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Multiplicitous Existences: Mixed Race Identities in Coventry

Tana Nolethu Forrest
Department of Sociology
University of Warwick
Supervisors: Khursheed Wadia and Hannah Jones
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Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Abstract

This project seeks to shed light on the experiences of mixed race people who have lived or grown up in Coventry, and the ways in which they understand and negotiate notions of race and experiences of racialisation. As an underrepresented field site for the current discourse which captures the experiences of mixed race people, this work considers the historical and socio-political context of the city of Coventry as a central factor in the shaping of people's experiences of race. The role of the familial is also considered as significant when trying to better understand mixed race people's experiences of race, with both the context of the city and the familial accumulating in the experience of the individual. Informed by feminist and postcolonial approaches to knowledge production and qualitative research methods, this research demonstrates the multiplicity of mixed race experiences.

Introduction

The city of Coventry actually did in the last century 'Boycott' the army. The redcoats were tabooed from all respectable society in Coventry, the civilians kept aloof from the military as through the letter had been infected with the plague. Any lady seen speaking to an officer was immediately 'cut' by all her acquaintances. So dull and desolate did barrack life at Coventry consequently become, that 'to be sent to Coventry' passed into a mess room proverb for the most execrable exile to which it was possible to sentence a soldier. From the mess room the expression has been incorporated into common social phraseology, but perhaps few who use it are aware of its true origin (Dixon, 2018[1812] published in The Ballarat Star, 1882).

To send one to Coventry; a punishment inflicted by officers of the army on such of their brethren as are testy, or have been guilty of improper behavior, not worthy the cognizance of a court-martial. The person sent to Coventry is considered as absent; no one must speak to or answer any question he asks, except relative to duty, under penalty of being also sent to the same place. On a proper submission, the penitent is recalled and welcomed by the mess, as just returned from a journey to Coventry (Grose, 1832).

Coventry is a city overlooked. Oft excluded from scholarly endeavours, and regularly dismissed in social settings. Coventry is engulfed in stereotypes such as the one exemplified by the idiom "sent to Coventry" which can still be heard today and represents the shunning, dismissing and metaphorical sending of one to a place in which they do not want to be. "Oh" people would exclaim to me when I said I lived in Coventry, "what's life like *there*?", accompanied by a look of sympathy. As time passed and I got to know the city, form connections and better understand its history, I started to respond in defence of Coventry. Now that I have left I think of it fondly, and my defense of it continues. Stereotypes such as the ones attached to Coventry distract from the role it plays as a home and a part of people's histories – a place which holds significance, a place with a complex and interesting story, and a place of belonging as was articulated by one participant named Jude:

> I'm fiercely proud of Coventry, uh, in a way that feels slightly false 'cos of the little amount of time that I've spent here over the last, um, last few years, but actually there, there is a lot that uh, has made me who I am, kind of, that comes from the sort of uh - well, the, the roots are in this city…I feel less out of place here than I have in a number of other places that I've lived…

The disruption of stereotypes is a theme that extends across this project, which seeks to provide insights into the experiences of mixed race people who have lived or grown up in Coventry. This project adds complexity to simplified understandings of the city, and about what it means to be mixed race, centering elements of multiplicity and making fluid categories that are presented as fixed. Through situating discourses of race and racialization in relation to Britain's history of empire, this project not only creates connections between the past and present, but considers the

different ways in which this history has been and continues to be challenged and subverted by people who identify as mixed race.

To date very little research exists about the experiences of mixed race people in Coventry, although there is an ever-growing body of literature surrounding the experiences of mixed race people in other places in Britain, with research and publications spanning the last three decades. This body of literature has sought to contextualise and add nuance to understandings and representations of mixed race people who have been historically pathologized and positioned as "confused" (Ifekwunigwe, 2004). This thesis aims to add to this discourse, through making space for the lived and nuanced experiences of mixed race people living in Coventry and paying particular attention to how these experiences are shaped by discourses of place and familial connections. The role of context is central to this project, both the historical and political context of Britain in which Coventry is situated and the individual and specific contexts of participants, which operate in relation to one another.

Despite notions of race being situated as socially constructed, they continue to shape our social worlds and our material realities (Winant, 2006). This suggests a need to continue to engage with the various ways in which race manifests in order to address the conditions it produces. Not only do essentialist notions of race continue to be perpetuated, but they operate in relation to other discourses of oppression that, as underscored by black feminist theorists such as Hazel Carby, (2002[1982]), Patricia Hill Collins (2012), Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) and Heidi Zafia Mirza (1997), but to name a few, may be articulated through, gender, class, sexuality, ability and religion (see Nash, 2019).

From an angle that is cognisant of these intersections, this project considers how essentialist notions of race are engaged and resisted by mixed race people in varying ways. It sheds light on the individual, multifaceted and deeply personal experiences of people who have historically been positioned outside of and in-between established racial categories, underscoring the possibilities present in processes of self-definition and refusing to be restricted by external perceptions of what it means to be mixed race.

Setting/Context

The initial goal of this research was to collaborate with a local community organisation, with the aim of gaining insight into the experiences of mixed race people in Coventry, and the support that they needed from community services in the city. Little to no research had been conducted in this vein and the Coventry Ethnic Minority Action Partnership (CEMAP) was interested in understanding the differing needs of those who are considered Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) in the city.

What started as a collaboration has since become an individual pursuit, as the organisation which birthed this venture – CEMAP – closed due to a lack of funding. This has been the case for many community organisations in Coventry and elsewhere across the UK as a result of Austerity policies which have seen the continued reductions of public funds for community focused endeavours (see Clifford, 2017). Indeed, between the time I applied to be part of this project in 2016 and the time I officially started later that year, there had already been a shift in leadership at CEMAP, which was shortly followed by a reduction in work space and staff members as a result of the limited funds available. Less than two years later there was one staff member left, Varsha, who was juggling all the responsibilities of CEMAP as well as a part time job and a family. After a year of writing and submitting funding applications which were consistently rejected, Varsha and the board (upon which I briefly sat) agreed that CEMAP would officially close. At the penultimate board meeting Varsha spoke about how disheartening it was to constantly be rejected for funding, and the impact of this on her as the only active staff member. The other board members, all experienced community workers based with various organisations around Coventry and elsewhere in the West Midlands, began to reminisce about what CEMAP once was – about the gap it filled within the community, as well as the way in which it collaborated with other organisations in the city. Where there previously existed many organisations which catered to individual communities in the city, CEMAP was situated as an organisation which offered support across Black and Minority Ethnic communities. There was a definite feeling of sadness in the room as the board members expressed their resistance to CEMAP closing, and reference was made to a previous incident where funding had been obtained at the last minute. Unfortunately, this time things ended differently.

It is telling that all the staff members with whom I came into contact at CEMAP were women of colour. Not only have austerity policies had an impact on the ability of community organisations such as CEMAP to survive, but research has shown that those most affected by austerity policies alongside disabled women, are Black and Minority Ethnic women. A report published by the Women's Budget Group, Runnymead Trust, RECLAIM and Coventry Women's Voices in 2017, detailed the impact that austerity policies and public budget cuts have had on Black and Minority Ethnic Women in the UK since 2010. The report stated that: "the poorest third of society will lose most by 2020 as a result of tax and benefit changes and cuts since 2010. Women will lose more than men and BME women will lose most of all" (Hall et al., 2017). Similarly, in a response to the 2019 Spending Review, The Women's Budget Group stated that: "the past decade has seen cuts to spending on public services and social security that have hit women harder than men, and black and minority ethnic (BAME) women and disabled women hardest of all" (Reis, 2019).

The closing of community organisations such as CEMAP in Coventry (particularly those catering to BME communities), provided the backdrop for Coventry's bid to become the 2021 City of Culture, which placed an emphasis on the city's "diverse" population and history of welcoming and tolerance, and drew attention to the potential funding opportunities that the bid could bring to local artists and organisations in the city. It was hard not to notice this juxtaposition, as whilst the City of Culture bid drew heavily on a narrative of diversity, the "diverse" populations in the city were struggling the most.

Coventry was chosen as the field site for this research as a result of its history of welcoming people into the city, and the ever-growing migrant population which has been shifting and reshaping itself since the 19th century. Originally migrant workers were drawn to the city due to its industrial activity (McGrory, 2003), and migrant populations from around the UK and the Commonwealth continued to settle in the city after the second world war (Partnership for Coventry, 2016). It is fitting that Coventry recognises itself as a City of Peace and Reconciliation, in light of the devastation and damage the city sustained during World War 2, the effects of which can still be seen in the city today. Along with holding an annual peace festival, Coventry is home to the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (United Nations Association Coventry, 2016). The city places a significant amount of emphasis on the importance of being hospitable to refugees and

asylum seekers, and it is recognised as a member of the City of Sanctuary network in the United Kingdom.

In 2017 figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) indicated that one out of every four people (26.1%) in Coventry were born outside of the United Kingdom, which is significantly higher than the 14.6% foreign born population in England (Gilbert, 2016). Further, in 2014 more people moved to Coventry from outside the UK than people who moved overseas from Coventry (Partnership for Coventry, 2016). These figures are indicative of the ongoing presence of migrant communities in the city, and of the continued popularity of the city for people from outside of the UK. Along with the burgeoning foreign born population in Coventry, 33.4% of the total population are members of Black and Minority Ethnic communities (Coventry City Council, Nd.). Further, the 2011 Census revealed that the mixed/multiple ethnic group in Coventry makes up 2.7% of the total population, and 6% of the school age population (Office for National Statistics, 2011). The city of Coventry is thus ethnically diverse, with a large BME and foreign born population, and fast growing mixed race population, making it an ideal site for research interested in the experiences of mixed race people. The demographic landscape of the city, coupled with Coventry's bid to become City of Culture in 2021 which was focused on the cultural diversity and welcoming practices of the city (Coventry Cultural Strategy, 2017), provided an ideal opportunity to interrogate the relationship between the ideals projected by the City of Coventry and people's actual experiences of the city. The identity that the city has established for itself in relation to being a space of welcome and tolerance for new comers and different groups of people, provided a compelling backdrop against which to compare the experiences of the individuals participating in the project.

Broad Aims & Research Questions

As a result of CEMAP closing, the focus of the research shifted in that uncovering how local community organisations were able to support local mixed race people was no longer a central aim of the project. The broad aims of the research remained, which were to provide insights into the experiences of mixed race people in Coventry. These insights were framed in relation to 1. Understanding what it means to be mixed race and whether the experiences of being mixed race contribute to the creation of a shared identity. 2. Understanding the impact that context has on the

production of racial - specifically mixed race – identity, with particular attention being paid to intergenerational and familial relationships. 3. To understand the specific experiences of mixed race people in the city of Coventry, and how they are influenced by or in relation to the city's history and cultural geography.

By aiming to recruit people who were not just from the more commonly recognised black and white mixed race background (see Aspinall and Song, 2013), I hoped to draw attention to the multiplicity of mixed race experiences, and to unsettle the assumption that mixed race automatically means having a black and a white parent. Through working with mixed race people from different generations, I hoped to understand how and whether racial identity shifts over time, and what the relationship is between these shifts and the context in which they occur.

<u>Research Questions</u>

- How do people in Coventry who identify as mixed race understand race and ethnicity as fluid or fixed categories?
- What language and terminologies are mobilised in order to define the experiences of people who identify as mixed race?
- In a context of increasing complexity surrounding migration and racialized statuses, what are the implications of this for changes in experiences and understandings of racial identity over generations? (i.e. how does context influence people's understandings of racial identity, as investigated through generation/experience)
- How do people's understandings and experiences of mixed race identity relate to Coventry's cultural geography and history?

<u>Limitations</u>

A limitation of this research can be located in the fact that all participants came from either black-white or Indian-white mixed race backgrounds. Although some participants had family members who had different mixed race backgrounds, they were not active participants of the project. There were thus no mixed race people with two parents of colour represented in this research. The implications of this in relation to the predominance of the experiences of mixed race people with black-white parentage in the existing discourse are charted in Chapter 3. Similarly, all of the families involved in the research were part of heterosexual family units, meaning that LGBTQ+ families were not represented in this research nor was any explicit reference made to the experiences of participants who may have been members of the LGBTQ+ community. There was

no focus placed on the ways in which religion and disability may influence people's experiences of being mixed race. Thus, whilst this project considers intersections of class, race and gender in the experiences of mixed race people, it lacks consideration of multiple other axes which would add further nuance to people's understandings of being mixed race.

Identity

In this project I refer often to the notion of "identity", and I have deemed it important to highlight how this term is being used, particularly in light of debates surrounding identity politics which have outlined how essentialist notions of identity have been imposed upon people and utilised to create divisions between them, as well as justify their oppression (Alcoff et al., 2006). As acknowledged by Alcoff et al. (2006), notions of identity have indeed been used in this way, and there is a need for new language with which to encapsulate our individual experiences and connections. Further, as the authors suggested, there is no doubt that identities are political. That being said, notions of identity are not only imposed – they are also claimed, created and understood by individuals in meaningful ways (Alcoff et al., 2006: 6). It is these individual craftings and understandings in which I am interested. Relating her definition of identity specifically to gender and race, Alcoff (2006) argued for a reconstruction of identity that is context specific and interested in explaining "how social categories of identity… are related to the self, the lived experience of subjecthood, and what we can perceive and know" (Alcoff, 2006: 9).

The way in which identity is used in this work aligns closely with the ideas presented by Alcoff (2006) in that whilst acknowledging the existence of "social categories" (ibid) or categories of analysis (see Hill Collins, 2012), I am interested in the ways in which people relate to and against these categories. Thus, identity here is understood very much in relation to individual experiences and subjectivities – of each person's engagement with existing categories such as race and mixed race. This project is not about mixed race identit*y* but mixed race identit*ies* – plural and multiple understandings of a category which is in itself constantly in a process of slippage as is detailed in Chapter 1.

Terminology

Although I engage in a discussion surrounding the history and meanings attached to notions of race and mixed race in Chapter 1, I thought it necessary to highlight some of the other terminology that is utilised in this project in relation to race, which is acknowledged as a socially constructed category that has material implications for people's lived realities and the organisation of our social worlds. I use the term "people of colour" to refer to people who experience racialisation but do not necessarily identify as black. I have chosen this term specifically in order to refrain from using the term "non-white" so as to encapsulate the experiences of people who experience racialisation without relating them or positioning them in opposition to discourses of whiteness. Similarly, I sometimes use the term "brown" to refer generally to people of colour who do not identify as black: I only refer to individuals this way if they have used this term to describe themselves. "Mixed-ness" and "mixity" are all utilised in relation to "mixed race" which is unpacked and defined in Chapter 1.

Approach

The contribution of this research lies not only in the focus it places on a city which is underrepresented in the existing literature surrounding mixed race people's experiences, but also in the perspective I have provided to the research design, theorisation and data that has been collected. As a mixed race South African, with links to Britain through birth and family – as someone trained in South Africa as a social anthropologist, who also happened to study English Literature and Art History for their undergraduate degree, I have always made connections across disciplines, and across contexts in order to help me gain a better understanding of the world around me. These transnational connections and perspectives have contributed to this research, which in turn is contributing to the ever-growing discourse that seeks to understand how mixed race identities are continually challenged, created and adapted within local and national contexts. This exploration occurs within a unique framework of understanding that is constructed by bringing both scholarly and intellectual experience from both the Global South and Global North to bear. By embedding local, site-specific research in transnational connections (both explicitly and implicitly), the project's design, findings, and conclusions give attention to the local and specific whilst concurrently recognising global flows and histories.

These interdisciplinary connections can be productive: the use of discourse produced in other spaces, particularly the Global South, can be productive and are especially necessary as we produce knowledge in the historical heart of Empire.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 explores the epistemological framing of this research, looking closely at the ways in which notions of race and mixed race have been conceptualised historically, as well as how these terms are being approached and utilised in this research. Along with drawing on Latina phenomenology, and themes of multiplicity and wholeness, this chapter also highlights the need for employing imagination when considering the possibilities for notions of race and the ways in which we look towards the future.

In Chapter 2 I underscore the methodological approach to this project, highlighting the role of postcolonial and feminist approaches to research which recognise the relationships of power that are embedded in processes of knowledge production and data collection. Whilst detailing the methods used to undertake this research, this chapter also introduces its participants.

Chapter 3 sheds light on some of the existing literature on race and mixed race in Britain and in a number of other contexts, situating the research in relation to these discourses and providing insights into the ways in which race operates in the British political and historical landscapes.

In Chapter 4 I provide an analysis of the city of Coventry, considering its history and thinking critically about some of the narratives that are attached to the city and the ways in which they are challenged by the lived experiences of mixed race people from Coventry.

Chapter 5 sees an exploration of the role of the family in mixed race people’s experiences and understandings of being mixed race, looking at the particular ways in which families approach, address and engage with notions of race.

Chapter 6 focusses on individual definitions of mixed race, what this means to participants and the differing ways in which these understandings have emerged.

Chapter 1: Epistemological Framework

This is an attempt to understand the everyday lived experiences of race, through the words of people who identify as mixed race and the words of myself - a mixed race woman. It is not my first attempt, and it will not be my last – with or without the vehicle of academia, as a mixed race person my own experience of the world is not something I can escape.

I say this understanding has been attempted by using words but that which occurred to make this research possible was much more than what you read here – and yet, at the end of it all, it is words with which the reader is presented. Words uttered and exchanged in the din of a restaurant or local theatre coffee shop, recorded on an electronic device, transcribed onto an electronic page, checked and checked again. Copied and pasted, formatted. This is how the people who participated in this research are presented and represented – but they are so much more than their words. Vibrant beings, generous, loving, with families, friends, lives far beyond a transcribed snippet or paragraph. What you read here is but a moment, and yet ironically it tells us so much.

Although they are not everything, words remain important (especially for this exercise). The choice of the words "mixed race" is important. It is pointed and intentional. Mixed race here is a moving category, an open category, an umbrella term that points to the multiplicitous experiences of being more than one race.

Of all the names I have been called – half-caste, amper-baas[1], mixed-ethnicity, biracial, mixed heritage, zebra nation (the list goes on) – mixed race is the term I use to define myself. At the entry point to my mixed race is my parents – each of a different, "singular", race, the combination of which makes me. Beyond that definition, my experience is one that is whole – I am not either/or, I am always both, together, at once. This is my mixed race.

This is an attempt. A beginning. Written by someone who is racialised, as an exercise in understanding. To catch a glimpse of what it means to be racialised in this way, to know race plurally. This project is personal, deeply personal, significantly influenced by the works of so many, and unable to exist without the positioning of the author; embracing the emotive, the pain, joy and heartbreak of being racialised me, of being raced us.

In and amongst the hundreds of books and thousands of journal articles, the ever-growing body of knowledge that engages with discourses of race, racial identity and being mixed race- this is our small contribution.

Introducing Mixed Race

The terms that we use to name ourselves (Black, African, African-American, Black British, Minority, Latina/o, West Indian, Caribbean. Hispanic, People of Colour, Women of Colour, Afro-Caribbean, Third World and so on) carry their strings of echoes and inscriptions. Each represents an original misnaming and the simultaneous constant striving of the dispossessed for full

[1] "Amber-baas" refers to the Afrikaans "Amper" which means "almost" and "baas" which means "boss". During the Apartheid era in particular the "baas" was a white man.

> representation. Each therefore must be used provisionally; each must be subject to new analyses, new questions and new understandings if we are to unlock some of the narrow terms of the discourses in which we are inscribed. In other words, at each arrival at a definition, we begin a new analysis, a new departure, a new interrogation of meaning, new contradictions (Boyce Davies, 1994: 5).

And so, we are inscribed, and we reinscribe - we are mis/named, and we rename. Each name holds a history, each act of renaming significant - each name is defined and redefined. We are both subjected to naming and agents of renaming. Naming can be active, naming can be un/conscious, naming can be violent, naming can be limiting, naming can be liberating. Carole Boyce-Davies (1994) reminds us of this, and of the contradictions that may be present within the process of naming and defining the names we use. Such contradictions emerge in how we define mixed race in particular - a term which implies the existence of pure races, whilst simultaneously complicating the idea through highlighting the possibility of existing outside of that which is considered "pure". Jill Olumide (2002) positioned mixed race in opposition to notions of racial purity, as an "ideological enemy of pure race" (Olumide, 2002: 2) which serves as evidence that race is not only constructed but ever-changing, as well as a tool utilised within relationships of power, and in the name of exclusion (with those situated as mixed race being excluded from essentialist notions of race). Whilst recognising the constructed nature of race, Olumide (2002) also pointed to its material realities, which essentialist purveyors of race have sought to distract from through demonising those situated as mixed race; "race, in all its constructions, is a fiction on which complicated realities are built and lived" (Olumide, 2002: 3).

The argument that race is socially constructed is not novel, but in any conversation or discourse which engages race it should be recognised. Whilst it is widely acknowledged by scholars who study race and racism that race is socially constructed (Omi and Winant, 2014; Miles and Brown, 2004; Goldberg, 1993), it is noted by many that despite its non-biological basis, the concept of race continues to play a major role in the organising of our social worlds and the production of inequalities. Stuart Hall (2017[1994]) discussed race as a marker of difference: considering the relationship between race, hierarchy and classificatory processes, he emphasised the lack of change that recognizing race as socially constructed (as opposed to biologically factual) has had on the way our social words are organised and the way in which people consider one another. Hall (2017[1994]) positioned race as "the centrepiece of a hierarchical system that produces differences" (Hall, 2017[1994]:33), and emphasised that it should be defined socio-historically

and culturally as opposed to biologically. Additionally, the way in which race is signified in our worlds is directly related to relations of power and "regimes of truth" (Hall, 2017[1994]:45).

I thus recognise that race is socially constructed, whilst concurrently calling myself mixed race - as much as race *is* socially constructed, it is a construct that is mobilised within relationships of power which have material and lived consequences for our experiences; we are racialised without our consent, we experience racism without our consent, we *have* been and *continue* to be named without our consent. Like many others, I have sought to take control of my naming in order to navigate these experiences, knowing all that I know about the term I have chosen, *mixed race* is the one I continue to utilise when I must. A term that is weighted, rejected, debated, embraced, replaced, repeated.

Although ample social scientists are in agreement about the socially constructed nature of race, there remains much contestation and debate surrounding how to define race (see Winant, 2006; Murji and Solomos, 2014). Similarly, there exists no singular definition to which one can refer when talking about mixed race (Olumide, 2002; Mahtani, 2002; Song, 2012). Due to the lack of consensus on the definition of mixed race, and the ways in which notions of race and experiences of racialisation more broadly, vary depending on the context and moments in which they are utilised, it remains important to think critically about and provide definitions for the terminology we use - the practices of naming in which we engage - when referencing race. This is what the first section of this chapter will consider, with particular attention being paid to how the concept of mixed race has been utilised in this project, but also in relation to what is meant by race, racialisation and other connected terms. The second section of this chapter considers how we can approach the notion of mixed race, beyond or behind the initial process of naming, by using Latin American feminist phenomenology and the concept of *mestizaje* as a guide/template. The final section emphasises the importance of imagining that which exists beyond current conceptualisations of mixed race and race more generally, highlighting the need for us to remain conscious of how the present may limit us, and the possibilities the future holds for liberating us.

Defining Mixed Race

About Race and Racialisation

> *"Historically, race has always been a more or less coded way of dividing and organising a multiplicity, of fixing and distributing it according to a hierarchy…" (Mbembe, 2018:35).*

We cannot define mixed race without first defining race, as the two are not independent from one another but are connected and relational. David Theo Goldberg (1993) explored the history of the term "race" and its existence in different European languages stemming back to the 15th century. Despite changing meanings over time, Goldberg (1993) underscored the ongoing relationship between notions of race and notions of difference; "from its inception… race has referred to those perceived, indeed, constituted as other" (Goldberg, 1993: 62). Whilst the emphasis on difference remained consistent over time, the meanings attributed to race shifted; Goldberg (1993) situated the concept of race as "a fluid, transforming, historically specific concept parasitic on theoretic and social discourses at any historical moment" (Goldberg, 1993: 69) (see also Hall, 2017[1994]; Murji and Solomos, 2014).

Aside from Goldberg's (1993) articulation of race as a fluid concept which is shaped by context, what is equally relevant here is the centuries-long relationship between conceptions of race and notions of difference (Hall, (2017[1994]) also placed ample emphasis on this relationship in his work as noted earlier). Important also is the historical emergence of a racial hierarchy, and the distinction that was made between those who were "civilised" and those who were "barbarous" (Goldberg, 1993: 65). This hierarchy provided the logic which fuelled the slave trade and colonial endeavours, both of which served to amass significant wealth and advance the global stature of the British Empire (see Williams, 1944; Hall, 1992).

The concept of race is thus deeply connected to notions of difference. It is not a static concept but is formulated in relation to the context in which it is being mobilised. Race operates within relationships of power - difference is constructed within power dynamics, as well as justified and perpetuated through the use of racial hierarchies.

When considering how to define race, it would be remiss not to mention how understandings of race and difference have been and continue to be enmeshed with phenotype. Colonial understandings of race are discussed in the work of Miles and Torres (1996), who noted how physical differences, and skin colour in particular, informed British conceptions of race during the colonial period. The authors grappled with the particular emphasis that was and continues to be placed on skin colour as an indicator of race, and problematise the idea that race can be seen; “but people do not see "race": rather, they observe certain combinations of real and sometimes imagined somatic and cultural characteristics which they attribute meaning to with the idea of "race”” (Miles and Torres, 1996:40). The relationship between phenotype and conceptions of race stems from the colonial era and continues to prevail today; Miles and Brown (2004) emphasised the ongoing practice of utilising skin colour as a marker of race in Europe, North America and Australasia, and analysed the way in which specific focus has been placed on particular phenotypical features over others in determinations of race.

Whilst it must be acknowledged that a focus on skin colour in conceptions of race continues to prevail, other phenotypic features are also associated with notions of race - one need only think of the way in which hair has been considered an indicator of race (see Mercer, 1987; Erasmus, 1997), not to mention body type as exemplified in the unimaginable treatment, objectification and hyper-sexualisation of Saartjie Baartman, who was an indigenous South African woman brought to Britain at the start of the 19th century and exhibited, inhumanely, due to the way her body looked (see Gordon-Chipembere, 2011). Such conceptions have in turn fuelled the prevalence of Eurocentric beauty standards which prioritise the representation of particular features - which are associated with European-ness, and by default whiteness - in mainstream media, thus working to reproduce racial hierarchies (see Erasmus, 1997). Additionally, elements such as culture, religion, ethnicity, and class (among other things) may coincide with or contribute to conceptions of race.

Conceptualisations of race thus intersect with notions of difference, which may be exemplified through particular characteristics, and which shift according to context - different places and moments in history shape understandings of and the meanings attached to race, and these operate in relation to structures of power. Importantly, racial hierarchies operate to distribute these differences, with all that represents whiteness being positioned at the top. Race becomes known to

us through processes of racialisation - these meanings, these differences, become attached to us when we are racialised. Heidi Safia Mirza (1997) wrote eloquently about the experience of being racialised in Britain, paying specific attention to how skin colour has been used as an indicator of race:

> Being 'Black' in Britain is about a state of 'becoming' (racialized); a process of consciousness, when colour becomes the defining factor about who you are. Located through your 'otherness', a 'conscious coalition' emerges: a self-consciously constructed space where identity is not inscribed by a natural identification but a political kinship… Now living submerged in whiteness, physical difference becomes a defining issue, a signifier, a mark of whether or not you belong. Thus to be black in Britain is to share a common structural location; a racial location… (Mirza, 1997: 3).

For Mirza (1997) to be racialised is thus to become defined in particular ways, which centres on conceptualisations of race that are informed by appearance - by skin colour - and which stand in opposition to norms of whiteness. It is a process of inscription - of marking - and it is political. It paves the way for the recognition of others who are also racialised, making it a process not only of self-consciousness that is informed by race thinking, but of *other*-consciousness; we perceive ourselves in relation to race and we perceive others in relation to race - we become aware of the ways in which we inscribe and in turn recognise the ways in which others like us may be inscribed. Isoke (2016) provides a definition of racialisation that is similar to Mirza's (1997), but which considers indicators of race that extend beyond the phenotypical;

> Racialization refers to an ongoing process of marking, categorising, and reproducing human difference through the uneven distribution of life chances within specified geographic space-time continuums. Within European societies and geographies that have withstood generations of colonial invasion, enslavement, and diverse modes of racial apartheid, the reproduction of difference is realized through the maintenance of fairly rigid social, economic and political hierarchies based on skin colour, phenotype, culture and the invention and enforcement of legal fictions that reify human difference. Race as a putative biological category is one such fiction (Isoke, 2016: 741).

Much like Mirza (1997), Isoke (2016) considers racialisation in relation to the reproduction, maintenance and marking of difference. The author also underscores the importance of context - of time and space - when considering racialisation, as well as its processual nature. Racialisation is thus, not something that is fixed or has an ending, but rather something which continues. Additionally, racialisation is fuelled not only through conceptualisations of skin colour, but through conceptualisations of other phenotypic characteristics as well as conceptualisations of

culture - all of these aspects thus contribute to narratives of difference that are informed by race thinking.

Considering the deeply contested and painful history of the concept of race and the process of racialisation, many scholars interested in the subject have debated the value of continuing to utilise the language and practices of race in our work, as well as the harm it may perpetuate. Samir Amin (2010) discussed the ways in which the repeated practice of racial categorisation over time has meant that it has become a fundamental part of the way in which we understand race. Amin describes this practice as "an everyday 'doing', well before thought" (2010: 7), suggesting that how we make sense of race has become so familiar that we cease to even recognise the implications of how we are conceptualising race within the world around us. Race becomes relational – understood as difference and read on multiple platforms, be that bodily, culturally, sensory. For Amin (2010) the implications of this process of recognising race (or as some would say, this process of racialisation) are that it provides the framework within which racism and racial hierarchies can exist on both every day and institutional levels.

Amin's (2010) work raises questions for both scholars and individuals who engage in the process of racial categorisation, about how to come to terms with the fact that through studying and engaging with race we are reproducing the conditions in which racism can exist. The notion of the postracial is often offered as an alternative way of thinking about race – but what does it mean? The word "postracial" refers to what happens *after* race, but as discussed by Goldberg (2015) the postracial is paradoxical due to the fact that it is racial. I take this to mean that in order for the postracial to exist, race must be recognised. Again, we see how notions of race are relational; even when trying to think of what transpires beyond race, the racial must be recognised for this new era to occur.

Goldberg's (2015) work critically engages with the meaning of the postracial, grappling with the conditions in which the notion is mobilised. The postracial implies that racism no longer shapes the societies in which we live, and people are not limited in their access to opportunities as a result of their perceived race (Goldberg, 2015: 4). For Goldberg, this is not the case – instead, racism continues to exist, it has just taken on new manifestations:

> What the claim about postraciality as the end of race suggests, rather, is simply that a certain way of thinking about race, and implicitly of racist expression, has been giving way to novel understandings, orders, and arrangements of racial designation and racist expression. Race (as we have known it) may be over. But racism lives on unmarked, even unrecognised, potentially for ever (Goldberg, 2015: 6).

When considering how to navigate the contradiction of engaging with race and racial difference which subsequently reproduces the conditions under which racism can exist, Goldberg's (2015) statement would suggest that this contradiction is beyond our control. In other words, until racist structures are dismantled, it does not matter how we engage with notions of race (be they through racialisation or postracialism) because racism continues to exist – "racism lives on unmarked, unrecognised, potentially for ever" (ibid). This speaks to the power of racism – that even when we attempt to control the way in which we as individuals conceive of race, racist structures continue to shape our lives on every day and institutional levels, and this may never change.

In line with Goldberg's (2015) recognition of the role that racism continues to play in our social worlds, there are scholars whose work aims to uncover the ongoing impact of racism on our everyday lives, and who have highlighted the necessity of race and racial categories to remain as reference points for the purpose of understanding the inner workings of racism. Miri Song (2018) wrote about the reluctance to refer to 'race' in Britain at both an individual and official levels, with 'ethnicity' being used instead by organisations such as the Office for National Statistics. Song (2018) elucidated how the concept of racism remains prevalent throughout Europe, whilst the concept of race has receded - she argued that this has limited understandings of racism and how racism may be challenged. Ultimately Song (2018) posited that we must continue to recognise race and the way in which historical notions of race and racial difference have and continue to inform formations of racism. Krieger (2010), argued for the continued use of racial categories so as to understand the effect that racism has on our health and health inequalities. The author underscored this as imperative until racism is no longer a determining factor in healthcare inequality. Further, through positioning healthcare inequalities as "a biological expression of racism" the cause of which is "injustice, not biology" (Krieger, 2010: 225), Krieger's work shed light on how racism may be embodied, exemplifying the corporeal and tangible effects of racism on people's everyday lived experiences.

About Mixed Race

Debates surrounding the potential harm of perpetuating the language of race and processes of racialisation are not limited to the broad category of race but have operated more specifically in relation to the notion of mixed race. Starting in the nineties, when the term began gaining traction in Britain, Aspinall (2009) detailed the contestation over the term *mixed race* and explored the alternative terminology that was being considered at the time (e.g., mixed parentage, mixed origins, dual heritage, mixed heritage). Despite the existence of alternative terms and the concerns raised by some surrounding the direct reference that the term *mixed race* made to the notion of race, Aspinall's (2009) research revealed that amongst self identified mixed race people, the term *mixed race* was by far the most popular, and more recent research continues to support this claim (See Caballero and Aspinall, 2018).

In their volume, which considered the experiences of mixed race people from a global perspective, Small et al. (2014) define mixed race first and foremost as something that is *self-identified*, highlighting the importance of agency when referring to racial categories. This is something I would like to emphasise as particularly important when thinking about historical practices of racialisation and the numerous forms of violence that have resulted from racializing people and placing them into racial categories. The material and lived consequences of racially categorising people have been devastating, a point that is reiterated by Isoke (2016) who spoke of race as a "deadly fiction", produced and applied through violence in a way that determines who does and does not have access to personhood (Isoke, 2016: 741). I would like to think of this application or removal of personhood as exemplified through the historical use of racial categories; in South Africa for example, racial categories were utilised under colonial occupation to distinguish between Europeans and local people – the application of these categories served to produce and reinforce racial hierarchies, which positioned white men at the top, and black women at the bottom, setting the conditions for who would oppress and who would be oppressed (See Baderoon, 2014). The application of racial categories quite literally exposed black women in particular to horrific levels of sexual violence, and provided the justification for these occurrences as well - black

women were deemed as less than their abusers, and thus worthy of and responsible for their abuse. This colonial process of categorisation was replicated in the Apartheid era, working to control people's entire lives and their positioning within society – determining the way in which they received education, the physical spaces in which they could live and to which they had access, the relationships they could or could not have - all of which have had implications for how inequality is distributed in South Africa today (see Baderoon, 2014); "the fierce colonial desire to divide and classify, to create hierarchies and produce difference, leaves behind wounds and scars" (Mbembe, 2018: 7).

In light of this violent history of categorisation, and the devastation it has left, self identification with or allowing for the rejection of racial categories becomes incredibly important in a world where race thinking continues to feature in our everyday lives. Thus, when defining mixed race it is first and foremost utilised in this project as a concept requiring self-identification. Although it was conceptualised in a particular way during this research, it was not expected that participants would necessarily identify with this conceptualisation, and being invited to share their own terminology surrounding, and understandings of, the term mixed race was a central feature of the interview questions (see Appendix).

Returning to Small et. al's (2014) definition of mixed race, they described how mixed race people "are descended from and attached to two or more socially significant groups" (Small et al., 2014: vii). Their emphasis on descent and attachment resonates in particular with this project, however the lack of direct reference to the concept of race creates room for ambiguity surrounding how the notion of descent is being used - one could be descended from two different "socially significant groups" (ibid.) and those groups could still have been racialized in similar ways. In this project, mixed race aligns more with the definition provided by Jayne Ifekwunigwe (2004) in that it explicitly considers the role of race and racialisation in the production of mixed race identities and experiences:

> …to be 'mixed race' presumes differently racialised parentage… for purposes of critical discussion, I use the term 'mixed race' to describe individuals who according

> to popular folk concepts of 'race' and by known birth parentage embody two or more worldviews or, in genealogical terms, descent groups (Ifekwunigwe, 2004: xxi).

Although, like Small at al. (2014), Ifekwunigwe (2004) utilised the notion of descent in her definition of mixed race, she did so along with express reference to genealogy as well as experiences of racialisation. This aligns with the way in which the notion of mixed race is used in this project in that it specifically pertains to people with parents who are racialised differently and genealogically descend from two or more socially determined racialised 'groups'. It is worth noting the instance of *passing* in relation to this definition, as it overlooks - or does not make reference to - how this relates to someone who 'passes' and thus may not experience racialisation in the same way as other people with equivalent genealogical lines of descent. This is something that emerged during the research and which is explored in Chapter 5. For the purposes of brevity in this chapter, the definition of mixed race in this project encompasses the experiences of those who may 'pass', and this will be picked up in Chapter 6.

Mixed race as a concept remains slippery, and there exists no singular definition to which one can refer (Olumide, 2002; Mahtani, 2002; Aspinall, 2009). This lack of certainty serves as a mirror for the experiences of mixed race people – they are varied and diverse, unable to be framed by a single definition or slotted into a neatly carved out category. Ironically, despite this uncertainty, the term *mixed race* is utilised by many – including myself. Thus, within the discourse that is produced which engages with mixed race experiences, space needs to be made for the nuances which mould these experiences. In this work, I am suggesting that we view the variability surrounding the term *mixed race* as closely connected to the experience of identifying as mixed race.

How do we go about recognising the experiences of mixed race people, in ways that do not reduce them to their lines of descent? How do we make room for mixed race people's experiences as independent from the racial identities of their parents? Whilst I will argue in Chapter 5 that familial relationships play a central role in the production of racial identity, it remains necessary to hold space for the lived experiences which accompany mixed race people as they perform and conceive of their racial identities. The concept of mixed race should not be used simply to indicate the racial

variations of one's parents but should be recognised as a complex and nuanced experience that is neither fragmented nor split but exists within, and may embrace, a state of ambiguity.

Approaching Mixed Race

Mixed race, (Im)purity and Resistance

I have often been asked by people who are not mixed race, what "side" I relate to more. In other words, as a person with parents of two different races, with which race do I most identify. The assumption behind this question is that mixed race people do not have a racial identity which extends beyond those of their parents, and that I, as a mixed race person, only have two "sides". This line of thinking goes beyond my individual experience, and can be located at an institutional level. When filling in job and university applications in the United Kingdom, applicants are requested to complete an Equality Monitoring form, which asks one to specify their ethnicity, as well as gender, faith and sexuality based on a number of predetermined categories (see ACAS, nd). The official census in the United Kingdom asks for the same (see ONS, 2011). Relevant to this discussion, is the way in which those who identify as mixed race are asked to categorise themselves. Mixed race is firstly articulated as "mixed/multiple ethnicity" and is secondly defined by the "ethnicities" of one's parents (with the four main options for one's "mix" offering two combinations, and a fifth blank space for "Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background", thus prioritising binary "mixes"). Earlier I briefly discussed the way in which ethnicity is often used as a proxy for race at an institutional level in Britain - what is most relevant here is the way in which the specific term *mixed race* is not currently used in governmental processes of data collection despite its continued use on an everyday level, and the category which is available to those who identify as mixed race – "mixed/multiple ethnicity" – only provides a definition that relates to the race of one's parents.

The notion of a person having different "sides" to which they relate suggests the existence of a split – choosing a side requires separation from one into more than one. That the sides in this example pertain to different racial categories, serves to undermine the existence of *mixed race* as

its own racial identity. When a mixed race person is asked to divide their experience into “sides” that are determined by their parent’s’ racial identities, they are deprived of the option to identify themselves in other ways. Mixed race then becomes situated as an indicator only of one’s parent’s differing racial identities, between which one must choose to identify. The question of “which side” one relates to, implies that racial identity is clear cut - that the sides being referred to are static and fixed - and that those who fall outside the realm of the perceived static racial category – those who have experiences of more than one racial category and are positioned within a seemingly unstable and less established racial identity – must align or split themselves accordingly with one or the other supposedly stable category.

A useful way with which to think about this process of splitting is through the work of Argentinian sociologist, philosopher and activist María Lugones (1994), who wrote about notions of purity, impurity and separation (see Vergès, 2020). Through the example of making mayonnaise, Lugones (1994) delved into conceptions of purity and how they are utilised as tools of control and domination. The example goes as follows; discourses of separation can either be split or curdled. Where they are split, one should envision the neat separation of egg yolk from egg white. Where they are curdled, we are introduced to the image of combining the yolk of an egg, water and oil in such a way that the mixture curdles;

> Mayonnaise is an oil in water emulsion. As all emulsions, it is unstable. When an emulsion curdles, the ingredients become separate from each other. But that is not altogether an accurate description: rather, they coalesce towards oil or toward water, most of the water becomes separate from most of the oil- it is instead, a matter of different degrees of coalescence. The same with mayonnaise; when it separates, you are left with yolky oil and oily yolk (Lugones, 1994: 459).

These different forms of separation are described by Lugones (1994) as split-separation and curdle-separation. Both are discussed specifically as approaches to multiplicity, which I understand to relate to the complexity apparent in our existence as individuals with varying and interconnected experiences. Split-separation is associated with discourses of purity and fragmentation – it requires the existence of neatly separated categories into which people can be placed through processes of fragmentation, and which combine to make a unified whole. Curdle-separation makes room for

the ambiguous and rejects the notion of purity, embracing ideas of impurity. As with the analogy of an emulsion, curdle-separation considers the impossibility of neatly separating the parts of a person, and makes room for the existence of an ambiguity that challenges ideas of a neatly combined whole.

When thinking, then, about asking mixed race people which "side" they relate to most, or asking them to situate themselves in relation to two or more discrete racial identities, we can see how a process of split-separation occurs, which looks to break down – to fragment - the person into separate racial categories. Ideas of purity come into play in the use of discrete racial categories, one of which must be related to more when asked to choose a "side". The possibility of ambiguity is erased in both these processes, and replaced by neat building blocks that come together to create a whole person. Chicana writer and theorist, Gloria Anzaldúa (2009) wrote about her experiences of being pulled in different directions by the people around her, who believed she should situate herself in particular spaces or in relation to particular identities (e.g. racial, gendered, classed, political, artistic); "they would chop me up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label" (Anzaldúa, 2009: 17). Anzaldúa's (2009) words provide us with a vivid image of the process of split separation – chopping is another way of separating or splitting - and points directly to the potential violence of the process, which draws parallels with the earlier discussed violence that has historically accompanied processes of racial categorisation. Additionally, notions of purity are implicit in the act of tagging and labelling – for the piece in question has been understood to fit into a discrete category which provides the content for the label.

In response to the external desire to "chop" her into "fragments" (ibid.) Anzaldúa wrote: 'who, me, confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me" (Anzaldúa, 2009: 17). Through defying the process of chopping/splitting/fragmenting, Anzaldúa (2009) was able to remain within a place of ambiguity. Further, by identifying the process of labelling as one that was outside of her own experiences, and also as something in which she may choose not to participate, Anzaldúa (2009) exposed the possibility for alternative ways of being and understanding oneself. "Only your labels split me" (ibid.) – Anzaldúa, is only split by others, not in her own experiences and

understandings which may be cast as "ambivalent" or "confused" (ibid.) by those who favour split separation – those, who Lugones (1994) called, "lovers of purity" (Lugones, 1994: 467). The relationship between embracing ambiguity and opposing discourses of purity resonates when considered in relation to how notions of mixed race have been situated in opposition to notions of 'pure' race as discussed in the aforementioned work of Olumide (2002); "mixed race implies exclusion from such constructions [of "essential difference"]; in fact, it rather spoils their clean lines and makes them messy and confused" (Olumide, 2002: 1-2). Mixed race spoils in the same way that mayonnaise curdles - both are "impure", both making room for messiness and ambiguity.

