

Caribbean Women and the Black British Identity:
Academic Strategies for Navigating an 'Unfinished' Ethnicity

by

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this dissertation is to make a substantial contribution to the better understanding of the identity formations of Black Caribbean migrant women in Britain. The dissertation outlines a theory of Black female subject formation in Britain. This theory proposes that the process of subject formation in these women is an interrupted one. It further suggests that interruptions are likely to occur at four crucial points in the development of their identities. These four points are: 1) the immigrant identity; 2) the Caribbean identity; 3) “the Jamaican” identity; and 4) the Black British identity.

In order to understand the racial and gendered dynamics of identity formation in these women, I hypothesized that the structure of institutional racism in Britain has taken the form of a “double wall” or a “double portcullis”, which must be scaled by these “immigrants”. My research, based on interviews with 15 Black professional women who identify with a Caribbean ancestry, confirmed very strongly the existence of this double portcullis. It further supported the hypothesis that the above points of identity transition were also points of possible interruption. My research also revealed that through a variety of social movements, cultural and political mobilizations, it has been possible to get over the negative stereotypes of the immigrant identity, the Caribbean identity, “the Jamaican” identity and to succeed getting over the first or the Black British wall of the double portcullis. For me, the most interesting findings of my research, are the continuing difficulties that the women I interviewed have faced in attempting to climb over the second portcullis to achieve the Black English identity. The dissertation concludes with

some suggestions about the future of this “unfinished” Black British identity and its prospects for easier access to the Black English identity, and thus to “life success”.

DEDICATION

For those who follow ‘Calherban’s’ and ‘Caliban’s Reason’ for continuing in the struggle to produce new knowledge and facilitate group success.

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CHAPTER 1

THE HYPHENATED BRITISH IDENTITY: HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?

*“If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched
into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive”
(Lorde, 1982)*

Introduction

The project that I have endeavored to address in my dissertation is a careful study of the specific set of obstacles that have challenged the socio-economic integration of Black female Caribbean immigrants into British society. I have examined the organizing strategies and particularly the individual projects of academic achievement that have been among the responses of Caribbean women to these obstacles. In the course of describing these obstacles and the responses to them, I have made some brief comparisons with the situation of Black Caribbean women who have migrated to the U.S. and Canada, societies that have found more multicultural solutions to the integrating of immigrant populations. Such systemic patterns of social exclusion in Britain and elsewhere raise questions of social justice because of their dehumanizing and inegalitarian consequences.

My dissertation will specify the major social justice issues raised by the experiences of Black Caribbean female immigrants to Britain. The major scholarly goal I hoped to achieve in writing my dissertation was the creation of a critical theory to capture the blockages or interruptions in the self-formative processes of these female immigrants produced by the exclusionary practices of British society. Initially, I outlined this critical theory of the Black female experience in Britain using auto-ethnographic and secondary ethnographic data.

For my dissertation, I collected new ethnographic data from case studies of about 12 Black Caribbean women who have migrated to Britain. With this new data, I revised appropriately the initial formulation of my critical theory. In the last chapter of my dissertation, I considered up the implications of my research for Habermasian, Rawlsian, and neoliberal theories of social justice.

Social Setting of My Research

The social setting of my research is the experience of race and gender in the everyday life of Britain. In contrast to the theorists I reviewed, I am of the opinion that race in Britain is inextricably tied to ethnicity and nationalism in unique ways that make the assimilation of Black Caribbean immigrants quite different compared to the cases of Canada or the U.S. To grasp the distinct racial barriers faced by Black immigrants to Britain, these barriers must be explicitly linked to a special group of white “ethnicities”. These special white “ethnicities” are of course the English, Scottish, Welsh and later Northern Irish. All of the former were incorporated into the supranational entity, Great Britain in 1707 that would be joined by Northern Ireland finally in 1801. With this incorporation, all of the members now had a double identity: English-British, Irish-British, Scottish-British or Welsh-British. However, as ethnicities formed out of incorporation they must be distinguished from ethnicities formed out of processes of immigration from abroad. Hence the quotation marks I have placed around the former use of the term.

Ethnicities formed out of incorporation are different because for the most part members remain in the land of their birth. Thus English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh

attachments to their places of birth before incorporation, have kept prior nationalist sentiments burning and therefore have limited the transfer of national loyalties to the supra-national entity of Great Britain. Given this peculiar interplay between nation and ethnicity, the Black Caribbean immigrant to England/Britain, will experience two distinct sets of identity-based exclusionary practices directed at them.

The first of these exclusionary or “othering” practices are associated with the broader and more inclusive British identity hence the cockney rhyming epithet “There Ain’t no Black in the Union Jack”. The second set of exclusionary practices that the immigrant will encounter, are those deriving from the “ethnic” or subnational English identity which is reserved for white people born in England. The latter set will be a more difficult wall for the immigrant to overcome than the one presented by the British identity. This double barrier to Black immigrant entry arising from the unique embedding of race in the dynamics of ethnicity and nationalism is an aspect of the project of forging a Black British ethnicity that has often been overlooked in the literature on race in Britain. We will see this in the literature review section, and the fuller implications of this double barrier to entry will be explored in the founding layers of my critical theory.

The Dilemma

Arriving in Britain presents three basic dilemmas for Black females categorized as immigrants. First, the identities of these Caribbean immigrants are racialized as negroes. To be negrified means that you become identical with your skin color. The implication of this is that whatever cultural construction that you had of yourself before entering British society for example a doctor, lawyer, or teacher, are negated. Being racialized as Black

suggests, that the visible Black immigrant is not considered to be a part of British, (that being English, Scottish or Welsh society), or assimilable to what is British. This is not because of one's aptitude, application of willingness to assimilate, but merely because of one's visible ethnicity that is raced as "Black". Blackness stands in antithesis of what is considered to be an essential characteristic of Britishness, and a prerequisite for one to be able to claim "authentic" Britishness, which is reserved for 'whiteness'.

The second dilemma which is faced by the Black female immigrant, is that once perceived to be female, one is also a gendered female, and to be a gendered female is to be considered the second or the subordinate female (De Beauvoir, 1949). Like women everywhere else, once you are considered to be a female, you are automatically classified as being second to males. Thus, this labelling places limits on how you are perceived, it limits your perceived capabilities and your ability to be "allowed" into certain spaces and professional arenas. Again, in addition to race, female secondarization can negate your cultural and professional definition of yourself. This adds to the negation that comes from race. Gender is a second factor creating obstacles for these immigrant women.

Third is the dilemma of being an immigrant. In the context of Britain, postcolonial Caribbean immigrants came to fill the lowest jobs, this identity became the core definition of the immigrant. Whatever prior construction of yourself that you held as a stable identity is called to question. Built into this status of the immigrant is that you are a failure and you are a substandard human being because of the implicit construction of the immigrant as a failure. The negative construction of the immigrant adds to the other two stereotypes that are imposed on the Black female immigrants. For Black women, their

role as immigrants included being factory workers, seamstresses and cleaners and thus they were for the most part excluded for the most part from academia.

As part of this struggle to navigate British society, Black British women have ventured into various fields of work including the academe — a space that is thought to provide ‘voice’ to those who have learned. In particular, the academic arena is one where those who have been silenced historically, the focus of this research study, should find platforms to have voice. However, with only seventeen Black female professors reported as having academic positions at British institutions in 2017, this makes one wonder, what are the experiences of being the minority of the minority —ergo that being both a woman and Black — navigating the academe? This also begs the question, does working in such a setting provide Black British women with some good possibilities for realizing academic, professional and personal success? How does the Black female academics’ professional success manifest beyond the academe into their personal lives?

As part of this research project, I am inquiring into the gendered “double consciousness” (Du Bois, 1920) and “life success” of Black British female academics, those who consider themselves as part of the “visible yet invisible minority” (Collins, 1998, 73), who are coming to voice. I have operationalized the term “life success” to refer to success beyond academic achievement. In other words, I have related this concept of life success to aspects of one’s life including and beyond the academe. I inquire into the challenges and the obstacles that Black women experience as they attempt to decolonize and lay claim within the academic space, be successful and achieve life success in British society. I consider this to be a justice issue and I intend to look at a number of Black women who are/have been located within the academe at various stages,

to find out how they see themselves, their struggles and how they perceive the challenges to achieve 'life success' in British society.

Literature Review - Racial and Gendered Double Consciousness

There are several theorists who have been instrumental in analyzing the Black experience in Western spaces, (Du Bois; Fanon, Hall, Gilroy, Fisher, Smith) each of them contributing a theoretical pathway to address the challenges and dilemmas that is the focus of this study. Among the earliest of these theorists is the African American, W.E.B Du Bois, whose work has reached across the Atlantic to engage the hearts and minds of Black people in Britain and the Caribbean. Du Bois' great theoretical contribution is his powerful conceptual account of the impact of negrification on the psyche and consciousness of people of African descent. In his classic text, *The Souls of Black Folk* — which highlights the dilemma faced by the Black person living in America, Du Bois theorizes the dilemma faced by “the negro” as one of the doubling of his/her consciousness. Thus, in addition to being able to see herself through her own eyes (first sight), the racialized subject must learn to see herself through the eyes of the dominant white other (second sight). Seeing herself through the eyes of the other she becomes a “negro”. Hence Du Bois considered “the negro” to be

“Gifted with second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world “
(W.E.B Du Bois, 1994, 8).

This split in the consciousness of the negrified African, Du Bois represented with the metaphor of the veil. Thus, he spoke of voices within and outside of the veil. For those trapped within the veil, second sight had overwhelmed first sight. In the cases of such

individuals, Du Bois saw “their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white” (1994, 2). It was the situation of the African person at this low point within the veil that prompted Du Bois to pose the very pointed questions: “what after all am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and to be an American?” (Levering-Lewis (Ed.) 1995, 24). This is the tragic internal struggle that came with the negrification of the African identity, and which Du Bois famously described as follows:

One ever feels his two-ness - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder
(1994, p. 2)

As a good theorist, after making this penetrating diagnosis, Du Bois turned his attention to the challenge of overcoming this racialized double consciousness. He counseled firm resistance to the rising power of second sight within the veil in a persistent effort to preserve first sight. This could be done in several ways. For example, if an individual still retained the ability to think, create art and dress in African idioms, then these should be carefully cultivated in the Pan-African or African nationalist tradition. If this was not possible, then the individual could elevate him or herself to the top of a high “tower above the loud complaining of the human sea” (Du Bois, 1999, p.17). This inner tower could be constructed out of the cultivating of definite talent that one possessed such as writing, business, science, music or sports. This tower was the counterpoint to the outcasts, sycophants and silent haters within the veil. This tower can be a way of saying “I am not your negro” (Baldwin, 2017)

The third strategy Du Bois offered for the overcoming of racialized double consciousness is the turning of second sight against the white other, and making it into a powerful weapon of critique. This critical transformation and use of second sight is grounded in a growing awareness of the gap between oneself and the diminished stereotype of “the negro” that white domination has imposed on one. This gap then becomes the sharp-edged tool for detailing the dehumanizing practices that the white other is capable of. In another of his famous essays, “The Souls of White Folks”, Du Bois made this critical use of second sight:

Of them I am singularly clairvoyant. I see in and through them. I view them from unusual points of vantage ... I see these souls undressed and from the back and side. I see the working of their entrails. I know their thoughts and they know that I know. (1999, 17)

Du Bois did not restrict his theory of double consciousness to the racialization of people of African descent. He extended it to include the secondarization of women. As in the case of racialization, female secondarization also produced a doubling of the psyche and consciousness of women. In other words, male dominance produced a gendered double consciousness through which women came to see themselves through the eyes of men rather than through their own eyes (1999, 95). Thus, here again we have a case of the losing of first sight and the inner struggle to resist its overwhelming impact by a male oriented second sight. Du Bois did not detail the specific inner strategies by which women could win this battle. Thus, we can only assume that they would be similar in nature to those outlined in the case of racial double consciousness. Later, to these inner strategies of resistance, Du Bois would add various forms of organized political resistance.

Given the comprehensive nature of Du Boisian theory, its applicability to the situation of Black people in Britain should be readily apparent. The theory suggests a clear parallel between the predicament faced by Caribbean Black people and “the negro” in America. Thus, it is very reasonable to assume that many Blacks in Britain have asked themselves the question: Can I be ‘a Negro’ and be British? The similar nature of this question derives from the fact that America’s approach to ensure of the continued subordination of the Black person was to ‘immigrantize’ the negro, portraying him/her negatively —” the nigger” — so that their claim to freedom, justice, rights and permanence within any space could be restricted and challenged. In regards to immigrants he highlights that America “trains her immigrants to this despising of “niggers” from the day of their landing, and they carry and send the news back to the submerged classes in the fatherlands” (Du Bois, 1999, 29). This notion that there is a corresponding relationship between oppressors (and indeed oppression) on both sides of the Atlantic, grounds the applicability of Du Boisian theory to my research project. Despite being written in the early decades of the 20th century, prior to the Windrush of the 1950’s and 1960’s, Du Boisian theory predicted the hostile response to Black Caribbean immigrants to Britain by whites from all strata of the society.

Frantz Fanon and the White Masks of Double Consciousness

Developing further this notion of double-consciousness presented by Du Bois, the text, *Black Skin White Masks*, by Fanon presents an existential and psychoanalytic analysis of the implication of being in a state of racial double-consciousness. Specifically, Fanon, explores the phenomenon of negrification, in particular, “the psychopathological and philosophical explanation of the state of being a Negro” (1967,190). For Fanon, “the

negro” is a colonial construct that equates an African identity with black skin within a white racial construct. It is one that categorizes and racializes the African skin color as “black” and negative in doing so, positions the African as being diametrically opposed to the European who was raced as white. Further, for Fanon, in Europe “the Negro has one function that of symbolizing the lower emotions, the baser inclinations, the dark side of the soul” (1967, 190). Thus, the connotation of “blackness” came to denote distinct inferiority, sub-humanity and just about everything negative. When pushed to these extremes, “the negro” became “the nigger”. This cultural code would seep out of Europe to permeate all societies and be understood across all societies of the world.

The “nigger” is not a historical character. Therefore, it is one that can be presented in various ways, including the buck; Uncle Tom; the Mandingo; the Pickaninny; the Golliwog; the Mammy; the Jezebel; the Sapphire and of course the Tragic Mulatto-who is treated somewhat differently and yet niggerized. In the British context, the “niggerized” Black female is portrayed as the available and undesirable female, which to a degree parallels the contemporary caricature, Bon Qui Qui, one who is portrayed as being ghettoized and embodying negative portrayals of black womanhood. The tragedy here for Fanon is that these caricatures, which are derived from the white racial construct of blackness, are often internalized by Black women. Once internalized, their stereotypical images produce within the African psyche the need for positive markers to compensate and erase these negative ones.

Making an already tragic situation even worse, in a white supremacist society many of these positive markers will be white ones, such as straightening black hair, bleaching black skin and seeking white lovers. Fanon goes on to explore in great detail the

psychological implications of these white masks and other pathological defenses that Blacks have deployed against their negrification. These are the Fanonian white masks by which blacks have attempted to negate the devaluation of their skin color.

Frantz Fanon and White Masks of Double Consciousness

As in the case of Du Bois, Fanon followed his trenchant diagnosis with three basic suggestions for how we can resist and overcome this debilitating form of racial oppression. First, he suggested a combination of existential and psychoanalytic strategies of self-reflection to expose the processes by which the above white masks were established within the psyche in its efforts to compensate for the devaluation that came with its negrification. When carefully and systematically pursued, Fanon suggested that these strategies of existential and psychoanalytic self-reflection were capable of uprooting these white masks and enabling a recovery and a reawakening to oneself as disclosed through one's own eyes - in Du Boisian language, through first sight. The second strategy suggested by Fanon is the turning of these white masks into weapons of anti-white critique. It is a strategy that is very similar to Du Bois' suggestion of turning the categories of second sight into weapons of anti-white critique.

Third and finally, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon, realizing that his earlier suggestions were suitable primarily for educated elites, made his highly controversial suggestion that for the masses only insurrectionary violence would be capable of uprooting these white masks that they had internalized. In other words, the negrification theorized by Du Bois and further developed by Fanon can be applied to Black people in Britain and across the world—a point which Stuart Hall expands upon with his construct of diaspora.

Stuart Hall and the Diasporic Re-imagining of Blackness

Stuart Hall approaches the problem of negrification of Black people in Britain by building on the de-negrifying strategies suggested by Du Bois and Fanon. His critiques of hegemonic whiteness in Britain builds on those of Fanon and Du Bois. Hall's distinct and original contribution is his challenging and overturning of the construction of the identity of Black Caribbean immigrants to Britain. As already indicated, this identity was one of a poor and failing group that had to be rescued by admitting them into Great Britain to do the lowliest of jobs - the ones that even the British working class refused to do. As the theories of Du Bois and Fanon enabled the challenging of the racialization of the identities of these Black immigrants, similarly Hall's theorizing of diaspora enabled the challenging of the "immigrantizing" of the identity of these Black people arriving in Britain from the Caribbean.

Drawing on CLR James' work on popular culture in *Beyond A Boundary*, Hall used culture to transform the stereotypes of the non-white immigrant into the much more positive image of a Black diasporic group. In developing his concept of diaspora, Hall went to great lengths to point out the cultural activities and achievements of Caribbean people in particular, but also those of Africans and South Asians. Thus Hall paid very close attention to the visual arts of Caribbean people and also of the white British working class (Hall, 2013). This cultural emphasis was important for two crucial reasons. First, it functioned like Du Bois' tower. In other words, it empowered and enabled these devalued people to say, "I am not your immigrant". In this regard, Hall emphasized the many contributions that Caribbean people were making to the enriching and diversifying of cultural life in Britain. He examined these contributions in the fields of literature,

cricket, film, television and photography. Together, he argued, these contributions refute the stereotype of the Black Caribbean immigrant, male and female. The effect of this theoretical contribution was to ease the sense of being a homeless outsider, a devalued and resented stranger, thus enabled many to feel more of a sense of home in Britain.

The second reason for the importance of this cultural strategy was that by encouraging and celebrating artistic practices such as photography, film, television and sports, Caribbean people were at the same time preserving and further developing their capacity for first sight. The distinct, original and non-negro images of Caribbean people that have emerged out of the literature, music, cricket and other artwork most certainly helped to challenge the stereotype of the immigrant and to continue to place new and original self-images for all to see.

Third, by embracing the struggles of Africans and South Asians, Hall's concept of Diaspora contributed a redefining of the concept of Blackness. It became an umbrella construct that was able to unify and give political focus to the struggles of non-white immigrants to Britain. Blackness was no longer restricted to peoples of African descent and became a symbol of the anti-colonial and anti-racist resistance of these different non-white groups.

In short Hall's major contributions to the challenges that Black Caribbean immigrants confronted in Britain between the 1950s and the 1990s has been a cultural re-construction of the image of this group that has been able to compete effectively with the stereotype of the impoverished immigrant, even though it has not been able to eliminate it. This approach to conceptualizing culture, created a pathway for other theorists like Hazel Carby and Paul Gilroy to interrogate British culture, Black British culture within it, and

also gender relations. These culturally oriented pursuits have continued to thwart the false premise that “There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack!” (Gilroy, 1987). Both Gilroy and Carby were students of Hall. Indeed, Gilroy brings us to the next theoretical stage in the cultural identity journey of Blackness in Britain.

Paul Gilroy, Resistance and Popular Music

Paul Gilroy joins the course for navigating a Black British identity by positioning race and culture as being critical to reclaiming voice within ‘permissible’ spaces. These are spaces where the presentation (and indeed the re-presentation) of these various mediums, produce culture that can not be challenged (Hall, 1997, p.1). Extending on the notion of diaspora, cultural malleability and popular culture as a site for political expression, Gilroy highlights how Black British people engaged in cultural politics and the redefinition of blackness. This practice of redefinition is one which allows for a revalorizing of blackness in Britain helping to define –and indeed redefine– perceptions of the people of the African diaspora. By theorizing in this manner, Gilroy presents an opportunity for “discussions of the modern world ... [which can be used] ...to produce an explicitly transnational intercultural perspective” (1993, p.15). The implication of this is that it allows the notion of Black British consciousness to be malleable and open to self-redefinition.

