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Autobiographical Acts, Ethnic Memory and History of African-Caribbean and Jewish Communities in Twentieth Century Britain

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ABSTRACT

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACTS, ETHNIC MEMORY AND HISTORY OF AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITAIN

by Gemma Romain

This thesis is a comparative assessment of the historical memories of African-Caribbean and Jewish communities in Britain. The communities' memories are explored through the 'autobiographical act' – primarily autobiography but also oral history narrative and Internet sites. This study analyses how mythologies affect collective memory and influence personal identities. In the last few decades there has been a massive increase in autobiographical productions of ethnic minorities. However, there has been little critical analysis of these works, as compared to the USA. This thesis explores life history productions, through an historical perspective whilst utilising the theories of other disciplines. The central premise of this work is to compare and contrast two communities who have several parallels in historical experience, and more significantly historical memory, but who for several reasons have rarely been compared to each other within ethnic minority research in Britain.

This thesis is divided into three interrelated sections. Section One explores the significance and relevance of the concepts of the 'Mother Country' and the 'Promised Land' to African-Caribbean and Jewish migrants. It suggests that these mythologies were in part constructed after migration as a way of internally dealing with the realities of life in Britain. Section Two compares the communities' use of the concept of diaspora within their autobiographical memories. Memories of professional writers are explored, who often use travelling experiences to reflect upon the idea of what it means to have a diasporic or essentialist identity. Section Three explores the reasons why communities and 'mainstream' collective memory remember and forget aspects of their experiences in Britain, including racism and anti-Semitism, and also explores the way both communities are now re-remembering suppressed histories.

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Chapter One. Introduction. Historical and Ethnic Memory in Life History: African-Caribbean and Jewish Autobiography and Oral History

1.1. General.

This thesis is a comparative history that examines the ethnic memory and identity of African-Caribbean and Jewish communities in twentieth century Britain.[1] Generally, these two communities have not been compared with each other. Although there have been in recent years a few short studies focusing on comparable experiences, they are not detailed and additionally do not explore historical memory or identity. Often when these groups have been compared to one another they have been done so in a detrimental manner, usually resulting in the Jewish community seen as the ideal immigrant as opposed to the African-Caribbean immigrant. As David Cesarani has argued, 'while there are huge differences between the saga of Jews and that of immigrants from the Commonwealth and Pakistan, there are also similarities that are obscured if the myth of success is repeated unceasingly and uncritically.'[2] This thesis demonstrates that both groups have had comparable experiences. Moreover, they have interpreted their experiences in similar ways, especially in their employment of mythologies.

African-Caribbean and Jewish immigration represent two examples of key migration movements in twentieth century Britain. Between 1880 and 1914, 150,000 Jews settled in Britain. This movement was the result of various factors, primarily due to the persecuting atmosphere of Tsarist Russia.[3] Young males initially dominated the migration although this balanced out to include women and children by the end of the period of mass movement. Jews settled in various parts of the country, mostly within large cities such as London, Manchester and Leeds

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[1] When studying the 'Black experience' in Britain the terminology employed will usually be African-Caribbean. However the terms 'West Indian' and 'Black' are used where the individuals under analysis have used them or where they are deemed appropriate. There is much debate over terminology and each term has its own particular problems. This thesis mainly concentrates on African-Caribbean migrants and Black-British of African-Caribbean descent. However, the work of Ernest Marke, a Sierra Leonian, is utilised greatly within this work. By using Marke's testimony, this thesis in no way suggests that Africans and African-Caribbeans share the same culture or history of migration into Britain. However, Marke's particular life story, his Black identity and his relationship towards Britain as a mythical place is pertinent to this study, which focuses on the concept of Blackness which Africans and African-Caribbeans have had an ambivalent relationship to, particularly when exploring the meaning and reasoning behind the idea of a Black diaspora..

[2] David Cesarani, 'Introduction', in Cyril Spector, *Volla Volla, Jew Boy* (London, Centerprise, 1988), viii.

[3] Although as Chapter One shows this reason has been mythologised as representing every

and were largely employed in the tailoring and manufacturing trades. They were religiously orthodox and worshipped in a very different manner from the established Anglo-Jewish community. There was Black settlement in Britain at the start of the century, mainly consisting of African seamen but also small, non-transient Black communities most prominently in Liverpool and Cardiff and a small Black elite in London. In terms of the latter period of migration, African-Caribbeans mainly arrived during the 1950s and 1960s. Although largely motivated by the British recruitment drive, the immigration picked up as a result of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which limited the number of immigrants, particularly Jamaicans, who could migrate to America (the country African-Caribbeans traditionally travelled to for obtaining seasonal employment). Like the Jewish community, the initial immigrants were mostly young men; women and children generally arrived later. They settled specifically in large cities, London being the most prominent. Between 1948 and 1962, 250,000 African-Caribbeans had settled in Britain.

The earliest historical accounts of the Black community in Britain were most often statistical analyses with few attempts to examine the memories and life experiences of the groups. The aim of this thesis is to document previously untold histories as well as providing new light on the communities by carrying out a comparative study. A significant proportion of this thesis explores the memory of experiences of racism. Problems can arise when exploring ethnic minority history whilst only focusing on issues of racism, by doing so the communities and their diverse histories and experiences will be solely relegated to issues of racism and will become pathological studies. Whilst recognising this danger, it is still important to deal with issues of racism and anti-Semitism in the context of the memory of the communities affected, especially so as in previous historiography the documentation of racism has often not involved the communities and their responses, memories and feelings. Additionally issues concerning racism have been subject to assumption and myth making in wider public memory and thus it makes for interesting comparison to analyse the communities memories and mythologies on the subject and the divergence and semblance between public and ethnic memory. At this point it is necessary to introduce some of the relevant thematic and

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individual Jewish experience.

theoretical issues, namely comparative history and the theory of life history and to contextualise these into the wider historiographical debates surrounding the communities.

1.2. Comparative History.

Comparisons are constructed implicitly in every domain of life. C.E. Black noted that the human brain functions in a comparative way by storing and processing information and categorising this information by generalisations. In addition, all descriptions of entities that exist in number have been derived from observing similarities and differences.[4] As Etzioni and Dubow have stated, 'Dr. Strangelove is a better movie than Fail-Safe ... "a" is larger than "b" ... all [are] examples from the larger universe of comparative statements.'[5] Comparative history is based upon these cognitive processes. The comparative historian assesses historical events, cultures, or nation states to reach a plausible conclusion of why particularities of a phenomenon occurred. Any other type of historical discipline cannot attain this.

As documented by Nancy Green, comparative studies have usually been confined to the comparison of nation states.[6] Some historians have termed these types of studies as the only true comparative ones. C. E. Black advocated the use of nation states over cultures within comparative history as he thought that 'no "culture" or "civilization" has ever passed a law or raised an army. Dealing with them is like trying to knit with spaghetti, for they tend to separate whenever they are placed under pressure.'[7] Yet avoiding the comparative study of cultures leads to the neglect of an important historical subject and provides one with 'a rather gross simplification' and a 'restricted conception' of comparative history.[8] Comparing cultures can be adequately performed if one keeps in mind the certain particularities of different cultures (meaning that certain terms/definitions will have differing meanings) and the internal dynamics of any particular cultural group. For example,

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[4] C.E.Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History* (New York, Evanston and London, Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), p. 35.
[5] Amitai Etzioni and Frederic L.Dubow (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods* (Boston, Little, Brown and Company, Inc., 1970), Preface, vii.
[6] Nancy L. Green, 'The Comparative Method and Post-Structural Structuralism: New Perspectives for Migration Studies', *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Volume 13, 1994, p. 6.
[7] Black, *The Dynamics of Modernization*, p. 42.
[8] Marc Bloch, 'Two Strategies of Comparison' in Etzioni and Dubow (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives*, p. 39.

when Frederickson compared Black ideology in South Africa and America he acknowledged the very different meanings of the term Black.[9] Similarly, Stephen Sharot has argued that the symbolic value and meanings of for example food, dress, or folklore may differ depending on the particular society.[10] In terms of providing non-elitist history, which is the central focus and goal of this thesis, one cannot analyse and compare particular groups of people and their life experiences by only referring to the nation state and high political history.

Historians have constructed comparisons in a variety of ways. Endelman has asserted that the most basic differentiation of construction is between 'internal' and 'external'. Internal comparisons are those that compare one particular type of entity within different environments, whether countries, organisations or other groupings. External comparisons are those that compare different entities within the same environment.[11] An example of internal is a comparison of Jews in Britain, France, and America. This thesis will be an external comparison but will carry out internal comparisons upon the communities' and then relate these internal differences to the other group. Nancy Green's division (which can easily be correlated with Endelman's) is separated into three sections: linear, divergent, and convergent. Green refers to the comparison of immigrant experiences when explaining these different possibilities. Linear comparisons are those that take an entity and compare its situation before and after an event/ development (either a movement in place or time). Convergent comparisons analyse different groups within the same environment (equivalent to Endelman's external). Divergent are those where the members of the same group (the Diaspora) within different environments are compared to each other (equivalent to Endelman's internal).[12]

Comparative studies can become flawed if they treat the two entities being analysed in an entirely separate manner (i.e., separate chapters on each entity with no contextualisation). Nevertheless, separate analysis within limits can be a useful way of exploring themes of similarity and difference as it provides chronological information thematic constructions cannot, enabling the analysis of differences in

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[9] George M. Fredrickson, *Black Liberation: A Comparative History of Black Ideologies in the United States and South Africa* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 4.
[10] Stephen Sharot, 'Religious Syncretism and Religious Distinctiveness: A Comparative Analysis of Pre-Modern Jewish Communities', in Todd M. Endelman (ed.), *Comparing Jewish Societies* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 25.
[11] Endelman, 'Introduction: Comparing Jewish Societies', in *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
[12] Green, 'The Comparative Method', pp. 13-15.

light of the particularities of the era. The importance of the specific historical context is particularly the case for the comparison of African-Caribbeans and Jews whose first waves of mass immigration were sixty to seventy years apart. It remains true, however, that purely disconnected treatment 'tends to result in parallel histories rather than genuinely comparative ones. Two narratives can be presented in such a way that the reader is always aware of both and senses that they are, as it were, constantly commenting on each other.'[13]

In recent years comparative studies focusing upon ethnic and religious groups have become more widely undertaken and not dismissed in the way previously carried out by academics such as Black. Nevertheless, these studies are still in their infancy. ERCOMER (European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations) intended its series (launched in 1995) *Comparative Studies in Migration and Ethnic Relations* 'to fill the vacuum in current publishing. It remains the case that most contributions to this field are restricted to national coverage.'[14] An increase in comparative studies focusing on 'Diaspora' communities has occurred, most prominently within the realm of African-American and Jewish Diaspora studies. These tend to be internal/divergent studies focusing primarily on the similarities in culture and historical experience of the various Diasporic groups and the treatment experienced from the 'host' society. Fredrickson's comparison of Black ideologies in America and South Africa, Ira Katznelson's comparison of Blacks in America and Britain, S.N. Eisenstadt's comparison of different Jewish civilizations and Mark Cohen's comparison of Jews in Islamic and Christian societies in the Middle Ages are all recent examples of this newly emerging history.[15] Nancy Foner and Karen Olwig have also recently compared the migration experiences of different African-Caribbean groups within different countries.[16]

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[13] George M.Fredrickson, *The Comparative Imagination: On the History of Racism, Nationalism and Social Movements* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, University of California Press, 1997), p. 13.

[14] ERCOMER Book Series, http://www.ercomer.org/publish/books/index.html. In 1998 this book series was replaced by the joint series *Research in Migration and Ethnic Relations.*

[15] Fredrickson, *Black Liberation,* Ira Katznelson, *Black Men, White Cities: Race Politics, and Migration in the United States, 1900-1930, and Britain, 1948-1968* (London and New York, The Institute of Race Relations, Oxford University Press, 1973), S.N. Eisenstadt, *Jewish Civilization: The Jewish Historical Experience in a Comparative Perspective* (New York, State University of New York Press, 1992), and M.R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994).

[16] Nancy Foner, 'Towards a Comparative Perspective on Caribbean Migration' and Karen Olwig, 'Constructing Lives: Migration Narratives and Life Stories Among Nevisians', in Mary Chamberlain (ed.), *Caribbean Migration: Globalised Identities,* (London, Routledge, 1998).

Nancy Foner has argued that 'cross-national comparisons point out that cultural explanations are insufficient in explaining processes of adjustment and adaptation.'[17] Foner's work highlights that as well as seeing the differences between Black American and Black British life, the implicitly assumed homogeneous nature of Caribbean experience must be questioned when looking at the different life experiences and resulting identities of Jamaicans in London and New York. Similarly, in a British context, St. Vincentians migrating to High Wycombe or Grenadians migrating to Kirklees have very different narratives to tell from those migrating to London (which has its own localised dynamics).

Returning to the focus of this thesis, external/convergent comparisons of African-Caribbeans and Jews in Britain have been attempted, although not on the same scale as comparisons between Blacks and Jews in America where relations between the groups are contentious and therefore subject to a higher degree of analysis.[18] Previous failure at comparing these groups can be partly linked to the general historical inaccuracy of not recognising 'white' and 'black' migration as part of the same process of twentieth century migration.[19] The main works comparing Blacks and Jews in Britain are macro-historical accounts rather than focusing upon everyday life experiences. There have not been many works comparing the groups and the work carried out on them has not been particularly comprehensive. John Garrard pioneered the comparison of responses to Jewish and New Commonwealth immigrants with his work carried out in 1971.[20] Others have taken an interest in comparisons between the groups and individual African-Caribbean and Jewish people have at times compared themselves to one another.[21] Steve Cohen's *It's the Same Old Story*, although not explicitly comparing the two communities, documents their experiences in light of 'host' society racism.[22] He

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[17] Foner, 'Towards a Comparative Perspective'.
[18] These works and the issues arising when the groups compare and relate to one another's histories are further explored in Chapter Seven of this thesis.
[19] Kenneth Lunn, 'Race Relations or Industrial Relations?: Race and Labour in Britain, 1880- 1950', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Special Issue on Race and Labour in Twentieth Century Britain, Volume 4, Number 2, July 1985, p. 1.
[20] John Garrard, *The English and Immigration: 1880-1910* (London, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1971).
[21] For example, see Diane Abbott, 'Jews and Blacks in Common Goal', *Jewish Chronicle* (Letters to the editor), 6 September 1996, Dow Marmur, 'Fight not Flight', *Living Judaism*, Volume 2, Number 4, Autumn 1968, Neville Nagler, 'Jewish Links With Black Community', *Jewish Chronicle* (Letters to the editor), 20 September 1996 and Irving Osbourne, *Jews in London: Comparative Perspectives* (London, Justin Hill & Sutherland Associates, 1984).
[22] Steve Cohen, *It's the Same Old Story: Immigration Controls against Jewish, Black and Asian*

finds several parallels between their experiences in the way they were discriminated against by the 'host' society. This work is however very short and not a detailed analysis. Ze'ev David Portner produced a study in 1996 analysing the friendship between Blacks and Jews in Britain, referring to the situation in the USA in light of the rise of the Nation of Islam and Louis Farrakhan. In this study Portner included a comparison of the initial experiences of the two communities when first arriving in Britain.[23] More generally, Simon Taylor has produced a study explicitly comparing African-Caribbean and Jewish communities in England (not Britain as a whole). He chose to study Caribbean migrants in Birmingham and Jewish migrants in the East End of London and although comparing them to some extent Taylor does fall into the trap explained by Fredrickson of providing 'parallel histories' instead of comparisons.[24] When carrying out comparative history on the groups' experiences it is essential to analyse and apply the theories of life history.

1. 3. The Rise of Life History and the 'history of everyday life', *alltegsgeschichte* and *microhistoria.*

> Life stories can help the researcher become more aware of the range of possible roles and standards that exist within the human community. They can explain or confirm experience through the moral, ethical, or social context of a given situation. ... They can provide the researcher with information about a social reality existing outside the story, described by the story (Bertaux, 1981), as well as about the story itself as a social construct (Rosenthal, 1993).[25]

When seeking to explore society and cultures, the historian, social scientist and anthropologist have a vast range of possible sources. Written documentation, usually official, has traditionally been the favoured source of historians and quantitative questioning the favoured source of social scientists. These divisions between disciplines and their favoured sources have been difficult to break. Although the positivist element of historical thinking was abandoned early in the twentieth century there was, until recently, still a marked ambivalence or hostility

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People, with Special Reference to Manchester (Manchester, Manchester City Council Public Relations Office, 1987).

[23] Ze'ev David Portner, *A Difficult Friendship: The Relationship Between the Black and Jewish Community in Britain* (Queen Mary and Westfield College, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 1996).

[24] Simon Taylor, *A Land of Dreams: A Study of Jewish and Caribbean Migrant Communities in England* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993).

[25] Robert Atkinson, *The Life Story Interview* (California, London and New Dehli, Thousand Oaks: SAGE 1998), p. 13.

towards using the study of lives as a historical tool. Life stories were seen as flawed, biased and unreliable. Anthropologists have used life history as a means of analysing specific groups of people and their cultures.[26] Clifford Geertz's model of analysis adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the historical study of cultures by constructing a 'thick description' of cultures – focusing on the whole array of everyday experiences and cultural practices within a society. He argued, 'anthropologists complain that the historian's reliance on written documentation leaves us prey to elitist accounts and literary conventionalisms. Historians complain that the anthropologist's reliance on oral testimony leaves us prey to invented tradition and frailties of memory.'[27] Historians can use the tools of life history to assess peoples' memories of events and experiences, as a way of understanding the history of everyday life rather than as a supplementary source to history. Historians of society and everyday life have adopted many of the strategies of the anthropologist particularly those interested in working class, women's or ethnic minority history. Recent historiography has become more sensitive to the idea of memory and myth being a part of history, and not an obstacle to historical truth.

The history of everyday life grew in the late 1970s and early 1980s as a radical left wing approach to analysing those people left out of traditional historical narratives. It objected to the social science approach to history and the Marxist approach, which although geared to analyse the history of working classes, became elitist and focused on quantitative research, grand structural narratives, institutions, and processes, rather than providing a human face to history. This social science approach has recently embraced the belief in the positive nature of history, that after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the perceived end of ideological movements in history, the world had moved to a democratic and fair society, with injustices and autocratic rulers as the exception to the rule. Opponents of this historical view turned to the study of everyday life to show that contemporary conditions of life conflicted with this optimism.[28] Historians wanted to analyse

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[26] The anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff has been extremely influential in raising the profile of life history within her discipline. See, Barbara Myerhoff (edited and with an introduction by Marc Kaminsky), *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling and Growing Older* (University of Michigan Press, 1992).

[27] Clifford Geertz, 'History and Anthropology', in Ralph Cohen and Michael S. Roth, *History and Histories Within the Human Sciences* (Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia, 1995), p. 249.

[28] Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover and London, Wesleyan University Press, 1997), pp. 101-102.

cultures within history, the domain traditionally taken by cultural and anthropological research. The key movements were found in the *Alltagsgeschichte* in West Germany, *microhistoria* in Italy and the History Workshop Movement in Britain.

Geertz's 'thick description' model has influenced everyday life history. However, as Iggers argued, this type of study created a contradiction as if one focused on the thick description the individual historical narrative would be lost once more.[29] Recent everyday life history has attempted to create an amalgamation between individual life history, cultural and wider historical concerns. This synthesis needs to be carried out, as the individual experience cannot be divorced completely from the collective – larger concerns, such as ethnic history, public memory and political history, affect individual history and memory. This task can be accomplished by assessing life histories.

A life history is the 'remembered' history and life of an individual, focusing on either a specific historical theme or a general exploration of a life. Atkinson defined 'life story' as having its roots in oral history, life history, and other ethnographic and field approaches[30] and as 'the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another.'[31] These definitions have been circumscribed in a generic and somewhat inflexible way and this strictness is particular true for the debate surrounding what constitutes an autobiography. Atkinson has defined a life history as similar to but not the same as a life story with the former usually focusing on particular aspects of a person's life such as work or religion.[32]

Autobiography and memoir are additional parts of the life story 'genre'. These two aspects have also helped shape and influence 'life story' as a whole in terms of how other aspects of the life history 'family', such as oral testimony, are presented in finished or published form. Memoir and autobiography have been seen as different and representing power and the powerless.[33] In this construction there

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[29] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[30] Atkinson, *The Life Story Interview*, p. 3. Atkinson also claims that the difference between 'life history' and 'life story' is very small.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] Jo Stanley in the introduction of her *Writing Out Your Life* acknowledges that she will be using the word *autobiography* interchangeably with *lifestory*. See Jo Stanley, *Writing Out Your Life: A*

are several key themes, including: the level of centrality given by the subjects to their own personal character and psychological and social development. 'Autobiography' has been perceived as centring upon the psychology and character of the individual with other characters taking a backseat whereas 'Memoir' has been defined as concentrating upon the central character along with other characters, observations and events of significance in their history and memory.[34] The next sections describe the rise of oral history and autobiography and the rise and content of theories towards them while concentrating on the historical analysis and application of these genres. Whilst this thesis will look individually at the various sub-genres of life-history, in reality it is difficult and not always appropriate to separate them.

1.4. Oral history.

The first aspect of 'life story' to be analysed is oral history. Oral history has been officially practised since the early part of the twentieth century. Within the USA oral history has become a mainstream component of academic research. There are oral history departments within universities such as Indiana University, Columbia University and UCLA. [35] Although historians had carried out oral history for several centuries it was deemed obsolete and forgotten as a result of the positivist movement in history.[36] Oral history increased in popularity during the mid to late twentieth century with the rise of left-wing academic movements such as the History Workshop movement seeking to document the history of ordinary people from their own perspective. These movements not only carried out oral history; they also carried out critical analysis of oral history as a historical source. Mass-Observation surveys also popularised the use of oral history testimony by its use of interviews with the general public in order to assess certain practices, attitudes and customs within British society. This was a direct influence of anthropological, rather than historical, thinking of the time. Three social

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Guide to Writing Creative Autobiography (London, Scarlet Press, 1998), p. 1.

[34] Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 149.

[35] For example, the Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, New York contains the Black Women Oral History project undertaken by the Schlesinger Library of Radcliffe College in 1976, a collection of ninety-seven interviews with Black Journalists and an oral history of the Black Panthers.

[36] See, Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978).

researchers founded Mass-Observation in 1937. Tom Harrisson had been involved in anthropological expeditions in various places such as Central Borneo. Humphrey Jennings was a filmmaker and painter, who was influenced to team up with the other founders as a result of the Abdication crisis. Charles Madge was a journalist for *The Mirror*, who became interested in the discrepancies between people's opinions and the government's belief in what people thought.[37] As stated by Mass-Observation in 1937, 'As a result of the Abdication crisis... we realised as never before the sway of superstition in the midst of science. How little we know of our next door neighbour and his habits. Of conditions of life and thought in another class or district our ignorance is complete. The anthropology of ourselves is still only a dream.'[38] However, today the vast Mass-Observation Archive has become a central resource to historians of British culture, particularly those researching everyday life and wartime attitudes and concerns.

The rise of oral history in Britain in the last decade can in part be related to the increasing appreciation of everyday local history from heritage departments of local councils and local museums (responding in part from an increased awareness of the activities of local community organisations). In recent years various local town and city councils have been redefining the way in which they represent their communities' histories. Due to the Heritage Lottery Fund they now have the financial ability to transform aspects of their heritage departments. There has been an increasing desire to document 'everyday life' in terms of oral history projects, and this has been particularly evident in ethnic minority histories. These projects serve multiple purposes as they can be stored in local archives and can be transformed into part of the museums display in terms of interactive audio-visual use of oral history recordings, be made into publications, be transferred to web pages and made into CD-ROMs. The Croydon Museum *Lifetimes Exhibition* provides a good illustration of the changes within museum culture of the twentieth century giving rise to the interactive museum, focusing on the everyday life of local people within Croydon (including a substantial minority group element). The *Lifetimes* collection which opened in 1995 focuses on collecting life stories, objects, photographs and other items relating to experiences of living in Croydon

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[37] http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/massobs/mohist.shtml.
[38] Tom Jeffrey, *Mass Observation: A Short History* (Birmingham, University of Birmingham, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978), p. 2.

from 1830 to the present.[39] The fundamental basis for the project is its oral history element. *Eastside Community Heritage* in Newham has carried out a variety of projects on local communities, including African-Caribbean and Jewish. *Eastside* carries out a minimum of two local projects a year.[40] Hackney Museum recently carried out a project called *Hackney Voices*, which recorded local peoples' histories and experiences of living in Hackney. This project included interviews with eight African-Caribbean people and six Jewish people. It has been used as part of the museum's exhibition, including online exhibition, it has been made into an educational CD-ROM and the resulting tapes have been copied and stored at the Hackney Archive.[41]

Local community groups have been at the forefront of oral history development, particularly ethnic minority history. These groups are composed of members of the communities, as well as local historians and community group workers. Local writing associations have been involved in the publishing and promotion of both autobiography and oral history. (These groups will be explained in greater detail in the subsequent section on autobiography). Small groups such as the *Centerprise* group in London and *QueenSparks Books* in Brighton, mainly composed of working class writers, started to be established in the 1970s and 1980s. They have sought to promote and publish autobiography and oral history as well as fiction and poetry and run community workshops and magazines. They first started when local and national government was not as keen to explore local everyday life history, particularly that of ethnic minorities. The groups have a political, grass roots, and left-wing approach. *QueenSpark Books* started in 1972 as a campaign to turn the Royal Spa buildings in Queen's Park into a nursery school instead of a casino, as developers had proposed to do. The campaign made a street newspaper called *QueenSpark*, which helped the campaigners to win their case. Within this magazine was a column called *Sparchives*, which included reminiscences of the area. In 1974 *QueenSpark* published its first book, which was sold cheaply through word of mouth and door to door by the author, Albert Paul. *QueenSpark Books* is now part of the *Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers. QueenSpark Books* have carried out oral history projects

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[39] See, Angela Fussell, 'Make 'Em Laugh, Make 'Em Cry! Collecting For Lifetimes – The Interactive Museum about Croydon People', *Nordisk Museologi*, 1997, Number 1, pp. 39-56.
[40] Eastside Community Heritage, *Hidden Histories*, http://www.eastside.ndirect.co.uk.

looking at the fishing community of Brighton and is currently running a project called *Make Multimedia History* group, which provides local people with the opportunity to create their own oral history testimony and put this onto the Internet.[42] The last few years have seen an enormous expansion in local community oral history groups in Britain. Local African-Caribbean, Asian, and Jewish people have organised history projects and exhibitions themselves in order to show the richness of their heritage and their various experiences of living in Britain. These projects and exhibitions have also been carried out within museums focusing on ethnic minorities, for example within the Jewish Museum of Finchley, the Manchester Jewish Museum and the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton.

With the rise of the Internet, local Black history groups have been able to put their life history projects onto web pages – leading to an empowerment of Black people, who are able to explore and document their history as part of a community based exercise in the format they feel is appropriate. The use of the Internet for community projects is still in its early phase (as is Jewish use of the Internet for the purpose of oral history) particularly in relation to the USA where Black and Jewish, slavery and Holocaust oral history web pages are very comprehensive and widely used. A group of African-Caribbean people in Kirklees, West Yorkshire carried out oral history interviews with members of their community and created an Internet site looking at African-Caribbean experiences (first and second generation) in the town from the 1940s to the 1990s.[43] Within the United Kingdom various oral history societies, community publishers and others are using the Internet. In 1998 the BBC carried out an oral history project focusing on African-Caribbean experiences in Britain for the fiftieth anniversary of the SS Empire Windrush. This project was put to use on the television and resulted in a publication. Additionally, the project was put onto the Internet and included poetry, a timeline of Black history and various oral history interviews.[44] The BBC has carried out a large oral history project called *The Century Speaks*, which involved local and national radio. In the past year they have interviewed over 6,000 people within the United Kingdom. This project will be put into the British Library in an

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[41] *Hackney Voices*, http://www.hackney.gov.uk/hackneymuseum/exhibit/voices/index.htm.
[42] QueenSparks Books, http://www.queensparkbooks.org.uk/who.html [and] / aboutus.html
[43] *Generations Journey: An Archive of Afro-Caribbean history in Kirklees*, http://www.batley.org.uk/genj/
[44] BBC Windrush, http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/windrush/index2.shtml

archive called *The Millennium Memory Bank.* Various audio clips of interviews from this project have been put onto the Internet, in the form of the online *Century Speaks Archive.* It includes topics such as Asian and African-Caribbean memories of immigration and hopes of Britain.[45] Additionally, the Black-Jewish Forum is currently working on an exhibition and history project focusing on African-Caribbean, Asian and Jewish experiences of life in Britain.

Ethnic minority historians have in recent times advocated using this type of history and numerous oral history projects on a variety of groups of people have been created.[46] Yet, although stated over ten years ago, Robert Perks' statement of the marginal place that the voice of migrants have held in migration history writing still holds partly true today.[47] Empirical analysis of the processes involved are undoubtedly necessary in studying migration, but immigrant testimony must have a place within the analysis of ethnic minority history and the various oral testimony projects now at the historians disposal need to be utilised. The recent anniversary of the *SS Empire Windrush* and the resulting attention on Black British history did include some utilization of oral history within history writing. The Phillips' *Windrush* interspersed testimony of Black settlers to Britain within the framework of their own narrative and reflection on the history and progress of Black Britons. In one case the Phillips' allowed a whole chapter to be devoted to one oral history narrative.[48] However, critical analysis of the multitude of projects on Black and Jewish history in Britain has yet to be carried out on a wide scale by academics. The difference between Britain and America is a stark contrast in this respect. In America the analysis of oral history (and autobiography as will be shown later in the chapter) is carried out by, among others, feminist, ethnic minority, Jewish, African-American scholars of various disciplines, historians, literary critics, sociologists, anthropologists and cultural theorists. However, in Britain recent work

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[45] *The Century Speaks: An Oral History by BBC Local Radio,* http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/century/cspeaks.shtml

[46] For example, the Black Cultural Archives (BCA)-The Myth of the Motherland, the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, the Hammersmith and Fulham Ethnic Communities Oral History Project, (ECOHP), Jewish Women in London Group, Oral History Project and recently due to the *Empire Windrush* anniversary a variety of African Caribbean oral history projects such as the BCA Windrush project and the BBC Windrush documentaries.

[47] Robert B. Perks, 'Immigration to Bradford: The Oral Testimony', *Immigrants & Minorities,* Volume. 6, Number 3, November 1987, p. 362.

[48] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, HarperCollins, 1998)

by Mary Chamberlain and Nancy Foner has analysed African-Caribbean narratives and oral history for historical purposes.[49]

Oral history can be used not only to document marginalised voices but to re-assess previous conclusions made about communities, which were made without actually looking at the individual experiences from their own perspective. As Bill Williams stated, when referring to the experience of Jewish immigrants, 'the critical use of oral history provides another means of access to the realities of immigrant life. The generalisations and the stereotypes can be tested against the testimony of immigrants and their children.' Williams' interviews with Manchester Jews contradicted the previous assumption that immigrants chose their occupation due to their religious or ethnic background.[50] Although, as stated previously, individual testimonies cannot represent the whole community they belong to, immigrants often have common experiences where generalisations can be seen. As Norman K. Denzin concluded from analysing the works of Sartre, Heidegger and Faulkner 'every life is both unique and universal, particular yet generalizable. Lives are the expression of personal and social history, as well as relational webs of influence. The differences that appear in the lives we study constitute the uniqueness of our subject matter and must be so established.'[51]

The Oral History Society Autumn Conference of November 1979, organised by Bill Williams and Manchester Studies, provoked intense discussion on the nature of oral history and Black history including sharp criticism. Natasha Sivanandan and Amrit Wilson criticised the use of carrying out oral history on the Black community by challenging the right of whites to document the Black experience, viewing it as the imperialism of anthropology. This provoked sharp and intense reactions from other participators at the conference.[52] 'Appropriation' of minority experience by the white majority society has been a criticism of oral history projects by others also. This criticism is in part problematic as it ignores the dangerous alternative to dismissing this form of oral history, the existence of white

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[49] See Foner, 'Towards a Comparative Perspective' and Olwig, 'Constructing Lives'.
[50] Bill Williams, 'Local Jewish History: Where Do We Go From Here?', in Sonia L. Lipman and Vivian D. Lipman (eds.), *Jewish Life in Britain 1962-1977, Papers and Proceedings of a Conference held at Hillel House, London, March 13, 1977 by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Institute of Jewish Affairs* (New York, K.G.Saur, 1981), p. 101.
[51] Norman K. Denzin, 'Interpreting the Lives of Ordinary People: Sartre, Heidegger and Faulkner', *Life Stories/ Récits de Vie*, Number 2, 1986, p. 16.
[52] Conference Report, 'Oral History and Black History', *Oral History*, Special issue: 'Oral History and Black History', Volume 8, Number 1, Spring 1980, p. 22.

historians only allowed to study certain subjects. However, the ethnic background of the interviewer, as well as the class and gender leads to those interviewed changing their story, or editing their story and leads to the interviewer having a different life perspective which may come through in the questioning process. As explained later within this introduction, the role of the interviewer is particularly important in the creation of the interview. Additionally as Elizabeth Thomas-Hope stated at the conference, the researcher needs to be able to communicate fully with the interviewee. Therefore it is advantageous to have a common linguistic background as 'linguistic misunderstanding leads to misinterpretations, while differences in social perspectives can result in simplistic and incorrect conclusions being drawn about them.'[53] The next related aspect of life history analysed is autobiography, which the Jewish community in Britain has used to a great extent to document everyday life experiences.

1.5. Autobiography.

The word autobiography was formulated in the latter part of the eighteenth century: combining the three Greek elements to mean 'self-life-writing' and was prescribed onto an already existing tradition of writing.[54] Autobiography increased as a popular art form in the eighteenth century. Scholars tracing this development have seen the beginning of autobiography in the enlightenment, where there was a new focus on the centrality and importance of the individual (particularly the 'great' individual) as opposed to the collective and also a positivist belief in historical attainable truth and philosophical truth through memory recall. These 'great men' were seen as the only people worthy of and capable of showing the world the greatest attainable human truth and knowledge through their writing. Recently, as Laura Marcus has pointed out, many criticise autobiography as 'irrevocably tainted by its Eurocentric, masculinist, individualist assumptions.'[55] Georges Gusdorf argued that autobiography was only possible in a specific time and space when humanity had emerged from the 'mythic framework of traditional teachings' and entered into a new historical and spiritual climate. In this new

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[53] Elizabeth Thomas Hope, 'Hopes and Reality in the West Indian Migration to Britain', *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[54] James Olney, 'Autobiography and the Cultural Moment: A Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction', in James Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 7.
[55] Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses*, p. 293.

situation people were able to see themselves as individuals within history and that they were unique and autonomous.[56]

The autobiographical act has been previously tracked in the form of a timeline from St. Augustine's *Confessions* to André Gide to Roland Barthes in the twentieth century and scholars and earlier literary theorists have traditionally seen these self-reflective works as autobiography in its purest and highest form. Other works of a different emphasis were sidelined, ignored or defined as not *autobiography proper* and this trend can be seen within society when, for example, looking at working class and women's autobiography of the nineteenth century which were seen to be degenerate, dangerous, and impurifying the fabric of the 'genre' or art form. These 'great men' were both popular at the time and were seen as the head of the autobiographical tradition by the newly emerging twentieth century autobiographical theorist. As Swindells argued, these men have been seen as not only speaking authoritatively for themselves but also speaking for the whole of mankind – achievable by either unequivocally representing the world in which they were perfectly integrated or by believing themselves disconnected from society and able to transcend the boundaries others were innocently restrained by.[57]

With twentieth century American autobiography some scholars have canonised the works of Henry James and Henry Adams as *autobiography proper* and have universalised the 'dominant' American experience. Critics propagating this elitist canon, among others James Olney and his mentor Gusdorf, have traced the development within a historical timeline but not within a historical framework. As Swindells found problematic, Olney sees no historical framework relating to the growth of autobiography, viewing it as purely the result of the impulse that has always caused man to create.[58] Olney argued that autobiography transcends history and is the result of man's attempt to impose order on human nature and experience. This transcending of history ignores the relationship between any individual and the individual's historical consciousness and social milieu, and the relationship to the society in which he/she lives and the power of that position in society. The result being what Swindells has stated, a collection of male selves as metaphors for

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[56] Georges Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', in Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, pp. 29-31.
[57] Julia Swindells, 'Introduction', in Julia Swindells (ed.), *Uses of Autobiography* (London, Taylor & Francis, 1995), p. 2.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the whole of human kind's past.[59] Olney is perhaps a more contradictory and ambivalent theorist than previously postulated. Whilst seeing these great men as representatives of 'the autobiography' he also acknowledges the work carried out by feminist and Black scholars who seek to re-address previous imbalances, reclaim previous autobiographical traditions and analyse new writings. Additionally, he has written an article about Black autobiography, which was published in a collection of autobiographical criticism of African-American writings (the inconsistency within this article will be explored later).[60]

During the last few decades of the twentieth century scholars (particularly feminist) have challenged the assumptions of the nature of earlier autobiographical writing and highlighted the work of women and working class autobiographers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In addition they have helped to challenge the accepted wisdom of what constitutes an autobiography or an autobiographical act and have helped to break down the rigid definitions imposed by theorists such as Philippe Lejeune. Carolyn Steedman has provided an alternative narrative to the growth of autobiography. Dismayed with recent historiography's acceptance of the view that the spread of autobiography was due to the increase of Protestant ethics, she has analysed the growth of twentieth century autobiography as a result of the massive programme of teaching self-expression in creative writing within post-war state education. Before this period school children rarely wrote about themselves. Today, autobiographical writing in the form of diaries and short stories is an essential make up of teaching children.[61]

Along with the traditional conception of real autobiography as a product of great men there is the conception of it being a purely Western phenomenon. Georges Gusdorf (who James Olney attributes as being the first autobiographical theorist) argued that the autobiographical act was formed in Western society and is found only in other societies due to a process of intellectual colonising – thus in Gusdorf's view only Western products are conceived as part of the tradition of autobiography. However, this line of thinking ignores the result of slavery,

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[59] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[60] James Olney, 'The Value of Autobiography for Comparative Studies: African vs. Western Autobiography', in William L. Andrews (ed.), *African American Autobiography, A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J, Prentice-Hall, 1993).

[61] Carolyn Steedman, 'The Peculiarities of English Autobiography: An Autobiographical Education', 1945-1975, in Christa Hämmerte (ed.), *Plurality and Individuality: Autobiographical Cultures in Europe* (Vienna, Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, 1995), pp.

colonialism, and imperialism: that there are ethnic minorities within the Western world and people within the post-colonial world who use the device of autobiography without having to borrow it from 'the white man'. His argument also ignores and marginalizes the vast array of autobiographical and oral traditions within non-Western countries. Gusdorf argued that when Gandhi wrote his autobiography he was using a western tool to defend the east: an example of Western intellectual imposition of ideas onto a different 'mentality'.[62] But by dismissing the autobiographies of people such as Gandhi, theorists ignore autobiographies carried out in periods of mass social and political transformation that represent key historical moments but more importantly marginalise voices already politically and socially marginalised. Is this a form of intellectual discrimination? Generically Gandhi's work is an autobiography and it is also written in the colonial world. However, due to the country of origin of the author the work is deliberately written out of the history of autobiography, or at least (if we agree with Gusdorf's timeline) the twentieth century history of autobiography.

However, Gusdorf's argument is interesting in that it relates to the debate surrounding the 'appropriation' of an experience, revealed in the case of working class autobiographies where the format and content of autobiography was chosen by the publishers to appeal to a middle class reader. James Olney analysed the similarities and differences in how people in the Western world and Africa have remembered their histories and written their life stories. By acknowledging the existence of autobiography in Africa he proposed a differing theory to his mentor Gusdorf. Gusdorf (although hating the inflexibility of generic theories of autobiography) was in fact uncompromising by saying that only the Western world has produced autobiography and by promoting the individualistic 'great Western men' timeline of autobiography (St. Augustine, Rousseau, etc.). Although these works were in a way canonised and made to characterise a 'pure work' as opposed to a 'degenerate work' in reality they only represent one particular tradition of autobiography: other traditions include those of the working class, women, slave narratives and, in the last century, immigrant, ethnic minority, 'third world' and refugee autobiography. Olney has characterised the autobiographies of Rousseau, Montaigne and others in the 'canon' as autoautography (autobiographies focusing

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86-88.
[62] Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', pp. 28-29.

on the self as the individual) and the autobiographies of Africa as autophylography (autobiographies focusing on the self as the collective).[63] This characterisation has problems but avoids the trap of characterising autoautography as analogous with autobiography. However, the emphasis of his work would suggest otherwise, although acknowledging the 'great man' tradition as one aspect of autobiography, this (autoautography) is the one aspect of the 'genre' that he almost solely emphasises when writing about autobiography as a whole.[64]

The most evident aspect of autobiographical theory is the disagreement between theorists about what constitutes an autobiography or about whether one can even define an autobiography. Gusdorf asserted in his influential paper first appearing in 1956 that 'autobiography exists, unquestionably and in fine state; it is covered by that reverential rule that protects hallowed things, so that calling it into question might well seem rather foolish.'[65] Although Gusdorf believed in autobiography as a genre he thought the rigid definitions of Phillip Lejeune to be too absolute, destroying in the process the spiritual nature of the genre. Philip Lejeune believes in an autobiographical pact, a set of conditions upon which a definition of autobiography can be achieved. In this pact those works falling out of this definition cannot be conceived of as autobiography.[66] Academics with differing viewpoints have vehemently disagreed with Lejeune's proposal. Olney has argued autobiography can be found in a variety of works and disciplines. Black and feminist scholars have disagreed with rigid generic theory in terms of looking at authorship and censorship surrounding marginalized voices. In Lejeune's definition slave narratives written anonymously would not be conceived of as an autobiography nor would female autobiographers taking male pseudonyms. Swindells argued that at first glance Olney would appear sympathetic to marginalized groups (another example of Olney's ambivalence) as he was freeing autobiography from the exclusiveness of a male tradition and Western European tradition by exclaiming how autobiography can be found anywhere. However, this freeing of the genre is carried out so that 'man's' desire to create can be seen

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[63] Olney, 'The Value of Autobiography for Comparative Studies'.
[64] See Olney's latest work as an example, James Olney, *Memory & Narrative, the Weave of Life-Writing* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1998)
[65] Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', p. 28.
[66] Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

everywhere, and is not subject to historical processes, thus creating again the scenario of 'man as universal subject'.[67]

In his influential study of autobiography, *Geschichte der Autobiographie,* Georg Misch outlined his theory of the difference between memoir and autobiography in terms of represention of the powerless and the powerful, respectively.[68] Referring to her work *From That Place and Time,* Lucy Davidowicz stated 'I called my book a memoir and not an autobiography because I would not dare claim to have had a role, however minor, in the making of history.'[69] Comments such as Davidowicz' can serve as another way to restrict autobiography, by leaving the genre solely to a certain group of people – those 'making history'. However, the perceived division between memoir and autobiography sheds light onto an important debate central to the workings of this thesis. Do those in positions of authority write differently from ethnic minorities, women and the working classes? Is this generic difference present between middle class and working class members of the same ethnic group and specifically between African-Caribbean and Jewish autobiographers? Generic classifications have seen that the author must be central to the text if that text is in fact an autobiography. Does this relegate works written by the powerless solely into memoir? Is African autobiography always 'autophylography'? Is the theory correct that groups, other than those canonised in the tradition, always write more about others than themselves, or write in the collective rather than the singular? Is there a difference between Black and Jewish immigrants and then second and third generation writing in this respect?

These questions need to be assessed not only by critics of women, working class and ethnic minority autobiography but by others professing to look at the genre as a whole but who in reality only concentrate on the Western male. Estelle Jelinek has analysed women's autobiography and found that the autobiographical theory written by men cannot generally be applied to women's autobiography and that in general the male autobiographical tradition has been documented excessively. As Swindells argued, Jelinek's view is correct to a certain extent but ignores a crucial point: that men's autobiography has not been exposed to the right

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[67] Julia Swindells, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[68] Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses,* p. 151.

sort of theory.[70] Academics have documented the centrality of the subject (with a lack of awareness of the outside world) within the Western autobiographical tradition. This self-reflection does not exist in a time vacuum and these autobiographies personify a particular and elite contemporary social and cultural milieu which made this insular thinking possible. However, this 'state of mind' does not represent humanity in its 'purest' form. It goes without saying that human beings always interact with the outside world (whether in ignoring, 'transcending' it or being conscious of it). Therefore if autobiography is defined as the written expression of an individual's life then both the 'Western model' and the 'memoir' model are examples of autobiography; of people expressing in written form their life experience, whether or not this life is conceived of as an interaction with their social environment. If we are to agree with the theory that ethnic minorities use the form 'memoir' more than 'autobiography' then perhaps we should accept Olney's assertion and replace autobiography with autoautography and memoir with autophylography and argue that both traditions are autobiographical in content and design. However, I would say that this is both hugely and dangerously ahistorical and a far too simplistic proposition. Ethnic and class groupings cannot be rigidly defined in such a way and as Warneken has outlined, often working class people only remember in the collective if they think the researcher or the public at large has no interest in their subjectivity.[71]

The traditional autobiographical theorist has additionally ignored a vast range of oral history and autobiographical writings carried out during the twentieth century. As we have seen, oral history was carried out during the first half of the twentieth century on a wide scale with regard to African-American and Jewish-American experiences. The slave narrative and oral history of slavery constitutes an enormous body of work in the autobiographical history of Black people. Holocaust testimony, autobiography, and oral history (particularly Steven Spielberg's Shoah project) has grown massively in the last few years.

The autobiographical tradition of the British Jewish community (also ignored by most traditional theorists) was also firmly established in the first half of

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[69] Lucy Davidowicz, 'Autobiography as History: Telling a Life' in N. Kozody (ed.), *What Use is Jewish History? Essays by Lucy S.Davidowicz* (New York, Schoken Books, 1992), p. 23.
[70] Swindells, 'Introduction', p. 3.
[71] Bernd Jürgen Warneken, 'Social Differences in the Autobiographical Representation of the Self', in Hämmerte (ed.), *Plurality and Individuality*, p. 13.

the twentieth century. This raises important question in terms of applying the theory of comparative history, as autobiography is on the surface more evident in Jewish rather than African-Caribbean life history and vice-versa in the case of oral history. Does this difference in autobiographical traditions between the communities perhaps point to Misch's formula of autobiography in that African-Caribbeans have less mainstream acceptance than Jews? Although several Jewish autobiographies have achieved fame and status (several by 'everyday' Jewish people), in general with 'everyday' Jewish communities being able or 'allowed' to document their experiences then the genre of oral history is used, as in the case of 'everyday' African-Caribbean people. The relationship of what is produced to what is published, intertwined with the notion of 'what is an autobiography' gives rise to certain questions. Perhaps the notion of Jewish people producing more autobiographies and African-Caribbean people producing more oral history is unfair. More Jewish autobiographies are certainly on the market and small publishing houses have found an audience for them. But this development did not happen until late in British Jewish experience. These works were usually autobiographies of the second and third generation (very different to the first generation tradition of American Jewish immigrants and the phenomenon of the assimilationalist, melting pot autobiography of Mary Antin and others).

Two Black autobiographies were published before the increasing attention on African and African-Caribbean 'everyday' history during the 1990s.[72] One was by Ernest Marke, who came to Britain from Sierra Leone in the early twentieth century, which was published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson in 1975 and then republished by a small publishing house, Karia in 1986, which publishes works on the anti-colonial and anti-racism movements and Black history.[73] The other was an autobiography written by a Jamaican called Wallace Collins.[74] It was published in 1965 when Collins was still young and had only lived in Britain for ten years and migrated to Canada. This autobiography was rare and unusual in that a large and mainstream publisher, Routledge & Kegan Paul published it. This work was very

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[72] Other works were published during the early period of post-war Caribbean history in Britain, from writers such as Sam Selvon and George Lamming. Although some of these works will be referred to within the thesis, it is Collins and Marke's autobiographies, which are the precursors of the everyday life-history movement.

[73] Ernest Marke, *In Troubled Waters: Memoirs of my seventy years in England!* (London, Karia, 1986)

[74] Wallace Collins, *Jamaican Migrant* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965).

much a pre-curser of the 'everyday' life tradition and was the result of Collins' decision to expand his creative writing skills, at the Working Mans' college. In general, many African-Caribbean autobiographies have been produced within local community writing projects and by people who have not been able to publish their works. It is therefore too simplistic to say that African-Caribbean people have used the practice of autobiography less then Jewish people, although we can see that Jewish autobiographies have been published by large publishing houses far more. In 1995 Sandra Courtman, a member of the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP), wanted to research various women's autobiographies of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly African-Caribbean. She talked of her frustration that the myth that African-Caribbean women before the 1980s did not write autobiographies was still believed. She stated 'I was told that we don't have a Toni Morrison in Britain because Caribbean women migrants were not educated and so did not write. Well many of them were highly educated and they did write, but it is more a question of what and how; of tracing their development and treatment as writers.'[75] Courtman saw that 'the first wave of migrant women's writing is a part of a prehistory of current black British women's writing; the historical significance of which needs researching and recording before it is lost.' Courtman talked to the Federation founding members Ken Worpole and Rebecca O'Rouke who talked about some of the early work done by Caribbean women, who were some of the earliest Federation members. Worpole remembered 'some of the stuff was terrific.' Courtman's 'frustration lies in the fact that it is doomed to remain in shoe boxes or in the private archives of Federation protagonists like Tim Diggles and Pollard.'[76]

The FWWCP was instrumental in the expansion of autobiography and life history of everyday communities in the 1970s. Along with the politics of those affiliating with the group its politics were radical and grass roots. The growth of creative writing in schools, as documented by Carolyn Steedman, was tied with the growth of community publishing, community theatre and the women's and feminist movement.[77] The Federation's early members included many Black people[78] and non-Black members have been involved in writing and promoting everyday Black

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[75] http://www.fwwpc.mcmail.com/Fedmagwomenissue.htm
[76] http://www.fwwpc.mcmail.com/Fedmagwomenissue.htm
[77] Carolyn Steedman, 'The Peculiarities of English Autobiography', p. 90.

history. For example, one of the co-founders of the Federation, Chris Searle promoted in schools radical, anti-racist teaching and has written literature on the Black British experience, published by local community writing organisations.[79]

Local writing community projects have until recent times been at the forefront of ethnic minority life history. Groups such as the *Centerprise* in Hackney provide various writing classes for local people. These include literacy classes, creative writing workshops, and poetry workshops and have resulted in a vast amount of non-fiction, including life histories and autobiographies. *Centerprise* has published various books from local writers and from those who have attended their classes and the organisation also has its own bookshop. They have been instrumental in publishing works by local ethnic minorities, including those from the large African-Caribbean and Jewish communities of Hackney. Sandra Courtman has assessed the role of Caribbean autobiographers (reflecting on both gender and class issues). She argued that the autobiography *Pure Running* by Louise Shore, published by *Centerprise*, is equally as powerful as that of Jean Rhys and that 'The Rhys' story is a crafted literary product: valued (now), analyzed and criticised. *Pure Running* is part of that inconsequential body of writing which is so often dismissed as working class autobiography: therapeutic and of value as process rather than product.'[80] *Centerprise* has published various autobiographies (as well as poetry and fiction) of African-Caribbean and Jewish people, including Martha Lang, *Austrian Cockney* (1980), Cyril Spector, *Volla Volla Jew Boy* (1988), Morris Beckman, *The 43 Group* (1992), Louise Shore, *Pure Running* (1982), Isaac Gordon, *It Can Happen* (1985) and Pauline Wiltshire, *Living and Winning* (1985).

Other publishing and writing organisations have helped various people, including people from ethnic minorities who speak other languages, with English literacy and language skills. Whilst developing these skills they have an opportunity to write about things important to them with the result being that many ethnic minority people write about their particular experiences of living and working in Britain. *Gatehouse* publishing charity is a Manchester-based community publisher that has been in existence for over twenty years. The organisation specialises in publishing books for adults with reading and writing difficulties and

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[78] http://www.fwwpc.mcmail.com/Fedmagwomenissue.htm

[79] For example, Chris Searle, *The Black Man of Shadwell: Four Stories by Chris Searle* (London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1976).

the books are written by students in Basic Skills and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. Recent publications from *Gatehouse* include life-stories from ethnic minorities (including African-Caribbeans and Jews), particularly women.[81] However, does the fact that these publications are written in English mean that the immigrant's voice is lost and that the works are geared more to a middle class or academic audience rather than 'everyday' people from the same community? Community groups have been aware of this dilemma and have published autobiographies and life writing in both English and the individual's first language. These community publishers, unlike large publishing houses, do not aim to maximise profits and publish these works within the philosophy of the group's aims and internal politics, of representing marginalized voices and producing works for the benefit of the local community.

Gender issues need to be explored within the context of a historical analysis of ethnic minority experiences. As in the case of the Western tradition of autobiography speaking for all people, there has been an universalist tendency in African-Caribbean and Jewish historical analysis. There are far more male autobiographies than female within the African-Caribbean and Jewish tradition, at least in terms of those accounts published, and male experiences are seen by some people to represent the whole communities, although this has been challenged by the work of local community publishing groups. As Sandra Courtman has argued,

> we learn something of the Empire Windrush generation from the fictional work of talented male Caribbeans like Sam Selvon in The Lonely Londoners. But what of the women? They appear in that work as peripheral to a lively male community. The women, if they exist at all, are there to be conquered, hustled for a free meal and a warm bed. ... It would be tempting to accept that the gender politics of the times rendered Caribbean women silent and servile. But this was curiously at odds with the historical accounts of real Caribbean women.[82]

Recently African-Caribbean women such as Louise Shore and Jean Buffong and Jewish women such as those in the Jewish Women in London Group have re-addressed this balance. This thesis recognises the importance of the role of

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[80] http://www.fwwpc.mcmail.com/Fedmagwomenissue.htm

[81] For example, Various authors, *Our Experience: Women from Somalia, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Pakistan write about their Lives*, Nanzin Monaf (Introduction in Bengali and English), *New Home, Hard Work* (about the experience of immigrant women coming to settle in Britain), *Just Lately I Realise: Stories from West Indian Lives* (written in Tobagan or Jamaican English), and Hilda Cohen, *Bagels With Babushka*. See http://www.gatehouse.org.uk.

[82] http://www.fwwpc.mcmail.com/Fedmagwomenissue.htm

gendered experiences and memories, however it has not focused on these aspects of the experience. In this thesis other questions have been explored and although gender has not been prioritised, the notion of men's memories speaking for the entire community experience has not been employed.

1.6. Myth and Memory.

Autobiographical memory is a construct based upon the interpretation of real events from a different standpoint in time. It is as, Conway argues, not a literal representation, but a personal representation and meaning of an event.[83] Factual information is preserved usually in terms of actors and locations but, as Neisser argued, events can be open to multiple levels of description.[84] As Melissa Levin and Laurice Taitz argue 'the autobiographical act necessarily entails a combination of two narrative genres – fiction and history.'[85] Memories of certain events can be simplified, to forget anomalies that do not fit a prescribed 'collective memory'. This simplification can also be termed a mythology, based upon real experiences but made less complicated and more nostalgic, easier to temporally remember and retrieve. As Arnold Wesker stated in his investigative introduction to his autobiography, 'I try to arrange feelings in an orderly manner saying, for example, that my love for Esther was a kind of Rosebud throughout my life; but stumbling upon a youthful diary reveals aspects of her character that irritated me.'[86]

> The internal contradiction of autobiography is that it demands organisation of the unorganisable, explanation of the inexplicable.[87]

Arnold Wesker's reflection on the complexities of writing autobiographies delves into the problem of how we can 'remember' a series of events when in reality they were less regimented, more fragmented and not experienced under subheadings. The psychologist Robinson proposed that people remember events and themes in their lives by a 'temporal reference system', a type of timetable that differs within cultures, and situates events and experiences within categories, such as school,

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[83] Conway, *Autobiographical Memory,* p. 9.
[84] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[85] Melissa Levin and Laurice Taitz, 'Fictional Autobiographies/Autobiographical Fictions: (Re)evaluating the Work of Dambudzo Marechera', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature,* Volume 32, Number 1, 1997, p. 103.
[86] Arnold Wesker, *As Much As I Dare* (London, Arrow Books, 1994), Introduction, xiv
[87] *Ibid.*

work, marriage, retirement.[88] (These subheadings are clearly referring to what are traditionally seen as 'Eurocentric' cultural norms). Other reference points are imaged-based, visual, and sensory, such as photographs, smell, music, and food – for example see Arnold Wesker's autobiography[89] and John Allin's paintings in Wesker and Allin's joint image and text-based memoir of the Jewish East End.[90] The hyphenated term re-member is used by Barbara Myerhoff who suggested that memory has to go through a process of retrieval, which in turn creates a new memory that is different to when first remembered. It is also used when referring to collective memory and memory retrieval when something has been 'forgotten' within a culture, as shown in Section Three of this thesis. Toni Morrison, as argued by Catherine Hall, also uses this terminology of re-membering in *Beloved* where the past of slavery has been buried in American society and consciousness and so needs to be re-membered.[91]

A particular organisational characteristic of working class autobiography is the sub-dividing of experiences into chapter headings similar to those remembered in the temporal reference system. This is the case for many of the smaller Jewish working class autobiographies published. It is debatable, as stated previously, whether people naturally remember events in such clearly defined categories. Nevertheless, these chapter headings serve as a focal point or a guide to make re-membering an easier task and also serve as an aid to those reading the works in published form. For example, the chapter headings in the writer Bernard Kops's autobiography are temporally referenced based, thematic, and very revealing of his cultural religious identity, ethnic identity, and 'double-consciousness'.[92] These headings range from the Talmud quote and title of his work *The World is a Wedding*, to the traditional style of writing chronologically, the first chapter entitled *Child in the Family*, to the Jewish cultural and ethnic references in *Smoked Salmon and Songs*.[93] Other people have deliberately avoided using these chronological

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[88] Conway, *Autobiographical Memory*, p. 29.
[89] Wesker writes of his starting his autobiography 'So many possible beginnings- streets, smells, sounds, family life, family history, social background.' Wesker, *As Much As I Dare*, p. 2.
[90] John Allin (Paintings) and Arnold Wesker (Text), *Say Goodbye: You may never see them again- Scenes from two East End Backgrounds* (London, Jonathon Cape Ltd, 1974).
[91] See Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives*, p. 240 and Catherine Hall, 'Histories, empires and the post-colonial moment', in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Question, Common Skies, Divided Horizons* (London and New York, Routledge, 1996), p. 66. I refer to this concept as re-remembering, as specific remembering has occurred for a second time.
[92] The idea of 'double-consciousness' will be explored in greater depth later in this thesis.
[93] Bernard Kops, *The World is a Wedding* (London, Vallentine, Mitchell, 1963).

temporal reference systems. Wole Soyinka wrote of his autobiography 'I have not only taken liberties with chronology, I have deliberately ruptured it.'[94] Some academics have argued that the desire to fracture the traditional chronology of texts is more prominent in ethnic minority literature and autobiography, and particularly in diasporic writings.