Lugones' (1994) notion of curdle-separation allows us to visualise the alternative way of being which is encompassed in the words of Anzaldúa (2009). As previously mentioned, curdle-separation carves space for the ambiguity and nuance of experiences, without using established categories, which provides us with a way to conceptualise mixed race experiences beyond the racial categories and identities of our parents. Not only is every process of curdling unique, for there are "different degrees of coalescence" (Lugones, 1994: 459), but fragmentation (or choosing a "side"/a category made up of two or more different sides) is not required, allowing for mixed race people to exist ambiguously without being split into parts. Through her mayonnaise analogy, Lugones (1994) made space for ambiguous identities - for identities in progress to stand on their own and in opposition to discourses of purity which are embedded in relationships of power. She developed this positioning of impurity in relation to resistance, and through the use of the concept of "mestizaje":

> I think of mestizaje as an example of and a metaphor for both impurity and resistance. I hold on to the metaphor and adopt *mestizaje* as a central name for impure resistance to interlocked, intermeshed oppressions…
> [Mestizaje]If something or someone is neither/nor, but kind of both, not quite either,
> if something is in the middle of either/or,
> if it is ambiguous, given the available classification of things,
> if it is mestiza,
> if it threatens by its very ambiguity the orderliness of the system, of schematized reality…
> (Lugones, 1994: 458 – 459)

The idea of mestizaje as "something… in the middle of either/or" (ibid.) again draws parallels with the aforementioned occurrence or idea of mixed race people being asked to choose between, or

being situated in relation to, one of their parents' racial identities. Mixed race becomes the identity in the middle – the unstable space in between two (or more) supposedly classifiable positions. Mestizaje as conceptualised by Lugones (1994) is thus an example of how we can approach the possibilities of mixed race as standing on its own as opposed to *solely* in relation to other racial categories. This is not to say that understandings and experiences of mixed race should be divorced from the racial identities/experiences of racialisation held by our parents, but rather to acknowledge that our experiences extend far beyond them. Further, proposing such an approach to understanding mixed race is not to encourage the establishment of mixed race as a static racial category, but rather to recognise it as a hermeneutic device with which to think about the variety and fluidity of experiences that may be held by people who identify as mixed race.

Mestizaje, Im/purity and Control

One cannot engage with notions of mestizaje without also considering the seminal work of Anzaldúa ([1987]2012), and her conceptualization of the mestiza consciousness. The notion of mestiza is used to relate to the experiences of people with mixed indigenous and Spanish ancestry in the Americas. Defined by Anzaldúa as "biologically and/or culturally mixed" (Anzaldúa, 2009: 124), she dated the emergence of mestizo identities back to the 16th century (Anzaldúa, 2009: 27). For Anzaldúa(2012[1987]), "mestiza consciousness" was a way of thinking about the experiences of people from these mixed backgrounds from a feminist perspective which sought to unsettle historically patriarchal aspects of her culture (note the shifting of the masculine "mestizo" to the feminine, "mestiza" in Anzaldúa's work): "from this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinization, an "alien" consciousness is presently in the making – a new mestiza consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (Anzaldua, 2012[1987]:99).

It is important to situate and acknowledge the roots of the term *mestiza* in relation to the experiences of Latin American people with mixed ancestry. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa (2012[1987]) underscores the need for Chicanos, Native Americans and other groups to understand their histories of struggle in order for unity to take place. In the same way, it is

important to recognise the context – the struggle and histories of dispossession, violence and loss - from which the notion of mestiza has emerged. As I am struck by the similarities between much of what Anzaldúa (2012[1987]) wrote about mestiza consciousness and my own experiences as a mixed-race woman, I remain conscious of the fact that this is not my story. I thus tread carefully in my use of Latina scholarship, as someone who is not Latina, but has grown up in her own borderlands and is interested in the possibilities that mestiza consciousness can present when thinking about the experiences of people who identify as mixed race.

At the same time, Anzaldúa's (2012[1987]) work does recognise the similarities of experiences between those who are mestiza and other occupants of the borderlands:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyes, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the "normal" (Anzaldúa, 2012[1987]: 25)

These words, along with so many others in *Borderlands/La Frontera* are what drew me in and connected me to the work of Anzaldúa. They welcomed me, offered me a place – an opportunity to celebrate and bask in the ambiguities of my person. Anzaldúa's (2012[1987])poeticism and passion, the way she drifted between languages unashamedly, the intelligence of her thoughts and depth of historical knowledge – all these things inspired me. Her pride in ambiguity and embrace of multiplicity, her conceptualization of and engagement with the concept of the borderland – the impact was undeniable. As someone born in exile, who learnt the world through moving across it multiple times, thus shaping an understanding of the significance of physical borders. As someone who never quite fit – as someone who was always a different Other depending on the setting and circumstance, thus leading to an understanding of social and phenomenological borders. Anzaldúa's (2012[1987]) work moved me. Thus, although mestizaje and mestiza consciousness are located in very specific contexts, they extend beyond those contexts and resonate with

troublesome, queer, half-bred others like myself who traverse the "normal" and are unsettled and limited by the presence of lines that divide.

Although this work has engaged more with Lugones' (1994) use of the concept of mestizaje, Anzaldúa's (2012[1987]) work remains relevant and, as shown earlier, resonates with the work of Lugones (1994) - they speak to one another. Both focus on the positioning of mestizaje between that which appears to be stable, "classifiable" (Lugones, 1994:458), "normal" (Anzaldua, 2012[1987]:25) - for Anzaldúa (2012[1987]) mestizaje was related to the notion of the borderlands, which are not only geographical but psychological, psychic, cultural and more. For Lugones (1994), the concept of the borderlands was not utilised - mestizaje signified the possibility for resisting control and domination through ambiguity, fluidity and impurity. In both instances there is an emphasis on embracing ambiguity, and in both instances ambiguity is situated in opposition to forces of oppression, be they represented by borders or broader epistemological conceptualisations of power.

I would like to return to the work of Lugones (1994) in order to think more deeply about the way in which she conceptualised mestizaje in relation to discourses of im/purity and control:

> When I think of mestizaje, I think both of separation as curdling, as an exercise in impurity, and of separation as splitting, an exercise in purity. I think of the attempt at control exercised by those who possess both power and the categorical eye and who attempt to split everything impure, breaking it down into pure elements (as in egg white and egg yolk) for the purposes of control. Control over creativity. And I think of something in the middle of either/or, something impure, something or someone mestizo, as both separated, curdled, and resisting in its curdled state. Mestizaje defies control through simultaneously asserting the impure, curdled multiple state and rejecting fragmentation into pure parts. In this play of assertion and rejection, the mestiza is unclassifiable, unmanageable. She has no pure parts to be "had", controlled. (Lugones, 1994:460)

At first glance, Lugones' (1994) use of "impurity" to describe a view that holds potential for positive change (if one believes that resisting control is something positive, which I do), forces us to reflect on our own preconceptions of purity – on the ways in which we have learned to understand and value that which is pure and disregard that which is impure. Lugones (1994) first

articulates resistance in her subversive use of language - in her decision to label something which offers possibilities/liberation with a word that is commonly associated with that which is negative and worth-less. This choice encompasses how Lugones' (1994) resistance works – through a rejection of common ways of understanding, a rejection of categorisation, and subsequently a rejection of control. Control over how we understand ourselves, of the language we use to describe ourselves, and of the way in which we relate to and recognise one another. Thus Lugones' (1994) articulation of resistance becomes a metaphor for the way in which her resistance is to be practised.

Creativity and a lack of restraint are two of the central facets of Lugones' (1994) conceptualisation of mestizaje. I interpret mestizaje to be about focusing on the unboundedness of the imagination, and validating the possibilities it presents. It is the opposite of control – it is rejecting control which is enforced through categorisation and fragmentation. It is evident in Anzaldúa's (2012[1987]) rejection of splitting – it is present in Lugones' (1994) ownership of her ambiguity; "mestizaje defies control through simultaneously asserting the impure, curdled state and rejecting fragmentation into pure parts" (Lugones, 1994: 460). Through a rejection of this process of labelling/chopping/splitting, comes a rejection of control, making the person who occupies and sits within a space of ambiguity "unclassifiable, unmanageable" (ibid.) and thus an agent of resistance.

When thinking then about mestizaje in relation to mixed race identity, it becomes clear that through rejecting the need for one to split themselves between the racial identities of their parents, one thus partakes in an act of resistance – one becomes "unclassifiable" (ibid.) when refusing to align oneself with the classifications on offer. Further, by framing one's identity on one's own terms – in ways which do not necessarily align with established processes of racial categorisation and the language of race – one is able to embrace the element of creativity present in mestizaje.

Imagining Mixed Race

Creativity and its relationship to resistance is not limited to Lugones' (1994) conceptualisation of mestizaje, but has been used by other theorists when thinking about the possibilities for imagining

alternate realities, specifically in relation to structures of racism and colonisation. In 1943, Martinican theorist, Suzanne Césaire, wrote about surrealism, and its relationship to freedom in *Surrealism and Us.* Where the Second World War, which at the time raged on, was described as a threat to freedom, surrealism was positioned in opposition to this threat – as the epitome of freedom (Césaire, 2012[1943]:35). Similarly, surrealism was presented by Césaire (2012[1943]) as a beacon of freedom for the people of Martinique in the face of French domination. Césaire (2012[1943]) wrote poetically, about surrealism and the possibilities it offered for resistance and liberation; "such is surrealist activity, a total activity, the only one that can liberate humankind by revealing to it the unconscious, one of the activities that will aid in liberating people by illuminating the blind myths that have led them to this point" (Césaire, 2012[1943]: 37).

The poeticism in and passion of Césaire's (2012[1943]) words are inspiring – not only as a result of their lyricism but as a result of their meaning. She spoke in defence of those who were/are oppressed and envisioned their liberation through making audible the things which were left unsaid – through unmasking the realities behind oppressive forces such as colonialism and war, and highlighting the possibility of freedom through such consciousness. Césaire (2012[1943]) spoke also of the future rising up of black people, in the often-quoted ending of her essay, and the role of surrealism in this process as a force to assist with such an ascent, during which "it will be time finally to transcend the sordid contemporary antimonies: Whites-Blacks, Europeans-Africans, civilised-savage" and "colonial idiocies will be purified by the welding arc's blue flame"(Césaire, 2012[1943]: 38). Césaire emphasised the need to overcome binaries which benefited imperialism and upheld colonialism, and the ability of surrealism to catalyse that process and act, in her words, as a "tightrope of our hope" (Césaire, 2012[1943]: 38).

Art was the realm in which I first came to know about surrealism. Swirls and colours across the canvas depicting a dream world I had never encountered, borne of someone else's mind and thoughts, perhaps their reality, perhaps not. For the viewer - for me - it offered an alternative to what I knew, to the way I saw the world – possibility, difference, imagination. Whether it was real or not was beside the point, or maybe it was the whole point – to urge the viewer to question what

they take for granted as real, and reconsider their notions of reality. When coupled with Césaire's (2012[1943]) work, these ideas are elevated – reality is colonialism, surrealism is the door into the factory that created colonialism, and the possibility of alternate realities that we may create for ourselves. Through that process, we require creativity - imagination - to practice thinking of something different, something else, without limitation.

Decades after Césaire, in a different time and place, sociologist Ruha Benjamin (2015) wrote a short story utilising science fiction and an imagining of the future to think about the way in which race and technology could operate differently in the year 2064. In Benjamin's (2015) future, the police have been disbanded, and research into "regenerative medicine" has been ongoing, meaning that past victims of police brutality such as Eric Garner (who was killed in 2014 by police in the United States), have the potential for a second chance at life. At the end of her story, Benjamin (2015) discussed three experiences which served as inspiration – rereading the work of W.E.B DuBois, listening to a speech by Ursula Le Guin and completing a book she was working on at the time. She quoted an excerpt from her book:

> But somehow imaginations go limp when we are confronted with social dis-order. For many people, the idea that we can defy politics as usual and channel human ingenuity toward more cooperative and inclusive forms of social organization is utterly far-fetched. Thus I am convinced that any institutional retooling must begin by first querying this faith in biological regeneration alongside our underdeveloped belief in social transformation. *If our bodies can regenerate, why do we perceive our body politic as so utterly fixed*?" This story is an attempt to perceive otherwise, to hold myself accountable to the query I buried in *People's Science*, to formulate a critique at the power/knowledge nexus through narrative, and ultimately to *fetch* a different social vision that, even to the author of this tale, feels incredibly far off. With these provocations, I take the idea of a *sociological imagination* quite literally, and envisage a not-too-distant future where race, science, and subjectivity are reconfigured differently, defiantly, and hope-fully (Benjamin, 2015).

Most striking to me is the emphasis Benjamin (2015) placed on imagination and the potential it holds for recrafting and changing our social worlds. Whilst acknowledging the difficulty of envisioning a different way of being, and its apparent impossibility as a result of being so accustomed to the current social order, Benjamin (2015) concurrently encouraged us to try anyway – through her story, her postscript, her statement of self-accountability; through her expression of hope and defiance.

Benjamin's (2015) subject is different to Césaire's (2012[1943]), not just in its use of science-fiction as a vehicle, but in its emphasis on police brutality in the US. The theme of racism and the way in which it is reproduced through authoritarian structures of power, however, is the same. Further, the emphasis that both theorists placed on the role of imagination in countering these structures, be it through surrealism or the sociological imagination, draw parallels with one another. Equally, defiance and hopefulness permeate the writing of both Benjamin (2015) and Césaire (2012[1943]). If we are to return then to the work of Lugones (1994) and her considerations of resistance, ambiguity and *creativity*, although not pertaining to specifically to racism as with Césaire (2012[1943]) and Benjamin (2015) but to structures of classification more broadly which may include racism, the theme of resistance and imagination - the possibility of an alternative, something new that we may envision - continues.

Concluding thoughts

The first section of this chapter looked at contextualising the concepts of race, mixed race and racialisation in relation to current usages and arguments, as well as providing definitions for how they are engaged in this thesis. Through the use of Lugones' (1994) work on mestizaje, I then grappled with approaching mixed race as an experience that is whole as opposed to fragmented, resistant to discourses of essentialism and purity, and which extends far beyond a recognition of the racialized experiences of one's parents. Although the racial identities of one's parents are considered in definitions and experiences of being mixed raced, it is positioned as a starting point into understanding those experiences as opposed to their entirety. Thinking through the possibilities inherent in experiences of unboundedness and ambiguity, I then entered into the final section of this chapter which considered the themes of imagination, resistance, possibility and hope and the ways in which they enable us to envision a different world beyond that which we know, and encourage us not to be limited by the categories and structures of racism by which we are surrounded.

This thesis makes space for the power of the imagination when thinking about race and racial identity. For fluidity and ambiguity - for the specificity of experiences of race and racialisation, for a celebration of the lack of consensus surrounding how to define mixed race. Here, the aim is not to categorise or to essentialise, but to observe and consider, with open eyes and an awareness that we can imagine more, create more, offer more, hope for more.

Chapter 2

Methodological Framework

> The black ethnographic storyteller is an unrealized mother in the making. She is seeking her own completion by giving narrative over to blackness (Isoke, 2018:153).

> It has become clear that every version of an "other," wherever found, is also the construction of a "self"… (Clifford, 1986: 23).

The purpose of this research was to gain insights into and a better understanding of mixed race people's experiences of racialization, and how those experiences are influenced and shaped by people's familial ties and the city in which they have grown up or lived. As a person who identifies as mixed race, was trained as a social anthropologist and whose politics strongly align with feminist and post-colonial scholarship, the way in which this research was designed was influenced heavily by discourses that are critical of qualitative data collection methods which have historically perpetuated reified, essentialist and racist portrayals of marginalized communities such as people of colour (see Mafeje, 1996), women (see Strathern, 1987; Isoke, 2018), and indigenous communities (see Hage, 2018), among others.

In order to study subjects such as race and racialization, there needs to be a recognition of the ways in which they operate in relation to histories of oppression and contemporary realities of structural inequality and violence. *We cannot study race without recognizing how it shapes the world around us and our place in it.* Further, there needs to be an acknowledgement of how social science research has historically perpetuated racist and oppressive structures, through the study and representation of racialized people in particularly harmful ways (see Nyamnjoh, 2012; Isoke, 2018.). We cannot undertake research, especially with people from historically oppressed communities, without understanding where our research methods have come from.

Through employing methods such as reflexivity in the conceptualization, data collection process, data analysis and writing of this thesis I aimed to draw attention to the partiality of my perspective as well as my position as researcher, and the way in which power operates in relation to that position. This consideration of power informed my choice of methods and the spaces within which I collected data which aimed to encourage participants to determine the flow of the interviews through asking their own questions and conversing with one another in group settings. Finally, I

approached my position as a mixed race person critically, recognizing that as a mixed race woman situated within the academy, and as someone seeking to unsettle essentialist categories of race, as much as it remains important to recognize the similarities between participants and myself, it is equally important to recognize the differences and variations in our experiences.

Research Questions

- How do people in Coventry who identify as mixed race understand race and ethnicity as fluid or fixed categories?
- What language and terminologies are mobilised in order to define the experiences of people who identify as mixed race?
- In a context of increasing complexity surrounding migration and racialized statuses, what are the implications of this for changes in experiences and understandings of racial identity over generations? (i.e. how does context influence people's understandings of racial identity, as investigated through generation/experience)
- How do people's understandings and experiences of mixed race identity relate to Coventry's cultural geography and history?

1. Approaching the Research

1.1 Reflexivity

> *When Kai was talking about expressing herself through how she dresses, and her experiences with being bullied at school I recognised how brave she is to put herself out there like that knowing that the reactions will be difficult to deal with. This made me emotional and spoke to my own pain – the pain of being different? Tears welled up in my eyes. Need to think through this pain for research – what is painful? Did Kai feel it too? Is this shared pain part of being mixed-race (if it is shared?)?*
>
> *Something Kai said about the two of us – "we would be understood as white" – was difficult for me to hear/agree with as I have always thought I don't look white. Think through this association she made between the two of us (Field journal, 2018).*

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> *Reflexivity is a process that challenges the researcher to explicitly examine how his or her research agenda and assumptions, subject location(s), personal beliefs, and emotions enter into their research. It is imperative for qualitative inquiry because it conceptualizes the researcher as an active participant in knowledge reproduction rather than as a neutral bystander…This conceptualization premises an interactive, relational research process that recognizes the presence of the informant and challenges a directive, researcher-centred epistemological proposition. The main objective of doing reflexivity in qualitative research is to acknowledge and interrogate the constitutive role of the researcher in research design, data collection, analysis, and knowledge production (Hsuing, 2008: 212).*

The reflections above are taken from an entry made in my field journal after my first interview in May, 2018. I chose these reflections in particular as they capture the practice of doing reflexivity during the data collection process. They also exemplify some of the ways in which I was able to relate to my participants, and how they sometimes related to me. Beneath these reflections I have provided Hsuing's (2008) definition of reflexivity as it eloquently encapsulates my own understanding of the concept, and highlights the relevance of relationality in considerations of reflexivity (something to which I will return below). For Hsuing (2008), reflexivity is related to the acknowledgement of the involvement of the researcher throughout the research process – from start to finish. Thus, although I have provided reflections from the data collection period, I recognize that my role as a researcher shaped the entirety of this research project. Nevertheless, these reflections are a useful entry point into a conversation about reflexivity and the role that reflexivity and its broader epistemological positionings have played in the design of this project.

The act of acknowledging the role of the researcher in social research, and recognizing our subjectivity sits in opposition to historically authoritative, "objective" and male dominated processes of knowledge production (see Haraway, 1988). Through highlighting the way in which embracing subjectivity can be beneficial to social research, and dispelling the notion of truly "objective" knowledge production, feminist thinkers such as Donna Haraway (1988) created space for researchers to embrace the partial and the particular, and think critically about claims to objectivity and our ability to know more about the experiences of our participants than our participants themselves. Similarly, anthropological discourses have underscored the role of partiality in ethnographic texts. The seminal work of James Clifford (1986), for example, sought to implicate the role of power and history in the production of ethnographic research; positioning ethnographies as no more than partial truths due to the ways in which power shapes anthropological encounters, and the role of the researcher who interprets the data which they collect in particular ways and based on their own specific context. These discussions were running in parallel to black and postcolonial feminist discourses (see Carby, 2002[1982]; Crenshaw, 1989; Mohanty, 1988) which sought to highlight how multiple axes of oppression can intersect to shape our experiences of the world – not only have such discourses engaged the overlapping ways in which power operates, but they have emphasised the multiplicity present in individual experiences and the way in which our lived experiences may differ from one another, epitomizing notions of

located-ness and underpinning the value of approaching social research with a recognition of particularity and context.

1.2 Relationality

Aimee Carrillo Rowe (2005) wrote about relationality and the way in which the knowledge we create is not separate from ourselves, or the people with whom we work. We are within our research, and perhaps our research is an extension of our selves. Carrillo Rowe (2005) explored a notion of the subjective that extends beyond the individual:

> A politics of relation is not striving toward absolute alterity to the self, but rather to tip the concept of "subjectivity" away from "individuality" and in the direction of the inclination toward the other so that "being" is constituted not first through the "Self," but through its own longings to be with. Belonging precedes being (Carrillo Rowe, 2005: 17).

The idea that subjectivity is not individual but relational can be applied to the research experience – our interpretations are understood to be subjective, but here that subjectivity is recognised as being interconnected with our research participants and the community which has been created through the research process. The idea that *being* is first constituted through our longings *to be with* raises questions about what causes our longing to conduct our research, and to work with particular groups of people. Our intentions as researchers must be addressed in order to truly recognise our relationships to and interpretations of our research findings. To some extent Carrillo Rowe (2005) is asking us to reflect on who we are, not simply as individuals, but in relation to other people:

> I am advocating a shift from a notion of identity that begins with "I"—as does the inscription "I-dentity," which announces "I am . . ."—to a sense of "self" that is radically inclined toward others, toward the com- munities to which we belong, with whom we long to be, and to whom we feel accountable (Carrillo Rowe, 2005: 18).

The above paragraph suggests that we understand who we are by contemplating where we belong and with whom or where we long to be – we see ourselves through seeing others; we create ourselves through others. This idea of relational subjectivity allows for researchers to acknowledge the relationships we have with our participants and the ways in which our identities – our notions of self – are not individual but informed by these relationships. Gloria Anzaldúa's (2012[1987]) notion of *nos otras* is useful here – in the same way that we are not purely the oppressor or the

Other, but both (always), we are not exclusively researcher or participant. We both exist within one another – we create one other, constantly.

Carrillo Rowe's (2005) work emphasizes that the experience of be-longing is not static, but constantly moving in response to and against relationships of power, making be-longing political and also adorning it with the potential for resistance. The author further suggests that be-longing can be contradictory, thus making room for a recognition of the relationships of power that inform notions of belonging. At the same time as being relational, there are tensions – we are inclined towards others, and yet we do not necessarily occupy the same positions as those others.

According to Carrillo Rowe (2005), a politics of relation insists upon a recognition of the conditions that shape experiences of belonging, and how they differ according to experience and context. As researchers, a politics of relation forces us to hold ourselves accountable – to think about our position, not simply as individuals, but as be-longing in relation to the people with whom we are working, and the ways in which our positions and the knowledge we have acquired have been informed by workings of power. Carrillo Rowe went on to underscore how the accountability offered by a politics of relation sets the scene for "coalitional affectivity" (Carrillo Rowe, 2005: 19). In short, through practicing reflexivity from a relational perspective, we can forge better coalitions with the people with whom we conduct research, the ultimate goal of which is to effect social change (Carrillo Rowe, 2005: 19).

Along with practicing a reflexivity that is relational, we must also take into account the affective implications of our be-longing. To aid with this line of thinking, I look to Ruth Behar's (1996) work on the importance of recognizing the vulnerability that takes place in anthropological work: "we anthropologists – merely poor relatives of Pablo Neruda – leave behind our own trail of longings, desires, and unfulfilled expectations in those upon whom we descend. About that vulnerability, we are barely able to speak" (Behar, 1996: 25). Again, we must ask what we long for as researchers, where we long to be and what the implications of that longing are. Further, we are requested to engage with those feelings described by Carrillo Rowe's (2005) be-longing, and the vulnerability that may be attached to such feelings. Behar (1996) highlighted the role of emotion and discomfort in ethnographic research, and argued for a recognition of vulnerability –

on both the part of the researcher and research participants – within our research. Here, to be reflexive is to acknowledge our vulnerability, our limitations as researchers and the pain our research can inflict upon us and our participants.

In a similar vein to Carrillo Rowe (2005), Behar (1996) advocated for the need to reflect on the identity of researcher, which is particularly pertinent in her discussion on the significance of the "native" anthropologist:

> The importance of this "native anthropology" has helped bring about a fundamental shift – the shift toward viewing identification, rather than difference, as the key defining image of anthropological theory and practice" (Behar, 1996: 28).

On the one hand the "native anthropologist" comes from a position of identification – identifying with their participants and having that inform their work, thus disrupting the notion of difference and othering as the approach to the research. On the other hand, the longing on the part of the "native" anthropologist should still be addressed - as researchers we must still be held accountable. We must still question to whom we are accountable, and what the assumptions are behind us identifying as "native"? What makes us "native" or rather, what makes us long and belong, and what relationships of power are at play within these longings? These questions are part of what makes reflexivity successful – for Behar (1996), it was not simply about introspection, but about connecting aspects of the self and power to those with whom we are conducting research:

> Efforts at self-revelation flop, not because the personal voice has been used, but because it has been poorly used, leaving unscrutinised the connection, intellectual and emotional, between the observer and the observed (Behar, 1996: 13-14).

Behar (1996) made an important distinction between simply reflecting on our individual circumstances, and not making a connection between them and the circumstances of our participants. Again, we are asked to consider the importance of the relational in our research, in this instance with regards to how we practice reflexivity, or "self-revelation" (ibid.).

I began with this discussion of the relational so as to offer a framework with which to think through the experiences reflected in the quotes at the start of this chapter. The work of thinkers such as Carrillo Rowe (2005), Behar (1996) and Anzaldúa (2012[1987]) surrounding the ways in which we are connected to one another adds complexity to the notion of reflexivity – extending it beyond the act of considering our role as researchers and the ways in which our experiences influence how

we interpret and create knowledge, and including the interactions between us and our participants. Reflexivity is understood here as not just being mindful of ourselves as researchers, but being mindful of the way in which we relate to and with our participants. Feeling pain on hearing about Kai's experiences of being mistreated and experiencing pain was relational; I related to Kai's pain, which brought about my own pain. Similarly, Kai related to me in her observations of how we would both be perceived by others – "we would be understood as white", *we*, together, not singular or alone, but perceived together with overlapping experiences.

We cannot underestimate the power of the relational in our work. Engaging with the work of thinkers such as Carrillo Rowe (2005) and Behar (1996) has led me to understand relationality as a tool of resistance, which can be utilized in the project of rethinking how we produce knowledge. As discussed earlier, the knowledge to which we have access is not neutral but situated within relationships of power. The methods with which we collect our research data are also entangled in power relations. Scholars such as Carrillo Rowe (2005) and Behar (1996) have advocated for practicing a relational reflexivity in order to address the reproduction of power relations in our research, and to hold ourselves accountable as researchers. Relational reflexivity promotes an understanding of the self in relation to the people with whom we work. It is not enough to simply recognize one's position at the start of one's research – we are asked to think about our positions *in relation to* the positions of our participants. We are being asked by Carrillo Rowe (2005) to think about where we long to be, who we long to be with and why. We are being asked by Behar (1996) to think about the vulnerability caused by this longing, both for us and our participants. To reflect on one's be-longing in relation to one's research and research participants is recognized as an emotive experience - space has been carved out in feminist discourse for us to reflect both critically and affectively.

1.3 Positionality

And so, where do I long to be in relation to this research? With whom do I long to be with and why? How do these longings make me vulnerable, and where does that vulnerability sit in relation to this project? I ask these questions with my own identification as a mixed race person in mind – as a mixed race person, researching the experiences of other mixed race people, how do my

experiences relate to theirs, and how do I navigate my position as a researcher in the process of trying to understand these experiences?

France Winddance Twine (2000) recounted her experiences as a black woman researcher in Brazil, where she encountered numerous discourses of anti-blackness amongst her participants. Importantly, Twine (2000) noted how this experience caused her to reflect on her assumption that she would share political views with her participants prior to the research started, and highlighted the need for context to be considered during fieldwork. The author also emphasised the importance of recognising the role that race plays in qualitative research practices, and the lack of discourse that existed around the issue at the time of writing.

Twine's (2000) work went on to critique methods of racial matching, which assume that participants will engage better with researchers if they are of the same race; "…the meanings and impact of racial difference are complicated by age, class, accent, education, national origins, region, as well as sexuality" (Twine, 2000: 9). This point was pertinent as a result of the fact that I am a mixed race person who was undertaking research with mixed race participants. Recognising the multiple factors that can influence people's interactions with one another was necessary in order to implicate myself in relation to my research and the potential challenges I may have faced as a researcher seeking to engage with strangers, and to recognize that people's experiences are shaped by multiple factors. Although I am mixed race, I expected to have different national origins to my participants, as well as a different accent. In addition, I was conscious that I may be older or younger than them, have a different educational background to them, as well as a differing sexual orientation, religion, class, gender and ability. The way in which these differences would operate could not be predicted, as elucidated by Twine (2000) – these factors operate differently according to context as well as individual experiences – however, it remained important to be cognisant of the possible ways in which our individual circumstances could interact and shape the research process, as well as to refrain from making assumptions based on racial identity, especially considering the fluidity and ambiguity that I have argued accompanies the mixed race experience (see Chapter 1).

In a similar vein to Twine (2000), Ann Phoenix (1994) problematized the notion that if the interviewer and interviewee are of the same gender, a rapport will be established. For Phoenix (1994) this notion was problematic due to the variation of reasons why respondents participate in research projects in the first place, as well as configurations of race, social class and the research topic (Phoenix, 1994: 55). These configurations interact differently depending on the context, as do formations of power;

> …the balance of power between interviewers and interviewees shifts over the course of a study. For example, at recruitment, respondents have the ultimate power to refuse to be involved in a study. In the interview situation, power does not only lie with researchers but shifts and varies, while during the analysis of the data and writing-up of the study, researchers are almost always more powerful than their respondents (Phoenix, 1994: 55).

Thus, instead of looking at power relations or perceived similarities between researchers and research participants as certain or fixed, the work of Phoenix (1994) and Twine (2000) suggests that we look at these factors as constantly in flux – not only in terms of how they manifest between different individuals, but also in terms of how they can change over the course of the research process. This research was approached with the above tenets in mind, and assumed that different factors contribute to different people's experiences of the world and would interact differently with me as the researcher. Similarly, I determined not to assume that the power dynamics between myself and my participants were fixed, but recognised that they could fluctuate and take on different subtleties at different moments of the research.

2. Research Design

2.1 Research setting: The City

The space of the city has been used as a framework for investigating instances of knowing and navigating spaces for centuries, one example being the poet Charles Baudelaire, who famously depicted the *flâneur* navigating 19th century Paris. Baudelaire's (Benjamin, 1999:21) concept of the *flâneur* has since been interrogated and refigured by post-colonial scholars who are interested in imagining the *flâneur* as something other than a heterosexual, white, Christian, middle to upper class man. Isabel Carrera Suárez (2015) looked at literature that refigured the *flâneur* as both gendered and racialized, in order to make a point about the embodied nature of experiencing spaces. Her work raised questions about who the spaces we occupy have been created for, and how

spaces can marginalise certain people and bodies. At the same time, spaces can be reclaimed and reshaped on individual terms (in a similar vein to the way in which Yasmin Alibhai-Brown [2015] claimed England as her home, in a context of fear mongering and animosity towards the migrant Other) as discussed by Beswick et al (2015), who looked at how city spaces have been reclaimed through art created by individuals who have been situated as Other/minorities.

I approached this research with a conceptualisaton of the city in the above ways, with the hopes of paying particular attention to the embodied experiences of participants in Coventry. Importantly, this took place in the context of Coventry's City of Culture Bid and subsequent award, which was thought to be an opportunity to bring about new infrastructure and investment to the city. This opportunity has stood in stark contrast to the ongoing struggle of community organisations such as CEMAP to secure funding in order to stay afloat. By attending local events, hosted by community organisations and the City of Culture team, I hoped to gain more insight into the cultural and social context of the city, which provided a backdrop to the research as well as the potential for sensory experiences of the spaces that research participants may have occupied.

I moved to the city at the start of 2017, shortly after starting this degree, with the hopes of learning it through my daily activities. Although I lived in four different areas of the city during my time there, I left in 2021 with many areas still undiscovered; Coventry turned out to be much larger than I had anticipated. A year after moving there, I began my interviews at local spots in the city centre, usually travelling by bus to meet participants. When I was not invited to participants' houses, I suggested meeting in local restaurants or cafés which were not too noisy but offered a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere and comfortable seating.

During my daily life I made sure to observe the city, paying close attention to the architecture, food shops, local street art and the City of Culture marketing campaigns that had started cropping up soon after I moved to Coventry. Although I became familiar with navigating the city centre and the areas in which I lived, it was not until I started volunteering with a local community group at the suggestion of my first participant, Kai, that I got to learn about the city more intimately. It was through this experience that I was able to build connections with people in the city – connections which I still maintain today.

2.2 Recruiting Participants

I started looking for participants in a number of ways. I attended local events and meetings such as those hosted by the City of Culture team, as well as those held by local community organizations with the hopes of connecting with people, learning more about the city and finding potential participants. Alongside this I posted about my research on local community Facebook groups, sent a recruitment email at my university and I met with several local community and university affiliated organisations with the hopes that they would be able to connect me with potential participants. I also asked for guidance from Varsha who was the manager at CEMAP at the time, and Val who had previously worked at CEMAP and who had originally conceptualized the project. In the end, it was through Varsha and Val that I met my first participants, and it was through those participants that I met nearly all the rest, with the exception of two who were introduced to me by local friends. This meant that snowballing (see Bernard, 2006: 192-194) was my most successful method for recruitment, and all my participants were introduced to me by a new or existing connection.

My first participant, Kai, was introduced to me by Val. Kai then invited me to join a local Caribbean community group that she worked with, which I did for a number of reasons. I saw it as a way to thank Kai for her participation in my research - conscious of the time and energy she had given to my project, I thought volunteering my time to a group with which she worked was a way to reciprocate and express my appreciation. Additionally, I wanted to learn more about the Caribbean community in the city and I wanted to find more people who may be interested in participating in my research. Finally, I wanted to engage in some sort of volunteer work during my time in Coventry as this was something that I had done previously and was eager to do again. On joining the community group, I introduced myself and explained my research; I made it clear that my participation was on a volunteer basis and that I would gain consent first if I wanted to make notes about anything that took place in the meetings or at the events for the purpose of my research. The group members were very supportive, and encouraging, and it was there that I met Morris and Pete, who later introduced me to Sharisa and Zia respectively.

Gina and Hannah were introduced to me through local friends of mine – one of whom offered to circulate my recruitment email amongst his colleagues. Hannah responded and we arranged to set up an interview. Gina was a close friend of my housemate who, after hearing about my project, asked Gina if she would like to participate. The interview with Gina was the only one that was held at my house, which I deemed safe to do so due to the pre-existing relationship she had with my housemate.

Varsha connected me with local community members who may have been able to help, one of whom was Kiran who had recently completed her PhD. After our interview, Kiran reached out to local friends who she thought might be interested in partaking, and in turn introduced me to Aanya, Jude and Victor.

As with most research projects, there were meetings that never occurred, people who reached out but were never able to meet, frustration and fear at not being able to find enough participants, and guilt at requesting people's time and energy with no tangible form of reciprocity or gratitude. The guilt which stemmed from the latter point became even more challenging when the collaborative element of this project fell away (as discussed in the Introduction) – without the support of a pre-existing organization that was established within the local community and that had proven itself through projects that worked to support and contribute to the lives of local people of colour, I was just another researcher asking for people's time and contributions. Although I was also a person of colour, I was still occupying the position of researcher and thus a position of power – as someone familiar with the histories of researchers extracting information from marginalized communities, this weighed on my mind.

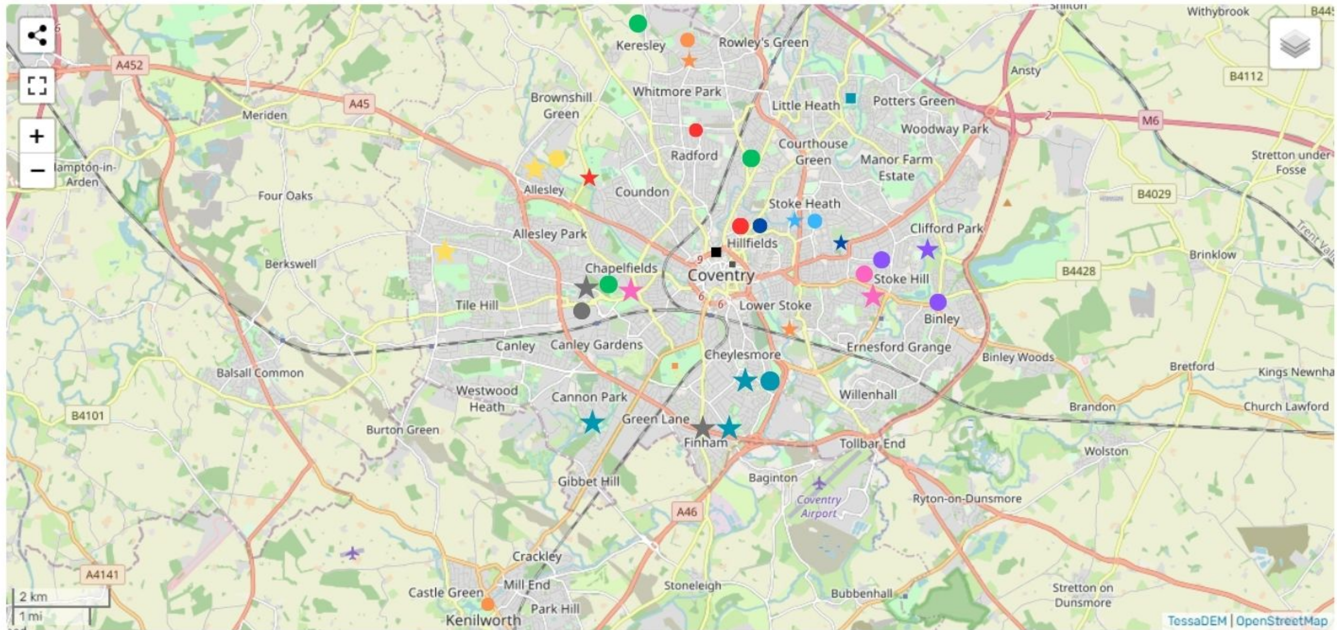
A total of twenty-five people participated in the research – fourteen of whom were mixed race. The remaining participants were family members of the mixed race participants, the exact relationships of which can be viewed in table 1. Their ages ranged from 13 to 67 and there were fifteen women and girls, and ten men.

Table 1. Participants

Name	Age at time of interview	Family Ties	Interview location	Interview type
Kai	25	Uncle Lenny's Niece	Local restaurant.	Individual and group interview with Uncle Lenny.
Zia	38		Local café.	Individual interview only.
Gina	26		My house.	Individual interview only.
Uncle Lenny	54ish (born in 1964)	Kai's Uncle	Kai's house	Group interview with Kai only.
Pete	47	Peggy's Husband	Pete and Peggy's House.	Group interview only.
Peggy	53ish (6 years older than Pete)	Pete's Wife		
Bianca	13	Peggy and Pete's Daughter		
Ryan	20	Peggy and Pete's Son		
Morris	54	Sharisa's father	Local café	Individual interview only.
Sharisa	25	Morris' daughter	Skype	Individual interview only.
Jude	35		Local restaurant	Individual and group interview with Hazel and Joe.
Hazel	Early 60s (born in 1956)		Hazel and Joe's House	Group interview with Jude only.
Joe	Early 60s (born in 1956)			

Hannah	33		Local café	Individual interview only.
Iva	17	Aanya's daughter	Local gym cafe	Group interview only.
Aanya	44	Iva's mother		
Val	55		Local restaurant	Individual interview only.
Kiran	55	Tim's wife	Kiran and Tim's House	Group interview only.
Tim	54	Kiran's husband		
Meena	18	Kiran and Tim's daughter; Jaya's sister.		
Jaya	22	Kiran and Tim's Daughter; Meena's sister.		
Smrita	56	Victor's wife, mother to Dylan and Matthew.	Smrita and Victor's house.	Group interview only.
Victor	67	Smrita's husband, father to Dylan and Matthew.		
Dylan	17	Smrita and Victor's son, Matthew's twin brother.		
Matthew	17	Smrita and Victor's son, Dylan's twin brother.		

Map of Coventry (Topographic Map, 2023)



Name	Colour
Kai	Red
Zia	Blue
Sharisa	Orange
Hannah	Purple
Gina	Green
Jude	Light blue
Iva	Pink
Meena and Jaya	Grey
Dylan and Matthew	Teal
Ryan	Yellow
Tamango's/ The Pink Parrot	Black square
Coventry Cathedral	Grey Square
War Memorial Park	Orange Square
Bell Green	Teal Square

Symbol	Meaning
Circle	Places lived
Star	School locations
Square	Key locations mentioned in research

2.3 Data Collection – Interviews

I chose informal interviews with families and individuals as my main method for collecting data. This method was one with which I had previous positive experiences during my Master's research and which aligned with my desire to employ a feminist approach to data collection which 1. was cognisant of the power dynamics that operate between research participants and researchers, and the history from which these dynamics stem, 2. created room for participants to contribute to the research process through determining the path of the conversation by asking their own questions to the researcher and to one another, and 3. recognised the value of the unexpected in the research process through allowing for the emergence of new themes and topics that may not be accounted for in structured interviews with lengthy interview schedules.

The interviews took place over the course of 9 months from May 2018 to February 2019, and they lasted between 1 and 2 hours. All the interviews were recorded with my phone to which I attached small wired mics in order to improve sound quality. Although I developed an interview schedule with broad questions and topics I wanted to cover (see Appendix), my main aim for the interviews was to facilitate a conversation between participants and myself rather than go through a checklist of structured questions. Informality here is aligned with a rejection of historically extractive interview methods – the spaces we choose for interviews, the way we sit in relation to our participants and the way we ask questions are some of the many things which can reinforce particular power dynamics of which I was conscious and wanted to challenge however I could.

Sarah Pink (2009) described the interview process as a multi-sensory experience, not static and limited to that which can be described through talk, but embodied and performed in relation to the spaces we occupy and the contexts we inhabit. Whilst the role of space in our experiences of interviews was considered in relation to the broader context of the city as mentioned above, it was also considered in relation to some of the interview settings I chose, the aim of which was to make participants feel as comfortable as possible, and to establish a less formal atmosphere which was reflected in the space around us. A café or theatre foyer with comfortable seating sets a very different tone to a room at a university with desks, hard chairs and harsh lighting. Additionally, choosing such settings allowed me to present myself to participants away from the university – whilst still positioned in the role of researcher, I was able to convey the relaxed tone with which I

was intending to approach the interviews, as well as highlight my role as an individual undertaking a project which for me was incredibly personal. That being said, although I had particular settings in mind, participants were always asked if they were comfortable with those settings.

Once I had spoken to participants about the research and they had expressed their interest, I asked them where they would like to meet and what times would be suitable for them. The intention behind me asking participants to choose the space and time was to begin the interview process from a position of equality – by inviting participants to determine when and where we met I wanted to convey to them that I was conscious of their time and energy, and that they were active participants in the process. Some were happy for me to recommend a place, some invited me to their houses and some asked me to meet them at particular places in the city (see Table 1). Despite deliberately choosing not to hold interviews on the university campus, I was conscious that my connection to the university remained – my entire degree was managed through the university, as was the funding I received to undertake the project. I thus had to navigate this tension throughout my research – trying to balance the curation of a project to which I was personally connected and invested, with people to which I became personally connected, whilst also being connected to and managed by an academic institution that had particular requirements and constraints such as timeframes, funding limitations and academic conventions (see Jamieson et al, 2011).

Whilst individual interviews were mostly conducted in the aforementioned spaces (see Table 1.), group interviews mainly took place in people's homes as per their suggestions. I remained conscious that these spaces were incredibly personal to participants, and recognized the significance of being invited into people's personal spaces. Whereas with the individual interviews I was familiar with the spaces in which I was meeting people (many of whom were familiar with those spaces themselves), in the group interviews the dynamic shifted – I was entering spaces which were unfamiliar to me, but familiar to the participants. When considering these shifts in relation to the power dynamics embedded in research processes, another dynamic was introduced as I, the researcher, occupied a position of unfamiliarity and vulnerability as a lone woman entering the houses of people, some of whom I had never met. Thus, whilst my role as a researcher and the power that held remained, other aspects such as gender and place intersected with this role to make my position more precarious, whilst concurrently shifting more power to the participants as

occupiers and owners of the interview space. Equally, whilst participants who invited me to their homes were in a position of power with regards to their ownership and knowledge of the space, they made themselves vulnerable through inviting a stranger into their personal spaces for the purposes of research (see Larossa et al, 1981). The positionality of researcher and participants was thus constantly shifting, and multilayered, intersecting with multiple factors pertaining to context and identity. These shifts are indicative of the variability of the interview process as noted by Pink (2009), not only during the interview itself which may constantly engage different senses, feelings and dynamics, but prior to it even starting. As researchers we may go from comfortably seated ten minutes early for an interview in a familiar space, to walking down a never-traversed street looking at house numbers. Similarly, as participants, people may go from travelling to a public space to find someone they have never met sitting waiting for them, to padding down the stairs of their home and answering the door to a stranger.