Gilroy’s references to popular music artists such as North London’s Funki Dreds, (Soul II Soul) —composers of “*Keep on Moving*” led by female Black singer, Karen Wheeler —a song that acknowledges the struggles of the present and the past, the desire for justice and also the need to “keep on moving” ergo, striving for a better position in

society as well an independent voice in the postmodernist context, can be considered to be as a direct rebuttal of the negrification of the black image in white popular and high culture. Not only did these cultural outlets provide social commentary in Britain and hint at the growth of Black British responses and activism, they provided a space for the origin narratives of British society to be developed further. The notion of popular culture as a political and critical discourse suggested by Hall and propagated by Gilroy highlighted that;

The oscillation between black as problem and black as victim has become, today, the principle mechanism through which 'race' is pushed outside of history and into the realm of natural, inevitable events. (Gilroy 1987, p.11)

Therefore, this British response to representations of Blackness, constitutes a rebuttal of the superimposed negrification of Blackness and also hints at the reclamation of first-sight.

Hazel Carby, Literature and Black Feminist Resistance

Although a Black Caribbean woman from Britain, it was in the U.S. that Carby really made her major contributions to the cultural transformation of Black female identity. She is primarily concerned with the identity and voice of Black women in both Britain and the U.S. Her major work, *Reconstructing Womanhood* is a "literary history of the emergence of black women as novelists" (1987, 7). Carby examined the racial and gender obstacles that Black women had to overcome in order to establish themselves as writers. For example, she writes:

[I]n order to gain a public voice as orators and published writers, black women had to confront the dominant domestic ideologies and literary conventions of womanhood which

excluded them from the definition of woman. (1987, 6)

Another important obstacle that Carby notes is the cultural convention of regarding period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in terms of great men such as the age of Washington and Du Bois. This convention she argued marginalized the literary and political contributions of black women as “these were the years of the first flowering of black women’s autonomous organizing and a period of intense intellectual activity and productivity” (1987, 7).

In addition to detailing the rise of the Black female literary voice. Carby also made very strong contributions to the theoretical development of Black feminist literary criticism. In the late 1980s, this field of criticism was dominated by scholars such as Barbara Smith, Deborah McDowell, Barbara Christian, and Hortense Spillers. Many of these critics were Black nationalist with roots in the Civil Rights tradition of the 1960s, which they saw as establishing a strong bond between Black women and Black men. Other critics adopted notions of womanhood or femaleness that they thought quite naturally created a sisterhood between black and white women. Drawing on the rising tradition of post-structuralist theory, Carby critiqued these notions of womanhood and Black nationalism on grounds of essentialism and made a strong case for an independent Black feminist tradition in both politics and literary criticism. This line of thinking was very important as it is today the dominant position among Black feminists.

Tracy Fisher and Black Feminist Organizing

Trading places with Carby, Tracy Fisher is an African American who moved to London and wrote on Black women’s organizing in Britain. Her 2012 book, *What’s Left*

of Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain, is a study of the shifting meaning of blackness and how it has affected the organizing strategies of Black Women. Fisher was particularly concerned with the changes in the nature of Black women's organizing after the mid-1980s, and also with their declining presence in the published literature. What was the significance of these changes? This is the question that drove her to do ethnographic work in Britain.

Fisher's primary strategy for resisting negrification and female secondarization is clearly organizing by Black women. To account for the observed decline in the visibility of Black female organizing, Fisher begins with the dramatic shift in the meaning of Blackness in Britain that occurred after the mid-1980s. She notes that "in post-WWII Britain, African, South Asian and Caribbean (Afro-Asian) political activists and academics reimagined blackness - expanding and extending its meaning from the limits of a visual understanding of race based on the color of one's skin - so that it came to signify a political imaginary of resistance, of struggle, of revolution, of liberation.

Vital to this construction of Blackness in Britain was the work of Stuart Hall that we examined earlier. It is this particular post-war construction of blackness that Fisher argues collapsed in the mid-1980s under pressure from the Thatcher administration and the competitive tensions within the unity produced by the banner of Blackness. With this collapse, the various non-white race/ethnic groups started going their separate ways and pursuing their singular strategies in fighting white racism in Britain. In this changed context, the organizing strategies of Black women had to change.

Fisher suggests that the collapse of the post-war construction Blackness in Britain produced a significant depoliticizing of organizing by most groups including Black

women. Organizing work lost its revolutionary, transformative and liberatory dimensions. Organizing became organizing within the system to secure various forms of already institutionalized benefits. With this turn, Fisher argues that Black women's organizing lost its highly politicized anti-imperialist, pro-third world orientations to become more restricted to gender-specific service organizations. In its new form, this organizing activity has lost a lot of visibility in both the political and the literary arenas. However, this shift in the direction of service within the system of British society, does not mean the end of Blackness for Fisher. She has suggested the reimagining of Blackness as "a racialized gendered blackness to signal a political imaginary that both critiqued and embraced the politics of blackness as described above" (2012, p. 10). As a gendered imaginary, it would critique masculinist elements in the post-war conception of Blackness while at the same time embracing the anti-imperial and revolutionary dimensions of the earlier construction.

In sum, Fisher changes the direction of this discourse of Black female immigrants to Britain by emphasizing the organizing activities of these women. She carves a pathway for the consideration of the Black British females' experience through the discourse of gendered racial politics as it has developed over the last fifty years. Interestingly, her theories emphasize the multiple veins of Black British activism that work to develop "blackness" in relation to "nation-state discourses of "Englishness" and Britishness (Fisher, xi, 2012). Her work which hones in on the grass-roots work of Black British women, who she considers to be a "seriously undertheorized and under-represented population in critical race scholarship in the United Kingdom" (Fisher, xi, 2012). Fisher's methodological approach is to use ethnographic data from various sources to construct

her theoretical framework for considering the race and gendered experiences of Black British women as they develop their own ontology to categorize, analyze and strategize from the Black British feminist position. Fisher also considers to what extent, notions of Black British feminism are explored beyond the academe (Fisher, p.110), and it is possible that the gap between the academe and Black British feminists is being bridged by writers such as Palmer & Andrews, and Zadie Smith.

Palmer & Andrews and Black Studies in British Academe

Central to Palmer and Andrews' thesis is the idea that the creation of an academic response to the dilemma is essential. *Blackness in Britain*, which highlights the presence of the emergence of Black British scholarship, which is in keeping with Stuart Hall's approach to theorizing on the presence of Black people beyond Africa and South Asia (diaspora), Palmer and Andrews implement a "diasporic model of examination to better understand the colonial formations of racialization that point to constructions of Blackness within the Western imperialistic framework" (Palmer, 2016, p.2). It is a strategic approach to redressing inequalities in the long run through 'the system', which provides readers and fellow researchers alike, with an opportunity to consider the wealth of concerns that derive from a Black British lens that can be addressed through an academic strategy. Firstly, it recognizes, highlights and positions Black British people — meaning Black colonial, post-colonial people and post-postcolonial people—as being central to not only generating the wealth that came from the colonial empire, they were central to the development of the British West Indian colonial empire and how Britishness is defined and redefined in this space. Secondly, Palmers and Andrews both demonstrate through their text and by the publication of this text that Blackness in Britain

is part of the British discourse, ergo it should be observed and analyzed as a growing discourse of permanence, thereby establishing a foundation on which to examine the various experiences and “struggles” for Black people in Britain.

These struggles refer to the various social, economic and political challenges faced by Black British people. Therefore, the focus of the research is not about Black British people per se, rather more specifically, this critical text broaches the concept that Blackness in Britain as a discourse indeed warrants a legitimate position, recognition and analysis within the British academe and beyond. It is a discourse with great intellectual potential and therefore should not be stagnated. As suggested by Palmer and Andrews, higher education is the vehicle through which discourses gain legitimacy and are able to gain momentum. Therefore, the analysis of higher education vis-a-vis Blackness in Britain is presented as being a crucial and foundational step which does not only assert the permanence of Black British studies within higher education and Blackness — it also reifies Blackness in Britain both within and beyond the academe.

As the text suggests, this academic approach towards considering Blackness in Britain, provides the opportunity for a revision of the Black immigrant narrative as well as the correction of British and socio-political commentary. It not only highlights that Black people are not merely immigrants, but it also demonstrates that the state of the Black British immigrant is one that is transitory. Being cognizant of CLR James’ caution, Andrews and Palmer approach to Blackness in Britain — both in reference to people and the discourse —re-positions Blackness in Britain so that it can neither be considered to be an addendum to British culture or scholarship and the notion of the post-colonial Black immigrant is indeed one that is transitory. Therefore, this text shuns the negative

connotation attached to the Black presence in Britain (both new and old) and Andrews and Palmer highlight a new pathway for asserting Black British legitimacy. It is one that considers the “complex epistemological reticence amongst black intellectual thinkers in the Black British diaspora as to the shape and purpose of the discipline itself” (Palmer, 2016, p.10). Their approach aims to, analyze and evaluate social phenomena in Britain from a holistic British perspective.

The Black British perspective, due to the outsider-insider position that is occupied by Black British people, has made British Black scholars fluent in the “language of Britishness” both inside and outside of the academe, and it is this inclusive approach to Blackness that is being used by Andrews and Palmer’s text.

The text then builds on some of the debates highlighted by Paul Gilroy’s concerns on the racialization of Black people and the impact that this has had on Black British lives. It directs our attention to consider topics ranging from Black experiences in higher education, othering, inclusion and exclusion, revolution, resistance and state violence, violence, isolation; belonging and gendering. This critical text highlights the rationale for the impetus for Black British studies within British universities, as groups of scholars will have the opportunity to research continuously, analyze objectively on how to handle the problems of the dilemma. If the United States is considered as a space of comparison where Black Studies programs have had a positive impact in the United States, it follows that Black British Studies programs should also have a positive effect on social disparities in Britain.

Zadie Smith, Creolization and the Mulatto

The publication of *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith, can be seen as heralding a new

direction in Black British feminism. Not only did Smith contribute to the discussion on Black immigrant post-colonial culture, she has represented a post-postcolonial culture, or what one may consider to be the creolization of Black Britishness. However, it is one that moves away from the binary representation of Blackness in Britain, whereby Blackness was seen to represent the antithesis of whiteness and therefore, of British culture. Instead, she highlights specifically the mixed Black British female presence in her literary texts that navigates between two worlds where she is socialized with both white and black people in British society. This can be construed as the re-creolization of the Black British person. Deriving from the Caribbean, a space in which it has been believed that Black people are being creolized, Smith appears to be developing the creolization of Black British discourse in a different direction. However, it is an approach which appears to consider the mixing of Black British people —namely post-colonials, post-post colonials and white British people —as creating a group of “authentic” creolized (in this case ‘mixed’ people) as representing British people.

As Smith provides her literary commentary, it appears that this creolization through mixing with White British people is Smith’s notion of a new and legitimate Black Britishness. According to Fanon, the negritized “black woman has only one way open to her and only one preoccupation —to whiten the race” (2008, 37). Although Smith may not consider her work as an attempt to ‘whiten’ ‘blackness’, the emphasis on the mulatto person, her beauty, acceptance, socialization, success and entry into ‘white’ work spaces alongside notably white women, presents the mulatto as “trapped” in an in-between space. This provides yet another dilemma for considerations of Black British feminist theory. Although Smith’s approach can be viewed as providing insight into the variations

of Black British feminism that exists in Britain, it's concentration on protagonists who operate from an in-between space — distinguishing one from being authentically Black British as defined by prior scholars and academics. This can be viewed to disavow the authenticity of black skinned British “Blackness” that is not mulatto. Further it may be considered that “blackness” ergo dark-skin, denotes having less of an authentic claim to Britishness. Instead, “true” Black Britishness, as suggested by the characters of her novels, must by definition comprise of a mixture of some whiteness and some blackness. Although her work provides an interesting consideration for Blackness in Britain, her fictional texts may be construed as propagating the view that the mulatto is the most “acceptable” black female within the British space. It is a notion that ascribes belonging to Britain simply based on image and skin color, which I therefore treat with reservation and I question whether this type of scholar helps or hinders the inclusivity of “Blackness” or indeed, diasporic Blackness within the British space.

Anique John's Critical Theory

As the above review of the literature in the field makes clear, none of the major contributors have focused directly on the internal racial and gender splits and interruptions that constitute the double consciousness of Black women in contemporary Britain. Carby's focus on Black female Afro-American writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are certainly important contributions to the reconstructing of Black female identity. So also, is Fisher's examination of the organizing done by Black women in Britain. These and other important contribution will be incorporated into the critical theory of Black female subjectivity in Britain that I have used in my dissertation.

My critical theory has five layers of concepts which interact and inform each other. The first will be some orienting ideas about the nature of racial and gender difference. The second will be an auto-ethnographic and ethnographic layer that will consist of narratives of the self-formative processes of Black women in Britain. The third layer consists of the additional concepts that the creation of a generalized narrative needed by a critical theory out of these individual narratives of Black female self-formative processes. The fourth layer will be the conceptual space that I have used for dealing with differing accounts of the intersection of race, gender and class, but particularly the first two. The fifth and final layer of my critical theory will consist of the concepts that will enable me to address the various ways in which Black women in Britain have been resisting the interruptions in their self-formative processes by the blocking and socially excluding forces of negrification, female secundarization and of being an immigrant.

On the Nature of Racial Difference

As the above review of the literature in this field clearly demonstrates, there is a strong consensus regarding the exclusion that results from the negrification of Black Caribbean migrants to Britain. Further, the scholars reviewed agree that this negrification has been a major obstacle to the crystallization and social acceptance of a Black British ethnicity. Thus their suggested responses and policy positions have been oriented towards the forging of just such a Black British ethnicity.

However, as already indicated, my approach to racial inclusion in Britain goes beyond the struggle to achieve a Black British ethnicity which I consider to be a start but not by any means, a satisfactory conclusion to the categorization of Black people in

Britain. This is because forging a Black British ethnicity addresses just the first of two walls of identity-based exclusion that the Black immigrant must face. It is the second wall which blocks and defeats the multicultural strategies of immigrant integration adopted by the U.S. and Canada. This is the additional dimension of the construction of racial difference in Britain that I want to incorporate into the first layer of concepts of my critical theory.

Arriving in England, the Black Caribbean migrant will not only have to struggle to gain recognition as a Black British person, but also the more difficult challenge that their children (post-post colonials) will face with regard to being recognized as a Black English person. These challenges may be different for bi-racial post-postcolonials as opposed to Black post-postcolonials as being mixed might provide this group with “bloodline” entry into the national community. The same would be true for the Black immigrant to Scotland or Ireland. The strong nationalistic elements in these ethnicities are indicated by the fact that people identify themselves simply as English, Scottish or Welsh, rather than the hyphenated English-British or Scottish-British that would clearly reflect a more multicultural form of transferring national loyalties to the imperial entity of Great Britain, and thus to deeper levels of social integration into the British community. In other words, the nationalistic sentiments attached to these white “ethnic” identities have made them more exclusionary and less accessible than the imperial identity of Great Britain. This latter identity has already been partially shared with the “British subjects” who dwell in the colonial possessions of Great Britain. Thus, it becomes an easier identity to acquire by Black colonial immigrants, some of whom have been knighted by the king or queen.

Since these Black immigrants have had no formal or substantive relations with the subnational and more homegrown English, Scottish or Welsh ethnicities, integration into these layers of the English-British or the Scottish-British identities becomes much more difficult walls of exclusion to scale. In short, these special ethnicities that were forged out of incorporation, rather than immigration, present additional barriers to inclusion apart from those associated with the outer and more accessible imperial British identity.

These additional ethnic barriers have become particularly important to second-generation Black Caribbean immigrants (post-postcolonial) who were born in England or Scotland. More rooted in English, Welsh or Scottish soil and knowing from youth these subnational communities, it is a painful shock when they discover that they are not allowed to claim an English or Scottish identity but only at most a Black British identity. For first generation Caribbean immigrants, who are still holding on quite strongly to felt attachments to the territories of their birth, getting over the first wall is often sufficient. They are usually quite content moving between their Caribbean and a Black British identity. For the second generation of post-postcolonials, whose felt ties to the Caribbean are much weaker, encountering the second wall is a very different experience as the coined term Black British denotes the primacy of negrification for those who have authentic claim to the country of their birth –thereby deeming them perpetually to second class citizenship.

This in brief is the ethnically embedded construction of racial difference in Britain, along with its double walls of identity-based exclusion, which I used in the researching and writing of my dissertation. It occupied one of the founding layers of my critical theory of Black British female subjectivity. This construction of racial difference departs

from the one found in the literature, which emphasizes getting over the first wall of exclusion by the forging of a legitimate Black British ethnicity. Thus, this claim that there are double walls of exclusion in the construction of racial difference in Britain is a major hypothesis that I attempted to test.

On the Nature of Gender Difference in Britain

As constructed in Britain and many other societies, gender, like race, was based on the social and moral significance of a number of key biological markers that were either absent or different in men. As in the case of racialized Africans, this secundarization of women raises the question of what is lost, what is being blocked by this negating and silencing of the voices and perspectives of women.

There is a unique insight that Black women bring to the world. This insight is not one that I believe derives necessarily from ones' achieved status, rather it is one that is ascribed to Black women. I believe that it is one that comes from having to understand the world from a position where your male counterparts have not been—or allowed to be your allies. It is one that I believe manifests in various ways (depending the experiences faced). As much as women have become accustomed to repelling their secundarization, I am of the opinion that Black women in the Western space—as is indeed the case in some traditional West-African matriarchal societies—have been known to navigate from a secondary position that required that they be strong and assertive. Therefore, I hypothesized that the notions of secundarization, the suggestion of being “runner up” or “second best”, is not quite the position that Black women have been navigating from. Black women have been required to work outside of the home unlike the ideal—in the

case of the white middle class and upper-class western societies. Working outside of the home, is very much a part of the role of women in Africa and the Caribbean. This very definite place within the economy, particularly in agriculture and marketing have created the need for Black women to present themselves as strong, assertive and independent.

As much as I most certainly concur with the notion that the female gender is by and large deputized to her male counterparts, once “blackness” is applied to gender, the positionality of black women is a conditional secundarization, which takes on its own course. Although Black women have been expected to function outside of the home, at the same time they have largely been excluded from politics. For a long time this was the preserve of men and because of that they have able to exert dominance over women. Thus, the process of secundarization was conditional and specific to the heritage of African culture. The subsequent racialization of African women in the Caribbean and in Britain added new layers to this conditional and African culture specific mode of secundarization.

As a Black British woman, who was at times ‘rejected’ or excluded from participating fully in certain social situations, it was in those moments that I felt that I did not have the protections of belonging to a male/female social group. Much like a VIP, I thought of myself—even as a youngster in my self-formative days—as a ‘very important person’, I had to be, for I was treated differently, and I did not need to wait on external recognition. In fact, I was free from this constraint in a sense. Instead I recognized myself, my skills, my talents and insight into life and situations, to denote my importance. Being a Black girl, and then a woman, being the marginalized other of the marginalized group in various spaces, made me understand myself as a Black woman with a purpose that goes beyond

merely surviving but one that aims at thriving. This is the difference that gender made in my experience growing up as a Black female in Britain. Thus, from this particular account of gender difference in Britain two important hypotheses follow:

- 1) The impact of race on female secundarization has been to force Black women to navigate their lives from positions of strength.
- 2) This navigation must cross two identity-based barriers, the first of which would be the Black British identity and the second the Black-English identity.

As my goal is a critical theory of the Habermasian type, this hypothetical construct of layers of concepts must take the form a narrative. In particular, the narrative of what Habermas calls “an interrupted self-formative process” (2015, p. 233). Further, because of these broader concepts that are embedded in this narrative, the latter will be more than just the individual narratives of the initial biographies and autobiography on which it was first constructed. As such a broader narrative it is one that I am hypothesizing will have a broader appeal, and thus will be a narrative in which a large number of Black British women will be able to see themselves and become more conscious of their situation. Thus, it will be an example of what Habermas calls a generalized narrative. This initial formulation of my critical theory is the second chapter of my dissertation.

However, although I expect my critical theory to engage the experiences of a significant number of Black British women, I do not see it as illuminating the experiences of all Black British women who have engaged in tertiary education. Indeed, one of the major unknowns in my dissertation is just how broad in scope, how general is my critical theory. Consequently, I am not making claims of universality for this theory, instead I am considering this theory as being capable of providing what Paget Henry has called

“partial or conditional universality” (conversation 2/20/18). Thus, the research design is one that will enable me to explore this partial universality, or more concretely the larger group of Black British women who will be able to see themselves in my critical theory and have their consciousness raised. This exploration will include sharing a shortened and clearly written version of the theory with prospective interviewees and soliciting as unobtrusively as possible their responses as part of the overall interview process.