In all of the methods of constructing 'life history' issues of memory and myth are extremely significant and relevant in assessing not only its usefulness for the historian and anthropologist but also in its wider purpose of representing and documenting real life histories, situations and events previously marginalised or ignored. Myths are present, implicitly and explicitly, in all areas of society. Within the process of reminiscing, exaggeration, omitting of certain facts and adoption of folktale and mythology occurs on a subconscious level. Social construction of historical 'facts' occurs from generation to generation and becomes a crucial aspect of an individual's history and identity. Memory construction and the process of 're-membering' for the purpose of documenting experiences is not only based upon mythology but on the influence of aspects of the person's present life and the influence of the interviewer and potential audience (particularly in the case of memoir and autobiography). As Lucy Davidowicz stated, 'any memoir or autobiography is likely to show signs of double exposure, for the past, even when it is accurately reconstructed and corroborated by documents, is nevertheless filtered through the memoirist's present consciousness.'[95]

A person remembers and forgets their historical memory for a variety of reasons. If an event was a horrific experience it can be placed at the back of a person's mind. Delving into this past by means of a short oral history interview is difficult as the subject may not want the interviewer to know personal details about their lives that they have not perhaps even shared with family and close friends. An event or aspect of a person's life that they feel is no longer significant to them may be genuinely forgotten and only remembered by chance if the interviewer asks them a question that triggers off something in their memory. Remembering childhood events for the elderly may be hard to do. The event and how an individual felt about it at the time may be genuinely forgotten. The question of the

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[94] As Cited in Ato Quayson, 'Wole Soyinka and Autobiography as Political Unconscious', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature,* Volume 31, Number 2, 1996, p. 24.
[95] Davidowicz, 'Autobiography as History', p. 30.

authenticity of memory is a question that needs to be addressed. As Barbara Myerhoff stated, when referring to her interviews with elderly Jews, forgetting things about your past when you desire to remember them is sometimes painful and upsetting. She argued that memory ranges from vagueness to bright recollection.[96] Gavin Lucas has also described the effects of forgetfulness in terms of attacking one's identity. He stated 'forgetfulness is the threat of oblivion, it is a moment which raises a question mark over one's very identity; remembrance is a way of re-affirming that identity.'[97] Charles Poulsen, in his memoir, was very confident of the accuracy of his memory when he stated in his preface that the events to be portrayed are done so 'exactly as it happened, with its due background.'[98] But accuracy or otherwise of memory is not the valuable part in life history analysis. The value lies in the documenting of neglected voices and how *they* remember their experiences.

Memories are constructed of mythologies, both personal and collective to an ethnic group and to society in general. This mythologising does not demean the importance of the individual's testimony and memory. Mythologies are very useful to the historian and anthropologist, able to illuminate social constructs and indicate why and how they were constructed. As the *Jewish Women in London Group* have argued 'in treating life histories as storytelling, as a mythologising of dreams and aspirations and memories, the silences and distortions become part of that reshaping. In a sense, the point lies not in what happened in the past, but in the interpretation from the present.'[99]

In the late 1970s Tamara Hareven analysed what she termed 'generational memories', mythologies and memories of particular groups of people passed down through generations and families.[100] An example of this can be seen in the Jewish community migrating in the period 1880-1914. David Cesarani has argued that the community generational history of fleeing from pogroms, although certainly a large factor in the reasons for migrating has been mythologised and has come to represent every Jewish immigrant of this period. This mythologising is a very

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[96] Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives*, p. 238.
[97] Gavin Lucas, 'Forgetting the Past', *Anthropology Today*, Volume 13, Number 1, February 1997, p. 9.
[98] Charles Poulsen, *Scenes From a Stepney Youth* (London, THAP, 1988), Preface.
[99] Jewish Women in London Group, *Generations of Memories: Voices of Jewish Women* (London, The Women's Press Limited, 1989), p. 11.
[100] Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives,* p. 232.

useful and important aspect of testimony and 'generational memory' for the historian. As Cesarani suggests, myths were subconsciously developed in part to appeal to 'liberal' Britain's perceived tradition of welcoming the persecuted refugee.[101] This aspect of Jewish generational memory is explored in Section One of this thesis, particularly in Chapter Three's assessment of Linda Grant's autobiographical memory.

Mythology constructed by the subject about their direct life experiences also occurs in the entire life story 'genre'. Jean Peneff's article entitled 'Myths in Life Stories' provides good examples of this point. She outlined the commonality of myths such as that of the poor-childhood among the rich and analyses the generational myth of the 'self-made man', prevalent in the United States, which perhaps ignores the less positive aspects of how riches were secured.[102] Maurice Levinson's autobiography (a source used throughout this thesis) establishes his mother as the central character of the text. His experiences of growing up poor can be to some extent placed within the mythological arena that Jean Peneff and Caroline Steedman have articulated, the 'poor but happy' scenario, common within working class and Jewish autobiography.[103] He reflected on growing up poor but never without want of food and demarcated his mother in terms of the stereotype *mythical Jewish mother*, houseproud and the perfect provider of food and necessities with little money to do so; a person enshrined within Jewish memory and culture. He stated that 'although she was so very busy when it came to cooking she never shirked anything. She used to put her heart and soul into it. It had to be done properly, as if her very life depended on it. She had the fixation of every Jewish mother of stuffing as much food into her children as she could.'[104] Thus, Levinson's mother possessed the attributes of a Jewish mother within ethnic memory, serving to contextualise his experiences within a delineated cultural norm.

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[101] David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in Aubrey Newman and Stephen W. Massil (eds.), *Patterns of Migration, 1850 - 1914* (London, Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996).

[102] Jean Peneff, 'Myths in Life Stories', in Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.), *The Myths We Live By* (London and New York, Routledge, 1990), pp. 36-37.

[103] This scenario is used commonly. For example, Evelyn Cowan recollects on her childhood, 'it was a world of poverty which, to me, was not misery, but rich and happy.' Evelyn Cowan, *Spring Remembered: A Scottish Jewish Childhood* (Edinburgh, Southside, 1974), p. 10

[104] Maurice Levinson, *The Woman From Bessarabia* (London, Secker & Warburg Limited, 1964), p. 34. However, apart from mythologising his mother in this way, his autobiographical memory does not portray a particularly happy childhood.

Spector referred to his mother as a 'typical Yiddishe Mamma', houseproud and with the reputation of a good cook (although this is something he did not remember as being true). He also placed his mother within not only Jewish culture but in terms of the culture of all women who came from a 'semi-literate society'.[105] In addition to the stereotype of the Jewish mother there are fixed cultural norms within all communities and groups. These conventions have led some autobiographers' to embellish their memories – sometimes subconsciously – to fit their stories in with the prescribed norms. Caroline Steedman analysed the working class autobiography, *Jipping Street*, by Kathleen Woodward. This work was written in 1928, set in 'derelict' Bermondsley but Steedman uncovered that the author had lied about some aspects of her background. Although working class, Woodward had grown up in 'relatively genteel Peckham' instead.[106] In this way non-ethnic minority working class autobiographies follow comparable patterns, where the author creates a scenario allowing them to identify with a cultural space or attribute. Steedman stated of her discovery 'Jipping Street was the landscape of her [Woodward's] imagination, an invented way of making the writing of a 19th century 'childhood' possible from a working-class woman writing outside the conventions of working-class autobiography current in the 1920s'.[107] Associated with this theme is the discourse that arises when one talks of 'community' and cultural identity, whether it is reasonable to talk of overriding norms characterising cultural groups into communities. Additionally there needs to be an analysis into how members of these groups have interpreted notions of the community, if they perceive themselves as fitting into these norms, even if these norms are not the only valid definitions of the particular grouping. Challenges have been made by theorists such as Stuart Hall who argued that cultural identities are not fixed, but fluid and ever changing.[108] Many African-Caribbean and Jewish autobiographies reflect this fact, that cultural identities change over generations and time and are composed of a plethora of multiple and diverse characteristics.

The part played by others in the construction of life stories is very significant, particularly in oral history where the researcher has a role in what is talked about.

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[105] Spector, *Volla Volla, Jew Boy*, p. 29.
[106] Carolyn Steedman, *Past Tenses: Essays on Writing, Autobiography and History* (London, Rivers Oram Press, 1992), pp. 41-42.
[107] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[108] See Stuart Hall, 'New Ethnicities', in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds.), *Critical*

Barbara Myerhoff's formulation is of great importance when considering the role of the oral historian in the production process. In the 1980s she developed the notion of 'the third voice', viewing testimony, particularly when edited and published, as a product of the relationship between the interviewee and interviewer.

> When one takes a very long, careful life history of another person, complex changes occur between subject and object. Inventions and distortions emerge; neither party remains the same. A new creation is constituted when two points of view are engaged in examining one life. The new creation has its own integrity but should not be mistaken for the spontaneous, unframed life-as-lived person who existed before the interview began. This person could be called an 'ethno-person', the third person who is born by virtue of the collusion between the interlocutor and subject.[109]

In part what is written is carried out with a view to publication. Although obviously it is their experiences being documented, perhaps what is included, omitted or talked about in a certain way is due to 'pressure' from what the public and publishers want to see. Jo Stanley's recent publication on autobiographies is a guide on how the female can write them instead of following the 'traditional 'Great White Male' version.'[110] It outlines what type of subjects and events to include, what styles to write in and who to write about.[111] People following her guidelines are therefore to a certain extent reducing the part played by their own memory and constructing their life story according to what 'should' be included.

1.7. Ethnic Memories in Life History: Black and Jewish Memory.

As outlined earlier, autobiographies and oral history have been utilised by Jews and African-Caribbeans to an increasing extent and there is now an abundance of material on the communities but with little historical research. This thesis seeks to analyse this material and test certain theoretical issues resulting from American studies on ethnic life history and analyses and compares memories of specific experiences and historical events or phenomena. The universalist assumptions, outlined in traditional criticism of autobiography, has been challenged by the writing of ethnic minorities. These writers and those partaking in oral history

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Dialogues in Cultural Studies (London and New York, Routledge, 1996).

[109] Cited in Mark Kaminsky, 'Introduction', in Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives,* p. 10.

[110] Jo Stanley, *Writing Out Your Life: A Guide to Writing Creative Autobiography* (London, Scarlet Press, 1998), p. 3.

projects have shown that there are particular experiences resulting from being a minority group within Britain. Do ethnic minority groups remember their history in a different way from others? Is there a particular type of autobiographical memory for ethnic minorities? In regard to America, Terry Dehay has argued that often a dominant culture will assume that all experience transcends ethnicity and will write the official history of the country and present this version as fact.[112] In the British case, although various projects and autobiographies have been carried out, the critical gaze on them has been slow to emanate. Literary theorists have analysed the fiction of writers such as Derek Walcott and Jean Rhys but the autobiographical work carried out on 'everyday' African-Caribbean and Jewish communities in Britain has not been analysed in terms of social, immigration and ethnic history.

Is there a particular way in which ethnic minority groups remember and document their experiences? This question must be analysed in view of the realities of double-consciousness and minorities holding marginal places within society where memory can be distorted for the sake of the dominant culture. American theorists have been analysing all of these issues for various years. Some academics have tried to arrive at grand theories, which encompass all ethnic experiences, and others have pointed to the difference between ethnic and immigrant history and between European and non-European immigrant (and/or ethnic minority) experiences.

William Boelhower carried out an analysis of immigrant autobiography that was based upon four autobiographies of Italian Americans. As Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong argued, Boelhower's book is particularly important, as it is 'the only existing book-length study devoted to immigrant autobiography and attempting a coherent theoretical account of it.' Immigrant autobiography has usually been categorised under the title ethnic autobiography, as have studies analysing immigrant history and this is one of the problems that needs to be addressed throughout this thesis.[113]

When one talks about Jewish and African-Caribbean experience, generational and immigrant memories are very different. The vast majority of the pioneering Jewish

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[111] *Ibid.*

[112] Terry Dehay, 'Narrating Memory', in Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerrett, Jr. and Robert E. Hogan, *Memory, Narrative and Identity: New Essays in Ethnic American Literatures* (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1994), p. 26.

[113] Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, 'Immigrant Autobiography: Some Questions in Definition and Approach', in Paul John Eakin (ed.), *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect* (Wisconsin and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 142.

autobiographies in Britain were carried out by the second generation. However, in the case of the African-Caribbean autobiographies, many are first generation accounts. In terms of comparative history, this difference must be taken as a serious issue.

Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong took Boelhower to task over his decision to include second-generation accounts into his account of immigrant experiences. Wong found this problematic on various levels as only an immigrant can write an autobiography of an immigrant in the same way as only a Black person can write an autobiography of a Black person. This confusion resulted in a telescoping of first and second-generation experiences and suggests that both generations have the same experiences and memories even though only immigrants have gone from the Old World to the New World. Boelhower, therefore, failed to differentiate ethnic from immigrant (although both can be the same) even though his work set out to look at the marginalized immigrant experience. However, it is possible to look at generational memory relating to immigrant experiences from the second generation – as this thesis explores in Sections One and Two when personal memories can be infused with collective, ethnic memories transmitted through generational family mythology.

Boelhower argued that a theory, encompassing all immigrant experience, could be achieved by a close scrutiny of four autobiographies. He found the assimilationist pressure of the American melting pot made immigrants want to strip away their old self and become American and found an autobiographical canonised script already in existence, which they based their autobiographies on. Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong has disputed Boelhower's claim that a model of all immigrant experience can be formulated. She has assessed Boelhower's claim and applied it to non-European immigrant autobiography. Her article has particular relevance for this thesis as it analyses whether there is a difference between non-Western and Western immigrant experience. This division is far too simplistic in itself and particularly when applied to African-Caribbean and Jewish communities: African-Caribbean immigrants were British citizens and through the concept of the Mother Country were engaged (in an 'tangible' and not just symbolic way) in the mentality of a British way of life before migrating.

Boelhower argued that all American immigrant autobiographies follow a similar pattern and that a single all-consuming narrative can represent 'the

immigrant experience'. First, there is the 'dream anticipation' of the New World when still in the Old. Second, there is a process of transformation where the protagonist is confronted with the reality of the New World, which leads to immigrant autobiography organising 'two cultural systems, a culture of the present and the future and a culture of memory, into a single model.'[114]

Boelhower's analysis is largely ahistorical – it aims to represent immigrant experience across time and space. Wong analysed various Chinese immigrant autobiographies and found large deviations between them and the texts Boelhwoer used. In Chinese immigrant autobiography '"anticipation" is minimal, "contact" with the "utopian grammar" of America and its consequences hardly portrayed, and cultural "contrast" either not drawn or drawn more to enlighten Anglo readers than to map the protagonist's own "Americanisation."'[115] Wong saw this divergence between Chinese and Italian American autobiography as the result of a difference in the historical relationship to imperialism, where non-Europeans were not part of the imperial dream and did not look at America as the utopian country of hope as they were seen as racially undesirable and not given free entry to America. Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong argued that the majority of Asian immigrants would deviate from Boelhower's hypothesis and that Boelhower is implicitly Eurocentric.[116]

This debate has wider theoretical concerns when studying ethnic minority autobiography as a whole. It is clear that theoretical discussions like this can benefit from a historical consideration of these themes. Although Wong and Boelhower deviate in terms of their central arguments they both tend to universalize ethnic experiences in different ways and stipulate experiences upon groups of people in a simplistic manner. Wong is particularly at fault in her implicit neglect of Jewish history and culture. In terms of the mythology of the Promised Land, which Jewish autobiographers such as Abraham Cahan have expressed, Wong argued that non-Europeans could never express this as they 'were the victims rather than emissaries of an (at heart) imperialistic myth.'[117] Wong went on to argue that Boelhower's work analysed autobiographies implicitly steeped in Judaeo-Christian tradition and then argued that when these works are compared to autobiographies of non-European, non-Christian ethnic groups or a different historical period then

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[114] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[116] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Boelhower's grand 'macrotext' would prove inadequate. Although Wong is correct to stress looking at the diversity of immigrant experience, her argument seemed to confuse Judaeo-Christian with non-Christian and thus implicitly assumed Jewish immigrants were coming from the same position of status as other European immigrants – thus ignoring centuries of persecution against Jews, which had marginalized them and made them victims of Western racism and the 'other' within Western society. Wong is correct to assert that 'when Sollors deplores the current state of ethnic literary studies, he seems unaware that premature adoption of a transethnic approach, before the uniqueness of each group's historical situation and its manifestations in literature are adequately understood, can be as static and ahistorical as any mechanically applied "group-by-group approach."'[118] However, the uniqueness Wong desires also should be applied to the Jewish experience, which in ethnic and post-colonial studies is so often generalized as part of the Judaeo-Christian dominant culture.

An analysis of British autobiography will help to see the deviations in ethnic experience within different countries and historical settings and perhaps challenge some of the assumptions made in America, which are used to universalise immigrant and ethnic experience. A comparison of African-Caribbean memories of the Mother Country as compared to Jewish memories of the Promised Land, as shown in Section One of the thesis, can highlight a different experience to American theory. A comparison of this kind can show an alternative to Wong's assumption in that non-Westerners, historically persecuted by imperial powers, can mythologise about a mother country due to historical, cultural, and colonial links and the particular relationship between Britain and the Caribbean. These groups, due to the history of persecution can highlight experiences, which have been marginalized, denied, or simplified. The Jewish experience generally (but especially outside of America) has not been subject to enough post-colonial or cultural theory and the Black British experience needs to be analysed in terms of its links with the Diaspora and African-American experiences but also its differences and particular historical experience.

This debate leads onto the increasing attention African-American and Black autobiography is receiving from various scholars. Autobiographical theory is

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[117] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 161.

usually centred upon African-American life writing and experiences, yet the term Black is often used as synonymous and all encompassing. Is this use of terminology another universalising tendency or can one apply the experiences and autobiographical memory of African-American history onto a specific Black British setting? Roger Rosenblatt argued as early as 1976 that Black autobiography, like Black fiction (which is almost synonymous) represents a genre and special form of literature, as the outer world 'apprehended' by Black autobiographies is uniform and 'unique', if hideous.[119] The material is diverse but there are two elements in Black autobiographies that are consistent: 'the expressed desire to live as one would choose, as far as possible' and 'the tacit or explicit criticism of external national conditions that, as far as possible, work to ensure that one's freedom of choice is delimited or nonexistent.'[120]

In Rosenblatt's view Black autobiography does not rely on an 'abstract victim' as 'when the central character is black, the abuses are authentic. No black American author has ever felt the need to invent a nightmare to make his point.' Rosenblatt described Black autobiographical experiences as closer to the confines of classical tragedy than any other modern literature, perhaps with the exception of Ireland at the turn of the century.[121] It is perhaps surprising that Rosenblatt did not highlight the Jewish experience of suffering as another possible exception. But this suffering did not come across on the surface in many of the assimilationist Jewish immigrant autobiographies in America, which were often written to a prescribed myth, such as that described by Boelhower. The 'success' of the American Jewish community, in terms of becoming mainstream and able to prosper, has been seen as immediate. As a result various hostile actions against Jews in America at the turn of the twentieth century (compelling Jews to assimilate and lose their 'otherness') have been marginalized by historiography.

In terms of this thesis, how far can one extrapolate Rosenblatt's model of African American experiences of terror onto the history and experiences of the African-Caribbean community? Rosenblatt referred to the experiences of minority groups' life writing and argued that they are very different from other examples of literature. He stated 'minority autobiography and minority fiction deserve their

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[119] Roger Rosenblatt, 'Black Autobiography: Life as the Death Weapon', in Olney (ed.), *Autobiography: Essays: Theoretical and Critical*, pp. 169-170.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

minority status ... because of the presence of a special reality, one provided for the minority by the majority, within which each member of the minority tries to reach an understanding both of himself and the reality into which he has been placed.'[122] Is the same sense of hopelessness seen within a British context, where the only way to be accepted into white society is to brutalise oneself and eventually be destroyed? How is this analysis of racism and double-consciousness articulated in specific historical moments, both from a contemporary and reflective position in life history? Rosenblatt's model can be placed onto many Jewish autobiographies where double-consciousness is exhibited as well as the dilemma of coming to terms with British anti-Semitism and racial violence. However, Jewish memory deviates from this sense of despair as in some Jewish life writing the memory of anti-Semitism and racial violence in Britain is suppressed, as shown in Chapter Six's analysis of the memory of racist riots in Britain.

1.8. Ethnic Memory and History.

> You understand, one word is not like another. ...So when just the word I want hides from me, when before it has always come along very politely when I called it, this is a special torture designed for old Jews.[123]

The life-history anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff interviewed the Jewish person quoted above. The interviewee not only reflected on the problems of memory-retrieval but also designated the pain from forgetting as a particularly Jewish experience, a 'torture designed for old Jews'. He exhibited an ethnic memory, that contextualised his experience within the Jewish experience and memory of suffering as an immense phenomenon. Therefore, although he talked of the pain of forgetting, by contextualising this pain as a Jewish experience, his ethnic memory is exhibited. As articulated by Jonathan Boyarin, memory and forgetting are not polar opposites as is so often assumed.[124]

Amy Newman, a theorist who has analysed Black and Jewish memory, investigated the phenomenon of 'forgetting' in African tradition and culture.[125]

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[121] *Ibid.*
[122] *Ibid.*
[123] Quote by Shmuel, a Jewish interviewee. Cited in Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives,* p. 238.
[124] Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise,* p. 1.
[125] The notion of forgetting and its relationship to ethnic minority history and memory is explored in Section Three of this thesis.

'Forgetting' is connected to the feeling of 'double-consciousness', often when a traditional culture has been 'displaced, suppressed, or restructured from without.'[126] Double-consciousness can exist when migrating to a different country and within ethnic or religious minority experience. First articulated by the African American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois 'It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being asunder.'[127] It arises when migrating, both in the pain of 'forgetting'[128] or the complexities of trying to keep alive one's heritage whilst living as a minority in a 'host world' where pressures to assimilate and forget one's culture exists. Double-consciousness exists due to dangerous forces declaring that having more than one ethnic or cultural identity is unallowable. Double-consciousness and multiple identities do not necessarily exist in a framework of anxiety. Increasingly with globalisation, positive diasporic experiences can be experienced, for example within popular culture, particularly with Black American rap music influencing Black people in other countries. Hyphenated and multiple identities relate to how a group identifies with people who have similar cultural backgrounds and histories, to maintaining Diasporic links and identifying with

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[126] Amy Newman, 'The Idea of Judaism in Feminism and Afrocentrism' in David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel (eds.) *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism* (California and London, University of California Press, 1998), p. 151.

[127] W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (USA, A.C.McClurg & Company, 1903; this edition: New York, London, Victoria, Toronto, Auckland, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1989), p. 5.

[128] This forgetting can be seen in second and third generation autobiography and literature where some feel that they have forgotten part of their identity as it has not been passed down to them by their parents. To remedy this cultural 're-remembering' is undertaken. This can be seen in the use of Yiddish. The director of the new Welsh-English-Yiddish feature film *Solomon and Gaenor* stated about learning Yiddish 'The rhythms and intonations were buried inside me...Bringing them out in the film was like bringing a part of myself to life.' The *Guardian*, 16 April 1999. Jack Kugelmass' essay on the role of the Hasidim in American Jewish identity shows second and third generation 're-remembering' parts of their cultural heritage to solidify their own Jewish identity. See Jack Kugelmass, 'Jewish Icons: Envisioning the Self in Images of the Other' in Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin (eds.), *Jews and Other Differences, The New Jewish Cultural Studies* (Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1997) This is also seen in literature. Philip Roth's Eli the Fanatic partakes in a cultural reclamation of his ancestral roots in a way of mystical 're-remembering' without really knowing why he allowed himself or wanted to. See Philip Roth, 'Eli the Fanatic', in *Goodbye Columbus* (New York, Bantom Books, 1973). *Eli the Fanatic* is also explored in Hana Wirth-Nesher, 'Language as Homeland in Jewish American Literature' in Biale, Galchinsky and Heschel (eds.) *Insider/Outsider*. The sense of forgetting can also be seen in writers who feel they do not belong to the community (often if they have not lived within an area

other 'members' of the same ethnic or cultural group within different national settings and upholding an attachment to the place of origin.[129]

The notion of 're-membering' is associated with the aftermath of colonialism and persecution where cultural 'memory retrieval' takes place in order to define current identities. What is 're-membered' may, although certainly not always, have dangerous connotations for memory and identity as a whole. Amy Newman shows this danger in certain problems of the remembered nationalist African image,[130] something that Franz Fanon was aware of and fought against in his writings. Jonathan Boyarin has argued that Jewish memory must be expressed with other emergent voices in the aftermath of colonialism.[131] Certainly, by analysing the significance of Diaspora and double-consciousness, as carried out in Section Two of this thesis, Jewish and African-Caribbean history and memory has a basis in which comparison with the other can be made. Jonathan Boyarin, Daniel Boyarin, Paul Gilroy and others have convincingly argued that the Jewish research and critique of Diaspora has much to offer other newly emerging Diaspora theorists.[132] This movement has facilitated much gain, but when comparing two groups of people the differences in terms of their historical experiences, both within the Diasporas and within their country, needs to be remembered.

Ethnic memory is related to this discourse, in terms of identifying with the history and suffering of other members of the 'group' in different parts of the world, in different generations, and in the ethnic memory of 'day-to-day' life experiences. Ethnic memory serves not only to maintain a double-consciousness but also is contextualised within cultural identity and notions of ethnic 'community'. Within most of the autobiographies examined, specific central themes are prevalent in African-Caribbean and Jewish autobiographies such as: ethnic memory, cultural identity and persecution (racism and anti-Semitism) from the host society and the outside world in general. In the chapters that follow, these themes are dealt with both within 'day-to-day' experiences and within the psychological reflections of the authors.

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predominantly of their ethnic group) and do not share any of the cultural or geographical reference points.

[129] See Michael Galchinsky, 'Scattered Seeds, A Dialogue of Diasporas', in *Ibid.*, p. 188

[130] Amy Newman, 'The Idea of Judaism in Feminism and Afrocentrism' in *Ibid.*

[131] Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise*, p. 77.

[132] Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin, 'Introduction/ So What's New?', in Boyarins'(eds.), *Jews and Other Differences,* x-xi.

This thesis examines the way in which ethnic memories surface when recalling particular events and experiences and analyses where African-Caribbean and Jewish experience and memory corresponds and diverges. The autobiographies and testimony are not studied in isolation from other sources that connote African-Caribbean and Jewish memory. Indeed, in Section Three of this thesis for example, autobiography is not the main source utilised – ethnic memory is explored in terms of autobiographical memory, collective memory and ethnic generational memory. Myths within the ethnic memory and wider public memory are analysed in order to see how and why certain myths are born and constructed and to see the relation between public and private history. The first section analyses the way in which the communities have remembered their experiences of migration to Britain and how they have utilised concepts and myths found in wider public and ethnic memory.

Section One. Paradoxes of Migration: Myths of Migration in Jewish and African Caribbean Narrative: the Mother Country and the Promised Land

i. Concepts and Definitions of the Mother Country and the Promised Land.

The migratory tale depicted in the autobiographical act is one where imaginary notions and anticipations of life in Britain are of notable importance – such as visualizations of Britain as the land of 'milk and honey' and of democracy and freedom. In no ethnic 'community' are these ideas more manifest than in Jewish and African-Caribbean Diasporic cultures. Although these myths are not always conveyed in the autobiographical acts of members of these groups they are routinely implied in a significant way. Moreover these myths (or versions of them) are pivotal to the wider ethnic memory of both 'communities' before migrating, particularly within the religious motifs of the groups. Yet Britain was not the pre-eminent Promised Land, particularly for Jews where this nomenclature was designated to Israel (in religious and symbolic terminology) and, within the Diaspora, to the USA. The USA as a place of settlement was an essential part of both 'communities'' migratory histories; in economic terms and additionally Jews saw (or at least as represented in memory) the USA in a symbolic way as a better option for starting a life within a democratic and liberal country, a 'utopian' country with its population constructed and shaped by persecuted minorities and immigrants.

The myths of the Mother Country and the Promised Land were in part 'created' or transformed after migration to appeal to a wider audience. In the process of this myth-creation other less idealistic and more complicated reasons for migrating to Britain were concealed, simplified or gradually evolved and modified, many motivations generated by the economic and political environment of the groups. The creation of myths is a complex process and cannot be explained by simply one factor. Myths, once created, can become national and cultural scripts and thus become universal personal truths. For instance many second and third generation Jews believe that their grandparents arrived in Britain being directly affected by pogroms in Eastern Europe; this is true for many people but often the reasons to migrate were through fear of impending violence or the availability to get out of Eastern Europe cheaply, something migrants' descendents did not have

the option of.[1] However, pogroms and other forms of persecution were part of the collective and ethnic experience of Jews in Eastern Europe and therefore did affect many people, if not directly then certainly in terms of emotions and psychological trauma.

The familiar narrative of African-Caribbean migration involves the arrival to a country they had been brought up to believe was the Mother Country and subsequently being subjected to a multitude of types of racism and discrimination. Thereafter the 'typical' narrative progresses with migrants coming to grips with the realisation that British people knew next to nothing about the Caribbean and certainly did not view African-Caribbeans as a constituent of the British community. This life experience contributed to the formation of an autobiographical act that was both reflective upon the concept of Britain and her empire and upon the life they left behind in the Caribbean: the account is often one of disillusionment resulting in the notion of Britain as the Mother Country being brought to the fore in the narrative sequence. The narrative and cultural script in Jewish autobiography is dissimilar in numerous respects, it is usually one of little overt reflection upon the idea of Britain as the Promised Land, although this is accomplished indirectly by concentrating upon the terrors of the *Old World* and in the analysis of everyday life in Britain. As explained in Chapter One, the bulk of Jewish autobiographies were carried out by the second generation and although they concentrate upon the immigrant story (and will thus be examined in this chapter) their memories are not first hand. Yet these autobiographies do represent the cultural, generational myths of Jewish immigration.[2]

Yet for both African-Caribbeans and Jews the reasons for migrating to Britain were often different from those articulated in later memories as represented in the autobiographical act (it must be noted that it is difficult to divide actual reasons for migration from mythology, as they are intertwined). The autobiographical act involves a simplification of events, narrative constructs, and themes to portray a symbolic and also a consistent message that will often involve changing the 'reality' of events. With the aid of the 'third voice' the act will be a

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[1] David Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins: Ethnic Memory and the Experience of Migration', in Aubrey Newman and Stephen W.Massil (eds.), *Patterns of Migration, 1850 - 1914* (London, JHSE and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996).

[2] *Ibid.* However, David Cesarani did not explicitly state that his autobiographical examples were all second generation, thus his work represents the way immigrant narratives are remembered generationally but does not represent the first hand immigrant construction of mythology.

constructed memory based upon the autobiographical 'I' in conjunction with the interviewer, editor, publisher, the *realpolitics* of the contemporary sphere and the collective identities of the subject, whether they be class, ethnicity or gender specific. Thus within autobiographies of African-Caribbeans and Jews we see the descriptions of Britain, the expectations and reality, based upon all these indices and upon the experiences and eventual myths surrounding the positions of the groups within British society when creating their acts. One important example (which is the subject of Chapter Seven) found in Jewish memory today is a belief that Jews achieved success instantaneously and that Britain was a land where people could attain economic and other goals if they worked hard enough. This in turn leads to collective memories omitting individual stories of lost illusions about life in Britain. Alternatively, the declaring of these views (if they have been suppressed by others for so long, like much of ethnic minority history) can reshape a person's memory to prioritise memories out of proportion to their actual significance when they were experienced.

The idea of the USA as the Promised Land for many Jews will be analysed in the following two chapters, as the autobiographical acts of immigrants (unlike Britain, Jewish immigrants in America published autobiographies in English to a wide audience) juxtapositioned the *Old World* and *New World* in an explicit, linear and conflicting manner to portray America as *the Golden Medini*. These autobiographies were written in an environment of increasing nativist sentiment, an atmosphere that was also significantly exemplified in autobiography, in works by people like Henry Adams.[3] Both illustrate the use of narrative sequence to achieve political representation but why did Jewish immigrants to Britain not carry out these grand gestures of living in the Promised Land within the autobiographical act? Jewish migrants to Britain employed the Promised Land motif, just in a more concealed way than their counterparts in the USA.

This section explores the concepts and definitions of the Mother Country and Promised Land and how they were manifested when migrants first arrived in Britain. It looks at the position the myths are placed in within the narrative sequence, whether they are looked upon in disillusionment or in celebratory terms

[3] William Boelhower, 'The Making of Ethnic Autobiography in the United States', in Paul John Eakin (ed.), *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect* (Wisconsin and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

of their expectations being fulfilled. Jewish reflections on Britain as the *Frei Medini* of second choice and African-Caribbean silences in acknowledging the similar role America played in their migratory history will be examined. The 'realness' of the myths will be explored, in the way that actual beliefs about Britain (although in themselves constructions) influenced the expectations and corresponding realities found. Related myths will be explored in the way in which they are 'constructed' in correlation to the myths of the Promised Land and the Mother Country: the collective memories of Jews migrating to avoid the pogroms and conscription, the silence within some autobiographies of anti-Semitism encountered in Britain and for African-Caribbeans the idea of migrating to help reconstruct Britain. Of course these reasons played a large and significant part in the migratory push and pulls, but certain reasons were either remembered or forgotten, prioritised or concealed in order to create a collective memory for a particular British script, this is the use of myths as devices. Another device explored centres upon silences and articulations of memories of experiences in Britain. The level of shock many migrants experienced has led to a mythologisation about the migrants' previous life, everyday life in Britain and attitudes toward Britain. For example, some of the harsh experiences Jewish immigrants had of arriving and settling in Britain have been forgotten, partly because they were never told to the next generation, partly through insecurity and through future generations adopting a simplified narrative of Jewish arrival and success.

ii. The Mother Country and the Promised Land in the Autobiographical Act.

Although these concepts are associated they do have disparate meanings, symbolism and histories of construction. The Mother Country myth, in broad terms, is both symbolic and legal, and represents the particular history of Britain and its imperial legacy. Legally, the Mother Country was the metropole, which was inextricably linked to various colonies, meaning that all colonials were British citizens and were part of one large, albeit unequal, geographical 'family'. African-Caribbean migrants have repeatedly stressed the absolute centrality of the Mother Country idea within their upbringing and day-to-day life in the Caribbean, that they knew more about British history than people brought up within Britain. Ros Howells was interviewed as part of Mike and Trevor Phillips' work on the Black British experience post-1948, she concluded her testimony by stating 'We didn't

see there was any difference between Grenada and England. "There'll always be an England and England shall be free" used to be one of our school songs. ... Grenada was certainly part of England.'[4] When St. Lucians started migrating to Britain they would tell friends and relatives they were 'going up the mountain'; Britain was seen as that near to the Caribbean: geographically and psychologically.[5] Interviews and life history narratives resolutely demonstrate that African-Caribbeans, out of all the various New Commonwealth immigrants, were the least prepared for the actuality of Britain and subsequently the most disillusioned. For example, in a study carried out by Daniel Lawrence in the 1970s, it was found that in a sample population 14 percent of Indians, 36 percent of Pakistanis but only 3 percent of West Indians said they had found Britain as expected.[6] Within African-Caribbean collective memory, therefore, the more common reasons remembered for migration were during wartime to fight for the Mother Country, and post-war to help reconstruct Britain and earn money at the same time and to visit the African-Caribbeans' symbolic home. These motivations as will be shown have been given priority over other reasons in many of the autobiographical acts, chiefly in some of the more recently created ones (i.e. post-1998 Windrush celebrations) found in collective community based works.

In her autobiography the children's entertainer Floella Benjamin typifies the Mother Country myth: 'We were taught the British way, the three Rs - reading, writing and arithmetic – because it was considered to be the best education in the world. As we were colonized and ruled by Britain before the island became independent, all our books came from England and were precious to us. Each morning before schoolwork, we would have to sing 'God Save the Queen', 'Rule Britannia' and 'Land of Hope and Glory'. We were encouraged to feel proud that we were British, and even celebrated British memorial days like Remembrance Day.'[7] Referring to the stories she heard as a child, Benjamin later explained the

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[4] Ros Howells migrated from Grenada to Britain in 1951. She settled in South London and worked as a counsellor. Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, HarperCollins, 1998), p. 13. Note that Ros Howells recollects her feelings of Grenada being a *part* of England, not just a relation of England.

[5] Testimony from Mary Denys. Cited *in* Jonathon Green, *THEM: Voices from the Immigrant Community in Contemporary Britain* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1990), p. 21.

[6] Daniel Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives: A Study of Race Relations in Nottingham* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 41.

[7] Floella Benjamin, *Coming to England* (London, Pavilion, 1997), pp. 19-20.

role the Mother Country had in the decision for African-Caribbean migration. She stated:

> There was always talk of someone who had left the island, who had gone to England to be met with open arms. Fantastic stories of how life was wonderful and much money could be made, of how the islanders were wanted and needed to help Britain build herself up again in the years after the war, and how people could better themselves overnight. The street were said to be paved with gold. Life was far from unbearable in Trinidad but many people were tempted by these stories and couldn't resist the opportunity.[8]

Thus Benjamin, although referring to the Mother Country in idealistic and formulaic terminology ('streets paved with gold') also shows a divergent influencing factor for travelling to Britain, that of economic consideration.

Although Jewish migrants saw the *Golden Medini* as either Palestine (if not in terms of actual migratory reality then in terms of religious symbolism and/or ethnic identity) or the USA, the importance of the myth of the Promised Land for Britain has been understated and disregarded. Britain has been mythically represented as the second choice of destination, as a country for temporary migration (which it mostly was) and those who remained in Britain did so because of unscrupulous shipping agents or because they thought they had landed in America.[9] Ian Mikardo, who was a Labour MP and backbencher recalled in his 'memoir' the story of how his father, Morris was in London for four months before he discovered he was not in New York. Anticipating the reader's suspicion, he stated 'that sounds incredible, but it happened, not only to my father but to quite a number of other immigrants I got to know in my teens.'[10] However, those autobiographies that have reflected on Britain, even those who admit it was not their choice destination, use similar concepts of Britain as the land of the free, the land of history, democracy, and civilisation; either to confirm this myth or demonstrate the hypocrisies arising from the divergence between expectation and reality.

The Promised Land in Jewish migratory narratives is greatly influenced by the narratives written across the Atlantic, the assimilationist Old to New World autobiographies expressing love and gratitude to the new, this type of work is best

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[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
[9] For example, between 1889 and 1902 over 60% of Jewish immigrants who arrived in London actually continued their migration process, mainly to the United States. See V.D. Lipman, *A History of the Jews in Britain Since 1858* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1989), p. 45.
[10] Ian Mikardo, *Back-Bencher* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), p. 17.

exemplified in the work of the Jewish immigrant Mary Antin, who described her old and new life in the form of two separate births and was able to refer to her old self in the third person.[11] This Diasporic mythologising was not just one-sided, as exemplified in the popularity and 'canonisation' of the works of Israel Zangwell in America, in characterising and scripting the transnational immigrant experience.[12] Within Jewish immigrant autobiographies of Britain the American narrative is usually either interpreted in a way that separates Britain from America, the latter as an ideal of the new or alternatively one that juxtaposes the migratory histories of America and Britain into their personal stories. The Promised Land myth in Britain emerges in conjunction with other myths and is often tacitly brought into the act of remembering whilst ruminating on daily experiences while in Britain. For example, the myth of immediate economic success or the myth that Jews were always on friendly relations with a police force that was non-discriminatory and welcoming were stories that helped assign Britain as a Promised Land free from all types and veracities of persecution whilst designating Jews as model migrants.[13] Often 'everyday' autobiographies, particularly second generation ones like Charles Poulsen's and Cyril Spector's, counteract wider Jewish memory and highlight the difficulties Jews experienced in obtaining employment and accommodation, the problems of anti-Semitism and not being accepted into British society without having to assimilate and still being seen as 'the other'. However, many of these same people, whilst explaining these experiences were also unable to give up the idea of Britain as the *Frei/Golden Medini*. In this respect there is occasionally a similarity between autobiographies written by African-Caribbeans and Jews, although by the second generation there is a disparity between the two groups' autobiographical voices in that African-Caribbeans, facing institutional racism, not being accepted in Britain but not having the immediate cultural memory of the Caribbean (with the corresponding colonial education) have been less willing to accept the myths of Britain as the Mother Country.

The reasons for the migrations, although intrinsically mythologised, were particularly different for African-Caribbeans and Jews. Additionally, African-

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[11] See http://www.digital.library.upenn.edu/women/antin/land/land-0.html

[12] As David Cesarani mentioned, many immigrants on both sides of the Atlantic had read the works of Zangwell and thereafter agglomerated it into their own personal narrative. See Cesarani, 'The Myth of Origins', p. 252.

[13] See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

Caribbeans, at least initially in the mass migration, did not expect to live as a minority grouping and had no knowledge of the way in which they were going to be assigned as different and inferior. Thus the racism African-Caribbeans experienced was more shocking and there was an absence of a cultural, institutional framework that Jewish immigrants had for support and help. This comes through within the autobiographical act and is why the Mother Country mythology is talked about so much within the narrative, in its debunking as a belief had a profound psychological affect on many migrants. Migrants had to alter the way they viewed their whole lives and their national identity, which had never been overtly questioned when they lived within the colonies and Commonwealth countries, at least this is how the autobiographical act remembers African Caribbeans questioning their colonial upbringing. One example of this cultural shock can be found in language. African Caribbeans' particular dialect was seen in Britain as a negative, as not 'proper' English, particularly within the schooling system, whereas in the Caribbean the creole dialect was something that brought about feelings of pride. Institutional racism was found within schools where children were made to feel unintelligent when they spoke in creole and were often designated as 'educationally Subnormal'.[14] Floella Benjamin poignantly recalled this aspect of the wider African Caribbean experience. She stated:

> One day the teacher who took us for English asked me to read a passage from a book, so I stood up and read in my most lyrical Trinidadian accent - but in mid-flow she shouted, "Stop, you guttersnipe! If you want to stay in my class and be understood by everyone you will learn to speak the Queen's English." I was devastated. I was being told to give up the one special thing I had that made me feel good at school.[15]

This section endeavours not only to investigate and compare the way in which the myths are represented in autobiographical memory and the autobiographical act, but also to understand the reasons why these myths have developed in collective and generational memory. The autobiographies are used as the principal tools in this understanding and thus this section does not prioritise

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[14] The designation of many Black children as Educationally Sub Normal was certainly a trend in schools in the 1970s and one of the most important aspects of Institutional Racism within the educational system. There have been many protests against racism and the ESN system, from grass roots activists and from parents. See, Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black child in Schools in Britain* (London, New Beacon Books, 1971).

[15] Benjamin, *Coming to England*, p. 100.

historical 'facts and figures' outside of the texts to validate the autobiographical memories of the particular myths. In other words a person's memory does not have to be false because historical facts do not fit their remembering. Even if the person's memory does not represent 'how it happened', the way they have remembered their history indicates the importance of specific experiences of migration to the wider community. This aim, a grasp of the significance of autobiographical memory, is in many ways a difficult and complex one. As David Rubin has argued, a complete understanding of autobiographical memory requires a knowledge of memory processes in the individual and a knowledge of the societal influences on the individual (both in themselves and over time), a knowledge of intact and impaired memories and a knowledge of cognition and effect.[16] Although Rubin is writing as a psychologist he has articulated the necessity of understanding historical and cultural forces if one is to analyse autobiographical memory in its entirety. Likewise the historian has to have a grasp of psychology, literary and cultural theory in order to analyse autobiographical memory and autobiography in any comprehensive way.

iii. The Autobiographical Act and the Transmission of Ethnic and Collective Mythology.

This section analyses the autobiographical acts of Maurice Levinson, Floella Benjamin, Linda Grant, Ernest Marke, Wallace Collins and Louis Teeman (authors of autobiographies) along with several others who have taken part in collective life history and oral history projects. Many of the collective autobiographical works and the oral history interviews were produced specifically to analyse some of the themes examined in this chapter: expectation and arrival, employment and housing and the effects of racism. They were often written in an explicit 'third voice' with the narrator or editor posing direct questions of this nature to them, thus manipulating their implicit memory process.[17] Therefore this

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[16] David C. Rubin, *Autobiographical Memory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 3.
[17] Implicit memory can be compared to Ebbinghaus' definition of unconscious memory, in that these memories are not intentionally remembered but can influence a person's behaviour and actions. The example this chapter has chosen is not a characteristically implicit memory as the act of oral history involves conscious remembering and the person remembering will always be constructing her/his memories while recollecting. However, the editor's influence can change some of the implicit memory processes a person will usually have. For implicit memory, see D.L. Nelson, 'Implicit Memory', in Peter Morris and Michael Gruneberg (eds.), *Theoretical Aspects of Memory* (London, Routledge, 1994), pp. 130-167.

chapter concentrates on these themes of migration and arrival but it also explores how the respondents relate to these pre-determined themes, whether or not they try to escape from the conventions of oral history precepts. The autobiographies, particularly the Jewish ones (as they are second generation and do not have a migratory story to tell first hand) are interested in the passage of time, from youth to adulthood, in the life story and its temporal landmarks (as outlined by Robinson): school, work, marriage, friendship, etc. They have as a central theme ethnic identity (which is what separates them from many other autobiographies) and this often includes commenting on or re-'remembering' their parents' (or, with more recent autobiographies, grandparents') migratory stories.

Although a few of the autobiographies were written in contemporaneous with the mass migratory period of their 'groups' (for Jews approximately 1880-1914 and for African-Caribbeans 1948-1970) most of them (particularly the oral history) were collated and produced when the immigrants had lived in the country for several decades; this time gap is not only a result of the process of memory (that one recounts experiences sometimes after several decades have passed) but also the result of the trend in life history collating, that it is a fairly recent phenomenon, as explained in the introductory chapter of this thesis. Three of the autobiographies stand in contrast to this phenomenon; Ernest Marke, Wallace Collins and Maurice Levinson all write their autobiographies when the genre or the established audience respondent to immigrant autobiography was not firmly established. Therefore the conventions of audience participation (including the participation of the oral historian and the academic) and the knowledge of what the audience expects from an immigrant memory was not so unambiguously obvious for the autobiographical voice. Lastly all three autobiographers wrote their works as a part of their life experience, where writing was something they took up as a leisure pursuit or a form of expression.

The diversity in mythologies surrounding both the Mother Country and the Promised Land from different periods in the same individual and within different collective migratory time periods becomes apparent and reveals the process of how myths are re-formulated and re-created by the same individual at different points in their life (particularly when analysing Maurice Levinson and Ernest Marke) and how the political and social environment the migrants found themselves in, including anti-immigrant sentiment, helped shape a particular myth that was in

some ways a refutation of anti-alien charges. The time period in terms of the mythology of success will show a deviation between Jewish and African-Caribbean 'collective' memory in that the latter groups narrative has increasingly shown the discrepancy between the British myth of tolerance and the reality, which led to economic exclusion and institutional racism whereas the Jewish narrative (in terms of collective memory) has largely kept the myth of Old to New World liberalism. However Jewish autobiographies, particularly those everyday, working class autobiographies have shown the myth of Britain, as a land free from persecution was at least in part a construction. But there has still been little reflection within Jewish narratives about how their parents viewed Britain, whether their expectations were fulfilled. Even if reflection has occurred there has been a corresponding uncertainty of their parents' viewpoints (particularly their individual histories of Eastern Europe) – subjects often not talked about within the family. Again, Levinson's narrative is an example deviating from these commonalities in Jewish memory; he knew in a detailed manner the specific reasons for his family's migration, as his mother was psychologically immersed with her experiences of anti-Semitism. In contrast to other Jewish parents who kept quite about life in Russia, Levinson's mother passed on her families history in specific detail and intensity to her son.

This chapter analyses the narrative structure of how the mythologies are presented within the autobiographical act as this sheds light onto how the reality of everyday life in Britain has been interpreted from a standpoint in time. Are the myths represented in a 'positive' light by, for instance, implicitly or explicitly showing how life had improved after migrating to a new country? Are the myths talked about whilst describing life in the old country? i.e. Britain was something one felt and thought about a lot before migrating. Do *the life*, or *the self*, in terms of the experiences a person has had throughout their lifetime, affect the way the previous ideas the person had surrounding Britain are recollected or written down, or are their previous opinions too difficult to permanently discard or revise? How do the myths manifest themselves within structured or edited testimony, within the structure of the compilation book and within the titles of books and autobiographies?

In terms of ethnic memory can there be an unambiguously defined and homogeneous autobiographical voice surrounding the experiences of migration? Is

it always the case that African-Caribbean experiences are represented as a journey from hope to disillusionment and Jewish experiences as persecution into freedom? What role does the individual have over the collective voice in analysing experiences of personal and collective migration? For example Sam King (whose autobiographical acts were used in the *Windrush* celebrations and whose autobiography was published in the same year) described the migrant experience as one where there were barriers for Black people but that often an individual's personal strength could break through these barriers. His personal experience of success as Mayor of Southwark therefore led him to accept the Mother Country myth much more than other African-Caribbean autobiographers and to collectively generalize the immigrant experience as a whole.[18]

[18] Sam King, *Climbing Up The Rough Side of the Mountain* (London, Minerva, 1998).

Chapter Two. Myths, Silence and Autobiographical Contexts: The Autobiographical Memory of Ernest Marke and Maurice Levinson

2.1. Introduction.

This chapter examines the autobiographical acts of Ernest Marke and Maurice Levinson. In both individuals' autobiographical voices no emphatic or direct statements concerning the Mother Country and the Promised Land arise. In this way Marke's autobiographical acts provide very different conceptions of the Mother Country than that often seen in more recent autobiographies by African and African-Caribbean people. This chapter analyses the workings and reasons behind some of these silences and shows that they can correspond to the emotional silences within the general schemata of his autobiographical voice. Although the language of and direct reference to the Mother Country and the Promised Land are not explicitly evident within the works of both Marke and Levinson, this term is nevertheless important when communicating some of their experiences and memories. Additionally it is important to analyse a text that does not necessarily conform to pre-existing assumptions surrounding the language and terminology that an African, African-Caribbean or Jewish migrant might use when recalling their migratory experience. It is for this reason that Ernest Marke and Maurice Levinson are important when assessing these myths as they represent unique voices within their respective ethnic groups and within autobiographical memory, in terms of the processes of production and the reasons they initiated their autobiographies (as part of their life experience and not influenced by the growth in popularity of *life history*).

2.2. Ernest Marke.

Ernest Marke, a Sierra Leonian migrated to Britain in 1917 when he was fourteen years old. He wrote two autobiographies (or rather updated his first one by changing one line and adding a chapter); *Old Man Trouble* in 1975 and updated it ten years later during his retirement years. The title of the autobiography changed with this update to *In Troubled Waters: Memoirs of Seventy Years in England.*[1] This chapter uses the second edition of Marke's autobiography. Marke has also

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[1] Ernest Marke, *Old Man Trouble* (London, Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1975) and Ernest Marke, *In Troubled Waters: Memoirs of my Seventy Years in England!* (London, Karia, 1986).

been the subject of a whole range of televised oral history projects focusing on the Black British experience. This chapter also refers to his testimony used within the Pebble Mill series *Black Britain* shown on BBC 2 in 1990.

Two important factors must be considered when comparing Marke's autobiography to other instances of African-Caribbean memories: Marke's life history is an early example of African-Caribbean and African migration (he arrived in Britain during the First World War) and his migration was not influenced by a large scale recruitment drive from the metropole (therefore even before analysing his work it is not to be expected that the same intensity of anticipation surrounding the Mother Country will be seen). These disparities certainly shed light onto why his memories deviate from other African and African Caribbean memories in that not only was he part of a different migratory episode in history but the formulation of his memories are a precursory to the ethnic and collective mythologising that has recently been displayed post-1998, the *Windrush* anniversary.

Within his autobiography Marke focused on his life experiences of stowing away to England and his subsequent life history of work on ships, gambling and running clubs, crocusing (quack doctoring) and of dealing directly with the brutal realities of racism in British and Southern American society. Although the title of the autobiography refers to his experiences in England, in the capacity of working on several ships Marke travelled to many different countries and lived in the USA for a few years working in prohibition rackets. In fact at one point Marke considered applying for US citizenship. This point is significant, Marke did not view England as the only place he wished to travel to or reside in and only decided to settle permanently in England after experiencing personal difficulties in America as a result of his involvement with prohibition rackets.

In terms of the processes of production and the discursive elements of the writing, Ernest Marke's autobiography is markedly different from most other ethnic minority life history; not only did it represent, as we have seen, one of the earliest examples of minority life writing, but in terms of content Marke focused on himself, the individual (although not *the self*) instead of the community or the family. This latter point needs expanding more as although the work focused on Marke's life, with almost no reference to close family and friends (unless their lives or actions impinged on the particular narrative Marke is recalling) his remembering did not focus on *the self* in terms of introspection and identity. For example, he

mentioned his first daughter by his first marriage only briefly and not even by name. In this way Marke's work is a mixture of autoautography and 'memoir' but it is not an autophylography (if one subscribes to these formulaic descriptions).[2] Marke placed himself as centripetal, a master of his own life but did not focus on the Freudian self, the ego or the subconscious. The lack of introspection is particularly relevant for how the workings of the colonial link between Sierra Leone and England are posited within the text, as often in other autobiographies it is in the memoirists' introspection and self-reflecting that the Mother Country idea comes to fruition. Alternatively, ideas of the Mother Country emerge when autobiographers' memories are transmitted into the collective, in terms of family and island histories.

The nature of remembering within any text is carried out not only by cognitive recall within an implicit way (as 'free flowing' memory retrieval that one may perhaps see in unedited oral history) but within the selecting, re-writing and editing processes. The memories evident in the finished product have as much to do with the chosen structure of the autobiography as with memory *per se*. Marke's autobiography is essentially a tale of adventure, a story of *life-as-lived*, rather than the story of *the self*. Thus at the discursive level it has as its central component the figurative, an autobiography that recalls events, incidents and actions rather than abstract imaginings, feelings and thoughts. However the autobiography is much more than a tale of adventure; it is most certainly an early example of the newly formulated genre of immigrant autobiography. The central theme of the book is the migratory narrative, providing the traditional diachronic structure with a deeper meaning and significance. Marke wrote his autobiography (from our understanding of the last chapter) with the specific purpose of passing on his experiences, as a migrant and a Black person, to younger generations (similar to Floella Benjamin's aim). It is in his concentration of his life as a Black person in England that the Mother Country myth is evident within the sub text of the narrative, within the stories and incidents of his life that he has not only remembered autobiographically but has situated within his account.

Marke initiated his autobiography with an introduction consisting of one paragraph. In this starting point he immediately introduced the theme of collective,

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[2] See Chapter One of this thesis for a description of these terms and ideas.

generational and ethnic identity by concentrating on skin colour as a defining theme in his and previous generations experiences. This paragraph is in the form of a distant recollection that stood out sharply in Marke's memory, a tale of two men talking about the difficulties in the world if you are Black. Thus the act of explicit generational remembering is posited within the text straight away, that the experiences Marke has in his life and is about to recall are part of and typify a wider historical process. He stated:

> When I was a little boy back home I once saw two old men in rags leaning cross-legged against a wall, each with an old clay-pipe stuck in his mouth.
> 'Man,' said one to the other, 'you can't run away from trouble no more 'an you can run away from death...sometimes you get a li'l break, mos' times you get none.'
> The other commented sadly, 'Yes, dat much is true, it's all in de Book. What will be will be. But when you's *Black* de trouble gets mountin' 'igher an' 'igher all de time an you wonder when it's gonna stop.'
> I didn't understand what they meant. But I knew that I also was black, and I wondered ...[3]

Immediately the reader recognises that Marke was not originally from England although no indication was given about his country of origin. Another instant reflection the reader gains corresponds to the main central theme of the book, separate from but intertwined with and axiomatic to the narratives of migration, ethnicity and adventure: *trouble*: *Old Man Trouble* or *In Troubled Waters*. The conversation between the two old men is directly related to Marke's 'future' troubles. He stated at the time he did not understand exactly what they meant but the conversation was still something significant for him to remember and to wonder about.

When first brought up the colour Black is placed in italics. Marke's experiences are represented as predominantly skin colour based throughout the autobiography, he saw the phenomenon of racism (in part due to his experiences of living in several countries) as not exclusively pertaining to Britain or the British and when found in Britain not just in relation to nationality and xenophobia, but as institutionally and hierarchically colour based. This positing of colour as central to racism within the West is relevant to how the concept of the Mother Country materialises within his narrative in that he is not only disillusioned with Britain but

[3] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, vii.

with 'white society' as a whole. Often the tales he recalled about racism in Britain are those involving American GIs. In fact racism carried out by American troops stationed in Britain led him (or at least as recollected and undoubtedly simplified in his autobiographical memory) to avoid volunteering for the Second World War.

After the retelling of the conversation between the two men Marke used the story as a justification and apologia for what he was to narrate, that 'if, in my youth, the inhabitants of this country had been as tolerant in their attitudes towards blacks as they are today there would have been no cause for my violent actions in the past. Before passing judgment put yourself in my position'. The rest of the paragraph continued in apologia mode, telling the reader that he was not an important person and that everything written within his autobiography was true.[4] Often within 'everyday' autobiographies the author iterates the belief that their story is true, indicating both an acknowledgement of the instability of memory and a belief in the 'truth' and uniqueness of their particular memory workings. Additionally by telling the audience to believe their memory indicates that the autobiographer assumes that others will not believe their story. This belief occasionally comes across in Jewish and working class autobiography, and certainly much more than in 'traditional' autobiography or autobiography of notables and politicians.

Positioning both of these thoughts at the very beginning of the autobiography is significant; Marke was playing with the notion of memory and establishing the concept of ethnic and generational memory in his text. This memory, or meta-memory, does not explicitly persist in his autobiographical voice, unlike the works of Maurice Levinson and Linda Grant (whose act is explored in the next chapter). In terms of this thesis, the psychological concept meta-memory will be employed to define the process of consciously being aware of your autobiographical act as a product of the function of memory, in general terms it relates to 'our beliefs about the ways in which our memories function and the ways to make the best use of them.'[5] As the following chapter shows, Linda Grant's understanding of her mother's memory processes and also of memory as a theory leads her to directly challenge or explore both personal, generational and ethnic mythologies she has

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[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Peter E. Morris and Michael Gruneberg, 'The Major Aspects of Memory', in Peter E. Morris and Michael Gruneberg (eds.), *Theoretical Aspects of Memory* (London, Routledge, 1994), p.32.

encountered within her life. Harold Rosen's autobiography of growing up in the Jewish East End of the 1930s contains a whole chapter centred on the Battle of Cable Street; this chapter is autobiographical but also deconstructs the history of Cable Street, terming it a 'necessary myth'. Thus Rosen's memory is likewise a meta-memory.[6] Levinson's meta-memory is different from Grant's and Rosen's in that it is not a self-knowing form, but is equally made up of constructed and implicit memory functions. Levinson's meta-memory is more of a context-dependent form, like Marke's in that the 'everyday' reminds Levinson of wider historical experiences and these are juxtapositioned as being part of the same memory formulation within the narrative structure and text.