Returning to the interview schedule, it was created by considering the broad topics of conversation I was hoping to cover, whilst also keeping in mind that I was hoping to facilitate a dialogue. I developed six open ended questions with subsections for my own reference that would assist if participants needed prompts to answer the original question. These questions were created with my research questions in mind, and made direct reference to people's individual experiences. Three of them pertained specifically to the concept of race and racial identity, and the other three referred to the broader context of the UK and the way in which race and racism operates at an institutional and political level. I hoped that these questions would work as springboards into people's other experiences surrounding the topic and welcomed the prospect of the conversation moving tangentially. When this happened and people shared viewpoints or experiences about which I was interested in understanding more I would ask questions – these were not predetermined, but decided in the spur of the moment, as they would be in a conversation between two people outside of a research setting.

During the interviews, participants were encouraged to ask me questions, so as to reinforce the conversational element of the process, to situate participants as agents who were not simply providing information but also able to request information, and to show my connection to the research as a person who identified as mixed race and was thus able to reflect on the questions

based on related personal experiences. A number of participants asked me questions during their interviews, particularly when they were one on one. I postulate that this was because individual interviews were more focused – whereas in group interviews participants would often engage with and respond to one another, in individual interviews participants were engaging directly with me and waiting for my response. I suggest that this made it easier for participants to respond to me by returning the question I had posed to them, or to ask questions of their own. Similarly, at times I would share some of my own experiences in order to help frame a question. For example:

Tana: The reason I ask is 'cos, um, so for the last research I did it
Zia: yeah
Tana: um it was looking very much at like kinship
Zia: yeah, uh hm
Tana: and identity and
Zia: yeah
Tana: so I was working with kind of - they were different families, including my own,
Zia: Yeah
Tana: um, but it was looking at the relationship that we all formed with each other.
Zia: yeah
Tana: So none of us were related by blood, obviously like there was my mom and I and
Zia: Ooh, yeah
Tana: then my friend and her parents and then it was - so it was all these different little
Zia: yeah
Tana: families that kind of came together
Zia: yeah
Tana: and formed a big family um-
Zia: It's a modern day blended family, isn't it?
Tana: Exactly, um so that's why I'm asking,
Zia: yeah
Tana: just because it's, it's I'm really interested in that
Zia: yeah
Tana: and it just gives insight into... I think especially with mixed race identity because I think often you struggle with that, you know, people - especially previously with that lack of recognition, that this is your parent, um
Zia: mhmm
Tana: like even now with my, with my mom in South Africa, people won't know that she's my mom because it's not that common to see,
Zia: yeah
Tana: you know, a mixed race family.
Zia: yeah
Tana: um, so that –
Zia: It used to be illegal, didn't it,
Tana: Yeah, and when I was born it still was-
Zia: [overlap] during the Apartheid –
Tana: so-
Zia: Oh really?
Tana: Yeah, uh that's why I was –
Zia: So your parents couldn't actually be together?
Tana: No. No, not until the end of Apartheid which was 1994, um, yeah, so... And my mom was in exile here because of her work against the Apartheid government

Zia: Wow
Tana: so we couldn't be there legally anyway
Zia: yeah
Tana: um but yeah, if I'd been born there I don't know how it would have been.
Zia: Yeah
Tana: I think um, it was - things were kind of changing then already but it was
Zia: [overlap] yeah
Tana: still this strange period of like unrest between 1990 and 1994
Zia: yeah
Tana: Um… so ja, it's just, it's interesting how people form these connections
Zia: yeah
Tana: um… and also - so what I wanted to ask you was, um, do you think it's different having two mixed race parents to having parents of different races as like I guess a first generation mixed race person?

Zia: (*pause*) Ooh gosh, I don't know actually, um (*pause*). See, my son had two mixed race parents but one was, like I said, absent (*small laugh*) so he didn't really experience - I think um, (*pause*) for him it's, it's probably worked out very well for his, umm... What's the word? You know like the cultural identity side
Tana: Mm.
Zia: of things of "This is where I fit, this is the norm"?
Tana: Mm.
Zia: Whereas for me it was very split.
Tana: Mm.
Zia: Not as split as yours (*laughs*) but it was - because I was a child of the '80s
Tana: yeah
Zia: and, you know, in the '80s where I was living you didn't have um, loads of mixed race people knocking about or um blended families
Tana: Mm
Zia: like that.

Offering a background for the basis of my questions gave participants insights into my thought processes, as well as what I was trying to understand about their experiences. It was also a way of encouraging participants to ask questions if they so wished – showing them that I was willing to share information about my own experiences and background was a way of reassuring them that this was something with which I was comfortable. Further, sharing information about my own experiences allowed for participants to compare and contrast those experiences to their own. This is exemplified in Zia's response where she went from considering her son's experiences as a mixed race child, to her own which she then compared to mine. In this moment Zia was able to capture three different mixed race experiences – separated by generation and background, both of which worked to shape our experiences differently.

2.4 Data Collection – Group Interviews

This research employed two main approaches to the data collection process in order to attempt to accommodate the potential gaps in the research as a result of working with families. By conducting individual interviews with participants and then separate group interviews with families (the ethics of which are discussed later), the hope was that different kinds of information would be made available and space would be provided for more detailed data to emerge in the one on one interviews. Reczek (2014) discussed different kinds of family interviews, highlighting individual interviews with family members as offering privacy to individuals, the opportunity to share their opinions without the influence of other family members, and the gathering of multiple perspectives through personal narratives of events which can be compared and contrasted. Group interviews with families offer the opportunity for researchers to observe and gain a better understanding of family dynamics, they allow for family members to take on the role of interviewer as well as for meaning making and definitions to be worked through amongst family members as opposed to engaging the researcher's definitions or meanings. Interviews in which family members take on the role of interviewer may reveal data that may not have emerged in individual interviews, as well as a more organic dialogue. At the same time this may result in conflict or tension, to which the researcher would need to pay close attention to manage, and try to limit the possibility of harm to, the group.

Alongside exploring the possibilities and limitations of both individual and group interviews with family members, Reczek (2014) also drew attention to approaches which combine the two – such as within this research. Combining both methods offers multiple "facets" (Reczek, 2014: 329) and perspectives on the research topic that may vary depending on an individual or group dynamic. A combination of both approaches also provides data with which to facilitate future discussions and grapple with contradictions. The order of these interviews is significant in that having the group interview first may influence the way in which participants respond individually after being privy to the views of the group. Additionally, protecting the confidentiality of participants in individual interviews is something that needs to be navigated by the researcher as discussed below.

Through using a combination of individual and group interviews I was able to gain individual perspectives on the research topic as well as perspectives developed within a group setting. Where individual interviews tended to be more focused – a more collected exchange of views and

conversation between myself and the participant, group interviews were more high-spirited, with each family dynamic emerging and shaping the energy in the space. Group interviews often veered off on tangents, and family members would exchange different versions of events as described by Reczek (2014). Although some groups entered into fairly mild debates about certain topics, there were no explicit moments of conflict in the group interviews. At some point in every group session a family member took on the role of interviewer, sometimes referring to specific events upon which they wanted their other family members to reflect. These moments lead to generative discussions, revealing data that was unlikely to have emerged otherwise and allowing for me to take on the role of observer. In order to protect the privacy of participants who partook in individual interviews I chose not to reference those discussions in group settings, allowing for participants to decide whether they would like to refer back to them.

Individual interviews were held first where possible, usually with the participants who identified as mixed race so that we could speak about their specific experiences before extending the discussion into a group setting with multiple perspectives from people who held different racial identities. Val and Morris were an exception to this in that I interviewed them both individually, as parents of mixed race children. I Interviewed Morris alone after interviewing his daughter, Sharisa, via Skype as she was based in South Korea at the time. We were unable to do a group interview due to the logistical aspect of being on different continents, and in different time zones. I chose to interview Val alone due to her role in the conceptualization of the research project – as someone who had been part of the creation of the original collaborative research proposal - and in order to gain both her professional and personal perspective on the research topic. Although we spoke about potentially organizing a group interview with her family, this was not possible.

Conscious of the logistics involved in organizing group interviews and people's time, energy and desire to participate in the research which may have varied between family members, I let participants guide me when it came to moving forward with group interviews. This decision was also fuelled by a recognition of varying family dynamics and relationships. Although I suggested group interviews with family members with individual participants, I did not pressure them to commit to these. Some participants were eager to involve their families - Jude and Kai organized follow up interviews with family members after meeting me for individual interviews. As is visible

in Table 1, there were a number of participants who I only met for individual interviews and who did not participate in group interviews with their families. Conversely, I was not always able to have individual interviews before group interviews – in some instances, I held group interviews after parents had reached out to me and expressed interest in participating on their family's behalf. This was the case with Pete, Victor, Aanya and Kiran and their families.

2.5 Data Collection – Text prompts

Alongside group and individual interviews, I was interested in the use of literature as a prompt with which to think about processes of the racialisation of people of colour in Britain, as well as the individual experiences mixed race people have of developing their racial identities. In this sense literature was situated as a tool of resistance; created by an author whose parents were of mixed descent and who engaged critically with experiences of racialization, which sat in opposition to historically negative and racist accounts of people of colour. The use of literature also allowed for a disruption of a more traditional interview dynamic – the hope was that by inviting participants to offer their thoughts on the excerpt, a conversation would be facilitated, in which space was made for participants' insights and questions. They could reflect on the excerpt or not. They could ask questions about the excerpt or not. Thus, although the excerpt was chosen by me, the researcher, the participants were given the space to decide the way in which they would respond.

The aim of using the excerpt was threefold; aware of the awkwardness and nervousness that can accompany interviews, I had hoped for an additional tool with which to break the ice and enter into conversations with participants. It was a tool upon which I could rely to operate as a catalyst for conversation if needed (see Törrönen, 2002). The excerpt also offered an entry into the research topic that positioned the conversation around mixed race experiences in relation to broader experiences of racialisation – this meant there was a chance that people's parents could also relate to the excerpt, not only in relation to their potential experiences of racialisation, but with regards to the potential histories of migration that many participants held within their families. Finally, the intergenerational navigation of race that is depicted in the chosen work spoke directly to my own

research question surrounding the impact of context and generation on people's understandings of race and racial identity.

I chose an excerpt, from seminal British-Jamaican Author, Andrea Levy's (2004[1996]), book, *Never Far From Nowhere*. This book was significant to me growing up, as reading it was the first time I had encountered a story that resonated so closely with my own. Similarly, I hoped that the setting of the story would resonate with participants, many of whom had either grown up in England during that time or who had parents who had lived in England at the time. Two sisters, Olive and Vivien, navigate growing up in 1970s London as children of Jamaican immigrants. One fair skinned, and one darker skinned – the two explore their experiences of colourism, race and developing a racial identity in the midst of racism and cultural difference. As the story progresses, Olive goes on to have a child with a white man, raising questions for her about her daughter's racial identity. Whilst each sister learns and grows, they must grapple with their own parents' approach to race and their resistance to naming themselves in racial terms.

Although the book is rife with moments where each sister reflects on their experiences of and ideas about race, I chose this particular excerpt (see image 1) because of its specific engagement with the role of the family in Olive's understanding of race. We see the navigation of racial identity across three generations, and Levy (2004[1996]) captured beautifully the interaction between Olive and her Mother – the tension between them, Olive's anger towards her mother for refusing to name or recognize her race which resonates so clearly with Stuart Hall's (1997) own depiction of navigating blackness intergenerationally in Jamaica and Britain. Hall (1997) wrote about never hearing the word "black" in reference to people in Jamaica, of his mother hating black people, and of correcting his son, telling him that he was black when he called himself "brown" (Hall, 1997: 54-55). Similarly, in *Never Far From Nowhere*, Levy depicted Olive's determination to be clear about race with her own daughter, and the variation in racialized language that is used between Olive and her mother.

The excerpt had to be short, as I did not want participants to be burdened with preparation for the interview, conscious that they were already offering me their time for the interview itself. At the same time, it had to be significant enough to potentially elicit a response and start a conversation.

Participants were sent the excerpt via email and asked to read it before their interview. The hope was that it would help to facilitate a conversation about people's thoughts on the excerpt itself, which would in turn lead into a conversation about their own experiences of being mixed race. Some participants came ready to discuss the excerpt, and were eager to provide feedback. Others had not had time to read it, and were provided paper copies in the interview as well as time to read through and respond. One group had not read the excerpt at all but requested that I resend it via email, to which I received a response days after our interview with reflections on the excerpt; "Hello Tana Just to say I read the extract you sent Jude and it was so familiar - Thank you for drawing my attention to the book" (email correspondence from Hazel, 2019). Thus, although intended to be a tool to elicit conversation in the interview space, the excerpt extended beyond that space – entering into the consciousness of participants prior to the interview, as well as long after, as they reflected back.

2.6 Data Analysis

My analysis began during the interview process, where I often made notes in a notebook whenever participants made comments which stood out to me. Although I took notes in this way, I relied quite heavily on the fact that interviews were also audio-recorded, and the knowledge that I would be able to listen to them afterwards in order to conduct a deeper analysis. I tried to be consistent with creating time stamps of when the comments were made so that I could easily refer back to them at a later date. The practice of taking notes was incredibly useful, but the amount of notes I was able to take varied depending on the nature of the interview. Group interviews, for example, usually enabled me to take more notes as participants were engaging with one another and I often spent a fair amount of time listening to them speak as opposed to speaking myself. In individual interviews the dynamic was different as the engagement was between me and one other person. Thus, although I still took notes during individual interviews, the quantity varied depending on how much the other person spoke and the time I had to write down notes when I was not speaking. It was important to establish a balance between listening, responding, observing, asking questions, and taking notes; whilst useful, taking notes during the interviews was not my main priority – my main priority was my engagement with the research participants.

When I began the interviews, I had no expectations surrounding what notes I would take, but as the interviews progressed I started to become more conscious of certain themes about which I wrote written reflections afterwards. Once the interviews had been transcribed, I went through each of them and developed codes as I progressed. These codes were then represented by different colours which I used to code each interview (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Interview Coding Key

Code
Purple: Interchanging racial terminology
Bright Green: Genealogy of race/discovery of race
Light blue: Physicality of race (skin colour, hair type, dress, genetics)
Pink: Nationality, location and race
Red: Acceptance/rejection of race
Grey: Racism/racial stigma/institutional racism
Olive green: Generational difference
Teal: External perceptions
Yellow: Defining racial identity (language and racial categories)
Green: Religion
Dark Grey: space being coded in particular, often negative ways and how that intersects with race and class (notions of "roughness")
Bright blue: political landscape and political economy
Maroon: Culture and race
White Underline: Race, gender and sexuality

I began to transcribe the interviews soon after my first interview took place, but as a result of prioritizing participant recruitment, field work, and other responsibilities, I was unable to complete the transcriptions by the time I had completed the interview period. Considering I wanted each transcript to be verbatim, with audible non-verbal cues such as laughter included, I opted to apply for funding from the ESRC in order to obtain assistance with completing the transcriptions so that I could complete the coding and analysis. Despite the benefits of transcribing the interviews oneself and the opportunity it offers to re-engage with, reflect on and remember the interview, I felt assured by the fact that in addition to holding memories from the interviews, I had also taken notes, made reflections afterwards and could return to the audio files whenever I so wished. The ESRC recommended a number of professional transcription companies, from which I chose one. The company I chose guaranteed confidentiality and protection of all the data that was shared with them which was imperative for the protection of the research participants. However, despite emphasizing the need for transcriptions to be verbatim the transcriptions which I received included numerous language errors, and no audible non-verbal cues. In order to address this, I ensured that

whenever I chose to include quotes from the interviews in my dissertation I checked each transcript against its respective recording in order to rectify errors, and include non-verbal cues such as laughter and pauses.

My decision to present verbatim quotes from participants and non-verbal cues was informed by a recognition of the role that the researcher plays as interpreter of the information they receive from participants (see Clifford, 1986), the way in which the process of transcription may distance the reader from the initial conversation, and an acknowledgement that altering the words and expressions of our participants creates another layer of distance between the reader and the participant. Transcribing interview quotes verbatim, with all the "ums" and "ahs", and pauses, and the moments of self-correction that take place when we use language is a way of acknowledging the power we have as researchers to represent the words of our participants, and recognizing the importance of limiting our interference with those words as much as we can (see Devault, 1990). In short, I chose not to correct, and restricted my editing as much as possible of the way in which participants expressed themselves through language. The work of anthropologist, Cecilia Ahearn (2001), whose ethnography tracked local understandings of social change in Nepal is useful here. When thinking about translating the words of her participants, Ahearn (2001) paid specific attention to the role of the researcher as interpreter, and, conscious of the interpretation that had already taken place in her translation of her participant's words into English, she chose not to translate words or phrases of which she was unsure. Although there was no translation required in my research, the element of interpretation remains the same – I have interpreted the words of the participants and the meanings behind them. Therefore, I have chosen to present their words as closely as possible to the way in which they were uttered in order to allow for the reader to make their own interpretations, and to limit my involvement as researcher in the process of transcription. The inclusion of non-verbal cues worked to support this endeavour, and provide an additional layer to the transcripts which aim to more closely represent a real-life sensory interview experience.

In her discussion of feminist interview analysis, Devault (1990) wrote about the limitations of standard approaches to transcription: "standard practice that smooths out respondents' talk is one way that women's words are distorted; it is often a way of discounting and ignoring those parts of women's experience that are not easily expressed" (Devault, 1990:103). Devault thus aimed to transcribe the interview recordings she collected in a way that reflected "some of the messiness of

everyday talk" (Devailt, 1990:109), and paid attention to the way in which this could better recognise and reflect women's experiences. The author also highlighted the tendency by researchers at the time to use "brief" (Devault, 1990: 106) excerpts from interviews in their publications. Jayne Ifekwunigwe's (1999) work beautifully exemplifies a move away from this tendency, as she dedicated entire chapters in her book to the words of her participants, and included her own observations and insights as footnotes at the bottom of the pages. Ifekwunigwe's (1999) decision operated to foreground the experiences of her participants, and offered the reader the chance to make their own interpretations of their words. Returning to Devault (1990), although the author was writing over thirty years ago, her points continue to resonate with this research – firstly, with my decision to provide more representative transcriptions and secondly in my decision to include more extensive excerpts from participant interviews. Although the excerpts are not as lengthy as those represented by researchers such as Ifekuwnigwe (1999), their inclusion in this work is intentional and aims to carve out more space for the voices of the participants of this research.

3. Ethical Considerations and Limitations

This research followed the British Sociological Association Statement of Ethical Practice (2017), which places an emphasis on the importance of safeguarding research participants and researchers, as well as encouraging researchers to take responsibility for their actions, capabilities and professional limitations. The names of all participants were changed to protect their anonymity.

As discussed earlier, the methodological approach of this research involved the ongoing practice of reflexivity concerning the research topic, as well as a consideration for the role of relationality in this practice of reflexivity. It remained important to recognise my own position as a researcher *in relation* to my research participants above and beyond the process of data collection – as an individual in a position of power who was responsible for conducting research of a high standard and utilising the time of participants with care and respect.

I planned to work only with research participants who would be over the age of 18 and that no children or vulnerable adults would be involved in the project. However, this was not always as straightforward as I had initially anticipated due to the fact that sometimes parents chose to include

their children in the research process. When I arrived to interview Peggy and Pete for example, they opted to have their daughter Bianca present for our group interview, despite the fact that she was 13. Similarly, Aanya volunteered to participate with her daughter Iva who was only 17 at the time, and Victor volunteered to partake with his sons, Dylan and Matthew who were also 17 at the time.

In these circumstances I was faced with a dilemma – did I choose to ignore the wishes of parents and young people who wanted to participate in the research, or did I go ahead with the interviews despite not having accounted for this in my research proposal? In these moments I chose to highlight to participants that the research was intended for those who were 18 and over, and that I had not accounted for those who were under 18 during my ethical approval process. I chose to prioritize consent in these moments, stating that I would need parental consent for the people who were underage to participate and emphasizing to participants who were under 18 that there was no expectation for them partake, as was the case with all the participants who were assured of their option to withdraw from the research at any time. All participants were given information forms explaining the project, which included their right to withdraw at any time as well as contact details for the relevant parties should any issues or complaints arise. All participants were also given consent forms to sign.

Scholars have written about the limitations of the idea of informed consent, and problematized the notion that it is possible to fully inform participants about the research in which they are about to engage, as well as the idea that getting consent is a neutral process. Hammersley and Traianou (2012) for example, explained how consent occurs in relation to the context of the individual participant and the reasons for them engaging with the research in the first place (many of which may not be known to the researcher). Additionally, the authors highlight the limitations on the part of the researcher to fully predict the risks that may arise during the research process. The experience I had of parents inviting their children to participate was one which I had not predicted and which I had to manage in the field. In these moments I relied heavily on the notion of consent, but as discussed by Hammersley and Traianou (2012), the notion of consent is complex, especially when considering the ways in which it may intersect with family dynamics. The power dynamics which may present in relationships between parents and children for example, and the influence

parents may have over their children to make or encourage decisions on their behalf. I tried to navigate this by gaining consent from both parents as the legal guardians of their children and from young people themselves, thus recognizing them as active participants in the process. Nevertheless, even in so doing, I remained aware of the challenges and complexities surrounding informed consent and the ways in which familial dynamics in particular may have influenced people's decisions to participate.

3.1 The Ethics of Working with Families

The discourse on engaging in research with families leans towards a reflexive approach on the part of researchers, which requires us to think not only about the personal nature of the data we collect, but also emphasizes the difficulties of working with people who have intimate relationships with and knowledge of one another, and the importance of sharing these difficulties as researchers in order to work towards developing more ethical practices.

Clark and Sharf (2007) discussed how different perceptions of truth can cause rifts and disagreements between family members participating in the same research. They complicated the idea of transparency during research, particularly in relation to the requirement that researchers protect their informants. If the research findings could, for example, be harmful to the research participants or have a negative impact on their relationships with family members, is transparency still the best option for the researcher? Further, the authors highlighted the ways in which their participants took issue with how they were represented by other participants in the research, and the difficulties of maintaining confidentiality when participants know each other well. This underpins how working with people who have intimate relationships can be a tricky process to navigate, especially when it comes to protecting individual participants and the confidentiality to which we have dedicated ourselves as researchers. A question is thus raised about how to reconcile the need to collect data and reflect the experiences of our participants as accurately as possible, whilst also protecting their anonymity and not causing harm to their pre-existing relationships. Not only did Clark and Sharf (2007) recognise the complexities of working with people who are related or intimately connected, they also placed importance on the need for researchers to acknowledge the research process as "a deeply personal enterprise" (Clark and Sharf, 2007: 399). Through identifying the personal nature of the research in which we engage as well as sharing the ethical

challenges that we face during the research process with other scholars for feedback and comment, the authors suggested that we can make our research more ethically sound.

In a similar vein, Lynn Jamieson et al (2011) iterated the importance of researchers being open and reflexive about the challenges they face during the research process, in order to make research more ethical. The authors detailed the role that context plays in shaping and reacting to specific ethical dilemmas, as well as drew attention to how research experiences can conflict with established theories about what makes good research. In so doing they highlighted a discrepancy between what is written about research processes and what occurs during the research process and underscored the importance of the individual context of the research in determining what constitutes best ethical practice.

During the process of this research, there were a number of instances when delicate information was shared with me by participants about other participants. One of these moments was during an interview and another was outside of the formal research setting. Conscious of the aforementioned dynamics between participants who have relationships with one another, and of the need to respect their privacy (see Gabb, 2008) and avoid causing harm to individuals or their relationships, I chose immediately not to include this information in the project. That being said, the instance outside of the research setting in particular made me more conscious of the complexities of forming friendships with participants. I had to remain aware of the additional information that I held about people which was shared outside of their interviews in passing conversation and with me as a friend or acquaintance rather than as a researcher. This information has been treated delicately, as part of relationships that extend beyond the scope of this project, speaking to the multiple roles I have occupied in relation to a number of my participants outside this research as I have worked alongside them, shared meals with them, laughed and travelled with them.

Chapter 3

Race and Mixed Race in Britain and Elsewhere: The Surrounding Discourse

In 2004, anthropologist Jayne Ifekwunigwe edited a reader, *'Mixed Race' Studies*, which situated mixed race studies historically, tracing the shifts in the discourse from the 19th century to the 21st century, and engaging with much of the existing literature on the topic in multiple locations around the world. Along with critically grappling with notions of mixed race, the reader also aimed to acknowledge the ongoing societal preoccupation with notions of racial mixture despite the concept of race being widely recognised as a social construct across the social sciences (Amin, 2010; Winant, 2006). Nearly two decades later, the discourse on mixed race experiences and identities continues to grow and expand, and has seen the creation of a discipline in the United States of America (US) which is dedicated to the topic - Critical Mixed Race Studies (see Daniel et al., 2014).

'Mixed Race' Studies provides invaluable guidance to scholars interested in the subject of mixed race experiences in that it helps readers locate the field in relation to historical and societal shifts, and to consider questions surrounding how to move forward within the discipline. It was in this reader that Ifekwunigwe (2004) reflected on and reformulated her previous approach to the terminology she chose to use surrounding the subject of mixed race. Where she had formerly used métise(e) and métissage (Ifekwunigwe, 1999), in her later work Ifekwunigwe (2004) chose instead to use the term *mixed race*. Whilst acknowledging that the term is not without problems, (some of which I infer to be the difficulty of defining the term, as well as the way in which it may work to perpetuate the notion of race despite it being a social construct), Ifekwunigwe (2004) listed a number of reasons for choosing this terminology. One reason was the prevalence of the term in the English lexicon, and another was the way in which using a French-African term in an English context could work to further exoticise mixed race people. Additionally, Ifekwunigwe (2004) considered the implications of trying to decentre race through the use of métis(e) and métissage, and the potential this may have had to distract from the lived realities of institutional racism. Another consideration was that using new terminology to refer to the process of racial mixing could perpetuate the idea that it was a novel occurrence, as opposed to one that is historically rooted. Ifekwunigwe's (2004) engagement with the relevance and importance of terminology

contributes to the ongoing slipperiness that surrounds the language we use when relating to people of mixed parentage; an approach that resonates with this project (see Chapter 1).

Alongside highlighting the importance of terminology when thinking about mixed race experiences Ifekwunigwe (2004) also provided a framework entitled “Four Global Pillars of ‘Racial’ Mixing” (Ifekwunigwe, 2004: 7) which considered the different ways in which mixed race experiences have been shaped according to sociohistorical and geographical context. These pillars served to highlight the role not only of history but of place in the production of mixed race experiences, which is something upon which I reflect later through considering the national and local (specifically through looking at the space of the city) backdrops of people’s lived experiences of being mixed race (see Chapter 4).

In order to historically situate the existing discourse surrounding mixed race people and their experiences, Ifekwunigwe (2004) divided it into three ages. The first was the age of pathology which focused on 19th century discourses of racial purity and pollution. The second was the age of celebration which aligned with the proliferation of work on the subject in the 1990s and saw the concurrent recognition of the problematic discourse surrounding definitions of mixed race in relation to social constructionist views of race and discourses of racial purity, whilst also centring the experiences of people who identify as mixed race. The final age was that of critique, which began at the end of the 20th and the start of the 21st century during which time notions of “multiraciality” were beginning to be reflected, particularly in the US, and critical engagement was taking place with regards to navigating practices of categorisation, identification and individual agency.

Reflecting on the three ages of mixed race studies proposed by Ifekwunigwe (2004), it would seem that this thesis contains aspects of both the second and the third ages in that it centres and creates space for the experiences of individuals who identify as mixed race, whilst also critiquing the limitations of institutionalised and dominant discourses surrounding mixed race identities, and the way in which individuals are able to navigate these. At the same time, through critically considering the way in which Britain’s history of colonisation and empire have set the stage for contemporary conceptualisations and experiences of race, this thesis also engages with the first age from a position of subversion.

When thinking about the existing and emerging discourses surrounding mixed race experiences, Ifekwunigwe's (2004) ages thus remain useful, especially when trying to navigate one's way through the depths and wealth of research that has and continues to emerge. The discourse which has been created since the publication of Ifekwunigwe's (2004) volume, offers a chance for conversation with and reflection back to some of her ideas, particularly with regards to the age of pathology which is explored below. I have thus chosen to use Ifekwunigwe's (2004) three ages of mixed race studies as a framework for this chapter, in order to assist me with contextualising some of the key works and broad ideas that resonate within the discourse, as well as situate works published after Ifekwunigwe's (2004) reader in relation to past works.[2]

Beginning with the age of pathology, I will look at some of the discourse which has since emerged that seeks to reframe and challenge colonial discourses surrounding mixed race people. Moving on to the age of celebration and critique, I will consider some of the key works and overall themes that emerged during these periods, whilst paying particular attention to work from the British canon within which this research is based, as well as considering some key texts from the US. In the final section of this chapter, I will look at the broader discourse on race in Britain, within which this research should be situated - discourse on the experiences of mixed race people is not disconnected from the broader discourse that exists regarding conceptualisations and experiences of race, and there can be no understanding of notions of mixed race without understanding notions of race. This chapter is by no means an exhaustive engagement with the existing discourse on racialised and mixed race experiences, but rather a snapshot of some of the key works that represent these fields and the ways in which my research relates to them.

Prior to engaging in the aforementioned conversations, it is worth reflecting briefly on the position of the US canon of mixed race studies in relation to the British canon. Ifekwunigwe (2004) wrote about the imbalance between discourse from the US and Britain in the reader she edited, suggesting it was indicative of the amount of scholarship at the time. That is, more discourse surrounding

[2] I acknowledge Ali's (2007) critique of Ifekwunigwe's (2004) ages and her suggestion that "competing discourses" (7) may exist at any point in time, however not all of them are made visible or accessible. I agree with Ali in this regard, particularly when considering the way in which power operates to produce and centralize particular kinds of knowledge. That being said, when trying to navigate and make sense of the extensive discourse on mixed race experiences which exists across the contexts of the US and Britain, Ifekwunigwe's (2004) ages provide a useful entry point. As with any theory or discourse, these ideas are approached critically and with an understanding that they are a means of thinking through a complex and dense topic which is evergrowing.

mixed race experiences emerged in the US than it did in Britain, despite the existence of an ever growing population of mixed race people in Britain. This is not to say that scholars in Britain were not engaging with the topic (and many of the key works on this are included in the reader), but that the discourse in the US was more substantial. Ten years after Ifekwunigwe (2004) reflected on the prevalence of US based research surrounding mixed race experiences, Small et al. (2014) shared similar sentiments in a volume they edited which paid particular attention to the role of the state and globalization as factors influencing mixed race people's experiences. In the volume, the authors refer not only to the scale of research about mixed race experiences that has taken place in the US, but also to their choice to include research detailing mixed race experiences from other, less represented contexts around the world in their volume.

The wealth of discourse focussing on mixed race and multiracial experiences in the US can be traced back to the political activism of mixed race people that started in the 1970s. This is detailed excellently in the work of Daniel et al. (2014), who provided an overview of the history and discourse surrounding the development of Critical Mixed Race Studies. Not only did they engage with some of the key works that have framed the discipline, but they situated the discourse in relation to the mixed race political movement that grew in the US from the late 1970s (for a detailed analysis of the research on multiracial populations in the US see Charmaraman et al, 2014). Discourse surrounding the experiences of mixed race people in the US grew significantly between the late 80s and the early 2000s. At the same time, activists were working to have mixed race experiences included in the social movements of the time, as well as in the US census. Using the terms *mixed race* and *multiracial* (both of which speak to the different preferences held by the mixed race/multiracial community in the US, and the common usage of both terms. See DaCosta, 2007 for an exploration of the mobilization of the term "multiracial"), the authors underscored the move from research which pathologised mixed race experiences prior to the 1980s (in line with Ifekwunigwe's [2004] age of pathology), to research which contested these findings, drew attention to the positioning of mixed race people in between existing and perceived monoracial groups, and sought to challenge monoracial norms that were informed by notions of racial purity (in line with Ifekwunigwe's [2004] ages of celebration, critique and beyond). Maria P. P. Root's (2004[1992]) work is an example of such work, considered ground-breaking at the time of publication and the "first comprehensive examination of multiracial identity and the mixed-race

phenomenon in the United States" (Daniel et al., 2014:9). Root (2004[1992]) powerfully articulated the threat that mixed race people pose to the US social order and beyond, through underscoring the limitations of essentialist and simplified conceptualisations of race and the role they have played in structuring the sociopolitical landscape of the United States; "the presence of racially mixed persons defies the social order predicated upon race, blurs racial and ethnic group boundaries, and challenges accepted proscriptions and prescriptions regarding intergroup relations" (Root, 1992 in Ifekwunigwe, 2004: 143). The author contextualized mixed race experiences in the US, connecting them to the history of anti-miscegenation laws, which operated alongside rules of hypodescent, and the pathologizing of mixed race people to silence and suppress the long history of multiraciality in the US. In addition, Root (2004[1992]) challenged the notion of mixed race people being positioned in between monoracial categories, tracing this practice back to the colonial period and emphasizing the way in which it has contributed to the suppression of multiracial identities and worked in favour of white supremacy through the maintenance of racial hierarchy. Root (2004[1992]) proposed the use of multidimensional models with which to think about race and mixed identities – such models allow for fluidity and membership of multiple identifications, disposing of either/or classificatory practices.

Returning to the work of Daniel et al. (2014), through tracing and considering the history of the discourse on mixed race experiences in the US, the authors were able to situate and highlight some of the key motivations behind the creation of Critical Mixed Race Studies as a discipline, namely recognising the existence of the multiple racial or ethnic backgrounds held by mixed race people in contrast to the prevailing monoracial norms in the US, providing a critique of racial essentialism, racism and racialisation, underscoring the importance of self definition and the impact of context on terminology, and drawing attention to the experiences and existence of mixed race people in the United States.

Britain does not have the same level of institutional foundation as the US when it comes to the field of study surrounding mixed race and multiracial experiences, nor does it have the same history of organised activism when it comes to the institutional representation of mixed race people (see Ali, 2012; Song, 2012). That being said, the research that exists in Britain continues to flourish and should not be overlooked as academics in Britain have been grappling with the question of representing the experiences of mixed race people on an institutional level for decades (see

Benson, 1981; Wilson, 1987). Considering that this research took place in Britain, and contributes primarily to the British discourse on mixed race experiences, this chapter prioritises literature which pertains to the British canon, however examples from the US canon and beyond will be utilised as well.

<u>Reflecting on the Ages</u>

Pathology

> In 1842 I published a short essay on *Hybridity*, the object of which was, to show that the White Man and the Negro were distinct "species;" illustrating my position by numerous facts from the Natural History of Man and that of the lower animals. The question, at that time, had not attracted the attention of Dr. Morton. Many of my facts and arguments were new, even to him; and drew from the great anatomist a private letter, leading to the commencement of a friendly correspondence, to me, at least, most agreeable and instructive, and which endured to the close of his useful career.
>
> In the essay alluded to and several which followed it at short intervals I maintained these propositions: -
>
> 1. That *mulattoes* are the shortest lived of any class of the human race.
> 2. That *mulattoes* are intermediate in intelligence between the blacks and the whites.
> 3. That they are less capable of undergoing fatigue and hardship than either the blacks or whites.
> 4. That the *mulatto-women* are peculiarly delicate and subject to a variety of chronic diseases.That they are bad breeders bad nurses liable to abortions and that their children generally die young.
> 5. That when *mulattoes* intermarry, they are less prolific than when crossed on the parent stocks.
> 6. That, when a *Negro* man married a *white* woman, the offspring partook more largely of the Negro type than when the reverse connection had effect.
> 7. That *mulattoes*, like Negroes, although unacclimated enjoy extraordinary exemption from yellow-fever when brought to Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, or New Orleans (Nott and Gliddon, 2004 [1854]:42-43).

The above excerpt from Nott and Gliddon's (2004[1854]) work provides an excellent example of the discourse that was produced during the earlier period of the age of pathology, which operated to reinforce notions of racial hierarchy by dehumanising mixed race and black people through eugenicist reasoning. I will not spend more time than is necessary on their publication, except to situate it as an example of the kind of thinking that many postcolonial scholars interested in processes of race and racialisation have sought to challenge through their work. There exists a growing body of literature considering the experiences of mixed race people throughout history,

which pays particular attention to the relationship between colonisation, colonial notions of race and the way in which they intersected with the experiences of local and indigenous people in colonised spaces. These works seek to shed light on the gaps within existing historical discourses, and draw attention to the absences present in traditional and often colonial historical representations of indigenous people. In so doing, they add nuance and complexity to traditional historical framings of indigenous and local experiences, often subverting reified colonial narratives and highlighting the presence of agency amongst people who experienced colonisation.

Some riveting research looks at histories of mixed-ness amongst Indigenous people around the world, with attention being paid in certain instances to intermarriage between Indigenous and European people as a result of imperialism and colonisation. Of particular interest is how conceptualisations of race accompanied European settlers and were then applied to the organisation of colonised places and Indigenous people. Rocha's (2012) work on notions and histories of mixedness in Aotearoa/New Zealand, for example, illustrated how British conceptualisations of race were transported and used, as demonstrated in census surveys, to create a distinction between European and Māori people, establish and reinforce a racial hierarchy, and categorise the population of mixed race people which grew as a result of intermarriage. That people with parents of different races in Aotearoa were captured in the census from 1916 is a testament to the historical occurrence of mixed-ness and mixed race experiences. Through amplifying the historical existence of mixed-ness in their work, authors such as Rocha (2012) and Wanhalla (2018) below, demonstrate that mixed-ness is not a novelty but has been taking place for centuries.

The ways in which racialised language shifted throughout the 20th century is reflected in Rocha's (2012) analysis of the changing census categories in Aotearoa, displaying the variability in conceptions of race and the difficulty of grouping people into static categories. Mixed race people in particular, posed a challenge to the binary census categories which accommodated those who were designated as Māori and European; not only did the terminology used to refer to mixed race people change over time, but the categories into which mixed race people were placed changed as well. In addition to drawing attention to the ways in which colonial conceptions of race organised and stratified society in Aotearoa, Rocha's (2012) work also highlighted the tensions which emerged between European conceptions of race and Indigenous understandings of the self. Fractional assessments of race which were employed in the first half of the 20th century in order

to categorise mixed race people, for example, stood in opposition to Māori notions of belonging which disregarded percentage and considered one's connectedness through birth.

Another example of research which considers the intersections between colonial and imperial activities and Indigenous communities can be found in Wanhalla's (2018) work, which looked at the experiences of Indigenous women who married Europeans in Canada and Aotearoa, and the ways in which these marriages impacted on their mobility. Where Rocha (2012) looked in detail at the institutionalisation of colonial understandings of race and racial hierarchy in Aotearoa, Wanhalla (2018) focussed on the lived experiences of Indigenous people who were subjected to these processes. Wanhalla (2018) compared the experiences of two Indigenous women in the 19th century – Agnes Grieve who was born in Canada to a Swampy Cree woman and Orcadian man, and Jane Palmer born to a Māori woman and European man in Aotearoa. This work is remarkable in that it details the experiences of Indigenous women from two different parts of the world who ended up in the same place during the 19th century. Additionally, both women were mixed race, again drawing attention to the historical occurrence of mixed-ness and experiences of mixed race people. Wanhalla (2018) looked at the way in which the context of colonisation shaped Indigenous women's mobility, adding another dimension to the notion that Indigenous women only experienced violence and remained static in local spaces through colonial contact. Where this was true for many Indigenous women, there were also instances of their participation in colonial networks and increased mobility. Wanhalla (2018) thus sought to underscore instances of agency amongst Indigenous women amid imperialism and colonisation; after marrying an Orcadian man, for example, Agnes Grieve travelled from Canada to the Orkney Islands, as well as to Aotearoa, and she was also able to own land and engage in formal political spaces. Through mapping these stories, not only did Wanhalla (2018) highlight the mobility of Indigenous women, who were in this instance also mixed race, but she introduced us to the gendered ways in which Indigenous women's experiences were shaped, specifically through intermarriage which allowed for them to gain access to resources previously denied to them, as a result of the privileges afforded to their European husbands. Thus, although Indigenous women gained access to certain resources, they remained positioned in an unequal relationship of power with their European husbands who were positioned above them in the racial and gendered hierarchy as noted by Rocha (2012). It is also worth noting that intermarriage not only offered Indigenous women's access to certain resources,

but also provided an opportunity for European men to gain access to land and strengthen ties with Indigenous leaders as is exemplified in Wanhalla's (2018) work in Aotearoa.

Both Rocha (2012) and Wanhalla (2018) offer examples of the existence and experiences of Indigenous mixed race people in the 19th and 20th centuries, shedding light on how they were perceived by, and navigated, colonial and imperial structures. These accounts are both historical, considering instances of initial contact between Indigenous communities and European settlers under colonialism. William S. Penn's (1997) collection of essays offers contemporary insights into the lives and experiences of Native American "mixblood" people in the US. Pertaining predominantly to people who descend from intermarriages between Native American tribes as well as between Native American and African and Latino Americans, mixblood is defined as;

> 'Mixbloods' and not 'mixed bloods' because they express the unified and inseperable strands of their heritage and experience. Mixblood instead of crossblood, though in this instance mainly because crossblood has been so long confused with 'mixedblood' (Penn, 1997: 9).

Striking here is the way in which Penn's conceptualisation of "mixblood" aligns with Lugones' (1994) framing of impurity that was explored in Chapter 1 – in both instances there is a resistance to "splitting" and an emphasis on unity. Penn's (1997) emphasis on "*mix*blood" and rejection of "*cross*blood" draws parallels with Lugones' (1994) curdle separation as opposed to split separation – both are situated as multiplicitious mixtures as opposed to the result of the crossing or fragmenting of complete entities. Further, Penn's (1997) use of 'mixbloods' challenges the notion that people with mixed racial backgrounds are half of two things in his inclusion of multiple lines of descent.

The writings in Penn's (1997) collection are thus different to those offered by Rocha (2012) and Wanhalla (2018) in that they are not limited to relationships between Indigenous and European people but extend to encompass people of other mixes. At the time, Penn (1997) noted the lack of knowledge surrounding mixblood experiences in the US, and pointed to the value such insights offer. Further, the author emphasized the importance of the use of unconventional writing methods as reflected in the collection, many of which are poetic examples of Native American writing, which stand in opposition to Western writing traditions and represent "different oralities" (Penn,

1997: 4) which aim to build connection and inclusivity as opposed to the exclusionary tendencies exercised in processes of colonization.

Gabeba Baderoon (2014) also wrote about the role of the poetic in expressions of resistance against historical practices of colonialism in the South African context in her work on the relationship between gender, sex and race during the colonial period in the Cape; "in colonial settings, sex was central to the making of race, rather than acting upon already stable, raced identities" (Baderoon, 2014: 85). Speaking to the lack of discourse which exists regarding the prevalence of sexual violence in South Africa's history and the way in which it intersected with slavery during the 19th century, Baderoon (2014) analysed some of the literature that has emerged which recognises the history of sexual violence and slavery in the Cape in the face of these discursive silences, and contemplated what an alternative future may look like in light of this history.

Especially pertinent to this conversation is the way in which discourses of "miscegenation" were mobilised in the colonial landscape of sexual violence, starting with the use of the name "van den kaap" as a surname for enslaved people born in the Cape who had racially mixed parentage which was usually as a result of rape or forcible prostitution (Baderoon, 2014: 84-85). The way in which sexual violence, gender and race are interconnected in this process of naming is undeniable, as is the role of place - the literal name of the place becoming a marker for the sexual abuse enacted, without punishment, against women of colour. Whilst this was occurring, narratives of "miscegenation" were simultaneously used to justify the policing of white women's bodies, with white women (and the "superior" white race more generally) being positioned as at risk from enslaved black men who, along with enslaved black women, were hypersexualised and framed as threatening (this narrative surrounding black men was also replicated during the Apartheid era in order to police white women's bodies: see Hyslop, 1993). Stereotypes maintaining the hypersexualisation of black enslaved people operated as justifications for the sexual violence enacted against black enslaved women[3], who were subsequently framed as responsible for their own abuse. All this to say that "miscegenation" was framed in multiple ways during the colonial period in the Cape - marking the prevalence of sexual violence against enslaved women of colour

[3] Ifekwunigwe, 1999 also explores the use of such logics in the US and Latin America.

by European men in particular, as well as the concurrent need to "protect" and maintain the white race from dilution through the policing of white women's bodies.