Having received their responses and other data that about them that I have collected, I will revise the initial formulation of my critical theory appropriately. This revised version of my theory will make up the penultimate chapter of my dissertation. For this revised version of the theory, I should be able to discuss more succinctly the nature of its partial universality than in the case of its initial formulation. However, given that I will be interviewing only 12 women, I am aware that I certainly will not be able to claim universality for it. Rather, I am planning for the general scope of this theory to remain an open issue that can be revised and updated by new cases. Looking beyond my dissertation to a book project, I can see myself doing another round interviews to supplement the data I will be collecting for this current project. Those interviews could easily result in further revisions to the theory.

Habermas’ Approach to Critical Theories

In his book, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas distinguishes between three types of theories employed in the social sciences. These are positivist, hermeneutic and critical theories. He distinguishes between them on the grounds of what he calls their “knowledge constitutive interests”. Positivist theories operate on the basis of a knowledge-constitutive interest in technical control and manipulation; hermeneutic

theories on the basis of a knowledge-constitutive interest in arriving at a mutual understanding; and critical theories on the basis of a knowledge-constitutive interest in freedom. The notion of “knowledge-constitutive” must be taken quite seriously. Through it Habermas is suggesting that these interests shape both the processes of knowledge production and the types of knowledge that we generate.

In contrast to the positivists, by providing greater freedom of thought, there is for Habermas no general or universal method of knowledge production (e.g. the scientific) but only variety of specific ones that cannot be substituted one for the other. Thus, positivist theories cannot provide the consciousness-raising insights produce by critical theories, and the latter cannot produce the general laws or statistical generalizations produced by the former. This is the first major advantage of using Habermas’ approach to critical theories: it requires us to always be ready to reflect on the categories knowledge production that we bring with us to the research situation. These categories may be positivist, imperialist, sexist, or racist. We will not be able to know unless we have access to the level of categories that Habermas label knowledge-constitutive.

As my practical goal is raising the consciousness and increasing the freedom of Black women in Britain so that they may experience what they consider to be ‘life-success’, a critical theory seemed to me the most appropriate choice for my dissertation. Further, as already noted, Habermas suggests that at the heart of a critical theory is a generalized narrative of an interrupted self-formative process. The examples that he often gives are those of the generalized narratives that are basic to the conceptual structures of both psychoanalysis and Marxism. In the case of the latter, this generalized narrative is all about the interruptions in the self-formative processes of workers around the world as a

result of their exploitation by classes of capitalists. In the case of psychoanalysis, Freud attempted to develop narratives of interrupted self-formative processes suffered by individuals due to harmful interactions with others during childhood. Although different in context and content, these two cases do address issues of self-formation, its interruption and the overcoming of that interruption. It is the latter, the overcoming of forced interruptions that link critical theories to issues of freedom and liberation.

As the trajectory of these generalized narratives captured the broad framework within which I see the subjectivity of Black women in Britain, this was the second important reason for my strategy of attempting to create a critical theory of the Habermasian type. Further, as these type general narratives identified by Habermas addressed so directly the issue of consciousness-raising, I have linked them to ideas from Du Bois, Fanon and Simone de Beauvoir that I was already using.

The third methodological reason for taking this Habermasian approach to my critical theory is that he develops in greater detail the ‘grammar’ or the rules for applying and testing critical theories. In applying a critical theory, the researcher must give to “the addressee”, in my case the interviewee, vital elements of the generalized narrative and wait for a “yes” or a “no”. The addressee has, so to speak, to try on the narrative and see if he or she experiences a fit. A “yes” would indicate such a fit. A “no” would indicate the absence of such a fit. The researcher can then discuss with the interviewee the nature of the gap or distance experienced from the generalized narrative. From such exchanges the appropriate modifications to the critical theory can be made. This is the manner in which Habermas proposes that we apply and test critical theories. It is the basic procedure that I plan to follow in doing my interviews.

Critical Theories of Self-Production and Knowledge-Production.

This detailed treatment of the nature, application and testing of critical theories of self-production allowed me to distinguish them from critical theories of knowledge production. In Habermas' discussion of knowledge-constitutive interests, we got a short introduction to his approach to this second type of critical theory. This type focuses more directly on the categories that a researcher brings to an interview or some other situation of knowledge production. As highlighted in the essay, Habermas emphasizes the knowledge-constitutive nature of these categories. That is the role of these categories in shaping patterns of thinking we employ as well as the outcomes of our thinking. Further, following Kant, Habermas recognizes some of these categories as having an *a priori* status. That is, they are among those categories (like the grammar of a language) that we routinely presuppose in doing our research, which are usually below our conscious awareness. Yet, they have the constitutive power to frame and direct our thinking, and thus, to shape outcomes. Thus, guarding against unwanted influences or biases become an important function of this type of critical theory.

A good example of this type of critical theory in use is the article, "*Toward Liberatory Early Childhood Theory, Research and Praxis: Decolonizing a Field*", (E. Swadener & D. Soto, 2002). This paper is a sustained examination of positivist theories in the interdisciplinary field of early childhood education from the point of view of critical theories that Habermas would argue are grounded in a knowledge-constitutive interest in freedom. Soto and Swadener open their essay by noting that an increasing number of researchers in the field have been "recognizing how its attachment to Western ideology and positivist traditions has tended to obscure the possibilities for newly

evolving critical orientations and research” (2002, p. 38). They also note that “most of the published research in scholarly journals of childhood education fall into this paradigm, with primarily quantified, predetermined hypotheses and discrete point data” (p. 38). Further, Soto and Swadener attributed this strong positivist orientation of methodology in the field to the influence of Piaget’s work in early childhood development. However, the primary thrust of their paper is to show that this positivist paradigm is being challenged at the level of what its basic categories exclude and therefore are unable to deal with adequately.

Among the researchers engaged in these challenges are those making use of bilingual/multicultural approaches and qualitative/interpretive methods that are motivated by what Habermas would call an interest at arriving at a mutual understanding. These studies tend to take much more careful note of the influences and impact of cultural heritages (African American, Native American) on our ways of conceptualizing issues and the results that follow from these conceptualizations. Swadener locates herself among these groups of researchers and has called for an education that is multicultural in early childhood settings” (p. 43).

Other groups of researchers who have also been challenging the dominance of the positivist paradigm in early childhood education include scholars in the fields of justice, feminism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism. These are all scholarly fields that could be categorized under Habermas’ group of theories that are motivated by knowledge-constitutive interests in freedom from different forms of domination. These challenges clearly amount to an anti-hegemonic critique at the level of the basic categories of positivist methodology by scholars making use of interpretive and critical

methodologies. In the concluding section of their essay, Soto and Swadener call their project “decolonizing the field” and express the hope that: “as we begin to leave the scientifically driven epistemologies as grounding for early childhood education, we can begin to pursue more personal, liberating, democratic, humanizing, participatory, action-driven, political, feminist, critically multicultural, decolonizing perspectives” (p.51).

This analysis of hegemonic categorical conflicts in the field of early childhood education is important to the methodology of my work for three basic reasons. Firstly, it provides me with a good model of how to navigate an interdisciplinary field. My work intersects many of the fields mentioned in Soto and Swadener’s paper, particular those of social justice and feminism. I will link their navigating strategies to the discourse-constitutive codes that Paget Henry has suggested critical researchers should be aware of whenever we cross disciplinary boundaries. He identified six of these codes: the epistemic goals of a discipline, its construction and positioning of the knowing subject, the pre-theoretical vision of the object of study, accepted modification of ordinary language; and finally, the specific methodologies accepted in that discipline (unpublished paper). If these codes are very different on the border between two disciplines (sociology and physics) it will be very difficult to cross. If these codes are quite similar (sociology and anthropology) crossing will be easy.

The second reason that Soto and Swadener’s paper is important, is that it demonstrates a very effective way of integrating feminist and anti-racist theories into works in the field of social justice. In my discussions of Black women’s organizing I will link them to issues of social justice in ways that are similar to Soto and Swadener.

Thirdly and finally, this paper helps me to grasp more clearly the differences between critical theories of knowledge production and self- production and thus to answer an important part of the question I have been asked by my committee members. Critical theories of the former type raise our consciousness of the categories (including *a priori* ones) that we routinely use in our research and thus take for granted. As a rule, they do not necessarily make us aware of interrupted self-formative processes as critical theories of self-production normally do. This I think is the crucial difference between the two: critical theories of knowledge production make us aware of the ‘grammars’ of the disciplines that are we are using while critical theories of self-production make us aware of interruptions in our self-formative processes. Thus, if scholars in the field of early childhood education move to adopt postcolonial, post-structural and other critical theories without carefully noting their categorical differences from positivist and hermeneutic theories, the outcome of the hegemonic struggles may not be as significant as the authors hope.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Given that my primary goal was to create a critical theory of Black British female subjectivity, the research design or overall strategy of dissertation project was not an experiment a statistical survey or a simple case study. I had planned for my dissertation project to take the form of assembling layers of integrated concepts which I hypothesized as being capable of representing and engaging the subjectivity of Black women in Britain. In particular, I specified five distinct layers of concepts, which together have served as this crucial hypothetical construct.

These five layers of concepts which I outlined in my dissertation proposal were concepts which I considered to interact and inform each other. The first idea was about the nature of racial and gender difference. The second was an auto-ethnographic and ethnographic layer that consisted of narratives of the self-formative processes of Black women in Britain. The third layer consisted of additional concepts that I used to create a generalized narrative required by a critical theory out of these individual narratives of Black female self-formative processes. The fourth layer provided a conceptual space which I used for dealing with differing accounts of the intersection of race, gender and class, but particularly the first two. The fifth and final layer of my critical theory consisted of concepts that enabled me to address the various ways in which Black women in Britain resisted the interruptions in their self-formative processes by the blocking and

socially excluding forces of negrification, female secundarization and of being an immigrant.

Differences Between Auto-ethnographic and Ethnographic Methods

Both auto-ethnographic and ethnographic approaches presented good methods for collecting data, especially for a critical theoretical approach such as this project. Typically, ethnographic approaches have derived from anthropological discourses, whereby an individual assesses members of a group and enters into extensive dialogue and observation of the group and its members to formulate an understanding of individuals and the group as a whole. Quoting a definition by Fetterman, Alan Bryman highlighted that, “Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group culture” (2001, ix). This is a research approach where the researcher may overtly or covertly, join a community to gather insights about the group. The anthropologist conducts these observations whilst in the ‘field’ of the study, at which time she attempts to take on the position of an ‘insider’. However, as this is only for a duration of time, the researcher can also be seen as an ‘outsider’. This type of research is known as fieldwork, where the researcher gathers information in naturally occurring settings and her presence should not influence the interactions of those being observed (as far as possible). The ethnographer collects data about the culture she is studying from the perspective of its members and this data must also be significant to fellow academics/researchers (Bryman, 2001).

Traditionally, the ethnographic study has been very far removed from the cultural background of the anthropologist and this presents not only a power/dependence dynamic which may skew the research, as it also reinforces Western paradigms that relegate

‘difference’ to being inferior to what is practiced in the anthropologist’s cultural setting. As Marcus and Fischer suggested, ethnography can be considered to be the study of ‘another culture’. This was the traditional approach to ethnography taken by anthropologists. In essence, this approach created a binary between ‘them’ and ‘us’, with the latter being the conclusive voice which explained the social phenomena within the field that has been witnessed.

However, increasingly, anthropologists have adjusted their approach to fieldwork where the field is no longer restricted to a obscure setting. Researchers can conduct fieldwork in smaller more relatable settings such as institutions and/or with familiar social groups. This however has moved the anthropologists’ fieldwork into the realm of sociological investigation whereby the researcher can be a sociologist, rather than engaging in merely ‘fieldwork’. Thus, sociologists often engage in what has been termed ‘participant observation’ –a term which has been used interchangeably with ethnography. Closely related to this, ‘ethnography’ is used as a synonym for qualitative research in general (Bryman, 2001).

The auto-ethnographic approach differs from the ethnographic approach by being a theory where the “form of self-narrative [...] places the self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, p.9). In the case of an ethnography (which is both a methodological and textual approach to research), the researcher conducts a study of people and cultures in a dialogical methodological approach where the researcher analyzes the communicative understandings between interviewer and interviewee. However, in the case of the auto-ethnography, the voice used for this type research is the first-person narrative where one has the freedom to reflect on one’s own life journey, express this alongside one’s

observations, and have the opportunity to identify key moments in one's self-development, and identifying when this self-development may have been disrupted. This is the approach that I used for this study as it is most applicable to the creation of a critical theory. Both auto-ethnographies and ethnographies can be approached from different disciplines and they allow for exploration of broader categories, social groups, cultures and cultural experiences through an intersectional lens.

Being that my PhD in Justice is an intersectional research degree where I have been frequently drawing on sociological, decolonizing, critical, feminist (and specifically) Black feminist/womanist theories, the auto-ethnographic approach allowed me to present multiple perspectives and voices that are normally lost at the intersections of traditional and positivist theories.

Auto-ethnographies can be performed in several ways and a researcher can implement aspects of an anthropologist's approach along with new and innovative methods, when conducting research on a society that they were once affiliated with by returning to the society to conduct "native" or "home" ethnography. As highlighted by Reed-Dahanay, Jamaica Kincaid used this approach in order to produce data for her essay "Homemaking". This approach can be implemented by a researcher who is not formally trained as an anthropologist but one who seeks to perform an "ethnic autobiography" whereby personal narratives are collected by members of an ethnic minority group. It is a research account that is experienced and written in the first-person narrative as it reflects on what is felt and on the key moments on one's self development. In essence, the auto-ethnographic approach provides space for the researcher to consider her life reflectively through several discursive lenses and identify where one's self-development or self-

formative process has been interrupted—a consideration that is fundamental to the development of critical theories.

In short, being able to ascertain the juncture at which one's self-formative process has been interrupted, was essential to being able firstly to identify these interruptions, and secondly find methods to overcome these interruptions and thus redress them. Also, while the individual researcher is re-collecting data on these auto-biographical issues, she must also reflect on the process of organizing, categorizing and comparing the data with her additional cases. However, whilst conducting an auto-ethnography, I remained mindful of potential dangers that this approach to research presents particularly when one is reflecting on one's past.

Dangers in the Auto-Ethnographic and Ethnographic Methods

As Habermas highlights “The unity of life history constitutes itself through the accretion of retrospective interpretations that implicitly always encompass the entire course of one's life including all earlier interpretations” (1968,152). Therefore, as there is a certain rationale that we apply to our life stories, as well as how one interprets these earlier interpretations, is not only critical to contextualizing and rationalizing past experiences, it was also essential that a process was implemented whereby individual experiences that may have appeared as though they were the result to one's ascribed characteristics or individuality, were compared to others' experiences who shared the same identity in order to find commonalities in experiences so that critical theory could be developed in response to these experiences.

Auto-Ethnography and the Ego

Due to the ego being first and center of one's identity and an auto-ethnographic voice—a voice that integrates both life experience and life history—it is susceptible to the dangers of personal bias, over exaggeration, failed recollection and selective memory. As Habermas emphasizes, the “Ego identity must be distinguished from the unity of the corresponding organism that can be identified as the same body from birth to death within a spatio-temporal coordinate system” (p. 153). It is an identity that presents itself prominently at the contemplation of reflection. Therefore, it was important to consider the dangers that are present with each of the various approaches to an auto-ethnographic narrative, particularly when one consciously reflects on earlier instances of life. At the same time, it was important to also stay mindful of how the ego positions itself and what affects this could have had on one's reflections on past situations. In addition, by considering how one's recollections may be skewed not only when recalling social circumstances with hindsight, but also how one may unconsciously (and consciously) sanitize the past whilst presenting experiences through the intellectualizing process of reflection for the purpose expressed.

In the case of an auto-ethnography that more closely aligned with a native ethnography, whereby one was pursuing the assessment of a group of which one was a member or can be associated with, it was important to consider which voices were being highlighted—and as an expected consequence—which voices were being overlooked. Considerations regarding whose narrative was being considered as providing the most representative voice for the group, and whose recollection of experiences will be collected and used as testimony and data for research was of paramount importance,

particularly when the purpose of the research was considered. These issues became all the more important as the purpose of the research was the creation of a liberating critical theory which could be applied both academically and practically to positively influence the lives of women who identified with being professional and black seeking “life-success”.

Participant Recruitment Process

The participants of this study were recruited firstly, from a group of Black female academics who had collaborated on a book known as *Inside the Ivory Tower* in the UK. A snowballing technique used to recruit the Black female academics who identified as being Caribbean through the Caribbean Philosophical Society (CPA) conference participants. A combination of criterion sampling and snowball sampling was employed to recruit fifteen Black participants for this research study for in depth interviews. The scope of participation will be limited to women who identify themselves as Black Caribbean diasporic women who identified as being first or second generation (or removed). Some of these women were born outside of the Caribbean, however they identified with the African Caribbean diasporic identity.

As part of the Black woman’s role and experience within academe, I presented findings from Black women regarding their perceptions of higher education, their perspectives of higher education being a vehicle for upward mobility, and therefore life success (LS) and collected data from respondents that indicated whether or not these women had been able to realize “life success”. Even though the Black Caribbean female’s experience is critical to the research, I also drew on observations of other Black women who identified with the Black Caribbean women’s experiences and used a Black

feminist theoretical lens (Collins, 2000). Themes such as upward mobility, intellectual curiosities and accessibility to career support and growth, (as she saw it) were critical to investigating, understanding and assessing their life success.

As confronted by Pnina Motzafi-Haller, one may also be faced with questions of authenticity if one's journey has not included the professional field anthropologist and yet categorizing research as being an "auto-biographical journey of professional development and ambivalent identity" (Reed-Danahay, 15). In my case, I was faced with questions regarding having an authentic "native" voice and the right to identify myself with having a "native" voice regarding the experiences of women who have navigated tertiary education in Britain. I was engaged in tertiary education in the United Kingdom over ten years ago, the majority of my graduate education has now been in the USA culminating with this PhD. This then begs the following questions: was the voice that predominates throughout my auto-ethnographic narrative one of a Black British or English woman — where my national identity or birthplace presented itself as my most salient identity? Was the voice which took precedence my Black woman persona which was navigating tertiary education in general? Or was it the voice of one who has navigated tertiary education in the United Kingdom in comparison with her experiences in the United States, the voice that took precedence in an autoethnography? Did the multiplicities of my identity have an impact on my lens in comparison with my potential interviewees? These were all potential dangers that were important to consider.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Having gained IRB approval in the summer of 2018 (see appendix), I travelled to England to conduct my interviews. I had planned to interview 12 professional Black women who had had extensive exposure to the academy. As planned, I used a snowballing technique to select my interviewees and I managed to interview 15 women. At the end of the summer I returned to Arizona, and I started to analyze the data which I had collected. I started by transcribing the interviews and looking for recurring themes. Then I wrote short narratives of each interviewee. Next, I shared these insights with my committee members for further validation. I then began to focus on the answers they gave to questions about affirming an immigrant, a Caribbean, a “Jamaican”, a Black British or a Black English identity. Following this, I began looking for points of interruption or blockages in the self-formative processes of these women. In my view, a completed process of self-formation would be achieved by these women being able to legitimately claim the Black English identity. Narratives that provided evidence for particular emerging themes were presented and featured in chapters 4 and 5. In fact, what I found was that most of my interviewees pushed past the immigrant, the “Jamaican” identities but stopped at the Black British identity.

The Black British identity was a point at which many stopped and, in some cases, they appeared to be contented with that identity location, even if this was postcolonial identity. In essence, the information that came out of the interviews around these interruptions, provided the data that I used to write chapters 4 and 5. In interpreting the data, I linked it to Habermas’ notion of ‘An Interrupted Self-formative Process’, making the difficulties of moving beyond the various phases that these Black women had to overcome as the major sites of possible interruptions in their self-formative processes.