Although Marke's autobiography is essentially diachronic and temporally referenced there are a few instances where stories of significance to Marke appear achronical. The first instance of this occurred at the beginning of the first chapter. Marke is travelling on a ship that has just been torpedoed. This story is important in the general schema, as it is represents events leading up to Marke's first arrival in England. This first section (consisting of just over one page) is written in an altered style from the rest of the autobiography, in almost an impersonal story-like narrative but with the autobiographical 'I' represented on the second line of the chapter. It is only at the end of this short section that we find out Marke is a stowaway trying to travel to Britain (specifically England), although we still do not know where he is from and if he intends to stay in Britain permanently. In this section Marke remembered his feelings and emotions when he was in the sea thinking he was about to die. This recollection is particularly significant as it is one of the rare instances that Marke depicted his feelings in an abstract manner. He stated 'so this is the end, I thought. I'd always longed to see Great Britain: London, Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the Bloody Tower and all those other places I'd read about; now I was never going to see them.'[7]

Whether these are the actual thoughts that went through Marke's mind at the time is circumspect. Flashbulb memories can often occur at times of trauma, but these are usually represented by actions and not by feelings and thoughts.[8]

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[6] Harold Rosen, *Are You Still Circumcised? East End Memories* (Nottingham, Five Leaves Publications, 1999).
[7] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, p. 10.
[8] Brown and Kulik coined the concept of a 'flashbulb' memory (vivid memories which represent significant turning points) in 1977 in what Martin A. Conway has described as a 'landmark paper,

Additionally a memory so direct and concise occurring at a time before potential death does not quite ring 'true'. However, that Marke remembered these feelings above all others is particularly relevant when assessing his views and expectations of Britain; that he was primarily (or at least remembered being) upset at not seeing Britain. The historical and symbolic images conjured up about Britain in this passage are a feature of other African and African-Caribbean memories and recollections. For example Wallace Collins' first experiences of Britain are, in his characteristic style that is almost polar to Marke's, a narrative of introspective thoughts and feelings surrounding stereotypically English culturally references such as Trafalgar Square and Sherlock Holmes.[9] These images are that of the Mother Country; the historic and symbolic, representations that capture the essence of what colonial citizens were taught about Britain and, more specifically, England. These cultural references have been recalled in other autobiographies and oral history interviews, where people have reflected upon their understanding of Britain as a place of tradition and history, of their history and the histories that they were taught at school and were later forcibly disconnected and alienated from when arriving in Britain. As one African-Caribbean migrant, Dudley Thompson, articulated in his oral history testimony 'after Buckingham Palace comes Heaven, that's the order of things you see what I mean.'[10] This idea is explored in the following chapter, particularly when Wallace Collins' autobiography is analysed.

One way in which concepts and ideas are often recalled in autobiographical memory is by context-dependent memory processes.[11] For example the act of Marke recalling his feelings about Britain is axiomatic to his being in a deadly situation in the oceans. He only reflected about feelings concerning Britain when incidents and events occurred that related directly to British society. This is certainly not how thought processes always function in everyday life. Most people

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which set the scene for the study of vivid memories.' Martin A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction* (Milton Keynes, Open University, 1990), p. 61. This concept has a controversial place within the ranks of psychology, however it is useful as a concept in autobiographical theory. Perhaps as a memory process, it had flaws based on its oversimplification and biological premises, but autobiographers in their acts and constructions of remembering certainly describe some of their memories in this defiant and simplified way.

[9] Wallace Collins' autobiography is assessed in the next chapter.

[10] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, HarperCollins, 1998), p. 45.

[11] Context dependent memory 'implies that when events are represented in memory, contextual information is stored along with memory targets; the contexts can, therefore use memories containing that contextual information.' S.M. Smith, 'Theoretical Principles of Context-Dependent Memory, in Morris and Gruneberg (eds.), *Theoretical Aspects of* Memory, p. 168.

reflect on the idea of the Mother Country (when recalling their memories in autobiographical narrative at least) in a form of context-dependent memory, where memories of bad experiences in England, of being told to leave a church or seeing a 'no blacks' sign for accommodation, leads people to reflect on their overall feelings of the Mother Country as a myth, idea and reality. Floella Benjamin's autobiographical memory is a good example of context-dependent memories of the Mother Country myth. When remembering her first experience of racial abuse in a British school in the form of name calling she recalled 'They were words which told me that I was different from them and that they felt my kind shouldn't be in their country. I looked at them, confused and baffled like a trapped, helpless creature. What was "my kind" and why shouldn't I be in the country I was brought up to love? The land of hope and glory, mother of the free. ...'[12] In his autobiography, Marke often recalled various tales of racism and discrimination but unlike Benjamin's without the usually corresponding deliberations on wider questions of colonial identity. However one can say that in his introduction Marke has already performed this narrative questioning by relaying that the tales to unravel in his work are the result of prejudice against Black people.

The first instance Marke had of the relevance of skin colour in Britain in terms of a clearly remembered incident was when he was working as an alter boy in a Roman Catholic church in Liverpool. After being rescued by the crew of a British ship Marke lived with the steward and his family for a short while in Wavertree, a prosperous suburb of Liverpool, where he started attending a school and church. On one occasion at mass a woman fainted in one of the pews, claiming she had seen a devil at the alter. Marke reflected upon this event in an obviously disillusioned way. He stated 'There were very few negroes in England in those days and there were certainly none at Wavertree. This was the first time that woman saw me and I imagine I was the first black man she had ever seen. But why a devil? Why not an angel or a ghost? I suppose in her mind only devils were black. After a few weeks of this schooling and alter-serving business I began to get restless again.'[13] Although this is just a short reflection on the incident it is again one of the few instances Marke gave of his thoughts and feelings rather than actions. It is, as seen

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[12] Benjamin, *Coming to England* (London, Pavilion, 1997), pp. 81-82. This autobiography is analysed in the next chapter.
[13] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, p. 14.

in *Childhood* theory (explained later in the chapter) an adult interpretation of a childhood experience but unlike most *Childhood*'s Marke did not relay what went through his mind as if he was revisiting his thought processes as that child. Marke left the reader to guess and expand on his feelings, he analyses his thoughts up to a certain point and then continued back to his usual discursive narrative. Whereas Benjamin reflected upon her school experience to put across the hypocritical nature of the Mother Country, using evocative terminology such as 'the land of hope and glory', Marke ended his analysis by recalling his subsequent 'restlessness'.

Marke's analysis should not be used as an example of faltering or missing memory when compared to Benjamin's. The comparison between the two autobiographical acts is significant as it points to the variation in ethnic memories; that there is not just one migrant response set down in autobiographical memory. Nonetheless Marke's memory is far less formulaic or conventional than many other African-Caribbean autobiographical reflections on the processes of migration, including Benjamin's. Is Marke directly minimising the pain, hurt and other emotions experienced after incidents like this in which his skin colour singles him out from others? Alternatively is Benjamin's memory, as set down in writing, a direct construct using terminology and emotions from wider African-Caribbean mythology? Did she really at that time in the school playground reflect upon the 'land of hope and glory' or is this a reflection and reconstruction of her adult mind at the time of writing? The differences between the narratives do not have to be problematic. As stated earlier Marke's narrative is particularly unique in African-Caribbean writing. Even if his voice was not unique, every autobiographer relates, reconstructs and captures within their writing expectations of the Mother Country in different ways.

After Marke began to get 'restless' he stowed away on various ships, firstly the *SS Gabon* bound for West Africa. After being discovered and put to work the 'Old Man' (the captain) eventually resolved to drop off Marke at Freetown, his hometown. Marke firstly considered this good news, it meant the 'Old Man' might change his mind again and allow Marke to continue on the voyage. However, Marke then considered that it might not be a bad idea to stay at home for a while. The reason he left home (described in-between the narrative of being torpedoed and rescued) involved his life being made intolerable after not being forgiven for an incident three years previously when he was eleven in which he was involved in a

fight and retaliated by stabbing a boy with a pen knife. He considered that people would stop calling him 'devil's angel' and his mother might also forgive him (this is one of the few times Marke mentioned his mother in the autobiography). The reason Marke felt they might be able to forgive is that jealously and admiration would ensue from his adventures and specifically from his time in England. In this way England is posited as a mythical place that would make his family and friends forgive and forget the worst of crimes.[14]

The question of fighting for the Mother Country exemplifies the changing relationship Marke has with Britain. After returning to Britain via America, Marke volunteered to fight in the British army in the First World War. After experiencing positive relations with the white people in his barracks he then, along with many other Black seamen, faced post-war racism culminating in the 1919 riots.[15] Although Marke acknowledged that the decision to volunteer was spontaneous and mainly due to his liking of a brass band involved in recruiting, he still remembered the posters of Lord Kitchener and identifying with the patriotic call 'Your Country Needs You'.[16] Interestingly, in Marke's oral history testimony this specific reason is prioritised more than in his autobiography. The racism of the post-war situation makes many of Marke's associates bitter about having served in a war that they later see as only to help the white man. Marke did not reflect on whether he agreed or disagreed with some of these opinions and simply put them in conversational quotation marks. However, certainly by the time of the Second World War Marke had become disillusioned enough by his experiences to refuse to volunteer for a conflict he considered to be irrelevant to him. This decision is made in direct result of being racially abused by a group of American GIs stationed in Britain. He recalled 'I had just been called up for the army. Now I decided they would have to come and get me. "Let them fight the bloody war themselves," I told myself angrily. "It's a white man's war and I'm having none of it." '[17] This is symbolic of the pattern of autobiographical memory as set down in writing in that a pattern is made representing Marke's eventual education of what life in Britain would be like. It represents a mimetic structure in that no clues about Marke's subsequent refusal to serve in the Second World War were given at the time of his experience in the

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[15] See Chapter Six of this thesis for an analysis of Marke's memories of these riots.
[16] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, p. 24.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

First World War, as set down in writing (a key difference between autobiographical memory and autobiographical memory as written down in autobiography).

In Marke's memories of volunteering in the First World War there is a minor but significant discrepancy between the oral history testimony and the autobiography. Marke's latter recollections screened on television have more in common with the traditional narrative of volunteering for the Mother Country. Marke recalled 'I was standing with a friend in Liverpool and I saw a troop of soldiers marching by so I turned round back to my friend Tommy Macauley and said 'eh we'd better join the army, cos after all there was a lot of sign Kitcheners pointing his finger at everybody 'Your King and Country Want You' and we considered ourselves, well that the country's our country and the kings our king...'[18] Thus in Marke's television narrative there is no mentioning of how Marke got swept away to join the army primarily because of his love of the brass band music being played by the military band. Television editing processes have a particular significant role in the creation of the autobiographical voice, there is a 'third voice' far more pervasive than in usual oral history, but a voice that is far more hidden unless one sees the editing process in action or the unedited script. In Marke's case one role of the editing process may have been to convey the Mother Country ideal to a general public ignorant of the significance and importance of the Mother Country link with the colonies. Thus, although it is not clear, Marke's reasons to volunteer for the First World War were probably simplified in order to prioritise his responding to the patriotic call to arms. In a similar vein one can see the nature of the changing autobiographical voice as a result of the collaborative process of television in the 1981 series on Leeds Jewry.[19] The director Alan Kassell, who automatically focused on the narrative he wanted the respondent to articulate, helped to simplify one respondent's multifaceted answer, eventually leading to a very different autobiographical act. This brief excerpt of the script is one example of this process:

Alan	Why did you want to come to England. Why did you want to leave Russia. Say I wanted ...
Collins	I wanted to leave Russia because I thought I find better – that's all

[18] Testimony of Ernest Marke, *Black Britain* (Pebble Mill, BBC 2, 1990).
[19] Allan Kassell Papers, Acc. 3954, West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds, *Jews of Leeds* script, Film Roll 13, Ninety One Take One, p. 29.

Alan	Just say I got married here and had a family.
Collins	I got married here and I had a family – I had a son and a daughter.
Alan	Just tell me about – just say I met my husband here and we got married and I have made my life here and so on ...
Collins	Well I met my husband because I lived here you see so I met him and we arranged to get married and I found out it's better than Russia. Russia is not so marvellous place so I settled here.
Alan	And you had a family
Collins	Yes my family were a daughter and a son
Alan	Say and after getting married I had a family
Collins	After I got married I had a family – I had, the first one was a son and the second one was a daughter
Alan	And now I've got
Collins	And now I've got three great grandchildren, two great grandchildren from my son and one great grandchild from my
Daughter	You've got two grandchildren

Thus, the final version of Collins reasons for migrating and staying in Britain is simplified to family priorities, that she had established roots in Britain, rather than the reason she seemed to want to prioritise, that of the harsh economic situation in Russia. Additionally, people change their memories without prompting by producers and editors. Marke may have internally edited and transformed some of his memories in order to fit into a collective Black voice.

In a *Windrush* anniversary edition of the post-colonial journal *Kunapipi*, George Lamming reflected upon the emotional and psychological paradoxes that emerged when colonial migrants entered Britain and had subsequent unexpected and/or terrible experiences. He argued that:

> the experience of migration here presents an interesting paradox and it is a paradox which is at the heart of my book *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) because West Indians were arriving in England with a very strong idea of England and that idea granted by imperial tutelage had a much more powerful influence on many of them – than their experience of the actual reality – which came out later in *The Lonely Londoners* amongst men who suffered all the hardships of being in Britain but still speak with this affection of not being able to leave the old Britain. It is an aspect of the colonial experience which goes much deeper than its economic relation.[20]

[20] There is a similarity here with some Jewish autobiographies in that anti-Semitism and general disappointments in Britain do not get in the way of the continued idea of a mythical liberal Britain. George Lamming, 'The Coldest Spring in Fifty Years: Thoughts on Sam Selvon and London',

Marke indirectly showed evidence of this paradoxical mixture whilst at the end of the British forces of law. Marke experienced severe racism at the hands of the police in his early days of being in England. In 1921 he was attacked and physically assaulted by un-uniformed policemen who subsequently framed him on charges of attempted murder. Marke, defending himself, was found not guilty. He reflected on the fact that there were good and bad in all spheres of life including the police force but that within the court of law in Britain one would always be treated fairly.[21] Yet we discover later in his autobiography about the comments from the judge Sir Bertram Watson who stated that he would, if he had his way, deport Marke. Watson's comments angered him, he replied in his mind the fact he was a British subject (this is one of the first times he talked about his nationality, in the form of his colonial link with Britain).[22] Why did he talk of the unbiased nature of the court system earlier in the autobiography when his autobiographical memory attests to contradictory experiences? Is this an example of Marke unable to give up the idea of the traditional moral worthiness of the British court system? Wallace Collins autobiography indicates this complexity even more, although it is not a characteristic of African-Caribbean everyday autobiography in general. In variance Jewish autobiographers are far less likely to give up, or alter their opinion, of the myths of Britain, this is the case even for second generation autobiographers looking back on their parents lives.

The underlying meta-narrative permeating Marke's work is that there is a lesson to learn from his life story. This lesson is made more explicit during the last sections of his work, where after having an adventurous lifestyle he settled down as a boiler worker and then entered his retirement years. This message occurred in the final chapter of his autobiography (written specifically for the revised edition) where he began writing political stories and in these stories his principles and views were expressed forthrightly for the first time. During retirement he had more time to think and reflect, his work demonstrated this process as the autobiography changed style drastically into a description of his thoughts rather than actions, now focusing on *the self* instead of the *life-as-lived*. Marke performed an assessment of

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Kunapipi: Journal of Post-Colonial Writing, The Windrush Commemorative Issue: West Indians in Britain: 1948-1998, Volume 20, Number 1, 1998, p. 5. Not italicised in text.

[21] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, p. 61.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

his life that is characteristic of autobiography in that his political writings served the same function as if reflecting back on his life and achievements. The same silences surrounding the Mother Country also occurred at this point in his writing, in that what the reader may expect of an immigrant (particularly those from the colonies or the Commonwealth) autobiography, an assessment of the migration experience, does not occur. Marke does not look back on his roots in Sierra Leone, whether he regrets the decision to live in England or does not reflect on himself as being part of a wider phenomenon of Black migration. He does not wonder about what became of his parents or friends and does not tell the reader about whether or not he has had any contact with his family at any point in his life. Again, there may be a problem in terming these characteristics 'silences' as this pre-supposes that Marke's voice is 'abnormal' and perhaps missing something. However, it is significant that Marke does not reflect on being a migrant in Britain at the end of his work. Further reasons why Marke is silent on the Mother Country will become evident in the next chapter, when an exploration of other (African-Caribbean and Jewish) autobiographers is carried out.

The next autobiographical voice analysed; that of Maurice Levinson shows the same silences on concepts of migration and memory. However, his work provides far more revealing memories relating to concepts and experiences of nationality, persecution and suffering – these memories reveal Levinson's attitudes and experiences of Britain as a symbol and reality.

2.3. Maurice Levinson.

Maurice Levinson, a Russian Jewish immigrant who came to Britain as a young child, has written various works. Much of his writing is autobiographical but only two works can be described as strictly autobiographies: *The Trouble With Yesterday* (hereafter *TWY*) and *The Woman from Bessarabia* (hereafter *WFB*).[23] The former work was Levinson's first attempt to write any piece of literature, thereafter followed his novels and 'autobiographical works' about his experience as a taxi driver and subsequently his autobiography with his mother as central protagonist (which makes this work fall short of Lejeune's definitional pre-requisite).

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[23] Maurice Levinson, *The Trouble With Yesterday* (London, Peter Davies, 1946) and Maurice Levinson, *The Woman From Bessarabia* (London, Secker & Warburg Limited, 1964).

In both autobiographies Levinson wrote about his childhood, his relationship with his mother and his day-to-day life experiences including how he felt about and dealt with anti-Semitism and fascism. In fact both pieces of work are almost analogous, they include identical themes of his life in a similar temporal sequence but there are also divergences, the most obvious being the different stages of his life when writing, and the examination of the text becomes very interesting when they do differ. Levinson concentrates most of his memories in both autobiographies on his formative years in a self-reflective manner, unlike Marke's his act combines both the *life-as-lived* and *the self.*

TWY was Levinson's earliest attempt at writing generally. His later autobiography was written after his mother, the foremost influence in his life, had died and he had the time and inclination to be more reflective upon his life and himself. The nature of his second autobiography positioned his mother as the central protagonist without it becoming purely biographical. This happened as his mother's life was primarily interpreted in terms of the manner in which Levinson thought about her and analysed and responded to her (likewise for this reason Linda Grant's work is also autobiographical). Levinson's second autobiography was written when the author had a more refined literary practice, having previously completed other works including his first autobiography (which was almost certainly used to test his memory for his second).

In some respects Levinson and Marke fit into different genres. Levinson focused a large part of his work on his early formative life in the method of a typical *Childhood* (*Jugenderinnerungen*), including childhood imaginations and curiosa. The *Childhood* is an autobiographical genre in itself, increasing in popularity from the eighteenth century onwards. Richard Coe, an expert on *Childhood* studies, defined the *Childhood* as 'an extended piece of writing, a conscious, deliberately executed literary artefact, usually in prose (and thus intimately related to the novel) but not excluding occasional experiments in verse, in which in the most substantial portion of the material is directly autobiographical, and whose structure reflects step by step the development of the writer's self; beginning often, but not invariably, with the first light of consciousness, and concluding, quite specifically, with the attainment of a precise degree of

maturity.'[24] The *Childhood* is common among ethnic autobiography, particularly second-generation Jewish autobiography. This feature is not incidental, Jewish narratives of childhood enable an autobiographer to look back on their childhood as a link with their heritage and ethnic past of the old East End and the immigrant past of their parents (which only later in life do they come to really feel as significant in their own lives and destinies). Levinson was a child migrant but was much younger than Benjamin and Marke when he arrived in Britain (he was only approximately four years old). Therefore although his works are technically immigrant autobiographies they do not have the same content as others in this genre as Levinson does not have a first hand 'immigrant memory.'

This chapter analyses the way in which the migratory pattern, expectations of Britain and concepts of the Promised Land appear, are absent or are alluded to in both of Levinson's autobiographies. In a similar way to Marke's, Levinson's work does not contain much reflection on British society or the disparity between expectation and reality of life in Britain. There is considerably more introspection and self-reflection in both of Levinson's autobiographies than in Marke's work. Levinson's work also highlights a characteristic of Jewish autobiography that is not evident in most African-Caribbean writing (with the exception of Marke) – the myth of Britain as the Promised Land is rarely directly or explicitly evident. Unlike other Jewish autobiographies Levinson did not refer to day-to-day life in an anecdotal way and only referred to the 'everyday' in order to explore the dynamics and psychology behind his particular family situation. His autobiographical voice is an extension of his personality, which he himself thought was much too introspective and depressive.[25] It is significant that his first autobiography was published immediately post-war. It is within his second autobiography that he contextualises his experiences of life in Britain within the broader framework of the Holocaust and the historical persecution of Jews.

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[24] Richard N. Coe, *When the Grass Was Taller: Autobiography and the Experience of Childhood* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 8-9.

[25] Throughout his autobiographical acts, particularly his latter one, Levinson articulated the depressive thoughts he had during his youth, partly caused by anti-Semitism. Whilst recalling his thoughts when emerging from a deep depression, he recollected that 'there seemed to be no point in going on. The world seemed like a dark shroud, waiting for me to step into my grave. I was afraid of unemployment, anti-semitism and violence. I had never spoken to a girl except Doris, and I put this down to my puritanical upbringing in an orphanage, plus the fact that my mother had made such a fetish out of the death of my father.' Levinson, *The Woman from Bessarabia,* pp. 118-119.

TWY is mainly diachronic, although as with Marke's autobiography, it is initiated with descriptions about Levinson's later life, starting 'four weeks after the war in Europe' where he was working in his taxi. This provided the narrative in which he introduced his cultural heritage and nationality as a Russian. He related two stories regarding his nationality, one where a policeman saw he was Russian and spoke to him in Russian and secondly where a Czechoslovakian asked him for his opinions of Britain. In both these tales he referred to the fact that he has no knowledge of Russia or anywhere else apart from Britain. In this way he is using these tales to establish his identity within the autobiography. Others may have used this story to expand on what life is like as an alien or an ethnic minority in British society.[26] He did not refer to himself as a Russian to the same extent in *WFB* where he now had British citizenship. Both autobiographies are similar to Marke's in that they are essentially chronological and temporally referenced (without the corresponding chapter headings such as school, work, marriage, etc).

Within both autobiographies the narrative of Russia and the *Old World* is interspersed within the discursive writing of events and life in Britain. Levinson's father's funeral provides the conjecture, the context-dependent memory process to ascertain how and why his family came to be in the East End of London. Within *TWY*, after a description of his father, Levinson 'went back in time' and recollected about life in Russia, or rather his mother's memories of life in Russia as he had 'no recollection of the country of my birth; only a sort of mystic romanticism handed down to me by my mother.'[27] This Russia is the *Old World*, a world of suffering and pogroms. He explained how he and his family were from the outskirts of Kishinev, Bessarabia. When Levinson was six months old his grandfather was murdered in the infamous and extremely brutal pogrom of Kishinev. That night the family hid in the cellar of a disused house and left Russia the following day. After living in Paris for three to four years they arrived in London.[28] The second autobiography explored the *Old World* much more than the first and is far more detailed about the suffering of the Jews in Eastern Europe. Perhaps this is because the work is indirectly Levinson's mothers as well as his own, she is the one with the haunting memories of Russia, unable to relinquish memories that have

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[26] Levinson, *The Trouble With Yesterday*, p. 2 and pp. 7-8.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

impinged emotionally and psychologically on Levinson's life as well. In *WFB* (as in *TWY*) Levinson narrated his earliest memories of his father dying and being buried in a cemetery in East London. After referring to his mother's sorrow he immediately 'recollected' on the sorrow of the Jewish people collectively and generationally. In this respect *WFB* and *TWY* are similar, only the former text goes further, as seen here:

> The East End Jew of forty years ago made no mystery of his feelings. A bereaved woman would symbolize the fact that she was wearing sackcloth and ashes by tearing her clothes to shreds and banging her head against a wall. It was symbolic of a much bigger tragedy, the dispersal of the Jews from Egypt to the four corners of the world. When a Jewish woman wept for her dead husband she was weeping for the whole Jewish race. She felt that she had an instinctive duty to mourn for all the Jewish wives who had lost their husbands, for the mothers who had seen their children hacked to pieces by the Cossacks, for all the Jews who had been tortured and killed throughout the centuries, and for the greatest tragedy of all, that God had inflicted so much sorrow upon them.[29]

Levinson's generational memory is particularly unique to Jewish autobiographies as a collective. He displayed far more memories of the *Old World* than other autobiographers (especially other autobiographers writing about growing up in the 1930s) but his memories of the *Old World* only relate to suffering and terror. For most East End Jewish immigrant autobiographers the world of the East End was the central and main theme of their writing. Levinson's autobiographical memory is likewise concerned with the themes of growing up in Britain, but he displayed far more knowledge and understanding of the experience of Jews in Russia. He has concrete memories passed on to him from his mother about life in Russia and he has been psychologically traumatised by anti-Semitism throughout his life which he often contextualised into the theme of anti-Semitism throughout the ages. Unlike Marke and other Jewish autobiographers, Levinson is much more introspective in his autobiographical act and does not fit the prescribed 'poor but happy' myth often evident in everyday autobiography. The reason why anti-Semitism affects his thoughts and happiness so much is explicitly tackled within his narrative, he recalled the depressing atmosphere of his formative years, his upbringing in an orphanage, which institutionalised him, and his depressing family atmosphere. In *WFB* he explained his hometown Kishinev (which he described as

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[29] Levinson, *The Woman From Bessarabia*, p. 8.

the worst place in the world for Jews before the Nazis came to power) in the same section as when describing his father's funeral and his mother's unhappy life. He stated:

> Some of the things that happened there makes the Spanish Inquisition sound like chapters from Grimm's Fairy Tales. The Jews in Kishinev weren't asked if they wanted to be converted or not. They were killed on sight. Killing Jews in Kishinev was a national sport just like football is in England. A Cossack wasn't considered patriotic unless he killed a few Jews. Indeed, his religion demanded it. The highest form of patriotism was to pick up a Jewish child and dash its head against a brick wall. During Easter the Cossacks would throng the churches and listen to their priests explain in minute detail how the Jews in Kishinev had killed Christ. The priests left nothing out. They told the Cossacks how the Jews nailed their Saviour to the Cross and then spat at him until He died; the agony He went through all because of the Jews.[30]

Initially the reader may expect the structure of both of the autobiographies to be similar to that of the typical American Jewish immigrant autobiography but this is not the case. Jewish immigrant autobiographers in America were following a national script to show that not only were they Americans before they landed in the country but also were symbolic recipients of a 'land of the free', continuing the tradition of the Puritans. As William Boelhower stated 'In fact the speciality of ethnic autobiography signification, its unique semiotic jeu, largely consists in consciously re-elaborating or simply rewriting the received behavioral script of the rhetorically well-defined American self. Immigrant/ethnic autobiographers quickly learned how to read the blueprint of this official version.'[31] The blueprint as seen in autobiography shows a narrative path of old world to new, old self to new self and darkness to enlightenment. Levinson's meta-narratives do not show him travelling from the old persecutory world to the new, liberal Promised Land. In this way Jewish narratives of migration to Britain do not compare (on a surface level at least) to the African-Caribbean Promised Land, the mother country.

Levinson recollections about life in Russia did not involve an exploration of, for example, what everyday life was like, how his mother and father met, what jobs they did in Russia, nor do they narrate any stories about the Jewish community in Kishinev (this is also the case in his narration of East End life where none of the

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

[31] William Boelhower, 'The Making of Ethnic Autobiography in the United States' in Paul John Eakin (ed.), *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect* (Wisconsin and London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), p. 125.

other members of the Jewish community are mentioned by name). The topics within his narrative are part of his particular family history, one that his mother has formulated; the stories he recalls are stories his mother chose to tell him. In terms of genre Levinson's work focuses far more on his family and other relationships and friendships he makes compared to Marke's narrative, but contains less information on his social life, his career decisions and happy times in his life. Again, this is due to the fact that Levinson was a far more depressed and introspective individual than Marke (likewise this is the reason that this chapter refers primarily to his feelings about anti-Semitism as they make up such a large part of his life story). Other stories that were not portrayed involve the role of the extended family in the migration process. Levinson did not talk about whether he had cousins, aunts or uncles and if they migrated from Russia or not. Often family migration plays an important role in the dynamics of personal migratory stories, and additionally in the myths of migration whereby family members write back to their relatives to tell them about life in Britain.[32]

The travelling experience, which is often mentioned in African-Caribbean recollections, is not analysed in Levinson's work. This is partly due to the fact that Levinson was only a small child when he left Russia. As he stated 'My life, within the limits of an exasperating memory does not begin to unfold itself clearly until my entry into a large orphanage in Essex.'[33] In other Jewish autobiographies and oral histories there is little focus on the travelling experience. For many immigrants this was a painful time, often people travelled in cramped conditions with little food. Conversely in African-Caribbean autobiographies life on the boat was, or at least represented as, a time of great joy. The memories of this time are perhaps reshaped to include the subsequent knowledge many would face surrounding discrimination and unfulfilled hopes. Thus ship life is seen as a time of innocence, naivety, freedom, and a place where friendships are formed and socialising can take place without accommodation or financial problems or the colour bar. Represented in these narratives is a communal solidarity, everyone was going through new experiences together. Everyone on the boat protected even stowaways, people would club together to buy them tickets for the journey. Levinson cannot recollect

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[32] See Alistair Thomson, 'Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies', *Oral History*, Volume 27, Number 1, Spring 1999, pp. 24-37.
[33] Levinson, *The Trouble With Yesterday*, p. 15.

the travelling experience by direct memory retrieval because he was too young at the time. In *TWY* we discovered that Levinson has no actual memory of ever living in Paris. He could have, nevertheless, inquired about this and also about his time living in Paris. Did his mother ever talk about this part of their migratory experience? Levinson summed up the whole three years in Paris within one sentence. He stated in *WFB* 'we left Russia on the following day. We packed a few things and wandered all over Europe until we found ourselves in Paris where we stayed for three or four years. Then we came to England.'[34] We do not know how Paris compared to England or if the family always intended to settle in England. Obviously as they migrated there during the First World War they had less authority over the decision of where to travel to. The only other mention of living in France is indirectly where Levinson's mother recalled how being called 'Jew-Bastard' in England was 'nothing new to her' as she had been called it in Russian, German, French, Polish and English.[35] In this way anti-Semitism, like racism in Marke's narrative, is seen in global terms and not just a phenomenon that occurs in one country.

In Britain there was a different emphasis on assimilation than American society where the melting pot was an established ideal, though it would be erroneous to suggest that British Jews did not feel pressure to assimilate. The stories and narratives people chose to put within autobiographies is influenced by what the wider general public would like to or expect to hear. In America 'certainly it was due to xenophobic pressure and the consequent need to allay spreading nativist fears that most immigrant/ethnic autobiographers sought to pass themselves off as Americans by didactically copying and promoting officially acceptable behavioral codes.'[36] One could debate the usefulness and relevance of the term Promised Land to British Jews. Britain as a migratory destination never had the same kind of symbolic or romantic appeal as the United States. Nevertheless it was still known as the *Frei Medini* to many Jews, and has been symbolically remembered as this in generational history.[37] In many narratives and second-generation autobiographies East European Jews, although migrating because of

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[34] Levinson, *The Woman From Bessarabia*, p. 16.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[36] Boelhower, 'Ethnic Autobiography in the United States', p. 127.
[37] For example Wolf Bennison in his testimony reflected on the meaning of the Yiddish term Jews used to describe England, 'Frie Medini', a free country. Manchester Jewish Museum (MJM), J24, Transcript, p. 3.

push factors, show they had an established belief about Britain, in that it was the home of traditional liberty and refuge. In Selig Brodetsky's autobiography (who was also a child migrant) Britain is regarded as the land of democracy and freedom, a Promised Land of sorts. He stated (in the context of describing his parents migratory story) '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.'[38] Interestingly Brodetsky asserted that Britain was more of a Promised Land than America (though not using this terminology). Although this may have been his own personal experience of success, other autobiographers certainly do not place Britain above America as the Promised Land. Usually in autobiographical narrative immigrants are shown to have landed in Britain thinking it was America. This story is so much evident in individual testimonies and is certainly mythologised by ethnic and generational family memory, it often shields individual stories of what people view as 'failure' and is used as a device enabling people to 'blame' their arrival and stay in Britain on unscrupulous shipping agents (which was a reality) or on not knowing what America looked like.

2.4. Conclusion.

In terms of comparative history and its particular dynamics and problems, it is difficult to compare directly the autobiographical memories of people who are recollecting on different but related concepts. Nevertheless as this chapter has demonstrated the Mother Country and Promised Land as ideas and mythologies have enough in common to enable a worthwhile comparison.

Marke's narrative is similar to Levinson's and many other Jewish autobiographies in that expectations of life in Britain before arrival are not analysed significantly. Jewish narratives generally do not focus on Britain as an idea and expectation because, in terms of the Jewish collective myths of migration and the direct influences of migration there were more direct pushes than pull factors to Britain. In the case of Levinson, who was directly affected by the pogroms, there was little room before migration for thinking about what life in Britain would entail and thus difference between expectation and experience was not so meaningful.

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[38] Selig Brodetsky, *Memoirs: From Ghetto to Israel* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), p. 19.

Additionally, Marke and Levinson's position as child migrants meant less reflection on migration at the time and in subsequent memory. Like Marke, it is only in the analysis of the sub text of the Levinson's autobiographies that the Promised Land as an idea comes into evidence. These two voices are representative of silent voices, they do not fit the conventions of ethnic autobiography as seen in Boelhower's classification of American autobiography.

The differences between the Jewish and African Caribbean employment of the myths can be seen within the narrative sequence and the structure of the text. Generally Jewish memories focus less on the expectations of life in Britain, less on everyday life before migration and less on the travelling experience. Obviously many of the Jewish autobiographical memories looked at are those of the second generation (or child migrants) and therefore a first hand memory of life in Russia cannot be given. However, Jewish autobiographers, like Levinson, who have been passed on immigrant memories from their parents, still do not focus on expectations of Britain or life in Russia in a detailed way. In general, or in generational memory, Jews were escaping from Eastern Europe (if not from pogroms then from the traditionally restrictive and repressive society Jews were forced to live in) and not being drawn to Britain because of adventure therefore there was less need than African-Caribbeans (who were British citizens) to think about expectations of life in Britain and less divergence between expectation and reality.

Both Marke and Levinson exhibit emotional silences of differing sorts. Marke certainly has emotional silences surrounding Sierra Leone and rarely deviates from his description of *life-as-lived* (whether in the USA or in Britain). He does not deviate within the narrative to focus on thoughts and feelings he may have had at different stages in his life perhaps surrounding his family and what he had left behind in Sierra Leone. Levinson's silences are less pronounced in terms of emotions and inward feeling, but are manifested when remembering thoughts on certain aspects of life in Britain, the everyday or community. These silences reveal something about both people's formative lives, Marke's traumatic break with his family and his community disownment in Sierra Leone and Levinson's upbringing for several years of his childhood in an orphanage. The next chapter continues the exploration of the Mother Country and Promised Land myths in the form of analysing early migratory experiences and memories. The autobiographers

analysed in Chapter Three exhibit more obvious analyses of the migratory experience as an historical phenomenon within collective memory.

Chapter Three. The Self-Knowing Autobiographical Voice, Meta-Memory and the Deconstruction of Myths: Linda Grant, Floella Benjamin, Wallace Collins and Louis Teeman

3.1. Introduction.

This chapter scrutinises the autobiographical memories of those who have explored their personal or generational histories in relation to the migratory experience in a candid and pronounced manner and who have often reviewed their memories as a method of establishing their identity or of transmitting their identities to others. Unlike the previous chapter it does not carry out an in-depth dissection on the narrative structure and sequence of how the myths of the Promised Land and the Mother Country came to fruition within the text. Instead it concentrates on the constructed autobiographical memory (particularly when looking at the Jewish texts) and the formation of unambiguous or overt mythologies, how they emerge and what features of the particular myths they portray. It analyses autobiographies that more than simply narrate a personal life history; they position collective ethnic experiences within the realm of their own personal identity. However, this chapter does not assess the life stories in their entirety, instead aspects of autobiographical memories are looked at, that shed light onto the individuals' histories and reflections of migration and early settlement in Britain.

As a result of their careers, two of the autobiographers are known to a wider public audience. In the 1980s, Floella Benjamin was a popular children's television entertainer and Linda Grant is a *Guardian* columnist and author. Both women have had life histories far removed from those publishing their work in community history projects. Benjamin aimed her work at the teenage/youth age range, in terms of the language and content and also in terms of her focusing on her teenage experiences. Grant's work follows on to some extent from the theme of her first novel, *The Cast Iron Shore* in which part of the novel centres around Jewish experiences in Liverpool.[1] Wallace Collins' work is unique, in that it was written at the time of mass migration to Britain, contains elements of apologia and was written with the aim of not only educating people, but of refuting and challenging

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[1] Linda Grant, *The Cast Iron Shore* (London, Picador, 1996).

some of the racist sentiment seen in the mid-1960s. Collins was a Jamaican migrant who stayed in England for most of the 1950s before moving to Toronto, Canada. He has lived in New York for thirty years and is now retired and writes fiction and poetry full time.[2] Surprisingly, it seems that, no one researching post-War Black history has utilised his work. Lastly, Louis Teeman's autobiography performs several functions; it recounts his personal memories of life in Leeds, Jewish and significantly non-Jewish memories of Jewish migrants settling in Leeds and specific histories of Jews throughout time. Aspects of Teeman's work were serialised in a local newspaper before it became his autobiography, but Teeman's reason for writing this work was primarily in order to pass on the history and memories of Jews to his grandchildren. The first work analysed is an autobiographical act by Linda Grant, a third generation British Jew who grew up in post-war Liverpool.

3.2. Linda Grant.

Linda Grant's autobiography *Remind Me Who I Am Again* represents a conscious effort to reconstruct or re-remember her personal history. This objective is only one portion of her eventual aim, which is to document her mother's changing life through her memory loss disease Multi-Infarct Dementia. Thus memory is the foremost premise of her book, not only historical and personal memory but also 'biological memory' and how its decline impinges on her and her family's identity and history. The different strands of memory are compared, juxtaposed, and fused together within her narrative. For example, towards the end of her autobiography, when Grant analysed the psychological and biological theories of memory she claimed that memory was 'rootless, the Wandering Jew of our physical selves.'[3] Grant's personal memory, or the memories she wished to explore, are predominantly concerned with her Jewish identity. Grant is a self-knowing autobiographical voice as she understood her memory and the processes of memory reconstruction, she indicated knowledge of how the book she was writing was a conscious effort and thus only a production and interpretation, not a mirror image of her mother's life. In this manner, Grant is similar to Connie Mark's autobiographical voice in that by the third voice or what I would term the self-

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[2] See http://www.poets.com/WallaceBCollins.html

knowing voice *'the subjects know that their knowing is a component of their conduct. They assume responsibility for inventing themselves and yet maintain their sense of authenticity and integrity.'*[4] Connie Mark is an African-Caribbean migrant who has lived in Britain for many decades. She has created various oral histories, working in conjunction with oral history projects, appearing on television and giving talks. She has become a self-knowing autobiographical voice as she understands and knows what is expected of her in terms of content and theme and re-iterates similar stories within her different testimonies and is willing to talk about various personal details in her life.[5]

Linda Grant is a third generation British Jew, who, when writing her work, had only her mother as a link to her generational past (her father, aunts, uncles and others from the second generation had all died).[6] Grant used this work as a testimony to her mother but also as a way to comprehend her immigrant family past. In this way the myth of the Promised Land is insinuated, although unlike Maurice Levinson and Ernest Marke, is not overtly analysed. Grant, however, analysed other mythologies relating to the myths of migration, and, as she is a self-knowing voice, she actually understood these histories as constructions. When referring to the reasons for her family's migration (although like Levinson, she never alluded to the reasons why her immigrant family settled in Britain rather than the USA or elsewhere) she remembered family conversations where different explanations of particular histories had been told to different family members. These disparate stories draw attention to a feature of memory that most of the other autobiographies under analysis in this section do not exhibit, how family mythology is not static or even the same between different family members. More significantly Grant's description of these stories demonstrates that her memory

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[3] Linda Grant, *Remind Me Who I Am Again* (London, Granta Books, 1998), p. 289.

[4] Barbara Myerhoff, (edited and with an introduction by Marc Kaminsky), *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling and Growing Older* (University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 232. Italics in text.

[5] Mark's testimony has been used in television programmes and is deposited in various archives such as the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton.

[6] The theorist M.L. Hansen has postulated that the third generation is often the group who will go looking for the immigrant roots the other generations have either consciously forgotten or not been interested in. This theory although, as Wong asserted is simple, certainly describes some of the motives for Linda Grant's work. Although, as Grant has explained, age factors and historical circumstances hindered her desire to learn about immigrant roots. Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong, 'Immigrant Autobiography: Some Questions in Definition and Approach', in Paul John Eakin (ed.), *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*, (Wisconsin and London, University of

process did not seek to create a simplified family narrative, but rather accepted and moreover found fascinating the way in which her families history could not truly be concretised and resolved into a single truth.

When Grant tried to uncover her family's immigrant history by documentary sources she found one sole document, her paternal grandfather's alien registration book, issued in 1916. Included in the document was a list of his children and their dates of birth. One of her aunts recalled that these dates were falsified in order that the boys could avoid conscription. The registration book documented her great-grandfather's name as Morris Ginsberg. However, during family conversations even the authenticity of their surname was challenged. Her mother recalled that the family name was changed because her grandfather was a deserter, thus taking an alternative surname when escaping from Poland. However Grant's cousin had a different story of the reason for the change in surname, declaring Grant's mother's story to be false. Her version was that when the family came to England they took over the rent book from a family called Ginsberg and so took this surname for their own. Thus Grant reflected 'I had thought once or twice of reverting to Ginsberg, but it had turned out to be no more authentic than Grant.'[7]

Grant did not probe deeper into her family history to question the reasons for their migration and for them specifically choosing Britain as their final destination. One of the few times she mentioned the pogroms of Eastern Europe was indirectly by calling her parents' generation 'children of the pogrom immigrants', although she had not said previously that her family left to escape the pogroms. In this case, and perhaps in Jewish memory as a whole, the term 'pogrom immigrants' performs a generic function; even if her family were not specifically affected by the pogroms the generational and ethnic memory of migration in this period has delineated the main, symbolic reason for mass migration as pogroms. It is obvious that Grant understood this mythology function within her text. Unlike other autobiographers, she did not claim that her family probably escaped Eastern Europe because of the pogroms, but she has situated her family within the ambit of

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Wisconsin Press, 1991), pp. 142-170. The concept of roots and *symbolic ethnicity* (Herbert Gans) are elaborated on later in this thesis.

[7] Grant, *Remind*, pp. 57-59. Grant's search for her family identity by names is a common feature of the Jewish search for roots. Genealogy, particularly web sites have become popular for a vast array of different groups. However, Jewish genealogical organisations are by far the most widespread and popular.

the all-encompassing history affecting Jews in that period in a symbolic and representative manner.[8]

Karl Mannheim viewed that 'individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process.'[9] Likewise, for Jews migrating at the turn of the century, the historical mileu that captured the essence of their experience (whether this is statistically accurate or not) was the persecution and pogroms of the 1880-1914 period. A rather recent manifestation of 'generational memory' affecting the individual and collective mythologies of African Caribbeans was brought about by the Windrush anniversary celebrations of 1998. As a result of these celebrations, collective memory delineates all African Caribbean migrants as being from the 'Windrush generation'. Although some people such as the Phillips' have deconstructed this term, much like the way this chapter deconstructs the term 'pogrom immigrants', it has also become an all-encompassing term, not necessarily subjected to the self-knowing voice. This myth is particularly relevant for the concept of the Mother Country. As the 'Windrush generation' were early migrants, they have been portrayed as pioneers, wanting to help rebuild Britain after the war, with high hopes and ideals and a love of Britain, as exemplified by the calypsonian singer Lord Kitchener's recital of 'London is the Place for Me.'[10] These myths are based on 'realities' but with their prioritisation there has been a corresponding and inevitable forgetting of some of the migrants other aims and objectives. As all post-war African-Caribbean migrants are remembered as being from the 'Windrush generation', their histories and reasons for travelling to Britain are necessarily romanticised, as also seen in the Phillips work. One result of this mythologisation is that factors motivating migration that occurred after 1948 are even more marginalized in memory, such as the Walter-

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 96.
[9] As cited in Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives*, p. 231.
[10] Kitchener's recollections of his composition of this song highlighted his belief in the Mother Country mythology. He stated 'But entering England, when the boat had about four days to land in England, I get this kind of wonderful feeling that I'm going to land on the mother country, the soil of the mother country. And I started composing this song, London is the Place for Me. And I composed that song. And it had to be a famous song. ... the feeling I had to know that I'm going to touch the soil of the mother country, that was the feeling I had. How can I describe? It's just a wonderful feeling. You know how it is when a child, you hear about your mother country, and you know what feeling is that? And I can't describe it. That's why I compose the song. Imagine how I felt. Here's where I want to be, London. So I sung: London is the place for me, ...' Mike Phillips

McCarran Act stopping many Caribbean people migrating to their preferred destination, the USA.

In terms of mythology construction and its place within the migratory process, Grant did describe her family changing their history because of living in a new land. When analysing her mother's personality trait of creating different selves or faces for different people she first related (in a context-dependent manner) 'my family had by necessity reconstructed itself and its past for the life it would live in a new land. Cut off from the previous century, from its own line of continuity with its memory, it made itself up. All the lies and evasions and tall stories are what you must have when you are bent on self-invention.'[11] Yet, she did not relate this process specifically to Britain or England, in terms of how to some degree these constructions intentionally emerge from concerns of 'wider society' from declaring the family's love of British or English national values, through a desire to assimilate and be 'good' citizens.

In terms of Grant's understanding of how mythologies and stories are constructed within a family setting, she has been influenced by her own academic knowledge of the subject; this is one of the reasons why she is a self-knowing autobiographical voice and this consciousness is evident in the terminology she utilised in her work.[12] Additionally in her text she referred to how she had always known about the constructions and mythologies within her family, which sprang from her own particular family dynamics (she 'grew up amidst a conspiracy of liars, show-offs and story-tellers')[13] but additionally from the fact that her relatives had an immigrant past. In a similar vein to her pondering about 'evasions and tall stories' later in the text, she claimed that her 'family had simply reinvented itself' and whenever they could not remember something she 'always assumed they had something interesting to hide.'[14].

Grant's narrative of how her grandfather arrived in Britain is a common tale employed by Jewish immigrants and their descendents, as illustrated by David

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and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, HarperCollins, 1998), p. 66.

[11] Grant, *Remind*, p. 156.

[12] For example she gave over a section of her work to analyse psychological theories of memory and relate them to Jewish memory and additionally to her mothers memory loss, see *Ibid.*, pp. 288-295. The way she approaches this subject indicated that she had found out or developed her knowledge of memory processes as a result of wanting to understand her mother's memory loss.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

Cesarani. Grant asserted that her grandfather and his brother had set sail for New York but 'blessed with the greenhorn ignorance of the hopeful immigrant who has just made landfall in a place he knows nothing of, my grandfather had walked round Liverpool for many days admiring what he believed to be the architecture of the New World, until someone put him right.'[15] This story is positioned immediately after she recalled that when growing up her family were liars and show offs, yet significantly she did not deconstruct this particular family story directly (at least in terms of ethnic identity) as she might have done if she had observed its commonality among other Jewish family stories leading it to be a collective Jewish memory. However, at the end of the narrative concerning her grandfather she stated that she could not declare any of these stories to be true and that 'for all [I] know it could be a pack of falsehoods, fairy tales to send the children and grandchildren to sleep at nights'.[16] The fact that she did not deconstruct this myth points to the power of the myth, in that even a self-knowing voice does not try to explicitly question this tale.

Grant's process of uncovering her family history and the problems the process entailed is explicitly documented in her work. One problem arises from being third generation with no-one alive apart from her mother to pass on her family and ethnic history, the problem of preserving or re-structuring her Jewish identity and memory. Thus for Grant at this junction in her life, where she wishes to know and understand her past, the only person who could perform this task – her mother – was gradually losing her memory. Grant looked back on her earlier life as a place where she could have discovered more of her family history, but where she was part of the new generation who did not want to know the past. When referring to family secrets and histories, Grant told the reader of her regret at not finding out about her families personal histories. She stated 'I had had my chance and I hadn't taken it. When I was younger I was bored stiff with my parents' reminiscences. I had no curiosity. I was living in a time when the past was going to be abolished. Born in 1951, I was part of the first generation that was put on earth, we fatally imagined, to be young and stay young forever. With pity and scorn we condemned our parents' youth to oblivion.'[17] This dichotomy was even more confounded for

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 50.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 52.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the new generation of Jews who wanted to look forward to the future rather than back to an unhappy persecutory past, particularly for the young generation of Jews in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust.[18] In her narrative Grant continued that 'it is my fate now, in the middle age we never believed was coming, with its own ailments and wrinkles and sagging stomachs, to scramble among the ruins of my mother's memory in search of my past, of who all of us are. To grow up as a Jewish daughter into an insistence of the importance of memory, knowing that without it, we are animals.'[19]

Jewish memory and history is something of deep relevance within Grant's narrative. That Grant's mother is losing her memory means that Jewish memory on a family level is ruptured. When reflecting on her mother being Jewish and losing her memory, Grant reflected that she didn't 'know if it is a tragedy or a blessing when Jews, who insist on forgiving and forgetting nothing, should end their lives remembering nothing.'[20] This paradigm is reflected in much oral history with the elderly. As one of Myerhoff's respondents articulated (as explored in the introduction of this thesis) 'you understand, one word is not like another. ... So when just the word I want hides from me, when before it has always come along very politely when I called it, this is a special torture designed for old Jews'.[21]

In contrast to the memory processes scrutinised within Grant's work, the next autobiographical act does not consist of meta-memories, partly due to it being a *Childhood*, but also because it represents more of a personal memory and not a memory of uncovering hidden histories of past generations.

3.3. Floella Benjamin.

Floella Benjamin's autobiography is a *Childhood*; it does not impinge onto her adult life in any way (except in the way she interpreted her childhood experiences from an adult perspective). It differs from the 'conventional' *Childhood*s Coe has documented; it was actually written for a teenage audience and it focused on the child migration experience instead of the formation of the child personality. Out of all of the autobiographies, it is Benjamin's that explicitly

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[18] Although Grant is inter-generational, born before the young generation of post-war Jews and also not part of the 1970s roots and genealogy 'generation'.
[19] Grant, *Remind*, p. 28.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[21] Myerhoff, *Remembered Lives*, p. 238.

analysed the Mother Country myth and it is her work that fits the conventions or stereotypes of the myth (both in itself and within the conventions of how the myth appeared in autobiographical structure).

Titles of autobiographies are revealing in terms of how myths of the Mother Country are presented within the text. Benjamin's narrative (although describing aspects of her childhood not necessarily axiomatic to her migration tale) is primarily about 'Coming to England' in a similar way to Marke's and Wallace Collins', as exemplified by their titles, whereas Grant's and Levinson's are about relating to the immigrant past, by focusing on their mothers experiences and in the case of Grant's by focusing on the lost immigrant memory. Benjamin's chapter headings indicate the traditional diachronic structure of her autobiography and that her narrative will employ conventional concepts of the Mother Country. For example chapter headings move from 'Life in Trinidad', 'School Life' to 'Coming to England' and 'Land of hope and glory' to 'Survival'. Although this structure has been made simpler and thematically based primarily for its young audience, it does conform to the narrative of hope to disillusion, but then disillusion to strength through adversity (like the title of Sam King's autobiography, *Climbing the Mountain*) as exemplified in the names of the last few chapters, i.e. 'Double Identity' and 'Breaking Down the Barriers'. However, many other compilations and autobiographies by their titles exemplify the process of hope to disillusionment, without ending on a similar high note; examples of this include the ironic and questioning *Land of Hope and Glory?* and the direct *Rude Awakening*.[22] Similarly, American Jewish autobiographies are revealing in terms of their views and opinions of the new country. As Boelhower has documented 'a clear affirmation of the ritual components of the American self was called for' as exemplified in the titles '*The Americanization of Edward Bok* (1920), by Edward Bok; *The Making of an American* (1924), by Jacob Riis; *An American in the Making* (1917), by Marcus E. Ravage; and the less obvious *The Promised Land* (1911) by Mary Antin.'[23] In terms of British experiences, titles such as Litvinoff's *A Very British subject* are

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[22] Mohsin Zulfiqar (ed.), *Land of Hope and Glory?: The presence of African, Asian and Caribbean Communities in Leeds* (Leeds, Roots Project, 1993) and Roots Oral History, *Rude Awakening: African/Caribbean Settlers in Manchester: An Account* (Manchester, Roots Oral History Project, 1992).

[23] William Boelhower, 'The Making of Ethnic Autobiography in the United States', in Eakin (ed.), *American Autobiography: Retrospect and Prospect*, p. 125. Not italicised in text.

indicative of wider Jewish collective memory and also Diasporic concerns, of wanting to portray being good and loyal migrants and citizens.[24]

Benjamin's work is not only about her personal tale of migration, it also relates to the West Indian migration as a whole. This is explicit at the end of her autobiography, where she reflected upon how West Indians migrants wanted to help rebuild Britain, although in the case of her own personal history, her parents left Trinidad because her father wanted to establish a career in jazz and Britain was seen as a better option in order to fulfil this ambition. Her autobiography is similar to Sam King's in that it is written as a tool for educating people about African Caribbean migration as a whole. In the case of Benjamin's work her hope is that (like Ernest Marke's) 'this book will go in some way in helping people to find their identity, discover where they came from and to feel proud of themselves.'[25]

The Mother Country myth materialises almost immediately within Benjamin's autobiography. She started her work by describing her early childhood in Trinidad. She described her family life, including her family members 'everyday life' in a detailed manner. She also described what Trinidad was like in terms of the carnival, the importance of food and the significance of different cultural activities. Amongst these descriptions, at various intervals she either compared England with Trinidad or she brought cultural references about England into her Trinidad narrative to indicate the importance of Britain before migration. Some of these examples were presented in mimetic terminology, in that no clues about the subsequent disillusionment with Britain are given within the earlier segments of her narrative. However, when she described her colonial education she mentioned not being taught about Caribbean history, which is probably something she realised and became angry about after she had arrived in Britain, when her experience made her understand the hypocrisies involved in the British Commonwealth. She stated 'we also learnt about Britain and how the British conquered the world. We learnt about the heroes of British history, and other countries in the world, but nothing about our own people.'[26] Other migrants have indicated their anger at the hypocrises of school life in a more self-reflective way, by relating it to the colonial experience in

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[24] Barnet Litvinoff, *A Very British Subject: Telling Tales* (London, Vallentine Mitchell, 1997).
[25] Floella Benjamin, *Coming to England* (London, Pavilion, 1997), p. 121.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

its entirety. This is particularly evident in the testimony of Vince Reid, who at age 13 was the youngest passenger on the *Windrush.*

> I knew more about England than I did about Jamaica. I mean, I knew absolutely nothing about Jamaica. For instance, I was taught in school that the black people in Jamaica were somehow better off than black people in South Africa, that although we were brought to Jamaica as slaves, this was somehow preferable to being free in whatever part of Africa we came from. And, of course, I was also taught that the person who freed the slaves was a white man called Wilberforce, so that one was always encouraged to believe that one must be beholden to white people for whatever happened. Whatever you became, it was due to the benevolence and goodwill of white people. What I'm really saying is that the whole imperialistic thing was drilled into you. Life might have been hard and tough, but you were grateful. You didn't complain about it. You certainly didn't blame white people for it. That's how it was. You've got this whole thing of the authority in Jamaica. The Governor was white, those in authority were white, the judges were white. The only people who weren't white were police officers, who were black. And, of course, on top of that, you're bombarded with images of the newspapers, of white people, and in cinemas, again, white people. So you're encouraged to love them, as it were. You're encouraged to cheer for the white goodie and boo the black baddie. That was my impression of it, that you're seduced into believing in their benevolence, in their goodwill. You're seduced into respecting them, never questioning what they did or why they did it. I didn't feel particularly Jamaican because you had no sense of what Jamaica was. I knew I was born in Jamaica, but in terms of having an identity called Jamaican, I didn't – no, I didn't have that.'[27]

Thus, Reid's experiences in Britain made him re-remember and simultaneously re-formulate his childhood experience in the Caribbean.

Benjamin's narrative exemplifies an important aspect of the migration process, that of the child migrant. As was often the case with African-Caribbean migration, children joined their parents at a later stage. Benjamin's autobiography revisits her childhood, not only within descriptions of incidents and events, but also within language and expression of feeling. She described her emotions surrounding her expectations of travelling, her feelings of excitement, anticipation and wonder at what her new life would be like. The travelling experience is recalled as a time of fun and freedom, particularly as for the first time her and her brothers and sisters had freedom on the boat.

Benjamin recalled the travelling experience as a time of adventure in a different way to adult narratives, but by using similar terminology: it was a time of

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[27] Vince Reid, in Phillips', *Windrush*, pp. 13-14.

innocence before the reality of life in Britain was realised. For children, this time was even more of an adventure; it was the first time they had been left alone, within reason, to their own devices. Benjamin and her brothers and sisters had no adult supervisor's travelling with them (someone was paid to watch over them, but as Benjamin remembered in reality this did not happen) and thus had the freedom to explore the ship and play without the level of restriction that they had had in Trinidad (particularly as Benjamin had been living with family friends who had treated her harshly). The adventure like experience on board ship was not only a construction based upon future knowledge of life in Britain, it was also a memory of a time when people could socialise freely without working. Benjamin reflected on what life seemed like for the adult passengers, that 'they were always laughing and having fun. For them it was like a cruise. They were all accustomed to working hard for a living and for two weeks they had all the food, drink and night life they wanted.'[28] Yet, for others there was anxiety on the ships about what life in Britain would be like, as exemplified in Sam King's autobiography. King remembered seeing a man on deck crying, worried that they would be sent home after hearing government ministers talking about them on the radio.[29] Benjamin remembered that it was only a few days after leaving Spain that people started thinking about England, after this point 'everyone started talking about the 'Big Arrival' and a buzz of excitement was going round the ship.'[30] Her status as a child migrant may be one explanation why she did not recollect any feelings of anxiety or worry from other passengers, as perhaps these adult passengers would have tried to hide their feelings of anxiety away from the child migrants, hoping not to worry them.

Within her narrative she used the terminology of innocence to describe her worldview before entering Britain. This innocence is the result of not only her status as a child migrant, with child-like anticipation of adventures in a new country but is also used, in linguistic terms, as a premise to explore the lost innocence she experienced when being confronted with racism in Britain. She recollected her first day at school, where she experienced racism, which led to her naive view of the world being shattered. She recalled her thought process at this time, that 'I wished I was back there, [her school in Trinidad] happy and innocent again. For that was the

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[28] Benjamin, *Coming to England*, p. 59.
[29] Sam King, *Climbing Up The Rough Side of the Mountain* (London, Minerva, 1998), p. 95.
[30] Benjamin, *Coming to England*, p. 60.

day I had lost a certain innocence, and I would never be the same again. I, too, would now see a person's colour first and wonder whether he or she was going to hate me.'[31] This recollection too may serve in the autobiographical act as a context-dependent memory, previously she may have had insinuations or hints of the racism she was to experience in school that day, but her memory processes have simplified this out so that she can remember a symbolic day when her view of the world turned from one extremity to the other, from moral to immoral. In 'real life' it is rarely the case that one single event will change someone's world view in such a defiant way, yet in practice this seems to be the way that people remember or categorise their memories in autobiographical memory.