Each of the works considered in this section underscores the importance of thinking critically about the way in which racialized people, and Indigenous people in particular, have been portrayed in dominant historical discourses. Not only does this speak to the need for applications of nuance and considerations of individual manifestations of agency when thinking about racialized people's experiences of colonization and enslavement, but it also speaks to the importance of situating those experiences in relation to broader frameworks of white supremacy, patriarchy and discourses of racial purity. The historical mapping of the experiences of mixed race people in particular offer insights into not only the long standing existence of mixed race people - thus countering the notion that racial mixity is something novel - but they also allow for us to think about how the existence of mixed race people has posed a challenge to discourses of racial purity and white supremacy over time. These challenges have stressed the constructed nature of racial categories, in the way that they have been altered and differently applied over time in order to maintain and "protect" white superiority, pointing to the reasons behind their conception – control, oppression, exploitation, enslavement – and highlighting just how significant individual challenges to and subversions of these categories are when considered in relation to the broader historical project and reach of colonization and the British Empire.

Celebration

> It would be fruitless to attempt to define 'mixed race'. Its meaning alters with national boundary, position in history, class, gender, ethnicity and other factors. Each will have separate understandings of the term, and its chameleon-like ability to adapt to meanings of race. However, one distinction needs to be very clearly understood. There is a world of difference between mixed and pure race. 'The American way of life', the 'African continent', the 'British character' possess a homogeneity which rests on notions of essential difference. Mixed race implies exclusion from such constructions; in fact, it rather spoils their clean lines and makes them messy and confused. It shamelessly exposes the inadequate underwear of race and must be covered, or denied, or transformed in some way. Mixed race is the ideological enemy of pure race as a means of social stratification. There are no universally agreed definitions of race, and we should certainly never be tempted into a belief in fixed templates for identifying mixed race (Olumide, 2002: 1-2).

In a move away from discourses that pathologized mixed race people and presented their experiences as mired in confusion and pity, as detailed earlier in the work of Root (2004[1992]), the age of celebration encompassed work which countered such discourses. The above excerpt

from Olumide's (2002) work is one such example – rather than depending on reified notions of mixed race, Olumide (2002) broke them wide open, pointing to the importance of contextualisation and the specificity of experience when trying to understand mixed race experiences. In her work we see that there is no one definition of being mixed race, and that we should not aim to find one. Further Olumide (2002) emphasized that mixed race operates in opposition to notions of racial purity, again drawing parallels with the work of Root (2004[1992]) and the historical works referenced above – Olumide (2002) positioned mixed race as disruptive, indefinable, and resistant to modes of differentiation that are utilized in the name of oppression. Olumide's (2002) work resonates with this project in that it too is critical of discourses of purity, and resistant to seeking one definition of mixed race, preferring instead to focus on the variety of meaning that emerges from mixed race experiences.

Just under a decade before Olumide's (2002) work was published, Barbara Tizard and Ann Phoenix (1993) published their seminal research on young people's experiences of having mixed parentage in London, which continues to be a relevant resource for research on the experiences of mixed race people in Britain today. The authors contextualized mixed race experiences in Britain in the early 1990s, detailing the common tendency at the time to view mixed race children with pity and "the widespread belief that they can be expected to suffer from identity problems, low self-esteem, and problem or delinquent behavior" (Tizard and Phoenix, 1993: 1). Much like the later work of Olumide (2002), Tizard and Phoenix's work (1993) operated as a response to these ideas – it disturbed the notion of mixed race identities as problematic, adding complexity and multiplicity to common misconceptions of mixed race young people at the time, and contextualizing discourses of race in Britain.

Not only did Tizard and Phoenix's (1993) research highlight the range of experiences amongst mixed race young people, but it also underscored how racial identities may change over time and in relation to other factors such as experiences of gender and social setting. Among other things, their research revealed the impact of social class on mixed race young people; mixed race young people from working class backgrounds for example, experienced more racism than middle class participants. Importantly, the authors noted the difficulty of generalizing about the experiences of young mixed race people - aside from the races of their parents and most of them having experienced racism, their experiences and the meanings they attached to their understandings of

being mixed race varied. Far from being problematic, the experiences of young mixed race people were situated by Tizard and Phoenix (1993) as diverse and complex, influenced by multiple factors and encapsulated in identities that were liable to change. Revised in 2002 to consider shifts in the ways in which mixed race people identified themselves, along with discourse on the adoption of mixed race children, Tizard and Phoenix's (1993) qualitative enquiry into the experiences of young people with one black and one white parent, the way in which they navigate racial identity and the institutional and historical framings of mixed race identity in Britain is a valuable resource when seeking to understand the origins of the age of celebration in the British context.

Jayne Ifekwunigwe's (1999) research in Manchester, Birmingham, London and Bristol offered another example of work which explored the specific experience and historical significance of having black and white parentage in Britain. As mentioned earlier, Ifekwunigwe retraced and reflected on the terminology she used in *Scattered Belongings* (1999) in *'Mixed Race' Studies* (2004), and her engagement with the relevance and importance of terminology exemplifies the slipperiness that surrounds the language we use when referring to people of mixed parentage. In an analysis which draws parallels with the aforementioned work of Baderoon (2014), Ifekwunigwe (1999) underscored the relationship between sexual exploitation and racism in the southern United States during the Atlantic Slave Trade, situating the mobilization of the one drop rule in this context as a way of maintaining a system of racial hierarchy and control over enslaved people born as a result of the sexual assault of black enslaved women by white slave owners. Importantly, Ifekwunigwe (1999) argued that the essentialist thinking which informed the rule of hypodescent is central to our understandings of "both colonial and contemporary Black/White social stratification in the former British Empire and the future United Kingdom, respectively" (Ifekwunigwe, 1999: 5). I understand this to mean that contemporary understandings of blackness in relation to whiteness need to be contextualised in relation to historical conceptualisations of hypodescent, which hold significance in their implications for the ordering of society, during British colonisation and in contemporary Britain. The logic and history of hypodescent is thus not isolated within the United States, but interconnected with British history; these ways of thinking have seeped into and continue to shape our ways of understanding blackness in relation to whiteness, as well as the "stratification" of society and the production of inequality along the lines of race. The logic of hypodescent has operated to maintain white supremacy and racial "purity"

and ensure that people with mixed parentage that includes a white parent, would by default not gain access to whiteness, structurally or within the social imaginary (this is of course complicated by instances and experiences of passing, however the logic behind hypodescent remains the same).

Ifekwunigwe's (1999) work thus helps us to think about the historical significance of having black-white parentage, which has been conceptualized in particular ways for centuries and informed by the logic of white supremacy. Through unmasking these logics, and including them in Britain's past and present, Ifekwunigwe (1999) made space for new narratives to emerge; "the story is old. Our testimonies are new" (Ifekwunigwe, 1999:22). Ifekwunigwe's critical and historical analysis of dominant discourses of race at the start of her book worked to counter the narratives seen in the age of pathology, however the rest of her book is dedicated to the experiences of her research participants, thus contributing to the age of celebration. The author's approach to and handling of participant narratives were discussed in Chapter 3, however it is worth noting here the way in which she approached her own positionality. *Scattered Belongings* celebrates the experiences of Ifekwunigwe's (1999) participants, but it is also a celebration of the mixed race researcher. Ifekwunigwe (1999) is connected to and implicated within the research – we read her story as well. Creatively, visually, poetically, we gain a better understanding of the researcher and her role in the work. This is significant to me as a mixed race researcher working with mixed race participants – Ifekwunigwe's (1999) combination of historicity, critical analysis, ethnography and reflexivity have all inspired this work as is evident in the preceding chapters and the way in which I have located myself in relation to my participants and the research, as well as in the importance I have placed on historical and contextual understandings of race and mixed race, and the need to analyse them critically.

The works of Tizard and Phoenix (1993) and Ifekwunigwe (1999) exemplify the discourse the emerged during the age of celebration which was critical of previous narratives regarding mixed race people and their experiences and drew attention to the specificity and complexity of those experiences. Both works resonate with this project in that it too draws attention to the nuances and complexity of mixed race experiences, whilst concurrently considering the historical and socio-political contexts in which they operate. Conversely, whilst the history of black-white parentage is significant, both Tizard and Phonenix's (1993) and Ifekwunigwe's (1999) works exemplify the

predominance of these experiences of mixed-ness in the existing literature, critiques of which are explored below.

Critique

The age of critique described by Ifekwunigwe (2004) highlighted the limitations present in the existing research surrounding the representation of mixed race people and their experiences. The following literature shows a common thread of limitation within the British canon – the limitation of research in which the experiences of people from black-white mixed race backgrounds have predominated; the limitations inherent in practices of categorization as represented by the national census, which may work to obscure or reduce the fluidity of mixed race experiences; the limitations of discourses surrounding the families of mixed race people, and white parents in particular who have been situated as unable to provide mixed race children with knowledge pertaining to their racial identities, which has in turn contributed to the pathologisation of mixed race people and their experiences; and the limitations that occur when experiences of mixed-ness are not considered in relation to other axes of oppression which when unearthed serve to illustrate how mixed race can be produced through or operate in relation to discourses of class, place, family, national identity and gender.

The Academic

Scholars have critiqued the focus that has been placed on the experiences of mixed race people with black and white parentage in the existing discourse, to the exclusion of mixed race people with parents of other races (see Mahtani and Moreno, 2001; Edwards et al, 2012; Aspinall and Song, 2013). In Britain work by thinkers such as Suki Ali (2003) and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown (2001) engaged with concepts of mixed race that extended beyond the black-white binary and included the experiences of people with parents of different racial backgrounds, however representations of mixed race people with black-white parentage remain predominant in the literature (Song, 2012).

Song (2012) spoke of the prevalence of black-white relationships in Britain in relation to other racially mixed unions, which may perhaps account for the prevalence of the experiences of mixed race people with black-white parentage in the literature. That being said, Maria P. P Root's

(2004[1992]) argument that representations of mixed race people with two parents of colour were less prevalent in the US canon due to their reduced threat to discourses of whiteness is useful to consider. As mentioned earlier, Root (2004[1992]), along with others, positioned mixed race identities in opposition to discourses of racial purity and as a threat to white supremacy, thus explaining the lack of interest in researching and pathologizing (as was the tendency at the time) the experiences of mixed race people who did not have a white parent as they did not pose a threat to discourses of whiteness and white purity. I am aware that Root (2004[1992]) was writing three decades ago, and in relation to the US context. Further, where black-white relationships were found to be most prevalent out of all interracial relationships in Britain, they were found to be least common in the US (Song, 2012), thus illustrating a significant difference between the two contexts. Nevertheless, Root's (2004[1992]) point about the ways in which discourses of white supremacy may be perpetuated by a preoccupation with mixed race people who have a white parent is worth considering in relation to the British context. Even if black-white relationships and mixed race children with black-white parentage may represent a significant portion of the mixed race community in Britain, mixed race people with other racial backgrounds do exist, along with mixed race people with two parents of colour. We must thus recognize the limitations of notions of mixed race which refer only to black-white parentage as well as mixed race people with one white parent, and remain cognizant of how these formulations exclude people who identify as mixed race and fall outside of these definitions (see Spickard et al, 2017).

This project considers the experiences of mixed race people with black and white parentage, as well as the experiences of people with one white parent and one South Asian parent. It thus contributes to the more exhaustive British canon that explores the experiences of mixed race people who have a black and a white parent, as well as the less populated British canon of experiences of mixed race people who have one white parent and one South Asian parent. That being said, the participants of this research all had one white parent, thus leaving mixed race people with two parents of colour excluded from the project.

The Institutional and the Political

> The ability of groups to claim or re-create their own self-images and identities, against the backdrop of ethnic and racial labelling by the dominant society, is not only important in terms of self-determination; it can also have important implications for people's self-esteem and sense of well-being (Song, 2003:2).

Miri Song (2003) wrote about the negotiation of ethnic identity and "ethnic options" (Song, 2003: 4) for ethnic minorities in the UK and the US, highlighting that the options available to people are not entirely determined by them. The terms which encompass or refer to our racial or ethnic identities at an institutional level are not necessarily informed by our personal preferences, and they may not always align with our own understandings of our identities.

With regards to the representation of mixed race people at an institutional level, Ali (2012) wrote about the contradictions present in the recognition of mixed race people in the 2001 British census, which both acknowledged their presence in Britain but also created the potential for mixed race people to be grouped in ways that risked reifying their experiences. These processes of reification were exemplified by Ali (2012) in an analysis of how statistical data gathered from the 2001 census, was used to make sweeping statements about the mixed race "group" in Britain which lacked nuance, essentialized mixed race people's experiences and served to work against the work produced in the era of celebration that highlighted the multiplicity of mixed race experiences. Ali (2012) argued that "the price of recognition might also be a form of representation that is either a glorification or pathologisation of mixedness" (Ali, 2012: 177). Ali's (2012) work acknowledged the complexity of encapsulating mixed race experiences, particularly at an institutional and political level, which I suggest speaks to a larger difficulty incumbent in processes of trying to group, box and categorise identities.

Another such difficulty is located in debates around terminology – in relation to the institutional representation of mixed race people (Aspinall, 2009) and the language of race more broadly. As noted in Chapter 1, The Office for National Statistic's use of the term *ethnicity* instead of *race* in the British Census, for example, has been problematized and situated as an avoidance of the fraught language of race (Song, 2018). For the purposes of space and in order to avoid repetition they will not be elucidated on again here.

The Intersections of Mixedness

Chamion Caballero and Peter Aspinall's (2018) work sought to critically engage with mainstream debates surrounding mixedness in Britain over time, situating these debates in relation to broader

discourses on race and highlighting the socio-political framing of and changes to discourses of mixedness;

> …we contend that it is the discourse—rather than the people—in which lies the change. To be precise, we hold that it is not that interracial couples, people and families have emerged where there were none before, but that they are emerging in a discursive racial framework in which 'interraciality' is recognised and debated in different ways than in earlier periods (Caballero and Aspinall, 2018: 7-8).

Significantly, they noted the lack of representation in 20th century debates of "experiences of LGBT interraciality and minority ethnic attitudes towards this" (Caballero and Aspinall, 2018: 10) which is something that can be said of the existing discourse in Britain more broadly. Although a number of scholars have engaged with interactions of mixed race identity and gender (Olumide, 2002; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Ali, 2003), and some have considered the role of religion in mixed race experiences (Caballero et al, 2008), there appears to be less of an engagement with other aspects of identity such as sexual orientation (this was also noted by Olumide, 2002) and ability in the British discourse.

Returning to Caballero and Aspinall's (2018) work, the authors noted that whilst the existing discourse reflects the historical treatment of mixed race people in Britain, historical representations of their lived experiences and personal testimonies are less prevalent. They thus sought to shed light on the everyday, individual accounts of being mixed race in Britain in the 20th century. The authors' focus on adding nuance to our historical understandings of mixed race experiences (drawing parallels with the aims of the postcolonial scholars mentioned in the age of pathology) and the attention paid to the socio-political context from which mainstream debates and discourses about mixed race people emerge add complexity to the existing discourse. In particular, they allow those of us interested in creating space for the lived and everyday experiences of mixed race people in the discourse, to have access to historical accounts next to which we may compare contemporary accounts of mixed race experiences – when considered comparatively and over time, new findings or questions regarding mixed race experiences may emerge as is shown in the work of Caballero and Edwards (2010) below. The focus Caballero and Aspinall's (2018) book places on the role of history and context in understandings of mixed race experiences resonates with this project, in that it too seeks to understand how mixed race people navigate ever-changing socio-political understandings of and responses to mixedness.

The remainder of this section looks at work which explores the lived experiences of mixed race people in contemporary Britain, depicting how mixedness can be produced and experienced through discourses of family, class, gender, place, and socio-political context. Such work has situated notions of mixedness as working *in relation to* as opposed to *in isolation from* other societal discourses and axes of oppression.

France Winddance Twine (2004) reflected on the role of parents in relation to mixed race experiences in the UK. The author analysed ethnographic data collected over 7 years in London and Leicester and looked closely at manifestations of racial literacy amongst white parents of mixed race children (all of whom also had a black parent). Twine (2004) focused on the work undertaken by her participants which aimed to assist their children with understanding their different racial backgrounds, as well as racism in society. This work was nestled under the term 'racial literacy' and cast as part of the project of anti-racism, situating the family as a site of resistance towards dominant and oppressive notions of race. Twine's (2004) work highlighted the creation of racial identity within the realm of the family, showing that the racialized language with which parents equip their children is important when considering what influences or shapes one's racial identity, especially with regards to parents of mixed race children.

Engaging with Twine's (2004) work, Caballero and Edwards (2010) reflected on the presence of racial literacy in the relationships between lone mothers and their mixed race children in the 1960s and early 2000s. Their report sought to contribute to a little researched area, through analysing the experiences of lone mothers of mixed race children in relation to societal shifts between the two time periods. The research showed that where lone mothers in contemporary Britain acknowledged the importance of racial literacy, this was far less common in the 1960s, which they linked to "a difference in understanding between the two groups of mothers as regards the emphasis they place on the importance of racial and cultural literacy" (Caballero and Edwards, 2010: 12). Interestingly, Caballero and Edwards (2010) underscored the stigmatization faced by white lone mothers of mixed race children in both time periods, which situated them in relation to notions of immorality, irresponsibility and ignorance for having relationships and children with men of colour. Although prejudice was found to be more implicit in the contemporary study, it continued to be experienced. The authors linked this stigmatization to historical tendencies to pathologise racial mixing which were explored earlier in this chapter, showing how it is not just mixed race people who have been

historically pathologized, but their parents as well. Further, these discourses of pathology intersect with the aforementioned discourses of patriarchy and white supremacy, present in the need to "protect" white women from black and brown men and in turn maintain white "purity".

The work of Twine (2004) and Caballero and Edwards (2010) highlights the role of parents as central figures in the experiences of mixed race people, and purveyors of 'racial literacy'. As Caballero and Edwards (2010) suggest, such representations sit in opposition to much of the work produced in the era of pathology which emphasized the inability of white lone mothers in particular to raise mixed race children and provide them with an understanding of their racial backgrounds and how to navigate experiences of racism.

Lisa McKenzie's (2015) ethnographic research also considered the experiences of parents of mixed race children, although interestingly, where Caballero and Edwards' (2010) work evidenced stigma directed towards white mothers of mixed race children, McKenzie's (2015) work demonstrated the opposite.

Through underscoring the intersections of class, gender, race and place on a council estate called St Ann's in Nottingham, McKenzie (2015) mapped how racially mixed relationships and dynamics were navigated and understood, illustrating how notions of race may be shaped in relation to class, culture and ideas of personhood and belonging. The presence of a large Jamaican population in St Ann's since the 1960s had informed local people's understandings of value, with Jamaican-ness being understood as "a cultural resource" (McKenzie, 2015:117), and racially mixed relationships being "openly accepted and encouraged" (McKenzie, 2015: 117). McKenzie's work unpacked processes of meaning making in a place that is stigmatised, looking at how people create their own systems of value within such places, and how those systems interact with the social and the personal:

> "Social history and personal history are important, especially when examining how groups of people understand their lives, and even more so when one group is severely disadvantaged by where they live, what they do, but more importantly, by who they are" (McKenzie, 2015: 114).

Stigmatisation in St Ann's was not limited to the place itself but extended to understandings of gender, with white working-class women being sexualised and marginalised in particular ways in McKenzie's (2015) findings. McKenzie's work (2015) illustrated how the relationships these

women had with black men, who were perceived as holding more status in St Ann's, helped them to distance themselves from this stigma, which was further compounded by parenting mixed race children[4]. This finding stands in opposition to the aforementioned findings of Caballero and Edwards (2010), showing how local configurations of race, gender and class can reshape age old notions of race and gender which have situated black men as threats to white women. In St Ann's this appears not to be the case, with relationships with black men allowing white women to avoid societal stigma. That being said, there simultaneously appears to be a process of fetishization implicated in how white women in St Ann's gain cultural capital through having intimate relationships and mixed race children with black men, illustrating in many ways the opposite of stigmatisation but feeding into a problematic conceptualisation of black men and mixed race children nonetheless.

McKenzie's (2015) work shows the importance of considering the local when attempting to understand notions of race, whilst reminding us to remain aware of the broader structures in place which influence and shape how we interact with race. The stigma associated with St Ann's as a working-class council estate was informed by broader, elitist and neoliberal notions of class that situate working class people at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This stigma was then responded to in particular ways after it intersected with local discourses of value which were informed by notions of race, gender and culture. Whilst multiple angles and intersections emerge in McKenzie's (2015) work, the role of place remains a central facet when it comes to understanding discourses of race and understandings of racially mixed families and what it means to be mixed race.

Where McKenzie's (2015) research in St Ann's considered how acknowledging cultural and racial difference, along with gender, in racially mixed relationships and in parenting mixed race children was an important part of navigating social stigma for white mothers in particular, Mengxi Pang's (2018) research in Scotland illustrated a lack of engagement on the part of parents of mixed race children with racial and cultural difference. In Pang's (2018) research, not only did she highlight a tendency in the existing discourse to focus on the experiences and roles of the parents of mixed

[4] The apparent fetishization of black Jamaican men in McKenzie's (2015) work that occurs through white women gaining cultural capital by having intimate relationships and mixed race children with them appears to foreground the experiences of white women in St Ann's, resulting in a lack of insight into the experiences of mixed race people in St Ann's and their *own* conceptualisations and understandings of racial identity and racialization.

race people as opposed to mixed race people themselves (something that is illustrated in McKenzie's (2015) work), she described how the parents of mixed race children that she engaged preferred to focus on notions of Scottishness, instead of engaging directly with race. Further, Pang (2018) unpacked the association between notions of Scottishness and notions of whiteness, showing how defaulting to notions of Scottishness was a way that her mixed race participants were able to navigate and avoid racial stigma. The site of the familial was positioned by Pang (2018) as a central reason for this approach to identity, which she described as an "ethnically monolithic parenting style" (Pang, 2018: 425) which prioritised whiteness, thus limiting the options of mixed race children to identify themselves differently or beyond this narrative. Reflecting on Twine (2004) and Caballero and Edwards' (2010) work which demonstrated how white mothers in particular can act as purveyors of racial literacy, Pang's (2018) work appeared to reveal the opposite, with parents actively avoiding discussions about and engaging with the language of race. Such examples work to show the different ways in which parents of mixed race people may or may not approach the subject of race within their families – such differing approaches are echoed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, which shows how parents both engage with and avoid discussions about race with their mixed race children.

To return to Pang (2018), her work is particularly interesting in that she not only highlighted the role of the familial in the shaping of mixed race identities, but she also noted the absence of empirical research from Scotland in the existing British discourse on mixed race identities, with data from England and Wales being more prevalent. Parallels can be drawn with this research which situates the familial as a central site for the production of racial and mixed race identities and which considers data from an underrepresented location (although this location remains in a country that is more represented than Scotland).

Where Pang's (2018) work emphasised the lack of empirical data on mixed race experiences in Britain outside of England and Wales, Remi Joseph-Salisbury (2019) wrote about the lack of attention that has been paid to men and manifestations of masculinity when thinking about mixed race experiences, highlighting the need for more intersectional analyses to take place when studying mixedness. Joseph-Salisbury's (2019) work paid close attention to the relationship between gender and race in the experiences of black mixed race men in the UK and the US,

showing how black mixed race men confront and negotiate racist notions of black masculinity in their everyday lives. Not only did Joseph-Salisbury (2019) underscore the limitations of looking at manifestations of masculinity and race through a homogenous lens which, for example, situates blackness as a homogenous and fixed category, but he proposed that black mixed race men experience a "multiple consciousness" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019: 3) as "they occupy multiple positionalities, simultaneously" (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019:12). That is, not only do they navigate white supremacist perceptions of black masculinity, but they must also negotiate perceptions of being black mixed race within the black community that may be associated with notions of skin tone or behaviour, among other things.

With regards to navigating white supremacist notions of black masculinity, Joseph-Salisbury (2019) drew attention to the agency of the black mixed race men who participated in his work, as they responded in different ways to racist portrayals of black men as unintelligent and violent for example (Joseph-Salisbury, 2019: 15 - 16). Some of their responses included performing behaviour that was read as less threatening to resist being perceived as violent, or excelling academically to challenge the idea that black men are unintelligent. Joseph-Salisbury's (2019) work draws attention to the fluidity and multiplicity of black mixed race men's experiences, as well as the ways in which gender can shape how and when this fluidity is mobilised. Further, by illustrating how black mixed race men are perceived under the umbrella of black masculinity in the context of white supremacy as well as within the black community, Joseph-Salisbury (2019) uncovered the complexity of black mixed race men's experiences which both overlap with and fall outside of notions of black masculinity.

So far, the work in this section has included considerations of class, familial relationships, national identity and gender in relation to the experiences and conceptualisations of mixed race people in the UK (and in the US as represented in Joseph-Salisbury's (2019) work). Karis Campion's (2021) work introduced the role of place as a central element to how we analyse and understand mixed race experiences. Drawing on her research with intergenerational black-white mixed race people in Birmingham, which has the second highest mixed race population in the UK after London, Campion (2021) noted the lack of discourse from Birmingham in the existing literature on mixed race in the UK and argued that the role of place is a crucial part of understanding how mixed race

identities are articulated and understood. Local histories, architecture, narratives of the city and different neighbourhoods are all explored as part of the production, experience and understanding of mixed race identity by Campion (2021). The architecture of Birmingham and the racist distribution of particular populations, for example, set the conditions for where racially mixed relationships were likely to occur. Further, connections to neighbourhoods such as Handsworth which was coded as a site of black culture within Birmingham assisted Campion's (2021) participants to gain access to "a Black group identity" (Campion, 2021: 949), and young black mixed race women were conceptualised differently by participants depending on which neighbourhood they were from which determined their "proximity to Blackness" (Campion, 2021: 950). Campion (2021) also examined the role of personal memories of racialisation in particular spaces, and the ways in which they interacted with the social history of the city – something that is illustrated in this thesis, particularly in Chapter 4.

Campion (2021) wondered at how the predominance of mixed race people with white-black Caribbean heritage may influence conceptualisations and definitions of mixed race in Birmingham and I would like to extend this question to the predominance of black-white mixed race experiences in the existing literature. Of all the work explored in this section, only Pang's (2018) work addressed the experiences of mixed race people who did not have black-white parentage. How does the ongoing emphasis in the discourse on black-white mixed race experiences continue to influence or shape perceptions and understandings of what it means to be mixed race? Whilst the black-white mixed race group may be the largest in the UK (Song, 2012) it is worth remembering that there are people who have parents of other racial identities who also identify as mixed race, and their experiences remain an important part of the narrative surrounding mixed-ness in the UK. This is something that this thesis seeks to emphasise and draw attention to through the inclusion of participants who do not have solely black-white parentage.

The Broader Discourse: Race in Britain

> *People like me who came to England in the 1950s have been there for centuries; symbolically, we have been there for centuries. I was coming home. I am the sugar at the bottom of the English cup of tea. I am the sweet tooth, the sugar plantations that rotted generations of English children's teeth (Hall, 1997: 48).*

Much of the seminal British discourse from 1970 onwards which engages notions of race and racism emphasises the importance of considering race in relation to the context in which it is being mobilised and experienced. The quote above, written by renowned thinker, writer and scholar Stuart Hall (1997), speaks to the relationship between discourses of race and Britain's imperial past – the way in which notions of racial hierarchy allowed for the exploitation and oppression of people who were positioned at the bottom of the racial hierarchy, which in turn led to the success and dominance of the British empire. Eric Williams's (1944) work regarding the triangular trade and the significance of the city of Liverpool in the 18th century encapsulated the relationship between subjugation and imperial dominance discussed by Hall:

> It was a common saying that several of the principal streets of Liverpool had been marked out by the chains, and the walls of the houses cemented by the blood, of the African slaves, and one street was nicknamed "Negro Row." The red brick Customs House was blazoned with Negro heads. The story is told of an actor in the town, who, hissed by the audience for appearing before them, not for the first time, in a drunken condition, steadied himself and declared with offended majesty: "I have not come here to be insulted by a set of wretches, every brick in whose infernal town is cemented with an African's blood" (Williams, 1944: 63).

Brick and mortar, funded by the profits from plantations approximating those mentioned by Hall (1997); sugar and bricks – representative of the interconnectedness of England (literally, historically, politically, economically, socially and symbolically) and discourses of race.

Hall (1978) has written elsewhere about the relationship between race and politics in England. Through underscoring the centuries-long presence of black people in England (see also Goldberg, 2002), Hall (1978) countered the common narrative that England was racially homogenous until after the Second World War. Hall (1978) pointed to the tendency in British politics to situate race as something outside of and unfamiliar to British society – an "external" problem, a crisis to be solved, an imposition completely disconnected from and unrelated to Britain's past (Hall, 1978: 23-24) as opposed to a foundational feature of British society. This practice went hand in hand with a lack of recognition of the role that discourses of race played in the creation and success of the British empire;

> The slate has been wiped clean. Racism is not endemic to the British social formation. It has nothing intrinsically to do with the dynamic of British politics, or the economic crisis. It is not part of the English culture, which now has to be indeed protected against pollution – it does not belong to the 'English ideology'. It's an external virus somehow injected into the body politic and it's matter of **policy** whether we can deal with it or not – it's not a matter of **politics** (Hall, 1978:24).

The pollution referenced by Hall (1978) in this characterisation of common approaches to race in Britain at the time, draws connections with the discourses of racial purity discussed and contested in the aforementioned discourse on historical conceptions of mixed race people. Historical notions of racial purity worked to reinforce the idea of race, which in turn served to justify the organisation of the British empire according to a racial hierarchy, in which black people were situated at the bottom. Positioning mixed race people as impure worked to support the idea of racial purity - to which mixed-ness was a threat - thus showing the way in which historical conceptualisations of mixed race people tie into broader discourses about race. These ideas emerge in the work of, Paul Gilroy (2001) who eloquently considered ideas of purity and contamination in relation to ideas of national and ethnic identity, and how notions of pure identity have been used to justify oppression;

> When national and ethnic identities are represented and projected as pure, exposure to difference threatens them with dilution and compromises their prized purities with the ever-present possibility of contamination. Crossing as mixture and movement must be guarded against… Different people are certainly hated and feared, but the timely antipathy against them is nothing compared with the hatreds turned toward the greater menace of the half-different and the partially familiar. *To have mixed is to have been party to a great betrayal*. Any unsettling traces of hybridity must be excised from the tidy, bleached-out zones of impossibly pure culture. The safety of sameness can then be recovered by either of the two options that have regularly appeared at the meltdown point of this dismal logic: separation and slaughter (Gilroy, 2001: 105-106. Own emphasis added.).

Gilroy's (2001) work highlighted the politicisation of discourses of identity, which intersect with ideas of difference in the form of race, ethnicity, religion, culture and nationality. These discourses of identity work to position people against one another, and to demonise those who represent a rejection of that divide – those such as the "half-different" (ibid) – taking us back to Olumide's (2002) positioning of mixed race as a challenge to discourses of purity. The thread of purity and contamination, and the way in which it is mobilised at different moments, – if we were to think about the aforementioned pathological discourses of racial purity in the 19th century in comparison to the politicisation of notions of purity in the 21st century for example – reigns strong, showing how ideas of purity operate in relation to context, but always seemingly in order to bolster narratives of difference and exclusion.

To return to Hall's (1978) work, we see how he implicated the role of history in shaping different racisms, as well as the role of the present; he did so by comparing the racism during the height of the colonial period with the racism operating in Britain in the 1960s and 70s, which he labelled "indigenous racism" (Hall, 1978:26). Through looking at the socio-economic conditions during

this latter manifestation of racism, Hall (1978) elucidated how these intersected with and informed discourses of race and racism; economic decline for example, aligned with the formation of racist policy which both created and reinforced everyday racisms, and provided those "indigenous" English populations most impacted by economic decline with a scapegoat in newly arrived black populations. These racisms also operated in relation to gender and ideas of the nation state, as is discussed in Francesca Klug's (1989) work, which considered the relationship between nation, race and gender in an analysis of immigration law and social policy in 20th century Britain. Klug (1989) traced the introduction of immigration control at the start of the 20th century in relation to the presence of non-British subjects, and the changes in immigration policy over the century which served to maintain the legal status of white Britons whilst reducing the ability of black and brown British subjects to claim the same level of citizenship through the progressive introduction of immigration restrictions. The eugenicist thinking behind these restrictions is considered by Klug (1989), as are the implicit governmental measures taken with the goal of population control. One example of such implicit control can be located in the development of incentives in the mid-20th century, which aimed to encourage white British women to have children (although not stated explicitly this racially homogenous and heterosexual reasoning suggested that they should be doing so with white British men) and thus grow the white British population, whilst at the same time birth control clinics were being considered in British colonies, which would restrict the population of black and brown British subjects. We see here how the theme of control over women's bodies discussed in the Pathology section re-emerges, marking a clear intersection over time between racist and patriarchal discourses in Britain and its empire.

More recent work on the relationship between legislation and ideas of race in Britain (see Bhambra, 2017 and Jones et al, 2017) echoes the work of Hall (1978), showing how discourses of race and racism have been mobilised by politicians, (often in a seemingly implicit manner, through notions of belonging and citizenship), in relation to the EU referendum and immigration policy respectively. In both instances, we see how policy and political rhetoric work to reinforce notions of difference and tip their hats to the previously mentioned idea of Englishness discussed by Hall (1978), which has somehow come under threat from "external" (i.e. immigrant and Other) forces, all for the purpose of broader political gains (be that population control or leaving the EU and the regulations that accompany its membership).

The intersection between discourses of race and racism and the British political context over time is undeniable, and is intertwined with other categories of analysis such as gender, culture and nationality but to name a few. Solomos et al. (2002[1982]) reinforced this intersection in their work, by looking at the creation of the political rhetoric of crisis and violence in late 20th century Britain. Picking up on the aforementioned narrative of disease in relation to nation, and reflecting on the work of Stuart Hall, the authors wrote about how crime, sexuality and youth were all politicised in 1970s Britain, to construct a discourse of a violent society which in turn portrayed an idea of crisis, and worked to justify the increasing control of the state over society.

Importantly, they underscored the relationship between racism and capitalism, illustrated through the way in which black people came to be positioned as the source of economic crisis in Britain, as opposed to the growth of capitalist policy and reductions in social expenditure (see also Rex, 1978), deindustrialisation and high levels of unemployment in the 1970s. This “problem” was to be “managed” through the policing of black people, increased state authoritarianism and the suppression of black people who were resistant to this. The result of these racist political narratives was that black people were scapegoated, providing a distraction from the role that the state had played in the creation of the crisis in Britain.

At the time Solomos et al. (2002[1982]) not only argued that racism was constructed, but that it transformed over time - changing in relation to political-economic and social elements - and that it may be produced and reproduced through the capitalist state. Racism was thus informed by context, and in need of analysis in relation to broader societal structures and histories. This argument aligns with the aforementioned work of Hall (1978), as well as the more recent works discussed above which exemplify how narratives of race and racism continue to feature in contemporary British political narratives and policy.

So far in this section I have briefly considered some of the key arguments that scholars in Britain were making in the late 20th century. These offer a backdrop for the more specialised studies into mixed race identity that were discussed earlier, as well as provide a sense of the way in which discourses of race have operated in the British political landscape. These considerations would be incomplete without pointing to some of the black British feminist discourses that were emerging at the same time.

Seminal scholar Hazel V. Carby (2002[1982]) wrote about the limitations of feminist discourse, which did not represent the experiences of black women in Britain who faced "the 'triple' oppression of gender, race, and class" (Carby, 2002 [1982]:111). Rather than facing one source of oppression, black women faced multiple, thus rendering existing white feminist discourses which focused mainly on patriarchy inadequate. Carby (2002[1982]) argued that the preoccupation white feminist discourses had with patriarchy were racist, as they worked to reproduce problematic and generalized narratives of black women based in the Global South, pitting black women in opposition to historically colonial narratives of progress and whiteness. Further, white feminist discourses failed to acknowledge the role white women played historically in imperialism and colonialism by focusing on white women's oppression based on their gender, and omitting the privilege they held as a result of their race. Ultimately Carby (2002[1982]) contended that feminism needed to be reconstructed in order to accommodate the specificity of black women's experiences and recognize the ways in which racism was operating amongst white feminists.

Mirza's (1992) research with young black women in London provided an empirical example of approaching black women's experiences from a multifaceted perspective, such as the one detailed by Carby (2002[1982]) a decade before. Mirza (1992) emphasized the need to consider structural inequalities when trying to understand ongoing "labour-market inequality" (Mirza, 1992: 2) amongst young black British women, by considering intersections of gender, class and race. Rather than aligning, for example, with notions of (heterosexual)femininity which presupposed that young working class women desired to get married, and take on the role of "home-maker" and "child-rearer" (Mirza, 1992:148) – a theory which had been commonly used in the existing discourse to explain gendered inequalities within the labour market – Mirza (1992) showed that young black British women had different conceptualizations of femininity. Young black women wanted to work and share childcare responsibilities with their partners, however they were constrained by other factors such as a lack of provision and access to childcare and familial support, and experiences of racial discrimination within schools which in turn impacted access to academic support and progress.

The work of both Carby (2002[1982]) and Mirza (1992) are indicative of shifts within social research and theory in late 20th century Britain, which were not only considering the role of racism and white supremacy in social discourses and societal structures, but the ways in which multiple

axes of oppression operated in relation to one another. Thus, the relationship between capitalism, race and the political sphere that was detailed above negatively affected all people racialized as black, but those effects were further informed by their gender, not to mention other social identities such as ability, sexual orientation and religion, which operated in relation to one another.

Although written decades ago, the work of Carby (2002[1982]) and Mirza (1992) remains relevant in that intersectional approaches continue to inform the work of black feminist research, and the way in which we think about feminism more generally (see Nash, 2019). Where Carby's (2002[1982]) earlier work reflected on the absences of black women's experiences in British history, and problematized the way in which black women were portrayed when they were considered, her later work continued to think critically about the historical absences of black people in relation to imperialism. Engaging with the work of Stuart Hall and returning us to the discussion at the start of this section which detailed Hall's (1978) recognition of the disconnect in Britain between discourses of Englishness and notions of race, Carby (2009) amplified this disconnect, showing the continued relevance of Hall's (1978) work.

Referring to an image published in 1948 of a black child in a British magazine entitled *Picture Post*, Carby (2009) wrote:

> Frozen in time and completely dislocated spatially, this black child has no past, present or future: its condition is alien – outside of temporality, and place of nation" (Carby, 2009: 653).

The author went on to provide a comparison between this image, and an image of herself as a child in Britain in 1950. Where the child in the magazine was pictured in a shapeless t shirt, within a white, empty space, Carby was located in the garden of her house, wearing a particular style of dress – where Carby was pictured with referents that situated her in a particular time and place, the child in the magazine was pictured with none. Carby's (2009) quote draws our attention to the way in which black people in Britain have been excluded from the narrative of what it means to be English – through disconnecting the black child in the picture from a particular place, she became place-less. This was not only a physical disconnection – it extended beyond the tangible, to encompass the temporal; this black child was denied a position in time and history.

> I should not ignore, or take for granted, the history out of and into which a subject emerges as a historical subject. For Hall's insistence that 'the fate of Caribbean people living in the US or Canada is no more ''external'' to Caribbean history than the Empire was ''external'' to the so-

> called domestic history of Britain', has structural and conceptual consequences for how we shape our narratives, for how we write our histories of the emergence of Britain as a modern racialized state, and for how we tell our stories of becoming racialized subjects (Carby, 2009:640).

How are we cast in relation to history? How do histories of race and racialization impact upon the ways in which we situate ourselves in relation to and within history? Carby's (2009) later work urged us to think about the way in which historical narratives are created in the context of empire (drawing parallels with the work of the postcolonial scholars mapped in the Pathology section) and how relationships of power have worked to erase the particular histories of black people in Britain, where her earlier work sought to challenge how these erasures were operating within discourses such as feminism in the 1980s. Significantly, Carby showed the importance of contextualising the experiences of black people and people of colour, particularly in the context of histories of subjugation and imperialism. Not only in order to recognise the presence of people of colour in histories and places shaped by empire, but also to allow for their experiences to be understood as more than dis-located or in relation to their oppressors.

Conclusion

> *Our tendency to think simplistically about complex relationships has resulted in dichotomous, hierarchical classification systems that have become vehicles of oppression (Root, 1992: 144).*

Each section of this chapter has considered literature which has sought to challenge and unsettle essentialist and simplistic notions of race and mixed race. Using Ifekwunigwe's (2004) ages as a guide, and starting with the age of pathology, I looked at how postcolonial scholars have sought to add complexity and nuance to our understandings of the experiences of mixed race and indigenous people living in settler colonies historically and in the present. Such works stand in stark contrast to the way in which mixed race and indigenous people have historically been portrayed, highlighting traditions of dehumanizing people of colour for the purposes of maintaining white supremacy through discourses of racial hierarchy, racial purity and patriarchy.

Moving on to the ages of celebration and critique, I considered some of the literature that has emerged in contemporary Britain which has continued to challenge essentialist representations of mixed race people and their families – speaking again to the fluidity and complexity of their experiences, as well as the ways in which they are shaped by discourses of class and gender. I also drew attention to work that maps how mixed race can be produced and experienced through

discourses of class, gender, place, and socio-political context, emphasising the importance of using an intersectional approach when seeking to understand mixed race experiences.

Finally, I situated these conversations surrounding mixed race experiences in relation to the broader context of race in Britain, showing how discourses of race and racial purity have been utilized at a political level in order to maintain societal divisions, a challenge to which is situated in the presence of mixed race people. The seepage of racist discourses into the British political landscape is significant, and positions race and racism as constantly manifesting in different ways and in relation to discourses of neoliberalism and patriarchy. It is within these frameworks that notions of mixed race also operate, with individuals navigating the legacies of empire present at the intersections of a society that is, raced, gendered, and classed. It is with these understandings of the British political landscape and history of empire that I have approached the context of Coventry in the 21st century, as a post-industrial city in which race, class, gender and history operate to shape mixed race people's lived experiences of race and racialization.

Chapter 4

The Multiplicitous City: Race, Class, Gender and Space.

> *Walk down the steps of the cathedrals – between old and new. One is the roofless, bombed remains of a time gone by. In and amongst the windowless ruins of the past, two stone figures embrace whilst on their knees in a sculpture called "Reconciliation". Facing them, on the other side of the cathedral is a plaque entitled "Sanctuary". Behind the kneeling couple, the other, newer cathedral is intact, majestic and reaching; through the glass windows you can see an ode to what was lost. At the bottom of the steps there is a square, look ahead and see the Herbert Museum on the right which boasts a curved roof made up of glass squares; the rest of the buildings, which are littered with 90-degree angles, belong to Coventry University. This square hosted some of the Coventry Pride celebrations of 2019 – a stage, families and their dogs, friends, partners and rainbows. To the left of the stairs there is a patch of grass, the home of the Knife Angel sculpture for some months. I saw the Angel in April 2019, standing tall, wings jagged and rusty, hands out, palms up, face with hollow contours. People left flowers and pictures of loved ones lost to knife crime on the surrounding grass and fencing. If you looked up you could see how the points on the knives that are the angel's wings stood against the square edges and bricks of the new cathedral.*
>
> *Turn left. Walk down the right-hand side of the street where you will see more of Coventry University's buildings on the right, the Britannia hotel on the left. You will reach a road, turn right and cross it. Pool Meadow Bus Station will be on your left, and if you turn over your right shoulder you will be able to see the Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre. I have never been inside. Ahead there is an entrance with a boom gate and just enough space for pedestrians – it is not accessible for everyone. Continue onwards and you will see a bridge underneath which is a car park. It is shaded and dank and there is a lot of cement. Everything seems grey. Follow the pavement around the outside of the carpark, veering right. Continue until you reach a roundabout – you want to go in the direction of the first exit but turn left beforehand, up Vine Street. It is awkward as a pedestrian, but once you get to Vine Street you are nearly there. Walk up the street which is lined with terraced houses on the right-hand side. The pavement is narrow, and sometimes obstructed. Further up, on the left, you will see the grounds and modern buildings of Sidney Stringer Academy. Turn right, and right again and you will be standing in front of St Peter's Centre and Church. This is Hillfields. (Reflections of the field, 2020 in response to Salmon, 1973)*

Hillfields is where this research project started, in a small office upstairs in St Peter's Centre which was once the home of CEMAP. Since then, Hillfields has emerged as an important site for a number of research participants who either had experiences in Hillfields, grew up in Hillfields, or live there now. Kyneswood (2018) used Wacquant's (2007) concept of territorial stigmatisation to describe Hillfields and the reputation it has garnered since the end of the Second World War. This stigmatisation pertains to the perceptions surrounding the area, and the way in which local residents have been and continue to be marginalised as a result of their precarious position in relation to the capitalist system. Elsewhere, in an analysis of Coventry's role as one of the first

sites for governmental Community Development Projects (CDP) in the 1970s, Carpenter and Kyneswood (2017) elucidated on Hillfields' decline from "a prosperous working-class suburb" that saw the birth of artisanal industries in the city in the 1830s, to "an almost classic inner city deprived area" (Carpenter and Kyneswood, 2017: 250) in the 20th century. Prior to the Second World War, as the economy in Coventry grew, manufacturers moved out of Hillfields to other parts of the city, along with skilled workers (Kyneswood, 2018: 145, and Carpenter and Kynsewood, 2017: 250). After the Second World War, facing the aftermath of bombing, plans by the City to redevelop Hillfields did not follow through. Although some high-rise flats were erected in the 1960s, by the 1970s, Hillfields was home to some of the worst housing conditions in the city (Ibid). Carpenter and Kynsewood (2017), analysed some of the local narratives surrounding Hillfields at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s, positioning Hillfields as an entry point for newly arrived immigrants and highlighting the associations made between the area and crime, as well as drug use and prostitution. Some of these themes emerged in Kyneswood's (2018) later work, with drug use in particular being touched upon during interviews with local people who lived in Hillfields in the 1980s. Today, Hillfields still experiences some of the highest levels of deprivation in the city (Coventry Insight, 2019) and as will be explored later in the chapter, the themes present in the reputation of Hillfields during the 1970s and 1980s continue to prevail.