Liberatory Praxis: Carving Epistemological Space for the Reflexive Voice

Essentially, auto-ethnography is “a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, 9). By considering Audre Lorde’s quote which was featured at the opening of my essay –it became particularly important to consider the Black Feminist voice. It became apparent why an auto-ethnography offered an opportunity for those who belong to communities that are typically the subject of observation and scrutiny under a western gaze, to redress this imbalance, and assert as sense of agency in their life progression. This was because the discourses that are typically used to theorize and reflect on marginalized sectors of society are of the positivist variety. Since these theories do not allow for the primacy of the subjective voice —one that is owned by ‘othered’ peoples and dismissed by imperial grand narratives, it has been recognized that;

“If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.” (Lorde, 1982)

Therefore, not only did the auto-ethnographic approach present space for the expression of the ontological voice, it also highlighted that there are various ways of knowing and reflection. As Swadener and Soto have highlighted, the way in which “we summon our imaginations to formulate, envision, and implement a liberating praxis that integrates theoretical understandings, critique, and transformative action will help determine what happens to young children growing up in a post-modern context” (2002, p. 51). It therefore seemed reasonable to suggest that the implementation of liberating praxis in conjunction with refined and innovative theoretical understandings had the

potential to improve life in general for all minority sectors seeking liberation in the post-modern context.

The autoethnographic approach provided an opportunity for self-reflection —and in doing so, allowed for my self-autonomy and the reclamation of power when defining and redefining aspects of a social history which was being presented. It was a first and crucial step in helping to define understandings of the emergence discourse of Black British Studies. “If making conscious the unconscious may be called reflection, then the process that runs counter to reflection must transform the conscious into the unconscious” (Habermas, 2015, p. 242). This dimming of consciousness was countered by the work of critical theories, an approach that was necessary to develop liberating or emancipatory methods of research.

These were the autoethnographic and ethnographic methods I used to interview 15 black women of Caribbean descent living in Britain. As I focused on possibilities of ‘life-success’ for Black women in the academe, I restricted the 12 interviews to British women who identified as Black who were at various stages of their ‘journey’ through the academy. Some interviewees were established professors, others were starting and some were advanced graduate students. I recorded these interviews and transcribed them. I also included in my sample some women who pursued professional careers outside of the academy as they provided good contrast with those who decided to navigate the ‘journey’ to life-success via the academe. They ranged in age from their early twenties to their sixties. Some of these other professional Black women were in other professions, (doctors and lawyers) in Britain.

In the subsequent chapters, I review relevant literature which forms a contextual basis for my theoretical argument. This chapter is followed by a summary of my analysis of interviews in chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER THREE
BETWEEN BEING BRITISH AND ENGLISH: SCALING A DOUBLE
PORTCULLIS

Introduction

As the introduction and review of the literature chapters made clear, this is a study of the experiences of Black female Caribbean academics in Britain, which focuses on the challenges of moving from the status of immigrants to being integral citizens of British society. In Britain, there is no clearly designed path for the integrating of Black Caribbean immigrants into the society. Black Caribbean migrants started moving to Britain in the 1940's in response to labor shortages in the British economy. The first set of these immigrants constituted the so called 'Windrush' generation as it was the name of the ship on which they arrived. Since being in Britain, the social identity of these immigrants from Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Grenada and other islands that were British colonies, has gone through three major iterations. The first was that of 'immigrants', who were all homogenized into Jamaicans —the largest of the islands and the dominant percentage of these incoming immigrants.

This first construction of the social identities of Caribbean immigrants to Britain has been very artfully captured in the novels of George Lamming and Sam Selvon. The revealing title of Lamming's novel was *The Emigrants*, while that of Selvon's was *The Lonely Londoners*. The second iteration of the identity of this group was 'diasporic' rather than 'immigrant'. The diasporic label was a self-imposed one that emphasized the cultural contribution that this Caribbean population was making to British society. Third

and finally, in the ongoing attempt to forge a distinct Black British identity and thus a clear path of integration for Caribbean and other Black immigrants to Britain. The absence of this clear path has been captured very pointedly in the cockney epithet, “There ain’t no Black in the Union Jack!”

The goal of my study is the creation of a Habermasian type critical theory of the self-formative processes of Black female Caribbean immigrants to Britain. The advantage offered by Habermas’ theory is the space that it provides for narratives of interrupted self-formative processes. My particular focus is on the racial and gendered interruptions of the self-formative processes of Black Caribbean women as they make their way through the British academy with the goal of becoming black British female Intellectuals. The empirical basis of my study is a set of seventeen in depth interviews with Black women who are at various stages of their careers in the British academy. From this data, and particularly their personal narratives, I made my first attempt at formulating a critical theory of the self-formative processes in cases of these women. In addition to this body of ethnographic/interview data, I conducted what scholars like Gloria Anzaldúa have called autoethnography. In my case, it has involved asking myself many of the same questions that I have asked my interviewees. This chapter is the result of this Autoethnographic exercise.

The Influence of My Parents

The British Isles represented more than a colonial mother country that had beckoned its colonial sons and daughters of empire—including my parents—to her shores to rebuild Britain after the Second World War. For some, the attraction of the UK (and indeed the USA), was that these Western spaces promised acceptance and progress for

those who were willing to work hard. Britain had long been thought of as a space of educational advancement. It was for this reason, that my father left Trinidad in the 1960's, my mother joining him in London just two years later. Advancing oneself through education has been at the center of my parents' philosophic.

For my mother in particular, moving to England provided an opportunity where she would eventually be able to realize her dreams in a line of work that focused on the Social Sciences. This did not come without struggle. However, her life experiences and insights enabled her to achieve this goal by becoming a Magistrate Judge where she was not only administering rulings from the bench, she was able to have "voice" in an arena where women (especially women of the African diaspora) are not typically afforded this privilege. This platform positioned her as being an undisputable member of the British Middle-class.

My sister, a barrister, would often remind me that she had researched and found that we had a great uncle, on my mother's side who was said to have been a barrister in England. Perhaps this was the reason why there was a theme of legal studies, ethics and justice in my family's understandings of professional achievement. However, what appeared to be the connecting theme of these professions, is the quality of being "heard". Ergo, to have one's critical "voice" acknowledged in a society that did not envisage diasporic people as having a permanent or clear ethnic identity in British society. Growing up in this environment, I developed the understanding that one can only reclaim their "voice" through education, in particular by attaining a high level of tertiary education. I was always identified by my elementary school peers as being a potential judge, but I saw myself as an academic, a professor with a legal lens. In particular, I saw

myself as a teacher of judges and historians. I was drawn to these two professions because I saw these roles as having significant impact on the world. Professions such as professor/academic, lawyer/barrister and judge, are professions where one's "voice" cannot be ignored. This is a sentiment that I remind each and every person who corresponds with me via email as my institutional email signature reads,

Tertiary education provides us with the language needed to cause those who oppose our voices with no choice but to listen. However, we must always work to ensure that we are always heard
– (Anique John)

These were my thoughts and aspirations at around ages 8 to 16. These ideas and aspirations really stayed with me until I entered The London Oratory School. In short, this was how I thought of myself during my pre-teen and mid-teen years.

Early Education

Although I sat in various classrooms over the years, at a range of institutions, my presence was largely ignored as the hypervisibility of my blackness in these prejudiced spaces, deemed me, invisible, like the hero in Ralph Ellison's novel, *The Invisible Man*. Nonetheless, whether I was ignored, excluded or overlooked in these spaces, I always held dear the words of my Trinidadian (British) mother who had reminded me from the time I was a small child that;

"The teachers are teaching, they are not teaching you, but you are there to learn what they teach!"

I did not truly understand the implication of her statement which seemed to be more of an adult conundrum to which I became familiar. However, even as a child, I understood that I must follow the little of this statement that I was able to grasp, which I understood to mean "learn whatever is being taught!". Through this teaching from my

mother's direction to learn from these educators, I understood myself, my culture and my future as being consistent with the country of my birth and therefore what I was, English. For I too had played in the rain, tried to enjoy playing with Horse Chestnuts (Conkers) during autumn—a game that could be considered as part of a rights of passage for primary aged children in England —where one would “conk” (knockout, destroy or indeed ‘conquer’ your playground opponent by breaking their Conker with your own). This would take place before the school playground bell would be rung in the morning and at break times during the winter.

Similarly, celebrating the capture of Guy Fawkes, the foiling of his gunpowder plot against a monarch (James I), in 1605 on the 5th November, and reciting the first stanza of the Guy Fawkes seventeenth century English riddle —the only part of the rhyme that we (my sister and I) could remember that we had learned in primary school, and the only part that we believe truly mattered;

“Remember, remember the fifth of November Gunpowder, treason
and plot Remember, remember the fifth of November Guy Fawkes
will ne'er be forgot...”

In the same fashion as all other English girls in my class, we celebrated the burning of Guy Fawkes' effigy on the top of a bonfire annually. I would watch from a distance and hear the chants of youngsters collecting ‘*a penny for the guy*’, whereby children would circulate the cul-de-sac of my neighborhood starting from a fortnight prior to November 5th with a home-made effigy of Guy Fawkes in a pushchair (stroller) to celebrate his capture, and his sentence which was to be hung, drawn and quartered and then burned. The collection was for the youngsters to collect money for fireworks to celebrate this occasion. These were all very English nationalistic traditions. These were my traditions

as I was born into this culture and therefore in spite of having black skin, I was an authentic English girl. Even if I could also be categorized as a granddaughter of the African diaspora within the English space, these English traditions were mine and were reinforced by my British parents, peers, my neighbors and the society in which I grew.

Attending Latimer Day Nursery

I have always instinctively known that racism and sexism have been a part of the national psyche in Britain that I would have to contend with. Seeing Moira Stuart, a London born Black female newsreader of Dominican and Barbadian parents, I knew she challenged both professional, gender and racial expectations as well as barriers. I knew that by her mere presence on television, she must have faced challenges as she navigated this lonely space. However, my exposure to these two intersecting categories, created a significant part of the struggles of my self-formative process. I have always had an awareness that the salience of these characteristics caused me to be an outsider-insider in my home space, the British space, as I was the daughter of African-Caribbean immigrants. In essence, I was a child of England, for the Caribbean was something that I was familiar with merely through the Caribbean music that I would hear on Sunday evenings, on the radio on Choice FM's show *A Caribbean Affair*, through my father's calypso songs and guitar playing, through the rich cuisine of my home, and folklore that I would learn from Caribbean almanacs. However, it was a culture that I would start to learn about specifically through my Caucasian Nursery teacher who brought me to the Commonwealth Institute on my own one day to expose me to Caribbean culture. She provided me with my first Afrocentric book "*Maybe It's a Tiger*" by Kathleen Hersom,

(a book that I still have) which depicted positive images of English black children with what I assumed to be Caribbean roots - for some of them were wearing Rastafarian hats and appeared to reflect the urban environment of Ladbroke Grove (Notting Hill) where I attended nursery school, the epicenter of the Caribbean Notting Hill Carnival.

I recall thinking that the book had such lovely images of children and children that looked like me, my favorite doll who I named *Finesse* —we were all a rich dark brown. We were much like the women, men and children who would be parading in the Notting Hill Carnival celebrating what I imagined to be the Caribbean coming to the streets of London surrounding the nursery, adding bright and vibrant color to the dull streets of Ladbroke Grove. Into this diverse microcosm of London, my mother would drive me across the city from our new house in the suburbs so that I could attend nursery school. As she worked, I would be immersed in London culture, which to me was a culture of diverse groups of English children from various ethnic backgrounds.

I enjoyed bringing in my favorite records, records by English music artists such as Duran Duran and The Police and listening to Musical Youth's hit, *Pass the Dutchie*, as well as Bob Marley's *One Love* whilst helping my nursery teacher to retrieve cutlery to set the table for our tea time —a quintessentially English ritual that was taught and reinforced in nursery school, and organized by Maudeline and Mavis —two Caribbean cooks —who would be preparing our cuisine, English cuisine with a Caribbean flare.

These women represented part of the norm to me, senior in age, they represented the matriarchal society of Caribbean women I was accustomed to seeing as leaders in my home. They represented the embodiment of family — substitutes for my extended family in Trinidad. I imagined these mature Caribbean ladies to be my paternal and maternal

grandmothers as they were also from Grenada like my grandparents. They were different from each other, but yet and still, they were warm towards me —and to all of the children of the nursery as I remember it. I distinctly remember feeling the freedom of running down the corridor from their kitchen and the laundry room area, after getting clean tablecloths in preparation for our tea-time to set the table —a duty performed with pride for I loved tea and tea-time.

Running to the bottom of the playground gate during our recess, laughing with an array of friends as I (one of the fastest runners) and made it there first, I felt free and happy to be me, my hair in an afro pony-puff at the top of my head, defying the wind resembling an unrestricted flame under the greyness of the West London sky, for I was “Anique the Peak” as the children would say repeating our rhyming skills beyond the nursery classroom. I was Anique, first and foremost, an energetic happy child who wore no labels. Unaware, that beyond the gates of the Latimer Day Nursery and beyond this station of my life, I would enter into “The world that wills to worship womankind studiously [and] forgets its darker sisters” (Dubois, p.96). I as well as my Nanny loved me for being me. I would run with energy and excitement for life as I played without judgement with my friends, Lennon, Aneeka, Michael, Mark, Barty and Markanalude, a diverse group of children of various hues and ethnicities who defined what I understood to be English culture, and they displayed avid fondness for me without restriction.

I enjoyed racing the boys as I wore my favorite outfit, a pair of dungarees —an outfit I wore as often as possible, because I liked being treated like one the boys. Different from my sisters, my mother would often say “she’s is my son!” and I enjoyed the freedom that this suggested. I suppose I can say with the benefit of hindsight, I admired boyhood and

not girlhood as the latter was presented to me. Boyhood appeared to provide unrestricted freedom to play, get dirty in sandpits and the mud. It was the freedom that being a so called “Tom-boy” gave to me.

Attending St. Michael’s and Martin’s RC Primary School

At St. Michael’s and Martin’s, I was no longer able to experience the freedom of simply being me. With hindsight I can see that here I began to experience some of the interruptions in my self-formative process that would shape the future trajectory of my life. These interruptions were primarily of a racial and gendered nature. For example, I vividly recall lining-up in the lunch hall (cafeteria) where there was a large mural of all the students’ self-portraits on the southern wall. It was entitled “We Are Family”, but I knew that this was not the case. Firstly because, unlike my peers who would play a game of ‘find your face’ as they lined up against the mural and found it challenging to identify their own portrait among the sea of children’s self-portraits, I could identify my own self-portrait almost immediately. I could because I had colored my face a deep brown, which made it unique among the sea of white faces that were colored either pink, beige or “flesh” colored as labeled on the crayon’s wrapper. According to Crayola at that time this, light/tan color was the legitimate skin color. However, this “flesh” color was not my skin color. Neither was there a skin colored crayon in the package that reflected my skin tone.

As I would stand lining up to get my lunch, alongside the “We Are Family” mural (that with benefit of hindsight, I can assume had been designed to reinforce school spirit, camaraderie, belonging and inclusivity), in fact it was something very different. As I would shuffle along in the line and sometimes past my classmates who were deeply

engaged in playing “find your portrait” —a game I was uninvited to play, because there was no “fun” to be had finding my very visible dark chocolate face among the portraits —my visibility made me in essence invisible. An invisibility where I would be neither heard nor recognized. I could be ignored, not invited to play games, or join in with this fun. I was not a party to this game that took place on an everyday basis, thereby reinforcing my ‘othered’ position. I was in a school where I considered myself to be a part of the school but by the rituals and social conditioning of the students, teachers and parents, —on an everyday basis simply due to the color of my skin —I was reminded that I was not a “true” member of the school or society that was defined mostly by whiteness. I was an outsider-insider (Hill Collins) not because of my failure to assimilate to the traditions, but due to what I represented, a person of African heritage as denoted by my blackness.

As every youth goes through childhood, they laugh, enjoy and giggle which is part of what is natural, an expression of their humanity. I distinctly remember a teacher called Miss Harrington, who chose to turn to my table where myself and two other black girls sat, which made up a hundred percent of the black girls in my entire year. She commented: “At the rate you’re working, the only thing you’ll be doing is packing shelves in Sainsbury’s!” As much as this was not an overtly racist statement, because I had observed that Sainsbury’s (a grocery store) seemed to only have black people working the shelves, I knew immediately at seven years old, that this statement was negative. Although I did not have the vocabulary and analytic skills to assess where she had socially positioned us, I knew her comment related to the social group I represented. I knew that this was a negative view of what I could and would likely be doing as an

adult in her opinion.

Clearly, she was not seeing us in the same light as the other equally playful non-black children who were demonstrating their enthusiasm for painting also. She was seeing us as members of the lowest social group of society, the working “black” poor who did not enjoy or would not experience “life success”. I did not know exactly why she was so hostile (racist), but it was almost as though I knew her lens already and I knew what she meant by her blasé statement. As British Black children, we did not benefit from *tabula rasa*. Our identity made us distinct from the other children. I was the only one in the group who appeared to not find her statement a joking matter and I was eager to go home so I could discuss this denigrating comment with my mother. When I arrived home ,she was occupied with writing a letter to my sister’s guitar teacher, Mr. Kennedy who had referred to her and her friend as “laughing washerwomen” for merely girlish giggling that was perceived and responded to in a historically loaded and negative sense. This also highlighted that she also did not benefit from *tabula rasa* so that one could experience success.

Navigating life and education as a girl in England was social conditioning for a life where I would be categorized “judged by the color of [my] skin [first and foremost] ...[and not] by the content of [my] character.”(M.L.King).

Becoming a Young Woman

At the age of ten I had reached a new plateau, was going through a growth spurt and in my mother’s eyes, I had reached a milestone entering into womanhood. As part of this arrival, I was ‘rewarded’ with being able to get my hair relaxed (straightened) like my

elder sisters. I had arrived at a point of joining Black womanhood in a Western space. In this space, womanhood defined itself in two ways: firstly, what it means to be a woman in Britain; and secondly, what it means to be a woman who demonstrates conformity, “progress” and success, much like the women I saw on television in the 1980’s in the United States on programs like *The Cosby Show*. In reality, it was conformity to Caucasian standards of beauty. In essence, it was the type of womanhood, a rite of passage, where I too would be burdened with the task of making myself palatable to the Eurocentric ideals of beauty, acceptability and assimilation.

Unbeknownst to me at this time —for I too young to realize that I was ‘sanitizing’ my blackness —in the hope of gaining acceptability in white society and among my peers. Conforming to European ideals of beauty by embracing a “white mask” (Fanon) despite my black skin, appeared to be a ‘natural’ progression of maturity where I could perhaps avoid being the butt of the ongoing “joke” about black people said at my schools. I frequently had to endure hearing what was an ongoing ‘joke’ where white children would say, “*Why do black people have so many children?*” To which a child would reply, “*I don’t know*” The answer given would be “*because they have pubic hair on their heads!*” I found this to be so humiliating and untrue, as I considered that my mother did not have lots of children neither did the black people we knew. However, this experience made it clear to me, that in order to be successful in life, one would have to defy such assumptions as having lots of children. However, I can now say, that I must have internalized this to a degree as I desperately wanted my hair to be straightened as soon as possible in an effort to reject this outward evidence of a presumed inability to realize “life success”.

Having endured the painful tingling chemical burning of the straightening process to ironically “relax” my hair so I would no longer have to battle with “fitting-in” in school. I returned to school the next day with my hair in a small ponytail, flowing freely in the wind. I walked into my classroom and I was stared at intensely by my fellow students and teachers alike. At first I thought that these were looks of admiration. However, I would learn that it was something different. One of the white boys leaned across the table and said “Ha ha, you look like Nat King Cole! What happened to you?” This provoked classroom laughter. I felt myself blush as my teacher also waited for my response. I felt perplexed and I said slowly with an air of sarcasm attempting to rebuff the hostility “Ha ha!” I remember thinking, my hair is straight now, now what is the problem?

Reflecting on this incident as a graduate student at Arizona State University, I recall Fanon’s often quoted statement: “When I walked in the room, reason walked out.” In my case, it seemed as though when I walked into the classroom, the others in the room believed that Englishness walked out. The room had been “tainted” by my presence. Being racialized negatively was not something that I could avoid. I also distinctly remember playing a game of “had” — tag as they call it in the United States — and I was ‘it’. Whilst enjoying the game, I accidentally fell onto one of the boys. He was white and his reaction was to say, “Ugh! Get off me! I don’t wanna have black babies!” The rest of the children shrieked with laughter, reinforcing their disgust at this prospect and their disdain at the idea of more blackness.