She used the terminology of Motherland, but at the end of her autobiography termed Britain the fabled Motherland – exemplifying the tainting of the Mother Country myth and additionally its importance within her memory of life in Britain. She did not counter her feelings at the end of the work, in the way that is done by many African Caribbean and Jewish migrant narratives by arguing that Britain was still a mythical place of tolerance. This is performed by her terming Britain the fabled Motherland and also in her description of how Black people had to work twice as hard to prove themselves and achieve something within British society. Her autobiography was traditional in its meta-narrative and structure; it represented a line of continuum from hope to disillusion. This is made implicit and explicit – the latter in regard to references of the fabled motherland, indicating that her hopes and joys were tainted by Britain's colonial promises being based on deceit. At one point in the narrative she exclaimed 'I came to England feeling special, like a princess, but was made to feel like a scavenger, begging for a piece of what I thought was mine. I had been told that I was part of the British Empire. Was that a lie? My dreams and visions had been shattered but I was in England now and there was no turning back. I had to learn to survive.'[32] Her work indicates that she learned to survive but also to sometimes break through the colour conscious society. Benjamin took part in a school singing and dancing performance. She remembered her feeling of happiness when the other children gave her praise for her performance. She did not conclude her work by a denial of

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

her experiences, but instead leaves the reader on a positive note by looking forward to the future that gradually things were improving for Black people in England.

3.4. Wallace Collins.

Wallace Collins migrated from Jamaica to Britain in 1952 when he was in his early 20s. He lived in Britain for eight years; thereafter he travelled to Canada to settle down. After he migrated to Canada he published an autobiography about his experiences in Britain. This autobiography is a very early example of African Caribbean life history and migration testimony. It was published in the 1960s by Routledge (a mainstream commercial publisher) two details that are unique in themselves. Additionally certain aspects of the style and presentation of the piece point to the autobiographies ambiguous nature in terms of its place within '*autobiography proper*' (although as my work does not support Lejeune's rigid definitions of autobiography, the atypical nature of this work is a positive: it is fascinating and not as others could perhaps see the text, a problem).

Collins expressed an ambivalent view of the growth of Rastafarianism and Black pride. In the context of describing society in Jamaica (in his earlier narrative when he recollected upon his early life before migrating) he referred to rastafarians as fanatics and described their view of returning to Africa in a mocking tone, as in his view they never did 'anything practical about it, as for instance, working for a living.'[33] However, he considered these same people wise to a certain extent, in that their forging of black pride was something Jamaicans only realised and made use of once they had travelled abroad. Collins' contradictory memories are explored further in Chapter Four.

Collins exemplified the importance of Panama and the United States in the history of African Caribbean (particularly Jamaican migration) when he referred to the stories workers told when they came back from short term contracts in the United States. In this paragraph he also referred to discontent experienced in these places and, importantly, in Britain.[34] In other African Caribbean oral testimony the two geographical areas of work are symbolically contrasted (if indeed the United States was mentioned at all): Britain is juxtaposed with America – unlike the latter country, people remembered that Britain was not talked about by those who had

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[33] Wallace Collins, *Jamaican Migrant* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 4.

returned as a place exhibiting racism. In this way the contrast between expectation and reality is brought into absolute opposition. This lack of knowledge of British racism is not just based on simplifying memory processes. As Chamberlain's work has shown, as well as earlier studies and recent oral history interviews, returning migrants were so shocked that racism was exhibited in Britain that they failed to mention their various experiences of it.[35] Additionally embarrassment was felt, people wanted to protect their families when writing letters home or people did not think they would be believed (see footnote for various testimonies indicating all of these reasons and more).[36] An important example of this in action can be seen in the study carried out by Mel Thompson. One of Thompson's interviewees was in Jamaica when Second World War recruits were returning. When asked if he was aware of the racism in Britain before he migrated he relayed the following story:

> He was walking downtown one day when he saw a large crowd of people, and they were making so much noise as they laughed that he went to see what was going on. In the middle of the crowd was a soldier who had obviously recently returned from England. The soldier told them how English people drank many cups of hot tea. At that, the people laughed loudly because for someone living in a tropical country such as Jamaica, the thought of people drinking several cups of hot tea was something they found hilarious. The soldier then went on to talk about how they asked him if he had had a tail and whether people in his country lived in trees. At this, people almost fell about with laughter!

Thompson asked whether the respondent felt uneasy about this and did the listeners not find the remarks he recalled racist. The respondent replied that they did not understand. Thompson argued that like the cups of tea the remarks were put down to their quaintness and to ignorance and that 'the majority of West Indians did not associate racism with Britain, and they were not prepared for it in the way they would have been had they gone to the United States and seen racism in practice.

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[34] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[35] Mary Chamberlain, 'Family Narratives and Migration Dynamics: Barbadians to Britain', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Volume 14, Number 2, July 1995, pp. 153-169.

[36] Lawrence's study produced diverging memories from various migrant groups (the West Indians interviewed expressed far more anxieties about what to write home to family and friends). West Indians writing home would omit bad stories about England. Responses included: 'I only write about the good things.' or 'I don't talk about England in my letters.' When asked why they did not talk about their experiences, Lawrence received replies such as 'I tell them it's not bad. You can't tell them it's bad because they'll just write back and say – why are you living there?', 'If my father were to come here it would really break his heart. To write to my relatives about what Britain is really like would just make them worry. But we have written to our friends. We wouldn't recommend anyone to come here.' and 'I keep quiet. If they want to come they can come. If I tell them how terrible it is here they will just believe that I'm trying to keep a good thing to myself.' Daniel Lawrence, *Black Migrants: White Natives: A Study of Race Relations in Nottingham* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 43-44.

The Jamaicans, in short, did not know how to deal with racism when they encountered it – especially in a British context.'[37]

In some way these findings can be linked to the discussion carried out in Chapter Two, surrounding the paradox of dealing with British racism and anti-Semitism; the unexpected nature of these phenomena actually occurring in Britain led the migrants responding with aspects of denial. Paradoxical 'denial' of racism and British hypocrises is much in evidence in Collins' work, within the narrative and structure of his autobiography and his memory processes, as represented in autobiography. Collins work is similar to Benjamin's as he expressed optimism and absolute love of Britain and British history but then his hopes were dashed by his experiences of Britain. This aspect of his work is analysed first and will lead onto an exploration of his eventual forgetting or self-delusion involving British racism.

As opposed to much of the recent collective mythologising, Collins did not romanticise his migration as the result of his love of the Mother Country. He recalled 'I had to get out of Jamaica before it was too late. I realised that the boys that I grew up with had led their lives into a dead end. I preferred to lose face and reverse out into the right path, than save my pride and remain stuck in that dead 'corner.''[38] His migration was directly caused by the economic situation in Jamaica, partly as a result of the 1951 hurricane. However, even though the Mother Country concept was not the prime factor for migration he still had an established ideal of what Britain would be like. When he first arrived in Britain he described the country in a dream-like mythical way, where he felt the greatness of the history of the country and an implicit view of Britain as superior to anything in the Caribbean.[39] It is worth quoting one passage at length, as it represents an important aspect of Collins' autobiographical memory surrounding his first experiences of Britain. This passage highlights Collins' fascination with Britain, but also provides an example of the novelistic style that parts of the work is written in:

> Looking at London for the first time I felt ageless, yet when I tried to place my twenty-two years in these surroundings, the solid immovable

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[37] Mel E. Thompson, 'Forty-and-One Years On: An Overview of Afro-Caribbean Migration to the United Kingdom', in Ransford Palmer (ed.), *In Search of a Better Life: Perspectives on Migration for the Caribbean* (Praeger, 1990), p. 45.
[38] Collins, *Jamaican Migrant*, p. 52.
[39] In his early life the famous Jamaican writer and left-wing thinker Claude McKay expressed similar feelings of love and romanticism towards England (feelings that radically altered after he had visited England). See Wayne Cooper and Robert C. Reinders, 'A Black Briton Comes 'Home': Claude McKay in England, 1920', *Race*, Volume 9, Number 1, 1967, pp. 67-83.

> monuments dwarfed my age into fleeting seconds. There was nothing then in my life that could make me balance the sentiments that these murky old buildings represented. Everything was set and orderly. No one spoke. No one smiled. People seemed to move about as if by remote control. I tried to understand this human mechanism but could not decide whether the city was old or modern, for at one time it seemed to me that all my physical imagination of history and the past, was plunked down before me. Black buildings, green monuments and the Mews. Yes the Mews! Every time I saw a Mews I remembered Sherlock Holmes, or one of those insidious characters in Dickens stories with a kind of nostalgia, and felt that somehow I had been here before. I felt myself a part of history. As I watched the buses move off from the bus stop and the bobby ambling along the side walk with his night stick bulging in his trouser leg. I felt that I was witnessing history being made. ... As I stood beside the fountain in Trafalgar Square a pigeon came and perched on top of my head and shit on it and I was undaunted and proud and wrote home to my mother that I went to Trafalgar Square and a pigeon shit on my head, I am making history instead of furniture.[40]

Generally within the autobiography Collins' high hopes of Britain were dashed when he countered the daily realities of life in Britain. He reflected upon not only these lost illusions, but upon how West Indians as a collective overcame or became a solid force in reaction to hostility. Collins' autobiographical memory is similar to Levinson's in that it is a *life as lived* and recollection of *the self.* However, his work goes further than Levinson's in terms of self-reflection, as he often enters the group psychology or individual psychology of the West Indian migrant, in terms of collective experiences, feelings and changing cultural identities as a result of living in Britain. Collins experienced discrimination at one place of employment where he obtained some level of authority over others at the shop, he remembered learning as a result of the job that 'it doesn't pay to be too interested in the white man's work, lest you be geared to do him out of his job.'[41] This reflection was followed by one of his many deliberations and philosophical ponderings.

> In order to work unnoticed in that shop, or get ahead with the men, I would have had to arrest my individualism, work within the confines of the myth they perpetuated about West Indians, and become a black senseless robot, an illiterate migrant from the land of banana and sugar cane, from an isle a former British Prime Minister described as 'The British Empire's slum.[42]

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[40] Collins, *Jamaican Migrant*, p. 56.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 75.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

His first experience of racism was on the first Saturday night he was in Britain when he and some friends were attacked by a group of people. This incident was a great shock to him and an event he 'did not take lightly.'[43] He saw the ignorance of these people but then explained that this fear of English people was brief as they turned out to be gentle and polite. This can be seen as a sort of denial of the impact of racism on him, as throughout the autobiography Collins' recollects on various bad experiences of racism and his subsequent feelings and hurt felt. After various instances of racism it is this 'politeness' found in British society that he found particularly distasteful. When Collins visited his girlfriend Sybil (whose parents' racism led to their eventual break up) in North London the 'polite' racism he experienced hurt and angered him. He recollected 'this façade and sheen of good neighbourliness, this sympathy to the uncivilised ex-slave, this subtle revulsion and ingrained philosophy of master over the black men.'[44]

After these recollections Collins exhibited an omitting of all of his various feelings about Britain in ending his autobiography by expressing a 'tremendous appreciation that I and other West Indian migrants must share for the kindness and goodwill experienced there' and that 'the eight years that I lived there were essentially splendid.'[45] The recollection of a 'splendid' experience is certainly not the general impression one finds when reading Collins' autobiography. This chapter is not trying to show that all Collins' experiences in Britain were bad. Generally bad experiences stand out within autobiographical memory and this is certainly the case for Collins. However, he certainly changed his essential feelings about Britain into very positive memories by his summary of life in Britain at the end of his work. This conclusion reads somewhat strangely, perhaps Collins' work was edited to end on a high note or he may have shaped his memories to what he expected the reader would want to hear. Although Collins' described various good memories of life in Britain, the main thrust of his work highlights the feelings he had towards the various manifestations of racism he experienced.

The final autobiographical act analysed in this chapter is that of Louis Teeman, who provides recollections that are the most historically and collectively based out of all the writers under consideration in this chapter.

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[43] *Ibid.*, p. 58.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

3.5. Louis Teeman.

Louis Teeman grew up in Leeds in what he described as the Jewish 'ghetto', the Leylands. He wrote an autobiography, which he finished in 1976, assessing his memories of Jewish history and experiences in Leeds. This autobiography is an extensive work, 768 pages in length covering an immense and widespread survey of themes relating to Jewish and local Leeds history. Parts of Teeman's work, before finished, were serialised in a local newspaper. Teeman's autobiographical memory engaged with the local population in a further way, as part of his work was created after interviewing local non-Jewish people who had responded to a request in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* – therefore directly engaging with other people's memories in order to expand his own recollections of the period.

Teeman's autobiographical memory is analogous to that of Linda Grant in three respects, the use of a self-knowing voice, his search of uncovering ethnic histories of the past and his use of other people's memories. In terms of Teeman being a self-knowing voice, he does not analyse the concepts and fragilities of memory in the same way as Grant or the myths and constructions of truths evident within collective and individual memory. However, he realised the importance of memory to ethnic identity and additionally the importance of historical contextualisation and historical knowledge, having an understanding of ethnic roots as a means of establishing identity. His work is not a self-reflective act, in terms of introspection. He described aspects of his life history – growing up, work, and marriage – in a personal way. However, few personal thoughts relating to his life history are elaborated on (in terms of emotions, fears, loves) but personal thoughts relating to Jewish collective history and memory are certainly documented.

The main motivation for writing this autobiography (and one that is referred to throughout his work) was for his grandchildren to become aware of their Jewish heritage and have a Jewish identity when they were older. In fact, his autobiography was written as a letter to his grandchildren. From the outset of the work, it becomes evident that Teeman was concerned that his grandchildren needed some level of educating into Jewish issues, as they lived in Cornwall, far away from a significant Jewish community. Later in the autobiography we realise that Teeman's son 'married out' and his wife was involved in the church, thus his grandchildren would be more aware of one half of their heritage, not the Jewish

half. The lack of Jewish cultural upbringing his grandchildren were experiencing obviously pained him greatly. His autobiography can be read as a plea to his grandchildren in order that they understand their heritage.

His focus on educating his grandchildren provides one of the reasons why his work is so broad in content, in that Teeman wanted 'to tell you a little about your family – this side of it that is and it is not easy unless first I tell you something of our history, our race, something of the trials and, being part of them, brought your family to Yorkshire.'[46] Thus his work is an educational exercise. Autobiography as education – this concept is characteristic of most minority life writing. Cultures that have been suppressed, stereotyped, or ignored need an avenue for not only self-expression but for re-addressing stereotypes and teaching the reader something of import. In this way Benjamin and Marke can be compared to Teeman's work. The historical assessment of Jewish experience centres primarily on the persecution and suffering of Jews, as well as heroic acts by individual Jews in countering persecution. Teeman assessed Jewish experiences in ancient Rome and the siege of Masada, the exile and slavery in Babylon, the crusades, the massacre at York, the persecutions arising from the Black Death, the Spanish and Portuguese expulsions, the pogroms and other persecutions of Eastern Europe, the Holocaust and modern day anti-Zionism and conspiratorial anti-Semitism. His ethnic identity of persecution is very similar to that of Maurice Levinson (although Teeman's is far more historically based). As was the case with Levinson, Teeman's recollections of the persecution were as if he had personally experienced the many sufferings the Jewish people had been through. He stated 'When, as I sit and write and think of what we have endured, I am angry and my blood boils. ... My anger is as though it is I who stumbled under the hot sun in the endless crawl, broken, without hope, spat on, and stoned; ...'[47]

Teeman's autobiography is also written for himself, to show his sense of self and identity, and to explore personal histories previously unknown to him. It is written as a tool of education and a way in which to make sense of the past and

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[46] Louis Teeman, *Footprints in the Sand: An Autobiography*, (Leeds, L. Teeman, 1976), p. 51.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 120. Similarly as a result of hearing a piece of music, Levinson remembered that he was reminded of Jewish suffering and persecution. He recollected 'it gave me a feeling of fear. It brought back some kind of vague recollection of the medieval past. I was being jeered at and stoned because I was a Jew. ... Then the people who were jeering and throwing stones at me suddenly grew old and vanished.' Maurice Levinson, *The Woman From Bessarabia* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1964), p. 172.

Teeman's place within the Jewish experience. 'Our memories allow us to make sense of the world, to plan for the future and to re-experience the past'[48] – Teeman's work aimed to make sense of Jewish experiences for himself and for his grandchildren and additionally to plan for the future, that his grandchildren would read his autobiography when they are older, when he perhaps was no longer alive to pass on his memories, and subsequently would hopefully want to embrace their Jewish identity.

Teeman's act is also far more achronical and eclectic than other autobiographies. Recollections of everyday life remind Teeman of wider historical experiences, which instead of briefly being covered are described at length and engaged with. Additionally, his work includes large chunks of historical narrative (occasionally whole chapters) fairly divorced from autobiographical memory and other people's autobiographical tales (letters and extracts from autobiographies). Although exploring historical experiences of Jews, the framework and narrative running through his work, is everyday life in Leeds and the experiences of Jewish immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century. Thus, although an explicit diasporic exercise, his autobiography provides significant light onto the concept and relevance of Britain as a migratory destination in Jewish historical memory. There are other ways in which Teeman's work does not fit the structural and stylistic conventions of autobiography. He initiated his story with that of his family background in Russia and his parent's migratory history (this is reminiscent of many other second generation Jewish autobiographies). However, he did not bring in his own personal history until much later in his work, chapter five. The structure and style of his work changed at the end of his autobiography into diary form. This change is somewhat disjointed and reflects the fact that Teeman published his own work and thus was not under pressure to edit his work into a certain style.

The recollecting of migratory and early settlement history is one of the most central parts of his autobiography. Like other autobiographers, Teeman did not know the precise reasons why his family migrated to Britain. He wondered if his parents had known each other in 'der hame' and told the reader 'funny isn't it, I never asked and I have often regretted it and the lack of communication that existed

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[48] Peter Morris and Michael Gruneberg, 'The Major Aspects of Memory' in Peter Morris and Michael Gruneberg (eds.), *Theoretical Aspects of Memory* (London, Routledge, 1994), p. 30.

in those days.'[49] He had far more detailed knowledge of Jewish history throughout the ages than he does of his own family narrative, although he is determined to uncover the history of the experience of Jews in Leeds and does this from external memories, in a similar way to Linda Grant's use of the memories and thoughts of various members of her family.

He referred to Britain as a migratory destination in a number of ways. However, the most fundamental way in which he differs from other autobiographical accounts is his use of Leeds as a symbolic destination rather than Britain and for this reason the concept of Britain as a promise, expectation, or reality is rarely engaged with. His initial description of the Leylands was far from positive, a location 'without doubt the most criminal the wickedest, most vice ridden part of the city and where the general behaviour of its inhabitants was only equalled by the drunkenness and squalor in which they existed.'[50] The Leylands are recollected as a site where hooligans attacked and intimidated Jews. However, Teeman counteracts this memory with evidence of worthy 'Gentiles', those who wrote to him as a result of his newspaper request. He provides almost a whole chapter of these letters, from people 'who bear witness to Gentile tolerance and Gentile sanity.'[51]

Teeman revisits the 'ghetto' in his autobiographical act in a way characteristic of much second generation East End Jewish autobiography (Charles Poulsen, Cyril Spector and Willy Goldman are three of but many examples), as he described walking the streets of what was the Jewish area of the city and reminisced in a sentimental way. His descriptions of the Leylands are carried out in terminology as if he was experiencing these feelings and emotions; he is evoking memory in the most direct of ways. Teeman reflected 'I cannot walk a step in what little still remains of the ghetto with its razed streets, some still with broken walls and the old evocative names still standing, Byron Street and Bridge Streets and Hope Road; alas no Hope Street or Copenhagen Street, where at number 44 I was born; without a rise in my breast, an excitation I feel nowhere else.'[52]

When talking about the political reactions to the immigration he viewed them as 'broadly based' as those held today and compared them with the reactions

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[49] Teeman, *Footprints*, p. 14.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

against 'coloured people' in that the Right wanted restriction, the Left opposed the Right initially but then fell into line.[53] The result to the outcry against Jewish immigrants was the Aliens Act of 1905. Teeman argued that the act decreased the outcry, but anti-Semitism still persisted. However 'the emotions which sought to prevent entry were kept within bounds by the long standing English tradition of justice, hospitality and fair play, which, as time went on, was marked by ever-increasing gratitude from the newcomers.'[54] Thus the England of tradition and hospitality was still evoked without questioning within his narrative. England is largely left untouched as a place of lost hopes because of his focus on local migration experiences.

The questions Teeman posed as to his parents' migratory history were always concerned with the reasons why his parents left Russia, rather than what made his parents come to Britain.[55] Again, this fits into the tradition of other Jewish autobiographies as opposed to Caribbean works. Unlike the other Jewish autobiographies, Teeman did reflect on the expectations and realities of Britain (usually Leeds) although these ponderings are in the form of guesswork rather than actual recollections. England was viewed as a place of work opportunities being 'the greatest of all manufacturing countries' but they found Leeds 'as dirty and forlorn and barren and cramped as the places they had come from, ...'[56] After describing the few families who settled in Leeds before 1877, he described what must have been their thoughts about Leeds, a city 'that had beckoned as though it were the end of the rainbow' which was 'almost as poor and un-appetising as those they had fled from. Depression and disillusionment there was in plenty, despair, no.'[57] That Teeman characterised no despair indicates his understanding of what they had previously lived through, that they were going to an environment, which although depressing was not as persecutory and restrictive as the one they had left behind. It is Leeds and not Britain that is seen in terms of lost illusions, Teeman did not relate the experiences of Leeds to areas such as the East End of London but characterised Leeds as a unique place, one with 'the worst reputation in the country for its attitude to Jews. True England had granted civil and political liberty but the

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[52] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 121.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 122-123.
[55] For example, see *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

inhabitants of Leeds and its surrounding areas behaved as though Acts of Parliament carried no caveat with them.'[58]

However, Teeman provided an interesting paragraph from the Jewish writer S. Schechter, which provides an alternative reading to the expectation/reality model I have stressed when looking at African-Caribbean and Jewish parallels. Like African-Caribbeans, many Jews were also shocked by racism they experienced in Britain and although it was not as persecutory as the country they left behind, it could in fact hurt more. Schechter wrote in 1903 'my real suffering began later in life when I emigrated from Rumania to so-called civilised countries, and found there what I might call the Higher anti-Semitism which burns the soul though it leaves the body unhurt.'[59] Therefore an analogous disillusionment narrative also exists among Jews, although less articulated than in African Caribbean testimony: Britain was seen as so civilised that if anti-Semitism could be found even there, then what hope was there left in the world. Overall, Teeman's narrative certainly does not provide a simple hope to disillusionment narrative, his re-remembering of the experiences of early immigrants in Leeds are far more multifacted than any simple model can document.

3.6. Conclusion.

Analysing the myths of the Mother Country and the Promised Land by use of these autobiographies has highlighted particular memory processes that most certainly would deviate if different autobiographies had been used. All four of the autobiographers can be described in some way as not traditional 'everyday' works. For example none were produced as part of a collective community project and all of the works, except Teeman's, were published in the main by mainstream or well known publishing houses. The role of editors and publishing bodies, in terms of their aims and political values certainly help to shape an individual's autobiographical act.

Although this section is divided into two distinct chapters, generally representing the silences and the explicit declarations of myth, the way the myths are employed are similar between the different styles of autobiographical memories

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[57] *Ibid.*, p. 131.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 188.

found. For example Collins and Marke both show evidence of finding the experience of living in Britain paradoxical. Additionally Grant did not focus explicitly on the myths of migration or the experience of migration but like Levinson used her mother as a way to explore generational Jewish history in which migration and its corresponding myths played a part.

Generally in all of the autobiographies the concepts of the Mother Country and the Promised Land are alluded to but not specifically analysed. Collins produced his work (like Marke and Levinson in Chapter Two) before the concept of ethnic memory was established within mainstream culture; for example before the popularisation of searching for ethnic identity as found in television serialisations of works such as *Roots* and the practice of looking at migrant experience in the collective, in programmes such as *Windrush*. Undoubtedly these changes within popular culture affect the way people remember their experiences. The time period the works were produced plays an important part in the types of mythologies found, for example it is unlikely that a deconstructionist work such as Linda Grant's would have been carried out before the 1990s. Grant's analysis of the myths of migration is in part a product of her knowledge and understanding of recent psychological and cultural theories of memory and therefore represents a self-knowing autobiographical memory, very different to the memories of, for example, Benjamin's (although Benjamin's lack of theoretical analysis of her experiences was partly because her work was written for a younger readership).

One central finding of this chapter, which has been alluded to previously, is that Jewish autobiographies contain far more roots-orientated memories. Again, this difference is due to the Jewish autobiographers being second and third generation. It would be surprising if subsequent generations of African-Caribbeans did not carry out autobiographies of ethnic reclamation. This re-remembering is unlikely to occur on the same level as Jewish autobiographies of ethnic memory, where as Jewish migration and mythology was clouded in far more family secrecy, subsequent generations have wanted to rediscover histories that were not talked about and were ignored in public/mainstream cultural spaces. Additionally, the rise in life history coinciding within such a short time-space from African-Caribbean migration means that the second and third generation African-Caribbeans do not have to re-discover so much about collective migratory history as Jews, (although a de-mythologising of these memories may occur within the next few decades). In

other words, African-Caribbean immigrants are themselves engaged in a vast array of oral history and collective Black history projects concerning their migratory experience, unlike Jewish immigrants a century ago.

The next section explores the concept of Diaspora and diasporic identity. It focuses on autobiographical memory as a means of re-discovering and addressing transnational ethnic identities. It also explores the notion of Britain as a reformulated diasporic-centre and the idea and positioning of 'homeland' within the autobiographical act. The role of the travel writer is explored as a way in which autobiographers can directly bring to life and challenge diasporic experiences and feelings.

Section Two. 'By the Waters of Babylon': Blacks, Jews and Diasporic Consciousness in the Autobiographical Act

i. Introduction.

The notion of diaspora and diasporic identity is of immense importance to Black and Jewish cultures in both historical memory and ethnic identity. 'Diaspora' in relation to these two groups, has often been cited as representative of something characteristically different from that of others, specifically due to its perceived 'original' or 'unproblematic' definitions.[1] This section compares the Black and Jewish notions of diaspora and explores their presumed uniqueness, particularly in historical memory and experiences. In Chapter Five this task is carried out by analysing how Blacks and Jews in Britain relate their experiences of migration and of life in Britain to their conception of trans-national ethnic identities. In the process, the notion of community will be explored and challenged, particularly when those evaluating their memories have an ambiguous or conflicting relationship with the idea of being a member of an homogeneous community or of being part of an essentialist identity.

Although to a great extent utilising Diaspora theory, this section focuses on actual memories of the communities. Recently Robin Cohen attacked theorists who defined the meaning and significance of diaspora without a corresponding analysis of what everyday communities and individuals have articulated. However, Gilroy must certainly be considered an exception to this charge. Although Gilroy utilises some of the most theoretically dense descriptions in his work he also draws on a vast array of cultural indices from music to literature in a particularly informed way. Robin Cohen's article on the Caribbean diaspora (partly problematic in its lack of analysis and positioning of Indo-Caribbean peoples) aimed to avoid the 'endless roller-coaster of meanings, discourses, representations and narratives' of theorists by exploring 'reality markers' of the communities in terms of cultural

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[1] For example both William Safran and the authors of the *Penguin Atlas of Diasporas*, Gérard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, view Jewish conceptions of the diaspora as unproblematic or pure. Chaliand and Rageau stated 'there is no ambiguity about the term *diaspora* – "dispersion" – when it is used in relation to the Jewish people.' See Gérard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1997), Introduction, xiii. This argument has been criticised by James Clifford and Michael Galchinsky. Clifford has argued 'we should be able to recognize the strong entailment of Jewish history on the language of diaspora without making that history a definitive model.' James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 249.

productions such as newspaper adverts.[2] This section follows Cohen in his assessment of 'reality markers' in its analysis of various autobiographical acts (including travel writing, which is a form of autobiography) in order to explore how individuals relate to the concept of Diaspora, the actuality of diasporic experience and diasporic identity. Robert Philipson's recent work on Black and Jewish autobiography is particularly welcome and fulfils Cohen's desire in a fuller manner, as it is one of the first academic assessments that juxtaposes heavily theorised accounts of diaspora with an analysis of the autobiographical acts carried out by Blacks and Jews.[3] Using autobiography in order to assess diasporic consciousness is a particularly important but relatively ignored practice in academic writing; as Phil Cohen has suggested, autobiographical accounts are one way in which people have used diaspora as 'a strategic metaphor or master narrative' which tends 'to stress the generic or genealogical usages of the term.'[4] Robin Cohen's concerns need to be addressed, particularly his question 'to what extent is a transnational identity a lived experience, demonstrated by migrants' social conduct as well as invented in the minds and emotions of writers, musicians and academics.'[5] However, although focusing partly on 'everyday life' history, this section does analyse professional writers, including one who can be termed a professional writer of the diaspora, Caryl Phillips.

Keeping in mind (whilst seeing the problems within) post-modern theory, specifically where diaspora is appropriated as a term for a whole range of situations not necessarily to do with feelings of trans-nationality, this section assesses the diasporic consciousness of Blacks and Jews who are professional writers and who have travelled to other countries in order to explore their feelings about diaspora and relate these feelings to their British identity. This section will analyse Gary Younge's travels through Southern USA, Howard Jacobson's *Roots Schmoots*, Chaim Bermant's *Coming Home* and Caryl Phillips' travel writings (and his related novel) and oral history interviews carried out by the author of this thesis and also by others. These writers are, in a similar vein to the works explored by Robert

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[2] Robin Cohen, 'Cultural diaspora: The Caribbean case' in Mary Chamberlain (ed.), *Caribbean Migration: Globalised Identities* (London, Routledge, 1998), p. 32.
[3] Robert Philipson, *The Identity Question: Blacks and Jews in Europe and America* (Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 2000).
[4] Phil Cohen, 'Rethinking the Diasporama', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Volume 33, Number 1, 1999, p. 7.
[5] Cohen, 'Cultural diaspora', p. 31.

Philipson (with the exception of Bermant) anti-essentialist, or at least ambivalent about their identity. Phillips, like Paul Gilroy, shows a form of anti-essentialism by arguing that Black culture and experience can be compared on some level to Jewish history and in his exploration of Jewish history argues against the romantic view that all Jews, whatever nationality, will automatically identify with one another. In one way some of these writers' reasons for travelling were in order to explore their unease with the concept of an essential identity, or, in the case of Jacobson, an essential religious Jewish identity. The travelling experience is used as a metaphor with which to investigate ethnic and diasporic identity, but does not represent the 'everyday' voice necessarily, particularly as the nature of travelling these writers undertake is not particularly open to all peoples of the diaspora.

This section, particularly Chapter Four, also explores the diasporic identities in some of the everyday autobiographies I have examined in the previous chapters, those from Maurice Levinson, Wallace Collins and Ernest Marke. The male autobiographical voice is utilised far more in this chapter than women's, therefore this chapter cannot make any claims to represent diasporic identity and memory in its entirety. Most of the autobiographies available and published are by men, this is revealing in that it represents how certain diasporic acts (such as travelling to explore one's identity) have sometimes been open more readily to males or to writers who can use travelling as part of their employment (and those from the middle class).[6]

This section analyses whether African-Caribbean and Jewish people, when remembering their migrations and life in Britain, express particular feelings towards an idea of homeland. Was the African-Caribbean idea of homeland initially fixed upon the Mother Country, Britain, and if so did this view modify after experiences in Britain to include Africa? From Section One, we can see how conceptions of Britain as the Mother Country were, or were at least remembered as being of central importance to many African-Caribbeans. Alternatively, is the autobiographical act of Jews produced in recent years focused upon Eastern Europe, rather than Israel, a result of the increase in popularity of genealogy and the search for immigrant roots? This section explores some of the Pan-African and Zionist conceptions of identity and home and relates these to everyday

[6] Clifford, *Routes*, p. 245.

autobiographical acts of members of the groups to see if they diverge or correspond, although certainly Pan-African (or rather Afrocentrist) conceptions of a mythical Africa have never been as mainstream or prevalent in historical memory as conceptions of Israel and return to Zion. Within Jewish culture, these memories (whether interpreted in a spiritual or political way) had centrality long before migration to Britain. Does the conception of exile or diaspora only emerge when African-Caribbeans and Jews have migrated to countries such as Britain and the USA or is it the case that, as Gordon Lewis argued that much 'of Caribbean literature, like Jewish literature, has been a literature of exile'?[7] In terms of the second generations of African-Caribbeans and Jews, are the diasporic 'homelands' related to in memory the Caribbean and Eastern Europe, the places of immediate historical roots?

When looking at diasporic identity it becomes clear that there is no one single voice or exclusive way of interpreting ideas of diaspora and homeland and often individuals will make sharp distinctions between themselves and others of the same 'group'. Many of the autobiographies are, like the ones Philipson analyses, anti-essentialist; therefore it is important to acknowledge that the whole spectrum of memories and manifestations of diasporic identity will not be fully represented within this chapter. Additionally, this section focuses mainly on the British born generations, or those who have grown up largely in Britain, and it is essential to see the difference in memories and relationships to specific aspects of the diaspora between first and second generation Black and Jewish people. Bronwyn T. Williams has argued 'Unlike writers of the first generation of postcolonial immigrants to Britain, like Roy Heath, who after forty years of residency in London still identifies himself as Guyanese and still writes only of Guyana, this younger generation finds itself troubled and conflicted as it attempts to create identities that defy the borders of the modern construct of the Western nation/state.'[8] Williams characterised the first generation in too simplistic a way: as shown in Section One of this thesis migrants to Britain most certainly found their cultural and diasporic identity challenged, particularly in relation to their perceived idea of Britain.

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[7] Gordon Lewis, *The Growth of the Modern West Indies* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969), p. 66.

[8] Bronwyn T. Williams, '"A State of Perpetual Wandering": Diaspora and Black British Writers', http://social.chasss.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v3i3/willia.htm

ii. The Autobiographical Voice: Case Studies.

Chapter Four explores the theories of diaspora and relates them to autobiographical memory. Chapter Five expands the autobiographical analysis further by focusing on autobiographical/travel writing and relating these works to the concept of diaspora and homeland. The 'everyday' autobiographies will often differ to the ideas of the cultural theorists who deal with issues on a macro-level. The individual voices often avoid pondering on issues regarding to their particular diaspora, however, in the sub-text a diasporic voice can frequently be seen.

The professional writers analysed in Chapter Five all focused their autobiographical acts on issues of migration, travelling and identity. The journalist and writer Chaim Bermant was born in 1929 in Breslev, Poland and at the age of three he moved to Barovke, Latvia when his father became Rabbi of the town. His life can be characterised by different periods of migration, which also included Glasgow, Kent and Israel. This chapter studies his autobiography *Coming Home*, which described his life story and migration. His work represents *life-as-lived* and *life of the self* and concentrates on family life and career in relation to his feelings of national and ethnic identity. Caryl Phillips has had a similar migratory life experience to that of Bermant as he has lived and travelled in various countries, although currently he has made his home in three locations simultaneously; England, the Caribbean and the United States. This section analyses his travel writing in Europe, which he wanted to carry out in order to explore his European identity, his novel *The Nature of Blood*, which (although Phillips says he was unaware of at the time) develops and expands on the Black and Jewish themes of his travel writing[9] and lastly his diasporic exercise into the memory of slavery and contemporary Black identities, *The Atlantic Sound*. This last work is the central work analysed in this section, particularly in Chapter Five. Gary Younge's work *No Place Like Home*, which is a travel diary and an autobiography, explored the private and public mythologies and histories of the southern states of the USA, focusing largely on the civil rights movement. This work is written through the prism of his experiences of growing up as a Black Briton; in a sense his travelling in the United States helped him define his Black British and Black diasporic identity. Howard Jacobson's work is also a travel diary/autobiographical account

[9] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000.

about his 'jewjewjourney'.[10] Unlike Phillips, Jacobson's travels, which include Europe, the United States and Israel, form part of an ethnic, diasporic journey, which is started off with scepticism. Jacobson's travels are carried out with the aim of wanting to explore his Jewish identity, which he had never been able to define and came to characterise as ethnic instead of religious. All of these writers, apart from Bermant, undertook their travelling as part of their employment – i.e. aiming to turn the travelling experience into a book, being commissioned to write a book or make a television series in the case of Jacobson.

[10] Howard Jacobson, *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1993), p. 7.

Chapter Four. Theorisations of the Diaspora: Race, Identity, and Historical Memory

4.1. Definitions of Diaspora.

In recent years postcolonial and Jewish cultural theorists[1] have looked at the question of Diaspora. Assessments of Diaspora, border and trans-national studies have increased on a large scale in recent years, in theoretical, sociological and historical studies. Although many academics have been disconcerted at the limits and rigidity placed on the concept and definition of diaspora, this chapter views these definitions (and the debates surrounding them) as significant and useful in a study and comparison of Black and Jewish history and memory. This chapter analyses these definitions in order to challenge them and relate them to the autobiographical acts of members of these groups, a synchronisation that surprisingly has not been carried out very often, as Robin Cohen acknowledges.

The term diaspora originated from the Jewish experience in antiquity of a 'scattered' people. As Arnold Eisen and others have pointed out the term is Greek in origin, this has particular relevance in that the language used to explain the 'condition' is itself a diasporic language (as is the biblical writing which received eventual canonity, the Babylonian Talmud). There is no actual Hebrew translation, although the circumstance that predicated diaspora is termed *galut*, or exile.[2] This 'condition' is, unlike that 'celebrated' by theorists today, a negative one that has been imposed on Jewish people. However, as some theorists have ignored, the reality of diasporic life was not always seen in a negative light, at the time of the Second Temple Period more Jews chose to live in the diaspora than in the centre, Judea. The contradictory nature of the diaspora has always been a part of Jewish discourses, particularly in the interpretation of whether exile and home was metaphysical, spiritual, political or a combination.

Most analyses of diasporic consciousness have been carried out by theorists from the USA and Britain and have chosen to analyse the concept of diaspora by

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[1] Although these two should not be seen as distinct, as the works of Paul Gilroy, Brian Cheyette, Daniel Boyarin, Jonathan Boyarin and Michael Galchinsky have exemplified. For an assessment of the academic exploration of the concept of diaspora, see John Solomos and Les Back, *Racism and Society* (Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1996), pp. 141-145.

[2] The Hebrew verb *galah* has two meanings: 'to reveal' and 'to be exiled.' See Abraham Cohen, *Everyman's Talmud: The Major Teachings of the Rabbinic Sages* (New York, Schocken Books, 1949 and 1995), footnote 1, p. 59.

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using references from the West. Thus, even those people who have conceived of a Diaspora as something with a set periphery and a symbolic centre (traditionally Africa and Israel) have implicitly made the centre Western. Likewise, those theorists who have characterised diasporic consciousness as trans-national and fluid have sometimes prioritised European and Northern American conceptions of identity consciousness. Reformulating the centre is not problematic and can benefit and make diaspora theory more complex – by showing how people conceptualise the diaspora from their own local or national perspectives, by remaking the centres of diaspora into those traditionally seen as diaspora outposts or by providing examples of diasporic consciousness that do not necessarily involve homelands but prioritise cross-cultural and trans-national networks. My analysis, which looks at the memories of Jews and Blacks in Britain, in part formulates Britain as the centre of a particular diasporic experience; a place of migration to, emigration from and a place of settlement and home. Similarly, Gilroy has shown that paradoxically Afrocentrists indicate a particularly American diasporic conception of African identity that usually does not involve contemporary African identities, to the extent that he has termed their viewpoint Americocentric.[3]

In a sense there are two formulations of diasporic consciousness, one relates to people of the same or similarly imagined community or ethnic group identifying with one another across national boundaries and the second relates to individuals placing themselves in relation to a homeland due to the symbolic history the group has with the specific territory. Theorists have analysed the diaspora as a whole, in terms of an ethnic group such as Armenian, African, Irish or Jewish or alternatively specific aspects of the bigger picture such as the African-Caribbean diaspora or the Black British diaspora. Robert Beckford has recently analysed an even smaller diaspora (in its criteria), the Black Christian diaspora, with the aim of establishing 'the importance of Diaspora for a Black Political Theology.'[4] Often smaller studies like Beckford's run into problems when they try to relate their studies to theoretical analyses that have been developed with larger models in mind. However, these smaller diaspora studies reveal important themes for the study of diaspora generally – they indicate how difficult it is to view one ethnic group as having the same

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[3] Paul Gilroy, 'It's a Family Affair' in Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London and New York, Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 197.
[4] Robert Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal: A Political Theology for the Black Church in Britain* (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), p. 8.

diasporic experience. This issue is described by Paul Gilroy, who has seen Ella Shohat's work as important because it has acknowledged the differences in culture and identity between Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.[5]

In the contemporary discussion carried out by theorists, Diasporas are generally described as trans-national 'communities' which have been created by periods of migration and which usually involve one place of origin. Diaspora represents the whole accumulation of different, yet connected communities and a diasporic identity does not have to necessarily involve the 'place of origin' or a desire to return to a 'home'. For example, the Black diasporic identity Gilroy has described does not involve a significant interest in Africa, but stresses the diasporic identity of Black British and Americans in terms of shared music and cultural identification, but with regional and national differences. Robert Philipson's recent work on Black and Jewish diasporic identity highlights writers who have emerged from enlightenment thinking and oppose the view of a diaspora (and even an ethnic identity) but nevertheless inadvertently reveal an ambiguous identity which involves some level of diasporic consciousness.[6]

The definition of Diaspora is contentious. Khachig Tölölyan (the editor of the pioneering journal *Diaspora*) described Diaspora as 'concerned with the way in which nations, real yet imagined communities, are fabulated, brought into being, made and unmade, in culture and politics, both on the land people call their own and in exile.'[7] Tölölyan's viewpoint has been seen as too restricting, as many have argued that diasporas do not necessarily have to possess a centre and periphery, or a homeland a people have been placed in exile from. James Clifford has argued that viewing diasporas by 'old localizing strategies' such as the centre and periphery may obscure as much as they reveal.[8] However, Tölölyan's statement does serve to illuminate the debt the modern definition of Diaspora has to Jewish memory and experience, as seen in the usage of the term *exile*.[9]

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[5] Ella Shohat, 'Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of the Jewish Victims', *Social Text*, Numbers 19-20, Fall, 1988, pp. 1-35, as cited in Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, Verso, 1993), p. 206.
[6] Robert Philipson, *The Identity Question: Blacks and Jews in Europe and America* (Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 2000).
[7] See Khachig Tölölyan, *Diaspora*, Volume 1, Number 1, 1991, Preface, p.3.
[8] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 245.
[9] See the works of James Clifford and Paul Gilroy.

William Safran has developed a six-point definition of diaspora which has become something of a standard by which others explore diasporas. At the same time it has provided a focus for those who have seen definitions (specifically Safran's) as too narrow with no one example fitting all six criteria simultaneously. In brief, these six points relate to 'expatriate minority communities': who are dispersed from any geographical centre to more than one other area, who preserve memories about their 'homeland', who feel excluded by the 'host' society and feel that they can perhaps never be completely accepted, who see this home as a place of return, who desire the re-establishment and safeguarding of the homeland, and whose identity and solidarity is in part shaped and maintained by an affiliation with the homeland.[10]

The one way which Tölölyan's and Safran's definitions are useful is by giving a definition to one type of diasporic experience, that made by persecution and suffering and that combine memory, forgetting and memorialisation in their historical and ethnic memories (of which the Black and Jewish diasporas are examples). This chapter is not based around Safran's definition but utilises it to establish whether the autobiographers relate their memories to these concerns or, alternatively, if they argue against such criteria being used to define the diaspora, such as the desire to return to a homeland. It is significant that different theorists (Beckford for the Black diaspora and Clifford for the Jewish) have seen that the Black and Jewish diasporas do not necessarily fit into Safran's last three points of criteria. The failure to meet all of the definitions can be used as an argument against rigid interpretation. It does, however, suggest a case for the similarities of the Black and Jewish diasporas.

In recent decades the Jewish term has been interpreted in varying ways, particularly after the emergence of the state of Israel. The Boyarins have interpreted theories and practices of diaspora in order to make a moral judgement and have aimed to develop an ethical way in which to relate to the diaspora. They 'want to propose a privileging of Diaspora, a dissociation of ethnicities and political hegemonies as the only social structure that even begins to make possible a maintenance of cultural identity in a world grown thoroughly and inextricably

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[10] See William Safran, 'Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return', *Diaspora*, Volume 1, Number 1, 1991, pp. 83-99, referred to in Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, p. 9 and Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 23.

interdependent.'[11] They have described Diaspora and choosing to live in the diaspora post-1948 as something utopian that allows people to keep morally pure. They have viewed the Israeli state as something that has robbed Jews of their exemplary role in the world and that has turned theological premises of exile into something nationalistic. There are many problems with this conception of diasporic identity, as Galchinsky has observed 'the Boyarins appear to position themselves as politically engaged critics, but they champion a form of political behavior that can only be seen as utopian in the most unconstructive sense. They apparently wish to restrict Jews to the role of Cain or Ahasuerus, the legendary wandering Jews.'[12] The main problem, which this chapter wishes to avoid, is that the Boyarins condemn rather than explain and define diasporic identity into one narrow conception, without seeing the ambivalence, multiple emotions or feelings of attachment and belonging someone living in the diaspora may have when relating to Israel.

There has been a synthesis of opinions regarding the possibilities and 'redemptive' qualities of the Diaspora. Scholars with essentialist sympathies, such as Afrocentricists, have outlined the various strands of the Diaspora in order to show that Black people all over the world are part of the African world and are essentially Africans. Others such as Gilroy have shown that a Diaspora can exist without seeing Africa as the homeland and without seeing Black culture as a homogeneous entity. Similarly, Bronwyn T. Williams has argued ' "Black" means more than any specific homeland, or more than "homeland" at all. It is a word that emphasizes the heterogeneous and unstable nature of diaspora. Not only can it move between generations and thereby avoid the inflexibility of a word such as "immigrant," it also blurs the boundaries of any stable conception of national essences.'[13]

This leads to the question of whether or not theorists romanticise the diaspora as a utopian place of redemption, a charge that has been levelled at one of the writers under analysis in this section: Caryl Phillips. In a particularly damning

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[11] Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, 'Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity', *Critical Inquiry*, Number 19, Summer 1993, p. 723.
[12] Michael Galchinsky, 'Scattered Seeds, A Dialogue of Diasporas', in David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel (eds.) *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism* (California and London, University of California Press, 1998), p. 203.
[13] Bronwyn T. Williams, '"A State of Perpetual Wandering": Diaspora and Black British Writers', http://social.chasss.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v3i3/willia.htm

and unsympathetic review of Phillips' *The Nature of Blood*, Hilary Mantel expressed her tiredness with 'these writers who feel themselves in an endless diaspora, who reckon they feel at home nowhere: who have adopted, as a professional strategy, the romantic pose of exile.'[14] Mantel's views ignore the very real and complex emotions Phillips has felt regarding his various identities, as seen in autobiographical accounts of growing up in Leeds in a predominantly white working class estate and additionally Mantel ignores a central part of Phillips' work – Phillips' has always aimed at de-romanticising both Afrocentric and anti-essentialist notions of homeland and diaspora. Similarly, Paul Gilroy, in contrast to Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, has acknowledged the less utopian qualities of the Diaspora, the experiences of being a refugee and of being a minority without full protection of the law and full acceptance in society. As Clifford and others have noted, post-modern theorists have privileged and romanticised the diaspora by looking from the standpoint of those who have enough financial security to shelter them from problems 'everyday' people have to experience, particularly diasporas of refugees living in hostile environments. Phil Cohen has argued that Avtah Brah provides one example of this post-modern utopianism, which taken to extremes has 'ceased to be a metaphoric statement about certain recurrent patterns of migration and settlement, and become inflated into a full-blown metaphysics of the transgressive subject', replacing the 'international proletariat as a site for the projection of revolutionary hopes.'[15] However in order to recognise the 'perils' of living in a diaspora, the denigration of the diaspora and of the related cultural hybridity *must* not take place as a result. The diaspora 'introduces the possibility of an historical and experiential rift between the location of residence and the location of belonging. Diaspora demands the recognition of interculture. The complex and ambivalent identifications it promotes exist outside of and sometimes in opposition to the political forms and codes of modern citizenship in its debased, camp form.'[16]

Often theorists whose initial aim is to analyse and explore conceptions of the diaspora end up condemning rather than explaining and tend to put forward moral visions of diaspora and denounce immoral, essentialist notions. Whilst

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[14] Hilary Mantel, 'Black is not Jewish', *Literary Review*, February 1997, http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~litrev/0297/mantel.html.

[15] Phil Cohen, 'Rethinking the Diasporama', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Volume 33, Number 1, 1999, p. 10.

[16] Paul Gilroy, Between Camps: Race and Culture in Postmodernity, Inaugural Lecture, 4 March 1997, Goldsmiths, University of London, p. 10.

agreeing with many, though not all, of these pronouncements, the aim of this section is to explore the autobiographical voice and its relation to diaspora, to explore how people remember and relate to different ideas of homeland and race (whether or not these ideas are savoury) rather than to debate the validity and strengths of one conception of diasporic identity over another. There is a distinction between the type of diasporic identity a theorist would approve of and the type of diasporic identity found in the 'real world'. Often phrases such as 'valid' will be used to describe a particular identity as opposed to a dubious diasporic identity; following Galchinsky's charge against the Boyarins, a theorist's role is not to necessarily condemn but to analyse and scrutinise.

As Phil Cohen has pointed out, Black and Jewish cultures are the dominant topics within diaspora studies. Cohen carried out a keyword search for diaspora on the British Library catalogue and found the term African or Black diaspora in the title or subtitle in 37 per cent of publications on diaspora and Jewish in 35 percent.[17] It is clear that both Black and Jewish identity and historical memory is clearly related to the concept of diaspora. However, are the definitions utilised here similar or interconnected? Philipson has argued 'while the Westernized Black has created a diasporic Black culture that is essentially a child of the modern age, the Jewish diaspora has been kept alive by traditionalists.'[18] In terms of Black and Jewish experience two important themes have been pinpointed to stand in contrast to other notions of diasporas: the historical memory of suffering and the usage of the same biblical imagery in this memory: exile and Babylon, Egypt and slavery. In terms of everyday memory, the experience of double-consciousness (in terms of a long standing historical experience of forced exile, occurring on a large geographical scale) provides a further parallel. As Robin Cohen has pointed out after the first experience of exile '"Babylon" subsequently became a code-word among Jews and later, Africans, for the afflictions, isolation and insecurity of living in a foreign place, set adrift, cut off from their roots and their sense of identity, oppressed by an alien ruling class.'[19] Although in both 'communities'' histories and memories, the diasporic experience has certainly not always been negative, as can be seen in many autobiographical accounts the concept of diaspora is multiple and

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[17] Cohen, 'Rethinking the Diasporama', p. 5.
[18] Philipson, *The Identity Question*, footnote 4, p. 234.
[19] Robin Cohen, 'Rethinking 'Babylon': Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience', *New Community*, Volume 21, Number 1, 1995, pp. 5-18

having an affinity with a 'homeland' does not mean seeing the diaspora as negative. It is rare in autobiographical accounts from African-Caribbean and certainly from Jewish people migrating and living in Britain that they will recollect or simplify their experiences of Britain as wholly bad.

Placing the Jewish conception of diaspora in relation to other postcolonial and specifically Black conceptions of diaspora can shed light onto the theories and realities of diasporas as a generic concept. The work carried out by Daniel Boyarin, Jonathan Boyarin, James Clifford, Phil Cohen, Michael Galchinsky, and Paul Gilroy is particularly welcome in that it seeks to achieve this aim and to re-address certain assumptions about Jewish history and the complexities of identity within the Jewish diaspora. All too often academics have seen Jewish notions of diaspora and Zion as straight forward and simplistic (ignoring the various intellectual and philosophical Jewish movements relating to the diaspora – movements that transformed throughout time and place) while juxtaposing post-colonial notions as the opposite – complicated and multifaceted.[20] Occasionally these assumptions lead to dangerous stereotyping of Zionist history and Jewish history in general as imperialistic. For example Stuart Hall has argued 'diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperializing, the hegemonizing form of "ethnicity". We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward conception of diaspora (and the complicity of the West with it)'.[21] An analysis of everyday autobiographies highlights that Jewish diasporic identity is similar in many ways to other diasporic groups, in its combination of various conceptions of diaspora and of double-consciousness, multiple identities, and hybridity. In most conceptions of diaspora, such as William Safran's, Jewish notions are seen as homogeneous and static – unchanging since biblical times.[22] As Clifford noted, Safran's definition leaves little space for the 'principled

[20] A similar division has taken place in the analysis of anti-Semitism and anti-black racism. See Bryan Cheyette, 'Jews and Jewishness in the Writings of George Eliot and Frantz Fanon', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Volume 29, Number 4, 1995, pp. 3-17.
[21] As cited in Cohen, 'Rethinking 'Babylon'.
[22] In fact Jewish thinkers of the Haskalah (the Jewish enlightenment) such as Moses Mendelssohn sought to universalise the concept and meanings of exile and home. Exile was conceptualised as a place where Jews lacked rights and equality in the diaspora. See Arnold Eisen, 'Exile', in Arthur A. Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought: Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements and Beliefs* (New York, Scribner, 1987), p. 223.

ambivalence' about the physical return and attachment to the land and also ignores Jewish anti-Zionist accounts of teleologies of return, such as the Boyarins.[23] Additionally this positioning ignores modern day discourses and notions of diaspora, which as the autobiographical memories in Chapter Five exemplify are multiple, sometimes contradictory, certainly never static or dogmatic and are very much modern day concepts. As Jonathan Boyarin relayed to James Clifford, Jewish diasporic experiences often involve 'multiple experiences of rediasporization, which do not necessarily succeed each other but echo back and forth.'[24]

4.2. Diaspora, Race and Essentialism.

> Neither the mechanistic essentialism which is too squeamish to acknowledge the possibility of difference within sameness, nor the lazy alternative that animates the supposedly strategic variety of essentialism, supply useful keys to the untidy workings of diaspora identities. They are creolized, syncretized, hybridized and chronically impure cultural forms, particularly if they were once rooted in the concept of rationalized terror and racialized reason.[25]

> I met other black men mainly from different parts of Africa. The white people had kept information about Africa away from us, but I now feel that we were all one and the same.[26]

The concept of race is particularly significant for diasporic identity. In the earlier part of the century, identities constructed on beliefs of common ancestry were often interpreted in essentialist and racial ways (although this still takes place today). As the Boyarins have documented, group identity has been traditionally constructed in two ways, firstly by common genealogical origin, secondly by common geographical origin, with the second seen as positive and the first corrupted with race thinking.[27] This section analyses some of the manifestations of ethnic and racial identities that are positioned in the autobiographical act in relation to feelings and memories of diaspora. Concepts of roots and historical memory combined with ethnic identity are usually prioritised over concepts of race in the autobiographical act, particularly in the autobiographers' descriptions of the

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[23] Clifford, *Routes*, p. 248.
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] Paul Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity', in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (London, Sage, 1997), p. 335.
[26] Roots Oral History, *Rude Awakening: African/Caribbean Settlers in Manchester: An Account* (Manchester, Roots Oral History Project, 1992), p. 4.
[27] Boyarins', 'Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity', p. 693.

differences in culture within these 'races'. Within most autobiographical accounts of race and diaspora, people combine concepts of race in an ambivalent way, seeing the disharmonies and diversities within the cultural 'group', whilst feeling a special affinity with all members of the group wherever they are in the world.

Both Ernest Marke and Wallace Collins expressed a combination of anti-essentialist and essentialist feelings of how they viewed Black identity and the cultural links between Black people across the world. The second time Marke travelled to New York he met a 'young coloured man' who decided to 'help' him, as he was new to the country. Marke gave Tony, a friend of this man all of his money, $980 for safe keeping which this man subsequently stole. Part of the reason Marke was so trusting was because he was young at the time but was also because he never thought, or recollected ever thinking, that another Black person living in a hostile society where Black people were the minority could steal from him. He stated:

> In England, where I first lived outside of my own country, all the coloured people stuck together. I might have been suspicious of the man if he had been white. But I never dreamt that a negro would steal from another outside of Africa or the West Indies where negroes are the majority. I thought he was only trying to help me, being of the same ancestral stock in a foreign land. I couldn't see him as an American. I saw him only as a negro.[28]

Neither Marke nor Collins viewed all Black people being Africans, however, and the common solidarity they felt as a Black person towards other Black people was partly a result of racism rather of having the same ethnic group. The philosopher (and son of the famous Pan-Africanist) Kwame Anthony Appiah has argued 'What blacks in the West, like secularized Jews, have mostly in common is the fact that they are perceived – both by themselves and by others – as belonging together in the same race, and this common race is used by others as the basis for discriminating against them. ("If you ever forget you're a Jew, a goy will remind you.")'[29] However, it is essential to understand that this discrimination is not what *makes* the communities or identities. Very few people will go as far as someone such as Richard Wright, who saw African-American culture as being a reaction to

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[28] Ernest Marke, *In Troubled Waters: Memoirs of my Seventy Years in England!* (London, Karia, 1986), p. 44.
[29] Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 17.

racism, in the same way that Sartre has positioned Jewish culture as a construct developed as a result of persecution. Richard Wright was a product of the enlightenment West and can be used as an example of one end of the spectrum of the debate surrounding race and diaspora as he believed American Blacks had no cultural traditions left intact from Africa and therefore should not conceive of themselves as Africans.[30] Others have seen 'Black' as a construct in a way that 'Jewish' is not. For example, the African-American academic Julius Lester who converted to Judaism wrote about his conversion in 1988 and stated 'I am no longer deceived by the Black face in the mirror, I am a Jew.'[31] This is an extreme example although not necessarily as extreme as Richard Wright who argued against the reality of an African-American culture. In terms of essentialism and community other academics have seen that the Black diaspora has no generalities in culture that binds it together. John Gibbs St. Clair Drake has argued of the Black diaspora that 'parallels with the Jewish experience must not be pushed too far, however, for there has been no single religion binding the far-flung fragments of Africa's population together as there has been among the even more far-flung Jewish people – both groups, incidentally made up of several races – nor has there been a belief in descent from a common ancestor with a common patrimony, and rituals related to The Return such as the Passover.'[32]

In terms of Black cultural memory, the concept of Africa has sometimes been brought to the fore by referring to Babylon and Zion. Although this cultural symbolism is rarely used in order to position Black people as only African, the terminologies Babylon and exile are not only used by Rastafarians. The term Babylon was used increasingly by second generation Black British people. One poem by Levi Tafari (Leonard Kelly) published in *News for Babylon: The Chatto Book of West Indian-British Poetry* reflects on the terror of living in Babylon, but does not view living in Babylon as necessarily bad as long as racism is rooted out and African (not Black, West Indian-British nor African-Caribbean) roots are respected.

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[30] For a particularly insightful analysis of Richard Wright's identity, see Philipson, *The Identity Question.*

[31] Leigh Donaldson, 'To be Black and Jewish: The Conversion of 'Julius Lester', *Midstream*, November 1993, p. 24.

[32] John Gibbs St. Clair Drake, 'African and Jewish Diaspora: Convergence and Divergence', in Joseph R. Washington (ed. and intro), *Jews in Black Perspectives: A Dialogue* (Cranbury, London and Ontario, Associated University Presses, 1994), pp. 20-21.