Hillfields is framed as an area that was left behind, as well as one which began experiencing destitution and growing levels of poverty from before the Second World War. Carpenter and Kynsewood (2017) added complexity to this narrative in their engagement with the CDP work that took place there between 1970 and 1975, underscoring the general economic decline experienced in Coventry in the 1970s and during deindustrialisation in the 1980s. The reputation of Hillfields discussed above, is thus situated in relation to the broader economic context of Coventry, demonstrating that although destitution and poverty were not limited to the area, it continued to be immersed in stigma. This speaks to the importance of recognising the context in which areas that are faced with stigma are located, as well as questioning the reasons behind such stigma.

In the same way that poverty and economic decline were not isolated within Hillfields during these periods, this chapter is not only located within the area of Hillfields, but rather the city of Coventry more generally with Hillfields appearing as a familiar and significant site for some participants. It

thus remains important to consider the reputation and narratives that exist surrounding the city of Coventry more generally in order to gain a better understanding of the backdrop to this research.

The identity that has been created for the city of Coventry is centred on its history of industrial growth and prosperity between the World Wars and after the Second World War, and its status as a City of Peace and Reconciliation which was commemorated with the consecration of the new cathedral in 1962 (Coventry City Council, 2023). The cathedral was built after the original cathedral was destroyed during the Coventry Blitz of 1940 (Gould and Gould, 2016: 11). Other elements of city's identity include Coventry's membership of the UK City of Sanctuary network, (which promotes the welcoming of people in need of sanctuary), Coventry City of Sanctuary's mission being, among other things, to facilitate the inclusion of local refugees and asylum seekers in the city (Coventry City of Sanctuary, 2020). Lady Godiva's famous ride through the city in the 11th century (a statue of which is positioned in the middle of the city centre), and Coventry's positioning as the birthplace of Two-tone Music in the 1970s (one can visit the 2-Tone Village on Walsgrave Road in Coventry) are also common narratives that contribute to the identity of the city.

A lot of attention was placed on Coventry's bid and subsequent award as the City of Culture for 2021 in December 2017 throughout the duration of this research. From the beginning of the project in late 2016, local businesses were starting to display stickers in their windows expressing their support for the bid - banners and brightly coloured promotional materials featuring, among other things, images of people of different races in various cultural attire, people holding musical instruments and dancing, a festival and a sound system, could also be found around the city. The bid placed an emphasis on the city's "diverse" population and tapped into the city's status as a City of Sanctuary in order to emphasis its role as "one of the most welcoming cities in the UK offering sanctuary to the most refugees and migrants in England" (Coventry City of Culture Bid, n.d.: 2).

City of Bombing

Les Back (2011) described Britain as "both a bombed and a bombing culture" (2011: 306) in his analysis of the relationship between militarism, nationalism and race. Whilst pointing to the connection between bombing and colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Back

(2011) underscored the importance of understanding bombing as a tool which facilitated the growth of colonialism, and upheld the notion of racial hierarchy which situated people of colour as inferior and thus their lives as less valuable than the lives of white people. This is further emphasised through a discussion by Back (2011), of the lack of recognition that has been given in dominant British historical discourses to the role that colonial soldiers played in the Second World War (see also Carby, 2009).

Back (2011) asked us to think about racism in relation to these histories of colonialism, bombing and strife, "as an affective structure, or a kind of rigged collective *nervous system* which is the result of a particular kind of education of the senses" (Back, 2011: 314). This structure shapes how we react to and perceive one another, particularly those who are positioned as Other, determining who we should fear and subsequently whose lives are more valued. These reactions are historically rooted, but continue to thrive in, and shape, the present; "what intervenes in the post-war era is a switch from a fear of an external threat to a panic over the presence of a threat from within" (Back, 2011: 316). Ultimately Back (2011) argued that we need to think critically about how racism informs our affective responses to one another, and the consequences of this; "the enduring damage that racism exercises in our world is to inhibit our ability to encounter each other and the social world" (Back, 2011: 318).

As a city with a history of bombing that remains so clearly commemorated in the landscape, the ideas put forward by Back (2011) can be considered in relation to Coventry. Even more so when paying attention to the identity that has been created for the city as a place of sanctuary, peace and reconciliation, and most recently "culture". The city is littered with reminders of the destruction that occurred as a result of being bombed during the Second World War (Gould and Gould, 2016: 11). The starkest reminder may be the ruins of the old cathedral and its surrounding medieval buildings and cobbled streets, which are harshly juxtaposed with the blunt modern architecture of the rest of the city centre – as with the two cathedrals, old and new, past and present exist together in the fabric of the city. The cathedrals are a testament to Back's (2011) statement about the past informing the present: they throw light on the history of Britain as a bombed culture, less so on the role it played as the bomber.

This is the trend throughout the city – War Memorial Park, the largest park in the city, was opened in 1921 to commemorate the lives of soldiers from Coventry who died during the First World War (Coventry City Council, 2022). Tributes were later added for the lives of local soldiers that were lost during the Second World War, and the local council stipulates only that the memorials available today are for those who have died in conflict (Coventry City Council, 2022), begging the question of which conflict, and where. In addition, Coventry was the first city to twin with another in the world – an act of solidarity with Volgograd (then Stalingrad), a city in Russia which was impacted by bombing during the Second World War (Griffin, 2011). In total, Coventry is twinned with 26 cities, most of which are in Europe and North America, with singular cities in Jamaica, Australia and China. There exist 18 peace gardens throughout the city, each of which is dedicated to the countries in which the twin cities are based. It is interesting to see the way in which the process of twinning is conceived of by members of local government in the local newspaper:

> Coventry's twinning obsession started as a noble pursuit, supporting our bid to be city of Peace and Reconciliation by partnering other cities that had suffered the devastation of war.
>
> But now, with more than two dozen twin towns in tow, did we just get carried away?
>
> Cllr Tim Sawdon (Con, Wainbody) said in an interview with the Telegraph in 2011: "The original line of thinking was building on the principle of being a city of peace and reconciliation.
>
> "It probably just got a bit out of hand and I think we did get a little bit carried away.
>
> …
>
> He adds: "It's always difficult to know what we get out of it. How do you measure cultural benefits?
>
> "It would be wrong to say the citizens of Coventry don't get something out of it.
>
> "The benefit for citizens is establishing a cultural relationship with other towns, which is useful."
>
> While the city council claims "there must be a reason" for Coventry twinning with Jamaica's capital, Kingston, no one knows what it is.
>
> And no twinning visits are believed to have ever been made between the two cities during our 49-year relationship (Griffin, 2011).

We see here how the dialogue changes from one of nobility when reflecting on how twinning started in Coventry, to one of uncertainty and flippancy when considering the reason for Coventry twinning with the city of Kingston, Jamaica, in 1962. This particular twin city is positioned as an anomaly – the reason for which is unknown. Striking considering the presence of people from the

Caribbean in Coventry since the 1950s (City of Coventry Scouts, 1967-1991), Britain's history of imperialism and enslavement in the Caribbean during the triangular trade (Williams, 1944), and as Back (2011) mentioned, the role that soldiers from British colonies such as Jamaica played in the Second World War. Although Kingston may not have experienced bombing, the connection between Kingston and Coventry is clear when considered in relation to Britain's history of colonialism. The fact that these connections were excluded completely from the dialogue above, and instead approached with bewilderment shows the ways in which history is presented in particular ways, with certain narratives being celebrated, while others are silenced. In this instance, Britain as the role of imperialist, coloniser, enslaver, is omitted in the same way as the narrative of Britain as bomber is overlooked in the memorials of Coventry. Attention is paid only to the lives lost in Britain, not at the hands of Britain; the narrative of Britain as a bombed culture prevails.

Back (2011) discussed how particular narratives become dominant, noting that this process takes place over time and in relation to systems of power – systems of racism and dominance that are often enforced through militarism. Not only does this speak to the existence of narratives that have been silenced or ignored, but it underlines the potential emptiness of the idea of a city of culture or even sanctuary which is operating in a context that has not fully recognised these histories and in which, as will be discovered below, racism continues to thrive. This is not necessarily unique to Coventry, but is made all the more evident when explored in relation to the dominant narrative that has been created for the city, demonstrating that the presence of different communities in a city does not override the existence of racism, and underscoring the need for thinking critically about notions such as sanctuary and what they mean for different people.

This chapter considers the less prevalent narratives about Coventry – the ones that are not dominant. This research has revealed that within Coventry there exist multiple stories and experiences, not all of which are easily accessible. As explored above, particular narratives about the city prevail, shaping the views of visitors to the city, prioritising certain ideas over others and raising questions about what is concealed. This is not to say that the dominant narratives about the city are untrue, but rather to suggest that perhaps they are not representative of the entire story of the city, or the experiences held by local people.

City of Music, Resistance and Love

On an evening in May 2019, I attended a City of Culture meeting with members of the local Caribbean community in Coventry. We all gathered in the downstairs section of the West Indian Club on Spon Street, one of main historic streets of the City Centre. The club had opened in 1983, and had recently come under new management. I had been there a handful of times before to attend local community events, and would return a month later to assist a community organisation with preparations for a Windrush Day event that was being hosted for local Caribbean elders and their families. This was my first time in the downstairs area of the club - on my previous visits, I had only been upstairs in a large hall with a stage, kitchen and bar. Along with flags from different countries in the Caribbean, the walls of the hall upstairs boasted large boards which traced the history of music in the Caribbean community in Coventry. A combination of historical images and text, these boards relayed the story of the way in which music was experienced by Caribbean people in Coventry from the 1950s to the 2000s.

On a Friday evening, one month after the City of Culture meeting, I helped to set up for a Windrush event that was being held the next evening. In between moving tables and chairs around the hall, and chatting with the other volunteers, I craned my neck and followed the boards around the hall, reading the story of "Sound System culture" in Coventry:

> In the late 1950s Coventry the newly arrived have nowhere to go out, and the much loved R&B and Ska is nowhere to be heard. The Caribbean community use early radiograms such as the famed Bluespot or self built valve amplifiers to host parties in their homes.
>
> Count Myrie, Sir Dick, The Coleman Brothers and Ossie Holt are among the first to become well known for playing in Coventry houses, garages, weddings and birthdays with Sound Systems they built themselves, keeping the music playing and people together.
> (1950s Board, Coventry West Indian Club, 2019)

The next board, the 1960s, detailed how these gatherings had begun to take place in local venues, and traced the increased popularity of Ska music which coincided with Jamaican independence from Britain. The rise of Rastafarianism in Jamaica and its influence on Coventry was captured in the 1970s board, along with an acknowledgement of the way in which the Caribbean music scene had grown in Coventry, drawing crowds from other parts of the Midlands.

> Unlike many other UK cities, Coventry blues parties welcome everybody – black and white.
> (1970s Board, Coventry West Indian Club, 2019)

Alongside the emphasis that was placed on the inclusivity of these parties, was an acknowledgement of the changes in the socio-political landscape, which saw the Notting Hill Riots and economic decline which extended into the 1980s. Amidst this decline existed multiple transformations – music styles, sound styles, the emergence of new artists - all detailed on the 1980s Board along with a recognition of the opening of the West Indian Club:

> Clubs, venues and radio are playing more black music.
> (1980s Board, Coventry West Indian Club, 2019)

The 1990s Board described how local artists continued to transform themselves, while styles such as Reggae were influencing the formation of new music styles and a number of local clubs were named as home and host to local Caribbean artists, speaking to the increase of venues accommodating black music since the 1950s:

> The DJ is king and the popularity and influence of black music is now universal.
> (1990s Board, Coventry West Indian Club, 2019)

The 2000s board acknowledged how technology has shaped the way in which people access music and offered alternative sources to sound systems. It offered a reflection and recognition of the history and influence of sound systems:

> The lyrics, beats and melodies of classic Reggae and even Ska are found woven into Drum & Bass, Garage and Grime. UK Garage and Grime are a legacy of the Sound System with the MCs influenced by the 'toasting' tradition of Sound Systems.
>
> Since the 1950s, Sound Systems have sought to promote the Caribbean music ignored by the mainstream media.
> (2000s Board, Coventry West Indian Club, 2019)

These boards commemorate an important part of Coventry's history, and offer insights into what life was like for people who arrived in Coventry from the Caribbean. The story of how people carved out spaces for themselves in the city is told through their experiences of music (see Campion, 2021) – a fleshing out of the story behind the sound-system so neatly depicted on the City of Culture fliers I had seen previously.

The way in which music was experienced and created was influenced by what was happening in Coventry – the lack of access to spaces or familiar sounds was a catalyst for the creation of new sound systems and spaces in which to hear them. At the same time this music was being influenced by what was happening in the countries people had left behind – music was being created in the Caribbean, travelling to Coventry and listened to or reproduced in different ways, serving as fodder for the construction of new styles within and beyond the Caribbean community. As the Caribbean music scene grew in Coventry, so too did the spaces in which it could be experienced, something that was deeply interconnected with race – with the spaces that black people were able to occupy and experience enjoyment in the city.

Paul Gilroy (2002[1982]) explored how black music was received in post-war Britain, whilst paying particular attention to the political foundation of music forms such as Reggae, the influence of Rastafarianism and the way in which these music forms influenced white young people, despite the existence of racial tensions. Gilroy (2002[1982]) offered an in-depth analysis of the different forms that Reggae has taken, as well as attempts to depoliticise such forms in order to make them more palatable to white audiences. At the same time, Gilroy (2002[1982]) consistently pointed to the relationship between black music, political struggle and resistance, recognising such music as "…a prime site of culture struggle by blacks" (Gilroy, 2002[1982]:301). The story Gilroy (2002[1982]) told is in some ways an expansion of the story told by the boards in the West Indian Club. They complement one another – placing emphasis on different elements of the same story. The recognition of the relationship between black music, resistance and struggle provided in Gilroy's (2002[1982]) work is perhaps most useful when attempting to broaden our understanding of what life was like in Coventry for newly arrived people from the Caribbean. It reminds us of the importance of considering these experiences as political - the creation of spaces to listen to and produce black music in a place where it did not previously exist, as a newly arrived group of people of colour, a minority, is a form of struggle and resistance. So too is documenting those experiences in spaces such as the West Indian Club, which serves not only to acknowledge the influence of black music from the Caribbean on the British music scene, but also the role that was played by local individuals in Coventry who took it upon themselves to share and make space for black music through the creation of Sound Systems.

Naming and acknowledging the local people who played a role in the story of Sound System culture in Coventry not only memorialises those people, but also personalises the narrative, pointing to the role that lived experiences play in the construction of memories and the process of remembering. This story offers some context to the experiences of other local people at the time, who were living in and around Coventry and possibly experiencing these sound systems. It also serves to contextualise more well-known narratives regarding music in Coventry which focus on the city as the birthplace of two-tone music in the 1970s, and the well-known band, The Specials, but less so on the music genres that influenced the creation of two tone and where they came from.

Music was a prevalent theme amongst parents and family members (ranging from their mid-forties – fifties) of participants during this project. It emerged not only as a backdrop for people's memories of living in Coventry during the 80s and 90s, but also as a connecting motif for the formation of several racially mixed relationships. Participants, their parents and family members recounted the stories of how they first met in night clubs in or near Coventry.

Gina's parents met in the early 1980s at a nightclub her father owned in Nuneaton, a town about ten miles North of Coventry:

Tana: So, do they have a story of how they met?
Gina: Yeah. My dad used to own a nightclub in Nuneaton -
Tana: That's so funny -
Gina: …My dad was 30 and my mum was 19.
Tana: Okay
Gina: Um, and she was in there and my dad thought he was, thought he was like ... he used to call himself Prince *(laughter)* Now I'm like, that seems a really odd, an odd thing to call yourself *(laughter)*.
Tana: As in after the musician, or just like I'm a Prince? *(Laughter)*
Gina: Yeah, yeah, the musician.
Tana: Okay. *(laughter)*
Gina: Yeah, and he managed to -
Tana: What? He saw her and approached her?
Gina: He saw her and like, what...there's, there's a word isn't there? Pursued her.

Uncle Lenny and his wife met at a nightclub in Coventry in the 1980s:

Tana: Okay, alright and um, and then when did you meet your wife, was it in Coventry?
Lenny: Yeah I met with my wife 35 years ago
Tana: Wow
Lenny: Um, at a night club in Coventry.
Tana: Okay
Lenny: I wasn't doing the door there I went for a night out. I used to go to, I used to be a funky boy. *(laughter)* I used to like dancing to funky music

Tana: Okay
Lenny: and um, she was at the, at the club and we met in the club and…
Tana: Do you remember what the club was called?
Lenny: Yeah Tamango's.

Pete and Peggy met at a nightclub in Coventry in the 1990s:

Tana: And how did you meet?
Peggy: I was a waitress in a cocktail bar as he would say *(laughter).*
Tana: Where was it?
Peggy: Um, it was the Pink Parrot in town, it was a nightclub
Tana: Okay,
Peggy: and, uh… yeah, I was working and uh, Pete had asked me out once before, didn't you, and I'd turned him down at that time.
Tana: Was that also… in the club?
Peggy: Yeah,
Tana: Okay
Peggy: only purely because I was with somebody else, um, and then he asked me the second time and I wasn't with that person so, yeah, decided to get together
Pete: Mmm hmm
Peggy: and have been for... god
Ryan: Don't get it wrong.
Peggy: I know *(laughter)*... Um, Pete was 19, coming up to 20 and he's now 47
Tana: Okay
Ryan: 27.
Peggy: So, Yeah.
Ryan: And you got married seven years into the relationship, I know that because you were pregnant with me! *(laughter)*
Tana: So you met in like, the early 90s.
Peggy: Yes, yes, so… and I'm a little bit, I'm six years older than Pete so...
Tana: Okay
Ryan: She don't look it, does she? *(laughter)*

Interestingly, Tamango closed in 1985, and became the Pink Parrot under new ownership (Williams, 2014), meaning that Lenny and his wife met in the same place as Peggy and Ryan.

These sites hold significance in each couple's memories, as well as some of their children's memories, showing the way in which memory and place can become interconnected (see Campion, 2021). Here the places in question are characterised by music and enjoyment, the memories relayed with laughter and nostalgia by those with first or second-hand experience. These memories hold importance – they are visited by those who lived through them, and those who have heard them and have chosen to hold space for them in their minds. When considered in relation to many of the other experiences detailed by participants of racism and hostility, these encounters shift our focus to experiences of love and connectedness. Along with the discord – the hate and violence people experienced as a result of their race, there also existed love and enjoyment between people of

different races, which led to relationships that would last for decades and fuel the creation of families. The role of space here – the spaces in which people were able to meet and connect with one another, dance or ask one another out – is important. These spaces are also committed to memory – the name of a nightclub that no longer exists, the name of a nightclub that became another nightclub, and then another.

In the late 1960s South African photographer Billy Monk, photographed people at a nightclub in Cape Town called the Catacombs, where he was working as a bouncer. The subjects of Monk's pictures are engaged in various activities, often accompanied by glasses and bottles of alcohol – many appear to be aware of Monk's presence as they look into the camera lens, smiling or posing for the photographs. There are people holding instruments, making music, some people are wearing naval uniforms; others are in the midst of intimate embraces – many of these people are of different races. It has been noted that Monk's photographs are far more than a simple depiction of racially mixed connections and the taboo surrounding them during a time in South Africa when such relationships were illegal, and although the racial dynamics of these photographs are a useful starting point for this discussion, it is what they reveal beyond race that is most striking. Jamal (2013) articulated this eloquently in his reflection on Monk's photographs:

> …Monk's work embodies a prosaic tenderness and honesty that is rare in a society - overdetermined by the legacies of colonialism and apartheid - in which human life has largely been re-presented through a pathological and spectacularised optic. His work captures love in a time of lovelessness (Jamal, 2013: 54).

Jamal's (2013) reading of Monk's photographs focused on intimacy, connection and love – encouraging us not to reduce our reading of the photographs to a simple representation of underground racial dynamics in South Africa during Apartheid, but to reflect on the existence of human connection during a time of strife, violence and conflict; "love in a time of lovelessness" (ibid), as he so poignantly framed it. Further, Jamal's emphasis on the importance of looking beyond the "pathological and spectacularised" (ibid) points to how we can become distracted from the everyday ways in which people exist and live their lives, in the face of overarching and domineering systems of racism and oppression. Jamal (2013) is not requesting that we overlook these systems, but rather that we do not reduce people's everyday lived experiences to the conditions of these systems and in so doing overlook their humanity, and the existence of love.

Although the couples whose stories have been captured above were not living in Apartheid South Africa where their interactions would have been illegal, they were living in the birthplace of empire in the midst of racial tension and discord. The nightclubs in which they met were not underground, or taboo – in Gina's case her father, a man of colour, owned the nightclub in which he met her mother, pointing to a divergence in dynamics of race and class between their stories and those in the Catacombs. Nevertheless, this does not mean that an analysis of these experiences should be reduced solely to a representation of racial dynamics in the midst of racism - here we should also make space for a recognition of love, connectedness and humanity.

Music travelled as a motif through people's memories of what it was like to live in Coventry in the mid-late 20th century. It was threaded through black people's experiences of arriving in a new country and city, their efforts to remain connected to the place they left and with one another. It was present in memories of enjoyment, and finding love; as a frame for the beginning of relationships. The history of music in Coventry exists as a site of resistance for the Caribbean community, and occupies an important place in Coventry's cultural history, as well as people's lived experiences and memories of the city.

City of Violence

Zia

Tana: And what was it like growing up in Coventry?

Zia: It was, um, I would say it's quite a violent city so it's quite an interesting, um, contrast to Derby. Derby was a lot more mellow, a lot more friendly, and Coventry was very hostile *(Laughs)*.

Tana: And in what way was it hostile?

Zia: I think, um, everybody at that time was on edge, everybody, um, would argue with everybody, even friends, um, and I think being in Hillfields, being in the heart of, um, the black community, there was a lot of negative forces and a lot of negative stereotypes, so to go with the negative stereotypes, um came violence and aggression. So I had, um, quite a difficult childhood.

Tana: And do you know or why do you think it was that people were so on edge at that time? What, what decade was this or what year?

Zia: Oh this was early '90s for me, '91 onwards. I think the riots had just happened, um, so the Hillfields riots had happened, and, um, I think… everybody was warring for their own patch. *(Laughs)* It wasn't a united culture, it was very much, um, a culture based on individuals trying to either sell drugs or trying to make money in some kind of unsavoury way, and then there was the elders, you know, and they were trying to have their, um, their 'spotlight', if you like. Yeah.

Zia moved to Coventry from Derby, a city about 50 miles north of Coventry, at the age of 11 with her mother and sister. The riots to which Zia was referring took place in May, 1992 as a response to significant levels of unemployment. Starting in Wood End, where male unemployment was at 49%, they spread to the areas of Willenhall and Hillfields (Gould and Gould, 2016:130), where Zia was living. The hostility Zia described existed in a multifaceted environment, where the local community dynamics of Hillfields were operating within the broader context of Coventry. We see that although Zia experienced the riots from Hillfields, they were in fact not isolated to this space, but influenced by other areas of the city where the problem of unemployment was also being experienced. The lack of unity within the local community that Zia spoke of, is thus juxtaposed with the connectedness of the different communities who participated in the riots, revealing the complexity of the city and once again reflecting the contradictions evident in spaces such as Hillfields. At the same time, Zia reflected on experiences which are positioned as specific to Hillfields, which connected conceptions of blackness with violence, drug dealing and individual success through potentially illicit means.

Violence not only shaped Zia's understandings of Hillfields when she was growing up in the 1990s, but extended to shape her son's experiences as a young person living there in the 2000s. As Zia went on to explain where her son grew up later in the interview, the theme of violence re-emerged, along with the prevalence of drug dealing, showing some intergenerational consistency between her and her son's experiences of this part of the city, as well as a connection between this narrative about Hillfields, and the earlier discussion of the reputation it had garnered in the 1970s and 80s. As before, Zia made a connection between these themes and particular aspects of blackness which she positioned as negative.

> **Tana:** So your son's 21 now, does that mean that he spent half his life in Coventry and half his life –
>
> **Zia:** So… we moved out of Coventry two years ago.
>
> **Tana:** Okay
>
> **Zia:** He spent his first eight years in Hillfields and, interestingly, in, in those first eight years it was quite a difficult time because of the groups of friends that he, um, used to hang around with, um, and the… just the environment and the impact it has on his mindset of um, you can't show any weakness, if somebody wants to have a fight you're having a fight; it's that negative side of black culture. Um… and he said if he'd stayed in Hillfields he probably would have been a drug dealer because that was rife, that was everywhere, and it's- and

he, he says to me that, um… the mindset he was in was, um, almost fight-flight or, you know, you, you kind of play the game or get played type thing, and he would stand his ground and fight and he'd stand his ground and be as good as he could be at what he was going to do. So… to him, like I say, he probably would have been a big drug dealer living up to his dad's reputation and trying to outdo him.

Tana: But then you moved?

Zia: Yeah, so I identified it and I moved out of Hillfields, um, before it was too late for him, and there was a shift in, um, his mindset and his friendship groups. He, I had a partner who, um, got him into rugby when he was 8 and that sent him off into a very different pathway and, he's you know, he's professional now playing for Coventry, so...

Zia's description of the potentially negative impact that living in Hillfields could have had on her son, and the association she made between black culture, violence and drug dealing both during her youth in Hillfields and then again when her son was growing up raises questions about the criminalisation of elements of black culture as well as young black men in particular in Britain (see Joseph-Salisbury, 2019). Hall et al's (1978) seminal text engaged critically with the concept of "mugging" and the narrative which surrounded it in 1970s Britain, paying attention in particular to the sensationalist role of the media in producing a narrative of crisis, the increased activities of the police in predominantly black areas and the criminalisation of young black men. Zia's experiences in the 1990s and concerns for her son over two decades later show how the narratives engaged by Hall et al (1978) have continued to thrive, alongside institutionalised racism in policing, and speaks to the political framing of racially mixed and working class inner-city spaces such as Hillfields. We see how race continues to intersect with discourses of criminality, situating black youth in particular as the source of the "problem" and concealing or distracting from broader issues such as structural inequality.

Palmer (2012) reflected on the racism that has been present amongst police officers since the 1950s in Britain, as well as the way in which such racism continues to inform the often brutal treatment of young black men by the police during encounters or experiences of being stopped and searched. Between the years of 2014 and 2017, there were 261 investigations conducted by the West Midlands Police Force after allegations of racism against police officers (Freedom of Information, 2018). In 2017 a member of the West Midlands Police Force was captured on camera telling a black man that he would shoot him first if he had a gun and referring to the group Black Lives

Matter (an activist group against police brutality which started in the United States and has a branch in the UK) whilst engaging in a search of a property in Coventry (Halliday, 2017).

In an analysis of the criminalisation of drill and grime music – both of which are black music genres - in London, Fatsis (2019) explored how these music genres have been perceived by the London Metropolitan Police as catalysts for violent crime in London, which has led to the increased surveillance of young black men who listen to or create drill and grime music, as well as restrictions on spaces in which this music can be disseminated. Fatsis (2019) used the concept of racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009; Kapoor, 2013) to provide a critique of the approach taken by the London Metropolitan Police, which is borne of institutional racism and situates young black men in particular, as responsible for the decline of their social settings:

> Instead of repairing the desolate environments that drill artists describe in their lyrics, the neoliberal state accuses residents for the deterioration in their surroundings; often attributing such decline to a lack of civility and a cultural propensity for gang violence, instead of the state's reckless disregard for the safety of its citizens (Fatsis, 2019: 1301).

Through implicating neoliberalism as a central facet in the shaping of people's everyday lives, which prioritises particular lives over others, Fatsis' (2019) analysis allows for the existence of violence and illegal activities in areas such as Hillfields which is home to many black working-class people, to be understood as a response to the limitations that are placed on disadvantaged groups, as opposed to a cultural tenet. Racial neoliberalism allows for a recognition of the way in which race and class intersect to shape people's experiences, implicating the role of the state in the mapping of violence and inequality in places such as Britain. Fatsis (2019) echoes the earlier work of scholars such as Hall et al (1978), Rex (1978), and Solomos et al (2002[1982]) interested in exploring the way in which discourses of race and racism have been mobilised in order to provide scapegoats for structural shortcomings in Britain, many of which are as a result of capitalist and neoliberal agendas that have encouraged the destruction of the welfare state.

Zia was not the only participant who had violent perceptions of Coventry. Sitting around their dining room table with their parents, Smrita and Victor, twin brothers Matthew and Dylan, spoke about their experiences of violence in the city centre of Coventry. The conversation was lively, with family members often talking simultaneously. Matthew was the most vocal, but it was clear

that Dylan shared similar experiences as he would regularly affirm what Matthew was saying. Unlike Zia, Matthew and Dylan made no mentioned of Hillfields, and their perceptions of violence in the city were connected to the city centre and an area north east of the city centre called Bell Green. Bell Green was an area to which the twins would mainly go to visit friend's houses, and in which they needed to be "near somewhere" such as a shop they could enter in case something happened. Matthew's reasons for spending time in the city centre when they did go out were compounded by issues of safety, "because if anything did happen we've got a lot of faces, and a lot of people… that could be anything, literally anything from robbing, mugging…". The excerpt below highlights some of the conceptions Matthew and Dylan had about safety in the city centre, which are juxtaposed with those of their parents.

Smrita, Victor, Matthew and Dylan
Part I

Tana: So, and but the city centre, would you say that it's a safe place?
Matthew: No. *(mild laughter)*
Dylan: No, no. After 10:00, that's when all the road men…come out.
Matthew: No, no I'd say after about 6:00 they start flooding in…
Dylan: Yeah… 'cos school's ended
Matthew: [*overlap*]… they usually hang around, um, Transport Museum, you know those [*overlap*] you know those people there?
Dylan: Pool meadow…
Matthew: To that bus stop, bus station thingymajigy,
Smrita: bus station, yeah…
Matthew: and then they'll slowly start advancing into, like it's like some sort of army-
Smrita: whose "they"?
Matthew: … It's like an army, so they'll start - the roadmen! The roadmen we call them,
Smrita: Ok
Matthew: Uh, people who carry knives, guns,
Dylan: drugs,
Matthew: drugs, anything
Dylan: Smoke
Matthew: anything…to sell.
Smrita: yeah, yeah
Matthew: Uh they'll, start advancing into –
Dylan: The Burges.
Matthew: - Burges and you know that McDonalds, the KFC?
Smrita: Yeah yeah
Matthew: If you walk down there [*overlap*] and it's getting dark,
Smrita: yeah
Matthew: you better, you better be able to run fast for your life otherwise you will get stabbed.
Dylan: You just don't. You'll just get mugged.
Matthew: mugged, anything
Tana: This is so interesting 'cos I -

Victor: [*overlap*]… As a couple of adults, if we walked down there - no issue.
Smrita: I don't feel like that at all
Victor: It's because they're young.
Matthew: No, 'cos we know what people are capable of.
Smrita: ok but, I- [*overlap*]
Dylan: Because young people buy fancy stuff
Matthew: [crosstalk] We had someone, we had someone in Finham come in with a knife 'cos they said that they were going to go stab someone up because they said something bad-.
Smrita: After 6:00 o'clock, I would walk down the Burges if I was in town and there was something I wanted to do. I wouldn't feel that anxiety at all, so it is something about the, the youth element of it, I… Would, would you feel safe?
Victor: Generally speaking, yes. There's parts of town I wouldn't walk through, but, uh, I'd I'd, I'd walk down there.
Smrita: yeah
Dylan: yeah you [*overlap*]
Matthew: I, I could walk through them all as long as I've got at least three people with me.
Dylan: yeah
Smrita: Ok, and Swanswell Park I noticed you used to go quite a lot around.
Victor: 'Cos there's an ice cream parlour there isn't there
Smrita: There's an ice cream parlour there, as a meeting place
Matthew: When - Once time, once - a once time thing [*overlap*]… happened to walk by to go to city college and then walk back to town.
Smrita: But the reason I remember it is 'cos Swanswell Park used to be an area of anxiety for me. You'd never go through it. You'd go around it.
Matthew: Ah, nowadays it ain't too bad. It's now moved up towards town.
Dylan: Yeah
Matthew: If you're down a back street, you've got to be careful.
Smrita: So tell me again, they walk through The Burges and then …
Matthew: They walk through The Burges and that's about 6 o'clock, 6 o'clock and then
Dylan: yeah
Tana: Is this every day or on the weekends?
Matthew: Oh *every day*. Everyday
Dylan: yeah
Matthew: No day is safe.
Tana: Good to know.
Matthew: No day is safe
Victor: It's as soon as school and college is over, yeah
Dylan: Yeah, then they'll start all filling in
Smrita: Ok
Matthew: and they'll slowly keep advancing into the city centre. The only reason I know they've gone into the city centre – 'cos they are usually around there at like midnight time. That's when all the roadmen activities kick off.
Victor: They're quite slow walkers.
Tana: Roadman activities… *(laughter amongst group)*
Smrita: It's a whole education…

Matthew drew on militaristic language to describe violence in the city centre, moving "like an army" and in the form of "roadmen", engulfing the area in danger. Landmarks in the city centre were used to detail this advancement, becoming checkpoints for violent activities that took place

as the sun set. There are multiple threads that emerge in this excerpt – knife crime, discourses of mugging, "roadmen", intergenerational experiences of safety and their connection to place, youth and crime. I would like to delve deeper into Matthew ad Dylan's use of the term "roadmen" and the association Smrita made between Matthew and Dylan's experiences of violence and the notion of youth.

Whereas the reference Matthew and Dylan made to occurrences of "mugging" in Coventry show the continued relevance of the aforementioned work of Hall et al (1978) regarding the proliferation and political context of the term, their use of the term "roadmen" is also worth noting. Boakye (2019) connected the term with the West Indian diaspora in Britain, the etymology of which can be traced to Jamaican patois. Further, he situated it as related to discourses of black masculinity, and living in tension between "bravado" and "struggle" (Boakye, 2019: 311); "to do road is to do things and experience things that happen out on these mean streets, automatically positioning the roadman on the margins of respectability" (Boakye, 2019: 310). Thus, although Matthew and Dylan did not refer to the race of the "roadmen" they were describing, the term they used held racial and gendered connotations that pertain to discourses of blackness and masculinity. Further, the connection they made between "mugging" and "roadmen", shows the ways in which narratives of black masculinity continue to be associated with violence (see Joseph-Salisbury, 2019), as well as illustrate the significance of language, and the meaning that it holds when it is situated politically and historically.

Smrita, Victor, Matthew and Dylan Part II

Matthew: …Oh, there's another one. We got searched at Gay Pride.
Dylan: Oh that was, that was stupid.
Matthew: That was stupid…
Smrita: Oh you didn't tell me that did you? [*overlap*]
Matthew: Yeah, me and Dyl. Yeah, we were, uh, walking down, it was near the cathedral, walking down with a load of mates. *White* mates.
Dylan: [*overlap*] We were, we were, we were, we were dressed in *black* to be fair. *(some laughter)* But I mean, we didn't have masks on or anything like that we were just-
Matthew: [*overlap*]…they're trackies. A lot of people do it.
Dylan: Yeah
Matthew: So we were walking down with a bunch of white mates, me and Dyl being the *only* Asians out of that group. They stopped me and Dyl only, like more or less splitting the group,
Dylan: Yeah
Matthew: stopping me and Dyl, and searched us.

Dylan: For *no* reason.
Matthew: And the rest could walk on.
Smrita: And you felt that was because you were brown?
Matthew: Oh yeah, and then there was people over there with gimp suits with like spikes sticking on their knuckles *(laughter).* Could've, could have done way more damage than us! *(laughter)*
Tana: And this was last year?
Matthew: Yeah. And they didn't, they didn't
Dylan: nothing about them, no.
Matthew: They stopped *us*.
Smrita: I think *(inaudible)* [*overlap*] for the event.
Matthew: They stopped *us*.

Matthew and Dylan's experiences of being separated from a group of white friends and stopped and searched by the police in Coventry exemplifies how young men who experience racialisation as Asian are also included in the aforementioned narrative of criminalisation attached to young black men in Britain (see Goodey, 2001). This provides a contrast with the first excerpt, in which Matthew and Dylan distanced themselves from those they deemed to be the perpetrators of violence in the city, and positioned themselves as potential victims of violence. The incident in the above excerpt illustrates how despite the distinction Matthew and Dylan made between themselves and those engaging in violence in the city, they may still continue to be associated with those narratives and occurrences of violence due to how they are perceived or racialised.

The location of this incident is telling – not only due to its proximity to where the knife angel described at the start of this chapter was displayed, and the fact that stop and searches may be conducted for weapons such as knives (Release, 2022), but due to it coinciding with the Gay Pride festival in Coventry. We see how instances of racism may crosscut moments of celebration, remembrance and resistance as well as the stark parallels apparent between the birth of pride – the 1969 Stonewall Riots in which LGBTQ+ people resisted unjust treatment by the police (Stonewall, 2020) – and the continued discriminatory treatment by the police, in this instance on the basis of race. Pride, a space carved out for LGBTQ+ people to express themselves, celebrate the progress that has been made and most importantly, emphasise the ongoing fight against *inequality* and harm perpetuated towards the community, marred by the singling out and searching of two young brown men by the police.

In these excerpts we see the ways in which discourses of race and criminality continue to be perpetuated in 21st century Britain, especially in relation to perceptions and the policing of young black men, but also extending to encompass young mixed race men with black-white parentage as in Zia's experiences, and young mixed race men with Asian-white parentage as in Matthew and Dylan's experiences. The experiences of Matthew and Dylan illustrate a disconnect between perceptions of the self and how we are perceived by others, drawing parallels with the themes in Chapter 6 which explores how mixed race people navigate external perceptions, as well as how these perceptions become entangled with processes of racialisation, gendering and criminalisation. At the same time, their experience of being stopped and searched at Pride shows how inequalities continue to be reproduced, with moments of celebration and resistance being interrupted by broader frameworks of institutional racism which are enforced through vehicles such as the police. Marginalised communities such as LGBTQ+ people and people of colour thus celebrate and exist within and against settings of structural inequalities, which are made even more fraught when one operates within multiple communities that experience oppression.

City of Stigma

> In many ways, Hillfields has been made the scapegoat for the city… People living in the suburbs pointed to it as one of the least desirable parts of the city. Estate agents devised ingenious ways of avoiding the use of the word 'Hillfields' when advertising properties. A change of attitude could be sensed when you announced that you lived in Hillfields. If an unmarried woman gave it as her address, then people were liable to get the wrong idea about her occupation. The people of the area were maligned by those who had no first-hand knowledge of them… Every city has its contrasts; every city has its Hillfields. Only the name is different (Salmon, 1973: 5-6).

I would like to return to the discussion at the start of this chapter, which explored the stigma that has been associated with the area of Hillfields since the 1960s, and consider some of the ways in which the experiences of participants in this research complicated and challenged that narrative. The following experiences of Zia and Kai challenge the one-dimensional narrative of Hillfields which is encapsulated in the above excerpt, through introducing notions of race, class and gender. Equally, the experiences of Sharisa later on challenge notions of Coventry as a city more broadly, showing how notions of class and race operate to produce narratives of roughness.

Zia

Tana: Okay. So you moved to Hillfields with your mum?
Zia: Yeah.
Tana: Was there a reason why she chose Hillfields?

Zia: *(Laughs)* We didn't choose it, we came as a domestic abuse case, so we fled Derby – not from my dad *(laughs)* at all. *(Laughs)* And we, we landed in, um, a safe house in Hillfields so- and we stayed there for a year in the safe house and then I suppose a natural progression, 'cause we were integrated into the area.
Tana: Yeah. So you stayed there?
Zia: Yeah.
Tana: Okay. And, um, did you go to school in Hillfields as well?
Zia: I went to a secondary school... No, my mum wouldn't let me. So I went to Stoke Park which is in Stoke. And my mum refused to let me go to Sidney Stringer because, um she'd heard how much crime and violence and all sorts was happening and she didn't want me to go there. So I - yeah, I was plucked out of it.

Kai

Tana: Ok, and why did you choose Hillfields?
Kai: Well to be honest, I didn't really choose it – it was what's available, um you know, you probably know all the issues with the housing crisis and stuff like that so it's very difficult to get a house in Coventry
Tana: Ok
Kai: So you just take what you're given really

Kai and Zia moved to Hillfields for different reasons, however, common in both their experiences was the lack of choice they had in that process. Both accounts hold within them a sense of uncertainty - Zia and her family "landed" in Hillfields when she was 11, and for Kai it was a case of taking "what you're given" at the age of 18 – which is further complicated by experiences of domestic abuse and housing shortages. Not only were both Kai and Zia uncertain about their destination, over which they had no control, but they were coming to that destination from precarious circumstances.

When considered in relation to Coventry's identity as a place of sanctuary and welcome, Zia and Kai's experiences are telling. They point to complexity of the notion of sanctuary and what that has meant and looked like for people, especially girls and women of colour, in the 1990s and 2000s. Sanctuary here, is understood in the context of lived experiences. Sanctuary is complicated and varies for different people depending on their circumstances. In the case of Zia and Kai, experiences of sanctuary crosscut gender, violence and precarity. They also disrupt the connection between sanctuary and welcome that was made in the City of Culture bid, showing that these concepts are not mutually exclusive, and opening up the possibility of sanctuary as an experience that lacks individual choice – an experience of "landing" or taking "what you're given" as expressed by Zia and Kai respectively - and is engulfed in uncertainty.

The idea of Hillfields as a place of sanctuary contrasts significantly with the reputation and perceptions of the area that were unpacked at the start of this chapter, speaking to the limitations of those perceptions, and the holes which exist in the dominant narratives surrounding that part of the city. Participants were aware of these narratives, as has already been demonstrated in the previous sections, where particular emphasis was placed on the levels of crime, violence and drug dealing in Hillfields. At the same time, other participants challenged these narratives, complicating them with their own experiences of both Hillfields and the city of Coventry more generally:

Kai

Tana: Ok, and did you know that area [Hillfields] beforehand?
Kai: well, you know that's funny because I've always received bad reviews of Hillfields – mainly for prostitution, but, um I wouldn't say it's a bad area. There is prostitution, but I wouldn't say it's a bad area,
Tana: Ok
Kai: and I think it was actually a nice shock to go there and think "actually, what's, what are people chatting about?" *(small laugh)* Hillfields is fine.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: so yeah
Tana: why do you think people thought about it like that?
Kai: Well back in the day I think around the eighties, it was called the frontline and it was predominantly afro-Caribbean community where they would literally man that whole area and from then I think it had a reputation of being, being the area… of rough basically. Um, whether that's true or not, I don't know, also we had marches through Hillfields from certain – like National Front, where black communities would literally run them out, and police would have to come, so those sort of things was what gave it that name.
Tana: Ok
Kai: Yeah
Tana: So that idea of roughness then was like quite connected with race?
Kai: I think it is. Even 'till now, um, in Coventry the black community is scarce. Everybody's scattered around now, but, if you… well, I say if you but, in Uni, I did - for myself - a test on people and said "what do you think of black people? What do you think of white people?". Majority of the time black people would become drug dealers, or these thugs, or this or that, so they'd have a negative image towards them already. Whereas white people would be like in business suits, professional, know what they're doing and so on… And I think that's to do with social media,
Tana: Yeah
Kai: It's to do with terminologies that we use as well, um, everything we use as black is bad.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: and everything that's white is pretty and nice

Kai's mention of the prevalence of "prostitution" in Hillfields, refers to the broader narrative surrounding the area which reaches back to the 1970s, and positions it more recently as the red-light district of Coventry. This is acknowledged by a local charity called Kairos who provide support and resources to women sex workers in Coventry, focussing on "street-based prostitution" (Kairos, 2018: 4). Kairos was set up in 1999 and has undertaken a number of projects and initiatives since then which focus on outreach for local sex workers, advocacy and awareness raising, among other things. One such project, Outreach and Drop-in, is described as follows:

> This is Kairos' front-line safety service and primary referral tool for women in street-based prostitution. We meet women on the streets in the red-light district in Hillfields and then have daytime and evening drop-in services available. These offer harm reduction items, access to health professionals including an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser, GP and Sexual health nurses, food, drinks, clothing, and a safe space to report or disclose crimes through the National Ugly Mugs scheme (Kairos, 2018:5).