Although we were all children not knowing what sex was or indeed how it happened (and of course this was a childlike response), it did however highlight a social conditioning in the children that was clearly developing. It was a pervasive sentiment

whereby even children understood that there were certain negative responses towards certain members of society, and in particular, responses towards black females and their offspring. These were the types of experiences that constituted the racial and gendered interruptions of the self-formative processes of Black women in Britain.

Attending University

After leaving high school I enrolled at Brunel University and completed a BA degree in History. I was drawn to History because at the time I saw it as a discipline through which I could have impact on the world. Also, I thought that History presented the possibility to critique and unravel the narratives that had been depicted as fact in the presentation of certain populations. E.H. Carr's book '*What is History?*' was one such text which sparked my intrigue. It made me consider not only the narratives that history books presented, but also how certain voices were given academic privilege and legitimacy to define history whilst other voices were muted. The history of history, (or historiography) became a topic of deep interest. For me, studying history was akin to learning a language, a language of concepts and methods of how to create (or indeed recreate) "factual" history, in a fashion that would not be easily or immediately disputed. In particular, I was skeptical of the claim that people of the African diaspora had been given true freedom.

My undergraduate thesis focused on the treatment of creole slaves and Free Colored's in Barbados towards the end of the nineteenth century. It provided me with the opportunity to assess primary documents at London's Public Record Office at Kew. There I learned of Joseph Denny, a free-colored man and landowner, who had shot a

white man who he took to be a thief on his property. The dilemmas that confronted Mr. Denny challenged me to think about this hyphenated identity of the “free-colored”. Was it a contradiction in terms perhaps? As to be identified as being free and colored in late nineteenth century Barbados, was to be provided with a type of “freedom” that was certainly not the same as the freedom afforded to white landowners. From this scenario I concluded that the freedom given to free-colored was not freedom at all.

After completing my BA, I continued at Brunel for my MPhil where I focused on the educational institutions in British Caribbean societies from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century. In particular, my research investigated the experiences of Caribbean secondary school educators. The empirical data for my thesis was drawn from the archival records collected by the British and Foreign School Society. I really enjoyed learning how to navigate the archive to retrieve the right information and I also enjoyed what I uncovered about colonial schooling.

After my MPhil research, I found the opportunities for furthering my education in the US more appealing than staying in Britain. In other words, my decision to migrate to the US was in response to what I perceived as the better opportunities for graduate studies. In America, I enrolled first at North Dakota State University and then Arizona State University. At the latter institution I entered the MA program Social Justice and Human Rights, and now I am enrolled in their PhD program. However, before discussing my educational experiences in this graduate program, I must say a little bit about the experience of becoming a naturalized American.

Becoming an American

March 16th 2012, a new day, a new identity. Could this be the beginning of a new me? Would the shedding of my immigrant shell through a routine ceremony, make it possible for me walk down any University Avenue or Main Street without feeling nauseous if I had mistakenly forgotten my alien card at home? I wondered if as a Black British woman, whether or not I would now be seen as one of the rest?

So unfamiliar was this process to me, of claiming a nationality that was not of my birth, heritage or culture. The oaths and the pledges to the United States, hinted of a rationally ordered country that welcomed all, defended all and treated all as equal. However, looking around at the diversity of faces in the courtroom, I wondered whether all of the people in the room would be equally protected by the pledges that we were told to say —and indeed, warned by the court official that if we were not seen to be mouthing the words of the pledges animatedly —we would not receive our naturalization certificates, clearly the last ditch attempt to discipline us as immigrants into the American order.

As the process continued, I had a sense of elation that this was no longer in a country where I would have to “beg” to stay and not suffer the threat of being removed if I unwittingly forgot to follow a mundane process such as updating my address within ten days of moving with ICE (Immigration and Custom Enforcement), or not having a voice when it came to voting in the land that had become my home. To me, this process beckoned at the opportunity for a new beginning. A chance to experience *tabula rasa* of sorts, to progress without restriction and enjoy and realize “life success” which I defined as success in my personal life, but especially professional advancement where I could become an academic. Here, I would be part of a society, known for its vast array of

immigrant populations. For this space was now my home, a place where I studied, lived and paid taxes. A place where I thought that my fellow newly naturalized citizens and I could live and be provided for by the protections that being a citizen of America is supposed to offer to all Americans as stated in the *Naturalization Handbook*.

However, as I looked around the room at the various faces and ethnicities, I started to wonder, how many of us would be given the opportunity for a fresh start, with no preconceived notions of what our ethnic identities were considered to represent? How many of us would be re-racialized negatively (or for the lucky few, positively) as indicated by a new hyphenated national identity that we may or may not have been assigned? How many of us would be racialized in a fashion that would be conducive to being able to assimilate fully and successfully into society as “true Americans”?

We —the resident aliens— were funneled one by one into the district court room for the last time being asked to present our resident alien cards, before we took our seats, so that we could be supposedly relieved from our immigrant status and exit the courtroom as Americans, able to engage in the ‘*American Dream*’. However, this made me think, what type of American would I be and what type of “life success” would I, a Black British aspiring academic experience in this new space? As highlighted by the voter registration form that I was given where I was asked to identify my ethnic group, I was rather perplexed. The categories listed suggested that the only applicable option for me was to be officially categorized as a member of another marginalized group, namely African-Americans. To me this appeared to be a group of people who had been marginalized in U.S. from the beginning of the nation’s founding due to the *Peculiar Institution* (slavery) which official ended in 1867, only to take a more sophisticated form —namely as

institutional or systemic discrimination and racism, prejudice and state endorsed harassment. In less than an hour, I went from being a resident alien to being another type of 'alien' that exists in this land. Never before in my life had the term 'African' been attached to my national identity and I pondered on the implication of my new ethnic designation.

Mary Waters' book in which she demonstrated that Black Caribbean immigrants to the United States have merged imperceptibly into the African-American population after one and a half generations. This was clearly a costly path that required Afro-Caribbean's to surrender a lot of their heritage. Was this going to be my fate? Was I going to have to give up comparable amounts of my Black British/English heritage in order to assimilate into American society? This led me to ponder whether or not America had an established hyphenated ethnic path for integrating Black British immigrants. My feeling was that it did not and that is why it was offering me this option of the African-American route into the mainstream of the society.

The woman who sat next to me during the ceremony appeared to be Caucasian European. She was also 'becoming an American' and her accent suggested that she was from Eastern Europe. My experience of being an immigration officer in the UK whilst studying for my first degree, made her accent foreign yet familiar and she sounded as though she were from Bosnia. When I sat down, I turned to her, smiled and said, "Congratulations to you!" She seemed taken aback by my accent. She replied by saying "yes" seeming not quite sure of what I had said. As I turned my attention back to the ceremony, I wondered, how long it would take before her and her descendants would be considered as simply Americans. For her, it was only her accent that identified her as

foreign, which would perhaps trigger her (temporary) marginalization in her new society. However, for me, it was the combination of my BBC English accent and my skin color that identified me as different. However, this option of being an African-American did not provide a viable option for someone like myself, who is both African diasporic and British. In other words, there was no clear path, for a Black British identity in the American race-ethnic order.

Back to Graduate School and My Critical Theory

Returning to my graduate experiences at Arizona State, one of the things that I focused on very intensely was the unclear path for Black Caribbean immigrants to Britain. I wrote several papers on different aspects of this problem, and made it one of the focal points for my comprehensive exams. Thus, for two years, I was reading widely and intensely in this area. It was during this time that I read very closely the works of scholars such as W.E.B Dubois, CLR James and Frantz Fanon, on the racialization or negritification of the identities of peoples of African descent. I was also reading Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Tracy Fisher, Hazel Carby, Kehinde Andrews, Lisa Palmer and Zadie Smith on the racialization of Blacks in Britain, and also their contributions to the ‘unfinished’ project of a Black British identity. I was also reading widely in the feminist literature, in particular the works of Simone de Beauvoir, Stanlie M. James, Sylvia Wynter, Hazel Carby, Rhoda Reddock, Elizabeth Blue Swadener, Patricia Hill Collins and Tammy Brown. From this feminist literature, I took the concept of female secundarization as developed by Simone de Beauvoir and Sylvia Wynter and integrated it into my critical theory. This I did in order to have a general theory of female identity

formation and to capture the distinct ways in which the self-formative processes of Black Caribbean women are often interrupted as they attempt to assimilate into British society.

I was intrigued to read about the various contributions of some of the above theorists to the project of a Black British identity. However, I had some reservations about the project itself. In my opinion, it reflected the experiences of Caribbean immigrants to Britain, and thus may have been an adequate solution for their identity problems. What the project did not reflect was the experiences of people like me who were born in Britain and therefore did not migrate from the Caribbean. Thus, my project, my critical theory is aimed at expanding the categories of the theories of Hall, Gilroy, and Carby to include the experiences of Black women and men born in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

My Critical Theory

As much as the critical theorists discussed above have helped to carve out and define a theoretical pathway to address the challenges experienced by Black post-colonials in British society, I consider that we are now at a point where critical theorists should consider the identity dilemma experienced by Black post-post colonials (Black people who are born in Britain). As I was wrestling with the differences between the experiences of post-colonials and post-post-colonials, I found that we needed the concept of a “double wall” in the Black immigrant experience to account for the differences between these two groups. In looking critically at the theoretical constructs of Hall and Gilroy, it struck me that they needed additional conceptual space if they were going to adequately theorize the experiences of Blacks born in Britain. The additional conceptual

space I thought they needed was room to incorporate the very real differences between being British and being English. The two are not the same and this distinction was not articulated in the theories of Hall and Gilroy.

The theories of Hall and Gilroy attempted to forge a synthesis out of the British colonial identity that was already available to citizens of Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and other British colonies in the Caribbean region. This concept of “British” for the United Kingdom was reinforced by the 1800 imperial construction born out the Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. These Acts established the United Kingdom as being the union of the Parliaments of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. It was this imperial formation that was the substance behind the British identity. This imperial British identity was also accessible to citizens of the colonies who were formally “British” subjects. The Black British project of Hall and Gilroy was based on an attempt to convert this legitimate label of a Black British colonial subject into the identity of a Black British citizen. This was an ethnic identity that allowed these immigrants to retain substantial portions of their Caribbean heritage whilst adopting a significant number of British norms and conventions necessary for assimilating into the society.

The limitations of this way of constructing the Black British ethnic identity became unmistakably clear when I applied it to myself and to others who were born in Britain. There was a dimension to our experiences that the model of Hall and Gilroy just did not cover. This dimension was the living distinction made in England between an English identity and the imperial British identity. For those of us who were born in Britain, we have discovered by direct experience that it is much easier to claim oneself as British than it is to claim oneself as English. It is this experience that has motivated me to revise

and extend the model of a Black British identity proposed by Hall and Gilroy.

It is in this context that I have introduced the concept of a double wall that the Black immigrant to Britain must scale. He or she will find that it is significantly easier to convert their colonial British Caribbean identity into that of a Black British citizen. As the long struggle of Hall, Gilroy and others to move the identity of Black Caribbean people from being “immigrants” to diasporic people, and finally to Black British citizens suggest, acquiring this third identity is not easy. As a post-postcolonial, I discovered that it was even more difficult acquiring an English identity.

The experiences that I described from my years in school, were my first exposure to British society’s refusal to accept my claim to an English identity in spite of being born in England. This was a qualitatively different experience of race/ethnic exclusion from that of being refused access to the British imperial identity. My fellow class members and educators understood that I had colonial connections to the British empire and was therefore in some sense British. However, they would not connect me with their understanding of authentic Englishness. As I reflected on this distinction between being British and being English, I began to think about the symbols, rituals, customs, and observances that separated the English from the British. Observances like Guy Fawkes Night, symbols like St. George’s Cross flag, which gets amply displayed when England plays in international soccer or rugby matches. This flag is one of the many flags that constitute the Union Jack, (along with flags of Scotland and Wales), but it comes out and is separated from the Union Jack on special occasions when England is being celebrated.

During the Soccer World Cup, the St. George’s cross virtually displaces the Union Jack—the symbol of Britishness. These were the dimensions of “Englishness” that I

began to consider as I was preparing for my comprehensive exams. By the time I completed my exams, I was certain that the theories of Hall and Gilroy did not address these notions of Englishness and the second or the distinct wall of exclusion that they constituted. It is the creation of new conceptual space for this distinction between Britishness and Englishness that will be the contribution of my critical theory. I will integrate these additional concepts into an expansion of the project of Hall and Gilroy. In particular, at the third phase (the Black British phase) in the evolution of the social identity of Black Caribbean immigrants to Britain. Instead of just this one path, I have introduced two related but diverging paths.

The first is for post-colonials who are interested in retaining their Caribbean identities and are thus unlikely to claim an exclusively British or English identity. The second path is for post-postcolonials (like myself) who were born in England, have an English identity and are committed to living and affirming that identity. This will be the distinct contribution of my critical theory.

The following chapter, *Strategies for Acceptance*, the cases of my interviewees who share their unique approaches for finding acceptance in British society, which includes in both their personal and professional lives are considered and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIES FOR ACCEPTANCE

FOR THOSE WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES TO BE CARIBBEAN WOMEN

The black physician will never know how close he is to being discredited. I repeat, I was walled in: neither my refined manners nor my literary knowledge nor my understanding of the quantum theory could find favor
(Fanon, 1952, p.97)

In this chapter, the testimonies of British women who identify as Black Caribbean are analyzed in an attempt to uncover whether these women have been able to scale the social portcullis of British society - and be accepted as authentic members of British Society in Britain. These interviews will reveal whether women who have worked to navigate higher education establishments in an attempt to realize “life success” have been able to scale both the first wall of the double portcullis, as well as the second wall, which would be demonstrated by their acceptance and their treatment within the British higher educational workspace. Focusing on the interviews of two research participants, a Professor and a Lecturer/Doctoral Student, as the main interviewees whose testimony is also supported with fellow women who occupy this space, this chapter considers strategies for acceptance used by these women who have been carving out a space of permanence in British society and reveals whether these women have been able to firstly scale the double portcullis, and whether their work has enabled them to realize what they consider to be “life success”.

The Concept of Blackness in Britain

The concept of Blackness in Britain, is one which is relatively new which has been derived from the movement of Black people from the Caribbean colonies after the Second World War who were invited to Britain, which was presented as a colonial ‘Motherland’ willing to accept and receive her colonial Black (but British) ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ to help them benefit from the advancement and wealth gathered from the colonies at a time when Caribbean people were thirsty for advancement and economic growth. As George Lamming remarked about Caribbean people emigrating to Britain in the 1950’s and 1960’s,

We simply thought that we were going to an England in which it had been planted in our childhood consciousness as a heritage and a place of welcome. It is the measure of our innocence that neither the claim of our heritage nor the expectation of our welcome would have been seriously doubted. England was not for us a country with classes and conflicts of interest like the islands we had left. It was the name of responsibility whose origin may have coincided with the beginning of time.
(Lamming, 1983, xxxviii)

As expressed by George Lamming, the notion of being in England for people of the Caribbean was not one where they expected that their hyphenated identity —that of Caribbean Britishness —would be challenged and rejected by members of the host nation, many of whom were reluctant to accept Black people as being authentic members of British society within the United Kingdom. For the Afro Caribbean people, there was the assumption that Britain —a country that had benefited from the toil of her colonial sons and daughters -would accept Caribbean people as an extension of British people and Britain, or more specifically England, had moved beyond the simplicity of colorism and racism that had been planted into the colonies, and instead they were “welcoming” Black people into Britain. However, the reality was that these people -whose non-whiteness

made them easily identifiable- presented a challenge particularly against white working-class populations that resented the influx of Caribbean immigrants that were changing the demographic and attempted to challenge the political landscape of the British Isles from the post war area. As a result, the Black presence in Britain has had a Caribbean inflection and Blackness in Britain has been closely tied to Caribbean roots.

A Unique Position : Blackness in Britain

The hyphenated identity used today in the United States, ‘African-American’ and the discourse used to consider race in the United States, is starkly different from the discourse of race in other western societies like the United Kingdom. Much like the Afro-Caribbean or Indo-Caribbean identity, the African-American hyphenated identity is one which has been coined to both reflect those of African origins and those who are African and living within the American space. It is a term which suggests that people who have this identity, occupy a position of permanence and indeed acceptance within these territories. For Britain in her colonial period, hyphenating people, nations and territories with the British identity, indicated Britain’s ‘ownership’ and subjugation over these people for generations and over territories until they were able to gain their independence.

As George Lamming highlighted, Caribbean people under colonial rule suffered a “different kind of subjugation. It was a terror of the mind; a daily exercise in self-mutilation. Black versus black in a battle for self-improvement” (Lamming, xxxix) whereby, Britain became the colonial ‘Mother Country’ and in innocence to progress, those who were her “colonial offspring” from the Caribbean colonies, aspired to be with

her (live in Britain), and live among her offspring (white people whom they considered to mean advancement) . However, the Black British population from the Caribbean, was one that was given a false sense of belonging in Britain, which merely wanted to use her colonial sons and daughters to help in the aftermath of the Second World War.

Interestingly, claiming what many Caribbean people believed was their “rightful place” in Britain meant unbeknownst to them, they were claiming a position which was yet to be clearly defined or considered and was not envisaged to be permanent. Most notably, the concept of Blackness in Britain has and continues to change. This is because Blackness within the British space contains identities that “are a matter of becoming rather than being” (p.1, 2000). This can be considered to be the first wall of the double portcullis which Black people in Britain had to navigate.

Further developing on the sentiments of Stuart Hall, the idea of ‘who we are’ ‘where we came from’ and what this means to us currently should be and is at the very core of the concept of Blackness in Britain and this must be understood to have foundations in the colonial Black experience.

What does it mean to be Black in Britain in a country where Black people connected with Britain have occupied for generations, an identity of pseudo-Britishness as British colonial subjects? What this research has emphasized is that there are several alternative discourses of “blackness” in Britain, Black Britishness and indeed Black Englishness which demonstrate “vernacular epistemologies—people’s own ways of making sense of ways of knowing” (Mohanty, 2012, xii). However, some of these epistemologies, notably the Black English ontology, is not an established group identity, and as a result, it is in effect ‘an unfinished identity’ one which it appears has not been given necessary

attention. The implication of this not being addressed is the reassignment of Black people who are born in the UK, being politically ‘othered’ as not belonging or being able to belong to the country of their birth and only being able to express themselves and identify within the constraints of white definitions of diversity within England.

The United States situation vs The United Kingdom Situation

For African-Americans, the recognition of first-sight (Dubois, 1903) provides for the opportunity for this group of diasporic people to consider themselves as Africans firstly who have become Americans, ergo the term African-Americans. For those of Caribbean parentage in England, their first-sight lens, is already a hyphenated identity, that of the African-Caribbean or Afro Caribbean. Therefore, being situated within England, the Black or Africana-English identity is an identity which is yet to be established and these are not identities that have been recognized or used as a group identity. Those who have and accepted their hyphenated identity whether this be the African-Caribbean or the African-American identity, have an identity which was established in the postcolonial phase of history. However, the postcolonial phase which extended Britishness to people of the colonies, cannot remain fixed. Therefore, the identification used to refer to people from beyond the postcolonial era and location, clearly must also change.

Four Factors of Navigation

When considering the experiences of Black diasporic women in England and the development of their identity, life success and experiences within the academy, there are four key factors to consider. As will be explored with my interview analysis, it is

important to consider a phase which I have called *The State of the Struggle from Childhood*. This phase can be considered to be a significant factor which can be categorized as an external trigger which awakens double-consciousness (Dubois, 1903). This awakening happens at a relatively young age and as shared by my interviewees. It is an awareness of how one is seen as the ‘other’ which comes to the fore. This can be seen as a significant determinant of how these women navigate the academic terrain, even from a young age. These experiences of struggle within the school setting —and the clear rejection of what these women are seen to represent, colonial Blackness, and what can therefore be considered to be the embodiment of *Sinews of Empire* (Michael Craton, 1974) — identifies them immediately as ‘not belonging’ to their surroundings. This can be thought to trigger the implementation of strategies of survival, including using educational establishments as a means to improve their achieved status in order to realize ‘life success’.

Gaining an understanding of responses to what is represented by Blackness in England, appears to signal an awareness of my interviewees’ first-sight (Dubois,). For some of my interviewees, their first-sight, provides a sense of pride, one that is able to reconcile the negative stereotypes attached to Black people in England as being just that, stereotypes, a distraction superimposed by the oppressor, designed to disrupt their focus. Although they may not recognize or consciously consider that their drive to succeed, is indicative of their reclamation of their first-sight, whereby these negative stereotypes are not applicable, are proved wholly inaccurate, this expression of determination and envisioning one’s own success despite “the struggle”, hint of the presents of various types of first-sight as Dubois defined it.