Black man's roots in a Babylon
A positive vibration in a wicked land
...
Give black culture a chance
And let peace and love advance
...
Then the running in a Babylon may be cool
Because we're spiritually rooted
We're culturally aware
And we want a cultural atmosphere
A cultural beat in a African way
Cause African culture is with us to stay.[33]

Paul Gilroy and James Clifford have provided an interesting argument, which is based upon Leroi Jones' theory, that Black diasporic culture (Black culture that has developed as a result of slavery and forced migration from Africa) represents the 'changing same.' This allows someone to have a sense of diasporic identity that may or may not include Africa but that does not ignore or try to bypass the history of Blacks in the modern world (to try to get back to some 'pure' state of being, before the interruption of slavery) which has created very different cultures from Africa, and differing cultures subject to where in the diaspora someone is from and yet share many of the same or similar cultural practices and historical memories – practices that can be traced partly from Africa.[34] Paul Gilroy's work on the Black Atlantic is a particularly good example of this school of thought, which is neither essentialist nor anti-essentialist. Gilroy points to generalities in Black culture in Britain and America, including cross-cultural practices that are not concerned with the history and memory of suffering (though this aspect of cultural identity should not be ignored). This is important to carry out, as seeing cultures as purely products of persecution is a dangerous and offensive practice. Ronald Segal's work on the Black Diaspora (which was influenced by his own Jewish diasporic identity) was going to be called *The African Diaspora* but he eventually settled with the title *The Black Diaspora*. One of the reasons for changing the title work was because the diaspora originated as a result of the Atlantic slave trade, which preyed largely on black Africa, south of the Sahara. Another reason for changing the title, which is particularly interesting, was because due to racism the diaspora was defined

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[33] James Berry (ed.), *News for Babylon: The Chatto Book of West Indian-British Poetry* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1984), p. 117. Levi Tafari was born in Liverpool in 1960. His parents were from Jamaica. He wrote this poem, which he won an award for, in 1982.
[34] See Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity', p. 335.

particularly on the blackness of people rather than the geographical area of origin. Additionally, the term black began to be used as a sign of strength and pride.[35] Therefore in Segal's conception the Black diaspora is particularly different from the Jewish, in terms of its use of racial signifier as the common criteria of definition. However, the term Black has come to be known in terms of ethnic identity, rather than racial and has come to represent those from the communities created as a result of slavery.

As Phillipson argued 'Black identity, while created within a diaspora forced on Africans and their descendants, had no centralizing theory of unity that all subscribed to. Diasporic consciousness might be felt when Blacks from different nations met up with one another, but these emotions didn't always translate into an articulated ideology.'[36] For diasporic consciousness and identity to be felt there need not be any centralizing religion or memory. On one level it is a lack of memory, and the pain in 'forgetting' that has shaped diasporic consciousness of Black people, in that they have been forced to forget because of persecution, and this in turn becomes a memory in itself, as Jonathan Boyarin has stated memory and forgetting are not opposites but are inter-related.[37] Additionally as the autobiographies under analysis in this section have observed, Jewish identity is manifold and is not as homogeneous or unifying as theorists have often presumed.

Kobena Mercer has argued that the African part of Black diasporic identity should not be prioritised.[38] This argument has particular resonance for African-Caribbean identities, and is one reason why some people prefer the term West Indian instead of African-Caribbean, in terms of denoting a multifacted national identity. Caryl Phillips' has reflected on his multiple-roots identity in a positive way. He stated 'the idea of being a Caribbean person, the African and the European and the Creole – not just from one source – that appeals to me.'[39]

Both Marke and Collins recollect on their lives as individuals rather than as members of a group or community. Marke's life of adventure is characterised by,

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[35] Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora* (London, Faber, 1995), xiii.
[36] Philipson, *The Identity Question*, p. 137.
[37] Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 1.
[38] As cited in Beckford, *Dread and Pentecostal*, p. 13.
[39] Caryl Phillips, Erika J. Waters (interviewer), "I Am What I Am Because I Was Born There", An Interview with Caryl Phillips, 15 December 1994, *The Caribbean Writer*, Volume 9, 1995, http://www.thecaribbeanwriter.com/volume9/v9p105.html

although being hindered by racism, a sense of agency and choice. He rarely talked of his dependency on any one person and as a result did not show any signs of being or wanting to be a member of a community, ethnic or otherwise. However, he recollected his involvement in Black political and social movements in Britain.

A large percentage of Marke's oral history testimony is concerned with his political consciousness and his views on Pan-Africanism. His views are also evident in his autobiography but are contextualised into his other concerns and interests and certainly do not represent the central feature of his autobiographical act. Marke explained how he first got interested in Pan-Africanism, after travelling to New York in 1920. He stated:

> ...I found myself in New York. While in New York I went to Harlem where all the black people lives and one day I was walking around and I saw troops marching by...all black people...I never heard of Marcus Garvey before or anything of this sort and so I asked some of them bystanders 'What's this celebration about? Well they said oh that's Marcus Garvey's UNIA people. I said who is this Marcus Garvey? Where can I hear him speak? They told me he's speak in Liberty Hall.[40]

This trip is the same one where he discovered that Black people could steal from other Black people. In his autobiography he did not mention experiencing this revelation in New York involving Marcus Garvey. Instead he talked about his feelings of disillusion after having all his money stolen by a Black American. Therefore in his subsequent oral history narrative there was a revising of purely hurtful memories of New York to discover constructive memories as well about the roots of his political consciousness and his introduction to Pan-Africanism.

The nature of the *Black Britain* programme focused on general historical themes of Black political consciousness, racism and to some extent life histories. It is markedly different from the life-history as seen in an autobiography where these events are juxtaposed with everyday life experiences, feelings, philosophies, family histories and memories of the individual. Marke's political consciousness is positioned into its own particular category in the television programme, separated from the rest of his life story. In his autobiography it becomes clear that Marke's political consciousness developed, changed and was implemented in the context of different parts of his life experiences and was not a distinct entity. After the 1919 riots Marke had an interest in helping with the welfare of Black men. He started an

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[40] Ernest Marke, *Black Britain*, Pebble Mill, BBC2, 1990, Episode 1.

organisation called the *Coloured Colonial Workers' Association*, which attracted many big names. The organisation was short lived as (when Marke re-called) the climate was probably not ready for such an organisation and the members had too many conflicting aims. Marke also knew he was a 'businessman' as much as a 'political campaigner' and gave more energy to club-running than the 'cause of African independence'.[41] Marke's life is seen in its many manifestations in his autobiography whereby his politics go hand in hand with providing social facilities for Black people, running his clubs and gambling.

Collins' autobiography is similar to Marke's in some ways; he generally did not express solidarity with every Black person. When first migrating to Britain he socialised in the East End of London but remembered his feelings of isolation when trying to fit in.[42] His solidarity is expressed by his feelings of unity with other West Indians. Part of this solidarity was remembered after recollecting on his experiences of racism in Britain, in the workplace and more specifically from the family of his white girlfriend Sybil. However, the solidarity he felt with other West Indians was largely cultural, he felt more comfortable when socialising with other West Indians. This identity is at times challenged; on one occasion he recollected his solidarity with other Jamaicans, as opposed to West Indians. His expressions of racism and its effects on people are carried out in a frame of viewing what the world should be like and what the nature of humanity is like, in which skin colour has no importance. After one Christmas, Collins was unemployed and the 'dismal midwinter... seemed to penetrate [my] mind, confusing [me], yet igniting a certain rebelliousness' and his mind focused on a range of questions, 'why am I suspected wherever I work? Am I of a different creed? How many creeds are there? How many worlds are there? But I am a member of the human race! I am a human being ... the soul is for ever; it's the evidence of life, now or after and it has no colour.'[43] Is part of his individualism, as exemplified in his universalistic style of philosophical ponderings, the reason for him (and Marke) publishing autobiographies before the life-history genre had become popular, in that they saw their lives as particularly unique?

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[41] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, pp. 136-137.
[42] He used to frequent pubs in the East End that other 'coloured' people went to. He felt he did not belong there and 'would go over to the Juke Box and listen to the records, wandering just how could I fit in.' Wallace Collins, *Jamaican Migrant* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 59.
[43] *Ibid.*, p.77.

4.3. Diaspora and Historical Memory: Suffering, Utopia and Dystopia.

> The Exodus event in the Old Testament is a defining feature of Israel's identity and Israel's understanding of God as well as being central to Israel's social development. It is no surprise that Black and other liberation theologies have tended to focus heavily upon the theme of Exodus because of its theological and socio-political underpinnings, for action against oppression of marginalized peoples today, and in particular, divine sanction of socio-political liberation with the context of oppression.[44]

> Slavery, pogroms, indenture, genocide and other unnameable terrors have all figured in the constitution of diasporas and the reproduction of a diaspora consciousness, in which identity is focused less on the equalizing, proto-democratic force of common territory and more on the social dynamics of remembrance and commemoration defined by the strong sense of the dangers involved in forgetting the location of origin and the process of dispersal.[45]

> The personal history and the public history in both African and Jewish worlds has been often erased, it's disappeared to the ground.[46]

This section scrutinises examples of memories of persecution that provide Blacks and Jews with a particular, and conceivably distinctive, diasporic experience and identity: the way in which autobiographers relate their everyday experiences of life in the diaspora to wider and long standing historical memories. It questions whether these memories are more evident in the diaspora than the 'centre', whether these memories provide a major constituent of trans-national diasporic identification and whether both groups relate their experiences to biblical sufferings. Additionally this section explores how ritual and culture affect historical memory, in that Jewish memories of persecution are remembered in a religious and symbolic sense. Likewise, one manifestation of the Black diaspora which Beckford analysed, the Black Christian diaspora, memories of persecution and slavery are remembered ritually through the biblical stories relating to Jewish history and memory, of how the Israelites triumphed against Pharaoh and went back to the Promised Land. Within churches in the Caribbean and the Black British diaspora the Old Testament has usually had a particularly prominent role in services, particularly in the 'Church of God' congregations. Aubrey Rose, a leading figure in

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[44] Beckford, *Dread and* Pentecostal, p. 8.
[45] Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity', p. 318.
[46] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000.

the Jewish community and the Patron of the New Assembly of Churches (an organisation consisting of almost all Black Christians), described his experiences when being a guest speaker at one of the churches: 'I compared Easter and Passover, quoted the teaching of the Rabbi from Galilee, related how Moses had spoken to Pharaoh as an equal and told him (the entire congregation in unison, before I could finish the sentence – "Let my people go").'[47]

Wallace Collins autobiographical memory explored issues relating to persecution in a context-dependent manner throughout his work. His analysis of his life experience provides far more ponderings on issues of colonialism and slavery than in other autobiographies of the first generation; these reflections are carried out in a novelistic manner (as explained in Section One of this thesis) that reflect his imaginings and thoughts rather than actions. In he same section as Collins description of the nature of the soul, he reflected on the position of Black people in the world, 'So we become comfortably underprivileged, trusting in God and less in man, for we hopelessly know and are conditioned to sympathise with the unjust and beastly imperfections of man, who gives a little more butter for our bread in order that the flies may devour us. I pondered in my mind whether we are emancipated slaves or not; then again, I observed that the iron anklets were gone but in their places were fleshy wrinkles caused by malnutrition and ignorance. How is it we are in almost the same position as three hundred years ago? I am thinking and I am happy, it makes me feel comfortable and relaxed. I saw no reason why is should disturb my thoughts and go out tramping in the snow, in a futile search for work.'[48]

Generally it is in poetry, rather than autobiography that the memories of persecution are played out in the Black diasporic imagination. Often the theme in Black expression is one of forgetting. The forgetting 'remembered' in Black identity is a forced situation, forced through slavery and colonialism. This historical discontinuity was carried out in the colonial education system where the history of Black people was not taught.

One of Caryl Phillips' vivid memories of his childhood at school concerned itself with a lesson where everyone's surnames were looked at in order to explore where they had come from. Phillips memory does not only characterise the double-consciousness felt living as an ethnic minority, but specifically exemplifies a

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[47] Aubrey Rose, 'Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!', http://www.ccj.org.uk/hallelujah.htm
[48] Collins, *Jamaican Migrant*, pp. 81-82.

particular Black diasporic experience, the loss of history through the slave experience and the role of skin colour in determining ideas of where a person could have originated from.

> About three years later [after a former friend told Phillips a racist joke] one of the most painful episodes of my childhood took place. This time it was inside a classroom. Mr Thompson, an English literature teacher, decided to demonstrate his knowledge of surnames. So Greenberg was Jewish, Morley originally came from the small Yorkshire town of the same name, and McKenzie was a Scot. I felt a hot flush of embarrassment long before he turned towards my desk. 'Phillips,' he mused, 'you must be from Wales.' The whole class laughed, while I stared back at him stony-faced, knowing full well that I was not from Wales. The truth was I had no idea where I was from as I had been told that I was born in the Caribbean but came from England. I could not participate in a joke which made my identity a source of humour. Even those I considered my friends were laughing. If the teaching of English literature can feed a sense of identity then I, like many of my black contemporaries in Britain, was starving.[49]

Winstan McKenzie's poem *Now, I Know Why* reflects this sense of historical fracture through persecution as seen in the following sample:

> Yesterday
> I claimed their heritage,
> Their history,
> ...
>
> We had nothing
> Of our own,
> For in their world
> We did not exist.
> ...
> They obscured our past,
> obstructed our future.[50]

Chaim Bermant's autobiography, which will be analysed to a greater extent in the next section, reflected on the Jewish memory of persecution. In contrast to many Black people, who express a wish to remember and memorialise forgotten histories, he reflected on what he viewed to be the dangers of ritually remembering, that

> One might have thought that there was sufficient in the present and recent past to satisfy the lachrymose instincts of even the most morbid

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[49] Caryl Phillips, *The European Tribe* (London, Faber, 1987), p. 2.
[50] Black Anthology Group, *Not All Roses: Poetry and Prose* (Hackney, Centerprise Trust, 1987). Within this anthology there are poems reflecting the black diaspora and its experiences: on life in Britain, Black women's experiences and the struggle in apartheid South Africa.

individuals, but Judaism also delves into the remote past to add a further area of darkness to existence. There is a fast to commemorate the assassination of the Babylonian governor of Judea (sixth century B.C.), and a fast to commemorate the slaughter of the firstborn before the exodus from Egypt (2000 B.C.), a fast to mark the fast undertaken on behalf of Persian Jewry by Queen Esther (fourth century B.C.) ... The seven-week period between the feast of Passover and Pentecost is likewise treated as one of mourning connected with various calamities in Jewish history, some going back to Roman times, some as recent as the Crusades.[51]

Bermant did not mention whether or not he thought these rituals were problematic in the diaspora, but he clearly felt that in Israel, where one needed national pride remembering histories of persecution was counter-productive. He stated 'there is no one more courageous than the Israeli soldier, no one more vulnerable than the Israeli civilian; and the pain is intensified, I believe, by the degree with which grief is celebrated in Jewish life'[52] and that 'tradition has made the Jewish people legatees of grief but such rituals re-enacted year after year, with their shedding of tears and the beating of breasts, are a strain on national morale.'[53]

Louis Teeman's autobiographical memory is very much a representation of what Bermant might consider a morbid mind. As shown in Chapter Three, his autobiography is a personal and collective history of the Jewish experience in Leeds contextualised with the history of Jews throughout the centuries, usually representing the history of persecution. In this way his autobiographical act shares similarities with that of Maurice Levinson's, although Levinson's ponderings on historical persecution are in the form of 'personal' memories, as seen in Chapter Two of this thesis. There are examples of Teeman reflecting on historical memories in a personal way. At one point he contemplated 'When I sit and write of what we have endured, I am angry and my blood boils. Angry because we have been driven for so long, angry at our humiliations, angry because we have been scapegoats, angry because it has been for one reason only: Because we are Jews. My anger is as though it is I who stumbled under the hot sun in the endless crawl, broken, without hope, spat on, and stoned; as though it was I who was burned in a heap of faggots,

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[51] Chaim Bermant, *Coming Home* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1976), p. 191.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[53] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

screaming, while the mob danced and laughed, as though Romans speared me and took me into slavery ...'[54]

Although he stated never thinking about the comparable themes of Black and Jewish history in any conscious or structured way, it is clear that Caryl Philips' in his fictional and autobiographical work (travel writing) has aimed to stress the comparable experiences of Blacks and Jews, whether to show the divergences or similarities. In terms of these experiences he focused on historical memory, memories of Jews and Blacks who have ambiguous relationships with their perceived homeland and/or ethnic group, and most importantly memories of suffering, persecution and displacement, as seen in his novel *The Nature of Blood* where he focused on the experiences of Jews in the Venetian ghetto, the Holocaust, the story of Othello and the experiences of an Ethiopian Jewish woman settling in Israel. When asked about the commonalities of experience in the diaspora, Phillips stated

> It seems to me that what the things that are in common are, you have a people who have suffered geographical displacements, involuntary geographical displacement, which in itself is a traumatic thing for any group of people to suffer based on their race, their ethnicity, their religion, but ... in the modern world that has definitely happened to the Jewish diaspora and that has happened to people of the African diaspora, and there's similarities in that but there's also something else which I think come through but is almost more important to me, which is the idea of a vigilance. I think that both people of the Jewish diaspora and people of the African diaspora are quite vigilant about their history, have a sort of sense of historical hurt and are very good at looking over their shoulder. And that idea of checking oneself, checking where you are, being sure that you're standing on *terra ferma* and that the ground beneath your feet is not quite slippy, being very capable of embracing two flags. ... This idea of at least keeping one eye open to another possibility of another homeland, all of these things are very common.[55]

4.4. Conclusion.

The concept of diaspora certainly provides one avenue in which to explore the comparable identities of Black and Jewish people. Firstly, the idea of an essential Black or Jewish identity, an identity that is parallel no matter where in the world you live, is particularly significant and even if this idea does not hold sway among Blacks and Jews, as in the case of Caryl Phillips, it is still an issue which

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[54] Louis Teeman, *Footprints in the Sand: An Autobiography* (Leeds, L. Teeman, 1976), p. 120.
[55] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author of this thesis, 10/11/2000.

autobiographers and writers of the diaspora are drawn to and compelled to write about and try to explain. Secondly, the idea of ritual and remembrance is something, which both the Black and Jewish 'communities', or significant parts of them, see as of absolute centrality to their sense of identity. The Jewish community remembers its history in a deep and multi-layered way, through biblical teachings, festivals, and commemorations. This type of diasporic identity – identity through remembrance – is increasingly a large aspect of the Black historical identity, particularly in African-American culture. Alternatively, there are those within the communities, particularly people interested in the notions of diaspora and mythology, who challenge and deconstruct some of these aspects of Black and Jewish culture. The next chapter analyses Black and Jewish writers who have been influenced and affected by issues of diaspora and have travelled to different parts of the world with the intention of assessing their own and others' diasporic and trans-national identities.

Chapter Five. Memories of 'Dwelling' and Migration: Britain and the Diaspora in Travel and Migration Narratives

Wild Life

Is England the gateway?
    Every time I think of a new place to live,
It turns out to be
    Europe, America, or the
West Indies.
    Am I afraid of Africa?[1]

Diasporist discourses reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland not as something simply left behind but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity.[2]

> The history of American Jews and Blacks encompasses not only their place in national culture but their memories of and attachment to sites of utopian belonging - Africa, Israel, Shtetl, and compound.[3]

5.1. Introduction.

This chapter explores the memories and articulations of feelings and emotions of African-Caribbeans and Jews to the concept of homeland. It focuses on whether people have related and juxtaposed their experiences of living in Britain to the notion of an ideal or ethnically rooted place of belonging, 'a place of attachment', a homeland. In addition it explores whether an idea of homeland is mentioned or thought about at all and whether the idea of a homeland is challenged and criticised. It also investigates the memories and viewpoints of British born generations of African-Caribbeans and Jews, whether they view their 'homeland' as the place of their parents/grandparents birth (the Caribbean and usually Eastern Europe) or the mythical homeland, disassociated from immediate history – Africa and Israel.

Memories of homeland, exile, and migration are analysed in relation to modern diasporic experiences. Although focusing on contemporary societies and

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[1] This is a poem by the Guyanian T-Bone Wilson. Wilson came to England in 1962 initially to study engineering. He later became an actor, dramatist, and poet. James Berry (ed.), *News for Babylon: The Chatto Book of West Indian-British Poetry* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1984), p. 119.
[2] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 256.
[3] Robert Philipson, *The Identity Question: Blacks and Jews in Europe and America* (University of Mississippi Press, 2000), xiii.

contemporary diasporic experiences, the books are, due to their autobiographical nature, reflections on historical and personal ethnic memories. This examination focuses on four professional writers who have all carried out autobiographical acts. Caryl Phillips is a novelist and academic, Howard Jacobson is a writer who has appeared on several television documentaries, Gary Younge is a journalist and author, as was Chaim Bermant. All of the writers exhibit a mixture of ambivalence and attachment to the ideas of diasporic ethnic identity. Similarly, all of the writers to differing degrees reformulate the traditional diasporic centre to include either Britain or the United States as a primary constituent of their ethnic identity or debunk altogether the idea of diasporic centres and peripheries. The first writer analysed, Caryl Phillips, carried out the latter: a debunking of the juxtaposition between a set centre and a periphery.

5.2.Caryl Phillips.

Caryl Phillips' writings include novels, travelogues, and essays. They all have a common motif, that of identity (usually identity as seen through the lens of migration). He wrote his first travel/autobiographical act *The European Tribe* (1987) in his early twenties. Whilst *The European Tribe* is commented on in this chapter, the main analysis centres upon his more recent travel/memoir *The Atlantic Sound*, which used the triangle of the slave trade as a spatial memory and living reality with which to explore contemporary Black identities, including his own.

Phillips' books, including his fictional writing, all centre on diasporic identity rather than solely Black identity as an ethnic concept. This theme is prevalent in Phillips' work far more than the other authors under analysis. The exploration of ethnicity is always carried out within the context of homelands and geographical and/or spiritual conceptualisations of belonging to a nation or community: ' "What is Home?" is a question that echoes virtually throughout the writing of Caryl Phillips, ...'[4]

Phillips was born in St. Kitts and came to Britain with his parents when he was a baby. Firstly he settled in Roundhay, a place of post-war Caribbean settlement, but then moved to a different part of Leeds, on a council estate near

[4] Bénédicte Ledent, 'Ambiguous Visions of Home: The Paradoxes of Diasporic Belonging in Caryl Phillips's *The Atlantic Sound*', *Enter Text*, Volume 1, Number 1, Winter 2000, http://www.brunel.ac.uk/faculty/arts/EnterText/Ledent.pdf, p. 198.

Seacroft, where he was one of the only Black children at school and their family was the only Black family living on the estate.[5] It was at university that he discovered Black history and his Black identity through an African-American student Emile Wilson, who became his closest friend at Oxford. Wilson politicised him and also made him want to search for his Black British identity that had not been fostered during his time growing up.[6] Travelling to America and reading works by African-American writers such as Richard Wright also helped foster his ethnic identity. Likewise, Gary Younge's Black identity was more fully realised by reading books by African-American writers and by feeling an affinity with American culture. As in conceptualisations of the Promised Land, the United States has had an important influence over ethnic re-discovery of British Black and Jewish people. Additionally, it is significant that it was whilst at university that both Younge and Phillips developed this American based consciousness.

Additionally Phillips and Younge both had a similar upbringing, they were both brought up in mainly white working class areas and not therefore with a Black or multi-ethnic geographical/spatial identity somewhere like Lambeth or Chapeltown might have provided. Unlike Younge, Phillips' upbringing at home was fairly assimilated. In an interview carried out by C. Rosalind Bell he reflected on immigrants and their desire to assimilate, in a manner reminiscent of the typical Jewish narrative or mythology of anglicisation. Bell asked Phillips if there had been a conscious effort on the part of his parents not to remind Phillips of where they came from. He replied that there had been to a certain extent and then immediately went on to talk about immigrants in the collective.

> Immigrants want to forget because they are so concerned with their kids becoming a part of the New World. They want them to become part of the new society, so they don't want them to remember where they came from. That's really what happened with me. My parent didn't talk about it, and it wasn't something that was taught in school. ... Most West Indian migrants came over for a few years, and they discovered that their lives were becoming inherently British. They didn't want to confuse their kids.[7]

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[5] This biographical information was given in an interview carried out by myself and was not used in *The European Tribe* or *The Atlantic Sound*. Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/00.
[6] Caryl Phillips, *The European Tribe* (London, Faber, 1987).
[7] C. Rosalind Bell, 'Worlds Within: An Interview with Caryl Phillips', *Callaloo*, Volume 14, Number 3, 1991, p. 578.

Initially it was Phillips' European identity that he felt was in need of examining and exploring, an identity that had shaped him and yet excluded him. This was the motivation behind his travels around Europe. He recalled 'the fundamental problem was, if I was going to continue to live in Britain, how was I going to reconcile the contradiction of feeling British, while being constantly told in many subtle and unsubtle ways that I did not belong. ... A large part of finding out who I was, and what I was doing here, would inevitably mean having to understand the Europeans.'[8] He wanted to question how he could belong when people told him he was not a constituent of Britain. Similarly, Gary Younge constantly faced this dilemma when growing up in Stevenage. However, before his European journey Phillips needed to travel to the Caribbean. But this trip mainly served to intensify 'an already burning desire to increase my awareness of Europe and Europeans.' He stated of his visit to the Caribbean, 'the discoveries that I made there were both deep and profound, but I still felt like a transplanted tree that had failed to take root in foreign soil.'[9]

Phillips' reflections upon Africa as a diasporic homeland have little changed from writing *The European Tribe* to writing *The Atlantic Sound*. In *The European Tribe* he feared 'the prolonged wandering of the displaced, who inevitably become the victims of handy theories, particularly if the host country is in trouble ... There is a danger that clichés, symbols or metaphors will be reached for, to substitute for being "rooted". "Africa" is the obvious example with reference to black people.' Phillips saw this 'back to Africa' idea as not being popular with the younger generation who are 'beginning to gather around themselves the values of survival ... and are now fighting for the right to be a part of the future of this continent.'[10]

Many people have seen Phillips as dismissive and condescending about various peoples of the Black diaspora, particularly those with Afrocentric beliefs. However, Phillips is sympathetic to the reasoning behind particular diasporic feelings, even when he is critical of their intellectual basis or physical outcome. This sympathy was expressed in a recent interview with the author. In the interview the question was posed of the possible parallels between Black and Jewish

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[8] Phillips, *European Tribe*, p. 9.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 9.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

culture.[11] Phillips talked about the memory of belonging to a specific territory and land, a memory that has often been ruptured in history. He stated:

> I think its very important for people who, people who basically feel that their way back home is blocked because the umbilical cord in their line of history has been cut. If you look at the genealogical historical line as an umbilical cord, back to home, or back to the mother land, or back to the promised land, at some point it was severed, and the process of re-attachment either theoretically or practically by actual, if you like re-migration, is fraught with problems, in both peoples it is. You don't have many Irish Americans, Ronald Reagan is not likely to show up and try and resettle in Donegal and you don't hear that many Swedish Americans from Minnesota who actually want to go back and live in Gothenburg, but people of the Jewish or people of the African, wherever they are in the world have always got one eye on the place that they came from.[12]

In this interview Phillips diasporic configurations are primarily centred on historical/symbolic homelands – Africa and Israel, rather than the immediate migratory centres, though not in terms of his own personal sense of identity. His sympathies with concerns over places of belonging never overshadow his acknowledgment off the possible dangers involved in the real manifestations of these yearnings.

The Atlantic Sound represents his continuation of the exploration of the Black diaspora as both a historical/symbolic and contemporary manifestation and conceptualisation. Phillips aimed to undertake a personal journey as well as explore the identity of other Black people – all through the prism of migration. The first journey he undertook is the one most immediately personal to him – he travelled from the Caribbean to England – recreating his parents' migration in the late 1950s. He then explored through fiction the role of Liverpool as a port built on the slave trade and later colonialism – this history is also narrated through the perspective of migration, focusing on a non-fictional person – the leaving home of John Ocansey. He also investigated Liverpool's contemporary scene, particularly in its historical amnesia with regard to its slavery past. Most of his travels are carried out in Africa, where he meets Pan-Africanists, African-Americans who have gone 'home' to Ghana and Israel. Lastly he looked at the notion of home and belonging to a

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[11] See Chapter Seven for a fuller investigation into the range of Caryl Phillips' comparisons between Black and Jewish cultures, identities, histories, and interactions.
[12] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000.

community for a white judge in the southern USA who opposed segregation and ultimately became an outcast of the Charleston white elite.[13]

Phillips' diasporic writings closely resemble that of Paul Gilroy's formulations, particularly when critiquing and de-romanticising Africa as the centre of Black identity. He does not achieve this critique by theoretical postulation, but as 'an empirical and historical reality.'[14] He achieved Robin Cohen's desire of assessing diaspora by 'reality markers' – to concentrate on the 'actual' imaginings and realities of Black people. Ledent views that Phillips 'driving force' may be his wariness of the term diaspora and the way in which it is employed – 'it is mostly through form and characterisation that he energises the diasporic threatened by the theoretical straightjacket.'[15]

The initial part of his work, which is in some ways a separate entity from the rest of the work, is a trip from the Caribbean to Britain. Although this trip is the constituent of the book that performs one-third of the re-creation of the triangle, his reasons for the trip are primarily concerned with re-remembering the post-war migration of African-Caribbeans to Britain. Phillips chose to travel on a cargo boat, as he wanted to recreate some of the discomfort and uncertainty of the pioneering migrants. In his characteristic style of little self-reflection he provided a narrative that focused on the minute details of his travels – the people on the boat, conversations and his subsequent loneliness – but little of the emotions Phillips almost certainly went through in terms of meta-memories concerning feelings of the diaspora, such as aspects of his life growing up in Britain as a result of his parents' migration. Phillips is certainly a self-knowing voice and he approaches the notions and confusions of identity in an illusive yet discernable way. One can read his loneliness as a re-creation of the loneliness of his parents – the sense of exclusion on the boat can be related to his sense of identity. The other British people on the boat define themselves exclusively by their distinctiveness and perceived cultural superiority to the German passengers. Phillips chooses to dine by himself; this act may be a part of his personality, which others have criticised for being too introverted for travelling. However, his trip primarily symbolises his experiences of being perceived as an outsider. People have been critical of his lack

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[13] Caryl Phillips, *Atlantic Sound* (London, Faber, 2000).
[14] Ledent, 'Ambiguous Visions of Home', p. 200.
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

of self-reflection and his imposed isolation on the trip, including Gary Younge. Phillips isolation and also his focus on the isolated individual or the outsider, rather than the collective community has been read by Ledent as a metaphor for his theory of *the self* and its relationship to *the community* in terms of the diaspora. Ledent argued that

> Though this solitariness may be read as a rampart against dehumanising systems, whether colonialism or the diaspora, as a theory it certainly does not preclude a belief in a community of experience, of uprootedness and dismemberment, that binds the descendents of the African diaspora, but which also links them to other dispossessed peoples like the Jews, as he most clearly suggests in *The Nature of Blood*. Yet, this collective identity is never allowed to take over the individual sense of self, which remains central, since displacement is first of all lived in a personal mode, a painful experience which, Phillips shows, is a far cry from the glamour and adventurousness that one sometimes associates with trans-national living.[16]

There is actually little overt reflection on his parents' migration – which is curious when considering the motive for this part of the travel. He mentioned them and their experiences briefly, without any in-depth analysis into their inner feelings and emotions. After exploring the hopes and ideals migrants had before migration he recalled 'much to their dismay, they discovered that the mother country had little, if any, desire to embrace her colonial offspring.'[17]

His sense of exclusion and belonging, characterised in *The European Tribe*, is alluded to in this narrative when referring to the fellow passengers on the boat. These passengers would assume Phillips' ignorance of Britain. He reflected that as opposed to the hopes and expectations of West Indian post-war migrants, 'I have travelled towards Britain with a sense of knowledge and propriety, irrespective of what others, including my fellow passengers, might think.'[18]

Phillips use of 'home' as a metaphor, usually an ambivalent or ironic one, is characteristic of all of the other writers analysed in this chapter. Phillips feels he belongs nowhere. Previously he has expressed a desire of sometimes wishing he belonged to a particular geographical community. He usually characterises home as a mixture of the Caribbean, the USA and Britain. In one interview he claimed 'I don't feel any culture shock between the United States, Britain and the Caribbean.

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 207.
[17] Phillips, *Atlantic Sound*, p. 15.
[18] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

I've been travelling in that triangle for so long. On a personal level yes, it would be nice to feel a sense of belonging somewhere.'[19] Here Caryl Phillips is showing his self-knowing autobiographical voice: this triangle is also the triangle of slavery. In one interview Phillips viewed his home as in the Atlantic and has said he would like to have his ashes scattered in the middle of the Atlantic, between the Caribbean, Britain and Africa.[20] However, overall he is wary of the concept 'home' and as his writings show, his sense of multiple attachments provides him with insight into the reasons why people desire rootedness and the perils sometimes involved in this desire of home. His first significant use of 'home' is when he glimpsed sight of the white cliffs of Dover (a symbolism of Englishness that he is consciously aware of). He stated 'On this bleak late winter's morning, I am happy to be home.'[21] This sentence is partly ironic. Previously, Phillips has articulated several times that his home, in practical as well as symbolic terms is divided between the Caribbean, England and the USA.

From reading the chapter titles of his book, all of the uses of home have a double meaning. Taken together, each chapter performs its part of a linear and conventional narrative from *Leaving Home*, *Homeward Bound*, to *Home*. But the content of the chapters are fragmented, non-linear and each one focused on completely different narratives, characters, and relationships to the symbol of home. As Gary Younge commented, 'In common with most literature of this genre, the book is deliberately disjointed in sequence and style – like the collective consciousness of the black diaspora itself, it shifts between the past and present, the personal and polemical.'[22]

Questions of belonging, race, and essentialism are grappled with from the outset of his African journey, ironically titled 'Homeward Bound.' Before his trip to Ghana, Phillips contacted a Ghanaian man, Mansour. This man was a friend of one of Phillips' friends, who resided in Britain for several years, initially studying and then going into hiding and working without a permit. He was deported for staying in Britain without studying. Mansour's aim was to work and live outside of

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[19] Interview with Caryl Phillips, Bronwyn T. Williams, '"A State of Perpetual Wandering": Diaspora and Black British Writers', http://social.chasss.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v3i3/willia.htm
[20] Ledent, 'Ambiguous Visions of Home', pp. 198-199.
[21] Phillips, *Atlantic Sound*, p. 16.
[22] Gary Younge, 'Home Run; Gary Younge follows one man's voyage around black history', *The Guardian*, 27 May, 2000, p. 8.

Ghana, he saw no hope there, and wanted Phillips to help him to live in the USA, a reverse migration from the African-Americans Phillips meets in Ghana.

The aeroplane trip to Africa is significant to Phillips' diasporic formulations. It provides a context-dependent memory, a 'flashbulb' memory such as Ernest Marke's imaginings of Britain after his ship had been torpedoed. Phillips sat next to a man called Ben who was 'several drinks past drunk.' Ben asked him where he was from and Phillips recalled the emotions going through his mind as a result of this seemingly trouble-free question:

> *The* question. The problem question for those of us who have grown up in societies which define themselves by excluding others. Usually us. A coded question. Are you one of ours? Where are you from? Where are you really from? And now, here on a plane flying to Africa, the same clumsy question. Does he mean, who am I? Does he mean, do I belong? Why does this man not understand the complexity of his question? I make the familiar flustered attempt to answer *the* question. He listens, and then spoils it all. 'So, my friend, you are going home to Africa. To Ghana.' I say nothing. *No, I am not going home*.[23]

As well as Ben, a man at customs control welcomed Phillips to Ghana by saying *Akwaaba*, which he was told means 'Welcome back home'. Again Phillips articulated his thoughts at the time, '*No, I am not going home*.'[24] Phillips envied the rootedness people can feel when belonging to a territory but he was defiant that this territory, Ghana, was not his home – symbolically or otherwise.

The use of the language of *home* highlights Phillips multiple feelings of and relationship to the diaspora and those who conceive of all Black people as Africans. His writing about the diaspora obviously signifies some level of identification to it, whether or not this relationship is strained or even denied.[25] Phillips' diasporic connection is undecided, he wants to embrace it to a certain extent, but not at the expense of romanticisation, particularly where people ignore the real Africa or the contemporary Africa in favour of a mythical, abstract and ultimately stereotypical Africa of the past. Ferdinand Dennis seemed confused at this apparent contradiction when he argued 'For someone clearly sympathetic to the idea of a "diasporan" consciousness, Phillips seems uncomfortable with its living bearers. Perhaps it's

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[23] Phillips, *Atlantic Sound*, p. 98. Italics in text.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 101. Italics in text.
[25] For example, someone like Richard Wright who was resolutely anti-essentialist still ironically exemplifies one type of diasporic consciousness. See Philipson, *The Identity Question*. Significantly Richard Wright's novels served as Phillips initial tool of education into his Black identity.

because memories of the dead are easily moulded, while the living are intractable.'[26] Ironically, considering Dennis' comments, Phillips is actually lamenting those Pan-Africanists who seem more comfortable with the united Africa of the mythical past, rather than real, contemporary Africans, who are far from homogeneous.[27] The main part of Phillips' stay in Ghana is focused on the Panafest celebrations, which Phillips recalled, promoted itself as 'a time when the diasporan family returns to Mother Africa to celebrate the arts, creativity and intellectual achievements of the Pan African world.'[28] These celebrations highlight the diversity in Black identities and the romanticisation carried out by some Black peoples of the diaspora. For example, a group of Jamaican guests staying at the same hotel as Phillips dress in African clothing but criticise contemporary Africans at the same time. Phillips was troubled by those 'people of the diaspora who expect the continent to solve whatever psychological problems they possess.'[29] Unlike Phillips' work, the next autobiographical act analysed, by Gary Younge, is not a conscious effort of trans-national diasporic exploration. Nevertheless, the work reveals significant issues and dilemmas regarding trans-national identity, through its self-reflection and linking of the historic to the personal.

5.3. Gary Younge.

Gary Younge's travel memoir, *No Place Like Home* is a recording of his greyhound bus journey through the Southern states of the USA following the journey of the historic Freedom Riders. The Freedom Riders were a group of black and white civil rights activists who travelled throughout the south implementing the law arising from the *Boynton vs. the Commonwealth of Virginia* case of December 1960, which made racial segregation illegal on facilities for passengers carrying out interstate travel. The riders were subjected to extreme physical assaults and their trips met with international news coverage.

Gary Younge's work is far more autobiographical than the other travelogues studied in this chapter. His exploration of the USA is always related to and juxtaposed to his life story in Britain. Melenie Mcgrath viewed that the book was

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[26] Ferdinand Dennis, 'A Symphony of Human Suffering', *The Independent*, 30 May 2000, p. 5.
[27] Also see Paul Gilroy, 'It's a Family Affair', in Paul Gilroy, *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London and New York, Serpent's Tail, 1993), p. 197.
[28] Phillips, *Atlantic Sound*, p. 133.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

more than a travel book, that 'Younge's Greyhound bus is the vehicle for a compelling exploration of racial identity and the problems of growing up clever, black and angry in small-town Stevenage.'[30] Additionally his work focused on the recollected life story in terms of his childhood and teenage years, everyday life and the formation of identity and ethnicity in a mainly white working class area. All of these experiences have created his adult self and are significant to the type of experiences he has in the states. We can see the autobiographical nature of Younge's work when it is juxtaposed with Phillips' *The Atlantic Sound*. Phillips and Younge, as already stated, had similarities in their formative years in terms of family and the environment they grew up in. Yet, the stresses and internal self-reflective questioning carried out by Younge is not evident in Phillips' recollections. However the similarities between Younge's and Phillips' autobiographical memories are striking in that aspects of their experiences led them to explore not only their Black British but also their trans-national identities. Additionally both felt a part of Britain and yet excluded from it.

In terms of the diaspora, Gary Younge performs only one diasporic trip, as opposed to the other writers' travels around several continents (and Chaim Bermant's multiple life-history migrations). This diasporic trip represents Black contemporary identity, rather than symbolic historical conceptualisations. His work shows the importance of Black American culture to the formulation of Black British identity, particularly identities like Phillips' and Younge's where there were limited Black British cultural references geographically nearby when growing up to provide a positive sense of identity.

Both Phillips and Younge, unlike, as we shall see, Jacobson, questioned their national identity throughout their early life. Younge's confusion regarding his sense of national identity was challenged when he went on a 'gap year' to the Sudan, when at the same time four Black MPs were elected in the 1987 general election. One of his Sudanese friends congratulated him on the election of his 'compatriots'. Younge recalled that 'identities suffocate if trapped in the narrow confines of a definition for too long. But everyone needs a working title. From then

[30] Melenie Mcgrath, 'Deep South, deep rage', *The Evening Standard*, 18 October 1999, p. 54.

on I decided I could be black and British and anyone who wanted to challenge my claim to either of these could expect a ferocious response.'[31]

As stated earlier, both Caryl Phillips and Gary Younge became politicised at university, but this was not due to attending any kind of radical university. Caryl Phillips remembered feeling as if he had a double life when he was at university; in the evenings he caught a train to London to absorb Black London culture and in the morning he would be in lectures studying European literature. When Gary Younge visited the HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) Morehouse, he recalled 'studying in Edinburgh at a time when I was becoming increasingly race conscious had made me feel like a racial crossdresser.'[32] This is an example of the way in which throughout his narrative he constantly juxtaposed his experiences of Britain to the USA.

The first section of Younge's autobiographical act centres on a description of his family life and experiences of growing up in Stevenage. Younge's parents came from Barbados to Britain in 1966 and settled in Stevenage due to work. Moving to Stevenage proved extremely difficult, as they could not find accommodation because they were Black. After several experiences of being turned away, one woman called Mrs Stilling rented them a house.

Younge described Stevenage as not so much redneck as redbrick.[33] There were three types of people found in Stevenage, in terms of how they related to Black people: the people who welcomed Black people, like Mrs Stilling, those who tolerated Black people and lastly those who despised Black people. In general Stevenage was a town of tolerators. These people were patronising and would either insist you were from Jamaica, Nigeria, or anywhere else they decided, whatever your answer or they would insist you were English, 'they would insist on talking about cricketers you had never heard of and singers you didn't know, supposedly to make you feel at home. The trouble was, I *was* at home.'[34] This self-reflection is indicative of Younge's work in general, his use of the autobiographical 'I' and his analysis of the question of race by using his autobiographical memory.

The question of home is of central importance to Younge's work. He reflected on his sense of feeling at home in Britain, in contrast to Caryl Phillips in

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[31] Younge, *No Place Like Home*, p. 168.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 190.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 9. Italics in text.

The Atlantic Sound. His questioning of the meaning of home has to do with a sense of fitting into the country of his birth, rather than analysing feelings of diasporic home. Early in his life he had an ambiguous view of defining his national and ethnic identity. Opposite to Caryl Phillips family life, Younge's mother made pro-active attempts to instill into her son a sense of pride about their cultural heritage and their racial background. This was manifested in their home, which became an extension of Barbados. Their rule, as soon as they entered the house, was that they were in Barbados and were not English. Before Younge had ever visited Barbados it was known as 'home'.[35]

Younge remembered having multiple identities when growing up, and would use one definition over the other depending on the situation. He recalled

> depending on who we were talking to, we were as likely to say we were Bajan as British. If we were at home, and Mum was chiding us for being too 'English', then we were Bajan. If we were at school, and someone was telling us to go back to where we came from, we would say we were British – somehow Englishness was never something any of us rushed to claim – and had as many rights as they did. But if someone at school or in the street tried to claim there was no difference between us and them and said, 'You're British, just like us,' we would immediately revert to being Bajan since we knew there was a difference.[36]

Thus his sense of self was in part a reaction of other peoples' views of him. Likewise, Caryl Phillips remembered that before he visited the USA, his sense of identity was reactive rather than proactive.[37] It was only several years later that Younge realised to his great relief that 'there was more to racial identity than nationality' and he did not 'have to cement [himself] in one identity and stay there for the duration of an entire conversation, let alone [his] whole life.'[38]

Younge's mother's attempt at cementing her son's identity did not stop his search for identity and roots elsewhere. This elsewhere was, like Caryl Phillips' early politicisation, the USA. He recalled 'Barbados may have been where my mother came from and where many of my family remain. The country's flag may well have been on my door and I may even have called it 'home', but Barbados never surrounded me in the way that America did.'[39] More precisely, Younge felt a

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[37] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000.
[38] Younge, *No Place Like Home*, p. 12.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

cultural identity with Black America and specifically with the American South. Additionally, Younge's identification with the USA was more than symbolic, as he had several family connections there.

His autobiographical memory of a trip to the seaside is particularly important for his reasons behind undertaking his travelling. This memory is context dependent in his autobiographical narrative and in his autobiographical memory; it represents a re-remembered memory of something he had buried in his subconsciousness for years. Whilst at university he watched every episode of the civil rights documentary *Eyes on the Prize*. He recalled 'for the most part I was enjoying a well-constructed, historical documentary series that championed causes I strongly identified with. But there was one still photograph, of a group of civil rights activists called the Freedom Riders, that reached a place in my subconscious I had not visited for many years.' When Younge was a child his mother took him to Black youth groups in London. These groups would organise trips around the country and Younge went on one of these trips to Brighton. He sat alone on the bus, as most of the other children were friends with each other, all coming from the same area of London. The coach stopped at some traffic lights and on one side of the road were a group of about six skinheads. These skinheads noticed the coach and ran in the middle of the road chanting 'Nigger ... Nigger...' and then started bashing on the windows and trying to rock the coach. They eventually managed to get away from the skinheads after jumping a red light. The memories of this event did not come back to Younge as an immediate flashback, 'it drew them back slowly, as though through a filter that shut out my forty-five seconds of isolated helplessness and allowed a sense of dignity and perspective to seep through.' He recalled 'before, I had been watching history unravelling in a faraway place. Now, it felt closer and more immediate.'[40] The rest of his book is divided into chapters about the cities the Freedom Riders went to and that he subsequently travelled to and these experiences are juxtaposed to the memories and experiences that Younge has had in Britain.

When travelling around the USA, Younge stayed with two sets of relatives. He has various American family connections, and his family can be seen as a diaspora in miniature. In Savanagh, he stayed with his Aunt Judy and his cousin

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-22

Ajani. He reflected on the differences in identity between second-generation migrants in the USA and Britain, and saw that him and his American cousins were 'the closest thing you can get to laboratory conditions for looking at the different ways that America and England affect your sense of racial identity.'[41] In a context-dependent memory, Younge positioned Ajani's sense of identity with his own, particularly when working in the Sudan on his gap year. Ajani had none of the difficulties Younge had when he was younger about defining his sense of identity. Younge recalled when he was growing up 'depending on my mood, I used to either dodge the question with a shrug and a surly "dunno", insist that it didn't matter, or say I was from Barbados, even though I'd only been there for six weeks when I was four.'[42] Contrary to Younge's sense of British identity, Ajani called himself American, 'he wouldn't deny his Bajan heritage, but it does not intrude on his sense of being American.'[43]

Another difference Younge identified was related to the question of hyphenated identities. In the USA, Americans not only proclaim hyphenated identities, but also find positive value in searching for their heritages in other lands. Younge noted that 'the hyphen qualifies their American identity but does not undermine it. That is why American politicians, from John F. Kennedy to Newt Gingrich, can go to Ireland to seek out their distant roots. The voters like it.' Britain is the opposite to the USA in this respect, there would be no votes won if British politicians went outside of Britain looking for their roots and 'that is why a "black Briton" does not come with a hyphen. They are two separate words relating to two very distinct and often conflicting identities.' Younge recollected on Tebbit's 'cricket test', where Tebbit argued (reminiscent to Powell) that you cannot have two homes and the result of 'conflicting' histories would be violence; Younge's saw a clear cut message being delivered 'Back England and renounce the land your parents came from or prepare yourself for a beating.'[44]

One of the most interesting aspects of Younge's travels is the response he has from Americans to him being both Black and British. He often reflected on how African-Americans viewed him as Black but as different to them. At Danville,

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[41] *Ibid.*, p. 169.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 167.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 168.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 185. For example, see the way Michael Portillo was treated during the Conservative Party leadership contest of 2001, where due to his father's immigrant roots he has been seen by some people in the party and by aspects of the right-wing press as foreign in a disapproving way.

Younge went to meet Louis Cobbs, a spokesman for the local branch of the NAACP. At this meeting he met a friend of Cobbs, Roshelle Guynn, who persuaded Younge to visit her son's school, as he would provide a good role model for her son. Guynn and others found the fact that Younge was from England a strange and fascinating concept. Younge had experienced this type of curiosity previously in America. He noted that 'Americans think of black Brits the way I think of the Cameroonian Orangemen who are devotees of Ian Paisley, or white citizens of Barbados and Jamaica. Anomalies. Intriguing always, entertaining often, but understood and accepted no more nor less than for what they are? Very rarely.'[45] A few days after the school visit Younge, Guynn, and her son met up; Guynn told Younge that she was Black, not African-American as she had nothing to do with Africa. The conversation then went onto Younge's identity.

> Then she paused. 'Do you think of yourself as English or American?' she asked.
>
> After all this time and after all the effort that Ms Guynn had put into promoting me as a black Englishman, she still didn't get it. She had seen my skin and heard my accent, but still could not believe the two could co-exist.
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> 'I think of myself as black mostly, but English as well,' I said. 'England is where I was born and where I grew up. That's where my passport's from and where I can vote.' I might as well have said I was from Jupiter but considered myself a Vulcan, since nothing I could say would ever take the bewilderment out of her eyes.
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> 'Oh,' said Ms Guynn. 'That's weird. It's just that you look like us. You just don't sound like us.'[46]

This experience can be compared to Caryl Phillip's conversation on the aeroplane to Ghana, where no matter what he said about his national identity, others could not comprehend being both Black and British.

Younge termed his last chapter *Homecoming*, a chapter title also used by Chaim Bermant in his autobiography. In this chapter he continued to compare the USA with Britain. He viewed that returning to Britain was tricky because trips to the USA made him 'bold and sassy.' One tricky aspect concerned his feelings of racial identity; Black southerners had embraced Younge's Blackness, even if they were confused at him being British. He recalled 'Coming home is always the same. Once I am through the hoops, I am fine. Past the barriers and far away, there are friends to whom I will not have to explain myself. …' The hoops Younge had to go

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[45] *Ibid.*, p. 87.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

through were certainly there on returning from this trip, where only Black people would be stopped and interrogated by passport controls and customs. In contrast to American media he had grown accustomed to, that day there were no stories about race in the newspapers. Younge reflected upon his homecoming in light of this experience (in the last line of the book) 'I was back home to a bigotry I understood.'[47] Howard Jacobson, the next autobiographer/travel writer explored, has a similar symbolic identification with the USA as the previous two writers. Like Phillips' he perform a trans-national diasporic journey, but with a far more exact and romanticised idea of his identity.

5.4. Howard Jacobson.

Howard Jacobson initiated his diasporic travelling in a similar vein to many Jews today – he desired to search for his immediate historical roots in Eastern Europe, as well as wanting to explore the varieties of contemporary Jewish identities around the world. Unlike the vast majority of Jews involved in genealogical history, Jacobson's aim was partly in order to write a book and simultaneously make a television series. This particular focus cannot be ignored, although his autobiographical memory as set down in the book is certainly selective on this issue, for example he did not state where the idea to make a television series came from, whether or not he would have searched for his roots in this particular way had it not been for the book and documentary. Basically, his motives for ethnic reclamation are never contextualised into the practicalities of making a living.

His book comprises an autobiographical travelogue, more in line with Gary Younge than Caryl Phillips in terms of its genre. For example both Younge and Jacobson's first chapters are autobiographical in the more conventional sense of the term, comprising aspects of his early life experience. The rest of his work is divided into sections representing his various travels: to Wales visiting Chasidic relatives; the USA visiting intellectuals (who fit Isaac Deutscher's definition of a non-Jewish Jew), *Jews for Jesus*, gay Jews and many others; Israel and lastly Eastern Europe. His style of writing is as a critic and social commentator, his work is often ironic, and critics have argued that he condemns other people far too easily.

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

Jacobson chose to call his autobiography *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews*. This title has a double meaning, it casts doubt on his journey and scepticism on his search for roots by the use of the term *Schmoots*, but at the same time by using this Yiddish terminology he established his ethnic identity in a positive way. Frederic Raphael viewed his title as the worst thing about his book 'threaten[ing] a feast of self-mockery and yiddishkeit – that sentimental ayayayish remembrance of things in the shtetl in which certain Jews seem to glory.'[48] Jacobson's journey was not only carried out to meet Jews in different parts of the world but was also undertaken as part of a personal historical journey to his ancestral 'home'. This home is not Israel, but Eastern Europe. Jacobson initiated his autobiography by recalling a joke Lenny Bruce used to tell and relating it to his own life, or at least his early memories:

> 'A lot of Jews who think they're Jewish are not,' Lenny Bruce used to sweet-talk his audience, 'they're switched babies.'
>
> I thought of that one a long time before Lenny Bruce did, but it never struck me as funny. I suspected I was a switched baby because I didn't feel Jewish. Somewhere out there in the gentile badlands, in the killing fields of Pendlebury or Harpurhey, the kid who was really me was singing 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,' and following the Virgin in the Whit Sunday walks, sure in his heart that he wasn't Christian.
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> ...
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> I must have been about ten before I discovered that none of my Jewish friends felt Jewish either. We couldn't all have been switched. ...[49]

Jacobson's feelings about being Jewish transformed by the time he wrote his work and although he expressed scepticism about his intended travels: his feelings about being Jewish were now established in a positive way. Jacobson characterised his feelings of being Jewish whilst seeing his identity as multiple and certainly not the same as every Jew. He remembered that he could not wait to start his journey once he had decided where to go, 'that's to say, once [I] had discovered where those Russo-Polack greatgrandparents of [mine] had come from.'[50] In the next chapter Jacobson recollected his discovery that his ancestors were from Lithuania and not 'somewhere in Russia or Poland' – the story he had been told before. He remembered his delight at this discovery, partly as it meant he was not descended from Hasids. 'Of Eastern European Jews,' he related, 'the Litvaks were the most

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[48] Frederic Raphael, 'Wunnerful Jew goes Wandering,' *Daily Mail*, 4 March 1993, p. 50.
[49] Howard Jacobson, *Roots Schmoots: Journeys Among Jews* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1993), p. 1.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

distinguished for intellectuality ... I knew where I stood on this: with my back resolutely turned on sobbing Judaism, ecstatic Hasids, fiddlers on roofs.'[51] Although Jacobson was fiercely critical of certain Jewish cultures, particularly Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox, his Jewish ethnic identity meant that he at times expressed particular affinities with all Jews.

Jacobson's diasporic identity, although involving Israel, was initially more pronounced when he referred to his intended visit to Eastern Europe. His travelling is typified by a counter-aim to the feeling of belonging, which he characterised by comparing to the travels of the African-American Alex Haley. He stated, 'Go on a jewjewjourney. Not as the famous black American, who felt compelled to re-root himself in Africa, went on his; not with the ambition of repossessing the sensation of belonging, but rather with the much more voluptuous expectation of repossessing nothing.'[52] For Jacobson, the diaspora is a positive (although not in the same way as the Boyarins describe) precisely because it is the place of homelessness. He stated, 'Spiritually I lean to New York, turn my soul to face it, exactly as Orthodox Jews incline to Jerusalem. And for the same reason. We both believe we are magnetized, like compass needles, by home. Except that home for the Orthodox means the place of final return, whereas for me it is the place of vagrancy perfected. A universal alienation. And where everyone is alienated is not everyone at home? ...'[53] This can be compared on some level to the Black British identification to African-American culture, not in terms of alienation, but in terms of culturally identifying with the United States.

Unlike the Black writers under consideration in this chapter, Howard Jacobson was in his middle ages when he undertook this journey of ethnic reclamation. This age difference is characteristic of the overall, general divergence between African-Caribbeans and Jews in that Jews will usually carry out their ethnic reclamation when they are much older and will usually feel upset at their previous 'failure' to ask their parents or grandparents more about their past history. For example both Louis Teeman and Linda Grant have recorded this emotion in their autobiographical acts. Perhaps, as in the discussion in Section One, the rise in popularity of positive feelings towards hybridity and ethnic identity has occurred

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[51] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[53] *Ibid.*,p. 32.

only recently. More importantly, as Linda Grant pointed out, post-Holocaust generation Jews were more concerned at looking to the future rather than the unhappy past of Eastern Europe. Jacobson has also reflected on why his generation of Jews have only recently started their search for roots. He stated:

> You can't feel rootsie if you don't feel treesie. Very few of us felt rootsie then. The times did not favour retrospection – not with new worlds to build and old sins to be forgotten – and we, the unswitched, were very much children of the times. Our grandparents, or our parents' grandparents, had come over with chickens in their baggage fifty years before, fleeing the usual – some libel or pogrom or another, some expression of peasant irrationality or another, brewed up in some Eastern European *shtetl* or another – that was as much as they cared to remember or to tell us. And in truth that was as much as we cared to know. We had been Russians or Poles or something – why split hairs? And now we were setting about becoming English. Roots we didn't think about; tendrils we needed. You don't look down when you're climbing.[54]

Jacobson is a self-knowing voice in terms of theorisation and romanticisation of the diaspora. He directly confronts these misplaced emotions within the text (although ironically his diasporic voice is certainly a romanticised one) At the beginning of the work he argued 'there is a giddying romance in the idea of homelessness. It's out of envy for our homelessness that so many artistic non-Jews have tried to pass themselves off as us this century. In peacetime, naturally.'[55]

Much of Jacobson's work, particularly the American part, is a conventional travel narrative where he meets a range of Jewish people. Where Jacobson's work differs from the traditional is in its exploration and desire to find Jewish identities that, although vary, transcend national identity, and additionally are limited in religious identification. Although Jacobson undertakes this diasporic journey with the intention of rediscovering his identity, he never seemed to have his identity challenged as a result of his travels. Natasha Fairweather has concluded that 'Jacobson seems reluctant to go beyond superficial observations and make sense of where this intense exposure to alternative visions of Jewish life leaves him.'[56]

Similarly this charge has been levelled at Phillips, where he has been taken to task for initiating his travels with pre-determined expectations. Unlike Phillips, Jacobson seems fully confident with his Jewish identity, but this leads him to rarely

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[56] Natasha Fairweather, 'From Adam's fall to Howard's end', *The Times*, 22 April 1993, Features.

dissect identities based on feelings of commonality, including his own, often romanticised, notions.

There are two occasions within the narrative, however, where Jacobson's feelings of Jewishness are directly confronted and in one instance transformed and widened, rather than deconstructing other people's identities critically. The transforming experience occurred by visiting a gay synagogue in the USA (this visit did not alter his prejudiced feelings towards a gay hotel staff person in Israel).[57] Jacobson was initially not comfortable with going to the synagogue but found something unique in the service. He recalled that 'the outlawed, embattled, exclusivist nature of the gay community suited the temper of the Jewish service. Who can say? – perhaps I have been close to the original spirit.'[58]

When Jacobson first travelled to Israel he remembered feeling a way he did not think he would, although he called this chapter 'Not Israel Proper' as 'it wasn't even Tel Aviv. Just a facility in the desert for getting you more quickly to Eilat which, as every Israeli will tell you, isn't Israel proper.'[59] In Eilat he spoke to a man from Manchester who described himself as not religious, this being the reason he had not visited Israel before. 'But', Jacobson recalled, 'the country got to him when his plane landed yesterday. I know it got to him. I was sitting in the row behind. I watched it get to him. It was getting to me at the same time.'[60] Jacobson reflected on this surprising feeling, stating 'we neither of us expected it. We neither of us identifies with Israel. We are both middle-aged and this is our first visit - that's how much we care. But we get off the plane at Ovda Airport gulping.'[61] Another memory of the arrival, which has symbolically stood out in Jacobson's memory was the reaction of his non-Jewish wife Ros, who accompanied him on his visit to Israel. He recalled 'as we came off the plane, she clasped my hand and whispered, "Welcome home, Howard." We could feel each other shiver. This is how deep the idea of return runs. This is how much of a foreigner she thinks I have

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[57] As Will Self stated 'in one of the few affecting passages in the book he bends over backwards to be sympathetic to a homosexual synagogue service in Los Angeles. But this outbreak of tolerance is sandwiched between attacks of crass homophobia directed against those bugbears of the Jacobson world: hotel staff.' Will Self, 'More wisecracks than wisdom. Will Self finds Howard Jacobson's voyage into the meaning of Jewishness less than enlightening', *Sunday Telegraph*, 7 March 1993, Books, p. 10.
[58] Jacobson, *Roots Schmoots*, p. 206.
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 283.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 282.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

been in England.'[62] This provides a parallel with that of Caryl Phillips autobiographical memory, when both a passenger and a passport control worker welcomed him 'home' to Ghana. However, unlike Phillips, Jacobson was moved by his arrival to Israel and although bemused by his wife's comments, felt surprisingly emotional about this trip.