In addition to Kairos' work engaging with women sex workers on the streets of Hillfields, Kairos' office is also based in Hillfields, further exemplifying the relationship referred to by Kai between sex work and the area. That Kairos' work prioritises the safety and health of local sex workers speaks to the potential precarity and vulnerability of these women, which is highlighted not only in the organisation's mission - "to increase the safety, stability and self-belief of women in Coventry affected by or at risk of exploitation, through emotional and practical support, advocacy and awareness raising" (KairosWWT, n.d.) – but by the statistics published in their 2017-18 report (Kairos, 2018:3), which detail the prevalence of diagnosed mental health conditions (80%) and experiences of at least one form of child, domestic or sexual abuse amongst service users (at least 80%), as well as pervasive drug addiction amongst women supported in street-based prostitution (100%). Significantly, Kairos estimates that around half of their service users entered into prostitution through exploitation, sometimes as young teenagers (2018:3). Between 2017 and 2018 service users disclosed over 30 crimes to Kairos, of which they were on the receiving end, including rape, sexual assault, assault, and other forms of abuse (Kairos, 2018:3).

This information provides some context to the association Kai made between "prostitution" and the area of Hillfields, shedding light on some of the challenges that are faced by local sex workers in the area, as well as speaking to the importance of considering gender in these associations. That Kairos focuses on supporting women sex workers in Coventry and that they have been operational for 21 years speaks to the ongoing need for their services. This is not to say that there are not sex

workers who are men, but rather that there appears to be a prevalence of women service users in Hillfields, and a lack of data surrounding service users who are men. Research conducted by Hester et al. (2019) at the University of Bristol's Centre for Gender and Violence Research, on the complexities of selling sex in England and Wales revealed that a large majority of their respondents who had been or were involved in sex work or prostitution were women (529) with only 13 respondents identifying as male and 8 as non-binary or trans (Hester et al, 2019:11). Additionally, out of 11 NGO respondents, only three did not explicitly work with self-identified women, and it was revealed that men made up a small percentage of their clients (Hester et al, 2019:78). This research seems to suggest that women dominate the sex work industry in England and Wales, thus supporting the above supposition regarding the prevalence of women sex workers in Hillfields.

The way in which gender operates here is important when thinking about Kai's statement regarding the "bad reviews" she had received about Hillfields and that this was "mainly" as a result of the prevalence of prostitution in the area. That the majority of sex workers in Hillfields appear to be women suggests that the reviews Kai had received were implicitly gendered – touching on gendered stigma surrounding sex work, and gendered ideas about women's sexuality and behaviour. When considered in relation to Kai's analysis of roughness and race, and the association she made between racial stereotypes surrounding blackness and the idea of "badness", parallels can be drawn. In both instances Kai used the notion of that which is "bad" to explain the stereotypes that exist surrounding sex workers and black people in Hillfields – on arriving in Hillfields she discovered that it was "not a bad area" whilst concurrently acknowledging that "prostitution" did exist. Further, she used the history of anti-racist activism in Hillfields to counter racist stereotypes surrounding black people which often positioned them as drug dealers and in other "negative" ways. Instead, she tapped into the history of Hillfields as the "frontline", expanding upon ideas of what it meant and means to be black in Hillfields as someone living through exacerbated racial tensions (see Campion, 2021: 947), and now as someone remembering those racial tensions and experiencing them in today's world. Interestingly, the language of the frontline is also mobilised by Kairos in their description of their services, again drawing parallels between these two instances of anti-black racism and stigma surrounding sex work, and positioning the resistance of these things in militaristic terms.

Kai was not the only participant to engage with the notion of roughness when dissecting and addressing stereotypes she had encountered surrounding particular places in Coventry. Sharisa made a clear connection between discourses of roughness and class whilst unpacking negative stereotypes attached to Coventry that she had encountered from residents in the surrounding towns of Kenilworth and Leamington:

Sharisa

> **Sharisa:** Ok…yeah, so um I lived in Kenilworth for I would say about 6 or so months uh with my mum's family… uh, had a job in Leamington Spa, uhm I didn't really enjoy Kenilworth *(slight laugh)*. It was not really my scene… There was no people, like I didn't know anyone, it just wasn't, it wasn't really me. Uhm and same with Leamington, really, and I did, I did say before that I felt like Kenilworth people, and even Leamington people, but especially Kenilworth people, they wanted to disassociate themselves with Coventry, like they would always be like "no, no, no we're not Coventry, we're Warwickshire or we're whatever" like they just didn't like *(slight laugh)* they wouldn't like it if I'd basically say Kenilworth was Coventry, they would, they would be like "no, we're not the same" or, "but oh I ain't going to Coventry", "oh I'm not going down there", like, do you know what I mean? As if it's some big difference *(slight laugh),* but really it was basically the same.
> **Tana:** Yeah… and so what, what do you think made people um think that way about Coventry?
> **Sharisa:** Um, I definitely think it was a class thing. I think for some reason people in Kenilworth think they're of a higher class or they've got more money or just they think Kenilworth is better – maybe they find… Coventry more rough or more *(sighs)* I don't know, like, they just, they just overall I think look down on Coventry and they just find it a bit like, yeah, rough and not as put together or nice as Kenilworth, but… I don't know, yeah *(slight laugh)* ... I th- I don't think Kenilworth is special.
> **Tana:** and when you were staying- 'cause I also lived in Kenilworth and kind of when you were staying there, did you see many people of colour?
> **Sharisa:** No. Not- no *(laughs)*.
> **Tana:** Ok *(laughs)*
> **Sharisa:** *(laughs)* yeah *(laughing)* just no *(laughing)*.
> **Tana:** and *(laughs)* how did you feel about that?
> **Sharisa:** Uhm, it was different. I was just like ok this is what it's like living in those small village-y kind of places. And yeah obviously I don't prefer it. Like it's not, it's not great. But it's like – I was kinda like whatever about it, but I definitely didn't love it. And even not far from where I was living at the time they had a sign up about, um, Brexit, and it was like vote, vote leave kind of thing. And I was just like, ok… (laughs) this is where I'm living… in a vote leave place. Ok…

In a similar vein to Kai, Sharisa challenged the negative stereotypes surrounding particular places, this time the city of Coventry in general as opposed to a specific area of the city. Sharisa positioned Coventry and Kenilworth as "basically the same", stating that "I don't think Kenilworth is special" when contesting the notion that Coventry was somehow inferior to Kenilworth. Unlike Kai, Sharisa explicitly engaged class and ideas of high and low class, with people from Kenilworth

being positioned as "of a higher class" than people from Coventry who are thus of a lower class. Notions of roughness surrounding Coventry were also presented when Sharisa reflected on the disassociation Kenilworth residents in particular had made between the town and Coventry. Alongside these considerations of class and roughness, Sharisa also reflected on whether people in Kenilworth felt the town was better because they had more money. Implicit connections could be made between these viewpoints of superiority and race; aside from Sharisa's definitive response to my question regarding whether she had seen many people of colour living in Kenilworth, her subsequent labelling of Kenilworth as a "vote leave place" made a connection with broader narratives surrounding Brexit and the political viewpoints of those who voted to leave the EU. Anti-immigrant sentiments and racism, as well as a rise of hate crime in the UK and the reach of far-right sentiments through the media since the referendum connect the discourse of "vote leave" with intolerance, racism and a clear narrative of fearing the Other (see Bhambra, 2017).

Using qualitative research methods, and starting with the work of Bourdieu, Watt (2006) analysed the use of the rough/respectable dichotomy amongst white working-class residents living on council housing estates in London. Watt (2006) elucidated on the historical existence of this distinction amongst working class people in Britain over time, making it clear that it is not novel, and emphasising the difficulty of offering a clear definition of "roughness". This is pertinent when thinking about Sharisa and Kai's use of the notion of "roughness", and how I have sought to understand each person's use of this term through the associations they made with it, as opposed to reaching for a standardised definition.

Also relevant to this discussion is Watt's' (2006) engagement with how participants who deemed themselves respectable sought to distance themselves from those residents they considered to be "rough"/ "low status" (Watt, 2006: 784):

> …those tenants who thought the low-status others were in a minority wanted to preserve the spatial status quo by keeping the problem tenants and urban others out and in so doing maintain enclaves of respectability (Watt, 2006: 788).

This echoes Sharisa's comments about people from Kenilworth seeking to "disassociate" themselves from Coventry; although we do not know the race or class of the people to whom Sharisa was referring, the narrative of distancing based on ideas of "roughness" or inferior societal positioning resonates between her comments and Watt's' (2006) research findings. The aspect of

spatiality referred to by Watt (2006) is also present in Sharisa's comments – in the distancing that occurs between the places of Kenilworth and Coventry based on particular ideas about each place, despite their geographic proximity[5].

In the above examples, we see the ways in which certain images of Coventry and areas within the city are associated with notions of roughness, as well as how those images may intersect with discourses of class, race and gender. Where at first these images may appear to be static, they come alive and are complicated by engaging the lived experiences of people from Coventry, people such as Kai and Sharisa who actively challenge classed and raced stereotypes as well as local community organisations such as Kairos which seek to provide support for vulnerable and often exploited women in the city, trying however they can to hold space for those affected by the conditions produced by patriarchal and neoliberal frameworks.

Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter I have sought to draw attention to the narratives that abound surrounding the city of Coventry, and the area of Hillfields in particular, and the ways in which these operate in relation to the lived experiences of mixed race people from the city. Coventry is not exempt from the broader discourses operating on the British political landscape, and neither are the mixed race people who live there. These are discourses of structural violence which see vulnerable people, and especially women, such as the service users at Kairos, exploited, and young mixed race women such as Kai and Zia in need of emergency housing. These are the discourses of institutional racism which see young men of colour such as Matthew and Dylan racially profiled and targeted by the police for simply existing. These are the discourses of racism and class, which see people from the next town over look down their noses at Coventry as it is more black, more brown, more working-class. Cutting across these discourses are moments of celebration, resistance, and love, living through and within the memories of some of the participants of this research and their families – participants such as Uncle Lenny, Kai, Gina, Peggy and Pete.

[5]The fastest train between Coventry and Kenilworth takes 7 minutes, and the distance between both city centres is approximately 6 miles.

Coventry is a city shaped by a bombed and bombing culture – it holds the remains of the past: the remains of war and the remains of empire. Coventry is a city of music, a city of love, a city of resistance. Coventry is a city of [structural]violence, a city of un/chosen sanctuary. Coventry is a city that is stigmatised. Coventry is a city that is classed, raced, and gendered, areas of which are overflowing with the weight of these intersections – areas such as Hillfields. Hillfields is the historical home of the working class, black, brown, and marginalised. The way in which Hillfields is positioned is home to the workings of neoliberal, racist and patriarchal discourses. Hillfields is home. Hillfields is the frontline. "Hillfields is fine" (Kai, 2018).

Chapter 5

Genealogies of Race

What does it mean to learn about race? When does this take place and how? From whom do we acquire the language of race and what does that process look like? Who shows us what it means to exist and navigate the world in racialised bodies? At what point do we look in the mirror, or lift our hands to see and know to label the colour of our skins, the kinks in our hair, wideness of nose and arch of lip, contour and positioning of eyelid as indicative of something different, as more than the uniform labels in the biology textbook? Although this process of learning is undoubtedly informed by external experiences with people and discourses that we encounter during our lives, we should also consider the knowledge to which we are given access within the realm of the familial (see Pang, 2018). The narratives of race that are woven by our parents, through our grandparents, and great, great grandparents, sometimes passed down via siblings of parents, through generation, made tender by time and memory. These narratives – these personal histories – do not exist outside of that which is external, but rather alongside and in relation to it, responding and addressing, selecting and emphasising, rejecting and resisting.

This chapter begins to consider the way in which mixed race people and their families navigate and engage with concepts and personal histories of race through a process which I am calling the genealogy of race. The genealogy of race is a crafting. Here genealogy is being used to refer to the conscious unpicking of elements pertaining to racial background, and the reweaving of them in order to come to a conclusion about how one's race is to be defined and understood. The genealogy of race is an intergenerational narrative, created amongst kin which serves as a way of explicating how one understands oneself in relation to race. Genealogies of race are ongoing, shifting processes – they constitute a continuous practice of negotiation within families as information is shared and stories are told, as well as in relation to external factors and newly discovered information. Genealogies of race are thus unfixed – they are made and remade, they may be altered as a result of additional knowledge that has been gained. They may be challenged. They may shift over time – they exist temporally, and are products of memory which may waver. They are visited and revisited, inhaled and exhaled and inhaled once more in different settings, amongst different people, for different reasons. Genealogies of race are deeply personal, specific to the individual

lived experiences of those sharing memories and experiences, and of those receiving and interpreting said memories and experiences in relation to themselves – in order to make sense of themselves. Although genealogies of race are not exclusive to racially mixed families, the existence of multiple narratives surrounding racial identity and background complicates this process, incorporating different histories or stories into mixed race people's genealogies.

Foucault's (1980) notion of Genealogy considers what he calls subjugated knowledges, which include knowledge created by scholars that has been excluded from mainstream and dominant discourses, as well as the local knowledges that are held by people outside of the academy. The relationship between power and the scientific is called into question through Foucault's engagement with subjugated knowledges, and he uses Genealogy as an alternative to this – as creating a space in which knowledge is positioned and understood beyond or outside of "the power hierarchy typical of science" (Foucault, 1980: 10).

In this thesis, the notion of genealogy is focused on the local more than the scholarly knowledges which have been concealed – it refers to the intimate knowledges that people and their families hold which play a role in their understanding of themselves. Here, the concept of genealogy is not entirely disconnected from Foucault's (1980) Genealogy, in that it too is used to make space for knowledge that is not typically considered to be scientific. Further, questions of validity remain central to this formulation of genealogy, or rather the need for an acceptance that although these forms of knowledge exist outside what is typically considered to be scientific, they are still valid. Haraway's (1988) work is applicable here, not only in her critique of the goal for objectivity and positivistic knowledge, which offers a continuation of Foucault's (1980) discussion of the scientific, the way in which it is interconnected with power and how it operates to conceal, but more pressing in this formulation of genealogy, is Haraway's (1988) recognition of the value of perspective, located-ness and the validity they hold:

> The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. All Western cultural narratives about objectivity are allegories of the ideologies governing the relations of what we call mind and body, distance and responsibility. Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see (Haraway, 1988: 583).

Situated knowledge is thus offered as a feminist alternative to positivist and disconnect approaches to science. Not only are the experiences of the situated knower considered to be valid, but the

knower themselves is considered to have agency, as the expert in and maker of those experiences. The emphasis on the relevance and value of situatedness is significant to the genealogy of race in that it refers to deeply personal experiences and knowledges. These experiences are also embodied, as with Haraway's (1988) situated knowledge – they are not disconnected from lived experiences but extend from and exist within those experiences, in the lived body as it navigates everyday life.

World Travelling

Maria Lugones (1987) used the notion of "World" Travelling to refer to a shift in our perception of others – it encapsulates a process of understanding the experiences of other people, in a manner which is playful and which facilitates a relationship which is loving. Lugones (1987) positioned the idea of "World" Travelling in opposition to Frye's (1983 in Lugones, 1987) theory of "arrogant perception", which relates to one's inability to identify with people who one views from a position of arrogance. Such a lack of identification prevents us from being able to love one another, and thus keeps us disconnected from one another.

Lugones (1987) explored the limitations of loving as arrogant perceivers, and the possibilities of loving as "World" travellers. Importantly, this exploration placed a particular focus on women of colour, and the role that patriarchy and racism have played in shaping how women arrogantly perceive one another. Lugones (1987) dissected her relationship with her mother, and the way in which she perceived her mother from a place of arrogance whilst growing up. She thought critically about the interconnectedness of love and abuse which emerge under arrogant perception, and the expectations she had of her mother to serve her and the rest of her family. This element of servitude and abuse is connected to discourses of racism, which locate the Other as disconnected from those who are positioned as white, and thus eligible to be used. A lack of identification between those who are positioned as white and those who are located as Other falls at the centre of this idea, but it is not limited to relationship dynamics between races, and can be replicated in relationships between women.

Lugones (1987) underscored her refusal to be like her mother through a lack of identification with her – something that she was unable to overcome until she worked to relate to, and with, her mother;

> To love my mother was not possible for me while I retained a sense that it was fine for me and others to see her arrogantly. Loving my mother also required that I see with her eyes, that I go into my mother's world, that I see both of us as we are constructed in her world, that I witness her own sense of herself from within her world. Only through this travelling to her "world" could I identify with her because only then could I cease to ignore her and to be excluded and separate from her. Only then could I see her as a subject even if one subjected and only then could I see at all how meaning could arise fully between us. We are fully dependent on each other for the possibility of being understood and without this understanding we are not intelligible, we do not make sense, we are not solid, visible, integrated; we are lacking. So travelling to each other's "worlds" would enable us to *be* through *loving* each other (Lugones, 1987: 8).

Through travelling to her mother's world, Lugones was able to relate to her mother – to see herself within her mother and thus love her. There exists an aspect of relationality in and amongst Lugones' words, as she describes the inability for neither her nor her mother to exist without a level of mutual understanding – they were not only able to love one another through travelling to each other's worlds and thus gaining a hold on each other's experiences, but they were able to *become* by doing so and depend on one another in order to be understood: "without this understanding we are not intelligible, we do not make sense, we are not solid, visible, integrated" (loc.cit).

It is noteworthy that Lugones' (1987) analysis of World travelling was done through her relationship with her mother, and that parallels can be drawn between that process and the interactions examined here. In each of the excerpts explored in this chapter, the role of the mother is central. All four genealogies of race feature a mother who is also a woman of colour, and shed light on the different ways in which mixed race children may or may not visit their mother's worlds in the process of creating genealogies of race. These visits – the process of travelling - look different for each family. As does each family's genealogy of race. Nevertheless, in each example we are able to identify the role that relationality, which is often manifested in World travelling, plays in the production of genealogies of race.

Part I. Together: Sometimes it is a collaboration.

Iva and Aanya

> **Iva:** I thought it would be awesome to like go out with a French person mixed with like Jamaican, it would be awesome you would have a baby that would be split six different ways; like I've got, I've got about four different things in me and it's brilliant because like I can, it's, yeah-
>
> **Aanya:** But the other thing we need to do because I had my blood looked at, not my blood
>
> **Iva:** Oh yeah

Aanya: I had my DNA looked at, um , through like saliva and stuff, and then I found out that I was 81% South Asian and 2% - I don't know if I put it in an email or something-

Tana: You did say [inaudible]

Iva: She was really excited *(laughing)*

Tana: Yeah so I wanted to ask you about that-

Aanya: Which is, so that's like 20% other. Now why I find that quite interesting is because our dad was always saying that

Iva: Yeah

Aanya: We came from Italian and Greek and stuff like that, and we've got no Italian

Iva: Nothing

Aanya: and no Greek there whatsoever, it's all up north way and so in terms of identity people can adopt a certain identity and say, "This is me, this is where I'm from, like I'm full-blown Asian" and they *talk with a twang* or whatever *(changes accent).* But the point is that we're not, we're all of us are, all of us are mess-messed up? Mixed up. *(Laughs)*

Iva: *(Laughing)* I'm not messed up

Aanya: That's just me *(laughs)*

Iva: Yeah, I mean if you're that mix what the hell am I? *(Laughing)*

Aanya: Well messed up, I don't mean messed up in a horrible way, I mean messed up in a good way…

Tana: So, you said you have a number of different like…?

Iva: Yeah, I can name some if you want but

Tana: Yeah, so no, please do.

Iva: Um, so starting with mum's side, so obviously she's all of that, but if she hadn't have had that test I would have thought that, 'cos nani's family originated from, you said very high up,

Aanya: Yeah so they're more sort of like

Iva: So like Chinese-

Aanya: Nepalese side of the, of the

Iva: But not that much

Aanya: The genetic equation;

Iva: Yeah

Aanya: Well all their eyes are like that, that's where we get slight like eyes like that.

Iva: Yeah but, yeah so then obviously Punjab, so Indian. And then my dad is actually I think *more* mixed because he's a quarter Irish, so I'm an eighth Irish, uh, English but then my granddad's side is Huguenots which is French, so I would be Chinese, Indian, English-

Aanya: Not Chinese-

Iva: What? Nepalese, sorry.

Aanya: Nepalese

Aanya: You need to have, your, your genetics looked at as well.

Iva: yeah, and then French and Irish, so I'm five different things but *mainly* like if I sub-divide that and found out, it would probably be like 16 different things *(laughs)* because you're, you're quite a few and I would just think you were like a, a bit Nepalese and then the rest Indian but you're not, you're like-

Aanya: There's no Nepalese even in, well no, it said, it said N-East,

Iva: It was *around* there, it wasn't there

Aanya: It said South Asia and then it said North - it said Europe sort of, and then - but the surprise was UK and Finland,

Iva: [crosstalk] Yeah I was like where did that come from? *(Laughing)*

Aanya: It was a bit of a surprise but not massive surprise, because again if you just look at the colour of the skin you know it's kind of *(laughs)*-

Iva: Yeah, we're not that, we're not that dark compared to some.

Aanya: yeah, 'cause if it's

Iva: [crosstalk] 'Cos like Sally, Sally keeps on saying that's just like, oh, one time she went to Sana as a joke, "Oh you're not, you're not uh-"

Aanya: Sana is my sister

Iva: Yeah, "you're not like proper Indian you're not dark enough," but she was joking around obviously, it's - she's her best friend, but it was, and, and then I realised, I was like yeah we are pretty pale for, um, someone that's supposed to be, a family that's supposed to be like full Indian but we're not.

The above excerpt is taken from the early stages of an interview with a mother and daughter named Aanya and Iva. Throughout the extract, we bear witness to the way in which they navigated their understandings of racial identity. There was a clear sense of familiarity demonstrated throughout the interview as Aanya and Iva regularly referred back to previous conversations. They had a dynamic which moved back and forth – one shared and the other responded, sometimes in agreement but at other moments offering alternative perspectives on things such as the language they used to describe their racial backgrounds. The interview was regularly punctuated by instances of laughter shared by both mother and daughter; a testament to their familiarity and style of interaction which meant that I, as interviewer, often went for long periods of time without asking questions.

That Aanya and Iva engaged in this way during a conversation about race and racial identity should not be dismissed. Their familiarity and ease of exchange suggested that Aanya and Iva had discussed race together before. Not only were the two comfortable discussing race and familiar with each of their opinions regarding race and racial identity - as is evident in the way in which Iva highlighted Aanya's excitement regarding her DNA test results - but the familiarity with the topic was clear in Iva's description of her racial heritage. Iva's racial identity appeared to be

informed by Aanya's ancestry test results, as well as their family history which was based on a conversation the two had had previously regarding Aanya's family origins:

> "So starting with mum's side, so obviously she's all of that [referring to DNA test results], but if she hadn't have had that test I would have thought that, 'cause nani's family originated from, you said very high up"

By referring to something that Aanya had told her previously about her family origins, Iva acknowledged that it had been discussed before. Further, the DNA test results were positioned as supporting what Iva already knew through conversations with her mother, as opposed to presenting new information. Conversely, just before Iva's discussion of her heritage, Aanya noted that she was surprised by the DNA test results as they were divergent from what her father had told her about their background:

> "…so that's like 20% other. Now why I find that quite interesting is because our dad was always saying that… we came from Italian and Greek and stuff like that, and we've got no Italian".

There was a clear divergence between what Aanya's father had shared with Aanya about her background, and what the DNA tests had revealed. What is noteworthy here, however, is that Aanya had come to understand her background and "where she came from" based on what her father had told her about their origins, in the same way that Iva had come to understand herself based on what Aanya had told her about their origins. These narratives about where people come from cross over generations – they were passed on in this instance from parent to child, to grandchild, and were situated as part of each person's story about where they are from and who they are. That said, these narratives are not static – they may be challenged at any time by additional information such as DNA test results, which are added to the narrative and incorporated alongside what was previously known.

Sometimes additional information can serve to confirm what was already known – as with the case of Iva. At other times additional information can serve to disrupt and resituate pre-existing ideas and understandings, as with Aanya. When Aanya's DNA test results contradicted what she was told by her father, they unsettled the intergenerational narrative to which she had related, a fact which led her to conclude that we are all "messed up" and that even if we adopt a particular identity, that does not make it certain or fixed.

Another factor that may influence the stability of the intergenerational narrative of self is memory – we see how Iva refers back to Aanya to confirm where her grandmother's family originated from; "'cos nani's family originated from, *you said* [own emphasis added] very high up". The text does not adequately capture the questioning behind this sentence – the inflection included when Iva spoke and referred to her mother. Here, "you said", is posed as a question, a small urging for confirmation that this was in fact what Aanya had said to Iva about her grandmother and that her memory is correct. This speaks to the slipperiness of the narratives woven amongst family members. Time is not only present in the differences between generations who share this knowledge, but between the moments when these family histories are first shared and when they are referred back to. They may be shared, and re-shared and shared again, at different times, in different spaces for different reasons. Memories may be altered or questioned (as with the case of Iva) speaking to the fluidity of the process of crafting an understanding of self – something to which Aanya later referred when she claimed that identity is "messed up". The crafting of an intergenerational narrative of self is not only fluid due to the influences of different sources of information, but by different positions and occurrences in time, which facilitate the making and remaking of particular ideas about where we come from.

The particular way in which Aanya and Iva engaged with one another, produced what I am calling a genealogy of their racial identities. In this instance, the process of creating a genealogy begins with a conversation about genetics, which is then intertwined with ideas about phenotype and place – notions of where people come from are wrought in relation to DNA, the way we look and the places we have been, all of which are connected to form an understanding of self. It is clear that this process of meaning making and these understandings of identity – these genealogies of race – are deeply relational. Often mother and daughter utilised the term "we" to refer to their family background, referencing the interconnected nature of these understandings. With Aanya and Iva, the narrative was at times so intertwined that the process of world travelling appeared to be shared – their worlds overlapping, merging into one. This materialised when Aanya and Iva discussed phenotypical characteristics; "*we're* not that dark compared to some". Similarly, it was not where *I* come from but where *we* come from. It was not the colour of *my* skin but the colour of *our* skin. Aanya and Iva's discussion about skin colour and Aanya's reference to "saliva and stuff" at the start of the conversation about DNA reminds us of the role that the body plays in understandings

of race. The testing of saliva allowed for Aanya to be connected to other people whose saliva was also tested, creating connections to particular places and spaces, which were then connected back to her family narrative. The saliva is a point of entry, a key with which to gain access to certain biomedical knowledge to which one may or may not relate. In her exploration of the way in which the body is constructed in relation to societal and historical contexts, Elisabeth Grosz (1994) considered the different social and psychological meanings which are attributed to bodily fluids, and referred to the existence of a hierarchy amongst bodily fluids which situates them on a spectrum from infectious to purifying (Grosz, 1994: 195). Her emphasis on the role that the social plays in determining the meanings attributed to bodily fluids is noteworthy when considering the role of the saliva in DNA testing – what may in many settings be considered a pollutant is in this instance a vehicle of information, a means of exploration and establishing connectivity. DNA test results are used here alongside other forms of information that Aanya and Iva had about their family, as well as an acknowledgment of physical characteristics such as skin colour, which as with saliva, are imbued with social and historical significance.

Blanchard et al (2019) looked at interpretations and perceptions of genetic ancestry testing (GAT) amongst Native American communities in Oklahoma. They revealed that although participants found some value in the diagnostic potential of GAT, the information offered by this form of testing could not be used as an indicator for indigenous identity:

> The foundation of an indigenous identity is having established attachments to shared histories, community networks, and an indigenous lineage that finds expression in long-held cultural practices and political autonomy. Indigeneity, as participants explained, is founded on lived experiences, not the discovery of shared genetic markers (Blanchard et al, 2019: 641).

The role of lived experiences is thus central to understandings of indigeneity, speaking to the way in which biomedical information alone is not always sufficient in understandings of identity. The role of the lived experience – the local, often subjugated knowledges – was of the utmost importance when considering indigeneity in the research referenced above. Similarly, although Aanya and Iva appeared to view the results of Aanya's DNA test as revelatory, the information was not reviewed independently but *in relation to* and alongside their pre-existing knowledge, again pointing to the role of lived experience in genealogies of race.

Alongside involving the physical and the relational, genealogies of race can also reference the temporal and the spatial. At a later point in the discussion about Iva's heritage, Aanya used phrases such as "was it", "I think it was" and "it was either" as she traced the movement of people that may have been their ancestors. These instances of self-questioning point to the way in which memory can influence the knowledge we hold – Aanya was grappling with her knowledge, referring inwards to ensure that what she was saying was correct. We see direct and indirect references to time, the way it passes and also the way it occurs simultaneously, synchronically. The time when these ancestral movements occurred stands at the forefront of the below excerpt – it happened at a point in the past, however it was also being imagined at the time of the interview as Aanya traced their movements and shared with us this narrative which connected her and her family to the past, and invited me to contemplate these connections in the present. Similarly, Aanya's conversation with herself and questioning of herself speak also to an element of time, the time between when she first learned of these movements, and the time of the interview. Her knowledge was gained at one moment in time, and then revisited and shared at another, speaking to the historicity of narratives – of how our knowledge does not exist in a vacuum, but accompanies us - sometimes slipping away and at other times holding on tight, stuck to a particular memory that we cannot forget.

> **Aanya:** Yeah, we're not, we're not because it's the, was it Dravidians, or Dravidians that went from like that whole Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, obviously that was all one sort of land they all went South
> **Iva:** Yeah and everyone migrated
> **Aanya:** and the Persians, the Persians pushed them down, the Aryans came down and I think it was, it was either Dravidians that came in, pushed them down, or whether it was Dravidians that went down, but basically the people in Sri Lanka, the darker skinned, they're, they're supposed to have connection with African tribes as well but they were the ones who were in India in the beginning and then they were pushed down by the ones up North.
> **Iva:** Truth is you never really know what your ancestors got up to; someone could have had an affair and then that was your thing and then they took them in and then the family carried on but they didn't ever know about him – and it's like, you're never going to know that it was actually always-
> **Aanya:** Yeah… well we're better placed in this day and age to find out that sort of thing as well.
> **Iva:** Yeah because of all the science and breakthroughs, but yeah…

Talk of different lands, peoples, directions of movement – the push and pull of it, the up and the down – connectivity, skin colour, tribe and a recognition by Iva that you can "never really know what your ancestors got up to" which takes us back to the role of the DNA test, positioning Aanya's results in time, demonstrating that although the information relayed can provide some insights into our ancestral genetic roots, there may still be that 20% "other", that remains inaccessible, and we

may not have access to the story behind the information we do have. The scientific and the local/lived/ "unscientific" work together here to form Aanya and Iva's genealogy of race – the scientific information provided is coupled with and interpreted in relation to the familial histories, the lived experiences, speaking again to the situatedness of it all.

Part II. Alone: Sometimes it is through racism.

Val
Part I

Tana: So, if you could tell me a bit about how, when you had your children, was there anything that you kind of told them specifically about their race to like, prepare them? Or, like how did you engage with them about race? Did it ever come up? Did they ever come with questions? Anything like that.

Val: Um, I didn't sort of, sort of sit them down and sort of give them a pep talk or anything like that, um, but I think there were things that happened, I mean for instance, I remember my, my daughter when she was – she must've been about five, four or five – yeah 'cos she, she would've just have started school. And um, she came home and she said, um, she said, she said "Mummy, I was upset today". So I said "why?", and she said because "so and so said, said, um, said that you were dirty". And I said "why did she say that?" so I said "what did she say?". She said to me, "she said your mummy's *dirty*", and so I said what did - she said "I said, my mummy's *not* dirty. My mummy's beautiful". And uh, and I said, "why did she say that?" and she said, "your mummy is dirty 'cos your mummy's brown". And she said, "my mummy's not dirty" And, and um, and you know so I said "what else happened?". She said, "I just, I just went away with my friends". You know, and uh, and my heart was breaking, it really was you know? And I thought, you know like "okay, calm down, you know"

Tana: yeah

Val: "take a deep breath", you know because when it's your kids you feel for them

Tana: yeah

Val: and, although it was another child that said something to a child the same age, you know so, but, I sort of stopped and thought, I thought, you know where has that come from?

Tana: ja

Val: You know, that, that child hasn't just said that, you know?

Tana: yeah

Val: you know, there's obviously something been said.

Tana: yeah

Val: 'cos according to the statistics and research children don't see colour,

Tana: yeah

Val: which I think is rubbish, 'cos they do.

Tana: yeah

Val: you know, um, but, um, but anyway, um. So I said to her, I said "well you did the right thing, darling". I said that she was very, very nasty to say that. And I said, "and that was really nice what you said about mummy". And I said, "come and give me a hug" you know, and yeah - as if like a hug is going to cure it you know.

Tana: yeah

Val: but I thought well, you know [inaudible] So I said to her, I said, um "what do you want mummy to do about it?", and she said, "I don't know". I said, "ok", I said "well mummy is gonna talk to so and so and say to her that wasn't a very nice thing to say to you and I'll talk to her mummy as well" I said "is that okay?" and she said "okay then", and I did that. I spoke to her mother and the mother was totally in denial. She said "my daughter wouldn't say that". And uh, so I said, "so why would my daughter lie about it?" I said you know "why would she even come and say anything like that?"

Tana: mm

Val: you know, I said "it's not like she's going to come out and say that to her mum"

Tana: mm

Val: She said, "well if she did say it, she wouldn't have meant anything". I said, "that is not the point".

Tana: mm

Val: "It's the fact she said it". And I said "where does she get statements like that from?"

Tana: mm

Val: and I stopped short of saying to her, "because it comes from you".

Tana: yeah

Val: I just threw the question out there

Tana: yeah

Val: and left it there, you know. But you know, I said, "what I'm expecting is an apology". And she said, "well, I'm sorry". I said, "no", I said "I don't want an apology" I said "I want your daughter to apologise to my daughter for saying" and I said "and I expect her to say it outside of the school". You know, I think I had a bit of clout because I was chair of the PTA, so (laughs).

Tana: mm

Val: Um, but you know so, so I went to fetch her at the end of school, you know, and I waited, and you know she did come, and she said to her, "what have you got to say to Kayla?", and she said "I'm sorry". And um, and I said, I said "well thank you for saying sorry". And I looked at Kayla and she said "thank you", and uh I said "the point is", I said "she's said sorry", I said, "but she needs to know what she's saying sorry for". So I said, "you need to have that conversation that what she said is unacceptable".

Tana: mm

Val: I said "if my child came home and said you know, and said - somebody came and told me my child had said anything like that", I said, "I would be sitting her

down and actually telling her why it's unacceptable, why it's wrong so she wouldn't do it again".

Tana: mm, mm

Val: I said what I wouldn't be doing - I said "I know you, you stick up for your children and you love children and you think my child would never do that", I said "but children *do* say and do things".

Tana: mm

Val: "there's no malice intended". I said "they learn, they pick things up".

Tana: mm, yeah

Val: I said "we as parents, we have a duty", you know? And whether I felt morally like that because I'm black, you know, and because I've had experiences myself, but you know it's important to challenge it. Um, and I think over the years, there were comments made you know, by other kids you know about, you know something, um you know, I can't even remember the sort of things, you know, um, but they're just like throwaway comments, you know about, you know "why are you different?", you know so. Um, and you know and she said "because my mummy and daddy are different", "well why are they different?". So it wasn't- I think I put it down to just them being inquisitive really, you know so, um, so I think that's when it started, really, you know and we sort of talked to her about it,

Tana: mm

Val: but not to make it an issue, because what we didn't want to sort of make her feel "well look, I'm different to everybody else" you know, so - but it's about sort of recognising that yeah, everyone is different.

Tana: mm

Val: so that was the conversation that everyone's different, you know, and it's not just because we have different skin, you know? Because like, we all like different things.

Tana: mm

Val: and I like this and daddy likes that.

Tana: mm

Val: you like that, mm some people don't like [inaudible] – so everybody's different

Tana: yeah

Val: so that's how we sort of coped [inaudible], we thought well, we don't want to be sort of making it into be a really big issue for her to start having, you know, you know an issue about. You know, it's about you choose your battles, don't you?

I interviewed Val about her experiences of having and raising two mixed race children with her husband, Ted, who is white. Val spoke about her long career of delivering equality and diversity training across Britain, her own experiences of racism as a black woman, and the conversations that took place within her home regarding the topic of race. Unlike the back and forth negotiation

that was displayed in the first interview between Aanya and Iva, Val attended the interview alone, meaning that she was sharing her experiences of race within her family from her perspective and in some ways on her family's behalf. This is something upon which Val reflected at the end of the interview - after noting that it would be interesting to see how her daughter would respond to my questions, she then went on to say "perception's a really powerful thing isn't it? People see things differently…". I took this as indicative of Val's awareness of the different "worlds" her and her daughter occupied.

Val and her family's genealogy of race was positioned in response to "things that happened" that required her and her husband to explain race and racial difference to their children. Where Aanya and Iva's genealogy focussed very much on an internal process of crafting and exploration - looking inwards, towards their family history - Val's was focused on navigating the external, to which she crafted a response. The external manifested across multiple "worlds" – the "things" that happened involving her daughter, for example, also extended into the "worlds" of Val and her husband, and all of those "things" appeared to include experiences of racism or racialisation. As Val described the painful moment during which her daughter came home from school and recounted her experience of racism, the interconnectivity of their "worlds" became clear – the relationality between her and her daughter was not only represented in the racist comments that were made to Kayla about Val, but in Kayla's response to those comments, and her feelings of upset.

A child at school insulted Val in order to get to Kayla, utilising their connectedness in order to elicit a response from Kayla – through responding in defence of her mother Kayla validated their connection, showing that she did not exist in isolation from her mother but in relation *to* her. Similarly, Val visited Kayla's "world", relating to her through her feelings of hurt at hearing what her child had been exposed to; "my heart was breaking" … "when it's your kids you feel for them". At the same time, and in the midst of pain and upset, both Val and Kayla responded to this incident at school through moments of resistance – Kayla resisted the suggestion that her mother was "dirty" by replacing the narrative with one of beauty; "my mummy's not dirty. My mummy's beautiful".

One wonders at the significance of this moment when considered in relation to how black women have historically been situated in relation to European beauty standards, as discussed in Chapter 1, with European features being characterised as the epitome of beauty. The power of Kayla's response is heightened further when we consider the historical implications of her mother being called "dirty", and the ways in which this draws parallels with the discourses of contamination and racial purity discussed in previous chapters and in relation to Gina's reflections on racialisation and "dirtiness" in Chapter 6. Thus, as Kayla defended her mother she also challenged racist and gendered narratives that have significant historical implications.

Val chose to challenge the parent of the child who had made the comments and position them as "unacceptable". In so doing Val visited the "world" of the child – "where has that come from?" – and quickly made a connection between the child's "world" and the "world" of their parents; "I stopped short of saying to her, 'because it comes from you'". Further complicating this process was the moment in which the mother Val confronted visited the "world" of her child – "my child wouldn't say that", implying that she was aware of the framework of her child's "world" and what it did and did not include. This battle of "worlds", this multi-layered process of relating to one another, visiting and trying to comprehend one another, encompasses moments of love and loving, whilst also being marked by instances of racism and resistance. For Val this resistance and need to challenge unacceptable behaviour was positioned as a "duty" as a parent that she was modelling to her daughter. At the same, Val time recognised that this sense of "duty" may have been informed by her "world" in which she had encountered her own experiences of racism as a black woman.

Earlier I reflected on how Lugones (1987) recognised the loving possibilities of "World" travelling as a means of resisting racism, particularly for women of colour. Lugones (1987) acknowledged that women of colour are often required to travel to white worlds, and that "racism has a vested interest in obscuring and devaluing the complex skills involved in it" (Lugones, 1987: 3). Val actively resisted this requirement, not only through recognising the importance of confronting racism and teaching her children to do the same, but by seeking to share with others the importance of resisting racism, as was illustrated by her engagement with the mother at school; "you need to have that conversation that what she said is unacceptable". Instead of conforming to "worlds" in which racism was prevalent, Val challenged them head on, choosing instead to do the work of

educating others on why it was problematic to expect people experiencing racism to continue visiting those "worlds"; "'well if she did say it, she wouldn't have meant anything'. I said, 'that is not the point'". Val refused to accept the reasoning that a racist comment made towards her daughter did not hold significance, changing the focus from the intention of the child to the importance of helping the child understand why it is not acceptable to make such comments. In so doing Val sought to alter the "worlds" in which racist comments made by children did not "mean anything", seeking instead to imbue them with significance.

Elsewhere in the interview Val spoke about her own experiences of racism and how they informed how her and her husband spoke about race with their children:

Val
Part II

Val: My training takes me to parts of the country where it's not diverse at all.
Tana: mm
Val: You know, I've walked into restaurants and it's gone quiet, you know
Tana: mm
Val: so, uh, but I just think it's their problem, you know, I'm entitled to be here, you know so-
Tana: yeah
Val: and I think you have to have that resilience.
Tana: yeah
Val: You know, um and that's what we've instilled in the kids as well, you know
Tana: yeah
Val: You're entitled to be here, you know, if anybody's got a problem with who you are and the colour of your skin, it's their problem.
Tana: yeah
Val: It's not yours. Let them, you know. Let them [inaudible]
Tana: yeah
Val: And I think it's important because if you don't, you end up feeling inferior.
Tana: yeah
Val: You end up feeling that you don't have a place and you're not entitled,
Tana: mm
Val: and you have to be given permission.
Tana: mm
Val: and you know, I don't think anybody needs to give me or should be giving me permission to do what I want to do or to my kids.
Tana: yeah, yeah
Val: They're entitled to be here, they're entitled to do what they want and you know, that's it, end of…

Val spoke of the need to be resilient in the face of racism and highlighted how her and her husband encouraged "resilience" in their children through "instilling" in them a sense of self-worth. This was positioned as a means to prevent their children from feeling "inferior" if they experienced racism, and a way of ensuring that they were aware that they did not need "permission" to "do

what they want". It is significant that Val and her husband deemed it necessary to prepare their children for experiences of racism. Although it was positioned as something that *might* happen – "*if* anybody's got a problem with who you are and the colour of your skin" – they prepared their children for it nonetheless. I interpret this to mean that Val and her husband expected that it was likely their children would encounter racism, and that this was at least partly informed by Val's own experiences of racism which required that she be resilient as well.

The work of Patricia Hill Collins (1994) is useful when considering Val's positioning as a black woman who is also a mother, and the importance she placed on "instilling" resilience in her children in preparation for any racism they might experience. Collins (1994) wrote:

> Racial ethnic women's motherwork reflects the tensions inherent in trying to foster a meaningful racial identity in children within a society that denigrates people of colour. While white children can be prepared to fight racial oppression, their survival foes not depend on gaining these skills. Their racial identity is validated by their schools, the media, and other social institutions. White children are socialised into their rightful place in systems of racial privilege. Racial ethnic women have no such guarantees for their children; their children must first be taught to survive in systems that oppress them. Moreover, this survival must not come at the expense of self-esteem (Collins, 1994: 57).

Whilst Collins' (1994) analysis also included a consideration of class and the ways in which structural violence makes survival more difficult for people of colour, particularly in relation to experiences of poverty, survival in Val's excerpt seems to be positioned less in relation to material conditions and more in relation to surviving instances of racial discrimination. The emphasis Val placed on "resilience" and the idea that her children should not feel "inferior" to others as a result of their skin colour echoes Collins' (1994) notion of survival that is not "at the expense of self-esteem" (ibid). Val wanted her children to be prepared to experience racism, not just so that they would get through those experiences, but so they would do so without losing their sense of self and feeling that they didn't "have a place".