Depending on where these women are situated, the reclamation of first-sight may have various forms. What appears to be true for women of my study, similar to Black female political activists such as Claudia Jones, their reclamation of first-sight extends beyond identification and nationality and claiming a right to belong to a specific country authentically. It extends into the professional realm, whereby despite all obstacles which they were likely to encounter and which they shared, they still could envision themselves as professional successes, lawyers (barristers), scientists, doctors, professors, academics being able to influence and help other diasporic women to witness their life success and therefore understand this to be possible or being able to have careers that are thought to command social respect, impact and facilitate 'life success'. This ability to have and indeed retain first-sight, thereby being able to see herself through her own eyes in spite of all the attempts to define her from the outside, is a second key consideration of "life success".

In England, as Dubois highlights, navigating 'the path' or as I say, scaling the portcullis, is no easy task. As Chapter 3 highlighted, for someone who may be considered to be a second-generation immigrant having been born in England, who had to navigate a life of being somewhere between being "British and English", scaling the portcullis is a mammoth challenge which is a precursor to be able to obtain "life success". Through the cases of two main interviews, this chapter considers how the self-formative processes of these women have been developed or indeed interrupted by their experiences within the academic realm. It considers whether their experiences have provided the right context to experience life success. This includes those who may have been born in the UK, who however do not identify as English and are therefore able to highlight the complexity of

Black identities in the UK and in particularly the complexity of experiences of scaling the portcullis within the academy.

The opening quote of this chapter by Fanon aptly described the predicament which confronts the black person. Clearly, the example of the black physician can be viewed as a metaphor for the professional black person across professions; this would of course include those who work in academia and those who have navigated higher education establishments. Significantly, the undertone of the quote is to suggest that black professionals -across the board -are likely to be treated with the same skepticism regarding their competence. Although Fanon refers specifically to the black physician, this should be considered to be a metaphor for the experiences of the Black man (and indeed the Black woman) within Britain and the professional space. Therefore, this notion can be applied to a plethora of professions, whereby the black person who has attained certain professional accreditation still exists in a position of certain uncertainty. Whereby one's "race", (Blackness), ethnicity and presumed immigrant status and in particular, one's African heritage, takes precedence and is used to discredit one's ability by institutions -consciously or not- whether this is justified or not.

The notion of being overlooked and discredited is a sentiment which is all pervasive within the professional work setting and disappointingly, it is particularly prevalent in the higher education environment for women, people of color and women of color, particularly those who are considered to be "outsiders" within the British work and academic space. The impact of this is multifaceted as could be reasonably expected, spanning from the creation of a hostile work environment for those who manage to enter into their profession of choice, to those who are attempting to enter -and indeed succeed

within these environments -this negative sentiment, one which is predicated on racism and a desire by establishments to maintain the status quo, ergo professions being reserved for those who are privileged, of a specific class and traditionally white and male. For the black women of my research study, particularly those who present themselves as being born outside of the United Kingdom —and therefore, they represent the post-colonial phase of immigration, re-emerging within the British terrain -their presence within the UK is not one that is typically welcomed. This creates an abrasive terrain and an experience of struggle as these women navigate a society which considers them as being the physical embodiment not envisioned as being a part of British society, let alone its higher institutions.

The Struggle for Acceptance

"You dare not gentlemen of the prosecution,
assert that Negro women can think and speak and write!"
(Claudia Jones, Davies, 2008, p. 204)

Why would this be? This could be because the Negro woman will be able to show prowess and sovereignty not envisioned and a strength that is unparalleled due to her task to navigate various spaces from various positionalities. The Black woman does not have to be in a courtroom when she has to navigate a society that becomes a continuous trial.

Hannah the Professor

Hannah the Professor, like Claudia Jones, demonstrates that women can indeed not only think and speak, they could embody activism.

"You know when they give you those boxes to tick,
sometimes I tick different boxes depending on what is full!"
(Hannah)

Hannah explained how she selects her nationality on forms that request racial identity information, whereby you are required to select a category which describes your identity/nationality. For Hannah, a senior professor at a London University, completing racial categories on a form was a matter of doing her own demographic control by simply choosing different boxes on different occasions. As an Indo-Caribbean woman who had worked for an Ivy League University in the United States and had spent many years as a Senior Professor in London Universities, she had amassed a wide breadth of experience and considered herself to be a mother and a woman who associates closely with the African Caribbean heritage. Despite being half Indo-Trinidadian and Austrian, despite being born in England and raised by a white mother and acknowledging that her national identity as being English when asked, Hannah categorized herself as Black Caribbean and she shared her experiences and insight in the academe having experienced it from a “Black” woman’s perspective.

Having spent her formative years in Trinidad, Hannah identified herself as a Black woman within the academy). One where she used her activism and her Black political positionality to navigate the academy from a position of strength whilst also encouraging and supporting fellow women of the Caribbean diaspora to enter into this academic space and demonstrate the strength of their presence and academic lens. This trait was not unique and was echoed by another Black female professor of Jamaican and Cuban nationality who was interviewed for this research study. She considered her participation in this research study as being necessary because she believed that “Us black women have to support each other” (Prof. Georgina). This support was something which Prof. Georgina had been able to amass from her family and two crucial years of

her life in Jamaica where she had the opportunity to understand herself outside of the western gaze of “othered” people. In the same fashion as Hannah, Prof. Georgina had been able to reclaim her first-sight (Dubois, 1903) having lived in the Caribbean and having seen her kinfolk in roles of power, respect and authority. She found pride and power in her “reclaimed” identity which she was steeped in when she spent time in Jamaica. She highlighted;

It’s crucial to say that spending two years in Jamaica, that changed my life” the fact that they are born in an environment where they are not in the minority, where everybody important is black, looks like them, the president, the prime minister, everyone, and I had that experience for two years whilst I was living in Jamaica, and I also had the positive encouragement from my grandmother when she was alive when she told me “ You know...the family is proud of me, that I could do anything that I wanted to!” So, when I came back to the UK I had a different attitude. I thought “Hold on, didn’t I say that I wanted to be a journalist when I was younger?” I’m gonna do that, oh and I’m going to university!” I probably wouldn’t have thought of that if I hadn’t spent two years living in Jamaica a feeling like I can be somebody.

Both Prof. Hannah and Prof. Georgina worked together on these initiatives to improve the experiences of women of color in the academy. Professor Georgina had explained that she had developed and was the founder of a Black Academic Forum, designed to support black women who were on their academic journey and trying to make entry into the academic realm. As much as her forum was designed to help Black women in particular, she had an open-door policy whereby women who identify with the ‘Black’ struggle -who were mainly non-white women - could find the camaraderie and community needed to develop in the academic space. Her main initiative alongside journalism and her own academic career, has been to foster a support network for Black women who may have experienced the “stranger” experience in the academy, (2012.p.3).

Professor Georgina. compared the network to the support that she had received from an atypical teacher in her school setting, who took a vested interest in education and clearly appeared to be sensitive to the “struggle” of the journey travelled on the road to navigating education, even at the early stages. Reminiscing about the value of support, Prof. Georgina commented,

Having somebody believe in you like that and push you... she made the difference in this environment in which black female students are so negatively constructed and treated. [...] It just took one person to make the difference. And similarly, when I went to London School of Communication, it took that one person to believe in me to invest, to support me and to encourage me to go on to become an academic.

Although Hannah, unlike Prof. Georgina, was not of African descent, politically within the British academic setting, she along with Prof. Georgina., embodied a position of Black Feminism, writing and sharing the experiences with her African Caribbean sisters who were also in the struggle to gain “acceptance” and in reality academic and therefore “life success” in their individual ways.

Wearing a grey beret and reflecting what looked like an 80’s European style, Hannah was relaxed to talk about her experiences as a professor in a candid manner. Having published several books and held esteemed positions, Hannah was no longer viewing the academy as a defining indicator for her life-success. She emphasized that the academy had facilitated a success of sorts. However, it was a lonely, trying and isolating experience. She commented;

I’m somebody who’s struggled to be there...you know...sustain it, you know...it’s a journey of quite hard work[...]I don’t wake up in the morning and say my life success is being defined by being a professor. And I know that many of my student, go well “H[...] you know, this is what we want [...] we want to have this trajectory that you have!” And I look at them and think “Really?”. It doesn’t necessarily make you happy.

The State of Struggle from Childhood

As a woman born in England, of biracial ethnicity - being Austrian and Trinidadian Indian - however brought up in Trinidad until the age of 17, Hannah returned to England in the 1960's. She was both surprised by the social deprivation of English society that she entered in comparison to the standard of living she was used to in Trinidad. Comparing her colonial home to England, Hannah soon realized that

Compared to the Caribbean, it was very poor. I remember being very shocked at how grey it was and cold, but how poor the people were because when you come from the Caribbean you think that white people and "white life" would be...life in England would be something grand. But we didn't have any heating.

Much like George Lamming's shared shock at the realities of English society, Hannah soon learned that even among the white people in England, there was poverty. For the Caribbean minded individual -which Hannah was at the time when she moved to the England,

"England was not for us a country of classes and conflicts of interests like the islands we had left." (xxxviii,1983).

Her expectation was that the country had a sense of grandeur and she would not readily witness the drudgery of social deprivation and the ignorance of people of insular people who rejected diversity.

Being one of only four "black girls" from the Caribbean at her school, Hannah recalls that her marginalization did not only come from educators who "had no expectations that [she] could go to university". She recalled that she had to exist within a very racist context whereby,

[T]he other girls in the school [...] would make monkey sounds to me and my friends. When we would walk down the corridors, they'd throw nuts at us, tell us to "go home!" They were members of the Nation Front which at that time was like UKIP but much more fascist and openly racist. So it was a very racist time. I thought of how backward England was.

For Hannah, these insults that were directed at her friends and herself did not impact her ability to maintain her first-sight (Dubois, 1903), and imagine herself in a position of strength for she was able to still maintain Caribbean first-sight. Hannah commented;

"I didn't have a concept of anything else but Trini"

Clearly, Hannah understood herself that went beyond her British nationality. Although it was not the type of first sight where she saw herself as an African, it was yet and still and an authentic Caribbean first-sight which allowed her to be able to recognize the lack of sophistication of the racist youngsters who were echoing the racist sentiments that were being propagated by white society in Britain that was hostile towards it Caribbean newcomers. For Hannah and her family, she understood her move to England was not merely for a better life, specifically due to what they considered to be the educational opportunities that would be available to her brother, their reasons for emigrating to England "was mainly educational on my family's behalf". Being a member of the second sex (De Beauvoir, 1952), her educational career was not considered to be the primary focus in her family and she recalls definitively that,

"They didn't plan an education for me".

Once Hannah entered school, she quickly had to learn that she would have to present a "sanitized" type of Blackness whereby she would have to disguise her Caribbean self and present and assume a British self. In essence, as a teenage girl moving into British society from the Caribbean, she was faced from having to scaled the first wall of the

‘double portcullis’ which faces women of color. As a colonized person in the society of her colonizers, Hannah had to be “constantly aware of [her] image, jealously protect [her] position, [...]. In the process, the colonized acquire a peculiar visceral intelligence dedicated to the survival of the body and spirit” (Homi. K. Bhababa, 2004, ix). This was an identity that she learned she would have to assume from the time she returned to England when she first entered school. Hannah recalled;

When I first went into the school the headmistress said to my mom “Well we can have Hannah in the school, but she’ll have to learn how to speak English!” I was speaking English, but with a very strong accent. So, over the years I learnt to speak this...as I am now, the Queen’s English.

Although Hannah had to adorn what could be considered to be a “white mask” she was fully aware that as Fanon had highlighted “speaking pidgin-nigger closes off the black [wo/]man; it perpetuates a state of conflict in which the white man injects the black [person] with extremely dangerous foreign bodies (Fanon,1952,p.23). Despite this, Hannah was very clear on who she was and her first-sight ontology which was of a Trinidadian woman who was merely learning how to navigate British society and she did this effectively to such an extent that she came to be ‘accepted’ within her high school becoming the Deputy Head Girl. Although this was a deputy position, it nevertheless highlighted how Hannah naturally embodied dual identities, her Caribbean identity and her “Black” British identity. Hannah added, “I’ve never felt conflicted about it.!” When outside of Trinidad, a highly racialized Caribbean island with its own racial categorization and structured as a highly colorist society by colonial design, she highlighted that although she may be categorized as Asian, whilst within Britain, within the professional space, in rejection of the colorist system of Trinidad, Hannah made a

point of defining herself as simply “Black”. As this suited her political ethic in the 1970’s and 1980’s whereby Blackness was defined as being beyond the African diaspora. Referring to Black feminist Patricia Hill Collins, Hannah highlighted how assimilation was a precursor to being accepted in British society. She had to learn to live “*up to acceptability*”.

“I mean Patricia Hill Collins thought...you have to assimilate in brackets. Assimilate in a way that doesn’t offend. You can be different, but not too different.”

Essentially, Professor Hannah highlighted her double-consciousness. Understanding both how she was positioned by the ‘oppressor’s lens’ and her understanding of herself as a Caribbean woman. As a result, she learned how to wear the “white mask” (Fanon, 1952) so that she could not only navigate British society but provide an impression that she accepted her postcoloniality without reservation.

Life Success

As part of Hannah’s political activism in the OWAAD (the Organization of Women of African and Asian Descent) she established this organization which sought for the authentic voices of women who challenged the official racial discourses to be heard and seen as more than “only mothers of sons and carers of husbands” (Mirza, 1997, p.8). This is also because Hannah, like her fellow Black sisters, occupied a space of being the marginalized other of the marginalized group within the institutional space whereby Black voices were typically ignored. However, through her work and that of her peers, she aimed at,

Challenging our conscious negation from discourse - what Gayatri Spivak calls ‘epistemic violence’[...] we as Black British women

invoke our agency; we speak of our difference, our uniqueness, our 'otherness' (Mirza,1997. p.4)

Having come from an island that had been under British rule when Hannah arrived in England, whereby to be part of the Indo-Caribbean community, placed her above the lowest echelons of Trinidad racially stratified society, being of lighter complexion and not having been descended from landless African slaves, but instead, being part of Trinidad's landed Indo-South Asian population, Hannah had to realign her identification with Blackness in a society that considered immigrants as being predominated by Blackness.

The Authentic Black English Person

Black Englishness is not an identity or concept that is readily used, claimed or coined as indicated by Black literature regarding Black people in Britain and confirmed by the statements of the interviewees of this study. However, the term 'Black British' which is more familiar due to its postcolonial use, appears to be the identity which is more readily used and accepted. As Palmer highlights "a definitive fracture [exists] between what it means to be Black and what it means to be European remains at the heart of European forms of domination and governance over non-White non-Western human beings" (2016, p.13). In the academic space, the term "Black" has stood to mean more than a color or Africana designation. Instead it has stood to mean, resistance, camaraderie of those who have been othered in British society (and beyond) and those who have been used to hold up British institutions. Those who have coined "Black" with being "British" appear to be neither reaffirming a Black person's claim to belonging, permanence or birthright to the

British Isles. This is because even during the postcolonial period, to be Black British did not mean that one who is Black necessarily had any rights or claim to permanence in Britain. It meant typically that one was a British subject, a legal identity that denoted historical control. However, for postcolonials, maintaining one's Caribbean identity, merging this with the British identity, and simply referring to oneself as "Black British" did not signal the surrendering of the Caribbean identity. As highlighted by Tracey Fisher who refers to the work of Kathleen Paul,

Whether born in Kingston, Ontario; Kingston, Jamaica; or Kingston-upon-Thames, one was a subject of the imperial Crown and shared universal British nationality. With this nationality came customary rights: all British subjects could freely enter the United Kingdom, vote for Parliament when resident there, and take up employment (p.27).

This may well be true, however, what this definition does not highlight, is that once one is born in Britain, one is entitled to more than simply being a "British subject". They are entitled to citizenship. Therefore, it should follow that they are accepted within the nation. Thereby providing them with nationality rights and claims to permanence in a respective Kingdom. This issue can be viewed as part of the postcolonial debate which was visited by the likes of Stuart Hall and David Held who interrogated notions of immigration and citizenship. However, once we go beyond the postcolonial phase, whereby Black people are legally born in Britain, it would appear that we have entered into a post-postcolonial phase whereby by birthright, one who is born in Britain is entitled to claim the nationality of the country of their birth as part of their identity including those who are not of European ethnicity.

Within the British space, the Black identity has taken on a Caribbean inflection whereby Black Britishness is viewed as being derived from Caribbean culture which

derived from the immigration of Caribbean people in the post war period of the 1950's and 60's. As much as for most Caribbean people, there is the understanding that some of the Caribbean became a space of African and later Asian immigrants predominantly. As a result, the Afro-Caribbean culture has become an authentic racial identity which provides Black people within Britain —whether they are of Caribbean heritage or not —with a locus to contextualize their placement within British society. It has provided an avenue to identify with the Black British experience with a Caribbean inflection.

Part of this development of the Caribbean inflection of Black Britishness has derived in part from the initiatives established by people such as Claudia Jones, a Trinidadian activist whose work reflected Black Marxism, but also highlighted that the Black Caribbean British woman in Britain occupies a position of what I call the marginalized other of the marginalized group. She worked tirelessly to affirm a Black British presence in the UK -having been ejected from the North American space, namely with the Caribbean Notting Hill Carnival, a direct response to the riots which rejected the Black presence in Britain. It may be argued that Claudia Jones's work was a success and Black Britishness, has been “accepted” as part of British culture. However, this is most definitely a postcolonial achievement of belonging and it begs the question, what is the next hurdle that has to be faced by postcolonials and their offspring and descendants who are in Britain, settled and consider Britain to be their home, do they remain Black British or do they become Black English?

The Postcolonial British Woman

Hannah spoke of having experiences within the academe as almost being natural. As an established professor, accomplished in her field, and the author of many well-respected books on critical Black Feminist Theory, and articles, she was able to provide a deep insight into of the marginalized group when interestingly although she embodied the sentiments of isolation of black women in society. With hair softly framing her features that are part European, part Asian (Trinidadian Indian with perhaps a hint of Africana ancestry due to this mixture), she speaks as a “black” woman and the black woman’s struggle. Rather than denying her marginality, owning the marginality prescribed to her by the rigidity of British society, Professor Hannah saw and believed herself to be a Trini, and using a clear Trinidadian cadence and vernacular, she shared “I feel myself as a Trini” a postcolonial identity whereby Trinidad’s culture and people are defined by predominantly African and South Indian cultures. Interestingly, she did not assign herself to a post-postcolonial identity whereby she would identify herself with the country of her birth, “England”. She commented,

I’m English but mainly Caribbean.... I've never felt conflict.

Hannah’s first-sight lens, is that of a African-Indian Caribbean woman. She considers herself to be a Trinidadian and even though she was born in England. The lens which she developed was based on her “ethnic” side and not her European side. Professor Hannah explained;

I think it's very different for people who are born here... I think because in the Caribbean, I kind of had a sense of who I was. I was comfortable with who I was when I came here, to England I remember thinking “why they throwing nuts at me?” I thought... it took me awhile for the penny to drop” having lived here for nearly 40 years, I understand that if you were brought up in this totally white world, and it's very very white with no reference to

the Caribbean and you've never gone back, I think it's harder with that level of self-esteem.

Interestingly, even though Hannah was born in the UK and did not move to the Caribbean until she was 3 years old returning when she was 17, she expressed herself as an authentic Caribbean person and highlighted a distinct difference between herself and others who were born in England. Her first sight ontology was to see herself as an educator and a “Black” Indo-Caribbean woman who had to advocate for her fellow Black sisters. She was able to share that having a different context in which to consider her placement in society, i.e. Trinidad, provided the opportunity for her to understand herself as a woman who did not have to be defined by the restrictions of England’s white society. She understood herself, her worth and life success to not be defined by England’s colonial definition of women or women of the colonies.