Jacobson has characterised the Jewish experience of homeland as a place easier to symbolically locate than a conception of a Black homeland. When explaining his travels to Israel and specifically his desire to 'go back' to Eastern Europe, Jacobson compared the Jewish notion of homeland to the Black experience. He stated 'It's not as though I'm African, either. I don't have to trace my source. I know where it all started. I've been where it all started. Abraham's Well and the King Solomon's Palace Hotel, Eilat. I'm a Bedouin, a lover of bright colours, not a peasant from the lightless forests of Lithuania.'[63] But it is Lithuania where he felt most at home. His visit to Eastern Europe provided the second time in his autobiographical memory that his sense of trans-national Jewish identity was felt. This identity was diasporic in the immediate sense of the term, it involved his feelings of personal historical roots; that he was walking on the ground where his not-so distant relatives had lived. More importantly the feelings he recollected while visiting Lazdai and Serhai reflect his ethnic identity; his visit to the overgrown Jewish cemetery in Serhai and his thoughts on the Jews slaughtered here during the Nazi period and reflections about walking by the graves of possible relatives.[64] Unlike the previous three autobiographical acts, Chaim Bermant's work is an autobiography – his diasporic identity is conveyed within the context of his life experiences of migration and settlement.

5.5. Chaim Bermant.

Questions of migration and cultural identity are themes permeating Chaim Bermant's autobiography. Immediately Bermant explored his identity and nationality of his place of birth, which showed how one could have differing identities without migrating. Bermant's parents were Russian, in 1918 they became Lithuanian and then two years later they became Polish – as a result of changing

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[62] *Ibid.*
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 450.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 500-501.

national borders. He recalled 'Jews were used to changes of identity as they moved back and forth across Europe, but at this time one could change merely by standing still.'[65] His work *Coming Home* reflected upon his life experiences in a diachronic, linear fashion from his birth and early upbringing in Eastern Europe, his childhood years in Glasgow, his years living in England as a young adult, his migration to Israel and finally his settling back in England. The migratory story is the most direct and overt narrative progression in the work.

His work is an autobiography in the traditional sense of the term. He reflected upon day-to-day life, family life, work life, friendships, relationships, and marriage. His work is also a story of *the self* – the internal thought he remembered experiencing as well as the thoughts whilst writing the autobiography about all of these phases and parts of his life history. The third aspect of his autobiography, the meta-narrative, is an exploration of his ethnic identity, his Jewish, Glaswegian, Israeli, and more significantly his English identity. Bermant's autobiography was published in 1976, much earlier than all of the other works assessed in this chapter. It was written primarily to document his life history, and not as part of a wider project including travelling; although some of this book was produced as part of his employment, sections of it were serialised in a newspaper before being published.

Like the other writers investigated, questions of home, not only the place where a person is born, but the place a person feels a sense of belonging, is of the utmost importance. The quotation used on the cover sleeve of the publication (highlighting its importance in the schemata of the book) represents his migratory travels and resulting identities. He stated 'I was born in a part of Lithuania which was then Poland and is now Russia. When I was three my family moved to Latvia; when five I was sent to school in Poland; at eight we moved to Scotland; at twenty I first went to Israel. In Latvia I was known as a Polack, in Poland I was known as a Lett, and in Scotland as a foreigner. In Israel, however, I was known as a Scott. In a sense I had come home.'[66] The use of the term *home* suggested that Israel was the place of his true home. In general, the reader may be led into thinking that the narrative would perform a linear function of travelling from exile in Eastern Europe to home in Israel. However, Bermant used the terminology of home in an ironic way similar to Gary Younge's *No Place Like Home*. For example, when first going

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[65] Chaim Bermant, *Coming Home* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1976), p. 15.
[66] *Ibid.*, Cover-sleeve. There is a similar quote on p. 131.

to Israel, he termed the chapter 'Homecoming' but this may also represent his decision to leave Israel and go back to Glasgow to take a degree.

In the context of an exploration of Bermant's diasporic identity, only parts of his life history are assessed – aspects he has remembered as significant and that which impinge on and reflect his sense of trans-national and local identities. Bermant was initially disappointed at life in Glasgow, particularly the way in which his father had changed, for example by cutting off his side locks in order to assimilate. He was a 'greener' and was dismayed at certain things in British society, particularly in the lack of religiosity of the Glasgow Jewish community as opposed to Barovke. An important part of Bermant's childhood experience in Scotland occurred when he was evacuated during the war. He was sent along with a boy called Myer Tobias, to the village of Cummertrees near the English border.[67] Previously, particularly in Breslev, anti-Semites had physically and verbally attacked Bermant. When still evacuees, one day after school Tobias and Bermant were beaten up by two or three boys. Bermant remembered that 'worse than the injuries were the memories they evoked' and that night he wrote a 'long tear-stained letter' to his parents demanding to be taken home, as he could face bombs but not the anti-Semites:

> There had been a concerted attack by the local boys against the evacuees – or 'Glasgow Khillies' as they were known. My injuries were not incurred from the fact that I was Jewish, but that I was a town boy, a Glaswegian. It was the most reassuring revelation of my young life. I gloried in the name of Glaswegian, and have not ceased to glory in it since. I became visibly taller, more erect, more robust. I was attacked again, sometimes by myself, sometimes as part of a crowd, but no matter the odds, I always stood my ground and gave as good as I got, sometimes with compound interest.[68]

Bermant had no nostalgic·thoughts of where he had come from, apart from the way his family and the Jewish community had been before migrating to Glasgow. His second billet whilst an evacuee was with a farmer and his two sisters who were devoutly religious, but unlike the experiences of other Jewish boys, did not try to convert them to Christianity. Bermant recalled one conversation with the sisters, a vivid one that is prominent within his autobiographical memory, and his

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[67] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

resulting context-dependent thoughts on the subject of identity and where he was from.

> 'You weren't born in this country, were you, Hyman?' I was asked one evening.
> 'No,' I said and added quickly, 'but I'm not a refugee.'
> 'Not a what?'
> 'A refugee, Flora – he said, he's not –'
> 'I heard what he said. Where were you born then?'
> 'Poland'
> 'You must miss Poland.'
> 'No, I don't, not a bit.'
> 'Not a bit?';
> 'Not a bit, Flora.'
> 'I heard him. Not a bit did you say?'
> 'Not a bit.'
> 'Now isn't that strange?'
> I could not see how any Jew who had lived in Poland possibly could miss it. Latvia, yes, but Poland?[69]

This certainly reflects collective experiences of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Unlike British born Jews with no direct or personal memories of Eastern Europe, such as Jacobson, Bermant's memories, particularly of his experiences of persecution in Breslev, meant that he could not look back in nostalgia.

Bermant's identifications to the idea of a homeland are much more concrete than any of the other writers, and yet they also prove to be ambivalent and multiple. His first interest in Zionism came as a result of his involvement with youth movements such as the Habonim and later Bnei Akivah. When he was sixteen he decided he wanted to migrate to Palestine. He had always been brought up a Zionist. Bermant remembered that more significant to his decision was that at this time news of the Holocaust was emerging and also Britain was turning back from Palestine the handfuls of refugees who managed to get out of Europe. He recalled the great strain it was for Jews at this time and that Britain's treatment of refugees troubled him, he felt 'perhaps anti-semitism was not, after all, a phenomenon peculiar to Eastern Europe.' He questioned whether all *goyim*, underneath the surface, were anti-Semities and remembered beginning 'to weary of the questions I was asking myself and the doubts and uncertainties with which I was beset. I wanted to be in my own home, Palestine, as an immediate solution to what was

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

coming to be an urgent personal problem.' He presented himself at the Glasgow Zionist organisation and was told to come back in two years time.[70]

After a few years he began to tire of school and would not attend, instead he would go to the town library with a friend, Pies. Neither Pies nor Bermant intended on doing what their parents expected of them 'going to university, becoming doctors, marrying nice Jewish girls from prosperous Jewish homes and settling down to life in the suburbs.' Pies wanted to settle on a kibbutz and Bermant shortly afterwards decided to go to Israel. His autobiographical memory has simplified this decision into occurring in a single moment. He recalled 'then one day as I attempted to formulate my own plans, I experienced something like a vision. I saw myself as a shepherd in the hills of Galilee, with a typewriter on my knees, and a dainty shepherdess by my side, and thought I heard the sounds of pipes'.[71]

Before first migrating to Israel, he had to train at a Kibbutz centre in Thaxted. Although planning to settle permanently and fulfil his Zionist aspirations, Bermant stayed only for a few years before going back to Britain to go to university. He recollected of his time in Thaxted (in order to show that his decision to go back to Britain was not as much of a turn around as others) that 'to do myself justice, I rarely preached and never denounced careerism or argued that Western society was decadent and unjust and that Diaspora Jewry was doomed. On the contrary, it seemed to me that Western society was becoming less unjust, that it held out every prospect of a good life, but that the Jewish state held out the prospect of a better one, at least as far as the Jewish was concerned. I certainly entertained no worries about the Jewish future of my children.'[72] It was in Thaxted that his love of England was solidified, which made him eventually leave Israel (he settled in Israel twice, the latter time with his wife and children before deciding to move back to England): 'I had come to Thaxted to prepare myself for a life in Israel and was left with a yearning to live in England.'[73] Bermant's love of England was absolute and this love involved romanticising an England of stereotypes.

The second time Bermant decided to leave Israel he talked about the difficulties and connotations for emigrating from Israel. He had difficulties in deciding whether or not to leave, his thoughts surrounded his attachments to Israel,

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[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-103.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

his love of England, and his opposition to the ultra-Orthodox having so much power in Israel. During his second period of settlement in Israel, he reminisced about life in England in a particularly homesick way.[74] One of the more serious misgivings about whether to go back to England concerned itself with ideas of diaspora and homecoming. He recollected 'one of the reasons why we were anxious to live in Israel is that there is something vaguely unreal about being an observant Jew in the Diaspora and although I enjoyed the Sabbath and festival rituals I had an odd feeling that I was taking part in a charade, whereas Israel seemed to be the natural setting for the sort of Jewishness I revere.'[75] He reflected on whether or not it was a 'moral crime' to leave Israel and concluded that 'in a sense it is, certainly for any Jew who has any pretensions to being a Zionist, or who draws reassurance and pride – as I do – from the existence of Israel.'[76]

Like Jacobson he certainly did not view the diaspora in a negative light: by the end of his autobiography we can read his 'Coming Home' as a return to Britain. Bermant reflected on the importance of Zionism in historical memory, including the prayer said at *Yom Kippur* and the *seder*: Next Year in Jerusalem.

> like every Orthodox Jew, I was born and brought up a Zionist. Zionism formed part of the language of daily prayer, and Jewish liturgy is full of evocations of Zion:
> 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her ...
> 'Do good, in thy good pleasure with Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem ... [77]

Bermant characterised his identity as both Jewish and English, but saw these identities as distinct. He 'wanted everything, a countryman's life with a townman's sentimentality, a goyish sense of liberty with a Jewish sense of tradition; I wanted my Essex with my Jewish contemporaries; I wanted my Jews to be a little less earnest and a little more bucolic, a little less in synagogue and more in the pub; I

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[74] Ella Shohat's analyses of Arab Jewish identities are particularly relevant in this discussion. Shohat has shown that the traditional notions of homecoming and exile do not leave space for people who actually feel exiled in Israel. These notions have often forced people to stifle the shared nostalgia they feel about leaving their homes. Ella Shohat, 'Reflections of an Arab Jew', *Emergences*, Volume 3, Number 4, Fall 1992, pp. 39-45, as cited in Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1996), p. 104. Similarly Caryl Phillips stories reflect this sense of being an outsider in the place you feel you should call home, particularly his story in *The Nature of Blood* about the experiences of an Ethiopian Jewish woman who settled in Israel.
[75] Bermant, *Coming Home*, p. 203.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

wanted Jewish warmth and English detachment.'[78] His experience of diasporic identity was brought to the fore in the last chapter of his autobiography, where he yearned for Britain but cared more about Israel, he stated 'But above all, and this I think is the truest test of home, events in Israel trouble me more – and not necessarily because they are more dramatic – than events in Britain. ... Home is where you lose your temper, but this may be because concern is contagious.' In the last paragraph of the autobiography he expresses the 'peculiar hold' Britain, specifically rural England, has upon him, 'which is not to say that I am completely at home in England. I am not – except that a language is also a homeland of sorts. Every word of English evokes English scenes, English thoughts, English ways; and I am at home in English in a way that I never shall be in Hebrew, no matter how lovely its cadences and how ancient its echoes.'[79]

5.6. Conclusion.

In most examples of autobiographical memory, diasporic consciousness is represented by cross-cultural connections, by people who travel from one place to another and do not necessarily have one homeland. Yet, there is still a particular feeling of identity and affinity with the idea of homeland, even from someone like Howard Jacobson who did not previously have any significant feelings towards Israel. There is certainly less feelings of homeland expressed in African-Caribbean memory (certainly less in a writer such as Caryl Phillips). Nevertheless, the sense of historical loss and cultural dislocation away from Africa is often expressed, particularly when people relate to their experiences of growing up in a colony where no Black or African history was taught or growing up in Britain where one was often externally excluded but, at times, albeit with certain conditions, included into a formulation of Britishness. As Beckford has argued, the concept of diaspora is more significant to African-Caribbeans in Britain than that of exodus. This type of diasporic identity is also the case for many Jews in Britain; feelings and love of the diaspora do not have to stand in polar opposition to feelings of identification with the idea of a homeland, as exemplified by Chaim Bermant's autobiographical memory.

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[78] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[79] *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.

Diasporic identity is not just an extension of ethnic or 'racial' identity. For example, Caryl Phillips' European identity and Chaim Bermant's English identity are certainly comparable to the feelings of diasporic identity based on ethnic heritage. In relation to the place Britain has within diasporic identity, the writers' articulations are particularly varied. Caryl Phillips has an ambiguous relationship to Britain. Within his diasporic travels he did not really relate his experiences to Britain, which contrasts to Gary Younge's work where it is a constant feature. Diran Adebayo has argued Phillips' *The Atlantic Sound* 'is billed as a "personal quest" but I wanted to know more about this Caribbean-born and England bred author's own deep feelings for "home" and how they were affected, or not, by his journey.'[80] This charge could certainly not be placed on Younge, although certainly Jacobson's feelings of his own sense of identity and his experiences of life in Britain are also never really explored or challenged. However, one type of diasporic formulation should not be set as the norm. Phillips and Jacobson's type of work is particularly revealing; they highlight that feelings of diaspora and home are multiple and disparate and not necessarily fixed upon Britain as the focal point.

In a similar vein to cultural theorists such as Clifford and Gilroy, the writers explored in this chapter do not pigeonhole their identity into fixed categories. Although focusing on writers who have used travelling and numerous migratory experiences with which to explore their diasporic identity, the same complexities of emotion regarding feelings of belonging are found in those people who have not travelled to the same extent. As shown by Gilroy, diasporic identity can involve cross-cultural connections, without individuals having to travel. Even so, travel provided these writers with a further way at looking at their identities and occasionally served to transform opinions the writers had previously viewed as absolute – Jacobson unexpectedly found feelings of belonging in Eastern Europe and Israel and Bermant found a feeling of home in the heart of rural England when paradoxically preparing for life in Israel. Ultimately, the relationship between ideas of 'home' and 'diaspora' is multifaceted and subject to constant change.

[80] Diran Adebayo, 'Africa and "home"', *The Times*, 11 May 2000, Features.

Section Three. Hidden Histories, Collective Memory, Remembering and Forgetting in Black and Jewish Ethnic Memory

i. Introduction.

Within every society, events impinging on 'the collective' or events affecting certain groups of people are subject to differing memory formulations. These formulations are partly created by what the society as a whole desires to have as its narrative or national myth. Ethnic minorities, as well as other marginalised groups, have additional forces at play, both internal and external, whereby their experiences are usually subject to forgetting and exclusion and are usually hidden within a short period of time without the power to challenge the dominant national script at work. This section explores the ethnic memories of specific historical events and historical trends in Britain that have been forgotten, revised, or suppressed within 'wider' memories and within the memories of Blacks and Jews. Diverse types of memories are utilised – personal, collective, generational and ethnic. Of particular importance is the link between remembering, re-remembering and forgetting history. It uses and explores certain concepts that have been subjected to scrutiny by historians and theorists – notably *collective memory.*

ii. Collective Memory and its usage within history.

Whole ranges of disciplines use the term collective memory, particularly historians who work on history and memory. Maurice Halbwachs first brought the term into the public domain in his pioneering study *La Mémoire Collective* published posthumously in 1950.[1] His work has been used increasingly in the last few decades as a result of the increasing interest in questions of identity, community, and memory and due to the post-modern effect on the disciplines, whereby historians have been adopting some of the strategies of literary critics.

Nora Gedi and Yigal Elam have not only recognised this phenomenon, but also the marked absence in historians who have tried to define collective memory, including Halbwachs. Due to this absence, and within a framework of analysing Halbwach's work, they set out to 'enquire whether this [collective memory] is merely a useful working term which expands the historian's explanatory capacity,

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[1] Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire Collective* (Paris, published posthumously by Jeanne Alexandre, 1950).

or whether we are rather witnessing an act of intrusion whereby a certain term is forcing itself like a molten rock into an earlier formation, jostling aside older yet still effective working terms, and unavoidably obliterating fine distinctions that have so far well served historical research.'[2] Predictably, from the strength of the language used, they concluded with the latter point.

Gedi and Elam have several problems with the definition and usage of the term. As they correctly ascertain, all 'collective' terms are problematic. Debatable, however, is their argument that as memory is a purely personal process, to talk of collective memory is a romantic misnomer. To re-iterate their argument they quote Amos Funkenstein, who stated 'remembering is a mental act, and therefore it is absolutely and completely personal.'[3] This comment, however, does not lead to Funkenstein abandoning the term. He has appreciated that the memory of personal experiences cannot be divorced from their social contexts.[4] As Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have articulated, personal history is in fact created by collective notions of the past.[5]

Additionally, Gedi and Elam have questioned Halbwach's theory of locating memory in terms of societal processes and the collective and concluded that 'collective memory' is a misleading new name for myth and 'indeed, collective memory is but a myth.'[6] They illustrate a particular argument that is based on a misunderstanding of the motives behind those theorists who use the term – they view all those who hold a belief in the existence of collective memory as having a sort of romanticised and somewhat dangerous notion of the actuality of a collective spirit or psyche of a group of people. Obviously, memory in terms of its biological function cannot be experienced within a group situation, but this predication does not mean that the expression should be defined in terms of a purely biological classification. Collective memory does not stand for biological personal memories, it relates to historical knowledge and beliefs that are explicit or silent within a society. These do not necessarily have to be articulated by an individual in order to exist and function. It represents the way in which history, myths, ideas, personal

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[2] Nora Gedi and Yigal Elam, 'Collective Memory – What Is It?', *History & Memory*, Volume 8, Number 1, Spring/Summer 1996, p. 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 34.
[4] Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), p. 4.
[5] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, 'Introduction', in Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By* (London, Routledge, 1990), p. 8.

experiences and personal memories are publicly verbalised, commemorated, memorialised, articulated in folk tales and fables, or forgotten, revised and repressed. Memories are certainly not consistent and uniform throughout a society or cultural group. One individual's personal convictions may lead to a conscious effort at re-remembering histories, whilst another person's fear of disturbing the status-quo may lead to personal suppression of memory and yet in a way both people share the same collective memory even though they engage with it in diverging fashions. Gedi and Elam made the error that Bloch has attributed to previous trends within the psychological study of memory, whereby personal memory is seen as a purely psychological and biological process not shaped by any societal influences or myths and memories within wider culture.[7] Additionally, as anthropologists and others who work on life history have shown us, personal memory is constantly re-created, re-constructed and transformed and thus is not a mirror image of when first experienced. This section shows instances where individuals juxtapose their personal memories to the collective and also where collective memory has shaped in part the individual's memories of a particular event. For example, Chapter Six investigates the collective memory of silence surrounding racist riots in Britain and the subsequent re-claiming of these events as part of ethnic history.

iii. History and Memory.

Although Gedi and Elam have criticised the memoriologist Pierre Nora for claiming that personal memories are formed in social contexts, they are in agreement with his other postulation, that history and memory are separate entities. They have referred to the 'obvious gap' between history and memory and that 'memory is an unreliable source of valid history.'[8] What happens to this 'obvious gap' when one studies the historical memories of people, as in the case of this thesis? Conjectures of this kind serve to ignore the small but growing historical discipline of memory <u>as</u> history rather than memory <u>and</u> history. This thesis, particularly this section, fits into the former discipline – memory <u>as</u> history. It

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[6] Gedi and Elam, 'Collective Memory – What Is It?', p. 47.
[7] Maurice Bloch, 'Internal and External Memory: Different Ways of Being in History', in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds.), *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (London and New York, Routledge, 1996), p. 216.
[8] Gedi and Elam, 'Collective Memory – What Is It?', p. 33.

concerns itself with historical memory and collective memory, the way in which individuals and communities remember, forget, and re-claim their ethnic histories.

Pierre Nora's work on history and memory, particularly his massive publication *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, has been of influence to a range of cultural theorists, historians and memoriologists, most notably in the case of this thesis has been Jonathan Boyarin. Nora has argued that within society today there are *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire* (real environments of memory).[9] The 'acceleration of history', in Nora's view, has caused a break between history and memory, between spontaneous remembering and self-conscious remembering. The modern world has caused people to deliberately remember, to create archives, maintain anniversaries, as opposed to spontaneously remember.[10] Interestingly Nora cites Jewish history as a tool to back up his theory. As others such as Funkenstein has noted, it was not until the modern era that Jews started to practise secular historical studies rather than to practise purely remembering. Nora has argued (using Yerushalmi's terminology) that Jews of the Diaspora were the 'peoples of memory' devoted to rituals and to remembering their experiences and therefore did not need historians until their 'forced exposure' to the modern world.[11] Aside from Nora's romanticised view of Jewish people somehow living outside of the modern world (as if Jews were being shaped by it, but not shaping it themselves) Nora contradicted himself. He argued that maintaining anniversaries is something characteristic of the modern world, but this ritual marking of anniversaries is part-and-parcel of pre-modern Jewish culture and identity.

Nora's ideas have use for historians involved in analysing theories of memory, particularly deliberately articulated memories of societies and groups in the modern world and in the case of this chapter, memories of groups that have been previously marginalized and are exploring their histories as an act of historical re-clamation. Re-claiming or re-remembering histories as a self-knowing action is an increasingly evident phenomenon among groups whose histories have been

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[9] Pierre Nora, 'Between History and Memory: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', *Representations*, Number 26, Spring 1989, p. 7.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 8. Yerushalmi broke new ground and has influenced many theorists working on history and memory with his exploration of memory within Jewish historical consciousness. See Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, WA., University of Washington Press, 1982).

ignored or suppressed by mainstream collective consciousness and by general historical teaching. Although as Section Two highlighted, Jewish collective memory is something of innate importance in Jewish history and culture, memory does not always entail remembering and can involve just as many silences and suppressions of history. This section looks at how some of these hidden histories have not only been ignored by wider societal memory, but have also been forgotten by the communities themselves.

iv. Memory and Forgetting.

As pointed out in the introduction, the links between memory and forgetting are at last being explored and acknowledged as of central importance to the fabric of memory. Often those exploring issues of history and memory will look at the articulated and evident manifestations of memory, rather than the silences and the histories that have been forgotten, revised, or suppressed. This section utilises the work of Jonathan Boyarin, particularly his exploration of forgetting as seen in collective Jewish memory of geographical spaces or sites. It also adopts his notion of collective memory as seen through the prism of ethnic memory. His conception of collective memory is certainly not at odds with personal memory and does not view the former as purely mythological or as a psychological concept. In terms of theories of forgetting histories, the work of Irwin-Zarecka is essential reading and has been the main influence within this section, particularly in its exploration of the memories of marginalized groups within society.[12]

Boyarin's groundbreaking work *Storm from Paradise* provided an original way of looking at collective memory in its focus on forgetting (and re-remembering, although he does not use this language). Memory, in Boyarin's view, is an active agent in contemporary society – what people as individuals or within a collective favour to remember is subject upon a whole range of considerations involving the way in which a community wishes to represent its past and also have a living relationship with its past. His first chapter *The Lower East Side: A Place of Forgetting* was directly inspired in title and content by Nora's *Les Lieux de Mémoire* and was meant as a parody on Nora's focus on remembering rather than forgetting. In contrast to this thesis, Boyarin concentrates his analysis on spatial

[12] Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publishers, 1994).

memory, particularly how Jews recollect on their personal memories or generational memories of life in the former immigrant area as a way of distancing themselves from or alternatively remembering the Jewish community of the past as a form of 'symbolic ethnicity'.[13]

As Jonathan Boyarin has thoroughly illustrated, memory and forgetting are not antithetical, opposites or inversely proportional to one another. Deliberating on the reasons why forgetting is rarely academically explored, he claimed 'forgetting seems ghostly, not because it has no force or weight (it presses against us heavily and constantly, and it may yet do us in), but because we are so unused to naming it that even those of us who realize its danger usually prefer to speak *for memory*.'[14] Although Boyarin seeks to explain rather than condemn forgetting, his work is in itself an act of remembering by bringing to light the histories that have been suppressed by collective memory. Another paradox, which links to Boyarin's *re-remembering by default* has been noted by Irwin-Zarecka, that for one to explore social forgetting there needs to be a pre-requisite assumption that the history given to society or made official is incomplete. Irwin-Zarecka has argued 'recognizing that one is always making a judgement when studying social forgetting as to what is true and what is not may give us theoretical discomfort, yet it is not an unreasonable price to pay for illuminating a key field where social forces are played out.'[15]

In Boyarin's view, forgetting must not be linked with absence. The latter term, as articulated by Boyarin, exists 'outside of history', whilst the former is created very much within a certain historical and social environment and can occasionally be deliberate, as Chapter Six exemplifies.[16] Unlike absence, forgetting can speak to the observer in much the same way as remembering can. Irwin-Zarecka's analysis of collective forgetting does utilise the term absence but uses it

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[13] The term 'symbolic ethnicity' was coined by Herbert Gans. It relates to the way individuals maintain their ethnicity by performing acts that are usually secular in nature, such as exploring one's roots and visiting places of significance to the ethnic past, e.g. Jews exploring the East End of London or the Lower East Side in New York. Howard Jacobson is a good illustration of someone carrying out symbolic ethnicity. See Herbert Gans, 'Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 2, Number 1, 1979, pp. 1-20, cited in Robert Philipson, *The Identity Question: Blacks and Jews in Europe and America* (University of Mississippi Press, 2000), p. 215.

[14] Jonathan Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 1. Italics in text.

[15] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 119.

[16] Boyarin, *Storm From Paradise*, p. 2.

as an alternative word for forgetting. When referring to individual life stories (which are not divorced from collective memory), Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson argued 'what is forgotten may be as important as what is remembered.'[17] For example Norma Baumel Joseph, influenced by Yerushalmi, has looked at the notion of Jewish memory and how it impinges on what is remembered about Jewish women. In particular she explored the biblical commandment for Jews to actively remember their history – '*Zakhor*, remember! But whose story have we remembered, and who has been silenced? If memory is so important, if it forms the basis of identity and commitment and responsiveness, then which pieces of history have been remembered, which have we neglected to commemorate with ritual, with celebration? Who has been left out?'[18]

In the context of collective national memory, locating histories of events about ethnic communities is carried out as a challenge to societal forgetting and a way of locating a community's history within a national framework. National myths, as stated by Samuel and Thompson, help to build up a sense of who is perceived to belong and who is seen as the outsider, in 'rallying solidarity they also exclude, and persecute the excluded.'[19] These silences can be read, for they are not absences (in Boyarin's usage of the term) but are hidden constructions of the past formulated in correspondence to officialised or articulated *versions* of the past. Partly as a result of this 'forgetting' within ethnic memory and 'wider' memory, a process of re-remembering (or re-membering in Barbara Myerhoff's and Toni Morrison's conceptions) has increasingly been evident within Black and Jewish diasporic culture. This re-remembering is sometimes subject to the partiality of those who wish to re-claim a certain history for a particular reason. Therefore re-remembering often contains much the same revision, suppression and forgetting as the previously held memory of the event, for example the romanticisation – 'we were poor but happy' – often seen within working-class autobiography.

An example of this ethnic re-clamation of history can be seen within Jewish culture, as exemplified by Norma Baumel Joseph, whereby people have aimed to re-remember aspects of Jewish history that have previously been marginalized

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[17] Samuel and Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, p. 7.
[18] Norma Baumel Joseph, 'Zakhor: Memory, Ritual and Gender', in Sarah Silberstein Swartz and Margie Wolfe, *From Memory to Transformation: Jewish Women's Voices* (Toronto, Second Story Press, 1998), p. 182.
[19] Samuel and Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, p. 19.

within collective Jewish memory. In terms of Black history, the African-Caribbean community has seen aspects of their histories marginalized and forgotten by mainstream consciousness. In recent years this state of affairs has been challenged and the 'forgetting' has been re-remembered through the mediums of oral history publications, web sites, and television programmes such as the BBC *Windrush* series, or the aptly named Channel 4 series *Untold* about slavery. Samuel and Thompson have seen this ethnic re-remembering as aiming to directly challenge exclusionary national memories, 'the collective memories of minorities need continual active expression if they are to survive being absorbed or smothered by the historical traditions of the majority.'[20] In terms of oral history and community projects, ethnic re-remembering is only one of the outcomes of the search for hidden histories, 'memory projects reclaim more than a past, they reclaim the power to define it.'[21]

This section considers the way in which ethnic minorities have sought to re-claim and remember hidden histories; it explores the processes of forgetting and remembering within collective memories and links memory formulations to the way in which certain events were immediately related to within society. Chapter Seven, an exploration of the hidden history of Black-Jewish interaction within Britain, is in itself an act of ethnic reclamation; in other words the author understands that the work carried out within this chapter has been a part of the process of ethnic re-remembering. The first chapter in this section explores the processes of forgetting and remembering of racist riots against Blacks and Jews in Britain.

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[20] *Ibid.*, 18.
[21] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 133.

Chapter Six. Re-remembering and Forgetting Histories: Memories of Racist Riots in Britain

6.1. Introduction. The Memory of Racial Violence in Britain.

Britain's public or mainstream collective memory in regard to ethnicity is highly selective. Throughout much of the twentieth century pride in the British Empire has gone hand in hand with notions of British tolerance. Additionally the treatment of minorities within Britain has been subject to the myth of liberality, clouding the history of violence, institutional racism, and social exclusion faced by a variety of communities. Everyday as well as extreme manifestations of racism have always been perceived as un-British. In turn, as Section One attests, many ethnic minorities have held as a belief (at least initially) the notion of tolerant Britain. These myths have contributed to the way in which the collective memory of racial violence has been remembered, revised, and forgotten.

This chapter examines the memories of various racist riots against Jews and Blacks in twentieth century Britain, the 1911 riots against Jews in South Wales, the 1917 riots against Jews in Bethnal Green and Leeds and the 1919 port riots against Blacks. This list is not meant to be 'pathological' in terms of giving the impression that riots and negative views about ethnic minorities have been the only response by the 'host' population.[1] However, as these riots are hidden histories because they have been subject to a great deal of collective forgetting, it is particularly interesting to focus on the nature of why and how the riots were subject to immediate and subsequent revision, suppression and more recently re-remembering and to contextualise the memory of the riots within a broader schema of ethnicity and memory.

Unlike the previous two sections, autobiographical acts produced by individuals from the two communities are not prioritised as the main genre under investigation. Instead autobiographical memory is seen through the prism of community memory, collective memory, and ethnic memory – not just the psychological theories of memory. Of particular interest are the political and moral reasons and undertones for the immediate forgetting and remembering of the riots

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[1] See Tony Kushner, 'Heritage and Ethnicity: An Introduction', *Immigrants & Minorities, Special Issue on The Jewish Heritage in British History: Englishness and Jewishness*, Volume 10, Numbers 1 and 2, March/July 1991, p. 11.

as well as the motives and the manner of re-remembering carried out in recent decades. This forgetting will not be condemned in itself, for forgetting is a part of memory in the same way as remembering. Forgetting can shed light onto the histories and the ways in which marginalised groups within society have been located by the dominant culture.

The next section of the chapter briefly explores some of the details of the riots, which could be viewed as selective memory in terms of its simultaneous prioritisation and ignoring of particular details as it is a summation of events. Press reporting of the riots is explored in this section as it provides useful indications as to the reasons why the riots were forgotten in public memory. Journalists and commentators can serve to shape how events are immediately interpreted, whether or not they are momentous, significant to the nation, or a turning point or alternatively whether they are something not to be dwelt on.[2]

6.2. Racist Riots in Britain: Case Studies.

6.2.i. The 1911 Riots.

In the years immediately preceding the First World War there was serious economic unrest throughout Britain. However, this factor should not be used as the primary explanatory factor in the 1911 disturbances even if the economic situation was a definite ingredient of the manifestation of anti-Semitism, particularly 'rich-Jew' anti-Semitism expressed at the time. The importance of the poor economic situation should not foreshadow the reality of anti-alien sentiment within the rioting and the specific anti-Jewish feeling expressed by the rioters.

In the summer of 1911 minority groups (Chinese and Jews) were singled out as the root of the economic problems within South Wales. On the evening of 19 August 1911, the day the national rail strike was settled, groups of people began rioting and looting Jewish shops in Tredegar.[3] The riots spread to other small Welsh valley towns including Ebbw Vale, Rhymney, Waunllwyd, and Brynmawr.[4] Approximately 30 Jewish shops were looted and the Jewish residents, alarmed at the intensity of the rioting, sought shelter in nearby areas. Those involved in the

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[2] Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publishers, 1994), p. 151.
[3] Anthony Glaser, 'The Tredegar Riots of August 1911', in Ursula R.Q. Henriques, *The Jews of South Wales: Historical Studies* (Cardiff, University Of Wales Press, 1993), p. 154.

rioting were men and women from the respectable working classes, colliers in employment and wives of colliers.[5]

The reaction to the riots can be measured immediately from the press reporting of both national and Jewish newspapers. For different reasons they tended to be in agreement about the nature and causes of the riots. The main local and national newspapers described those who took part in the violence as hooligans and young, thus not the work of the average respectable Welsh person.[6] However, the newspapers stressing this point served their own purposes in order to minimise the anti-Semitic nature of the affair – as hooligans were seen as not ideological, and therefore not anti-Semitic. *The Times* coverage on 24 August viewed the events as a 'spirit of indiscipline run riot', not motivated by want or class and viewed the initiators solely as 'young, irresponsible "hooligans."'[7]

Further themes in the newspaper response blamed and criminalised the victims of the riots. Jews were held culpable by using various anti-Semitic stereotypes which justified the rioters for feeling that something needed to be done against the Jewish population although there was regret about the violent 'disgraceful outburst.'[8] One of the most extreme articles was seen in *The Times* on 25 August. The article stated that the fears of Welsh people were comparable to the fears centuries ago that caused the Moors to legislate against their Jewish population. The Jews were described as the 'clever alien population.' It referred to the Welsh awakening of what the Moors 'realised', the 'superior financial intelligence of the Jew' and legislated against to prevent the 'Jews' dominating the entire community.'[9]

6.2.ii. The 1917 Riots.

The 1917 riots were tied up with racialised notions of citizenship, loyalty, and patriotism. They occurred within the severely anti-alien environment of the First World War. Additionally the riots coincided with debates in the House of Commons surrounding forcible conscription of Russians. The media, particularly

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[4] Geoffrey Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales', *Welsh History Review*, Number 6, 1972-73, pp. 192-193.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 196.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 194.
[7] *The Times*, 24 August 1911.
[8] *Ibid.*, 25 August 1911.
[9] *Ibid.*, 25 August 1911.

anti-alien East London papers, associated Jews with Bolshevism, causing overcrowding and exploiting the 'natives'. As Kadish argued 'the apparent desire of many Russian Jews to go back to their birthplace was held up in the immediate aftermath of the February Revolution as an example of true patriotism; by the summer it was interpreted as a sure sign that they were all Reds.'[10] Previous to the riots the *East London Observer* had already blamed Jews for any potential future violence in the East End, stating 'the misbehaviour of any offensive foreign bounder, or the impertinence of a Whitechapel Jew boy, may light the smouldering fires of native feeling. To use a familiar colloquialism, East London is 'fed up.''[11]

The first disturbances occurred in the Leylands, Leeds in June. The only reference by the police to the riots appeared in the Leeds Police Report for 1917 and only amounted to a few lines. Failing to indicate the specifically anti-Jewish nature of the attack, it stated that a 'riotous outbreak in the Jewish quarters of the city had occurred.[12] Windows of Jewish shops were smashed and looting took place in the Leylands, particularly in the Jewish area of Bridge Street. Later that year, in September, riots against Jews occurred in Bethnal Green where 'between two and three thousand Jews and gentiles fought a pitched battle in Blythe Street and Teesdale Street.'[13] The violence was substantial and several Jewish people were seriously injured.[14] Younger Jews and shop-owners fought back against the rioters, and this was portrayed in Jewish and national newspapers, though usually in far from a good light.

The general theme in the contemporary response was that of almost complete silence. Repeating the situation in 1911, newspapers wanted to play down any actual violence occurring. In terms of the scale of the violence, local newspaper reports were slightly more detailed than their national equivalents. One local Leeds newspaper referred to the incident as one of the most severe outbreaks of violence the city had seen for a long time.[15]

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[10] Sharman Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: the Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London, Frank Cass, 1992), p. 52.
[11] Colin Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society: 1876-1939* (London, Edward Arnold, 1979), p. 135.
[12] Murray Friedman, *Leeds Jewry: The First Hundred Years* (Leeds, Jewish Historical Society of England, 1992), p. 12.
[13] Julia Bush, *Behind the Lines: East London Labour 1914-1919* (London, Merlin Press, 1984), p. 181.
[14] *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 September 1917.
[15] Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, pp. 130-131.

One motive for keeping the riots quiet was due to the particularity of the wartime situation. The government did not want Germany using the riots for their wartime propaganda. Therefore, as noted by Holmes, the Home Office reacted to the Bethnal Green incident by dismissing it as merely a street brawl.[16] The Leeds situation additionally involved the Home Office trying to intercept Abraham Bezalel's campaign to spread knowledge of the riot abroad and oppose Jewish help in Britain's war effort.[17] Once the German press had got hold of the news they termed the riot a pogrom. The British responded to this by the Commissioner of Police issuing a statement recording that 'there was nothing in any way approaching a riot or pogrom, anti-Semitic or other.'[18]

The national newspaper coverage of the disturbances was notable by its almost total absence. *The Times* coverage of the Bethnal Green incident was one very small article at the bottom of the domestic news page on 24 September and another small article the following day, which referred to the court appearance of the charged rioter. In addition to this absence, the articles forgot the victims. The first article did not mention the anti-Jewish nature of the riot and only referred to the Jewish population as Russian. The article implicitly blamed the victims by only referring to the violence carried out against soldiers and not mentioning any against Jewish people.[19]

Blaming the victims was a common response and can be contextualised within the framework of the wider anti-Semitism displayed in newspapers surrounding the question of military service. Local papers from London and Leeds provided extensive coverage of the riots when compared to the response of the national papers. They expressed the same types of myths and opinions. The main focus of these papers was to locate a reason for the outburst of resentment and in this case a corresponding justification of the rioters' actions. *The Leeds Mercury* printed a comment from a Jewish woman who could not understand why she had

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[16] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 132. Abraham Bezalel's real name was Solly Abrahams. Little information is known about him. He worked for the Foreign Jews' Protection Committee against Deportation to Russia and Compulsion (FJPC). This committee was set up in the East End of London to oppose 'veiled government threats to deport back to Tsarist Russia "friendly aliens".who did not volunteer for service in the British army.' Bezalel was deported in August 1917 after a police raid on the FJPC's headquarters. See Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, pp. 197-208, especially p. 198.
[18] David Englander (ed.), *A Documentary History of Jewish Immigrants in Britain: 1840-1920* (Leicester, London and New York, Leicester University Press, 1994), p. 297.
[19] *The Times*, 24 September 1917.

been targeted as she had various relatives serving in the armed forces. The paper seemed to hold her views until it proclaimed 'on the other hand' Jewish youth were provocative in their conduct – thus in essence exonerating those involved in anti-Semitic attacks. The *Yorkshire Evening Post* although noting the particular anti-Jewish nature of the riot (unlike *The Times* in its description of the riots as a group conflict) categorically attributed violence to Jews. It stated 'one who is in a position to know declared to-day that there is no class in Leeds so provocative as the young Jewish hooligan class which has been very much in evidence of late.'[20]

6.2.iii. The 1919 Riots.

During 1919 various riots occurred in nine port towns across Britain against Black seamen and others. The result of these riots was five men dead and more than 200 people arrested.[21] Immediately after the war thousands of men were de-mobbed and looking for work in traditional sectors of employment such as the shipping industry. Most Black people in Britain in the early twentieth century were employed or looking for work in the shipping industry, and were seen as alien far more than white foreign sailors of the European mainland. 'Coloured' seamen had been displaced by the return of white seamen and by this time there was severe Black unemployment.[22] Many people within society saw Black people as foreign and inferior. Added to this rationale was the existence of a more aggressive post-war-time jingoism, as seen in the previous riots against Germans and Jews and a nationalist feeling of betrayal when soldiers thought they should have received better treatment when returning home. The racism of the riots was a 'well-internalised mode of thought, called out into the open by a combination of economic and social pressures.'[23]

The victims of the rioting defended themselves against physical assaults and due to this were often arrested. These riots were very different to the earlier ones carried out against Jews as they involved far more physical attacks upon the community, although likewise there was looting and destruction of Black houses

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[20] Englander (ed.), *A Documentary History*, pp. 290-292.
[21] Jacqueline Jenkinson, 'The 1919 Riots', in Panikos Panayi (ed.), *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840-1950*, (Leicester University Press, 1993), p. 92.
[22] Evans, 'The South Wales Race Riot of 1919', p. 12.
[23] Jenkinson, 'The 1919 Riots', p. 92.

and property. This chapter focuses on the memory of the Liverpool riots, specifically Charles Wootton, a 24 year old Bermudian who was killed in the riots.

In Liverpool on 4 June 1919 two Scandinavian sailors stabbed a Black seaman, John Johnson. The police found no reason to arrest those responsible for the stabbing.[24] On the following night there occurred a fight between 15 Swedish and a few Black seamen outside of a public house. One Black man was accosted by a white seaman and reacted by pouring his beer on the sailor. The owner closed the bar. According to reports, when the white men went into the street they encountered a group of Black people and the fight followed.[25] The disturbances spread to Upper Pitt Street where a very large number of whites had gathered. Fighting ensued, the police charged the crowd and several whites joined them. Three policemen were injured: PC Thomas Brown, Sergeant Getty and Constable Parkinson. Thereafter occurred the controversial decision of Detective Inspector Burgess to raid a boarding house at 18 Upper Pitt Street. Burgess later defended this decision, as he believed a man who had allegedly shot the policemen was residing there. At 18 Upper Pitt Street the police encountered two men. One was Charles Wootton who was arrested after running to the Queens Dock. A hostile crowd, along with the police, ran after Wootton. The crowd caught up and either pushed Wootton in the river or he jumped. Thereafter missiles were thrown with one hitting Wootton on the head and he was left to drown, with the crowd chanting 'Let him drown.'[26] There was no inquest into his death and no one was arrested for his murder.

After Wootton's death the police arrested Black seamen from 18 Upper Pitt Street and various other lodging houses.[27] Following this terrible murder more violence was inflicted on the Black population. On 10 June the controversial 'round up' of Black people into protective custody occurred. By 11 June over 700 people were put into the main bridewell in Liverpool.[28]

The newspaper coverage of the events far overweighed that of the anti-Jewish riots – present in editorials, headline reports, and letters from the public in

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[24] C.E. Wilson, *A Hidden History: The Black Experience in Liverpool, England, 1919-1945* (University of North Carolina, PhD Thesis, 1992), p. 151.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-152 and Andrea Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto: Racism and Reaction in Liverpool 1918-1948* (Liverpool, Liver Press, 1995), p. 16.
[26] Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, pp. 16-17.
[27] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

major newspapers and a variety of local newspapers. Nevertheless, the actual detail of the events was contorted and ideologically motivated, showing several key racist ideologies. Although newspaper reporting of these riots differed locally in some respects common themes from the response can be determined. The enormity of racism within the press is the most common theme. Even the most liberal newspaper of the time the *Manchester Guardian* (set up in the nineteenth century as a radical newspaper and unique in its tolerance shown towards Jewish refugees in the 1930s) expressed extreme racism against Black people. This paper's response to Black people after the riots was that 'the quiet, apparently inoffensive, nigger becomes a demon when armed with a revolver, caring for nothing except the safety of his own skin and the speediest method of overcoming his opponent.'[29] As Jenkinson stated the utilisation of 'racist terminology ... is illustrative of the dominant trend in the reporting of the riots throughout Britain.'[30]

Another way in which the victims were blamed was in the reporting of the Black people who had defended themselves by viewing them as the instigators. One of the main racial stereotypes to emerge in the reporting of the riots was that of Black men representing a sexual menace and danger to white women. This view was used to justify the rioters' position and to lay the blame of the violence on the Black population. On 14 June a letter sent by Sir Ralph Williams (a former administrator in the West Indies and Bechuanaland) to the editor of *The Times* argued that the riots were not due to racism but to 'an instinctive certainty that sexual relations between white women and coloured men revolt our very nature.'[31] The subsequent racist discourse surrounding these sexual relations (emerging from left and right wing circles) far outweighed that of the economic reasons for the disturbances.

Within the local Liverpool newspapers, the death of Charles Wootton was minimised in a variation of ways. For example on 6 June an article in the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* had the headline (with each successive line significantly reducing in font size) 'WILD AFFRAY IN LIVERPOOL, 2 POLICEMEN SHOT, REVOLVER FIRED FROM HOUSES, [and lastly] NEGRO DROWNED IN DOCK.' Within the main body of the article the injured policemen were all

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[29] Jenkinson, 'The Glasgow Race Disturbance of 1919', p. 48.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *The Times*, 14 June 1919.

mentioned by name. Charles Wootton's name was not mentioned once and the paper termed him either 'a negro' or 'the fugitive.'[32] The lack of sympathy and ignoring of Wootton's death at the time has played its part in the recent motives for re-remembering him in terms of ethnic and Black British identity. These subtle differences in reporting can serve to shape public memory before it has had time to properly reflect and remember. Charles Wootton was deliberately forgotten and in the process immediately depersonalised, anyone reading the paper would know of Wootton as purely 'the fugitive' or 'the negro' and not visualise or formulate within their context-dependent memories of him as a murder victim.

The next section focuses on the immediate responses to the riots by the communities affected – those personally attacked and those of the same ethnic group. Much of the focus, as in the case of the previous section, surrounds newspapers, particularly in the case of the Jewish responses to 1911 and 1917. Although in many ways this level of analysis is far from satisfactory, it is difficult to ascertain the immediate responses of everyday people as deliberate re-remembering projects such as oral history were not available at the time. As Geoffrey Alderman reflected on Welsh Jewry at this time 'the records tell us precious little about the daily lives of these Jewish people, their hopes and fears, their family circumstances, their economic and social status. It is easier to ask questions than to answer them.'[33] Reflecting on Boyarin's work one can say that these silences are as important and significant as the more pronounced indices of memory. Without the existence oral history or memory projects one paradoxically gets a chance to see how the communities responded to the riots internally – usually by silence.

6.3. The Ethnic Responses to the Riots: Immediate Remembering and Forgetting.

6.3.i. The 1911 Riots.

Jewish newspapers and many though not all prominent Anglo-Jews expressed somewhat comparable sentiments to the mainstream press by trying to deny the anti-Jewish element of the riots and show that hooligans and not 'ordinary' Welsh people had been involved. The idea that Britain was an anti-

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[32] *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 6 June 1919.
[33] Geoffrey Alderman, 'Into the Vortex', in Aubrey Newman (ed.), *Provincial Jewry in Victorian Britain*, (London, Jewish Historical Society of England, 1975), pp. 9-10.

Semitic country comparable to Russia was seen as particularly hazardous. Anglo-Jewish elites generally believed, as did many people, in the idea of Britain as a tolerant country and thought that any expression dissenting from this view would cause further anti-Jewish feeling and would also be unpatriotic. However initially the anti-Jewish nature of the riots was not denied in the Jewish newspapers, which firstly referred to it by comparing the events to Russian pogroms but subsequently in a matter of a few days changed their official view of the situation.

William Rubinstein has brought Alderman and Glaser to task for arguing that Anglo-Jews tried to hide the anti-Semitism of the riots. In his view the reason why immediate public memory viewed the riots as anti-Jewish was due to the misinformation from the prominent Anglo-Jews and the press, the latter having a 'field-day with the apparent taste of "Russia in England."'[34] It is true that in the initial response Wales was compared to Russia. The *Jewish Chronicle*'s response was that 'the Jewish packman of South Wales is the product of the Russian terror.'[35] Initially the *Jewish World* viewed the motive of the riots as a lust for plunder.[36] This was still the case in an article a week later calling those involved as 'unscrupulous hooligans.'[37] However, in similar vein to the *Jewish Chronicle* it also viewed anti-Semitism as the underlying cause, stating that the phrase ' "Down with the Jews!" has not yet lost its potency even in England, and is liable to be revised on the least excuse... '[38] But by 1 September the view of the *Jewish World* had drastically changed by minimising the anti-Semitic nature of the riots. The newspaper suggested that rioting would have been carried out even without Jewish people being present in the area.[39]

In terms of the *Jewish Chronicle*, Rubinstein's argument is equally problematic. He has used the *Jewish Chronicle* as an example to counter the claim that the Anglo-Jewish elite minimised the anti-Jewish nature of the riot. But the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* cannot be used as an example of prevailing Anglo-Jewish thought. The owner of the *Jewish Chronicle* at this time, the Zionist Leopold Greenberg, was willing to publish reports on British anti-Semitism to

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[34] William Rubinstein, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of 1911 in South Wales: A Re-examination', *Welsh History Review*, 1997, pp. 688-689.
[35] Cited in *The Times*, 26 August 1911.
[36] Cited in The Times, 25 August 1911.
[37] Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales', p. 194.
[38] Cited in *The Times*, 25 August 1911.
[39] Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales', p. 194.

show that Jewish people could never be safe in exile and therefore did not seek to minimise or ignore the anti-Semitism of the 1911 riots. This was in stark contrast to many other previous and subsequent owners of the paper.[40] Additionally, Greenberg was representative of a newer type of Anglo-Jew, who did not keep a low profile to avoid anti-Semitism. He identified with liberal views on immigration restriction and remained neutral in the increasing European hostility right up to July 1914.[41] More representative of the Anglo-Jewish response was the reaction of Alfred de Rothschild who viewed the purpose of the riots as thieving and robbery and thus not ideologically motivated. Similarly Stuart Samuel, MP for Whitechapel, viewed those involved as criminals and vulgar.[42]

The response of the Board of Deputies of British Jews was hesitant. Following the riots they issued a statement in which they saw the riots as only incidentally affecting Jews.[43] The Board of Deputies was in some ways reflecting the divisions between London and the Provinces. Individuals representing provinces on the Board had little to do with the actual communities and often the small provincial congregations could not afford to pay the necessary cost for proper representation. It has, however, been argued that the Board's lack of knowledge of provincial issues meant they failed to act accordingly when tensions were evident in the anti-Jewish outbreaks of Limerick and Wales.[44] Similarly, the historiography of the Jewish community was additionally centred upon London, particularly the *JHSE*. There was also a class difference between Anglo-Jews and the Jews of South Wales, most of who were immigrants or first generation British born.

6.3.ii. The 1917 Riots.

Previous to the 1917 riots, sections of Anglo-Jewry were embarrassed at the East End Jewish populations supposed neglecting of their duty to help in the war effort and saw that anti-Semitism could increase as a result. Edmund Sebag-Montefiore, the chairman of the Jewish War Services Committee, stated in 1916 that 'It must be appreciated that Russians in their own country are accustomed to

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[40] David Cesarani, 'Reporting Anti-Semitism: the *Jewish Chronicle* 1879-1979', The Parkes Lecture, 1993, University of Southampton, pp. 14-17.
[41] Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, p. 57.
[42] Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales', p. 193.
[43] Arthur Gray-Jones, *A History of Ebbw Vale* (Arthur Gray Jones, 1970), p. 237.
[44] Steven Gilbert Bayme, 'Jewish Leadership and Anti-Semitism in Britain, 1898-1918' (Columbia University, PhD, 1977/Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1992), p. 247.

compulsory service, and the idea of voluntary service is foreign to them' and added that the conscription bill would have the support of most of the Jewish MPs in the House of Commons.[45] Even Leopold Greenberg, who was keen to publicise the 1911 riots, played down the 1917 riots. A shift occurred in Greenberg's views on the subject of conscription from, as Kadish stated, favouring 'friendly persuasion' to 'coercion.' One illustration of this turn around is when the *Jewish Chronicle* came out in favour of the Convention of 1917, where Russian citizens were made to conscript either in Russia or in Britain. According to Israel Cohen, Greenberg was so unpopular at this period that he had to leave his office under protection for several days.[46] The pressures on the Anglo-Jewish community at this time are evident in their response and immediate remembering and forgetting of the riots.

The *Jewish Chronicle* printed an article on the riots on 28 September with the headline 'Serious Rioting in Bethnal Green.' This article was the only reflection within the *Jewish Chronicle* at the time of the riot and was not a particularly extensive report. The rioting in Leeds provoked an even smaller reaction in the press. The 28 September article showed a different approach to the Jewish newspaper reporting in 1911. It indicated that the anti-Jewish nature of the outbreaks was more than incidental by stating that there had been apprehension for some time among Jewish residents in Bethnal Green. The report also showed the involvement of soldiers in the attacks and thus did not perpetuate a myth that the only participators were those on the fringes of society.[47] Jewish newspapers and officials sought to minimise the disturbance in the hope that they would show themselves as loyal citizens to the state and nation and not bring any press to themselves by talking about the affair. There was however more coverage surrounding the question of air raid shelters and the *Jewish Chronicle* severely attacked the anti-Semitism displayed in newspaper reporting as 'weak and wicked' and a 'ludicrous distortion.'[48]

After the riots, local Jews and Jewish communal leaders in Leeds were dismayed at the character of the police involvement, finding their actions slow to the scene and biased against Jews. However, at the end of June two local Anglo-Jewish leaders proposed a resolution at a Jewish Board of Guardians meeting to

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[45] Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews*, p. 217.
[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 219-220.
[47] *Ibid.*

thank the police for their actions in the riots. Others at the meeting were passionately opposed to the resolution but the pronouncement was eventually passed.[49] That the resolution was eventually endorsed indicates a high level of apprehension, Jewish leaders wanted to smooth over the friction and saw that thanking the police would demonstrate that Jews were exemplar citizens even if many believed that the police actions were suspect. What is probably the case is that local Jews affected by the riots felt resentment against the police and anger at the resolution.

6.3.iii. The 1919 Riots.

The Black response to the 1919 riots was one of disillusionment but not total surprise. These events had not existed in a vacuum of previous tolerance. Various Black groups and newspapers responded to the riots and racism within the press by writing letters to editors of *The Times* and other local papers. The letter written by Felix E.M Hercules (the general secretary of the Society of Peoples of African Origin) in response to the imperialistic racism shown by Sir Ralph Williams is an index to what ordinary Black people thought about the discourse arising from the riots. Hercules wrote 'I might say that I am voicing the feeling of my own race when I declare that my whole mind revolts against the seduction of my women and girls by white men.'[50] Andrea Murphy described Hercules response to Williams as an example of Black pride and as unusual in that the white press printed it.[51] Some Black people wanted to uphold of the myth of tolerant Britain and at the same time point out to those rioting and other people who had conveniently forgotten that Black seaman were British subjects. One person stated 'we are not the rotters our detractors tried to make out. We are British and love Britain.'[52] Nevertheless, most Black people became disillusioned with Britain and its defining of nationality in terms of race.

The death of Charles Wootton angered and saddened the Black Liverpudlian community as well as Black people throughout the country, including

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[48] *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 October 1917.
[49] Abraham Gilam, 'The Leeds Anti-Jewish Riots: 1917', *Jewish Quarterly*, Spring 1981, p. 36.
[50] *The Times*, 19 June 1919.
[51] Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, p. 49.
[52] Roy May and Robin Cohen, 'The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism: A Case Study of the Liverpool Race Riots of 1919', *Race and Class*, Volume 16, Number 2, 1974, p. 119.

elites from London. Hercules demanded an inquiry into the death of Wootton.[53] There is evidence of Black elites supporting those Black people directly affected by the riots. Although based in London, many of the Black people involved in organisations such as the African Progress Union or the Society of Peoples of African Origin helped those targeted in the riots in various locations. In Liverpool the Afro-Guyanese Edward Theophilus Nelson, whose fees were partly paid for by the APU, defended Black people sent to the assize court in November.[54]

In contrast to the Anglo-Jewish response to 1911 and 1917 a protest meeting was organised at Hyde Park and the Society of Peoples of African Origin produced a Manifesto.[55] In reply to the sexual racism of the riots and within the press the manifesto stated that 'the only thing that prevents the lives of coloured men in this country being a deadly monotonous hell is the sympathy of British women.' Also the Manifesto served to put the blame of the riots on the shoulders of 'the other' and thus not British white people. It stated that 'dangerous foreigners ... [were] plotting the break up and downfall of the British Empire.... They believe that if only they can stir up British men by showing up in the most disgusting fashion all intercourse between black men and white women, then they will be on a fair road to accomplishing their objects.'[56] Although Russian and Scandinavian seamen were heavily involved in the riots; this statement's purpose was to show that the alien and not the Black Briton should be feared.

Some Black elites desired repatriation, although for different reasons than the police and the press. On 16 June the Deputy Mayor met with a group of Black elites generally responsive to the idea of repatriating Black ex-servicemen. This group included Alfred S. Cann, Rev. E.A. Egasa-Osore and John Archer.[57] In terms of ordinary Black reaction, the *Liverpool Mercury* printed a letter from a 'British coloured soldier'. It read:

> ... Simply send us back to where your ships took us from (from our native lands). And all your people who is out there making their living must come back home and make their living here. It'll be justice then, don't you think so? And at the same time we'll stop all the cargoes

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[53] Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, pp. 16-17.
[54] Jeffrey Green, 'A Black Community?: London, 1919', *Immigrants & Minorities*, Volume 5, Number 1, March 1986, p. 112.
[55] A contrast that must not lead to positioning one type of response as correct, whilst passing judgement on those who often through apprehension stayed silent.
[56] May and Cohen, 'The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism', p. 117.
[57] Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto*, p. 38.