Val and her husband's desire to "instil" these ideas in their children "if" anyone had "a problem" with them based on the colour of their skin or who they were speaks to the lack of "guarantees" (Collins, 1994:57) available to children of colour that they will be "socialised into their rightful place in systems of racial privilege" (ibid) as detailed by Collins (1994). This is further compounded by the incident of racism that Kayla experienced at school in the first excerpt, where instead of receiving validation for her "racial identity", she was placed in a position in which she

experienced racial discrimination. Whilst Val's "motherwork" in this instance was clear, the role of her husband, a white man, was also iterated as she regularly referred to his involvement in processes of educating their children about race. This speaks to the role that white parents can play as purveyors of 'racial literacy' to their mixed race children, as illustrated by Twine (2004).

Val's genealogy of race was very much situated in response to "things that happened" to her children and to herself. These "things" were inflected with racism, which Val consistently challenged, along with her husband, and which her daughter, Kayla, challenged as well. Here, the genealogy of race is crafted in moments of resistance to racist incidents, and moments of reflecting on those incidents together after they had occurred, ensuring that they were not made into "issues" but equally that they did not have an impact on their children's sense of self; "They're entitled to be here, they're entitled to do what they want and you know, that's it, end of".

Part III. Processual: Sometimes it is persistent.

Kiran, Tim, Meena and Jaya

During an interview with Kiran and Tim, and their daughters Meena and Jaya, the terms "BAME" (Black and Minority Ethnic) and "Brown" cropped up several times. When I asked if these terms were familiar prior to Jaya attending university, the family responded with laughter, with Meena going on to explain how Kiran would often point out the representation of black people, women and other people of colour on television or during films they watched together. Kiran was situated as the initiator of such topics of conversations, with Meena and Jaya referencing their memories of attending a conference about Blackness in Britain with their mother.

Part I

Tana: So Kiran, why did you decide to take them? *(Laughter).*

Kiran: Well I… I'm very conscious obviously, that they're uh, you know that they're mixed race but also I think as a life style it's very much more, um, it's less of a life style. I think I give them less of an influence of my culture, and also I had a fear that I didn't want my kids to grow up , um, not liking their, you know, non-white culture, and I'd seen this a lot when I was growing up, this reminds me of it this uh… *(small laugh),* so um, and I… I think, were you interested, I can't remember now… Jaya, I was more kind of you know I thought Jaya might be interested, thought it might open ... 'cos she was at university then, and I thought it might, couldn't do Sociology. And I thought it might open up her, her horizon of

knowledge and experiences, because I think at the university the um, there's heavy influence of white academics and of white perspectives of race in Sociology. And Meena, I was just, you know, I just thought it would be good you know, as an experience, for her, you know, and why not... And I asked them if she could go and they were delighted. They said "Yes, of course, she can come and she can come for free because she was just a school child" *(laughter*)… And I hadn't thought enough about maybe it would be too academic and whatever, and I was just like "oh my god Patricia Hill Collins is gonna be there and she's this famous, famous academic and wouldn't it be great for Meena to hear - and Jaya - to hear her speak". Um…

Meena: Jaya's friend came as well... Alan… He's white, for the record *(laughter).*

Kiran: So that's why, um, I, yeah I thought it might be a good idea for them to go to the conference. And of course they had a choice, they could say no *(laughs).* I think, I think I presented it as a choice, I don't know. But yeah, that's always… and that's why I come out with phrases like "oh there's no, you know, um" - I think once we were watching Graham Norton and Meena said "Look, Mom, there's a black person" *(laughter).* And I said that's because they've got Idris Elba on, that's why" *(laughter).* So… and I remember once Meena was at primary school and she said "Mom, you'll like this, we had make a friend day today and my, I chose a black friend" *(laughter and exclamations)...* You were about six and, they had to choose a friend in a different year when they were at primary school, yeah so, yeah…

Meena: It must've been like the one black person that the primary school had… *(laughter)*

Tana: So do you remember that?

Meena: No.

Tana: So would you say that you kind of… consciously made that decision to raise awareness in that way?

Kiran: Yeah. I wouldn't do it without, yeah, yeah I would. 'Cos I felt, if I don't I think it will be, one um… a disservice to them as their parent but also, um, a lot of ... And myself included, growing up didn't like my heritage… made, made to feel that it wasn't of value, I was of the wrong skin colour. And also within the Asian culture there's a high value placed on light skin, and I didn't meet that, um, and I was continually compared to my sister, who is the pretty one, etcetera. So I um, felt that, um, I didn't want them to grow up with this kind of sense of, you know, sort of internalised oppression of race. So… that's why I was keen. And there's lots of, you know… um, it's a good thing to be proud of your heritage, whatever heritage it is. I think it is more damaging if you deny a part of your heritage. So…

We see the intentional emphasis Kiran placed on her children being conscious of the experiences of black women – of having access to those experiences, as well as developing a sensitivity towards racism that was informed by her own encounters with colourism as a darker skinned Asian woman. Kiran's own experiences of racism shaped how she passed on knowledge to her children, along with the need to resist that racism which drew parallels with the experiences of Val. Kiran was also thinking critically about the university space in Britain, the prevalence of what she called "white perspectives" in this space, and the impact that this could have on her daughter's own

experiences as a mixed race person. Taking her children to a conference which centred the experiences of black people in Britain, and the perspectives of a renowned black feminist scholar was thus not only a way of inviting her children into her "world" as someone who was obviously influenced by such scholarship - "and I was just like 'oh my god Patricia Hill Collins is gonna be there'" – but also inviting them to consider alternative perspectives to the ones they may have had access to in their educational settings. This could be considered an act of resistance to white, patriarchal forms of knowledge that dominate the British academy, as well as the structure of British society.

Navigating and negotiating the external influences to which we have access thus appeared to be a central consideration for Kiran, and was acknowledged as something over which she did not have full control whilst raising her children. The excerpt below charts Kiran's memories of when her children were much younger, and a moment of considering just how big a role society plays in shaping the knowledge to which we have access.

Part II

Kiran: I found it interesting hearing what Jaya and Meena said about their experiences of… being mixed race... or, um their experiences of race... I didn't know a lot of that stuff. Um, and uh… it kind of makes me think about, when they were little and what they said to me, and kind of where they are today. So I can give two examples when Jaya came home once really frustrated, so I think she must have been about six, seven ... 'cos I used to try and, um, you know like when they used to pick names for their dolls… I used to say oh "pick an Indian name" or, and then she came in once and she said "oh we were playing a game and I was trying to you know suggest an Indian name and they kept ignoring me" *(laughter)* and she was quite frustrated about it. And I remember Meena once, um, so telling me not to, she was, just started school, so she was in reception. So she was saying "I don't want you to pick me up from school", I said "Oh, why not?", "Well you're not like the other mothers. You're not like, you're not like the other mommies. You're not white". And I remember feeling really devastated, but thinking obviously I wasn't doing enough to kind of instil in my daughter, that you know- I remember talking to Margaret… "Oh my God, my daughter said this to me". But… it made me realise what you're up against as a parent, the kind of onslaught of… *(sighs),* you know the context of, of, of society, and the influences of society and media. Um, but, so… those are kind of early examples to, what we were talking about, about things being [inaudible] ... Maybe we should have these sorts of discussions [inaudible] *(laughter)*

Tana: So what do you think then about that journey, like I guess at the time you said that you felt like you weren't doing enough. So based on this conversation, obviously it wasn't like, very extensive, but like do you feel like you did enough?

Kiran: No.

Tana: No?

Kiran: No

Tana: Ok

Meena: Why? Looking at us you don't feel you did enough?

Kiran: I don't, I feel, um… I don't know if I did enough about the kind of the cultural side of things. I think I did enough about race and maybe, I don't know, I didn't - I should have tried harder with the language… Um, and I don't think I've done enough of the history 'cos I don't know much of it myself, and I think Meena's right about if… I mean I… although I'm Asian, I am not someone who was born in India. I was born here. So I've got that experience, that's my… I think I would have had a very different experience if I was born in India and then came here, um, so… so my schooling, wasn't, didn't educate us about our, kind of history, Indian history, and stuff, um…

Kiran's memory of the comment Meena made to her when she was in Reception is multi-layered – it speaks to Meena's positioning as a mixed race child with a mother who was not white like "the other mothers", her awareness of this and understanding that her mother was different. It underscores Kiran's feelings of pain at Meena's response to her, and also her feeling that it was her responsibility to "instil" certain ideas in her child and that she needed to do more "motherwork" (Collins, 1994:57), again drawing parallels with Val's experiences and her articulation of the importance of "instilling" "resilience" in her children. Finally, this memory highlights Kiran's recognition of the power of society and the influence it can have on us, and especially children. This experience connects directly to Kiran's other comments, regarding her own memories of growing up disliking her heritage and not wanting her children to have an "internalised oppression of race".

At the same time, the excerpt shows the way in which Kiran was able to travel to her daughter's' "worlds" in the interview setting and reflect on what she did and did not know about their experiences. She then juxtaposed the experiences they shared in the interview with memories she had of visiting their "worlds" in the past, ultimately returning to a reflection on the ways in which the limitations of her own "world" may have limited the "worlds" of her daughters: "I don't know if I did enough about the kind of cultural side of things…my schooling, wasn't, didn't educate us about our, kind of history" (ibid.). We see how the "worlds" of Kiran and her daughters feed into one another and are constantly moving and shifting over time – able to be known and unknown to one another at different times.

Threaded through the excerpts from the discussion with Kiran and her family, and their genealogy of race, was Kiran's conscious desire to ensure that her children were encouraged to accept themselves and their Asian heritage, and to offer them access to discourses which resisted and challenged racism. In a similar manner to Val, Kiran too engaged in "motherwork" (Collins, 1994: 57), and underscored a specific and nuanced understanding of the impact of racism on one's sense of self. Here the genealogy of race also comprised the temporal; we see how it is constructed over time. Beginning with Kiran's own experiences of navigating her racial identity, then extending to her children, Meena and Jaya's engagement with race and Kiran's involvement in that process as they were growing up, then moving to Meena and Jaya's changing reactions to and navigations of formulations of race as they got older, within and outside of the family to which Kiran was introduced in the moment of the interview.

Part IV. Silence: Sometimes the narrative emerges over time.

Kai
Part I

Kai: Well, just I think the opening sentence in itself – "my mother didn't believe in black people" really resonated with me because my mum is black, well mixed race as it's said now, but she never told me I was black… I had to find out till I was 16 that I was black, just by accident of knowing my grandad at that age, who is from Jamaica and looks black.
Tana: Huh
Kai: *(laughs)*
Tana: So do you mean that you didn't think about race or…
Kai: No, not that I didn't think about it, it's because my skin is so fair, I didn't know about it –
[Tea arrives]
Kai: Thank you
Tana: Thank you very much
Kai: It's a red mug this time (laughs)
Tana: Fancy… no special sugar this time, sorry
Kai: I know
Tana: (laughs)… So it was because your skin is so fair?
Kai: yeah
Tana: Huh
Kai: And my hair didn't really show, my hair's like afro-Caribbean hair now but when I was younger it looked more, more white *(laughs)* I don't know how else to say it but that's how it looked so you never really, nobody ever knew – or I didn't know
Tana: and then what happened when you were sixteen?
Kai: When I was sixteen I noticed my hair was like afro-y and it was getting kinks in it and my friend was from Jamaica, and I was like "actually my hair looks like yours you know" *(laughs)*… And then by accident my grandad came to my mum's house to see her and then I was like "hold on a minute, how can that be your dad? We've never been told that we're black…" And she was like "well…" and then he got upset, actually – my grandad did, and

he was telling me all about his… and then from then I've been a massive fan… knowing I'm black – let's go for it.

The above excerpt begins with Kai's response to the text prompt which was provided to participants. Kai's experiences of coming to understand her background, and the creation of her genealogy of race is striking in that it begins with a discovery – a process of shifting from one position to another; a process of becoming. Although there is a negotiation that takes place with her grandfather, it coincides with a moment of revelation – it was through seeing her grandfather and recognising his appearance as phenotypically black, *as well as* conversing with him about his background that she was able to come to an understanding of her own background and racial identity. This experience comes across as revelatory – "hold on a minute, how can that be your dad? We've never been told that we're black". This realisation reflects the connectedness between her grandfather and her mother, as well as the connection between the two of them and herself, again pointing to the intergenerational nature of understanding oneself, as well as the relationality involved in this understanding. It was through recognising that her grandfather was black that Kai was able to recognise that her and her siblings were black – because if her grandfather was black then that meant her mother was black and therefore her and her siblings were also black. I return again to the words of Lugones to highlight the role of relationality in the moulding of genealogies of race; "we are fully dependent on each other for the possibility of being understood and without this understanding we are not intelligible, we do not make sense, we are not solid, visible, integrated" (Lugones, 1987:8).

Among other things, Kai's genealogy is marked initially by silence and the absence of negotiation present in the other genealogies of race discussed in this chapter - "she never told me I was black". This exemplifies the different ways in which the experiences of family members can determine the information to which we do or do not have access, which consequentially informs our understandings of race and our own racial identities;

Tana: And then did you and your mom talk about it after that?
Kai: Not really, my mum kind of distanced herself from being black. One, she doesn't look black – only her hair, kind of like myself, as, like curls – so if you looked at her features you'd say yeah, she's a black lady, but apart from that no, and when she was growing up she got a lot of stigma for having a black dad and, bearing in mind, you can kind of understand why she had distanced herself, but at the same time I never understood it – the distance.

The stigma experienced by Kai's mother as a young person is positioned as the reason for the lack of conversation within Kai's household about race. Kai's interpretation of her mother's act of "distancing herself from being black" is complicated – she recognises that she holds both an understanding and a lack of understanding of her mother's approach to race. Additional nuance is added through Kai's own reaction to the discovery of her racial background - of her genealogy of race – in that it is marked with enthusiasm. The point at which Kai's genealogy of race emerges is interesting, not only because it begins from a place of not knowing but because it evolves into a place of acceptance and celebration – "from then I've been a massive fan… knowing I'm black – let's go for it". Kai's genealogy of race is shaped by years of silence, historical experiences of stigma, simultaneous understanding and confusion, as well as moments of disruption, celebration and acceptance. In this sense, Kai's genealogy of race differs from that of her mother's – the divergence of their genealogies is marked by their different engagements with race; by the silence between them.

It is worth considering how silence may operate in relation to acts of resistance – the resistance of experiences of trauma, racism, stigma; the rejection of such experiences. Silence both conceals and reveals – it prevents us from accessing information and having an awareness of the existence of certain information, whilst concurrently urging us to question what the intention behind it may be, and whose voices are missing from certain narratives. Where some parents chose to address experiences of racism with their children head on, other parents avoided them, and in so doing prevented their children from engaging with them as was the case with Kai. This shows the different ways in which racism can affect us, as well as the different ways in which children may or may not gain access to their parent's "worlds". Referring back to the text prompt Kai explained:

> **Kai:** I think there's like a little paragraph in there, I think the young girl is talking to her mum, and she is basically looking her in the face and saying "you're not black"
> **Tana:** hmm
> **Kai:** and you know I can kind of relate to that as well *(laughs),* um because my mum would say to me that I'm not black, so I can kind of understand the frustration in that regard, and I think it's kind of important to sort of remember our roots – of course - but also understand where our parents are coming from, and the struggles they went through, 'cos that's why they're doing what they're doing.

Kai accessed her mother's "world" through recognising what may have informed the silence and "distancing" practiced by her mother in relation to race, to gain a better sense of "the struggles"

her mother experienced. Even though she did not fully understand or take the same approach to race as her mother, Kai visited her mother's "world" through empathising with and relating to her in order to make sense of why her mother had said that she was not black. Travelling less directly than others, but going there nonetheless, Kai's reasoning exemplified what Lugones (1987) referred to as the loving aspect of world travelling;

> Loving my mother also required that I see with her eyes, that I go into my mother's world, that I see both of us as we are constructed in her world, that I witness her own sense of herself from within her world. Only through this travelling to her "world" could I identify with her because only then could I cease to ignore her and to be excluded and separate from her… travelling to each other's "worlds" would enable us to *be* through *loving* each other (Lugones, 1987: 8).

Concluding Thoughts

What does it mean to learn about race? When does this take place and how? From whom do we acquire the language of race and what does that process look like? Who shows us what it means to exist and navigate the world in racialised bodies? At what point do we look in the mirror, or lift our hands to see and know to label the colour of our skins, the kinks in our hair, wideness of nose and arch of lip, contour and positioning of eyelid as indicative of something different, as more than the uniform labels in the biology textbook?

Although learning about race and our own sense of self can take place in multiple settings, this chapter highlights the negotiations that take place within the family. These negotiations look different for different people, and may be continually revisited and reshaped; sometimes they take place early on in life, sometimes they happen much later. Sometimes they are melded into the everyday, and sometimes they happen suddenly. Often, they include the visiting of different "worlds", which aid us in better understanding each other and in so doing, ourselves – these visits can be taken together, but they can also be taken from a distance, illustrating the different avenues we may use to relate to one another.

This chapter focused on some of the ways race is learnt about within the family – this does not mean that we do not learn about race elsewhere, as we saw how familial narratives are often shaped by and in relation to external experiences, especially those of racism. The way we learn about race within the context of family is not linear, or uniform. Influenced by existing familial dynamics,

and shaped heavily by the experiences of those who teach us about race, this process is personal. Sometimes it is our parents, sometimes it is one parent more than the other – sometimes it is not our parents, sometimes it is another family member passing on knowledge, making us aware of what we did not know, answering questions we had about ourselves, the way we look and forever changing how we see ourselves in the process.

In every genealogy of race explored in this chapter the role of mothers in the weaving of these narratives has featured in one way or another. I would love to say that this was intentional, but in fact, it occurred to me after I had selected and begun to analyse these particular excerpts. Mothers and daughters, mothers of colour and their daughters, together and apart. I do not wish to generalise, but simply to reflect on this unexpected emergence, and the different ways in which mothers and daughters visit each other's "worlds" in the crafting of their genealogies of race; together, alone, persistently, silently.

Chapter 6

Defining Mixed Race for Ourselves

> ***Tana:*** *If you were to explain being mixed race to someone who'd never heard the term before, how would you do that?*
>
> ***Sharisa:*** *I think I would try and make it very simple, like the same way I talk to Korean children here, and try and say "mummy is this, daddy, (slight laugh) like dad is this and so I'm this". Like that – I would try and explain it like that, especially as well, because in the UK we have a lot of mixed race people, when we say "mixed race" people tend to assume half white, half black, But it's not, uhm, it's like even my little sister's like half black, half Indian. When we say mixed race, I think people jump to that conclusion of white and black but it's not. So, I could never say, I could never define it to be like oh white and black or this and that because I think that's not really fair to other mixes or whatever. So… I think I would have to just explain it in a way of, ok mom's this, dad's this.*

Sharisa and I spoke via Skype, between Coventry and Seoul where Sharisa taught English. I had been connected with her by her father, Morris, who I had met through Kai. We were all connected in multiple ways – through our relationships with one another, through our experiences of race, through Coventry. Sharisa spoke across contexts, about her experiences as a mixed race woman living in South Korea and growing up in the UK and Coventry. Having undertaken her own research about mixed race identity in the past and taking an active role in trying to engage with her students about race in the classroom, Sharisa's insights about race spanned gender, borders, familial connections and more. Her response to the question of how she would define mixed race, touched on a number of these themes, displaying the interconnectedness of understandings of race.

Starting with the familial connections – the lines of descent - Sharisa's answer then branched out to acknowledge how place features in understandings of race (see Campion, 2021), highlighting the role of dominant place-specific discourses in shaping those understandings, and linking this with the impact it can have on the individual. Here, the individual was her sister, and thus the individual for Sharisa was also the familial. In some ways this excerpt takes us full circle, from the familial to the contextual to the individual and back to the familial. Sharisa's engagement with what it meant to be mixed race also reflects the varying experiences of people who use this terminology to identify themselves. Through considering people who have different parentage and thus mixed backgrounds – people such as her sister – Sharisa challenged pre-existing ideas and assumptions about what it means to be mixed race. Sharisa's engagement with the term was inclusive of mixed race people who do not have a black and a white parent, and it was resistant to

limited understandings of mixedness that only refer to this manifestation of mixed race (see Song 2010 and Ali 2003). This resistance was informed by the dominant narratives Sharisa had encountered in the UK, but spanned her interaction with race in other places such as South Korea.

Not only did Sharisa contemplate the contextual implications of people's understandings of racial identity through reflecting on manifestations and understandings of mixed-ness in the UK, but by defining mixed race on her own terms, Sharisa exercised agency, thus resisting dominant notions of mixed-ness. Her resistance was twofold – she resisted dominant narratives in her articulation of what it meant to be mixed race, and through actively shaping perceptions of race and blackness in her classroom, where each week she displayed pictures of different influential black people to represent black people in a space in which they are underrepresented, and to encourage discussion from her students.

Sharisa pointed to the multiplicity of mixed race experiences – to the existence of different mixes not only in general terms but within families as with her and her sister. The range and variation in experiences of mixed race people was not only underscored by Sharisa, but reflected in the articulations of other mixed race participants. This chapter traces some of the varying experiences of mixed race people in Coventry, all of whom either came from a black-white mixed background, or an Indian-white mixed background. It explores the way in which mixed race experiences vary and are shaped by multiple factors. Although there are overlapping experiences between mixed race people, there are multiple complexities which serve to shape and inform people's experiences of being mixed race. One such complexity is the different ways in which people are mixed, which results in differing experiences which intersect with discourses of culture, class, gender and individual epistemologies about race. Different mixes lead to different experiences, which are *also* shaped by individual circumstances.

Individuals are shaping what being mixed race means to them, which often presented in this research as an explorative journey of self, that took place whilst concurrently navigating other people's perceptions and societal stereotypes around race and mixed-ness. The act of defining mixed-ness for oneself should not be overlooked, but centralized when thinking about experiences of being mixed race, particularly but not only in relation to the way in which mixed race people

are often challenged about and expected to validate their race or racial identity. This chapter makes space for individual definitions and explorations of mixed-ness, by mixed race people, in their own words. Each experience is different, each story unique to the life of the individual. Each expression is also understood here as resistant to dominant discourses about race which are often stereotypical, to institutional manifestations of race which seek to shave down and box, to all the individual responses to mixed-ness that mixed race people have experienced which have made them feel out of place, invalid, less than, or half of.

This notion of making space for and recognizing the importance of the individual experiences of people who are mixed race and their articulations of those experiences is inspired by hooks' (1989) politics of location, which encouraged us to look critically at the spaces in which we "begin the process of revision" of "counterhegemonic cultural practice" (hooks, 1989: 203). Moving against these practices, and

> out of one's place… requires pushing against oppressive boundaries set by race, sex and class domination. Initially, then, it is a defiant political gesture. Moving, we confront the realities of choice and location. Within complex and ever shifting realms of power relations, do we position ourselves on the side of the colonizing mentality? Or do we continue to stand in political resistance with the oppressed, ready to offer our ways of seeing and theorizing, of making culture, towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing, where transformation is possible? This choice is crucial. It shapes and determines our response to existing cultural practice and our capacity to envision new, alternative, oppositional aesthetic acts (hooks, 1989: 203).

hooks (1989) highlighted the potential for resistance that is present in our refusal to conform to and within hegemonic practices and boundaries – for hooks this was a political act, contributing towards future transformation and change. Others may not consider their acts of sharing how they see and make their worlds political or resistant; the ways in which we lean against that which is oppressive, and that which dominates, may not always be conscious or intended. Nevertheless, I suggest that defining one's racial identity on one's own terms is offering their way of seeing (ibid.), thus defying hegemonic practices and norms that may seek to predetermine or set the boundaries for how one defines themselves. This process may look different for different people. Whilst similarities between people's experiences are present, this work is also attentive to the variations in experience and circumstance that are charted in the below excerpts - variations in people's racialized and cultural backgrounds, but also in the way in which they navigate external perceptions and conceptions of race.

Although people may have similar mixed or cultural backgrounds, how they engage with those backgrounds in their everyday lives and understanding of self may vary. Thus, whilst similarities may emerge in the socio-cultural or ethnic groupings to which people may be attached, variations exist in people's responses to those groupings. This is not limited to the experiences of people who are mixed race, as experiences of racialization encompass many other racial groupings. Nevertheless, it is made more complex by the existence of multiple groupings within one person's racial heritage and identity, as well as by the lack of established recognition of and about what it means to be mixed race, versus the societal recognition that may be extended to other racial groups. Alcoff (2006) discussed how this lack of recognition may impact the experience and understanding of the self, and the process of alienation that occurs when:

> Mixed race persons are racialized, but the particular form of their racialization has not been accorded a general social recognition, which I would suggest is likely to lead to problems of self-alienation… For mixed race persons in North America and many other places in the world, this problem can be particularly difficult to over-come. The mixed race person has been denied that social recognition of self which Hegel understood as necessarily constitutive of self-consciousness and full self-development. For us, it is not a question of reorienting perspective from the alien to the familiar, since no ready-made, available, or socially acknowledged perspective captures our contradictory experience. Without a social recognition of mixed identity, the mixed race person is told to choose one or another perspective. This creates not only alienation, but the sensation of having a mode of being which is an incessant, unrecoverable lack, an unsurpassable inferiority, or simply an unintelligible mess. This blocks the possibility of self-knowledge: the epistemic authority and credibility that accrues to nearly everyone at least with respect to their ''ownmost'' perspective, is denied to the mixed race person. Vis-a`-vis each community or social location to which s/he might claim a connection, s/he can never claim authority to speak unproblematically for or from that position (Martín Alcoff, 2006: 278-279).

Alcoff's (2006) work engaged critically with the different ways mixed race identity can be approached, and leaned "tentatively" towards a

> …social recognition of the particular groups in the person's genealogy… by preserving the identity that the mixed person has connections with, the capacity for moving between such groups might be acknowledged… so their social or public recognition needs to acknowledge not *simply* that they are mixed, but what the mix is in particular to understand that person (2006: 283).

Alcoff's (2006) emphasis on the recognition of one's racial background as a way of understanding their experiences as mixed is in part supported in this work. Not only in Chapter 5 which considered the role of one's parents and kin in the production of mixed race identities, but in this chapter, with the recognition that different racial mixes inform different experiences and

connections. That being said, the recognition of one's racial background as a mixed race person is not considered sufficient for an understanding of mixed race people's experiences, but rather as a potential starting point for that process of understanding. Furthermore, whilst Alcoff's (2006) engagement with the limited societal recognition that exists for mixed race people's experiences of racialization is considered relevant to the data collected in this research, it does not offer the possibility or recognition of mixed race people's individual reactions to racialization and the importance of this in understanding their experiences. Whilst mixed race people may lean toward existing racial categories when elucidating their experiences of being mixed, and defining their racial identities, this is often accompanied by additional insights into their lived experiences as mixed which extend beyond a recognition of their racial descent. Rather than viewing the lack of societal recognition and definition as solely a source of alienation, the lack of established definition of mixed race in particular, and the ambiguity which accompanies this is positioned in this work as a potential source of resistance and agency.

Space is made here for individual insights, with less importance being placed on the societal recognition of mixed race in relation to other racial categories. Mixed race people are agents of their own racial identities, engaging with that which society and their loved ones present to them, considering and rejecting, investigating and accepting, owning and sometimes moving between, in an experience of racial slippage. Thus, while alienation may occur for mixed race people, and an understanding of self is not necessarily predetermined or even acknowledged by society, an understanding of self occurs regardless. Nearly every mixed race person who partook in this research was able to define what mixed race meant to them, and whilst this did consider the role of their racial descent, it was not limited to this as will be shown in this chapter.

On Perceiving and Being Perceived

Gina

"…when I was younger, I'd *rather* people think I was half black"

Tana: …And then you said, obviously that when you were younger, um, you would try to hide that side of you. So what kind of things would you do?

Gina: Yeah… I would try to look as… English as I could. My mum used to ... when she used to plait my hair, I used to hate it 'cos I'm like "Mum, you're making me look Indian." If people asked me my name, I'd just say Gina… Unless they specifically asked for my surname, I wouldn't say it, because I think that is the most Indian bit about me *(laughs).*

Tana: So why do you think that plaiting your hair is an Indian thing?
Gina: Do you know what, I really actually think what it might be is because they brought me – they bought me this doll, you know the ones that stand up, and they just, and it had a sari on and everything. And she's got a, double plaits *(laughs)* and I actually think to me a *plait* is Indian.
Tana: Really, because of that doll?
Gina: Not anymore maybe, but definitely back then. I think it was because-
Tana: So this was when you were younger, there was this doll?
Gina: Yeah. If I could show you some pictures, I look really, really Indian.
Tana: And it's because of your hair?
Gina: And, yeah, my face as well. I was a bit darker, I think, when I was younger. But definitely the hair helped, yeah.
Tana: Okay… Okay… And is your hair naturally curly?
Gina: Yeah
Tana: Okay
Gina: it is.
Tana: So would you straighten your hair or you couldn't… really do that?
Gina: Well… I'd, I'd try and keep it curly, before I would, because Indians traditionally have straight hair, I think. So I'd try and let it be curly, because at the, at the - when I was younger, I'd *rather* people think I was half black.
Tana: Really?
Gina: Yeah
Tana: Why?
Gina: Because it ... when I ... the people who were in my school, it was cool.
Tana: Okay. And how do you know that, did they talk about it?
Gina: Yeah… Yeah, because like the girl who called me a, a gollywog and then there was another girl as well, she was half black, and it was kind of like this uhm unity between them. How they'd be ... I don't know how to really put it, but… it would be ... they would try and make like they were the superior ones. And so, I suppose in - obviously when you're younger you kind of take it on board, don't you? So I'd much rather other people think that I was half black. So when people'd say to me, "Are you half black?" I'd be like, I wouldn't say yes, but I'd be glad inside that they were thinking that, and not that I was Indian.

This excerpt holds multiple facets – Gina's positioning of Englishness as preferable and in opposition to Indian-ness. The association between notions of race and naming, with Gina's surname operating as an indicator of her Indian-ness. The relationship between notions of race and hair - not only hair texture but hair styling as well. The connection between notions of race and phenotype, specifically the colour of one's skin. All of these facets speak to the ways in which we may craft our understandings of race, and the role that one's "look" may play in this process. Considering that at the start of this excerpt Gina referred to the way she looked and her desire to "look" English, one could postulate that there was an implicit association between notions of Englishness and notions of whiteness, with ideas of Englishness often being coded in this way (see Young, 2008:239; Ifekwunigwe, 2001: 54). In the same excerpt, however, Gina expressed wanting to be perceived as "half black" rather than Indian, and made no explicit reference to whiteness. It thus remains unclear what Englishness meant to Gina in this moment. What was clear was Gina's

desire to distance herself from being perceived as Indian, and all the different ways she considered doing so.

Also apparent in this excerpt is Gina's direct reference to the different ways of being mixed race – much like Sharisa, she acknowledged that mixed race is not specific to one racially mixed background. Gina showed how, when she was growing up, different ways of being mixed held different meanings - being mixed race and "half black" was positioned as "cool", whereas being mixed race and Indian was positioned negatively. The incorporation of ideas of superiority in relation to being "half black" elicits the notion of a racial hierarchy, drawing parallels with the predominance of black-white experiences in the literature on mixed race in Britain (Song, 2010). Interestingly, the hierarchy of mixed-ness described by Gina did not coincide with discourses of anti-blackness as is often the case with racial hierarchies, and being "half black" was positioned above being "half Indian". Being "half black" was considered cooler, and fostered a sense of "unity" from which people of other mixes, such as Gina's, were excluded. The use of racist terminology between mixed race people with different mixes also features, with Gina being referred to as a "gollywog", thus reinforcing the notion of hierarchy and superiority between mixed race people in Gina's experiences. Gina thus preferred to be perceived or 'passed'[6] as "half black", rather than be recognised as "half Indian", although this sense of shame was not limited to the experiences of the "half black" young people with whom she went to school but extended to her own views of being "half Indian" at the time which she voiced elsewhere in the interview:

> "when I was younger I was ashamed to tell people that I was half Indian, um, 'cos it was like a... I suppose it was kind of like dirty, Indians were classed as dirty. And so I would literally do anything to not tell them my surname."

The relationship between race and one's name was thus reiterated by Gina elsewhere in the interview, and the feeling of shame was named. Shame at being coded as "half Indian" through her surname because her surname was associated with Indian-ness, and Indian-ness was associated with dirtiness. This was painful to hear, is painful to read, and painful to imagine – a child not

[6] Suki Ali (2003) spoke about how mixed race people may pass as white, and detailed her own experiences of being mis-identified or "placed" (Ali, 2003: 13) by others. What struck me particularly in Ali's (2003) work was her recognition of the ways in which we are "passed" by others, sometimes without our knowing. Passing then, is not just something that one can do, but which can be done to one by others. Further, we see how in the case of Gina, one many not just pass for white but for other racial backgrounds as well.

wanting to be associated with their surname because of the way in which Indian people were racialised. *Shame and dirt, dirt and shame. Dirt versus purity. Dirt and impurity, impurity versus humanity. Dirt and inhumanity, shame and inhumanity.* When considered in relation to historical conceptualisations of race as a marker of difference, and the colonial discourses about racial purity that were traced in Chapter 1, Gina's comments hold clear echoes of the past. Here, racial purity is not so much associated with being mixed race as has been the case historically, but with the experience of being Indian. In Gina's childhood, the narrative of contamination was mobilised to position those who were racialised as Indian as dirty. This was something that she was able to avoid through avoiding association with all things coded as Indian (see Pang, 2018) – through presenting herself in particular ways, and through avoiding the use of her surname so as not to be "classed" as dirty. Her use of the term "classed" is powerful – it could be read in relation to social class, but when coupled with the notion of that which is dirty it also speaks to the idea of *class*ification. Returning once again to Chapter 1 and the historical significance of, and violence that accompanied and continues to accompany processes of racial classification, the idea of those who are perceived as Indian being "classed as dirty" weighs even heavier.

Gina's experience draws connections between the past and the present, showing how racial hierarchies continue to thrive, but may take on different forms in different contexts and may emerge in the experiences of mixed race people with different racial backgrounds. Gina's experiences show how the concept of race continues to be used to differentiate, with particular attention being paid to the association between understandings of race and one's appearance and name. This process of differentiation continues to draw on discourses of contamination, which reproduce racial hierarchies and depend on ideas of dirt (impurity) and purity in order to survive. Gina's excerpts also show how experiences of being mixed race not only vary, but take place in relation to broader conceptualisations of race – she navigated being mixed race alongside the particular racial positioning of being Indian. At the same time, her positioning as someone who was able to "pass" meant that she was able to move in-between these conceptualisations – recognising the ways in which people are racially coded and situating herself in positions that exposed her to less harm; positions that were "cooler" and less "dirty" than the others she was able to occupy, and were interestingly not related to whiteness so to speak, but to other iterations of mixedness. This speaks to the multiplicity of Gina's experience, occupying and being connected

to multiple spaces, as well as the deliberate and painstaking processes she went through in order to be perceived differently, less shamefully.

Meena and Jaya

"…it's strange to think that like Obama is the same amount of white as us, but we clearly like move through the world in different ways"

Jaya: I thought it was interesting. I like that bit about, the bit where um, she says … I thought if anyone looking at us, like would just see two black women talking, even if… that's not what her mum thought of them. It shows like how your perception of your race can be different to other people's perception of it … So, it's like, what's the real one?... *(laughter)*

Meena: Um, I thought it was interesting when she was talking, like she said that like being black is a political statement, not just a fact. So I think that kind of makes it more interesting - she's saying that it's a fact being black not like a perception, like not what you think you are. It's like a fact. But I dunno, I guess some people might disagree with that.

Tana: So can you elaborate more on the idea of it being a fact?

Meena: Yeah, well I think maybe it's a little bit more complicated for mixed race people. Like, I mean like we're half Indian but I wouldn't call myself Indian. But maybe it's different with like if you're half black. 'Cos like, I dunno people like Obama, he was half black - people called him black. There wasn't really a sense of him like in any way not being black...

Jaya: Yeah. It's strange to think that like Obama is the same amount of white as us, *(laughter)* but we clearly like move through the world in different ways.

Meena: Yeah… I think, I dunno 'cos I feel like with, um, Obama like… it's because he looks black rather than about what maybe his like actual parents are. So I think it may be more about like how people perceive you other than just like a fact - more about perception if that makes sense…

Tana: Hmm, so why do you think that differ- differs from your own experiences?

Meena: Uh… well yeah, I dunno I think 'cos we're like, like quite light skinned. Um, and I dunno I think… people don't look at us and immediately know that we are half Indian, half white… so yeah um… I don't know. I don't really know where I am going with this *(laughter)*.

This excerpt from a group interview with sisters Meena and Jaya, and their parents, Kiran and Tim, begins with Meena and Jaya's responses to the text prompt that participants received from Andrea Levy's (2004[1996]) book. Starting by reflecting on external and internal perceptions of race, the conversation then shifted to notions of political blackness and the relationship between the perceptual and the factual. Meena noted the complexity involved in negotiating the "factual" for mixed race people, and both sisters compared their experiences to those of Barack Obama's. Meena observed being "half Indian", but unable to identify as Indian, in comparison to Obama being "half Black", but referred to as Black. Jaya framed her observations as both her and Meena being "the same amount of white" as Obama but experiencing the world differently. There are thus

similarities drawn between Meena and Jaya's experiences, and Obama's, in that they all have a racialised "half" and a white "half", but differences in the way they are perceived and experience the world. "Maybe it's different… if you're half Black" (Ibid) – Meena considered that Obama being racialised as black even though he was "half Black" was related to a connection to blackness that was absent from her own experiences. Therefore, although Meena considered Obama to be mixed race like herself, their experiences were not the same. The conversation then shifted to appearance – Meena wondered if perhaps Obama was referred to as black because "he looks black" which took precedent over the racial identities of his parents, thus indicating that the way in which one is perceived outweighs the "facts" of one's lines of descent. For Meena this was different to her experiences as both her and Jaya were "quite light skinned" and thus perceived differently; "people don't look at us and immediately know that we are half Indian, half white"(Ibid.).

These observations are weighty, and open up multiple avenues of exploration – how does one begin to unpick the layers of questioning and grappling present in such a short excerpt? I found Jaya's engagement with whiteness striking. Often when considering experiences of race and racialisation whiteness is left out of the conversation – perhaps this stems from histories of racial thinking which have positioned whiteness as the default - the race-less - and racialised all those who have existed in opposition to that default (Olumide, 2002; Ali, 2003). Jaya countered this tradition by positioning whiteness in the conversation about her and her sister's experiences of being mixed race, as well as in relation to Barack Obama's racial identity. At the same time, the comparison of their experiences with Obama's, and the certainty they observed surrounding how he was perceived draws parallels with Gina's comparison between the positive perceptions attached to mixed race people with black and white parentage as opposed to the negative perceptions of mixed race people with Indian and white parentage. Although the meanings attached to Indian and white parentage were different for each participant, in both instances, they were perceived with less certainty in comparison to people with black and white parentage, perhaps providing an avenue of enquiry in response to critiques of the prevalence of the experiences of mixed race people with black-white parentage in the existing literature noted in Chapter 3.

Meena's commentary about Obama is particularly noteworthy when considered in relation to the way in which race and racialisation operate in the US. Although as discussed in Chapter 3 there

are communities in the US who identify as mixed race and multiracial (see Daniel et al, 2014), the way in which Barack Obama is often racialised as black in popular culture may also speak to a long history in the US of hypodescent, in which people with mixed parentage are by default classified within the group with the lesser status (see Root, 2004[1992]). The practice of hypodescent or the "one drop rule" was not utilised in Britain, although Ifekwunigwe (1999) argued that the essentialist logic of hypodescent remains central to our contemporary understandings of "Black/White social stratification" (Ifekwunigwe, 1999: 5). Returning then to Meena's reflection that "maybe it's different with like if you're half black", and considering it in relation to the specific history of hypodescent and blackness in the United States, Meena's observation may very well be correct. Discourses of hypodescent may continue to shape people's understandings of the race in the US (see Ho et al, 2017) which, as argued by Ifekwunigwe (1999) is not disconnected from understandings of blackness in relation to whiteness in Britain. If this is the case then it would position the experiences of people with black-white parentage differently to mixed race people with other racial backgrounds, highlighting the role that context and history play to shape our understandings of race and processes of racialisation.

The role of perception engaged by Meena and Jaya in understandings and experiences of race was a consistent theme throughout this research, as well as in previous research I have done surrounding mixed race experiences (see Forrest, 2014). Jaya and Meena directly addressed the role that perception plays in shaping reality, and producing multiple realities, which pointed to a fracture between how we see ourselves and how we are seen, leading Jaya to ask "what's the real one?". But what if there is not one reality? What if we choose to consider these experiences as indicative of realit*ies*, and that being hyper-aware of these realities – of the perceptions of others and the way in which they stand in relation to our perceptions of ourselves – is a central part of many mixed race experiences. This is not to say that people who are not mixed race do not experience or engage with multiple realities in relation to race – racial stereotyping, as engaged with by Kai later on in this chapter, is a good example of the tensions between how we see ourselves and how we are seen. At the same time, the experience of seeing and being seen becomes further complicated for mixed race people, not only as a result of presenting as racially ambiguous, or not, but as a result of the different ways in which people can be mixed due to the different races of our parents.

Thus, multiple perceptions may reflect reality – different realities for different people, from different viewpoints, which shape and inform mixed race experiences, sometimes endowing them with the weight of ambiguity, the disruption of being perceived as something that is not our entirety and is different from how we perceive ourselves, at other times getting it right for one mixed race person by aligning them with one parent over the other and simultaneously wrong for another who does not want to be aligned with only one parent. The process is messy, hard to pin down, always, always varying and in flux – the process is personal.

"Facts" can serve to guide us in some ways – the fact of our parentage that may inform the foundation of our racial identity, the fact of an Indian mother – but these may be overruled by the way in which we are perceived as was evident in Meena's analysis of Obama being perceived as black due to how he looks in comparison to herself and her sister's "light skinned" appearances which do not position them clearly in relation to their lines of descent. Alongside revealing the tension between the factual and the perceived, Jaya and Meena's navigation of their experiences also demonstrated how seeing and being seen can be forged through different understandings of race; the physicality of race for example - the colour of the skin and the way in which we may or may not look to other people, and the politics of race – our affiliations with political blackness for example, and the way in which this shapes our identity beyond the physical.

The comparison that Jaya acknowledged between her and her sister's experiences and those of Obama's not only reference the varying ways in which mixed-ness can manifest, but also the similarities; "Obama is the *same amount* of white as us, but we clearly like move through the world in different ways". Meena and Jaya's engagement with Obama's racial identity shows how contradictions may be present in experiences of being mixed race – that we can have similarities, but experience the world differently. That we may be the "same amount" of something, but perceived differently. Perceptions may also be shaped by the dominant discourses surrounding race in particular contexts, as well as understandings of race that pertain to appearance – to how one "looks" and the meanings attached to that. There are both alignments and differences between these experiences that are shaped by context – both international and local, individual and circumstantial.

Mirrors and the shifting of racial identity

> *In the dual relation of subject to subject or subject to object, the mirror is the symbol of an unaltered vision of things. It reveals to me my double, my ghost, my perfections as well as my flaws. Considered an instrument of self-knowledge, one in which I have total faith, it also bears a magical character that has always transcended its functional nature. In this encounter of I with I, the power of identification is often such that reality and appearance merge while the tool itself becomes invisible (Minh-Ha, 1989: 22).*

The first section considered the experiences of Meena, Jaya and Gina, and the different ways in which they navigated the perceptions of others in their social worlds. In each of their experiences, the starting focus extended *from the outside in*, charting the ways in which external perceptions may influence our internal worlds. In this next section, the focus begins *from the inside out*, reversing the lens and considering how participants Zia and Hannah navigated their internal perceptions of themselves in relation to their social worlds. This difference is subtle, in that no matter the starting point, all five participants still engaged with external perceptions at some point in their excerpts. That being said, the shift in focus is a useful reminder that the angles from which we approach external perceptions and the impact they have on our understandings of ourselves can vary.