Black feminist theorists since the late 1970’s attempted to invoke what has been considered to be a subtle project to “invoke some measure of critical race/gender reflexivity into mainstream academic thinking” (Mirza, 1997, p.5). As part of this, acknowledging one’s placement within British society, beyond the postcolonial phase, appears to be a critical consideration if the “journey of becoming” is one that is likely to be realized. However, with people from South Asia (India), the Caribbean and Africa emigrating to Britain after the Second World War, there was a reintroduction of colonial Britishness into Britain which would be able to redefine what Britishness in England could look like. As highlighted by Lisa Palmer, that “Britishness is still understood and assembled as a distinctive and exclusionary classification of Whiteness” (2016, p.11). As a result, non-white Britishness, even when born in Britain, was received with trepidation and appeared to compound what was being presented as a “problem” to Great Britain in

the 1950's and 60's. Due to the hostility faced by British people who were othered due to them not being ethnically European or white as indicated by my interviewees, there is some hesitation when my interviewees are asked to identify themselves in relation to the British identity.

Hannah highlighted;

I don't feel that Britain is my home[...]when I'm here I believe that Trinidad is my home. When I go back to Trinidad then I realize that I don't, I don't belong there either, [...]that you're neither one nor the other.

However what Professor Hannah is able to highlight, is that she occupies a position which appears to be quite common for my interviewees, whereby they exercise a position of being the marginalized other of the marginalized group. It is a position which is not foreseen by the advocates of postcolonialism. In the case of Hannah, due to her rejection in British society due to being a woman of color, she is not considered to be authentically British (that being of the British Isles despite being born in England) her Caribbean culture and mixed European ethnicity, excludes her from feeling authentically part of the British Isles.

Professor Hannah explained that she had always spoken English, and although she was born in England, due to her Caribbean parentage, she considered her experiences meant that she had experienced what she called the "immigrant experience". She explained "We all have immigrant journeys don't we?" The journey Hannah shared was a journey not only of nationality, identity and ethnic categorization, it was also a journey of an English woman who was not born into wealth or a family accustomed to the academy. In essence, Hannah like many of my interviewees was able to share the story of an English born woman of color, who neither feels accepted by a society, work colleague,

the academy or understood by her family as she attempts to permeate society and its academic institutions successfully. Notably, the intersectionality of these various identity characteristics, highlights the implication of not only one's race and nationality on their experiences in society, but also one's class as denoted by one's academic achievements which positions these women on the margins of several communities. Although Kimberle Crenshaw (1990) writes in relation to the US, the experience of intersectionality whereby women who are in unique positions in relation to their race, gender and class, is highlighted here.

Your family and... and friends, like my old school friends, they do not understand what [I] do, my mum doesn't understand, they don't understand what [I] do because it is so removed from their life and even your most immediate family that do know what you do, but...I suppose you have to look for your rewards in many different places, not just one, not just your family not just your students, not just your friends, you have to have good relationships with them all.

For a woman whose mother was an Austrian and father an Indo-Trinidadian immigrant who arrived in England on the SS *Colombie* in the 1950's in the wake of Prime Minister Clement Attlee's Labour government's passing of the British Nationality Act in 1948 whereby "all British subjects were said to be entitled to equal treatment, and be able to enjoy the rights and privileges afforded to citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies," Hannah appeared to be using her position and profession to legitimately claim the Black identity as part of her activism, thereby giving voice to the exclusion of Blackness female voices within the British academic space.

As highlighted by Tracey Fisher, this Act confirmed that "Imperial subjects were to be formally equal but geographically separate" (Fisher, 2012, p.30). However, in the aftermath of the Second World War and the emigration of colonial subjects to Britain,

what manifested was geographical integration, however social separation in terms of housing, schools, professions and inequality, a factor which help to explain the small number of Black faculty in the UK. Being Black in Britain and representing Britain's colonies, was not greeted with welcome. Contrary to this, it was greeted with disdain, hostility and rejection towards what had been defined as a subset of "British" subjects who were considered to be encroaching on Britain and claiming their rights to citizenship and therefore permanence.

Due to Hannah's Caribbean upbringing, accent and dialect, she had been socialized as Caribbean. The "non-English persona" which she authentically embodied was categorized as "foreign", as not belonging, one that was seen to be "incorrect" within the space which she now called home, England. This was also seen as being "incorrect" within the academy, a sentiment which would also be highlighted as she navigated the academy later in life. As Mary C. Waters highlights in her book, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*, as in a context of political activism in response to rejectionism and racism towards Black people, Hannah identified herself as Black even though she was not of African ancestry. As she explained, identifying herself as Black was a statement of solidarity against coloniality which in an island like Trinidad, was used to create further disunity among various people of the African and South Asian diaspora.

"It's so hard because politically I identify as Black British".

Hannah explained that the "Black" identity in the seventies and eighties included the Asian identity, but it has become more fragmented despite the fact remaining that;

"As black women, we see from the sidelines, from our space of unlocation, the unfolding project of domination"

(Mirza, 1997, p.5).

With this in mind, Hannah highlighted;

“I would like I would like more consolidation because we so fragmented we can't get things done.”

Despite this move away from Blackness in the British space being an inclusive term over the last thirty years, Hannah's hopes for Blackness in Britain to be an inclusive term whereby women of color work together to navigate the academe no matter what level of the academe they are navigating, is realized through the work and interview of Prof. Georgina, who recognized that without collective efforts incorporated all different types of “Black” people, the academy, its curriculum and its reach would continue to be stagnated. This also reflects the sentiment of the academy and the professional experiences faced Hannah which appeared to make her look beyond the academy to measure her success. She highlighted;

Life success... for me...The most important thing... I guess... I mean Career Success is one thing but life success is another thing[...] I'm somebody who's struggled to be there... you know and sustain it, you know...it's a journey of quite hard work. But I don't wake up in the morning and say my life success is being defined is being a professor. And I know that many of my students, go well “Hannah ... you know, this is what we want, we want be like... we want to have this trajectory that you have”. And I look at them and think “really?” It doesn't necessarily make you happy...you know.

None of those categories can sum you up...so you know... cause I'm mixed race, Indo-Caribbean, Trinidadian British (chuckle) so all those things...

Q: But not English?

A: No no.[...] I mean I often do take black British [...]... black Caribbean. But I know that I'm not African Caribbean, and so in my extended family we have everything[...] as we do in the Caribbean, everything[...]everybody's mixed with something!

Hannah provided an insight into the “otherness” which is attached to women of color not only within the academic space, but also with Britain. Her activism and research her made her willing to ascribe to Black feminist identity politics. However, her interview revealed that she considered identity to be fluid. One that could be used, taken, put on and removed when necessary. As a woman of color who was able to find fluidity in her identification, she was able to navigate both British and North American academic society successfully using these identities.

The Struggle for Acceptance Profs. Candice and Chris,

For various professors, the struggle for acceptance in the work environment presents itself as having very different traits. As a minority within the work space and a postcolonial individual, Prof Chris, categorized herself as Caribbean. She did not use a hyphenated identity, nor did she consider that attributing her to a specific island was necessary in order to consider her position as a member of a minority population working in higher education. Having moved to the UK alone and as a youngster, she saw her move to England as an opportunity to “broaden her horizons”. However, although she left “home” and moved to the UK to become a nurse, she shared that she “wasn’t a nurse at heart” and instead she pursued ‘A’ levels before attending university. Prof. Chris shared that as part of the struggle that she recognized was that there appeared to be a large degree of what she considered to be ignorance by the host nation, which she commented “they didn’t know anything about their colonies” Prof. Christian’s assessment of English society.

It was mixed, ... some were welcoming... and the attitudes of some people were...I wouldn't say hostile... but ... very strange. I thought that it was strange that they didn't know anything about their colonies. They didn't know anything about their commonwealth. They assumed that all Black were African, and they would ask "What part of Jamaica is Africa?" They would ask some very strange questions, and I was surprised of the ignorance about me when I knew so much about them. I knew so much about their history and I knew so much about their language and their literature and then, you make these assumptions about white people when you are in the Caribbean, you thought that it would be reciprocal, but it wasn't.

What Prof. Chris was immediately able to highlight was that the visible difference of people such as herself, assigned her to a position of the 'other' whereby the host nation seemed unaware of both her and her fellow islanders claim to permanence within Britain proper. She understood herself through what she believed the 'white' lens.

I come from a background where education is always important, so I wasn't going out of my comfort zone, so going to A levels and university it was a natural sequence of events"
"There is not a question of slacking, everyone knew you had to do, you had to do what you had to do.

Prof. Christian spoke about her journey through education and recalled being rather surprised about the level of ignorance she encountered when meeting native English people. She shared that was surprised that she knew so much about them and they did not appear to know anything about Caribbean society.

My area of education is first degree is French and English and I did an MPhil and PhD. and French Caribbean literature, then I applied for a job teaching Caribbean literature in the only university that teaches Caribbean studies, the University of London, so I had to teach myself about Caribbean literature.

Prof. Chris, referred to herself as an Anglophone and focused on the language capacities and she remarked that her experiences in Martinique were very positive. I've always

loved the French language. I like English literature and I like the them I like the way literature can reflect history and culture. Prof. Christ commented that when she completed her first degree, she didn't have knowledge of being Caribbean and it was only after she was doing her doctorate that she started reading more widely and asking more questions.

Similar to Prof. Christ, Prof Candice also had spent in excess of twenty years living and teaching in the UK academy and despite having a British citizenship, as a native of Jamaica, she commented;

I think that I am a little different, I wasn't born here. I came here as an adult, I have been here for twenty years, in terms of being an immigrant, even though I have been here for twenty years I don't think that I would ever ever feel British passport even though I have British passport, I don't think that I would ever feel British or English!

Prof. Candice appeared to attribute this lack of connection to the national identity to being due to not being able to forge valuable friendship and being isolated away from a Caribbean community. However, it beckoned at a lack of acceptance for the diversity which she presented.

When I did my PhD, it was a very lonely experience, because I didn't have a community around me very challenging particularly emotionally for not having a real support network [...] I do not have network of people that are around, I found it very difficult to be honest.

Much like Prof. Hannah who had described her experiences once moving from Trinidad, Prof. Candice, similarly found her experience in England to be a lonely one, she appeared to indicate that British society materialized as different societies to different people. She commented;

Is there any one British society? I think that it's difficult to develop friendships" British society is presented as white society, but it is a very different kind of thing and I find it hard to navigate other sort of societies as well, because I find it hard to navigate African British society as well, for different reasons. In terms of Africans, 'cause most of Africans I have encountered are either Nigerian or Ghanaian, and we have quite different backgrounds [...]and for lack of a different term (I don't really want to use this term...) but it's different class backgrounds as well.

Society for Professors Tina and Ruth

Professor Tina and Ruth a Lecturer and PhD student, both shared in a distinct British identity of 'Northerners' coming from Yorkshire but yet and still, they both considered themselves to be Caribbean women and would not refer to themselves as Black English. Much like their fellow Caribbean educator -a professor born Jamaica, they could not consider themselves to be English, and preferred to quality that England has distinct regional identities and these two interviewees were able to demonstrate an insight into their regional English affiliation and how their blackness impacted both their abilities to navigate higher education institutions and provide them with life success.

Both Prof. Tina and Ruth, had a unique experience compared to my other interviewees as they were very much "Northerners". Ruth an aspiring Geographer professor studying for her PhD and teaching at a London university, was born in the city of Sheffield which is located in South Yorkshire along with her five siblings. Ruth, a PhD student from Northern England, who researched Cultural Industries as a means to overcome social exclusion, explained that although she did not consider herself to be an immigrant, she was well aware that within the British space she was considered to be an immigrant. Highlighting that her parents were "born in what was the British West Indies", Ruth was very keen to explain her claim to being authentically British due to the

postcolonial framing of African diasporic people who came to England after the Second World War; she commented;

Legally speaking my parents were and are British they are on the island of Jamaica...so when they traveled to the UK in 1958 after being invited by the UK government, they travelled on British Jamaican passports Commonwealth, so in their psychology they believed themselves to be British.

Similar to Hannah's explanation of her father's arrival in the same year, Ruth shared that there was the understanding that those who arrived in Britain, were presenting themselves to the colonial mother country not forever but what was presented as an opportunity for economic advancement[...]

I think my parents, when they arrived here the late 50s ...had some understanding of the racism here from others who had previously arrived here before them...um... but actually they ... they said in hindsight that they were completely unprepared for the experience they faced [...]it was not in their mind but they were thinking that we will be here for the rest of our lives but[...] and of course, they believed in the Education opportunities for their children would be available to them being here actually in England as opposed to in the colonies in the empire.

Ruth attributed her upbringing in Northern England with having provided her with an understanding of Britain as a whole as well as her placement in society.

I would say and I say this now, I think growing up in the north of England gave me a very good understanding of Britain as a whole as opposed to living here in London where I have done for most of my adult life. what I mean by that is I understand you know I think that being in London you can be lulled into this idea of ideal of multiculturalism. and that this is a multicultural... community and Society. and it is not. Britain is a monoculture... and it operates as a monoculture and I mean that it... it authenticates a monoculture through its institutions.

Ruth described what growing up in what has been presented as a multicultural city was for her. She explained that she grew up in a socially segregated city and although

outwardly, Britain presents an image of multiculturalism, when in reality as she commented,

“As a black woman or black British of Caribbean or Afro-Caribbean heritage, ...I mean we were just invisible.”

As Stuart Hall had highlighted, the visibility which is “allowed” after the efforts of activists such as Claudia Jones, Stuart Hall, and Paul Gilroy, highlighted that the presence of postcolonial Black people who were seen to have supported the empire had to be acknowledged in some fashion, allowing them to aspire for what would be in reality, the reaffirmation of their hyphenated positionality whereby national identity labels that were extended to Black people of the British colonies was also used to allow for the incorporation of Blackness within “the Union Jack”. Therefore, allowing Black people to self-identity as “Black British” thereby scaling the first gate of the national identity portcullis and remaining British - however at a distance as they were given the status of a British national; however, it was not nation specific (i.e. English, Scottish, Welsh). Therefore, this national identity can be seen as only the first gate of the nationality portcullis. Black people are not considered to be English nor encouraged to claim a nationality which has in essence been reserved for European ethnicities, thereby being represented by the King George’s Cross, the national flag of England.

Having attended a public comprehensive school that was deemed to be one of the worst comprehensive high school in England, Ruth did not feel as though she received the support or guidance to succeed in education. At the time when she graduated high school (1986) she approximated that

At that time only maybe fifteen to twenty percent of the adult population went into university, [...] most people didn't go[...] And

certainly coming from my background there was no expectation to go.

Ruth expressed that her experience in school was of a substandard and she attributed this to being due to two factors;

I think that because of the cohort, which was based on two components white working class...um...black Afro Caribbean and British Asian and British Pakistani predominantly. It was a working-class District at that north at that time, um there were no aspirations to go to university, it wasn't that students didn't go to university, it's just that they were the exception.

This can be thought of as the an example of how interviewees had to scale a “double portcullis” that not only represented nationality, i.e. British vis a vis English, but also the educational portcullis, ergo further education, and higher education whereby in order to experience social elevation (and be accepted into professions), they had to first scale at the very least two key factors, racial stereotypes and the class designation which was attached to immigrant communities and gender stereotypes. Ruth shared;

As black women... race is always the first issue... that we experience...um..and the gender issue is often with white women, you know. that's where the gender issue becomes an issue.

Although Ruth described her education establishments as being multiracial, she specifically highlighted that despite this, her classes were not multicultural and all of the teachers were white, except for one substitute Black teacher. She used this example to show the disparities that existed between people if not only various races, but also class designation.

Witnessing black people being able to scale the class ladder through professional development, could be categorized as being demonstrative of the various ways that

people of the African Caribbean diaspora were able to demonstrate what appeared to be “life success” Ruth recalls that she could

...[C]ount the amount of Black people that were on television when I was at school, there was Floella Benjamin the presenter on a children’s program; Moira Stewart who was a presenter on BBC news; Trevor McDonald on ITV, later on in my teens there was Lenny Henry.

And before returning to further education, she worked in journalism, which appears to be a common work area for interviewees in this project who were trying to reclaim their voice. She recalls;

Here I was at the BBC, I kind of ‘arrived’, everyone kept on telling me I’d ‘arrived’, And I’m like yeah but where? You know I looked around The Newsroom, I saw a lot of brown and black people in distress, all the people that got promoted were always white. Um ... I thought ok this is just how it is. um... I didn't see any way out and I saw talented that people literally walking out the door. um... this isn't this isn't.... there is no pathway here for me [...] Whatever the pathways are, I’m not the person they are looking for. whatever they're looking for it's not me.

Double Marginalization

Ruth emphasized how being a member of the ‘gentler sex’ was not extended to the Black woman. She was able to highlight that within the context of England, the woman of color is positioned outside of humanity, and if she is not being considered as subhuman, she is resented for her strong work ethic and considered to be ‘superhuman’, simple humanity is a standard which is not readily provided to the Black woman... Ruth commented;

As a black woman[...] and you're dealing with the two things simultaneously, um [...]as a black woman you're expected to be the strong black woman, you can basically deal with anything. So, the only women that suffer in this world are white women... the only ones that suffer... the only ones that are allowed to cry the

only ones who allowed to say” I can't do this”, if a black woman says “I can't do this”, it's like “I don't care quite frankly!” you know...so you Stop looking for the help because no one is offering it. No one's interested [...] I found support from other black women.

Ruth's perception of her treatment was not unique to her experience. Several women in the study described how they received little to know help when trying to navigate the higher echelons of society terrain. According to Ruth, she considered the difficulty of considering Black women as either English or British came down to racism;

Part of it is just, it's just racism. I mean sometimes we can intellectualize these things it's just racism you know. it's the assumptions of what one has of racism. There is an assumption about who we are as black people in Britain. There are very few positive that are highly visible... so those of us who rise above that and achieve things, I mean everybody knows about the absolute torrent of abuse that Diane Abbott and David Lammy get who are Black British members of Parliament here in the UK, that they suffer terrible social media abuse, which is far higher than their colleagues in Parliament. So, these things can filter through. People think “gosh! I don't want to put my head above the parapet!” but also as well, there's that still that ...that kind of understanding that people are not used to having black people in positions of authority in the UK. So soon as you start to get into what I call, the upper echelons, I've really noticed that doing this PhD, I really feel like I've gone up a level”
I've noticed everywhere I go I can have a little look around the room and I can count the black people, I feel like I'm back to that I feel like I'm back 20 years ago, where if I can get past counting 5 it's been a good day. Very rarely I get past the number 5. and when I say lack, I mean anything non-white European...including Asians!

Conclusion

The interviews focused on in this chapter were born in a context of hostility in Britain against the colonial other. The 1958 riots which derived from a Black Caribbean man supposedly talking to a white woman in a pub, triggered race riots whereby numerous

Black people were attacked by white people. From the case of Antiguan born Kelso Cochrane, who was fatally murdered in London for merely being present by a group of white youths, to these journeys of Black British born and Black English born women, not only did these stories provide discussion into life journeys navigating race in England, it was also a journey of social elevation, which much fit in within Stuart Hall's framework for diasporic development. It was the notion that rather than Black people in western spaces exercising a position of being, they were charged with operating in a space of becoming. Their identity which are "black identities can no longer be cultivated within the confines of these nationalist parameters.

This cultivation must now take place in a new space -a postnational one" (Henry, 2012, 217). The post-postnational British woman, who is exploring identity paths and define herself and exploring her ability to obtain life success, carves out a new and innovative identity characteristic which had not been envisioned by colonialists or even postcolonials. This is a "journey" as referred to by Hannah, which is navigated by all of my interviewees, whereby they have not only had to navigate the academy in order to become professional, they have grown up within a context which rejects and resents their mere presence and so they have struggled for acceptance in wider society and in different areas. For many of my interviewees, there challenges were not only due to their race, but also due to the class structure which exists in England.

As indicated by my interviewees, there appears to be a reluctance for interviewees to either claim themselves to have the nationality of the country of the birth (i.e. England) despite not hesitating to refer to themselves with various hyphenated terms of Blackness, there appears to be the preference to keep one's identity within the postcolonial,

Caribbean or Afro/Indo Caribbean phase, or within the confines of being simply “British”. Notably this does not designate a specific country affiliation. Interestingly, some of those who also have birthrights to England, (and therefore could identify themselves by their country of birth), appear to not consider that claiming an English nationality demonstrates of a position of resistance. Resistance towards the lack of acceptance of the Black person’s right to belong —and indeed claim, the nationality of a country which clearly wants to keep non-white bodies in a postcolonial phase. This idea of “keeping Black people out” of claiming nationality or permanence can be seen to reflect the attempt to similarly not welcome nor encourage the group that these same women represent, within the higher education establishments which indicates that perhaps one is at the precursor for realizing life success.