> coming from the Niger's country's "England" (just as cottons, leathers, Tea, Sugar, Silver, Gold & Diamon.) just for a year or two, and we'll see who will Suffer for it. I remember a reading in the papers where an ex-soldier, making a complain, about the coloured men's Employments in England. fancy if all these cargoes I mentioned were to stop from coming over. do you think that they'll be any employment at all in England...[58]

Cohen and May argued that 'such letters and expressions of opinion from Black people reinforced a demand from several sections of White opinion for immediate repatriation.'[59] It is clear that, as stated by Wilson, newspapers favoured printing anything that showed Black people favouring repatriation.[60] However, what Cohen and May have failed to see is the intended irony in the letter.

The next section explores the way in which memories of the riots have been formulated, keeping in mind the previous two sections of the chapter. It focuses on personal memories of those involved in the riots such as Ernest Marke. However, much of the section is devoted to ethnic or generational re-remembering.

6.4. Ethnic Memories, Memorialisation, Forgetting, and Autobiographical Acts.

This section looks at the way that ethnic minorities are re-claiming their histories and in the process uncovering information about the riots. It also looks at the 'frames' of collective memory; for example the re-remembering of the 1919 riots as part of the increasing use of web sites by Black community groups. Acts of remembering are often deliberate, particularly when they occur within museum spaces and other commemorative acts that have been formulated in boardrooms, by design consultants, historians and others. Within remembering, one can read the forgetting that has taken place as 'most of the time, when we speak of forgetting, we are speaking of displacement (or replacement) of one version of the past by another. To use different imagery, when we set out to listen to historical silences, we are forced to listen to a great deal of noise.'[61] The 'noise', or in other words the remembering, is explored as a way in which to ascertain the forgetting; but neither is prioritised as of chief importance to this chapter. Remembering is often easier to explore than forgetting. This chapter follows Irwin-Zarecka's framework with which to explore societal forgetting, in its understanding that things forgotten have

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[58] *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury*, 11 June 1919.
[59] May and Cohen, 'The Interaction Between Race and Colonialism', p. 120.
[60] Wilson, *A Hidden History*, p. 191.
[61] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 118.

usually been displaced; therefore the declarations of memory can shed light onto what has been forgotten and why. The memory of the 1911 riot is explored first. This riot has recently been the subject of a film and thus has been brought into public memory in a more mainstream way than that of the other riots.

Historical analysis of the 1911 riots started in 1952 with an article by C.C. Aronsfeld who compared the 1911 riots to the 1917 riots against Jews in Leeds.[62] It was not until the 1970s that a full historical analysis by a Jewish historian took place with an essay by Geoffrey Alderman in the *Welsh History Review*.[63] Previous to this, mainstream and Jewish historical writing had not written about the riots, although a few years later the *JHSE* did include an article by Alderman on Welsh Jewish history (which mentioned the riots) in its conference and published proceedings of provincial Jewry in 1975.[64] When the *Jewish Chronicle* examined the 1947 anti-Semitic riots, they maintained that these were the first riots within memory, indicating that the knowledge of the 1911 and 1917 riots was not immediately retrievable to them.[65] The riots have also been ignored by historians of racial violence, for different reasons than the forgetting of the 1919 riots. The standard textbook of racism to emerge in the 1970s usually under the auspices of the *Institute of Race Relations* often contrasted Jews as religious minorities with racial minorities; those visible by skin colour. Similarly, when journalists or academics wish to explore racism and violence in Britain's past as a way of showing it was not a new phenomenon they uncover the history of the 1919 riots, and rarely the 1911 or 1917 riots.

For Jewish memory the immediate forgetting of the riots can be seen as a conscious action predicated on a belief that it was wiser to forget than remember. One of the most prominent Jewish leaders of Zionism in the twentieth century, the historian Lewis Namier, provides a pertinent case study with which to explore this type of memory construction and also gives an indication of the wishes and

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[62] C.C. Aronsfeld, 'Anti-Jewish Outbreaks in Modern Britain', *The Gates of Zion: A Quarterly Review of Judaism and Zionism*, Volume 6, Number 4, July 1952, pp. 15-18 and p. 21.
[63] Alderman, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of August 1911 in South Wales'.
[64] Alderman, 'Into the Vortex'.
[65] The 1947 riots occurred in various towns around the country, including Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow. They started the day after two British officers were killed in Palestine by the extremist group *Irgun*. Previously they have been ignored by those studying racial violence in Britain and have been positioned solely as part of historiography concerning Palestine. See Tony Kushner, 'Anti-Semitism and Austerity: the August 1947 riots in Britain', in Panayi (ed.) *Racial Violence in Britain, 1840-1950*, p. 163.

memory processes of the local Jewish community affected by the riots. Norman Rose has written a biography of Lewis Namier which can be described partly as a 'psychobiography' or a 'sociobiography' as elements of Namier's personality and his social surroundings are described. This narration is performed not only to provide context for some of his actions but as a reflective work in which Rose has tried to understand Namier's inner psyche.

Namier provided a very interesting response to the riots, which Rose has identified as being of significance to his 'ethnic identity' (although Rose has not used this terminology). According to Rose, Namier's Jewish identity was unstable and changed throughout his life. Namier met constantly with pycholoanalysts who picked up on his emotional turmoil (which resulted when looking at matters non-academic) and termed this his 'ambivalence'. Norman Rose has detected that Namier's Jewish identity and his relationships with other Jews were his more pronounced 'ambivalence'.[66] It was only until the riots of 1911 that his development of a Jewish identity became more fixed in his mind when concern for fellow Jews became in Namier's words a 'gut reaction.'[67]

Both Namier's parents were Jews who had a strong Polish identity. They converted to Roman Catholicism and brought their children up within this tradition as they saw the only way for Jews to avoid persecution was to assimilate. His mother Ann saw herself and her family as being of 'Jewish descent, with strong Christian sympathies and Polish enthusiasms.'[68] At an early age Namier rejected his parents viewpoint, seeing it as degrading to Jews. He, however, did not embrace Jewish culture in any religious sense. He also rejected any attempt to define himself in hyphenated terms, not because he thought of himself as Polish, but as a Jew, with the idea of Jewish identity as representing his complete nationality. During his time at university in Oxford he attempted to locate his Jewish identity but was dismayed at the religious aspects of Jewish student groups. He attended one Zionist meeting whilst an undergraduate but fled after seeing them preparing the Friday night meal for Shabbat, which Rose argued Namier saw as 'some kind of mysterious Sabbath ritual.'[69] His Zionist identity was still forming during this time. In later years Namier felt contempt for anti-Zionist Jews and particularly English Jews. He told

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[66] Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 5.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Isaiah Berlin 'the Jews of England were victims of pathetic illusions – ostriches with their heads in some very inferior sands – foolish, ridiculous creatures not worth saving.'[70] Namier differed from Zionists such as Greenberg who picked up on the anti-Semitic nature of the riots to show that Jews could never be secure in the diaspora. As Rose argued 'Namier, like many East European intellectuals insisted on regarding England through rose-tinted spectacles.'[71] This can be extrapolated onto his viewpoint of Britain, not only England. Nevertheless, Namier's 'rose-tinted spectacles' did not blind him completely to anti-Semtisim in a British context, as he did express distaste for those Jews who maintained, even though 'suffering slurs', that they had never suffered any discrimination in the diaspora.[72]

Namier heard about the riots of 1911 whilst staying at a friends home in Knockenhair, near Dunbar. These riots affected him to the extent that he decided to visit the site of the riots after they finished. He did not publish his findings, although he did submit a report to Claude Montefiore, which is no longer in existence. Perhaps that this report was ignored indicates a symbolic fragment of memory, whereby the report was 'lost' because it was perhaps seen as unimportant or maybe too delicate to be published in the public arena. Namier wrote a letter many years after the riots, in 1959, to Arthur Gray-Jones (who wrote about the riots in his work on Ebbw Vale). This letter explicitly described his attempt to 'forget' the riots as a consequence of the local Jews in Wales he spoke to wanting to forget. He stated 'I published nothing. I well remember having been asked by the local Jews to let the matter die down. People in South Wales were ashamed of the whole business and discussing it in public would have served no useful purpose.'[73]

That nothing was done with Namier's report is also indicative of the contemporary Jewish response of wanting to minimise the reality of the anti-Semitism of the riots. Had other prominent Jewish leaders wanted to investigate the riots they certainly could have bypassed Namier's decision. The immediate deliberate forgetting is one of the main features of the Jewish communal response to the riots, and it provides a stark contrast to the response of many Black leaders to

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[69] *Ibid.*, p. 8.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[72] Lewis Namier, *Conflicts: Studies in Contemporary History* (London, Macmillan & co. Ltd, 1942), pp. 125-126.

the 1919 riots. Why did Jewish leaders want the affair to die down? Part of the reason lay, as shown in the previous section of this chapter, in the geographical distance between Anglo-Jewish leaders and the communities of South Wales. More significantly this response can be placed into the wider currents of society at the time: the general division between immigrant Jews and a settled Anglo-Jewry, within the context of anti-alien social and political sentiment and the general insecurity Jews felt within Britain.

The 'forgetting' of the riots, by not publishing anything about them, was not just a deliberate distortion, it also reflected Namier's believe in the tolerance of the British (at least at this time, although his later writings suggest a more complex viewpoint of Britain, rather than straightforward veneration).[74] The very harsh experiences of Jews in Eastern and much of Western Europe stands apart from anti-Semitism in a British context yet this led many people to a psychological denial of all manifestations of British anti-Semitism, as seen in Chapter Three of this thesis. Namier's reaction to the riots has been seen by Rose as following a pattern. In 1912 Namier failed to obtain a Fellowship at All Souls. There were rumours (which Namier chose to ignore) that he failed to get the post due to anti-Semitism. Rose rightly argued 'obviously, as during the South Wales affair, he felt more secure with his idealized version of what English society should be, choosing to ignore its uglier face. Like his despised English Jews, he too was burying his head in 'some very inferior sands.''[75]

In terms of immediate remembering, Jews had to contend with an event that could potentially shatter their view of Britain as a land free from persecution. In addition, Anglo-Jews could marginalize the riots as being something East European immigrants had generated and not established Jewish communities. Finally, it was widely thought that to publicise the riots could lead to anti-Semitism being on the public agenda for longer, and could dangerously feed into the general political debate over Jewish immigrants. Glaser has cited the fear of anti-alienism perhaps provided the motive for the denying of 'an explicit anti-Semitic content to the riots.'[76] As Irwin-Zarecka has articulated 'to justify the new ways of remembering, whether on moral, intellectual or emotional grounds, is often to undermine some

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[73] Gray-Jones, *A History of Ebbw Vale*, p. 237.
[74] See Namier, *Conflicts.*
[75] Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism*, pp. 9-10.

very cherished cultural values and beliefs.'[77] Though certainly not the only factor shaping immediate memory, the cherished belief in the tolerance of the British certainly made remembering untenable or undesirable.

Recently the 1911 riots have been re-remembered by two people, Simon Joseph and Paul Morrison. The former has engaged in an act of personal re-remembering as he was directly affected by the riots and has additionally realised the interest the riots have generated. The latter has undertaken a process of ethnic re-clamation stemming from his previous unawareness that there were Jewish communities in the South Wales valleys at this time. By using examples of re-remembering, one can see how the riots have not been a significant part of Jewish collective remembering.

In terms of autobiographical acts, Simon Joseph is one of few 'everyday' Welsh Jews to have published an autobiography to a fairly wide audience (as a London publishing house distributed it and people outside of Wales have access to his work). His autobiographical memory has positioned the riots as of central importance to his life history. Joseph's impetus to write his autobiography was a trip to Poland, undertaken to visit the land of his parents. He was the first person from his family to be born in Britain. His family settled in Ebbw Vale, and then Wanllwyd (both villages involved in the riots, the latter was targeted but not looted). He grew up in a mainly non-Jewish atmosphere. Although having links with the small Jewish community in Ebbw Vale, particularly after the establishment of a small synagogue there, the members of his family were the only Jews within the village at the time of the riots.[78]

The riot is not minimised in his account; indeed a whole chapter was given to the event (although as the autobiography is particularly short, this chapter is only one and a half pages long).[79] However, the events were not contextualised into the rest of his life story in terms of providing evidence of which neighbours and

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[76] Glaser, 'The Tredegar Riots of August 1911', p. 167.
[77] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 126.
[78] Simon Joseph, *My Formative Years, A Jewish Boy's childhood in South Wales in the 1900s* (London, Multifarious Publications, 1993). Joseph's autobiography is a valuable piece of source material on the riots and has yet to be used by historians looking at this area of research. Although Rubinstein has footnoted Joseph's autobiography and thus has knowledge of at least one Jewish family living in Wanllwyd, he has argued (in support of his theory that Jews were not the main targets of the riot) that Wanllwyd was targeted even though there were no Jews living there. See Rubinstein, 'The Anti-Jewish Riots of 1911 in South Wales: A Re-examination', p. 687.

customers supported the riots and how they were treated afterwards, being the only Jewish family in the village. As was done at the time and in later historiography the economic situation was given precedence in his narrative as a reason for the riots, appearing only incidentally that Jewish shops were the targets. He remembered the harsh economic situation, but did not recollect on the emerging anti-Semitic environment whereby Jews were charged with economic exploitation. He stated 'a strike broke out in Tredegar to start with and spread to Beaufort, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale. There was no dole at the time. The miners were provided with soup only. In their desperation they gave vent to their feelings and looted Jewish shops.'[80] In a recent conversation with Joseph, he re-iterated the point that the miners were rioting due to poverty and hunger. He remarked twice that people at this time received no national financial assistance but again did not refer to any stories of 'rich-Jew' anti-Semitism.[81]

Joseph reflected on how this riot has been forgotten within Jewish memory. He referred to the *Jewish Chronicle* and *Jewish World* as evidence of the riots. He stated 'at that time there was a weekly Jewish paper called the *Jewish World*, it was a sister paper to the *Jewish Chronicle*. So many Jews cannot believe this pogrom occurred in South Wales in 1911. But if one can get hold of the *Jewish World* of that time, it has pictures of some of the Cohen families in Tredegar waking with their bedclothes and other immediate requirements, as they left Tredegar for the duration of the crisis.'[82] Interestingly he has re-built his memory of the event by re-reading the coverage of the *Jewish World* and *Jewish Chronicle*. Not only does the media help to shape immediate visual and context-dependent memory, it is also used as a tool of reformulating memories and acts as a way in which individuals can legitimate their memories by factual information.

Joseph did not expand on the role of his neighbours in the context of the riots. He gave the impression that the potential rioters were outside of the community. The historical and newspaper evidence corroborate this claim. But Joseph did not give any indication about what the local community thought about the riots. He described his next-door neighbours, the Ledbury family, who invited

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[79] Simon Joseph provided advice to Paul Morrison for the film *Solomon and Gaenor*. Telephone Interview with Simon Joseph carried out by author, 28/5/00.
[80] Joseph, *My Formative Years*, p. 45.
[81] Telephone Interview with Simon Joseph carried out by author, 28/5/00.
[82] Joseph, *My Formative Years*, p. 46.

them to stay at their house as there was a rumour that gangs intended to loot their shop. However, the Ledbury's woke the family up as they were afraid they might also be attacked if found helping them. The Joseph family slept in their stable overnight. This is the only example within his narrative of local non-Jews giving the family some sort of help, even though in the rest of the autobiography he talked about several other families known to them within the village.[83]

The 'forgetting' within Joseph's narrative comes across in the omission of the response of the village (friends and customers) to anti-Semitism. When asked about the reactions of the neighbours he firstly recalled the help that the Ledbury family gave the Joseph family. When asked to provide further detail on what other neighbour thought he replied that he was too young to remember.[84] However, he has remembered other events or incidents in his life at the time in a comprehensive manner. The Ledbury's response has become a symbolic memory, representing a response of people helping the family, and thus is important enough to vividly remember. This narrative can be seen as a flashbulb memory, remembered either by Joseph or by his family, in the form of a folk tale passed on to the younger generation.

Significantly and contrastly to the 1917 riots, there has been a forgetting of Jews who fought back against anti-Semitism. In his autobiography Joseph remembered fighting with people who were anti-Semitic, but did not mention Jews using self-defence to combat anti-Semitism in the riots. When interviewed he recalled, without being provoked by any specific questioning on the subject, that a Jewish man (Mr Goldblatt) fought with some of the rioters who were attacking his property. This man and his family were mentioned in Arthur Gray-Jones' account of the riots (although fighting back was not mentioned). As Jones' work is not footnoted, it is not clear where he got this information. Joseph's language and intonation when referring to this story became particularly resolute, as if he really wanted people to know of this story as not many people had particularly acknowledged or had knowledge of Jewish self-defence.[85]

Given the contemporary intentional forgetting involved in the immediate response of the riots it is easy to see how, as mentioned by Simon Joseph in his

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[83] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[84] Telephone Interview with Simon Joseph carried out by author, 28/5/00.
[85] *Ibid.*

autobiography, many Jews today cannot believe an anti-Semitic riot could have occurred in Wales in 1911.[86] The views of Namier and the local Jewish people he talked to indicate that the riots were forgotten partly as they were too painful to remember. Rubinstein has implicitly argued that local Jews minimised the riots only as they felt they were not anti-Semitic. This goes directly against Namier's report, which suggests that Jews were shocked at the riots occurring and wanted to get back to normal day to day relations with their non-Jewish neighbours. There was still evidence of anti-Semitism after the riots, particularly in light of the rioters being taken to court and receiving what local people thought harsh sentencing. The silences within memory have to be read as well as the declarations of memory: simply because local Jews did not talk about the anti-Semitism of the riots does not mean that it was not a reality. In this way 'forgetting' and hidden declarations of memory shed light onto how significant the riots were in the lives of Jews at the time.

Public memory of the riots has been changed recently with the release of the film *Solomon and Gaenor*, a fictional love story based upon the events of the riots.[87] This film represents the first major public declaration of remembering about the riots. It is difficult to ascertain whether collective memory has changed as a result of this film, as it is one act of remembering as opposed to a shift in collective remembering on a wide scale. However this one act has, opposed to the 'limits' of autobiography, reached a wide and international audience, and has been particularly welcomed by the Jewish diaspora, especially by the American Jewish community. Its gross box office figure in the USA was $301,754 and in the UK was £73,505.[88] It has been shown at several international film festivals and was nominated for an Academy Award (Oscar) in the Best Foreign Language Film Category.

Paul Morrison is a film and television director and writer mainly of documentaries. He has produced a diverse range of films; *John and Yoko*; *Like Other People*, about sexuality and handicap; *Divide and Rule – Never!*, for young people about racism; and in 1989 *From Bitter Earth*, about the drawings and paintings of the Holocaust. He has worked for *Channel Four* many times, where in 1991 he produced a documentary about the British Jewish community called *A*

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[86] Joseph, *My Formative Years*, p. 46.
[87] *Solomon and Gaenor*, Film Four, SC4, 1999 (Paul Morrison, Director).
[88] See http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/2000/SOGAE.html

Sense of Belonging.[89] This documentary served as a tool for re-examining his Jewish identity. Morrison grew up in a Jewish area of North London and at university was involved in left wing politics. It was when he was in his 30s that he decided to re-discover Judaism and his Jewish identity. He set up a discussion group for British Jewish filmmakers and began to make the documentary about Jewish experiences in Britain.[90] Morrison decided to make the film after first 'discovering' the small Jewish communities of the Welsh valleys when he was researching for *A Sense of Belonging*. Thus the film was made because the communities and the riots were a 'hidden history' in public and Jewish memory. He was 'struck by the juxtaposition of these two hardworking, god-fearing peoples.'[91] Additionally he wanted to remember the riots as a part of Welsh history as in his view the Welsh are 'more comfortable being seen as victims... Here's a film which portrays Welsh anti-semitism, which doesn't portray the Welsh as holier-than-thou.'[92]

The central plot of the film is a love story between a Jewish boy, Solomon, and Welsh Baptist girl, Gaenor, which ends tragically. Both are brought up in a restrictive and repressive environment. The riots serve as a backdrop for the love story. This film's mythologising of the riots comes across in its representations of the type and frequency of everyday anti-Semitism in South Wales and by the romanticisation due to its love story. Morrison's ambivalent Jewish identity is particularly relevant to this film. The love story is autobiographical, Morrison's wife is non-Jewish, and he believes Jewish religious refusal to accept mixed marriages will lead more people away from practising their Jewish faith.[93] The film is an example of Morrison's viewpoint on the constraints of Jewish culture. In the film the Jewish family are seen as old fashioned, restrictive and dominating. Although the central storyline concerns the riots, much of the film concentrates on

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and http://www.bfi.org.uk/facts/stats/1999/ukfeatures_boxoffice.html.

[89] Paul Morrison: CV, http://www.aptonline.co.uk/ABOUT_US/PAULcv.htm

[90] See Naomi Pfefferman, 'A Wales Tale', *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*, 24 March 2000, http://www.jewishjournal.com/old/endpaper.3.24.0.htm and Peter Ephross (Jewish Telegraphic Agency), 'British Oscar Nominee Tells Tale of Forbidden Jewish-Welsh Love', *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, Entertainment, http://www.jewishsf.com/bk000324/etoscar.shtml

[91] Paul Morrison, 'Solomon & Gaenor, My Film, My Story', *Manna*, Number 63, Spring 1999, http://www.refsyn.org.uk/manna/manna63/m063-10.htm.

[92] Brian Logan, 'What? You mean I've got to learn Yiddish? Please, give me a smaller part.', *The Guardian*, April 16, 1999.

[93] 'Paul Morrison at the Phoenix', *6degrees: The Film Connection*, June 1999, http://www.6degrees.co.uk/en/2/199906ftmorrison.html.

the 'failings' in the Jewish family to integrate. According to Joseph (who thinks that the film is a brilliant portrayal of the riots) the film along with Joseph's book has led to a great number of Jews finding out for the first time about the riots.[94]

The memory of the riots has been changed in light of the film, which was on location in the valleys, as a new generation of local Welsh people has learnt about the riots for the first time. Thus the way in which events are recalled continuously changes, and can become geographical and place memories as well as ethnic due to subsequent external factors, as will be shown in the 1919 riots in Liverpool. Immediately remembering riots can be painful and at times be attacked as morally dubious, if involving a re-awakening of emotions of the local community. A deliberate re-remembering such as that arising from a film such as *Solomon and Gaenor* could only be carried out several decades after their occurrence, for fear of exploitation and voyeurism.

Akin to the 1911 riots, the riots occurring in 1917 have undergone much the same process of collective forgetting, although a greater range of factors motivated the immediate forgetting of the 1917 riots, mainly connected to the First World War. The riots, particularly those occurring in Leeds, have been re-written into Jewish history and memory, although often as isolated acts by local Jewish historians such as Murray Friedman and earlier Louis Saipe.[95] In terms of autobiographical memory, Louis Teeman, has focused a significant section of his memory of life in Leeds on the riots and has contextualised them into an account of day-to-day relations between Jews and non-Jews in the Leylands.[96]

For the purpose of obtaining other peoples' memories on Jewish life in the Leyland's, Teeman wrote an article in *Yorkshire Evening Post* asking for non-Jewish people to provide information on their memories of living with Jews in Leeds. Teeman received various letters and additionally met and interviewed some of the respondents. Teeman interacted with non-Jewish memory to inform his general understanding and ethnic re-remembering of the riots. The memories concerning the riots from those who responded to Teeman are particularly fascinating. One respondent remembered 'Jew baiting' around the period 1914-

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[94] Joseph, Interview.
[95] See Murray Friedman, *Leeds Jewry* (Leeds, Jewish Historical Society of England, 1969) and Louis Saipe, *A History of the Jews of Leeds* (Leeds, Leeds Jewish Representative Council, 1985).
[96] Teeman's autobiography was assessed earlier in the thesis, in Chapter Three. See, Louis Teeman, *Footprints in the Sand: An Autobiography* (Leeds, L. Teeman, 1976).

1915, but also remembered the riots (although did not recall the exact year they occurred), stating 'About 1916 miners, I think rioted in Leeds and as they marched down Green Road to the Leylands they smashed Rosenberg's and Velinky's windows.'[97]

One of Teeman's best respondents recalled the 1917 riots as they were a vivid memory for him. According to this person a rumour spread in the Bank and Quarry Hill that some Jews had injured some wounded soldiers. Thereafter 'mobs' gathered (including men, boys and some women) and rampaged through the streets. There was little opposition as the young men had gone into the army.[98] Another respondent Teeman interviewed declared the 1917 riots were one of the first memories that came to mind (and also her clearest). She remembered the start of the riots when 'the rumour was that an English Tommy was set about by some Jews.' When Teeman asked if wounded soldiers were involved the respondent 'looked blank.' She clearly remembered Jewish self-defence against the rioters. She recalled ' 'Jimmy the Jew', who was 'strong and brave and fierce', who drove his horse and cart through the crowd of rioters, but they pulled him down and assaulted him.[99]

Almost all of the non-Jewish memories concerning the riots are 'flashbulb' memories. Respondents remembered the riots in a far more detailed and specific way than other events Teeman asked about. Thus for non-Jews these riots can be seen as of great significance in the local history of the Leylands, in that the events have been remembered lucidly after so many years. Teeman's interpretation of the riots is hard to explore as within this section of his autobiography he left much of the testimony of other people to stand by itself, without detailed critical analysis.

In general these riots have been 'forgotten' by historiography for various reasons. For some people the year 1917 as a device of memory retrieval is usually symbolic of the Balfour declaration. In this way official memory of the riots becomes clouded by more celebratory events. In terms of local memory, it is difficult to estimate the memory of local Jews, as oral history work has not been carried out on many of those Jews who lived in the Leylands at this time. The fact

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[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.
[98] *Ibid.*, p. 236.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

that the memory of the riots from non-Jewish respondents to Teeman's analysis was so vivid can indicate the significance the riots have on Jewish memory also.

The other autobiographical account about the riots is found in Selig Brodetsky's memoirs, which focused on his life as one of Britain's most prominent communal and Zionist leaders. Brodetsky recalled the riots in a small paragraph when writing about the Balfour declaration, in that the joy felt at the declaration was 'saddened by some serious attacks made on Jews in Leeds.'[100] This differs from Teeman and most historical analysis, which have contextualised the riots in the general environment of increasing anti-alienism. Brodetsky's memories of the riots are shaped by his involvement in Zionism and that for Zionists the year 1917 is particularly significant, symbolic of the first positive official declaration in support of the idea of a Jewish homeland.

Brodetsky explained the riots in terms of the scapegoat theory. He referred to the anti-foreign feeling within the country at the time, that the war was going badly and that there had been an angry reaction to the Socialist Conference held in Leeds. Thus 'the Jews were made the scapegoats.'[101] Perhaps it is strange that a more nuanced analysis was not made of the rioting and that the riots were summarized in only two paragraphs. He remembered that although most of the Jewish immigrants were Russian there was a whispering campaign going on that all the foreign Jews were German. Brodetsky's knowledge of local relations in the Leylands area was minimal (he chose not to live there when he got his position at the university) and in his autobiography did not express knowledge of the day-to-day relations between Jew and non-Jew in the area. His lack of local knowledge led him to oversimplify domestic anti-Semitism and specifically local Leylands everyday relations.

In terms of the historical focus on the riots, Abraham Gilam has examined the 1911 and the 1917 riots. Significantly, his motivation was identical to Jerry White (as seen in the analysis of the 1919 riots) as the Brixton riots influenced him to find out about previous riots in Britain.[102] Gilam's re-remembering is particularly

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[100] Selig Brodetsky, *Memoirs* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1960), p. 88.
[101] *Ibid.*
[102] Gilam argued that an exploration of the 1917 riots provided 'a timely reminder of the dangers of riots erupting which can be sparked off by social unrest of various kinds.' Gilam, 'The Leeds Anti-Jewish Riots: 1917', p. 34.

unusual; it is rare that Jewish examples are brought to bear when historians and journalists wish to provide historical parallels to modern day riots involving race.

Gilam did not minimise the Jewish involvement in physical retaliation against the rioters. However, he adopted or shared the same viewpoint about Jewish involvement in physical retaliation as the contemporary reporting of the riots. Gilam stated 'one cannot begin the narration of events without ascribing some responsibility to Jewish hooliganism as well. In response to years of violence in the Leylands, Jewish youths formed bands of their own to cope with the surrounding aggression. But the use of force always leads to the increase of violence.'[103] The role of Jewish physical retaliation is one of the principal reasons as to why the riots were 'forgotten' or minimised. Due to the position Anglo-Jews found themselves in and the Anglo-Jewish belief that the best way to avoid anti-Semitism was to reject confrontation, Jews physically fighting against rioters was to be condemned. This reaction can be seen in later episodes of street disturbance involving the Jewish community.[104] Additionally Gilam marginalised the initial rioters as 'teenagers' or 'hysterical women.'[105]

In terms of symbolic memory, there is little collective remembering of the 1917 riots, although local Jewish historians have uncovered the Leeds riots in recent years.[106] The riots were forgotten as they were contextualised within the framework of wartime and were not seen as racist manifestations, but as examples of pressure points caused by the strains of war. For Jewish memory, the riots were a painful reminder of a period of history seen as better forgotten. As in the case of the 1911 riots, they are being re-claimed after several decades as a part of Jewish identity and experience in Britain. In many ways the Jewish community has sought to re-discover its heritage by being influenced by other immigrant groups who have explored their histories without the level of apprehension that to talk about racism in Britain would affect their place in British society.

The reclaiming of the 1919 riots has occurred on a much wider scale than that of the others analysed in this chapter, although the recent remembering is still

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[103] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[104] The reaction of Jewish communal leaders to the Cable Street disturbances provides a particularly pertinent example. See Tony Kushner, ' "Long May Its Memory Live!": Writing and Rewriting "the Battle of Cable Street" ', *Jewish History and Culture*, 1999, pp. 109-180.
[105] Gilam, 'The Leeds Anti-Jewish Riots: 1917', p. 34.
[106] Analysis of the Leeds riots has not been in-depth and has been explored briefly in the context of general Leeds Jewish history. For example, see Friedman, *Leeds Jewry*, p. 12.

within a limited milieu. The re-remembering of the riots is a direct response to the way in which Black people's history has been marginalized within Britain, including the riots which were subject to immediate selective forgetting. Most commentators were unanimous in their viewing of the riots as the natural response to the supposed behaviour of Black people regarding employment and sexual relationships. Thereafter the riots were quick to fade from the general collective consciousness, except when they were revised and used to justify legislation against the Black population. Four years after the riots, a writer who produced an article for the USA *Atlantic Review* on 'Britain's Negro Problem' confidently proclaimed 'up to the present time, Great Britain has been spared the odium of race riots.'[107]

There has been a combination of remembering and forgetting concerning the 1919 riots, in that the memory displayed is fragmented. Some historians of racial violence have not written about them (which indicates how widespread the public forgetting process has been) and believed that the 1958 riots were more substantial, one such historian stated that 'events of 1958 notwithstanding, there have been no major outbreaks of racial violence in England.'[108] Additionally, as Paul Morrison wanted to challenge, the memory of racism within Wales is particularly restricted. For example, in the midst of celebrations of the diversity of Cardiff's population a representative of the Cardiff Police stated 'there is no record of any serious disturbance involving the indigenous and immigrant population,' highlighting that riots carried out against a variety of communities have been forgotten.[109]

As in the case of the 1911 and 1917 riots, the events of 1919 were focused upon in light of the Brixton riots of 1981, which is significant in terms of how riots are brought to public attention by subsequent disturbances occurring.[110] *The Times*' report on the 1981 riots in Toxteth referred to the 1919 riots, but described them more as a ethnic clash, not telling the reader of the differences between 1919 and 1981 (whilst misrepresenting both disturbances). It stated:

> The history books reveal that Liverpool was the scene of one of Britain's first race riots in 1919, when Charles Wootton, who has had a

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[107] Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, Pluto Press, 1984), p. 316.
[108] Allen D. Grimshaw, as cited in Evans, 'The South Wales Race Riots of 1919', p. 6.
[109] Evans, 'The South Wales Race Riots of 1919', p. 5.
[110] As far as the author knows there have been no links made between the disturbances in Oldham in 2001 and the riots of 1911-1919.

> local adult education centre named after him, was drowned in the South Dock. Sixty-two years later few would predict that Liverpool might also be the scene of the last battle between blacks and whites in Britain's depressed inner cities.[111]

Similarly influenced by the 1981 riots, Jerry White wrote an article on the various riots occurring in 1919, including the race riots. Interestingly, White termed the race riots 'pogroms'. Here one can see the interplay with words, using terminology arising from Jewish experiences onto a Black historical setting.[112] More recently the riots have been focused upon in light of the anti-capitalist May Day protests, where Derek Brown investigated the history of British people rioting.[113]

Previous to this re-remembering the riots were recalled in the late 1950s (in a *Times* article) at a time when much of the media was focusing on issues of race, nationality, and immigration. The article referred to the long-standing Black communities in order to show evidence of the successful integration of Black people in Britain and then proclaimed 'things have not always been calm in these coloured enclaves' and mentioned the riots in 1919 and in the twenties in both Liverpool and Cardiff. However, as a precursor to later historiography the article concluded that the riots were not motivated by race but were due to discriminatory rates of pay for seamen.[114]

There has been increasing attention on the 1919 riots in recent years. Andrea Murphy's analysis of the Liverpool riots has also shed new light onto the subject, utilising Assize court hearings.[115] Mike Brogden's exploration of Liverpool police between the wars by means of oral history is a particularly revealing examination of the way in which police officers have remembered their work. One of the officers interviewed failed to remember the riots specifically but recalled events (that Brogden has correlated to be the riots) he termed 'black trouble'. This forgetting is not only due to the way in which memories are engaged with after several decades, but is a result of the severe racism of the officers interviewed. [116]

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[111] *The Times*, 6 July 1981.
[112] Jerry White, 'The Summer Riots of 1919', *New Society*, 13 August 1981, pp. 260-261.
[113] Derek Brown, 'We're not revolting, but do we protest too much?', *The Guardian*, 2 May 2001.
[114] *The Times*, 25 May 1959.
[115] Murphy, *From the Empire to the Rialto.*
[116] Mike Brogden, *On the Mersey Beat: Policing Liverpool Between the Wars* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 148-153.

Recently there have been works analysing the Black experience of the riots by using the tools of 'life history.' C.E. Wilson, whose thesis explored the Black experience from 1919 to 1945, created an extensive number of oral history interviews from Black people living in the area at the time of the riots. In the section on the riots, Wilson aimed to look at the history of racism from the experience of Black people, as this had not been done before.[117] Those Black people interviewed by Wilson expressed their shock and anger at the death of Charles Wootton. Kate Aynsu remembered that this was particularly evident among Liverpool born Blacks.[118] Peter Fryer positioned the immediate remembering of the riots by those attacked in stark contrast to white memories of the events. For Black people '1919 illuminated reality like a flash of lightning. The lessons of the riots were etched into the consciousness of an entire generation.'[119] The re-remembering of the riots started with the autobiography of Ernest Marke, whose memories have influenced others to explore Black history pre-1945 and in the process uncover the history of the 1919 riots.

Ernest Marke is one of the few Black people to have written about his experiences of the 1919 riots in autobiographical form.[120] In fact Marke is one of the few Black people who migrated to Britain in the early twentieth century and who has written an autobiography, as shown in Chapter Two. Marke additionally talked of the riots in the television programme *Black Britain*, which made use of his oral history testimony in its analysis of the Black experience in Britain in the early twentieth century.[121]

In his autobiography Marke described his initial disbelief at the riots. He was still a boy of not yet seventeen at the time. One day he went to watch a game of wappy (a card game played by Africans) at the African Hostel in Stanhope Street. Stanhope Street was one of the hostels destroyed in the riots, although Marke did not mention this in his autobiography. Two men came in covered in blood claiming some 'John Bulls'[122] had beaten them up and then an argument ensued about whether the men were telling the truth about being attacked without provoking the

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[117] Wilson, *A Hidden History*.
[118] *Ibid.*, p. 155.
[119] Fryer, *Staying Power*, p. 316.
[120] See Ernest Marke, *In Troubled Waters: Memoirs of my Seventy Years in England!* (London, Karia, 1986).
[121] Testimony of Ernest Marke, in *Black Britain*, BBC Pebble Mill, 1990, Episode 1.
[122] 'John Bulls' is slang for white British men.

fight. Marke remembered (through later knowledge) that 'little did I dream that this was just the beginning of a big race riot that was to spread throughout the big shipping ports of England, Scotland and Wales.'[123] The riots were linked to the First World War by some of the Africans Marke knew at the time who discovered the realities of racism and imperialism, that regardless of whether you were a British subject, if you were Black you were seen as inferior. By recalling these views Marke highlighted the massive effect the 1919 riots had on him and his ethnic identity and memory of racism.

Marke recalled that Elliotte (a highly respected Sierra Leonian who had just been demobbed) told another man called Joker (who he later found out was his long lost cousin who had ran away from home before Marke did):[124]

> '... in the first place we shoulda let them fight their own bloody war. Always remember this, Joker boy, a white man is a white man, no matter how you look at it. Whether they is Germans, English or even Turks, they all got white skins; don't you forget it. After they'd perched up their goddamn quarrel, what happen? They jump on us and say "F... off nigger, get back to your kennel." I tell you man, that's jus' what 'appening now.' He banged his fist on the table. 'Bloody bastards!'[125]

Marke explained the race riots as the result of unemployment with Black people as the 'scapegoat ... who happened to be the small minority and the underdog.'[126] Marke recalled his memories of the riots with the knowledge of the 1958 riots and compared the contemporary situation of Blacks in Britain with that of 1919 – a 'flashforward' memory as this comparison is contextualised within the 1919 recollections and not placed later in the autobiography. The result is a mythologising of the 1958 riots that the forces of British liberalism speedily stopped them and the participants were only hooligans and organised fascists, an almost universal mythology. He stated:

> The race riot in Notting Hill and Nottingham in 1958, however, was quite a different affair for there were lots of jobs to be had, with the construction of new buildings, post-war production and full employment. ... The 1958 race riot was caused through sheer ignorance and hooliganism, which was partly instigated by a certain fascist element and it was only a speck in the pan in comparison with 1919. The authorities, the press and public sentiment in 1958 soon put a stop

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[123] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, pp. 25-27.
[124] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[125] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[126] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

> to it then, but in 1919 there were fewer of us and less people who cared.[127]

Marke's testimony differs from the interviews Wilson carried out because he did not talk about the policy of rounding up Black people, which was a significant action for the Black community of Liverpool, as also seen in the press reporting of the time. Additionally he did not mention the sexual racism surrounding the riots and attributed them solely to issues of economic competition. Perhaps just as significant, Marke did not talk about the death of Charles Wootton, which for many people in Liverpool has come to represent a symbolism of the riots and of Black struggles.

In terms of the current public memory of the riots, the death of Wootton has served as a tool for memory (geographical, ethnic and public). As Wilson stated, 'his death [Wootton's] came to symbolize the presence of racial hatred and the black struggle against it.'[128] In Liverpool the death of Wootton is commemorated each year in June and there is a Liverpool street named after Wootton.[129] This memory and memorialisation has come about largely due to the Higher Education College dedicated to Wootton, called the *Charles Wootton College*. This college was established in 1974 'as an inner city experiment to enquire into the educational problems of black people' in Liverpool and 'to provide an alternative education for the many young black adults for whom the conventional education system had been a disappointment.' Those starting the college decided to honour Wootton 'by naming the College after a man who died of racial harrassment [*sic*] and oppression in Liverpool.'[130]

In 1988 the college opened a library called 'The Charles Wootton Mandela Library', thus linking Wootton to the famous Black leader oppressed by the apartheid regime in South Africa.[131] The college offers various courses, including Black studies. The nature of the memory of Wootton and the 1919 riots is seen within the work of the students. Two papers analysing the 1919 riots have been

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[127] Marke, *In Troubled Waters*, p. 32.
[128] Wilson, *A Hidden History*, p. 155.
[129] Colin Holmes, 'The Myth of Fairness: Racial Violence in Britain, 1911-1919', *History Today*, October 1985, p. 44.
[130] Charles Wootton College For Further Education, Prospectus 1992/1993, p. 2.
[131] *Charles Wootton News*, Number 11, June 1992, p. 12.

written under the auspices of the college.[132] Additionally, poetry sent into the *Charles Wootton News* has reflected the Black memory of the riots. One poem *Wootton & Mandela* contains the lines: 'The Charles Wootton Centre, On Upper Parliament Street, The building is small, And very discreet, Named after a man, Powerful in his own right, As long as his name lives on, He will have won his fight, Murdered in Race Riots, Back in 1919, Buried in Anfield Cemetery, Fighting for his own right, Against apartheid still to be seen.'[133] Another poem by a pre-Higher Education student contains the lines 'Charles Wootton was the first black man to be killed, because of white man's racism. Gangs chased him till he ran no more, like a rag doll flopped to the floor. Kicked, punched, showed no mercy. like a stone throw in the Mersey.'[134] Thus the memory of the riots has been linked to the experiences of Wootton and the knowledge of the riots has been circulated to a much wider audience due to the establishment of the College.

The memory of Wootton has developed into ethnic and geographical memories and the wider memory of the riots has been individualised into one story as representative of the injustice of the whole event. He is an iconic figure and has come to symbolize the Black Liverpool community and their struggles for recognition and equality. As with the linking of Wootton to Mandela, his death and the injustices of police inaction have served as a link to the murder of Stephen Lawrence.[135] Recovering the history of Wootton has been important for many political activists and Black people because the manner of his death was forgotten about in such an immediate way. Additionally the lack of concern shown towards him by press, politicians and the authorities in the aftermath of his death, like Stephen Lawrence, was indicative of the way Black people were treated within Britain. After the process of re-discovering him had taken place, Wootton has been

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[132] L. Julienne, '1919 Liverpool Race Riots and Charles Wootton' (publication details unknown) and James Squire, 'The 1919 Race Riots', unpublished paper, The Charles Wootton Center, 1 (date of production unknown).

[133] *Charles Wootton News*, Number 11, June 1992, p. 21.

[134] *Charles Wootton News*, Number 21, June 1997, p. 33.

[135] In 1999 Dorothy Kuya gave a speech at the Town Hall in Liverpool for the unveiling of the portrait of John Archer. She reminded listeners of various episodes in history linking Liverpool to Black people, from slavery to the 80th anniversary of the riots and the death of Wootton. Both Wootton and Stephen Lawrence, she told the audience, were killed on the streets because they were Black.
http://www.liverpool2007.org.uk/history/ethnichistory/blackhistory/johnarcher/johnarcher.htm.
Marika Sherwood has also utilised the death of Stephen Lawrence as a context-dependent memory in which other racist murders were re-remembered. Sherwood used the death of Charles Wootton as

re-remembered so that his memory will not fade once again and that his life will not have been taken in vain. L. Julienne asserted at the end of her essay about Wootton, 'CHARLES WOOTTON LIVES.'[136] In terms of memory and re-remembering, he has been remembered so that he can symbolically live on, in terms of being linked to current day struggles.

Recently the use of the Internet has provided a way for Black groups to remember all aspects of their histories and has also provided a different layer onto the concept of the Black diaspora – people interested in cross-cultural exchange can easily do so over a fast and increasingly accessible medium. Particular groups have used the Internet to relay their collective and personal histories and experiences of life in Britain. The 1919 riots have been re-remembered on various Black web sites in a way that the 1911 and 1917 riots have not. This is partly a result of new initiatives such as the *Channel 4 Black and Asian History Map*, which provides its own historical analysis as well as providing an umbrella link between thousands of individual web sites.[137]

As explained in the introduction to this section, re-remembering is a result of previous denials and suppressions of history. In terms of national and officialised histories a process of what Chic Smith has called *Selective Amnesia* has occurred.[138] Chic Smith provides an important example of how histories are remembered, in that often people outside of the immediate cultural group will want to re-remember hidden histories as a constituent of their own ethnic history. Paul Morrison's astonishment that there were Jews living in the valleys at the turn of the century was a primary reason for his making of *Solomon and Gaenor*. Similarly when visiting Britain from the USA, Chic Smith desired to find out about the history of the Black British community. Initially he was in awe of the way in which British, as opposed to Americans, knew about their national history, which 'had been ingrained in the memory banks of the natives as well as those who migrated there for whatever reason.' Smith attended a lecture outlining the various aspects of

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an example with which to show that lynching in Britain is not a new phenomenon. See Marika Sherwood, 'Lynching in Britain', *History Today*, March 1999, pp. 21-23.

[136] L. Julienne, '1919 Liverpool Race Riots and Charles Wootton', p. 8.

[137] See http://www.channel4.com/blackhistorymap/index.html.

[138] Chic Smith is the co-founder of the politically conscious Black music magazine *Urban Think Tank*. Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson have likewise used the personal memory formulation first explored by Freud (of memory being inherently revisionist and an exercise in selective amnesia) and related this to collective memory. Samuel and Thompson, 'Introduction', p. 7.

British culture, but the lecturer omitted the history of Black people, saying that there was not a Black presence in Britain until the 1960s. After this Smith's 'awe was transformed to dismay and disgust.' He recalled 'how could it be that Blacks were not acknowledged as part of the British population until 1960? ... I was confused as to how a country so well versed in their own history, could collectively omit the presence of and/or contributions of an entire race of people?' The reason to this suppression of history, which has also affected America, concerns itself with *Selective Amnesia* – 'the deliberate process which eliminates or omits factual information from memory or records ... the choosing from among several to be lost/deleted from memory.' As a result of this discovery, Smith set out to document the history of Blacks in Britain from Roman times to the present (and as a result explored the race riots of 1919) so that 'the age old ailment of *Selective Amnesia* will be cured for once and for all.' However, as Boyarin and Irwin-Zarcka attest to, the re-remembering of one person, particularly within academia, does not serve to alter collective memory in any monumental fashion. Smith acknowledged that his re-remembering would not challenge collective memory in its entirety but that 'it is the responsibility of each individual to search beyond the surface to reveal the whole story.'[139]

6.5. Conclusion.

Colin Holmes has asserted that although it is potentially hazardous to conclude due to lack of research 'Jews were better able to cope with the hostility they encountered than certain other groups.'[140] Holmes' assertion is certainly correct in terms of the help Jews could receive as a result of the communal structure of the Jewish community in Britain. With regard to reacting to racist riots, however, partly due to the difference in status and culture between the Anglo-Jews and East European immigrants and due to the fragile nature of British tolerance, there was a notable denial of racial violence against Jews by communal leaders. This denial was not seen to the same extent in the 1919 riots, as exemplified by the reaction of the *APU*, John Archer and Hercules. This difference in reaction has led to differing levels of memory and re-remembering within Black and Jewish culture.

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[139] Chic Smith, 'Selective Amnesia: A Historical Look at the Black Presence in Britain, *Urban Think Tank*, http://www.urbanthinktank.org/selectiveamnesia.cfm.
[140] Holmes, *Anti-Semitism in British Society*, p. 233.

As the anti-Black riots were less internally suppressed within immediate memory, they have been more readily re-remembered in recent years. However, ethnic re-remembering in general has been occurring to a greater extent within the Jewish community – Jewish re-remembering has been occurring within historical writing, oral history projects, television documentaries, public exhibitions, and museums such as Manchester, Finchley and Camden. As a result people as diverse as Paul Morrison, Simon Joseph, Geoffrey Alderman, William Rubinstein and Anthony Glazer have begun to explore the anti-Jewish riots and the reasons why they were so readily forgotten.

Remembering as an act of historical inquiry has been a significant way in which these riots have been recalled and has served to uncover previous hidden history. It is significant to note that most of the riots under consideration have been re-remembered in light of other public disturbances and debates concerning race and immigration (which in terms of implicit politics can be problematic). For example, the Brixton riots served as a tool for remembering all of the riots considered in this chapter, in the form of short articles and newspaper accounts. Additionally the 1947 riots acted as a device in which C.C Aronsfeld could 'remember' the 1911 and 1917 riots. In this way the writers were directly confronting and challenging both public memory and the myth of tolerance to show that Britain's image, as a nation free from public disturbance was a mythology. However, the fact that the disturbances in the 1980s were used as a device for remembering and that there was little distinction made between those events of the 1980s and earlier riots is representative of pathological memory: the racist riots were seen solely as incidents involving ethnic minorities and public disturbance.[141]

In contrast, the memory of anti-Semitic violence did not initially focus on Jewish resistance. Subsequently, however, those defending their property in the 1917 riots and physically fighting rioters have been acknowledged in Teeman's autobiography, who has utilised the memories of local non-Jews. Yet Gilam, as late as 1981, although acknowledging Jewish involvement in violence, condemned those partaking in the same manner as many contemporary Anglo-Jews: he suggests those defending themselves were hooligans and therefore partially of blame. The 'failure' to document Jewish self-defence within ethnic memory is why

Simon Joseph was at pains to stress the story of Mr Goldblatt in his interview to counter such tendencies.

'Ethnic memory' has been shaped by the wish of avoidance and forgetting, partly for the reason that remembering brings too much personal pain but also because of the domestic politics surrounding the group at times of domestic unrest and instability. The riots of 1917, for example, occurred at a time when the situation of the Jews in Britain was fragile with anti-Semitism expressed in political and other circles. Sections of the Jewish community, particularly those within the Board of Deputies of British Jews saw that remembering violence against them would serve to increase domestic anti-Semitism and also make them appear unpatriotic by undermining notions of British tolerance. This apologetic response is evident in the aftermath of the rioting against Jews throughout the century and is one of the striking differences between Black and Jewish memory.

However, there are internal dynamics within the groups' memories, which result occasionally in a parallel response between Black and Jewish people. For example, some Black people have equally remembered the riots in a way as to sustain the concept of liberal Britain usually by blaming fringe element of society for the riots – 'dangerous foreigners' in the case of the 1919 riots. Ernest Markes' memory of the 1958 riots (influenced by his knowledge of much more violent riots in 1919) also led him to adopt the concept of 'liberal' Britain. This belief was achieved by claiming that times had changed since 1919 as Britain was much more accepting and that the 1958 riots mainly occurred because they were fascist inspired and involved hooligans. Thus the concept of tolerant Britain was used in both Black and Jewish reactions to the riots, although far more in 'elite' rather than everyday memory and more in Jewish than Black memory.

How then do ethnic minorities remember the causes and background of racist rioting? Black memories of the 1919 riots generally point to previous racism within the local community, but in terms of individual ethnic memory of riots against Jews, it can be concluded that alternative reasons for the riots besides simply racism are often given priority. Simon Joseph pointed out in his autobiography and was keen to stress in his telephone interview that there were harsh economic problems in the area and that there was little anti-Semitism at the

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[141] See Michael Rowe, *The Racialisation of Disorder in Twentieth Century Britain* (Aldershot,

time. Although he termed the 1911 riots a 'pogrom', he did not dwell on the anti-Semitism in the violence. Likewise Brodetsky commented that the reason for Jews being targeted was scapegoating, or that many Jews had German sounding names. Jewish memories have generally been keener to acknowledge other reasons for Jews being attacked, other than anti-Semitism. Whilst some Black memories have pointed to the economic problems involved in the local area at the time of the riots – Ernest Marke viewed the 1919 riots as being the result of economic hardship and that the existence of Black people who could be used as scapegoats in fact prevented Britain from undergoing a revolution – there has been less resistance to accepting the reality of racism as an underlying cause.

For many Jewish and Black people the riots are seen as vivid memories. However, in the case of Black memory the 1919 (like the 1958 riots) were seen or have been subsequently symbolised and mythologised as a turning point in which all hopes and illusions of being viewed as British were dashed. This is not evident in any way in the response or official memory of the anti-Jewish riots and serves as a striking contrast between the two communities. The riots against Black people resulted in explicit discourse and government action that marked Black people off as someone apart from the nation. This had subsequent affects on ethnic memory in that the riots were symbolic of political developments as well and were recalled and remembered in terms of these developments such as the policy of repatriation after the 1919 riots.

There is certainly no one simple or homogeneous way in which internally the communities remember or re-remember these riots within collective memory. As highlighted in the introduction of Section Three, collective memory does not equate with harmonised or standardised memory. There are disputes within any group of people about how to interpret a particular event, as cultures and ethnic groups are always heterogeneous. Memories are revised, reshaped, and prioritised according to an individuals' particular relationship with their ethnic identity and also according to generational change – allowing re-remembering to become more tenable, such as the increasing re-remembering occurring facilitated through the Internet. Generationally, today there is a greater willingness to re-remember anti-Black and anti-Semitic riots – within academia and public memory arenas, such as

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Ashgate, 1998).

film. However, the riots, their causes and importance are internally still contested, as we have seen for example in the manner of remembering in Paul Morrison's *Solomon and Gaenor*.

Chapter Seven. Mythology and History: Memories of Comparative Histories, Black and Jewish Identity and Inter-Ethnic Relations

7.1. Introduction. Historiography and Cross Cultural Comparisons: the USA and Britain.

The historical gaze over the topic of Black and Jewish ethnicity and identity is particularly intense within American academia - 'indeed, more has been written by historians, sociologists, and novelists about the relationship between Blacks and Jews than that between any of America's other ethnic groups.'[1] Much of this research focuses on the mythologised past of Blacks and Jews in solidarity against the forces of racism and the subsequent breakdown in alliance through issues of affirmative action, Israel, Black nationalism and historical revisionism centring on the slave trade. Those seeking to re-address the re-remembering of dangerous histories have focused on the parallels in experiences between the groups in order to rebuild an alliance. Nevertheless, with the rise of the ethnicity school of research, scholars have explored not only the relations between the groups, but interconnections in terms of their life experiences and ethnic identities, providing a more inclusive and comprehensive comparative framework.[2]

Why are these groups compared and contrasted to such a large degree and with such high emotional stakes? Comparative studies focusing on other groups of people do not provoke the same level of debate, dispute, anger, and sadness. Unlike many other subjects within academia, those who focus on this issue do so with the intention of changing current political and economic climates by directly using memory and history. But are the reasons for this increase in historical analysis

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[1] Edward S. Shapiro, 'Black-Jewish Relations Revisited', *Judaism*, Summer 1995, Volume 44, Number 3, p. 379. A detailed survey of this historiography can be found in: David Brion Davis, 'Jews and Blacks in America', *The New York Review of Books*, Volume 46, Number 19, 2 December 1999, pp. 57-63.

[2] See works by Jack Kugelmass, David Biale, Daniel Boyarin, Jonathan Boyarin, Paul Gilroy, and others for an assessment of Jewish ethnicity as posited alongside examinations of other groups' ethnicities. Part of the rise of some scholarship involved in Jewish ethnicity has been a direct result of the Black-Jewish controversies in the USA. David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel asked 'why is it that only the Jews experience multiculturalism with such a special ambivalence? In part, the answer has to do with the vexed relationship between Jews and African Americans, a history that is much more complex than the prevailing myth suggests.' David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel, 'Introduction: The Dialectic of Jewish Enlightenment,' in David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel (eds.) *Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism* (California and London, University of California Press, 1998), p. 4.

applicable to a British context – if not in terms of grand alliances and fractures, then in terms of ethnic memory and identities? This chapter explores the ways in which people (of which academics are a large proportion) utilise the history and memory of Black and Jewish history, the reasons why certain memories are being uncovered and why people use or 'abuse' memory in order to foster better or worse relations between the groups.

Emily Miller Budick has argued that there has been little actual interaction between the groups, the civil rights coalition, and everyday relations in areas such as New York provide the main focal points, but the people involved in these were not numerous. Budick has seen that the vast amount of literature (historical, fictional, philosophical) written from Blacks and Jews about the other groups has been a tool of exploring the bigger picture of ethnicity and sense of self in general, 'for a significant number of African and Jewish American writers, the other group becomes a vehicle by which to think through their own ethnic identities.'[3] Although the interaction between the groups is far more pervasive than much historical scholarship has uncovered, the emotional stakes between Blacks and Jews represent something more than purely historical detail, as Cornel West has documented in his analysis of Black-Jewish relations.[4]

Part of the reason for the intensity of emotions has been provoked by offensive charges being made by some revisionist researchers, such as the denial of Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement or a belief that Jews only entered the movement for self-interest, a struggle in which several Jews were imprisoned or lost their lives. Murray Friedman was directly involved in civil rights and wrote his history of Black-Jewish relations in the USA because of his 'sorrow' and 'anger' at the destruction of the alliance and asked 'What Went Wrong?'[5] Similarly Jonathan Kaufman has referred to his 'puzzlement and sadness' about the current situation.[6]

Within all of the debates and controversies surrounding Black-Jewish relations, the notion of memory is of central resonance and importance. Memories

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[3] Emily Miller Budick, *Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 1.
[4] See Cornel West, *Race Matters* (New York, Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 101-116.
[5] Murray Friedman, *What Went Wrong? The Creation and Collapse of the Black-Jewish Alliance* (New York, Free Press, 1994), p. 15.

of the past are revised, suppressed, re-remembered, and simplified by a whole array of authors comparing Black and Jewish experiences. Some of the topics of debate that shape memory – issues of colour and ethnicity, migration and mythologies, histories of suffering, competitive histories and stereotypes – have particular resonance within a British context. By performing this exploration, this chapter re-remembers histories of interaction between Blacks and Jews within Britain that have never been fully confronted within Black or Jewish ethnic memory or within historical memory and historiography. Like the numbers of studies focusing on everyday interaction in areas such as Harlem, similar studies could be produced about everyday housing and employment relations in an area such as Hackney or Chapeltown, Leeds. A further area of study, not examined in this chapter but of great importance in this area of research, could be made of the links between Black and Jewish political thought such as Pan-Africanism and Zionism and political movements in the early half of the twentieth century. Kwame Anthony Appiah, Gilroy and a few others have made a start in this area of research. Of particular significance is the paradoxical and ambivalent identities seen in the political ideology of Marcus Garvey or the political, moral and humanitarian views of Paul Robeson who dedicated many of his speeches and political actions to empathising with Jewish history, identity and experiences of persecution and providing parallels between Black and Jewish history.[7]

This chapter also reflects on those Blacks and Jews seeking to build bridges of unity and how they use historical, biblical and hidden memories in order to alter current political climates. As Murray Friedman stated 'Blacks and Jews cannot achieve agreement about their future until they have achieved a common

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[6] Jonathan Kaufman is a journalist and author. He has written on the subject of Black-Jewish relations in the USA. See Seth Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind: A Crisis of Liberalism* (New York, New York University Press, 1998), p. 1.

[7] For historiography concerning Pan-Africanism and Zionism, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York and Oxford, OUP, 1992), Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, Verso, 1993), Robert A. Hill, 'Jews and the Enigma of the Pan-African Congress of 1919', pp. 55-82, in Joseph R. Washington (ed.), *Jews in Black Perspectives: A Dialogue* (Lanham, University Press of America, 1989), Robert A. Hill, 'Black Zionism: Marcus Garvey and the Jewish Question', in V.P. Franklin, Nancy L. Grant, Harold M. Kletnick and Genna Rae McNeil (eds.), *African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century: Studies in Convergence and Conflict* (Columbia and London, University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 40-53, and Robert G. Weisbord and Richard Kazarian, Jr (eds), *Israel in the Black American Perspective* (Westport and London, Greenwood Press, 1985), Chapter II: "That Marvellous Movement": Early Black Views of Zionism.

understanding of their past.'[8] Whilst using aspects of American theory, there must be an acknowledgment of the geographical and historical differences, particularly as the African-Caribbean community in Britain arrived as migrants mainly in the 1950s to 1970s and did not experience a system of plantation slavery within the metropole, as had been the case with the Black community in the USA. Additionally, the sizes of the Jewish and Black communities in the USA and Britain are considerably different, as was the nature of the struggles for equality between the two countries.