This next section thus considers the experiences of Zia and Hannah, two mixed race women who, when compared in relation to prevalent categories of analysis (see Hill Collins, 2012) appeared to have some similarities in their backgrounds. Both Zia and Hannah were women [gender] in their thirties [age], grew up in working class families [class] and had white English mothers and black Jamaican fathers [race]. I began this section with Trinh T Minh-Ha's (1989) reflections on mirrors and self-perception as both Zia and Hannah referred to moments of looking in the mirror when explaining their experiences of being mixed race. For Minh-Ha (1989) the mirror has the ability to reveal one's self, "unaltered" (Minh-Ha, 1989:2) – it is a reliable source; a tool that may sometimes disappear in one's acknowledgment of oneself. We may thus see ourselves and forget that we are doing so with a mirror – we just see, we just are. As is evident in the below excerpts, for Hannah the reality and appearance discussed by Minh-Ha (1989) seemed to merge – the mirror revealed her *self*, whereas for Zia the mirror seemed to reveal her *double* with which she had to come to terms on her journey of self-knowledge/recognition/acceptance. Different parts of Minh-Ha's (1989) description of the mirror thus resonated with each person's experience. These differences are striking, if we return to the similarities between both women, and pay particular

attention to the similarity of their racial backgrounds. When thinking about the experience of being mixed race, these differences serve to exemplify how considering one's racial background alone is not enough in order to understand mixed race experiences. Knowing the racial identities of one's parents does not do enough to facilitate an understanding of one's experiences, even when coupled with seeming similarities in class, gender and age. It is the individual experiences and the particularities of people's lives and responses to race which are revelatory, as will be discussed below.

Hannah

Tana: …so you identify as mixed race?
Hannah: Yeah.
Tana: So if you were to define that to someone, how would you do that?
Hannah: I'm black and I'm white. I don't know. See, for me, it's really like – I never wake up in the morning and look in the mirror and go, "Oh my god, you're equal parts black and white, look at you." I just see myself in the mirror. So I don't realise my race until someone points it out or I'm checking a box of what sort of ethnicity are you. So yeah.

Zia

"I literally believed I was black until... You know, I'd look in the mirror and be a bit shocked that my skin's quite pale"

Tana: And what was it like being mixed race in Hillfields?
Zia: Um… See I didn't really notice that I was mixed race; I think I always identified as black *(laughing)* when I was growing up, um, because it, it meant a lot to me - my culture – um, because my mum didn't have any family so all *my* family was my dad's side of the family which is the Jamaican side, so I think when I came to Coventry my sense of identity was, was quite strong and I wanted to... I think that's what kept me going, because I was away from my family, so… yeah.
Tana: Yeah. And so even - that was at age 11 so already you were really quite conscious.
Zia: Yeah. I was very conscious as a child.
Tana: Yeah. And was that because your family spoke about race or you just picked up on it?
Zia: No, it was me. It was - see, my family was quite an interesting one because, um… all, there was six um… aunties and uncles and all but… two were with white people. Um, yeah, one then since remarried to a white person, so it was very mixed and there's loads of mixed race children because of the marriages and... So it wasn't a case of it was very one-sided, it wasn't, it was me siding with one side. So for me as a child, um, yeah, I just identified with my... I didn't even know what the black culture was, I just thought it was skin colour and the Jamaican flag *(Laughs).*
Tana: And then when did that change?
Zia: I think it changed when I was about… um 16, 17 when I met a group of friends at college, well just before college, and they're still my close friends now who are black, and they introduced me to a whole new side of the black culture, a positive side, very um, lovely side of all the wealth and riches of the culture. And that was a game-changer although it *did* kind of make me a bit um… a bit *more*… identity-confused *(small laugh)*; I literally believed I was black until... You know, I'd look in the mirror and be a bit shocked that my skin's quite pale *(laughing.)* I literally used to be walking around with my fist in the air *(small laugh)* and thinking that if anybody who was black was dating anybody that was

white was a sell-out, which I know is wrong, completely wrong now but I did go through that stage and out rightly called them a sell-out.

Tana: And so how did that fit with your... Obviously 'cos your mum was white so how did that fit in with that?

Zia: Hmm. Fitted in fine, my mum was my mum.

Tana: So it was a separate thing to you?

Zia: Yeah. That was the weird, um, contradiction of it all *(laughs).*

Tana: Yeah. And then when you met these friends… did they ever kind of say to you, "You're not black" or –

Zia: No. Never. Never. Didn't say to me I was black or white or anything, they just accepted me for me. It was *me* that I suppose, um… had my own perception of myself.

Tana: Hmm, which started to change.

Zia: Yeah.

Tana: Because you said that you became quite confused.

Zia: Yeah. Yeah. Hmm hmm. And I wouldn't say it was confused… On reflection now, I think I was confused, um, but actually in that moment, you know, I was black, I wanted to date black people, listen to black music and… that was that. I, I didn't talk in a certain way, I didn't try and act black or anything but it was quite interesting.

Zia and Hannah's references to looking in the mirror and their different encounters with their self-perception speak to the diversity of mixed race experiences. Where Zia described surprise at seeing herself in the mirror and being shocked at the fairness of her skin, Hannah described a lack of surprise when looking in the mirror and situated the experience of recognising her race in relation to external encounters with people or institutions. Hannah also spoke of a rejection of being split into equal parts which are determined by the races of one's parents – this is something to which I will return later. When considering these excerpts, the role of time should be noted as Zia was speaking retrospectively about her experience as a young person, whereas Hannah's comments were located in the present. Nevertheless, the fact that both women used the mirror as a device with which to interrogate their racial identities is noteworthy. The mirror offers us access to our physical reflection, forcing us to encounter our corporeal self. Our image is flipped to face us, looking at ourselves looking, a doubling of reality, giving us access to an idea of how we may be perceived by others but no possibility of confirmation as it is still *us* looking - seeing ourselves seeing. Zia and Hannah's discussion of appearance draws parallels with Gina's experiences of looking a certain way and how this is connected with experiences of racialisation. Again, we see how understandings of race may be intertwined with external features, and the way in which they are perceived within our social worlds.

As with other participants, Zia engaged with the notion of perception as she grappled with her experiences of race and the shifts that occurred within her racial identity. Contradiction and duality

both emerged as trends – the contradiction of resisting racially mixed relationships whilst also being inherently connected to the racially mixed relationship between her parents; the duality of identifying as black as a young person, and retrospectively acknowledging herself as mixed race as an adult as was articulated later on in the interview; "I don't just have to be black or I don't have to be white, it's okay to be mixed race". The role of perception in Zia's experience focused very much on the internal – her perception of herself, whilst also recognising the impact of the external on her self-perception, through different encounters with black people and aspects of black culture.

The complexity of being black was also tapped into - again making connections between mixed race experiences and broader discourses of race - as Zia connected experiences of being black to the choices she made in romantic relationships and the type of music she wanted to listen to, and disconnected it from "acting black" or talking in a particular way which I infer to mean talking in a way that may be associated with certain ideas of blackness. It could be that Zia was referring to the experiential, and the subconscious choices she made which aligned with blackness, which she positioned in opposition to actively adjusting the way she talked or acting in particular contrived ways. The lived experience is acknowledged as a valid experience - "in that moment… I was black" – despite being different to Zia's current views on herself and her identity as a mixed race person.

This reflection by Zia demonstrates that as much as we analyse, contemplate, reflect and discuss, the moments in which we live, and experience, and feel – the moments in which we just are, in which we experience *being*, are also important when trying to understanding individual experiences of race. I am aware here of the irony of analysing the moments in time that occur prior to or outside of analysis, however, not only are these moments important, but they may change and transform. Identifying differently in different moments was not limited to Zia's experiences, as other participants also slipped between different racial categories. Where Zia's experience reads in some ways as a linear journey from identifying as black, to expanding her understanding of blackness, to a moment of recognising herself differently in the mirror, and eventually identifying as mixed race, other participants continually veered between or held multiple categories at once as

is illustrated below in Kai's experiences, indicating the differing experiences of mixed race people, with some appearing as linear and others appearing to be held in simultaneity.

Journeying

I would like to delve deeper into the process of journeying which was echoed in the above experiences of Zia and which was also apparent in the experiences of Gina. Both women detailed their experiences of coming to terms with/acknowledging their mixed race identities and what these meant to them, whilst simultaneously engaging with or resisting external perceptions of who they were or how they were meant to behave respectively. Similarly, both Gina and Zia engaged with notions of culture in relation to notions of race – for Zia this was explicit as she regularly referred to "black culture", for Gina this was implicit in her discussion of certain types of food and attire that could be interpreted as indicative of Indian cultural traditions. These ideas were engaged in different ways by each woman – where Zia embraced the notion of "black culture" and her journey of learning more about it, Gina pointed to the ways in which essentialist ideas of culture and their connection to race can be problematic.

In Gina's second interview excerpt, we see how she navigates external and essentialist notions of race and notions of culture, as well as the journey Gina took from initially being ashamed to identify as "half Indian" earlier in the chapter to embracing it in the latter part. We bear witness to Gina's own process of defining what being "half Indian" means to her, and resisting external expectations or societal recognition of what that might mean.

Gina Part II

Gina: …being mixed race and half Indian means that people will judge you for having a ready meal curry –
Tana: *(laughs)*
Gina: *(laughs)* that is… *(laughing)…* that is what it means to me… they will look at you and think 'why are you having that chicken tikka masala packet' *(laughter)*
…
Gina: It's so true, and do you know why it irritates me so much?
Tana: Why does it irritate you?
Gina: Because it's like why can't I like this, what, they…why you having a white person's curry? And I'm like because it's nice…
Tana: *(laughs)*
Gina: Like what is a white person's curry? My white mother of a person cooks the curry
Tana: Yeah

Gina: so… it, it honestly, and I don't know if Catarina has told you anything about our previous boss Abeni – now her colleague – uhm, she used to make some really weird comments like 'oh you're not even Indian' and like, you know 'you're not even Indian, like do you know what curry is?' *That*, to me, was almost as bad as calling me a Paki, because it was like *so* dismissive, and what just because I don't like come into work dressed in a Sari and you know with a Bindi on my head, does that mean I'm not Indian? I think, I think these are the things that I suppose you'd ... I don't think about them as being things that bother me as a mixed-race… person, but now that I'm thinking about it properly, these are probably my everyday… little bugs. You know?

Like somebody telling me like… where's your brown skin?... What? *(laughs)* You know? It's stupid, like… it's dumb saying it, and it really ... I think that actually now really bothers me. And I've only just really thought about it bothering me.

Tana: So what do you think it is about that that bothers you so much?

Gina: I feel like it's *really* dismissive… of, of my dad, maybe. You know, it's not ... obviously not personally to him, but *his* part of me. Um, and one day, when he's gone, I'm probably going to be more proud of, of that part of me because he's not there anymore, so kind of keep it going. You know? And it's like who are you to, to say to me that I'm not Indian or I shouldn't be eating this ready-meal curry, which I absolutely love? You know?

Tana: Hmm. Hmm. Yeah. And do you think that ... so obviously your old boss is black, right?

Gina: Yeah.

Tana: So do you think that had anything to do with that comment?

Gina: I… She – 'cos her dad, I think, converted to, um, Hinduism and she like used to say ... because sometimes she'd, she'd try really hard to relate, because it was like she was telling me her dad was basically Indian, even though he's not - he's black - but telling me about the curries he makes, which is absolutely fine, because obviously they're not, they're not limited to an Indian person. But… So sometimes it was kind of like she was… "Oh like I had dahl at the weekend" Like, okay, great, like are you telling me because I'm, *(smiling)* I'm half Indian? But then like the next day you're telling me that I'm not Indian."

…You know, I think what I have found with - sometimes, is that it's like mild racism coming from other people. Like she would say like, you know "White people's food is bland." Well, like you know, well okay that's my mum then. Do you know what? And it's ... I suppose… I suppose being mixed race you've got like *two* backgrounds to think of. You've not just got one, you know if, if you're white and you're being, you know you're being judged, you've just got that one. Do you, do you know what I mean?

Tana: Yeah

Gina: I've got my white background and my Indian background to think of *(small laugh)*.

Legitimacy and external perceptions as well as questioning figure strongly in Gina's exploration of what it means to be mixed race and half Indian. Ready meal curries are positioned as representative of a lack of racial legitimacy, with eating and enjoying homemade curry being positioned as a true reflection or indication of Indian-ness. Gina's enjoyment of ready-made curry complicates this positioning, speaking to the limitations of prescribed notions of race and the way in which they can distract from every day and varying experiences of *being* mixed race. This is exemplified by the fact that Gina's mother, who is a white woman, makes curry in her household, which counters the notion that racial legitimacy can be determined by stereotypical ideas about

practices such as making particular kinds of food or wearing particular clothes. Although the relationship between race, cultural practices and food should not be dismissed, this relationship should not be applied prescriptively, and it should be recognised that it can vary for any number of reasons – upbringing, interpersonal relationships, familial dynamics, cultural mixity, class and religion being only some of the factors that may influence how this manifests. These associations are not clear-cut or linear, and may vary according to household, and particularly in households that are racially mixed.

Irony is present in the example of Abeni, a black woman who pointedly discussed her father's ability to make curry with Gina which was interpreted by Gina as a challenge to her own racial identity: "it was like she was telling me her dad was basically Indian, even though he's not - he's black". The irony sits within the fact that a black man's knowledge of curry is being used to challenge a half Indian woman's knowledge of and preferences for curry – if anything this disconnects curry from the relationship that is assumed to exist with race, positioning it as something that anyone can make, even though it may be prevalent in particular countries or cultural settings. Utilising the ability to make certain kinds of food is one example of the way in which mixed race people may face challenges to their racial identity as detailed by Alcoff (2006). Facing questions of legitimacy and having to respond to them or defend them should not just be considered in relation to the limited ways in which race may be considered or understood, but also in relation to the way in which experiences of race and mixity may be emotive and personal. For Gina, challenges to her racial identity and its legitimacy not only had an impact on the way in which she was positioned, but the way in which her parents were considered or disregarded – her mother and the role she played as a provider of traditional Indian food in the household was not considered, and her father as a significant contributor to Gina's identity and sense of self was not considered. This indicates that for Gina, the crafting of her racial identity was deeply interconnected with her parents and their identities, drawing parallels with some of the themes from Chapter 5 regarding the role that familial ties may play in mixed race people's understandings of race.

At the same time, we see how in this excerpt Gina no longer shies away from her Indian-ness as she did in Part I, but defends it against those who challenge her on it - "who are you to, to say to me that I'm not Indian…". Such challenges were positioned by Gina as worse than being on the

receiving end of racial slurs, in that they were "dismissive" of her father and "his part" of her. This moment speaks to the role of the relational in our understandings of ourselves, taking us once more to some of the themes that emerged in Chapter 5 regarding genealogies of race, in the importance Gina placed on having the role of her father acknowledged in relation to herself. This was positioned as something that was not fixed but could change and grow - as something that was given to her by her father that she could "keep"; "one day, when he's gone, I'm probably going to be more proud of, of that part of me because he's not there anymore, so kind of keep it going. You know?" Not only does this illustrate the role of relationality in individual experiences of mixed race and understandings of self, but the ways in which the relational may change. For Gina, she went from wanting to conceal her Indian-ness, to defending and acknowledging it, and recognising that this acknowledgement and pride would no doubt continue to grow when her father was no longer alive.

We see how an understanding of the race of one's parents is not necessarily sufficient to understand a mixed race person's experiences – not only as a result of the different ways in which people may relate to their parents, but as a result of the fact that this process of relating may change over time. We know that Gina has a white mother and an Indian father – and so what? Knowing this alone cannot tell us what it means to Gina, or how she navigates and makes meaning of this process, nor what it may look like at different moments in time. Further, whilst Gina experienced challenges to her Indian-ness – "oh you're not even Indian" - returning me to Alcoff's (2006) supposition that mixed race people "can never claim authority to speak unproblematically for or from that position" (Alcoff, 2006: 279), we see how challenges to one's "authority" may be resisted and subverted; "just because I don't like come into work dressed in a Sari and you know with a Bindi on my head, does that mean I'm not Indian?"… "who are you to, to say to me that I'm not Indian". Gina reclaimed the authority from Abeni, through troubling external and essentialist perceptions of Indian-ness and asserting her own understanding of it which was deeply connected to her sense of self through her father.

Wholeness – a multiplicitous existence

Earlier Hannah spoke about how she does not recognise herself as "equal parts white and black" when looking in the mirror; "I just see myself'. This conversation evolved as the interview continued, some of which is encapsulated in the following excerpt:

Hannah Part II

"I feel like a whole person even though I'm not meant to"

Hannah: Did you encounter racism more from black people in South Africa then or…?
Tana: For me, the biggest problem in South Africa was people always saying to me, "What are you?" That was the constant question I received, "What are you?"
Hannah: What sort of question, what sort of question is that? I think that's what gets to me, when people say, "Where are you from?" Because I'm just like… like, I don't feel like it is necessarily always like a genuine sort of… "Oh, I really need to know, I want to know where you're from" or, if someone turned 'round and said, "what are you?" I think that's so insulting.
Tana: Exactly, it's like you're not a human being.
Hannah: Human being - exactly, and that's what I don't like, when people are like um - …Um… So yeah, I feel like maybe not - they're not saying, "What are you?" But probably the similar sort of reaction you get when people ask you that is how I feel when someone abruptly sort of says, "Well, where are you from?" … Like, "I'm trying to work *this* out, what is this?"
Tana: Exactly, yeah.
Hannah: I don't – I think that's why it gets my back up, 'cos I, I suppose maybe I've never been probed and asked these questions, that's why I'm finding it a bit hard to understand, 'cos I do get annoyed when people do ask me… that, and I think it's similar – Um, I've never, I don't think I've ever had anyone say, *"What are you?"* but I feel like that's what they're – when they say it – you know the difference between someone sort of being like, *"Ah cool… anyway, where are you, where, like where's your family-?"* difference, to someone trying to be like, *"What's this? What's all of this*?" Um, yeah.
Tana: Yep, yeah, it's a very like -
Hannah: Yeah, it is odd because I think… it's like you're not a whole person, and I think that's what I *like* about it because I feel like a whole person even though I'm not meant to, if that makes sense. So I think when you're fully black or fully white, you're like, you're really quite confident in what you are… Society's labelled you, you look in the mirror, you're this, you've, you know, you fall into this category, and I think what I like about being mixed is that I *like* that I'm a bit of this and I'm a bit of that but I still feel like a whole person. And I feel like I've got a bit of like, not one up on someone, but like, I think it's quite beneficial to have like… a mixture of cultures, a mixture of experiences and, and that being my genetics.
Tana: Yeah… Definitely, um. Yeah
Hannah: I feel sorry for the rest of the world that they're not mixed race *(laughs).*
Tana: Yeah, that's really interesting… Yeah, and it's interesting that you drew that connection between the two questions 'cos I haven't heard many people here say that they've heard the question, "What are you?" But a lot of people say they'll get, "Where are you from?"
Hannah: Yeah, so I, I think when you said *that*… I can imagine how that felt, and that's how I feel when people ask me that question, so yeah.
Tana: Yeah, so I think it's like I think just contextual differences but –
Hannah: It's *like* we're an odd species and they want to – what is this? Like you're something different. Sometimes I do feel a little bit special that I'm mixed – well, not special but

> like, proud and happy about it. But then, yeah, people have like this intrigue about it, whether it's like a really innocent like wanting to know and curiosity about it, but it's so odd because you just feel like you, don't you?

Hannah's engagement with the way in which questions such as "where are you from" pose a challenge to her wholeness as a mixed race person confronts binary conceptions of race which seek to situate or "split" people into discrete racial categories, and often overlook the existence of racial identities which exist outside of or across those categories. Responses such as Hannah's, challenge the ability of such categories to adequately represent people who identify as mixed race. By underscoring her wholeness, which exists as multiplicitous - outside of a binary - Hannah points not only to the limitations of racial categories but also to the possibility of existing fully, wholly, beyond such categories and without feelings of alienation or discomfort.

In Chapter 1 I considered Lugones' (1994) metaphor of mayonnaise, and the notion of curdle separation as a means of considering how we might think about mixed race experiences. Lugones' (1994) notion of curdle separation informed her understanding of mestizaje; "mestizaje defies control through simultaneously asserting the impure, curdled state and rejecting fragmentation into pure parts" (Lugones, 1994: 460). Hannah's experiences of being mixed race draw parallels with Lugones' (1994) notion of mestizaje, in that Hannah rejects fragmentation and embraces multiplicity: "it's like you're not a whole person, and I think that's what I *like* about it because I feel like a whole person even though I'm not meant to". Hannah refused to be "controlled" by questions such as "where are you from" and "what are you", which implicitly require that we "split" ourselves up in order to answer them. Instead she embraced her wholeness, with a clear sense that this was not and is not expected; "even though I'm not *meant* to". I am positioning this embrace of wholeness as an act of resistance against instances of dehumanisation– "It's *like* we're an odd species and they want to – what is this? Like you're something different" – as well as a rejection of external perceptions in favour of those that are internal – "it's odd because you just feel like you, don't you?".

Hannah's embrace of wholeness, and pride at being mixed race as opposed to "fully black or fully white" in which "society's labelled you", stands in contrast to ideas that mixed race people are confused (as seen in the age of pathology) and the idea that one requires societal recognition or "labels" in order to have an understanding of oneself. This speaks to the role of agency and variety

in our experiences – we are agents who may determine how we choose to position ourselves, in spite of what external perceptions and labels may be thrown at us. To return to the words of Anzaldúa (2009), 'who, me, confused? Ambivalent? Not so. Only your labels split me" (Anzaldúa, 2009: 17).

Militant and Mixed – Resisting racist and gendered stereotypes

Kai

"So that's what I did, I showed her that this idea of mixed race isn't about being an alien. And I made sure that I fought in a, a visual sense and sometimes verbal..."

Kai: …I watched a documentary, I don't know if you've seen it on Stephen Lawrence and Doreen Lawrence.

Tana: Yeah, it was on a weeks ago, right, 'cause of the anniversary?

Kai: Um, yeah, and um that's a more UK story and, *what's changed*? And, you know, Doreen Lawrence went through that, she was very brave to come forward at that time as well. But before Stephen had passed there'd been more killings before him, and then killings after him and killings now, and so on. So, what's changed? That's my question. For a lot of people that are fighting this cause, um, of institutional racism. Police will always say "we're not racist", but, look at their policies, look at what they bring in. When you go into court, the first thing they ask you is, what's your nationality? What relevance does that have if you've burgled someone? I don't, *(small laugh)* I don't really get it, so...

Tana: Yeah… Yeah… Definitely.

Kai: And I think that's why people believe me and you will have the best of both worlds, because - and I say that kind of loosely. But if you went into the system, like the court service or something like that, you're seen as white so you'd fit in, it's only if you're like me, and start mouthing off about *(laughs)*, about why are you doing this and, you know, start talking about black people, because... it's kind of unheard of in those places. You don't, you don't get it, they'll see a black person as a security guard. And think "yes, so multi- multi-cultural", but they don't know anything about us.

Tana: Hmm, yeah... but do you think that that would happen, like if we were taken into custody or whatever, that they'd think we were white?

Kai: Yeah.

Tana: Do you think so?

Kai: Yeah.

Tana: *(laughs)*

Kai: And the, the reason for that is because our skin colour's light... if you didn't say anything at all about being black... they don't know... you wouldn't get you wouldn't you wouldn't get that hassle I don't think, but because I visibly show I'm black and of course, I've been stopped and searched... You know, I think it's what you connect as being black as well...

Tana: So how do you visibly show it?

Kai: By the way I dress, through it-the kind of comments and stuff like that, that I say, I think that kind of shows like somebody said in my office just about three or four days ago, um, physically referred to black people as monkeys. So of course, I flipped and that that sort of flipping shows that you've got a connection - they'd never say it again. [small laugh]

Tana: Yeah

Kai: Clear as that, um... I didn't get in trouble. And I said, well, what you need me-why would I be in trouble for? You're being racist.

Tana: Yeah.
Kai: Um, and so they couldn't, they couldn't do anything.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: ...and I think it takes more of that.
Tana: Yeah... yeah. And so the way you dress like what... tell me the thought process behind that like, so you say that you dress a certain way to show blackness?
Kai: Sometimes sometimes I do it as a statement.
Tana: Okay
Kai: ...um, I prefer Bob Marley, red, gold and green - that's my preference.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: But... sometimes if I if I know that it's going to be a all white place that I'm going to,
Tana: Yeah
Kai: I'd dress so you can see me red, gold and green, wraps, sometimes a hat, you know, all these things. And I think it takes yourself to being comfortable.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: So you can make a change.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: If they consistently see what like -Topshop's just across the road - those particular clothes all the time that's what you get used to. So you just mix up a little bit [small laugh].
Tana: Yeah
Kai: start showing people that actually I'm not a horrible person, because I'm wearing red, gold and green
Tana: Ya
Kai: Or I'm showing, well what they call rasta colours.
Tana: Hmm
Kai: I'm not horrible and I don't loads of smoke weed and get high everyday, these sort of stereotypes need to slowly... but also I did it for gender, gender ideas. I noticed that... everywhere you go, they expect a woman to dress in a certain way. Me being me, stubborn.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: I ain't dressing like that.
Tana: Yeah
Kai: *(Laughs)* So I had two different sort of ideas about it, especially in school. School was a place where they didn't understand me at all, um, and I said to the teachers, well, I'm actually getting called racial names. I'm getting called all these things. I got told to deal with it. You know, so how, how do we overcome this? Right, okay, I'll show you. And *(small laugh)* that's how my attitude was.
Tana: Hmm, so you'd dress a certain way to show them that you were being treated-
Kai: -in school? Yeah, I dressed red, gold and green, I'd wear loads of Bob Marley. I'd have my hair out massive, um, and that was just to say, well, I'm black and proud, what you gonna do about it?
Tana: Yeah
Kai: teachers would say summin'- is we always get taught slavery in his, in history. I said, but what's positive about our history? This is all negative - I got in trouble for that
Tana: Hmm
Kai: I got called a alien in school... by a teacher... *(laughs)*
Tana: What is wrong with these people? *(Kai laughs)* This was in Coventry?
Kai: Yeah... so it was our head te- it was a head teacher as well. So, I said to my teacher, you know, I'm really unhappy - people are calling me names. This was like, when I first started sixth form
Tana: Ya
Kai: And um, I'm not liking what's happening. She said, "well you're an alien, deal with it", and I... I *(laughs)* I remember thinking wow I must be E.T. or something. And I came home, in tears. And I said to my uncle, I said to him, this is what she said to me. How am I

supposed to deal with this? And he's black, and he said, "show her". So that's what I did, I showed her that this idea of mixed race isn't about being an alien. And I made sure that I fought in a, a visual sense and sometimes verbal... I'd never be physical – one, I was always smaller than everybody else *(small laugh)*

Tana: Yeah

Kai: So, so yeah, that's how I dealt with it really, even with teachers, teachers have the most... ignorant mindset, um... about mixed identity... same with black teachers, they were the same because they didn't know what to do either... it was the first time seeing somebody, mixed identity, relating to *very black* kind of strong views.

Kai referred often to the many ways in which her racial identity intersected with other identities and societal structures – from how mixed race people such as her and I are viewed, or "passed" in relation to the criminal justice system, and the role that institutional racism plays in shaping our experiences, to the intersection of gender and race and the expectations that have been placed on her as a woman. Interwoven throughout Kai's exploration of these experiences were instances of resistance to preconceived ideas – moments during which she took control of the narrative she was encountering and replaced it with one of her own making. Sometimes this resistance was verbal, aimed to correct colleagues sharing racist ideas in the workplace. At other times, the resistance was visual, manifesting through the use of clothing and styling her hair in order to represent and highlight her blackness as well as resist gendered expectations around how she should dress – here the resistance was layered, addressing multiple stereotypes not only about black people and how they behave, but about women and how they are expected to dress and show their bodies. Not only were these decisions around dressing this way positioned by Kai as a "statement", but they were located by her as a means of making "a change". Further, her acknowledgement of the intention behind dressing this way – "I'd dress so you can see me" – and the comfort it requires, which I interpret to mean comfort within oneself, recognises the consequences of *being seen*; the consequences of subverting a gaze which is racist and gendered. There exists a double meaning in the notion of *being seen* which is striking, considering that Kai aimed to cover her body in order to be seen; as if to say *see me, but in the way I desire to be seen, and not in the way that you desire to see me.*

> …well, there's always this idea that women should have a producti-, prov-provocative, there we go, provocative dress, or they should wear skirts and have pretty flowers on and all this kind of crap. And I thought, you know what, let's wear baggy trousers, baggy top, let's be comfortable, let's do what I need to do, and... that was taken funny as well. Because a lot of people would say, why can't you dress feminine? (Kai, 2018)

Later in the excerpt Kai reflected on her experiences at school, which demonstrate that alongside showing pride and challenging stereotypes, *being seen* can also cause pain as Kai was subjected to racial abuse from other students at school, and called an "alien" by a teacher. This pain did not exist in isolation, and with the support of her uncle, and the crafting of a new genealogy of race, was channelled into correcting the notion that Kai was an "alien", taking us full circle; from discomfort to comfort. Taking ownership of her narrative as a mixed race person – "I showed her that this idea of mixed race isn't about being an alien" – was an act of resistance, focusing on the presentation of an experience that is not "alien" - alien being different, otherworldly, not from here, *not like us* - but created on her own terms and in allegiance with the black experience.

Kai recognised the role that blackness plays in her experiences as a mixed race person, and the confusion this caused amongst her teachers, including her teachers who were black - "it was the first time seeing somebody, mixed identity, relating to *very black* kind of strong views". The lack of understanding surrounding mixed race experiences is underscored by Kai, and goes alongside her emphasis on shaping that experience on her own terms. Kai's bold approach and acts of resistance echo the thoughts of hooks (1989) introduced at the start of this chapter, she embodies the idea of being:

> "ready to offer our ways of seeing and theorizing, of making culture, towards that revolutionary effort which seeks to create space where there is unlimited access to the pleasure and power of knowing" (hooks, 1989: 203).

Through Kai's experiences we see how transformation is possible – her choice is clear, as is her "capacity to envision new, alternative, oppositional aesthetic acts" (hooks, 1989: 203) which manifests through the way she navigates the world, through her choice of dress and literal acts of speaking up and against racism, discrimination and stereotypes which do not fit her, which she will not accept.

The excerpt above from Kai's interviews echoes many of the themes that have emerged in other excerpts across the last three chapters – notions of appearance and how we may alter them in order to change the ways in which we are perceived; feelings of pride surrounding one's racial identity; challenging racial stereotypes and racism, – the pain of experiencing racism - crafting narratives of what our racial identity means to us alongside kin; the criminalisation of people of colour within legal institutions; engaging multiple racial identities at once. At the same time Kai's story is

unique, much like all the others shared in this chapter and across this thesis. Each dotted with particular nuances and specificities, experiences and memories, family structures and histories.

Concluding Thoughts

We see the variety of mixed race experiences – each story is different, each person picking up on and responding to the things which matter to them. Within these stories there are resonances, moments which reflect those that have been experienced by another. One such resonance can be found in the ongoing engagement with pre-established ideas about mixed race that were charted across the chapter which showed how constraining these ideas can be. Each participant in this chapter defined mixed race on their own terms – these definitions were not always clear cut. Many of them were processual and changed over time, ebbing and flowing their way through people's everyday lives and experiences. Many were marked by immense experiences of pain – experiences that have stayed with people, experiences that continue to hurt. All of these definitions were enough.

The variations encapsulated in these processes and moments of people defining mixed race for themselves are not only positioned here as necessary, they are positioned as resistant. There is no one definition of mixed race, and we should not aim for there to be. Mixed race is everything that was described here and more – it is all of these things, operating at once, intersecting with notions of culture and gender, situated within and in relation to history, contradicting itself, slamming up against a wall of external perceptions and hopping the fence nearby, speaking to the limitations of generalising about experiences of mixed race, and experiences of racialisation more broadly.

Conclusion

The Past in the Present

Throughout this thesis, connections have emerged between the past and the present, showing how legacies of empire continue to shape how we experience the world. When thinking about experiences of race and racialisation this is particularly apparent – we label one another without thinking, not recognising the violent history that frames how this process began. To label oneself then, in the face of these histories, becomes significant, even if it may concurrently reproduce the systems we are trying to resist. If notions of race continue to thrive, the least we can do is try to take control of the narrative.

Narratives weave themselves throughout this work: the narratives we receive, and the narratives we create. There are the narratives that dominate, the ones that hold the power to shape our lives and how we learn to perceive ourselves and each other. Then there are the narratives that are lesser known, the ones fashioned and safely kept in the privacy of the familial, the ones we create when we consider our reflections in the mirror, the ones that are held by the landscapes of the cities we inhabit – in their archives, their infrastructure, their spaces, their residents. It is the narratives that are lesser known which I have sought to capture in this work, highlighting how they operate to resist, to empower and to replenish us with the strength we need to continue to exist in a world that inscribes us in harmful and violent ways.

The experiences of the participants of this research reveal the differing ways in which mixed race people navigate the external perceptions of others, perceptions which are informed by centuries old ways of thinking. I sought to draw attention to this from the start, but it was also something which emerged as the research progressed – adding further heaviness to experiences such as Val's, wherein her five-year-old daughter came home from school upset that another child had labelled Val "dirty". These experiences are serious. These experiences are painful. These experiences break our hearts. These experiences make me wonder how to move forward. And then, we read on. We see how Kayla responded to this moment that she may or may not have understood as racist – we see how she called her mother beautiful. Knowing alone that this is what happened is already moving – knowing it alongside the historical implications of calling a black woman "dirty" and

the ways in which black women have been systematically subjected to racist and patriarchal oppression, is confounding.

The experiences of mixed race people in Britain occur in relation to Britain's political and historical landscape. Not only must we pay attention to the specific experiences of mixed race people, but we must also situate them in relation to this land, this history, this society. This is a contradiction of sorts – I have argued that we must note the nuances and variations in the experiences of mixed race people, whilst concurrently noting the way in which broader structures of race and racism are perpetuated and reproduced. I stand by this contradiction – we can pay attention to the nuance and specificity of people's experiences whilst also recognising how they are articulated in relation to broader historical and political framings.

I have drawn attention to the histories of racial hierarchy, racism, white supremacy and oppression that have informed notions of race, and particular experiences of mixed race. I have also sought to highlight the ways in which mixed race people have resisted these forms of oppression and domination. These moments of resistance are not always clear, or conscious, but they have been situated as such as a result of the fact that they represent a clear engagement with pre-conceived ideas about race, and an insertion of individual responses to those ideas. These responses are crafted on an individual and familial level, as well as in relation to the spaces in which people are located – in the moments when Kai reflected on the gendered and racialised narratives she had encountered about Hillfields and provided her own observations which stood in opposition and added complexity to those narratives. In the moments when Sharisa challenged the notion that Coventry is "rough", situating this idea in relation to notions of class and race. In the moments when Meena and Jaya contemplated how they are perceived in relation to Barack Obama, questioning and reflecting on their different experiences of mixed-ness, processing and pondering. In the back and forth between Aanya and Iva, as they unpacked and reflected on their family history, weaving an intergenerational story of their shared history, memory, and racial heritage. All of these moments have shown the ways in which meaning is made in people's everyday lives, bursting at the seams with multiplicity and standing in stark contrast to hollow and tired essentialist notions of what it means to be mixed race.

In a similar way, I have sought to add complexity to some of the dominant narratives about Coventry. Situating it historically, and politically, as a place that has been impacted by neoliberalism and the destruction of the welfare state, as a place that has been impacted by unemployment and institutional racism, as a place that is home to many, as a place that holds strong in people's memories, as a place in which people have loved and lost, as a place that, just like anywhere else, has a story. As a place that is worthy of consideration. Just as contemporary discourses of race and racism have been situated in relation to Britain's colonial and imperial history in this work, so too have the discourses of place that I unpacked in Chapter 4, illustrating that legacies of empire not only continue to seep into our understandings and experiences of race and racialisation, but they extend to encompass the spaces we occupy, and the ways in which we navigate and consider them.

The contexts in which we live and make our identities are informed by legacies of the past. Coventry provides an excellent example of Britain's culture of bombing and being bombed (Back, 2011) - history remains embedded in the landscape and the narratives of the city. Whilst the past continues to shape and inform the present, Coventry is not exempt from the broader contemporary discourses operating on the British political landscape, and neither are the mixed race people who live there. Discourses of past and present merge together, providing a backdrop that is made up of structural violence, institutional and everyday experiences of racism, as well as discourses of class and gender. At the same time these broader discourses are crosscut by lived experiences of celebration, resistance and love.

Drawing attention to Coventry as a field site with historical, social and political relevance is one of the contributions of this thesis. When thinking about social scientific research, it serves as a reminder that there will always be another place to consider, and we must not get caught in the trap of only considering main cities and centres as "worthy" field sites. There will always be a place that is left out of the conversation in the same way that there will always be a voice that is missing; we should *always* pay attention to the absences and to the silences. We should *always* remain wary of the dominant narratives we encounter about places and people: who and what do those narratives omit, and who do they serve to benefit?

I mapped the dominant narratives of Coventry against the less dominant, the ones that have been overlooked and silenced, creating space in the discourse for a different, more complex experience of place and how it is shaped by histories and experiences of race and racialisation, and the varied and nuanced ways in which people work their way through those experiences and the spaces they create to do so. These stories remain underrepresented, especially in the historical discourse to which we have access.

Such absences are not limited to where we choose to do our research and who we choose to do it with, they encompass the discourse with which we choose to engage, approach, and analyse our research as well. Cognisant of these absences, and as articulated in Chapter 2, I made such choices in this research with intention, paying particular attention to the how, the why, the who, and the when in my methods and analysis. The approach I have taken is thus a contribution to conversations on how we may do research with people who identify as mixed race in Britain, as well as people who experience racialisation more broadly.

Another contribution of this thesis lies in the connections that have been made between different contexts through the use of theories and literature that is situated globally. Such an approach has allowed for parallels to be drawn between seemingly disconnected places and experiences – echoes of a bar in Apartheid Cape Town where people of different races would meet and dance can be found in a bar in Coventry where people of different races met and fell in love in the 1980s and 90s, all brought together by music; Maria Lugones'(1994) theorising about discourses of multiplicity, fragmentation and mayonnaise find resonance with the lived experiences of mixed race people such as Hannah in Coventry who conceives of her mixed-ness from a position of wholeness, rejecting discourses of fragmentation.

Not only does this research contribute to the existing body of literature on mixed race experiences in Britain, but it adds complexity to it through representing the experiences of mixed race people who identify, or recognise the existence of mixed-ness, beyond the black-white binary that has been predominant in the discourse. In this work, mixed race is not about a particular racial configuration but rather it situates the experience of having parents who have different racial identities as the entry point into experiences of mixed-ness which extend far beyond the racial

identities of one's parents, and manifest in many ways. Further, whilst this work considers the role of the parents of mixed race people in their understandings of their racial identities, it does not prioritise their experiences (Pang, 2018) but rather underscores how the relationality that may exist between mixed race people and their parents can inform their understandings of race. This has been done through the mapping of intergenerational narratives shared by mixed race people *and* their parents, sometimes in conversation with one another and sometimes apart.

When it comes to defining mixed race for ourselves, I have underscored that this process is neither linear nor unified; the ways in which people choose to define and identify themselves are multiple and look different depending on their individual experiences and journeys. Meaning is made and remade, shifting over time and in relation to our experiences of ourselves, as well as our experiences of others. In the face of all this multiplicity, one thread emerged, which can be located in how the mixed race participants in this research all came to an understanding of what mixed race meant to them, refusing to simply accept the limited and static external narratives they had encountered, choosing instead to mark their own paths and definitions which were always characterised by fluidity and ambiguity.

Looking to the future

In Chapter 2 I posed a question to which I would like to return;

> "…what causes our longing to conduct our research, and to work with particular groups of people? Our intentions as researchers must be addressed in order to truly recognise our relationships to and interpretations of our research findings" (42).

I posed this question to myself, to help me to locate my position as a researcher in relation to the participants of this research. To allow for a recognition of my own connectedness to this discourse, and to hold myself accountable as someone who may identify with and be connected to the work, but also holds a position of power in this work. This is something I would like to see more of in the discourse on mixed race people's experiences of race in Britain. Without foregrounding our experiences over those of our participants, we should always locate ourselves in relation to the work, and we should name why we long to do it. In so doing we can challenge the legacies that remain from the age of pathology which risk pathologizing and reifying the experiences of mixed

race people, whilst concurrently acknowledge that relationships of power continue to exist in research processes, and yet we choose to do it anyway.

As someone who identifies as mixed race, I see this project – this exercise in documenting and mapping the experiences of mixed race people in Coventry – as an attempt to better understand what mixed race can look like in a context other than the one with which I am most familiar. My longing, which fuels my research, is to *connect with and relate to* people like myself who identify as mixed race and to *create space for their stories - in their own words* - in the discourse. This work is about how we relate to and see one another – such an exercise in understanding should not be limited to the people who participate in our research but extended to us as researchers. How do we relate to and see one another, and how does that inform our research?

Along with thinking about the ways in which we approach research about mixed race experiences, I think it is important that we continue to make space for the experiences of mixed race people who do not have black-white mixes as well as for the experiences of mixed race people who have two parents of colour. Not only is this important in order to unsettle any assumptions that mixed race pertains only to black-white parentage, but it is also useful to further understand how different mixed race identities operate or are produced in relation to one another as was evident in the experiences of Gina in Chapter 6. Additionally, the centring of such experiences would help us to gain a better understanding of whether the experiences of mixed race people with two parents of colour are permeated by discourses of whiteness in the same ways as they so often are for mixed race people with one white parent.

Paying attention to the nuances of mixed race identities should not be limited to a consideration of differing racial mixes but extended to encompass other aspects of people's experiences. I have noted before the ways in which differing axes of oppression may intersect with and inform the experiences of mixed race people. More research is needed in Britain on the relationship between sexual orientation and mixed race identities, between chosen and non-heteronormative families and mixed-race identities, between ability and mixed race identities, between religion and mixed race identities, between discourses of citizenship and mixed race identities. Ideally, we would consider everything, all at once, but alas, there never seems to be enough space or time to undertake

in-depth analyses of *all* the complexities of people's lived experiences in social scientific research. My hope is that through continuing to prioritise the lived experiences and voices of mixed race people in the discourse and through engaging in in-depth qualitative research, these varying intersections will have room to emerge.

I urge those who seek to understand and document mixed race experiences to do so in a manner that embraces our complexity – our experiences are not easy to understand or untangle, and conclusions about them should not be drawn with swiftness. We are not a problem to be solved, or a theory to be dis/proved; we thrive in ambiguity and nuance, we are ever varying in our multiplicitous existences.

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Appendices

Text Prompt

didn't want anyone to think I didn't get the joke – that I had no sense of humour.

My mother didn't believe in black people. Or should I say, she tried to believe that she was not black. Although she knew that she and my dad were not the only people who came over here from Jamaica in the fifties, she liked to think that because they were fair-skinned they were the only decent people who came. The only ones with 'a bit of class'. And she believed that the English would recognize this. That in a long line of 'coloured people from the Caribbean', an English gentleman in his bowler hat with rolled-up umbrella would run his pointed finger up the line and say, 'Yes, her, Rose Charles, and of course her late husband Newton Charles – they are what we in this country are looking for. They are the truly acceptable face of other people from the Commonwealth. Welcome to our country, which is now yours too. I hope you and your offspring enjoy your stay.' (Then he'd turn to everyone else: 'And the rest of you can stay if you don't make a noise and don't breed.')

She used to talk to me about what she thought of the black people here, looking me straight in the face, telling me how they were like this and like that – nothing good of course. But she sat looking in my black face telling me. And I thought if anyone looking at us sitting at the table talking had to describe the scene, they'd say, 'There are two black women talking.' But my mother thought we weren't black.

'I'm black,' I used to say, when I was old enough to butt in.

'Don't be silly, Olive, you're not coloured.'

'No, Mum, I'm black.'

'No Olive, you're not black, and that's enough of this stupidness.'

'Well I'm not white, I have to be something.'

'You're not white and you're not black – you're you,' she would say, leaning her face right into mine, and that was the end of it.

I tried to explain that now I was a grown-up I liked being

Interview Schedule

- **How would you describe your racial identity?** (What makes you identify in this way? What does it mean to you to identify as this? Would you say all mixed race people/people with the same racial background as you define themselves in this way? If you had to define "mixed race" to someone who didn't know what it meant, what would you say?)
- **Can you remember when you started thinking about your racial identity or race in general?** (Where did you gain knowledge about race? How did you learn the racial terminology that you use now to define yourself? How did you learn what was racist?)
- **As a mixed race person/person of colour, what has your experience of living in Coventry been?** (What do you think of the City of Culture Bid? Would you describe Coventry as a diverse city? Have you ever experienced racism in Coventry?)
- **What do you think about Brexit?** (What are your thoughts on the Royal Wedding?)
- What do you think about the racial categories you have to choose on official application forms?
- Would you say the UK is racist? Why do you think that is?