If on a lesser scale than the USA, most of the literature that has arisen from studying Black-Jewish relations and interconnectedness in Britain has still been produced with the aim to better relations between the groups and to re-address historical revision or forgetting.[9] The history of this interaction has been almost completely ignored, with the exception of a few articles and MA dissertations. The Black-Jewish Forum has been at the forefront of the historical remembering which has so far occurred in Britain, from the articles written by the J-Core (Jewish Council for Racial Equality) director and the Black-Jewish Forum member Edie Friedman to the forthcoming historical exhibition on Black, Asian and Jewish experiences in Britain.[10]

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[8] Friedman, *What Went Wrong?*, p. 3.

[9] Paul Gilroy has explored the similarities in Black and Jewish diasporic experiences, language, memory, and political identifications. Additionally, Jewish theorists influenced his focus on the 'Black Atlantic' and he wanted to acknowledge this influence in order that it could in a small way help to improve Black-Jewish relations today. See Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, pp. 205-206.

[10] There have, to my knowledge, been three MA dissertations produced in Britain exploring Black-Jewish relations, connections and interaction in Britain, which are: Ze'ev David Portner, 'A Difficult Friendship: The Relationship Between the Black and Jewish Community in Britain' (Queen Mary and Westfield College, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 1996), Gemma Romain, 'An Analysis and Comparison of Black West Indian and Jewish Immigrants in Twentieth Century Britain: The Immigrants Perspective' (University of Southampton, Unpublished MA Dissertation, 1998), and Miriam Waldenberg, 'The History of Anglo-Jewish Responses to Immigration and Racial Tension, 1950-1970' (University of Sheffield, Unpublished MA dissertation, 1972). There have been a few articles published on the subject, for example: Edie Friedman, 'Faith in the City: An Alternative Jewish View', *Jewish Quarterly*, Volume 33, Number 3, 1986, pp. 20-25, Edie Friedman, 'Mobilizing Jews Against Racism: A Personal Reflection', *Jewish Quarterly*, Volume 42, Number 2, Summer 1995, pp. 26-29 and Paul Boateng, MP and Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, 'Blacks and Jews in Britain and America', *Common Ground*, Number 1, 1996, pp. 17-18. One book exploring comparative histories of migration and settlement has also been published: Simon Taylor, *A Land of Dreams: A Study of Jewish and Caribbean Migrant Communities in England* (London and New York, Routledge, 1993). Rachel Garfield is currently working on visual representations of Jewishness and, in a similar vein to American Jewish cultural theorists, has explored the relationship between Blackness and Jewishness in Britain. See Rachel Garfield, 'Ali G: Just Who Does He Think He is?', *Jewish Quarterly*, Voume 47, Number 4, Winter 2000/2001, pp. 69-72.

There is a particular divergence between Black and Jewish memories of comparison: Jews reflect upon issues affecting the African-Caribbean community far more than African-Caribbeans consider Jewish experiences as bearing upon their identity. Much of the chapter, therefore, may appear as if its main focus is an exploration of Jewish attitudes towards Black experience (and subsequently Black reactions to Jewish attitudes) and likewise an analysis of Jewish mythologies, rather than examining both communities and their 'comparative acts' and myths equally. Jewish reflections on African-Caribbean and Asian experiences usually arise in the autobiographical act and in memory recall when individuals reflect upon their place of growing up (in Jewish autobiography particularly the East End). Jewish autobiographies are written as a way of reclaiming past history, particularly past ethnic histories of the old immigrant spaces and cultures, of reflecting upon youth when older and relating their experiences to the history of migration in Britain today. Additionally many Jews reflect upon issues relating to African-Caribbeans and Asians in a genuine desire to be a part of the anti-racism struggle and work in partnership with other communities.

In terms of direct Black and Jewish comparisons this chapter provides an exploration of memories and reactions to specific historical events that affected Black-Jewish relations in Britain. It does not provide an in-depth exploration of the details of these events, but explores the types of comparisons that emerge when the communities are 'compelled' into a dialogue with one another. It suggests that these dialogues, despite their different history, are of a broadly similar nature to those occurring in the USA but that further scholarship relating to ethnic relations and memories of relations in Britain needs to be carried out in this area. The historical themes that provided a catalyst for dialogue are: the issues arising from Louis Farrakhan's banned visit to Britain in the 1980s, the Nation of Islam rally at Broadwater Farm in the mid-1990s up to the ban being lifted on Farrakhan visiting the UK on 31/7/01, and Lord Jakobovits' 1986 report *From Doom to Hope* (his assessment of the report *Faith in the City* produced by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas).[11]

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[11] Louis Farrakhan is the Black Nationalist leader of the Nation of Islam. Sir Immanuel Jakobovits, Chief Rabbi, *From Doom to Hope: a Jewish View on 'Faith in the City', The Report of the*

It is important to stress that many of these issues, particularly that relating to Farrakhan, have not been as significant in Britain as in the United States and that Black-Jewish relations are rarely at the forefront of peoples memories and everyday life experiences. However, these issues brought to the fore debates on Black-Jewish relations in both 'communities'. It is likewise important to stress that the comparisons articulated by certain individuals should not be taken as the views of the 'communities' as a whole: this will become particularly evident when looking at the vast amount of letters written by Jews to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* which condemned certain aspects of Jakobovits' report. Within this condemnation, historical re-remembering occurred, whereby people brought to the fore certain historical experiences of the Jewish community that have been marginalized within collective memory.

7.2. The Historical Framework of Memories of Comparison.

A brief description is needed of the key historical events that have brought to the fore Black-Jewish debates in Britain. These debates reflect many of the nuances, contradictions, ambivalences and associations involved in Black-Jewish relations and the practice of comparing Black and Jewish histories and experiences in Britain. The mass migration to Britain of New Commonwealth immigrants in the late 1950s and 1960s was discussed in both the *Jewish Chronicle* and Jewish communal and religious bodies such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX) and the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB). The RSGB and the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) became particularly active in 'community relations' during this period. Debates centred upon community relations, the implementation of race relations legislation, immigration controls and the increase of fascist activity in areas such as Dalston. In terms of the consensus among communal leaders, it was generally felt that Jews should involve themselves in race relations work as individuals and not as representatives of Jewish organisations (although all of the main Jewish organisations expressed their belief in supporting and aiding New Commonwealth immigrants) and that additionally the fight against fascism should not involve direct

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Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas (London, Office of the Chief Rabbi, January 1986).

confrontation but should involve the legislative process. Just as the Jewish community was diverse, so there was also a large number of Jews who involved themselves in direct anti-fascist action (such as the members of the *62 Group*)[12] or wanted to work towards race-equality within a Jewish organisation or with Jewish inspired ethics and teachings. Although advocating that Jews should join existing anti-racism organisations, the Board of Deputies asserted that Jews should help other communities by directly reflecting on biblical and rabbinical teachings such as Genesis 5.1 and Exodus 23.9.[13] These issues have carried onto the present day, where communal leaders have taken a more active stand against racism, with *J-Core* being of direct influence.[14]

During the 1970s there was a large increase in far-right activity against the Black community. Again this activity was of great note in the pages of the *Jewish Chronicle* and also for individual Jews involved in anti-racism and anti-fascism struggles and for Jewish organisations such as the left wing group *Poale Zion* and the Board of Deputies' defence committee. Three key events/themes occurring in the 1970s (two in February 1978) provide important issues for this chapter; they do not provide a window onto everyday, general relations and attitudes, but they did serve to provoke debate amongst Blacks and Jews as to the nature of Black-Jewish relations, of the Jewish part to play in anti-racism and of the nature of Jewish identity, whether ethnic or religious. First, the issue of Israel was of great importance throughout the 1970s and 1980s: specifically the 1975 UN declaration that Zionism was synonymous with racism, the alleged anti-Zionist stance taken by organisations such as the Anti-Nazi League, and the perceived anti-Zionism of the Black British community. Second, the newspaper *The Jewish Tribune*, the newspaper of the very orthodox Agudas Israel organisation (small in its circulation and certainly not representative of the general Jewish population in Britain) printed

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[12] The *62 Group* was a direct action anti-fascist group set up in 1962. It's membership was Jewish and it worked with Black anti-racist workers and other organisations. Its methods were criticised by communal bodies such as AJEX and the Board of Deputies' defence committee, although there was often dialogue and co-operation between the groups.

[13] See Working Party on Race Relations, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, *Improving Race Relations: A Jewish Contribution* (London, Board of Deputies of British Jews, 1969).

[14] For an extensive analysis of Jewish responses to New Commonwealth immigrants, see Waldenberg, *The History of Anglo-Jewish Responses to Immigration and Racial Tension, 1950-1970.* This dissertation is the only in-depth analysis of Black-Jewish relations and Jewish views on race and immigration in the 1960s and if published would provide a much needed addition to British race relations historiography.

an article attacking Greville Janner for trying to link the Black and Jewish communities together. This article was attacked by the *West Indian World*, with the headline of the front-page reading 'Jews in Wogs Row' and caused debate in both the *West Indian World* and the *Jewish Chronicle*.[15] Third, debate was provoked largely in the *Jewish Chronicle* as a result of the controversy surrounding Keith Joseph's 1978 call on Jews to create a 'Jewish vote' in support of immigration legislation against New Commonwealth immigrants.

During the 1980s and 1990s the debate surrounding Farrakhan's attempts at entry into the United Kingdom caused controversy between the African-Caribbean and Jewish communities (although it is difficult to determine how far 'everyday' Blacks and Jews were caught up in debate amongst each other). Black newspapers such as *The Voice* ran editorials which implicitly and explicitly attacked Jews for the ban. Immediately after Farrakhan's ban in 1986, the Chief Rabbi, Sir Immanuel Jakobovits (a former refugee from Nazism) published his response to the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas (UPAs). This report, *From Doom to Hope*, provided Jakobovits' perspective on the commission report and more significantly his belief of the way Jewish teachings and experiences in Britain could help contribute to solving the problems within UPAs. His report was criticised by many Black and Jewish people for being patronising to Black people, mythologizing Jewish history and experiences, 'comparing the incomparable' and misunderstanding the various problems affecting the inner cities. The USA debate over affirmative action has not been manifested within Britain, but there has been similar sentiments expressed within these key events, particularly when the communities compare their experiences in terms of the divergent levels of help they received when first settling in Britain. The Farrakhan saga reared its head again in the mid-1990s, when a live broadcast of Farrakhan to be held in Wembley was cancelled and when a rally was held at Broadwater Farm to coincide with Farrakhan's Million Man March in Washington. More recently the lifting of the ban on Farakhan has provoked debate within both communities. There is much that can be said on the history of inter-ethnic relations between African-Caribbeans and Jews in Britain, although it is not the intention of this chapter to provide a full

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[15] Greville Janner is a Labour backbencher. He is involved in Holocaust education and anti-racism education.

historical exploration of these complex and different historical phenomena. This chapter assesses theoretical and academic debates, which have arisen as a result of historical events – the first such assessment being whether members of the groups have found their histories comparable.

7.3. Parallels in Experiences or 'Comparing the Incomparable'?

In 1968, at the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain (RSGB) Conference, Rabbi Dow Marmur, the Minister of the South-West Essex Reform Synagogue stated 'the comparison between Jew and Negro is justified by history. In both America and Britain the Negro has frequently taken over the former social and economic position of the Jew. The Negroes have even inherited the Jewish vocabulary of persecution; words like ghetto and pogrom have assumed a new meaning in recent years.'[16] The history of the two communities, in terms of suffering and persecution, has frequently provided the basis with which both Jews and Blacks have compared their experiences to one another. Comparisons of historical suffering and experiences of immigration are frequently referred to within historiography and ethnic memory of Jews and Blacks involved in the anti-racism movement. These comparisons serve as a potential springboard for dialogue and also a refutation of mythologies. The memory of these comparisons within the USA context is fragmented. Within the age of the mass migration of Jews and mass northwards migration of Black people there were instances of solidarity between the groups. This solidarity was expressed within Yiddish newspapers and in coalitions such as the *NAACP* and the *AJC*. Yet at the same time there were everyday divisions and local antagonism within areas such as Harlem. From the 1940s there have been antagonisms within the accommodation sector when Jews were characterised as exploitative landlords and there had been conflict in schools and in employment that has often led to dangerous racisms being made respectable.

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[16] Dow Marmur, 'Fight not flight', *Living Judaism*, Volume 2, Number 4, Autumn 1968, p. 128. At the same conference a resolution was passed opposing race discrimination and also calling on individual synagogues to help immigrants directly. Dow Marmur's view was expressed in a paper that aimed to challenge Jews to involve themselves in anti-racism work - something he contended was not generally carried out. Marmur used his experience working in the USA in order to formulate his views on race relations in Britain.

Both of these memories have been utilised by academics and been evident in collective memory in order to affect contemporary relations between the groups.[17]

With its own specific national context, but similar in general theme, these historical memories have been brought into articulated memory within Britain. In 1986 in light of Farrakhan's ban on entering the UK and the Jakobovits' report the Black newspaper, *The Voice* attacked the Jewish community as a whole for forgetting the parallels in experience between the two groups. The editorial stated, under the headline 'we all deserve dignity', that 'the history of the Jewish people and that of Black people can be seen as interrelated. Both have suffered a dispossession and today there is a searching for identity and also for unity.' These parallels have been articulated on many occasions within the *Jewish Chronicle*, not only within editorials, but also from people writing letters to the editor. However, the report in *The Voice* found the combination of Farrakhan's ban and Jakobovits' report as a 'worrying development' and that 'Jewish people should realise that Black people have a right to dignity – something *they* claim is taken away from *them* in antisemitism.'[18] The fact that *The Voice* thought that the Jewish community as a whole had forgotten the parallels in experience between Blacks and Jews indicates that memories and activities of the many Jews involved in anti-racism work have been marginalized or not generally remembered in Black ethnic memory. The last line in this editorial is interesting – it questioned whether Jews have had their dignity taken away from them by anti-Semitism, by the use of the word 'claim'. Within Black-Jewish relations competitive histories are one of the central themes at play, leading to a failure at times to acknowledge the problems each group has faced. For example, there is a lack of knowledge about domestic British anti-Semitism within wider memory and the memories of Blacks and Jews. The competitive histories seen here have particular resonance to the theories of James Baldwin, who argued many Blacks find it offensive that Jewish suffering is put on par with the suffering of the USA Black population. The anti-Semitism the Jewish community in Britain was subjected to at the turn of the century is little known of, as exemplified by Chapter Six. However, not only were anti-Semitic riots forgotten

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[17] For assessments of these themes, see Friedman, *What Went Wrong?*, Davis, 'Jews and Blacks in America', and Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind.*

but this is also the case with everyday instances of racism in the streets of areas such as the Leylands, Leeds. These histories have been directly re-remembered by those wishing to challenge communal memory and wishing to re-address historical assumptions as exemplified by the wording of *The Voice* article.

Many of the parallels in experience Blacks and Jews remember are those from past suffering, from stories of Egypt and Babylon to the more recent traumatic histories of both groups. These similarities have provided a springboard for comparison but also a way in which competitive histories are further compounded. The utilisation of terminology from the Jewish experience has not always occurred in the way in which Dow Marmur described in 1968. There have been disputes between members of the communities over whose suffering has been the greatest. Laurence Mordekhai Thomas has provided a philosophical-logistical way in which Blacks and Jews compare each other's histories, furthermore his contention has been that both groups look upon their suffering in moral terms, as a moral beacon.[19] These disputes are reflected often subtly. The word Holocaust has also been utilised to describe slavery, to differing degrees of subtlety – for example, Toni Morrison's use of the number six in her dedication to the '60 Million and more' in *Beloved*.[20] Of a more extreme nature was the gathering of members of the University of Pensylvania's African-American community to commemorate the victims of slavery. Slavery was termed the 'African Holocaust' or *Maafa*, the Kiswahili word for disaster. At this commemoration the famous Afrocentric scholar previously known for anti-Semitic views, John Henrik Clarke called the Jewish Holocaust 'an internal dispute among Europeans' and went onto argue 'I am not saying it was not tragic, or that it was not wrong' and there 'is no comparison between six million and 100 million deaths.'[21]

Similarly in the UK it is of significance that the terminology Holocaust is used when describing slavery. The use of this word has underlining contentions of

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[18] Editorial in *The Voice*, I February 1986, cited in Greville Janner, 'Black-Jewish Controversies in Britain', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Volume 20, Number 2, April 1986, pp. 5-6. Italics in text.
[19] Lawrence Mordekhai Thomas, 'Suffering as a Moral Beacon: Blacks and Jews', in Hilene Flanzbaum (ed.), *The Americanization of the Holocaust* (Baltimore and London, John Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 199-210.
[20] Budick highlighted this symbolic use of the Holocaust. See Budick, *Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation*, p. 161.
[21] Chris Marcisz, 'Students commemorate "African Holocaust", *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, March 15, 1995, p. 9, http://www.english.upenn.edu/~afilreis/Holocaust/african-hol.html.

many layers: it serves to compare directly the sufferings of Blacks with Jews – suggesting that – as if on a scale of suffering – the Holocaust has been remembered at the expense of slavery, it often seeks to implicitly or explicitly suggest that slavery was a greater crime than the Holocaust, and it serves to show that there are hidden histories at play within society as mainstream British society has never come to terms with the history of slavery and more importantly its role within the slave trade. The utilisation of this terminology paradoxically hides the history of slavery by subsuming it under what might be regarded as an inappropriate title and by not exploring the specificity of slavery. The re-remembering of slavery in Liverpool has on more than one occasion utilised the term Holocaust, although its deployment is certainly not analogous to the dangerous motives of someone like John Henrik Clarke.[22]

Thomas' appraisal failed to historically ground the memory of the Holocaust and slavery into contemporary Black-Jewish relations and relied too much on Christianity as a model that has defined Black-Jewish tension. But he, like others exploring Black-Jewish relations, provided more than an academic assessment and sought to offer a way in which Blacks and Jews could empathise healthily with each other's histories. He argued that 'as moral beacons, we can prevent evil from ever having a posthumous victory' and that this state of being was only achievable when 'we would no longer concern ourselves with the question of who has suffered the most, blacks or Jews.'[23] Paul Gilroy has, whilst recognising the dangers of comparative history between Blacks and Jews, if it results in competitive assertions, suggested that 'the issues of tradition and memory provide a key to bringing them together in ways that do not invite a pointless and utterly immoral wrangle over which communities have experienced the most ineffable forms of degradation.'[24]

However, often members of the groups have related to each other's histories in a real, empathic, and non-competitive manner. Caryl Phillips has provided this type of comparison within his fictional and factual writing and in his autobiographical reflections. As shown in Chapters Four and Five of this thesis,

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[22] For example, see Black History Resource Working Group, *An Introduction to the African Holocaust* (Liverpool, Publication details not known), http://www.merseyworld.com/slavery, and National Museum & Galleries on Merseyside, *Transatlantic Slavery: Against Human Dignity* (Liverpool, Publication details not known), p. 8.
[23] Thomas, 'Suffering as a Moral Beacon: Blacks and Jews', p. 210.

Phillips has seen many parallels between the Jewish and Black experiences, in the formations of their diasporas, in their histories of suffering and in their subsequent fragmented historical roots and memories. Phillips' first interest in Jewish history occurred when he was a teenager; this identification with Jewish history was, like his later writings and thoughts, formulated as part of his own ethnic and Black identity. Several years later, when he was aged twenty-five, he wrote about this experience and his subsequent feelings on Jewish history in his travel writings *The European Tribe*. *The Nature of Blood* stands as the fullest literary representation of Phillips' identification with the Jewish experience through the prism of Black history. As already explored in this thesis, he identified strongly with Jewish memory and histories of suffering, in terms of a diasporic identity, although not necessarily from an everyday experience of interaction with Jews in Britain. He also analysed Jewish history in a European perspective. In a similar vein, his ponderings on Black histories are carried out by his diasporic travels and not specifically by an analysis into Black British culture or ethnic identity. It is significant, for example, that in an interview carried out by the author, when asked for examples of the parallels in experience between Blacks and Jews, Phillips automatically gave examples pertaining to identities in the USA.[25]

Within *The European Tribe* when he recalled visiting Venice, the sight of the first Jewish ghetto, he started his chapter with a quote by James Baldwin from his widely quoted essay *Negroes are anti-Semitic because they're anti-white*.[26] Thus his exploration of Jewish history immediately started with a reflection on what Jewish history has of relevance within the wider history of Black-Jewish comparison and interaction. Phillips then referred to Black-Jewish relations in the USA and recalled that he could never understand why anti-Semitism permeated through so much of Black thought. He then described the possible reasons; although this analysis leaves the reader with an impression that he was justifying, rather than purely explaining the situation.[27]

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[24] Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, p. 212.
[25] Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000.
[26] James Baldwin was a personal friend of Phillips. Phillips quoted Baldwin's declaration that 'the Jew must see that he is part of the history of Europe, and will always be so considered by the descendent of the slave. Always, that is, unless he himself is willing to prove that this judgment is inadequate and unjust.' Caryl Phillips, *The European Tribe* (London, Faber, 1987), p. 52.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

Phillips then recollected the reasons why he has identified with Jewish history so much, stating 'as a child in what seemed to me a hostile country, the Jews were the only minority group discussed with reference to exploitation and racialism, and for that reason, I naturally identified with them. At that time, I was staunchly indignant about everything from the Holocaust to the Soviet persecution of Jewry. The bloody excesses of colonialism, the pillage and rape of modern Africa, the transportation of 11 million black people to the Americas, and their subsequent bondage were not on the curriculum, and certainly not on the television screen. As a result I vicariously channelled a part of my hurt and frustration through the Jewish experience.' However, he went onto state that 'today, however, I find myself in agreement with the critic George Steiner in feeling that some of the policies of modern-day Israel, particularly with relation to South Africa, bring 'shame on the Jewish people'. But as a black man living in Europe, I always remember the words of Frantz Fanon, who wrote in 1952 that, "It was my philosophy professor, a native of the Antilles, who recalled the fact to me one day: 'Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you.'" And I always pay attention. Perhaps this explains why I have never been able to admire *The Merchant of Venice*.'[28]

Both Gary Younge and Jonathan Friedland remember when they were young being told by their parents to watch *The Holocaust* and *Roots* on television, programmes which had a huge impact on them. Younge was ten years old when his mother made him and his brothers stay up to watch the television series *The Holocaust*. His mother told him that this was a part of his history. Friedland remembered being told by his father to watch two things on television when he was younger: the resignation of Nixon and the showing of *Roots*.[29] Therefore, whilst competitive comparisons occur, there are several instances where people will identify with each other's histories in a constructive and compassionate way. Similar types of either destructive or positive comparisons have occurred when comparing the history of African-Caribbean and Jewish settlement in Britain.

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[29] Gary Younge and Jonathan Friedland are colleagues, both working as journalists for *The Guardian* newspaper. They appeared together in a discussion on Black-Jewish relation in Britain at the 2001 J-Core Annual General Meeting. J-Core AGM, 12 July 2001, West London Synagogue.

In terms of everyday experiences, within Lord Jakobovits' report on UPAs there was an assessment of recognized parallels in experience and history between Africans, African-Caribbeans and Jews and these similarities provided the basis for an informed Jewish view on the situation. An analysis of the specific debates that arose within the Jakobovits controversy (as found in letters written to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*) is important for this chapter; it brings to light all of the various viewpoints and mythologies that can be found in Jewish and, to a lesser extent, African-Caribbean memories of comparison. However, it must be recognised that Jakobovits' outlook represents a more exaggerated version of views sometimes expressed and felt within Jewish memory. One common type of comparison made is exemplified in the way Jakobovits suggested the two groups reacted to British racism and to the challenges in British society. He contended the groups' reactions were poles apart, viewing the Jewish experience as an ideal model with which other immigrant groups should follow. Although asserting that there were differences in historical experience between the two groups, he contended that Jews had several disadvantages that Black people did not have to contend with. He stated,

> there are of course dissimilarities. Above all, Jews were not marked off by a distinctive skin-colour. Also, their thought patterns and cultural/educational heritage were distinctly European, more amenable to acculturation and integration in Britain. But as against these advantages, Jews had some very considerable extra disabilities, arriving not only destitute but without the slightest knowledge of the English language, none sharing the dominant faith, and all of them exposed to manifestations of virulent residual antisemitism, often erupting in acts of organised violence by fascist thugs and earlier anti-Jewish agitators.[30]

These views epitomise various strands of collective Jewish memory some remembered and others forgotten, and it is interesting to note that when these views are disputed (often within the autobiographical act) the 'reality' expressed

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[30] Jakobovits, *From Doom to Hope*, p. 5. The Leeds Jewish historian, Murray Friedman has expressed identical opinions, that 'the welfare state, inner city grants and anti-racial discrimination legislation have all eased the path of their settlement. These facilities were not available to the Jews when they immigrated, and it was only with the multiplicity of organisations they set up to promote self-help, and their full grasp of the educational opportunities then available, that they survived and prospered.' Murray Friedman, *Leeds Jewry: The First Hundred Years* (Leeds, Jewish Historical Society of England, Leeds Branch, 1992), p. 2.

challenges or modifies both of these two points. Jews did have 'difficulty' in integration as they were often seen by the 'host' society and by members of the Anglo-Jewish community as foreign and, if European, then certainly not Western European and were often racially constructed as 'oriental'. However, many Jewish immigrants did not see their cultural specificity as problematic, they wished to keep aspects of their language and cultural practices and were unenthusiastic with the level of the Anglicisation process they were expected to embark on. Jakobovits' second point – about anti-Semitism experienced – is well documented in the autobiographical act, particularly those produced by second-generation East End Jews. However, Jews did fight back against racism and physically defended themselves. As shown in Chapter Six, however, the public memory of Jews being involved in any sort of disorder was often immediately suppressed for fear of bringing the Jewish community as a whole into disrepute, particularly by communal organisations such as the Board of Deputies.

Divisive comparisons of this kind inevitably lead into a competitive spirit, whereby the group who has not 'made it', despite having less perceived obstacles than the successful group, is thought of as somehow internally deficient in one form or another. Related to this type of comparison is the viewpoint articulated in general memory and mythology and by certain prominent social scientists, most notably Ceri Peach, that the Asian community is following the pattern of the Jewish, and the African-Caribbean is following the pattern of the Irish. Peach argued:

> One of the most illuminating generalisations about ethnic minority groups in Britain has been to divide them into the Jewish and the Irish models of settlement. Broadly speaking, what I have termed the 'Irish' model is seen as blue collar, manual labour dominated, council house tenured, inner city, while the 'Jewish' model is seen as white collar, self-employed, owner-occupied and suburban.[31]

Apart from ignoring the diversity within the communities and the dubious nature of predictions of this kind, these types of viewpoints contain a great deal of mythologising about the way in which and the timespan the communities achieved economic success.

Essentially there were three different types of objections to Jakobovits' report from people within the Jewish community. Generally, those objecting were

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[31] Ceri Peach, 'Introduction' in Ceri Peach (ed.), *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census, Volume Two: The Ethnic Minority Populations of Great Britain* (London, HMSO, 1996), pp. 15-16.

angered that the report was seen as the official 'Jewish response' to urban deprivation. First, those who saw the two communities as so different that a comparison could not be made, particularly if the comparisons were made within a competitive spirit. Second, those who viewed the report as mythologizing Jewish history into one single narrative of success. Third, those who thought it unwise to get involved in anti-racism work and who saw no parallels between Jews and Blacks as Jews were European and religious, not ethnic minorities.

In one of the few assessments on Black-Jewish relations in Britain, Greville Janner provided an example of the first and second type of objection.[32] In an article examining the Jakobovits report and the Farrakhan ban he said of the former that 'the comparison between other ethnic minority groups and the Jewish community is inevitably misleading because of the nature and origins of the Jewish community, the timing of its arrival in this country and the times into which it arrived.' The main difference between the histories of the two groups, he contended, was the vast amount of Jewish charitable institutions present in Britain before the mass migration of East European Jews in the late nineteenth century. He stated

> how different are the circumstances, the amenities and the organizational structure which have greeted recent immigrants. Not for them the representatives and voices in high places. They feel that they are cut off from authority and that their voices are not heard. They have no established and accepted political structure. Not for them the jobs which they are qualified to do. There are no jobs for most of them, even for those who were brought over by our own government to do jobs which other people at that time were not available to do. Not for them the structure of community care or the unity of the community. Even our important divisions and differences of opinion are as nothing compared to the vast differences between the other ethnic minority communities.[33]

In terms of general feelings of comparative histories (not explicitly tied to Jakobovits' report) many other Jews express similar sentiments to Janner.[34]

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[32] Janner was embroiled in two of the controversies affecting Black-Jewish relations in Britain, firstly the 1978 *Jewish Tribune* attack and secondly the 1986 ban on Farrakhan entering the UK.
[33] Janner, 'Black-Jewish Controversies in Britain', pp. 8-9.
[34] Louise Ellman's letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* is indicative of the most common Jewish response to the report. She argued that 'the Chief Rabbi equates the situation of the millions suffering mass deprivation in Britain's inner cities in the mid-1980s with the experiences of a small Jewish minority in different circumstances up to three quarters of a century ago. The comparison does not stand up to examination. The Jewish tradition of learning, coupled with a strong sense of self-identity and commitment to mutual support, including active participation in trades unions, enabled many Jews to

However, others involved in anti-racism work, particularly members of the Black-Jewish Forum such as Edie Friedman conclude with the point that the two groups can be meaningfully compared and that there are sufficient fundamental parallels in history to allow an analysis of Jewish history alongside other minority histories.

7.4. Mythologies of Success.

> In distancing ourselves from today's refugees and immigrants we construct a rather simplistic model: Jews equal law abiding, deserving immigrants who succeeded despite the absence of the Welfare State, whereas today's immigrants and refugees are less deserving and more impatient, and have not done so well despite having a welfare state.[35]

Jakobovits' report contains opinions representative of the whole gambit of memories that have affected, whether in believing or in refuting these memories, the modern Jewish community. The one main theme, which has been a part of general Jewish memory, is the myth of immediate economic success and integration into mainstream culture; that immigrants or most certainly second-generation Jews had generally all moved out of the old settlement areas and had financially prospered very quickly. This memory is widely held and not just within Jewish memory. In his report, Jakobovits quoted part of his farewell address he gave to his former congregation in New York, believing that the USA situation could be equally applied to a British context. He argued that Jews broke out of their ghettos by hard work and not by rioting or demonstrating, that they 'channelled the ambition of our youngsters to academic excellence, not flashy cars. ...'[36]

A further mythology evident in Jewish history is that Jews always enjoyed good relations with the police, and this provided Jakobovits with a further point of

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escape economic deprivation over the generations. The fragmented groups of today's inner cities face record mass unemployment in the midst of affluence. Government deliberately refuses to invest in job-creating areas like house-building and infrastructure development, thereby increasing frustration and anger. The cancer of racism is an added evil, often exploding a fuse that is already burning. Jews have consistently opposed antisemitism. Why, then, should Blacks be criticised for opposing the racism they are experiencing.' *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1986, p. 22.

[35] Friedman, 'Mobilising Jews against Racism', p. 28.

[36] Jakobovits, *From Doom to Hope*, p. 5. Chaim Bermant recollected in his biography of Jakobovits, 'the Chief Rabbi's response left a bad taste, certainly in some Jewish mouths, if not in the actual ghettos. It seemed to smack of smugness and complacency, and phrases like 'flashy cars' in reference to black aspirations were unfortunate, as if no Jew ever aspired to one.' Chaim Bermant, *Lord Jakobovits, The Authorized Biography of the Chief Rabbi*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), p. 177.

comparison with the African-Caribbean community. In a discussion on community relations held by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis between senior London police officials and a group of religious leaders, Jakobovits recalled how a Black minister of a West Indian community charged the police with Institutionalised racism. Jakobovits replied to the minister that he could understand these problems but 'although we had escaped from persecution in countries in which government and police were often looked upon as the enemy, **on arriving here we had cultivated trust in and respect for the police, realising that our security as a minority depended on law and order being maintained.'**[37]

One letter written to the *Jewish Chronicle* combined a whole array of assumptions regarding the Jewish immigrant experience, assumptions that can be challenged when read alongside autobiographies from people such as Charles Poulsen. The author was particularly incensed with an article by Gerald Kaufman, in which Kaufman argued 'any Jew who feels removed from the recent inner-city riots should feel ashamed of himself.' In contrast, the author of the letter felt 'removed and not a bit ashamed.'[38] He claimed that Kaufman was ignorant of the absolute poverty that immigrant Jews experienced 'even as late as the years before the First World War' and

> there was no dole or social security of any sort. Those who could not find work did not eat, and even if they did find it, some did not earn enough to feed their families. And, above all, there was a great deal of prejudice and discrimination, with no race relations industry to protect them. We did not riot or burn our neighbours property, or attack the police, or expect the police to deal 'softly, softly' with our wrongdoers. Or course every right-minded person – especially we Jews – deplores racial and colour prejudice; yet no one can deny that Britain has always been fair and hospitable to the multitude of immigrants from many nations and cultures who now live in this country.[39]

An acceptance of these mythologies is certainly not universal. Letters to the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* in response to the report concerned themselves largely with debunking these myths in the same way that Jewish East End autobiographies have, for the most part, attempted. Janner contended that while respect for the police is certainly true of today's Jewish community, previously this

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[37] Bold print within text. Jakobovits, *From Doom to Hope*, p. 6.
[38] Gerald Kaufman has been a Labour MP for several decades and is now a back-bencher.

was not so and that he expected 'that many of us remember the days when, in Ridley Road and other areas of fascist activity, our community regarded the police as protectors of our enemies and not of ourselves.' With this memory in mind he felt that the Jewish community 'should therefore be understanding of the attitudes of the Black community towards the police. The feeling of organized police hostility against them is no more based on paranoia than was our own not so very long ago.'[40] Similarly, Edie Friedman referred to counter-memories within Jewish memory, that of 'intercommunal strife (such as Jewish establishment opposition to Jewish immigrants) and organization of trade union activities, including strikes and fighting the fascists on the streets. The latter often resulted in difficult relations with the police and, at times, in the kind of anti-police ethos now regarded as the particular preserve of the Afro-Caribbean community.'[41]

Another letter to the *Jewish Chronicle* from Cyril Gallant also wished to debunk this type of mythology with regard to Jewish protest, stating

> as a lecturer I am aware that there are no more ambitious or studious students than my Black ones. It still does not help them get a job because, crudely speaking, a Black skin is harder to hide than a Jewish nose. As for Jews breaking out of their ghettoes and entering the main stream of society without violence, there is no better example than the Jews of Germany. How, then, is the Chief Rabbi in this country and not in the land of his birth? But Jews *did* riot, demonstrate and use violence against their tormentors when necessary; from the minor Battle of Cable Street in the East End to the terrible uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto. He himself takes part in protest marches against the plight of Soviet Jews and is not averse to using 'Jewish power.' [42]

Ethnic memory is never homogeneous. As shown by the various responses to the report, counter-memories exist along with the 'established' memory of trouble-free and immediate success.

The question of ethnicity has frequently affected the way in which Jews have been compared to other immigrant groups and ethnic minorities, and has in turn affected Jewish reactions to anti-Black racism and how far Jews and Blacks identify with each other. Within the 1960s and 1970s Jews involved in community relations work used their experience as members of a community with memories of

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[39] *Jewish Chronicle*, 3 January 1986, p. 21
[40] Janner, 'Black-Jewish Controversies in Britain', p. 8.
[41] Friedman, 'Faith in the City', p. 21.
[42] *Jewish Chronicle*, 7 February 1986, p. 22.

migration in order to help recent New Commonwealth migrants. There were debates on the best way to help new migrants, and it was often considered that Jews could provide a model of integration that newer migrants could follow. For example, one volunteer worker, Alan Toffel, in his request for young Jews to put themselves forward for a work camp to aid organisations working on behalf of immigrants, stated 'the immigrants do not understand the average Englishman. They need the guidance of a group who have integrated into the community but who have not lost their identity. Here Jewish members of the party can help most to solve the problems of the immigrant.'[43]

Of particular relevance to the various debates and dialogue that went on within Jewish organisations who were involved in community relations work centred on the question of assimilation and integration. When Jewish migrants first arrived in Britain the already established Anglo-Jewish community wanted them to assimilate and lose their otherness. They were to become Englishmen and women of the Jewish faith, a faith which would also become more Anglicised. However, the Anglicisation process was certainly not as clear-cut, painless or as desired as it has been represented. Many of the immigrants fought against Anglicisation and wanted to keep their ethnic, religious and cultural traditions. As Bill Williams has documented, the working men's clubs set up by Anglo-Jews as part of the Anglicisation process were certainly not as popular as the organisations the immigrants set up themselves, such as *chevras*.[44] However, the period of time Jews entered Britain meant that integration and assimilation were more difficult to oppose than today, due to the more pervasive hostility to difference and to the latent jingoism in society, particularly during the First World War. Jakobovits' recalled the myth that 'we did not gate-crash into our Gentile environment; we made ourselves highly acceptable and indispensable by our industrial; intellectual and moral contributions to society.'[45] Even with the assimilation efforts by some, the Jewish community were one of the first organised communities who wanted to keep their traditions. At the turn of the century Jewish immigrants set up a whole range of community associations, and today the community have continued to have

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[43] Alan J. Toffel, *Jewish Chronicle* (teenage section), 6 May 1966, p. 39.
[44] Bill Williams, 'Elevating Influences', *Manchester Jewish Museum*, 27 June 1991- January 1992.
[45] Jakobovits, *From Doom to Hope*, p. 5.

cultural and social events and organisations representing all aspects and parts of Jewish life. Thus, although not largely acknowledged, the Jewish community throughout the twentieth century has much in common with various other ethnic groups in Britain.

In terms of communal organisation, Jewish models of self-help have influenced Black leaders. The self-help concept has increased in recent years with the Black community organising educational associations such as supplementary schools. This is one reason why many Black and Jewish voluntary workers within the inner cities were angry at Jakobovits' report, in that it represented an ill-informed view of the type of organisational activity occurring within the Black community.[46] As cited in an Institute of Race Relations publication in 1971, one West Indian leader of an organisation involved in the self-help movement looked upon the Jewish community as an ideal model to emulate. His views, although looking at Jews as a group to follow, also contains mythologies of the type of success the community has gained and also contains terminology such as 'power' with dangerous connotations. This leader was one of a few other West Indian leaders interviewed who wished for the West Indian community to follow the economic achievements of the Jewish community. He stated 'the Jews, for instance, because of their economic status in the society have a lot of control. It would hurt the country as a whole if the Jews were to withdraw their financial backing, and, therefore, the Jews can't be touched. This should prove to us how powerful it is when one is in a really powerful position. The Jewish community has to be consulted before Parliament can pass laws. That, in due course, will be the case with us if we move towards economic independence.'[47]

A recent discussion and lecture took place at the J-Core Annual General Meeting in which Jonathan Freedland posed the question of how a community, such as the Jewish, can provide advice to other communities without seeming

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[46] For example, at a meeting of the *Jewish Social Responsibility Council* (later to become *J-Core*) Paul Boateng stated 'When people do sometimes lecture the Black community on self-help, and the need for perseverance and the need for self-reliance and improvement, I just think it would do those people good if they would join us in a visit to some of the supplementary school at work in London today.' *Jewish Chronicle*, 31 January 1986, p. 8.

[47] R. Manderson-Jones, 'West Indian Leaders', in Simon Abbott (ed.), *The Prevention of Racial Discrimination in Britain* (London, New York and Toronto, Oxford University Press for Institute of Race Relations, London, 1971), p. 215.

condescending.[48] Others have posed this dilemma, such as Irving Osbourne, a former teacher of a multi-ethnic school in London. Although viewing that 'the Jewish experience is necessary for Blacks in predominantly white society. Their qualifications for offering it are impeccable, having been gained over many years and in many countries,' Osbourne also reflected 'how necessary is this 'Jewish perspective' for Blacks today? How relevant is any 'Jewish advice' to Blacks? Is this 'advice' even welcome? Could advice by Jews (a former immigrant group, perceived by many Blacks as part of the white establishment) be taken as 'patronizing' by Blacks (a generally recent immigrant group yet to establish itself within British society)?'[49] In general, comparisons made by those trying to provide advice because of past Jewish experience have been done without competitive comparison and with a desire not to appear patronising.

The debate on skin colour and ethnicity has particular resonance for Black-Jewish comparison. Part of the historical revisionism that has took place since Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* has focused on the relationship between Jewishness and whiteness. Cruse and some other academics since have characterised Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement as due to self-interest and not a struggle based on solidarity. Others have argued that Jewish relationships with Blackness has been one of superiority, whereby Jews have either patronised Blacks or have played exactly the same role in oppressing Black people as white society in general.[50] At the further extremes of this type of argumentation has been the work of those arguing that Jews have continually subjugated Blacks from the slave trade onwards. Historical re-remembering can often involve revisionism and, depending on the motives behind new themes in history writing, can often involve more forgetting than remembering.

In terms of Jewishness and ethnicity, during the 1960s and 1970s many British Jews did not see themselves as ethnic minorities for various reasons. Ethnicity, before its realisation as a term denoting cultural identity, was inextricably linked with the concept of race, a term that obviously has dangerous connotations.

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[48] J-Core AGM, 12 July 2001, West London Synagogue.
[49] Irving Osbourne, *Jews in London: Comparative Perspectives* (London, Justin Hill & Sutherland Associates, 1984), p. 7.
[50] Seth Forman provides a very good analysis of the differing types of historiography with regard to Jewish ethnicity. See Forman, *Blacks in the Jewish Mind*, Introduction.

This was not the main or only reason for Jews previously not being identified as an ethnic group. Ethnicity has been, at least in Britain, though less so in the USA, thought of as something only applying to non-white people. Jews, although this is changing now, have been seen as white, and as a result not an ethnic minority. Chaim Bermant, referring to the Jakobovits' report argued that 'Jews tend to view his work in this field with some ambivalence for they do not regard themselves as members of a minority group. They have lived in Britain for generations, have attended its schools and universities, have served it its armed forces, absorbing its language and culture, and if they are still Jewish – after a fashion – it does not affect their status as Britons. Therefore, some of them feel that in joining with other minorities they may compromise some of their claim.'[51] However, there is a large hidden history that needs to be told of Jews working within the anti-racism and community relations movement of the 1950s to 1970s.

Paul Boateng and the Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks wrote an article where they sought to explain Black-Jewish relations in America and Britain with the aim of unifying the two communities. Boateng reflected on the similarities and differences between the groups. He recalled how Black people resented Jews who have said they have achieved success without help. Jonathan Sacks viewed that Blacks and Jews can learn different things from one another. One of the things that Jews have carried out is establishing a communal infrastructure, which he thought the Black community could possibly learn from. Additionally, Sacks viewed Black self-identity as being something that Jews could emulate, 'it is easier for a Black to say "Black is beautiful", than for a Jew to say, "Jewish is beautiful."'[52]

Many others have suggested that Jews can learn from more recent immigrants in respect to both ethnicity and assimilation/integration. As seen in Chapter Five, Chaim Bermant used his autobiography to exemplify his absolute love of England, rhetorically using the title *Coming Home*, to mean England, his real spiritual home, as well as or instead of Israel. However, in light of the Jakobovits' report he talked about how Jews had become too English, and because of this, as Seidler has argued, Jews could learn from the African-Caribbean

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[51] Bermant, *Lord Jakobovits*, p. 179.
[52] Paul Boateng, MP and Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, 'Blacks and Jews in Britain and America', *Common Ground*, Number 1, 1996, pp. 17-18.

experience rather than vice-versa. He argued, 'if there is a lesson which newcomers can draw from Jewish experience, it is that one can possibly become too English too soon.'[53] However, this trend has recently changed, and it can be argued, as Seidler has done, that younger Jews have looked at and been influenced by the way in which other ethnic minorities have formed their identities.[54] Additionally, identity today is more fluid, or the fluidity of identity has now been acknowledged as positive, therefore many younger Jews have as a constituent of their own identity, many things that were formed by Black culture.[55]

7.5. Conclusion.

This chapter has explored some of the ways in which Blacks and Jews have related to each other and re-remembered their histories as a direct result of events bringing the groups into dialogue. There are other histories of Black-Jewish interaction, particularly everyday histories occurring in migration and settlement areas such as Hackney and Leeds, which have yet to be written. Oral histories of these communities are increasing in line with the everyday oral history movement, but also in line with research on ethnicity in Britain, but the interactions between different communities (rather than between an ethnic minority and the majority) are rarely focused upon.[56] The interaction and dialogues between Blacks and Jews in Britain, like that in the USA, highlights the differing memories of processes of migration and settlement between the groups. It indicates that memories of communities can be revised, transformed and re-remembered when a perceived common narrative or memory of group experience is explicitly articulated or brought to public attention. Jacobovits' report and other articulations of memories of this kind directly influenced many Jews to challenge 'official' Jewish memory, in order to highlight that not only were Black and Jewish experiences at times analogous, but that the reactions of both groups have often been similar. In other words, members of the communities challenge the models of success and economic

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[53] Chaim Bermant, 'Too English, too soon...', *Guardian*, 10/2/86, p. 11.
[54] Victor Jeleniewski Seidler, *Shadows of the Shoah: Jewish Identity and Belonging* (Oxford and New York, Berg, 2000).
[55] See Garfield, 'Ali G'.
[56] The work of Leeds based Max Farrar has challenged some of these silences, in its exploration of sites of community and the similarities in Black and Jewish experiences of racism in Chapeltown, Leeds.

and social integration suggested by Peach and others by directly using memory and remembering. A fuller analysis of Black and Jewish memories of each other, including memories from the whole range and diversity of peoples making up the communities, would challenge some of the stereotypes about the groups and indeed some of the assumptions made by academics as to how Blacks and Jews relate to one another. For example, the myth of immediate economic success is certainly not a universal memory or reality within the Jewish community, and Jacobovits' report enabled many Jews to articulate their personal experiences and memories of a divergent nature. This could equally be applied to the USA situation, where Blacks and Jews who do work together are marginalized in newspaper accounts and subsequent collective memory, as they do not provide the desired narrative of conflict. There are several ways in which relations and comparisons between Blacks and Jews in Britain could be academically assessed: everyday relations, anti-racist and anti-fascist coalitions in the 1970s, and theoretical interactions such as comparisons between Black and Jewish memory and identity of slavery and the Holocaust. Exploring these interactions can serve to uncover hidden histories and also provide a new way of looking at the history of minorities in Britain, not as separate entities but as communities constantly interacting on a variation of levels with other groups within society.

Conclusion

Historical assessments of memory are an important addition to ethnic minority research, as previous explorations of the functions and articulations of the subject have been confined to social scientists and anthropologists. The exploration of autobiographical memory, in terms of critical analysis, is still a neglected field within ethnic minority studies, particularly when compared to the type and amount of research emerging from American academia. This thesis has explored the memories of African-Caribbeans and Jews partly because of this gap in research, but more importantly because a comparative assessment of these two groups serves to undermine certain notions about which groups can or cannot be compared to one another.

Major comparative studies of ethnic groups in Britain have rarely been carried out between these two groups. Jews have been represented as poles apart from Commonwealth migrants due to skin colour, the time period of arrival, and due to mythologised histories of economic success and integration. Therefore, even when these groups have been compared to one another, dangerous competing histories have often resulted such as Ceri Peach's models of Jewish and Irish ethnic success, in which he argues that the Asian community have followed Jewish mobility and the African-Caribbean community have followed the Irish as an economic underclass.[1] Recently these fixed categories have been challenged and revised within collective memory.[2] Autobiography and autobiographical memory is a particularly useful way of comparing these groups: the way ordinary people remember their everyday experiences often brings into light hidden histories that challenge community memory.

This thesis has explored notions and different types of memory formulations and articulations: memory in terms of its biological and cognitive premises and in terms of the way it functions within society – collectively, ethnically, generationally, and individually. Everyday memories of African-Caribbeans and Jews have been more readily open to the scrutiny of researchers due to the rise in community publishing and life history projects. These projects have been carried

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[1] See Ceri Peach, 'Introduction', in Ceri Peach (ed.), *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census, Volume Two: The Ethnic Minority Populations of Great Britain* (London , HMSO, 1996), pp. 15-16.

out for several decades, but the 1990s saw a massive increase in publication and production of life history. Funding bodies arising from local council budgets and Heritage Lottery funding have helped this expansion. Additionally, society has come to recognise the importance of everyday memories, stories and experiences, in building pictures of historical events and themes and giving voice to marginalized groups – this is reflected in the vast range of oral history being broadcast on television and radio programmes. Anniversaries particularly provide a reason to reflect and collect these oral histories. For example, the Windrush fiftieth anniversary in 1998 saw a proliferation of oral history projects throughout the country, within local community groups, on television, the Internet and in book publications.

In terms of autobiographical productions, African-Caribbean and Jewish communities have both been involved in oral history projects. Due to the differences in mass migration and the corresponding development of life history, African-Caribbean migrants have been part of this process of memory recording in a manner unknown to Jewish immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century. Conversely, up to today, second generation Jews have published more autobiographies than any other minority group, although this balance will no doubt change and in the last few years many autobiographies have been published by African-Caribbeans, Africans, Asians and others.

Theorists, particularly those based in the USA, have debated on the type of autobiographical memories that minorities create. There are sometimes certain differences between autobiographies of politicians and celebrities and those defined as 'everyday' in terms of the autobiographers' introspection and insularity. However, as more recent autobiographical theorists postulate such as Julia Swindells and Laura Marcus, these works are not the pre-eminent or only type of autobiography.[3] Bernd Jürgen Warneken has showed that often working class oral history subjects reflect and talk about their lives in the collective, as this is what the

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[2] On a political level J-Core and the Black-Jewish Forum have played a major role in challenging these assumptions.

[3] See Laura Marcus, *Auto/biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994) and Julia Swindells, 'Introduction', in Julia Swindells (ed.), *Uses of Autobiography* (London, Taylor & Francis, 1995).

general public, the academic, and the interviewer want to hear or expect to hear.[4] Barbara Myerhoff's 'third voice' is certainly important to remember when trying to assess generalisations in memory within particular groups in society through life history.[5] Confirming Warneken's findings, African-Caribbeans and Jews, while referring to collective experiences, particularly experiences concerned with long-standing historical memories, always explore these collective experiences in the form of the personal and the individual. For example, both Louis Teeman's and Maurice Levinson's historical memories of persecution were always interpreted individually even though they were collective/generational memories that both people had not directly experienced. The autobiographers' individuality no doubt is an element of the reason why these particular individuals have chosen to write about their experiences: they find their lives unique and worth telling. However, much of the recent autobiographical acts carried out in collective projects involve locating the 'everyday' as important, showing that collective, community experiences, memories involving family, friends and social environment are just as significant as memories involving the personal psyche and individuality. Collective experience and memory is no doubt of importance within most African-Caribbean and Jewish autobiographies. Nevertheless, it is a romantic misnomer to suggest that individuals from these groups show no signs of individuality and refer to their experiences in terms of a solid, homogeneous community. Often these autobiographies indicate diversity and divisions within communities and occasionally represent a life story divorced from 'community'. This is particularly evident in the case of Ernest Marke whose lack of memories concerning family or friends is one of the most characteristic aspects of his work.

In their autobiographical acts and within ethnic memory in general, African-Caribbean and Jewish communities are comparable on many levels – if not in actual experiences then certainly in the ways those experiences are reformulated, filtered and handled within ethnic and collective memory. Similar and often interconnected concepts are central to both communities' histories and symbolic identities. In

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[4] Bernd Jürgen Warneken, 'Social Differences in the Autobiographical Representation of the Self' in Christa Hämmerte (ed.), *Plurality and Individuality: Autobiographical Cultures in Europe* (Vienna, Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, 1995), p. 13.

terms of migration, the ideas of the Mother Country and the Promised Land were central to both communities' experiences and later recollections. These ideas, particularly the idea of a symbolic homeland, have resonances with, and are a direct product of Jewish historical memory as represented in biblical narrative and are therefore directly important to the idea of diaspora and symbolism of homeland, exile and Zion. Migration and life experiences in Britain, particularly when recollected in the temporal and structural fabric of the autobiographical act, result in complex, ambivalent, and contradictory emotions and views of Britain. At first glance a general model can be ascertained as to the way African-Caribbeans and Jews have reflected upon their experiences of life in Britain. Jews were fleeing to, if not the Promised Land of the USA, then the *Frei Medini*. African-Caribbeans were travelling to the Mother Country as British citizens – therefore the racism experienced produced shock, anger, sadness, and disillusionment. Certain mythologies arise in conjunction with these generalities. Collective memories have been articulated on why Jews settled in Britain – that immigrants thought they had arrived in the USA, when in reality these migrants had often specifically wanted to travel to Britain due to cheaper ticket fares and then for various reasons did not continue with their intended travels to the USA. Similarly, many African-Caribbeans migrated to Britain as the USA was no longer a viable destination due to immigration restrictions. The concept of the Mother Country was a definite reality for African-Caribbean migrants, but it was often not the main motivating factor for migration. However, African-Caribbeans came to Britain with a definite idea of expectation and the difference between this expectation and reality was often vast and has produced an autobiographical act that therefore prioritises the idea of the Mother Country because its debunking was of such significance. Autobiographers and oral history interviewees exploring their memories of migration are increasingly self-knowing, they understand the collective narrative surrounding the particular group and shape their memories according to this 'script'. The increasing understanding of the complexities of memory is another aspect of the self-knowing voice found in everyday autobiography. Individuals,

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[5] Marc Kaminsky, 'Introduction' in Barbara Myerhoff, (edited and with an introduction by Marc Kaminsky), *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling and Growing Older* (University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 10.

such as Linda Grant, have come to understand that their personal, ethnic, and generational memories are continually re-constructed, revised, and suppressed. However, certain mythologies, such as the confusing of Britain with the USA found in the Jewish memory of immigrant experiences, have yet to be deconstructed by those people who otherwise accept the intricacies in collective memory. Linda Grant, for example, reproduces the myth of Britain being mistaken for the USA by the first arrivals, even though she is aware how constructed other aspects of her family narrative have been.

In terms of historical memory and ethnic identity the concept of diaspora is of central importance to African-Caribbean and Jewish communities in Britain. This thesis has concentrated on the memories and articulations of diaspora found in the autobiographical works of professional writers. Whilst Robin Cohen has found analysing elite writings too restrictive a way of assessing diasporic identity, the concept and historical reality of the idea of diaspora is central to *all sectors* of those communities' revealed in this thesis through examining autobiographical acts such as the autobiographies of Ernest Marke and Wallace Collins. Although it would be dangerous to position diaspora as a concept solely applying to Black and Jewish identities, there are certain aspects of these groups' histories that indicate a different type of diasporic experience than that of other groups.[6] The experience of suffering is not confined to Black and Jewish communities, but the historical memory of suffering is something that makes both groups diasporas' particularly comparable, and sometimes analogous. In general terms both groups have, as forcefully shown by the writings of Caryl Phillips, as an alive and immediate memory, within their historical memory the experience of ancestral and immediate suffering – the Holocaust and slavery.[7] Both groups have had their histories shaped in a monumental way by official racisms lasting centuries and occurring in the era of the

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[6] This proposition must not lead to an acceptance of the arguments by Gérard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau that the Jewish diaspora represents an ideal definition of diaspora. See Gérard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *The Penguin Atlas of Diasporas* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1997), Introduction, xiii.

[7] Phillips has argued (as cited in Chapter Four) 'I think that both people of the Jewish diaspora and people of the African diaspora are quite vigilant about their history, have a sort of sense of historical hurt and are very good at looking over their shoulder.' Interview with Caryl Phillips carried out by author, 10/11/2000. For Phillips' most in-depth comparison of Black and Jewish history and memory, through the prism of displacement and persecution, see Caryl Phillips, *The Nature of Blood* (London, Faber and Faber, 1997).

enlightenment, in the form of colonialism and anti-Semitism within Europe. Nevertheless, it would be dangerous to suggest that suffering has been the only thing internally binding both communities, as Sartre has argued in the case of the Jews. As Gilroy has shown, cross-cultural identity within the 'Black Atlantic' exists within the realm of art forms such as music and in street culture. Cross-cultural identities of this kind, which many theorists such as Clifford and Gilroy have aptly shown, exist for all diasporic communities.[8] Identities of this kind have been romanticised by many people, particularly those who conceive of Jewish or African as essential, stable, and homogenous identities. The autobiographical act indicates that people do not interpret their experiences or recollect their lives in terms of an essential identity. People such as Caryl Phillips and Howard Jacobson, although seeing the links between identities of Black or Jewish people, show the cracks, ambivalences and misnomers found in those who argue people of the same ethnic heritage/background whatever their nationality are analogous. Similarly, everyday autobiographies indicate that even in terms of British identities, let alone transnational identities, there are divergences and differences within ethnic groups, based on nationality and class. Yet there are shared cultural memories and experiences recollected upon, that also allow for diversity – often everyday communities will exemplify identities suggested in theories articulated by academics such as Paul Gilroy. Nevertheless, having multiple attachments to feelings of diaspora and home does not prevent someone from romanticising or believing in essentialising notions of identity, as can be seen in the case of Howard Jacobson's romanticising of Jewish diasporic culture and Chaim Bermant's idealized version of stereotypical English culture.

In terms of British experiences, African-Caribbeans and Jews have themselves seen these similarities in their histories and more immediate experiences of migration. These similarities have been compared and contrasted and have served to motivate members of the communities to work together against racism and fascism, particularly in the 1960s. This work is one of the hidden histories that exist within general and ethnic memories of both communities, and although only

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[8] See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London, Harvard University Press, 1997), Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and*

alluded to in this thesis it would be a great addition to British race relations historiography if this co-operation (including problematic relationships) were fully explored. Whilst parallels in historical memory are often explored (sometimes in a competitive and unsavoury manner as seen in the current USA situation) similarities within day-to-day experiences in Britain have yet to be considered. Indeed, it is often the case that the groups' experiences and the way they responded to pressures they faced have been represented as oppositional. The response to racism and anti-Semitism was often similar, but ethnic and mainstream memories have clouded this history. For example, riots against Jews were deliberately forgotten at the time, for fear of increasing anti-Semitism. In general memory, riots against both communities have been subject to 'selective amnesia' in mainstream collective memory, often immediately. In recent years, re-remembering has occurred whereby groups have desired to uncover histories previously deemed unimportant, undesirable, or a challenge to the country's dominant myth of tolerance.

This thesis has focused on first and second-generation memories of the communities. There are, however, several other ways in which the groups can be compared. Although not explored in detail within the parameters of this work, issues of gender are particularly significant and indicate one of the central themes of this thesis, that internally communities cannot be generalised at all times. Both communities are not homogeneous and the concept of the cultural theorist is particularly relevant to this work: ethnicity is a socially constructed concept which is multiple, fluid and subject to generational change.[9] In terms of comparative notions of community, issues of mixed race identity and 'marrying out', again not explored within this work, are an increasingly significant, neglected, and necessary area of research. Indeed, the parallels between the two communities, which have become visible in this thesis through an exploration of life history and everyday memory, show that work of this kind can provide greater insight and uncover hidden histories of the experiences of minorities and the way in which they have understood those experiences.

Double Consciousness (London, Verso, 1993), and Paul Gilroy, 'Diaspora and the Detours of Identity' in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (London, Sage, 1997).

[9] See Clifford, *Routes*, p. 248.

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