This begs the question, how does not successfully navigate a society and its institutions that treat certain individuals (Black individuals) as foreigners? One strategy would be to resist this rejection and claim the identity that you should be able to claim without ridicule, rejection or skepticism. As will be explored in Chapter 5, “*Englishness Redefined: The Stories Sharon and Tracey*” some of my interviewees, understood themselves to be English and despite societal resistance, they continued to scale the “double portcullis” to be identified as English, albeit Black English.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENGLISHNESS REDEFINED: THE STORIES OF DIASPORIC SISTERS OF

SHARON AND TRACEY

*“Everywhere we go! Everywhere we go!
People always ask us, people always ask us
Who we are, who we are!
And where we come from, and where we come from
And we tell them, and we tell them,
We’re from England, we’re from England
Mighty mighty England, mighty mighty England
And if you can’t hear us, and if you can’t hear us
You must be deaf! you must be deaf!”*

Introduction

From a young age, I grew up with some connection to a community that reflected my ethnic background, elders from the Caribbean, namely Grenada. However, it was a community that did not fully encompass my cultural understanding of myself, an English Black woman. We (my sisters and I) were brought up and referred to as “English” by both members of this group and our peers. Visiting Trinidad and Tobago when I was seven years old, the Caribbean islands of my parents’ upbringing, my sister and I were simply referred to as “English”. We were identified as English simply by the way and pace of our walk; the way we spoke were factors that made it undeniable that were “foreign” to the Caribbean space. However, our identity was multi-layered. We understood that more than being English, we also had a Caribbean layer which was derived from our African roots. It was a hyphenated identity of being Afro-Caribbean that provided us with our ‘first sight’ which made us in effect bi-cultural being both Afro-Caribbean and English.

England is a country which has many distinct dialects which not only denote what region one comes from, it is also thought to highlight one's class designation, educational attainment and standard of living. Everywhere we (my sister and I) went, people asked us if we were indeed Londoners as they listened in awe to our English accents, which to them, they were not reflective of Blackness and the working-class immigrant narrative. Neither was it reflective of the working-class accent typically attributed to Londoners. Instead, it may have been reflective of what would be typically identified as the 'Queen's English'. For our mother had been certain that despite having her having a Caribbean accent which would identify her as 'otherable' when applying for a job or opportunity, we were from England and therefore would speak the dialect that is referred to as the Queen's English, so that we would have a better chance of 'entry' into the higher echelons of society. It is a dialect not typically used by Black or working-class people who lived in urban areas of London whose dialect in part derives from the Cockney accent, which is a pidgin dialect of the working class and underclass' Londoner's accents. As emphasized by Frantz Fanon,

Speaking pidgin means imprisoning the Black man and perpetuating a conflictual situation where the white man infects the black man with extremely toxic foreign bodies. There is nothing more sensational than a black man speaking correctly, for he is appropriating the white world. (1952, p.19)

Therefore, speaking "pigeon" of any sort was not a choice for myself, my siblings or peers trying to permeate tertiary institutions, who also understood themselves to not be imprisoned by the wrath of a history interrupted by colonialism. As suggested by Fanon's quote, when the Black man—or in the case of my research population Black women—speaks "correctly", which could be attributed to a number of things including her

upbringing, her educational attainment and or her socialization, she is neither imprisoned by a Caribbean or cockney dialect of English, two dialects that could be used to marginalize her and categorize her as either immigrant or lower working class respectively. This should mean that she could be freed from her social bondage.

However, for the Black or ethnically African-Caribbean in the United Kingdom woman who has continually tried to negate her assigned social and professional imprisonment and uses higher education as a means to obtain life success, this raises the question of whether the individual is able to and has obtained life success having navigated the harsh terrain of tertiary education. It also raises the question of whether one who demonstrates this persona is authentic and is able to realize life success. Women who fit this category certainly stand to challenge notions of Englishness and this also raises the question of whether Englishness is being redefined by these women.

Four Factors of Navigation

When considering the experiences of Black diasporic women in England and the development of their identity, life success and experiences within the academy, there are four key factors to consider. As will be explored with my interviews here, it is important to consider a phase which I have called *The State of The Struggle from Childhood*. This phase can be considered as determining factors can be categorized as an external trigger to awaken double-consciousness (Dubois, 1903). This awakening happens at a relatively young age and as shared by my interviewees. It is an awareness of how one is seen as the 'other' which comes to the fore. This can be seen as a significant determinant of how these women navigate the academic terrain, even from a young age. These experiences of

struggle within the school setting —and the clear rejection of what these women are seen to represent, colonial Blackness, and what can therefore be considered to be the embodiment of *Sinews of Empire* (Michael Craton, 1974) — identifies them immediately as ‘not belonging’ to their surroundings. This can be thought to trigger the implementation of strategies of survival, including using educational establishments as a means to improve their achieved status in order to realize ‘life success’.

Gaining an understanding of responses to what is represented by Blackness in England, appears to signal an awareness of my interviewees’ first sight (Dubois, 1903). For some of my interviewees, their first sight, provides a sense of pride, one that is able to reconcile the negative stereotypes attached to Black people in England as being just that, stereotypes, a distraction superimposed by the oppressor, designed to disrupt their focus. Although they may not recognize or consciously consider that their drive to succeed, is indicative of their reclamation of their first sight, whereby these negative stereotypes are not applicable, are proved wholly inaccurate, this expression of determination and envisioning one’s own success despite “the struggle”, hint of the presents of various types of first sight as Dubois defined it. Whereby these women’s first sight allows them to envision themselves as professionals or being able to have careers that are thought to command social respect, impact and facilitate ‘life success’. This ability to have and indeed retain first-sight, thereby being able to see herself through her own eyes despite of all of the attempts to define her from the outside, is a second key consideration of “life success”.

In the case of Sharon, there is evidence to suggest that she has first sight, and she is the only one in her family, who refers to herself as being Black English. She has a unique

vision of herself. All of her family members are Black English, father and two brothers and at the same time she was determined to be a high school teacher which she believed

“When I left secondary school, it was either be a secretary or teacher, I did enjoy the sciences and maybe I could have!”

For Tracey, both her and her sisters viewed themselves as English. She shared her unique vision that as part of the English nationality, it was essential to become central to industries that influence. Being an educator, a journalist and barrister are clearly professions that are thought to provide influence. Therefore, ensuring that one has influence is a characteristic that appears to be at the core of the women I interviewed in their respective journeys to realize “life success”. Thirdly, using education as a strategy to upward mobility was central to the realization of life success. Sharon shared that along with her family members, she had a strong commitment to education. Both her elder brother and cousin Ellen were very important role models for her.

Fourthly, the power of educational performance and performative excellence as a means to challenge racist stereotypes, is a factor which appears to be prevalent in the experiences of the interviewees. This is a collective struggle of racism in Britain which was challenged by such academics like Claudia Jones, Hazel Carby, CLR James, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, that not only helped to set the stage of the contextualization of Black people in Britain. It made it undeniable that Black people could be seen as a part of the creative arm of modern Britain. In 1996, Stuart Hall wrote “Now cultural strategies that can make a difference, that’s what I’m interested in - those that can make a difference and can shift the dispositions of power” (p.468). It is important to note that the struggle was able to force White Britain to acknowledge the creativity the culture, the humanities of immigrants from the Africa, Black people undoubtedly enriched life in Britain. In

doing so, this set the context where immigrants in Britain could be viewed and not merely “taking” from Britain or being “Sinews of Empire” or a sign that “Empire Striking Back”, instead these theorists positioned Black people in Britain as being able to offer enrichment to Britain, therefore demonstrating humanity and the rehumanization of Black people who had been marginalized and not afforded their humanity and belonging.

Therefore theorizing, and education becomes a very important factor as this can force the recognition of a Black racial category that is authentic in Britain that has been ‘othered’ and suffered being considered stereotypes. This portrayal of Blacks in Britain challenged the stereotype of the negro and the immigrant. The performative element and Stuart Hall had mobilized this. However, changing notions of authenticity for Black people within Britain, not only about convincing white people that Black people can be authentically from and of England, it is a matter of Black people considering themselves as having an authentic claim to the nationalities of Britain.

The Portcullis - State of The Struggle from Childhood

A colonized person must constantly be aware of his image, jealously protect his position, Fanon said to Sartre. The defenses of the colonized are tuned like anxious antennae waiting to pick up the hostile signals of a racially divided world. In the process, the colonized acquire a peculiar visceral intelligence dedicated to the survival of the body and spirit.
(Bhabha, 2004)

As a child, I was always enthralled by medieval British history and the rigidity that existed between different classes, particularly those who were considered to be classless. Medieval English History was a period that distinguished people by class more than race, as interactions with races, was yet to occur in large numbers. However, as a child,

Medieval history always represented to me, society that established structure, rigidity and barriers of who did or did not belong to certain environments. It also reinforced a sentiment of who could and could not be allowed entry into certain sectors of society. As a Black child, I recognized that my ethnicity was not represented in this society, and rather than considering our positioning as being on the lowest position of the social hierarchy, I considered my ethnicity to be beyond what I considered to be this nonsensical structure of fake grandeur where “whiteness” was presented as superior to “blackness”.

The English Context

Long before the arrival of diasporic people to the UK, England contained a diverse population. However, this diversity was different from the racial categories that we consider as demonstrating diversity in today’s world. Instead, it comprised of diverse white populations within England who were defined regionally, and they had their own rivalries and unique qualities. Defining Englishness has always meant considering various regional attributes and various Celtic ethnic roots. As distinctive as skin tone, dialects in England have not only been used to denote regional affiliation, they have been used as a marker of class and creed. Whether an English person is considered to be a *Brommy*, (from Birmingham), a *Jordie*, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, *Cockney* from London, Cornish from Cornwall, or a *Scouser* from Liverpool among others, these regional ethnic groups have fulfilled the various definitions of Englishness. However most notably, despite there clearly being diversity in the types of Englishness which exist, each of them having very distinct attributes, yet and still they have all been

afforded their claim to authentic Englishness. Ultimately, those who have been considered to be authentically English, have had to satisfy expectations for what Englishness has been. This can be seen as being due to their Whiteness which “allows” for diversity of class and cast within the nationality but is less accommodating when it comes to those of non-Celtic and non-white roots being allowed to claim permanence in Britain.

Notably, the term English appears to be not only a noun but it is also used as an adjective. Therefore, the notion of being authentically English is challenged when one does not “look” English ergo white the notion of one being authentically English can and is typically be challenged. Others who may be born in England or “look” more likely to be ‘English’, (who may be ethnically European) do not have to contend with being in a perpetual position of the outsider.

Despite regional differences, Englishness has been considered to represent homogeneity, whereby whiteness has been used as an in-group prerequisite for belonging. As a result, the notion of the white population in England representing diversity has by and large, been muted despite dialects which highlight regional differences, and it is certainly does not compare to the diversity that immigrants of color who came to the aid of the colonial ‘mother country’ after World War II for example. As a result of this, diversity in the UK was redefined dichotomously, whereby racial categories reinforced the notion of there being separation of people based on those who are thought to belong to England versus those who do not, or more simply stated, those who are white and non-white in England of which my interviewees fit into the latter category.

With educated Black British people who have been born in England who also have regional accents and dialects and yet they maintain and acknowledge the value of their diasporic identity –an identity which is intimately and authentically linked with British society due to historical interruptions of Black diasporic people – having to contend with issues of authenticity within what has been established as a “white” space (including higher education institutions in Britain), not only reflects the struggle faced outside of the work environment where “blackness” is deemed foreign, as seen with my interviewees, this can be considered to trigger a reexamination of one’s placement, authenticity and identity within these spaces. Further having a direct bearing of one’s experiences within the professional environment.

The Authentic Black English person

Authentic Black Englishness is a concept which is yet to be truly understood. One such example of this was highlighted outside of the English space where American prosecutor in the *The People vs. OJ Simpson* case, in her role as a director being interviewed by a *Nightline* journalist in March 2019, referred to Black English actor Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje by saying “[A]lthough he is African American, he is British”. Although this prosecutor can be considered to be well informed, a learned professional in the American space, what her response and categorization of her English non-white actor, is that despite acknowledging that there is a difference represented by this actor compared with African-American actors, it highlights a colonial understanding of Blackness whereby within the American space, Black people are afforded the identity of African American, but for Black people of England, they are yet to be afforded the use of a coined identity of either African English or Black English.

Although this may highlight an individual case, it is important to consider that the consideration of the Black identity may be seen as one example, it provides an insight into considerations of Black people and their categorization not only within the British space but beyond it as, diasporic people born within the English space, are yet to be defined as an authentic ethnic group in England, nor are they considered to be authentically English. Instead, it appears that the Black English identity is still in its formation. Whether one considers it in a similar fashion to James Walvin, who considered Black and White interactions in England in the nineteenth century where he highlighted the differences of the development and acceptance of African diasporic people in Europe vis-a-vis North America as permanent and legitimate members of European space, it can be deduced that understandings of Blackness being authentic within the English space have remain underdeveloped.

The *Brown vs. Board of Education* case in the US, highlighted the marginalization of Black people within education and their exclusion within the US, and although the *Somerset* case in England highlighted the exclusion and marginalization of Black people in England and considered whether they were to be permanently confined to social exclusion, whether as a slave or othered in a society that had not envisioned Blackness as operating in an unconfined position. This can be seen to demonstrate that Black integration in society and institutions that enable social elevation, namely access to education in England compared to the situation of the United States has been markedly different and it is a critical issue of consideration when assessing the progress of people of color marginalized within the society which they call home.

Theoretical Development

In the post war period, Stuart Hall was a driving force and intellectual figure, who was able to legitimize Black people as diasporic and authentic within Western spaces. Figures such as Sir Learie Constantine, a grandson of slaves, who would become a master cricketer who had been born into modest means in colonial Trinidad, was able to use British society and the establishment to only to dispel myths about the intellectual insight of diasporic people, he was able to elevate his social class and carve a path for authentic Britishness due to his ability to bridge several worlds, “colonial and metropolitan, local and national, working class and middle class, black and white”(Jeffrey Hill, 2018, p. 2,). He was able to demonstrate, that through integration in society whether this is in various professional occupations, or sports, diasporic people can become authentic. However, the framework which he navigated, although it can be seen as having provided a niche for what one might consider to be “pseudo acceptance” of Blackness within England, it has remained a diasporic framework which has not progressed with time. It maintains a permanent space of “othering” in England of people considered to be diasporic and therefore non-white people. As a result, the development of diasporic people has become stagnated within the British space and confined to its colonial British identity.

Black British and Black English identity

Being British for non-white people, has meant being a part of what had been the esteemed British Empire. It is a term, which many people of colonial territories have been proud to be associated with and within Britain, it is a term which has been used interchangeably with being English for those who are born in England. However, for Black people born in the UK, the vast majority of them being born in England,

identifying as a British Black person compared to an English Black or Black English person is more than merely being British as was shared by some of my interviewees. Due to the connotations attached to the categorization of Black people from the African diaspora and notion of Black people as being reminders of the British Empire, the categorization of one being British, has the ability to suspend the development of Black people in England to being continuously in a postcolonial stage.

In effect, Black British people born in the UK, who do not freely claim the country of their birth as their nationality, (for example English if you are born in England), and instead resort to identifying only with the country of the parents, appear to be in a position of suspension and arrested cultural development.

Black English: The Marginalized Other of the Marginalized Group.

Being Black and British and using these categories to identify oneself, within the British context, is by its very nature an acknowledgement of not belonging to the country of one's birth and one of the countries of the British Isles. As Britain comprises of four countries as discussed previously, Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland and therefore, by using the term British and not identifying with the specific region of one's birth, it appears to denote a degree of acceptance of an in status of being an outsider. Reminiscent of the British empire and its influence in foreign lands —and indeed upon foreign people— claiming only the British identity when one has been born in the British Isles, hints at what can be considered to be a bygone era. It was an era where Britain claimed foreign territory (and people) for its own purposes, not to the benefit the people who would be given the opportunity to claim a hyphenated British identity from areas far

and wide across the world the ergo the British Caribbean, The British Virgin Islands and so forth. Interestingly, hyphenated British identities denote ‘otherness’ thereby distinguishing ‘foreign’ Britishness from native, or British born people of the British Isles who are referred to by the country of their birth, ergo Scottish, Welsh Irish or English, thereby ensuring that the outsider-insider position of Black people in Britain is maintained for perpetuity as once you are recognized as Black and assigned the identity of British, you do not necessarily have claim nor permanence to life in Britain (as has been seen with the treatment of some of the Windrush generation who have been deported from Britain). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that, the sentiments of this era have formed the undercurrent of racism, marginalization and othering of Black people in Britain which provides what can be considered an unjust society which hinders the ability for both Black men and women alike to realize “life success.”

Double Marginalization II

Being a Black woman in England, who is born in England, automatically positions one in a unique position. You are both considered to be a member of a second sex (De Beauvoir, 1949) and a marginalized racial group due to one’s Blackness. However, as non-Anglos in a white society with the ambition to permeate into the professional world and the academe, you are considered to be by some to be trying to assimilate by adorning a white mask (Fanon, 1952). For, entering into high status professions like the academe or law, presents not merely the aspiration of these Black women to become educated. Further, it can be considered to suggest that these women were ready and prepared to go beyond the social confines which are attached to the notion of ‘immigrant’. This double

marginalization occurs in spaces where one has to overcome being associated with the negative connotations attached to Blackness which is neither deemed authentic within certain careers. Claiming an English identity for those not considered to authentically belong to the country of their birth/upbringing (Britain/England), or not being considered to authentically belong to the postcolonial nations of their parents/fore parents, clearly has implications for these post-postcolonials who are not being considered as authentically British.

From the hard sciences, the social sciences, liberal arts to legal studies, women who have identified as Black in the academic setting have been categorized as one and the same. They are thought of and indeed treated as though they are the ‘Sharon’ and ‘Tracey’ of the Black group. Ergo “ordinary” Black folk who have no distinguishable attributes, academic, professional or otherwise, which in a society which increasingly values professional women and recognizes their success and yet negates the experiences of women of color, is clearly unjust and inhibits the realization of ‘life success’.

What appears to be revealed by the interviewees of the research project is that within the academic setting, Black women of various fields are considered to merely represent and be used to satisfy arguments against the notion that the academy does not include Black women. Thereby fulfilling and satisfying the equity and diversity quotas, whilst still hampering these women’s ability to thrive within the academic environment.

Journey of Redefinition

Stuart Hall provided the language for Black people in the Western traditional phase, thereby emphasizing the richness, diasporic people presented themselves as having

something to offer to British society. Not merely from the colonies but once Black people we were not only giving labor, but enriching British life through culture, thereby amalgamating British culture with Caribbean culture and the culture of blackness was redefined. Stuart Hall's work on diaspora and the legitimacy of African diasporic people, has carved space for recognizing Black people in what are considered as "non-black" spaces such as England and most importantly, as Black people being authentic within the said place. By claiming this, this group of people who have been historically displaced as diasporic, Stuart Hall's work was able to be a valiant and crucial step towards the "rehumanization" of Black people whose ancestors have been impacted by colonialism. Away from the false and negative stereotypes attached to slave bodies and therefore attached to "Blackness" since the colonial period. As much as this can be seen as a strategy of resistance established by Stuart Hall, it signals much more and it should not be seen as final conclusion in the evolution of Black "diasporic" people". In a sense, as Jefferey Hall has been able to highlight, Learie Constantine assumed a position which signaled the extent that a Black person could be considered to be accepted into English society.

His is a story of acceptance and assimilation: of the immigrant behaving as 'good guest'. It was a story he projected as a model for all immigrants, though whether the vast majority of them accepted the model is another matter. Constantine had undoubtedly 'got on'. Even now, in the twenty-first century, when black men and women have achieved eminence in many fields – politics, the arts, sport, business – people can still admire Constantine as a initiator of such advancement. (Hall, 2018, p.164)

This was a role that accepted that positioned the Black British (colonial subject) within the English context as a temporary visitor. 'A guest' as Hall has highlighted, whereby colonial sons and daughters represented the African diaspora, but their historic

socialization (colonialism) made Black diasporic people in the British West Indies ascribe to the values of authentic Englishness, whilst not taking away from the benefits of an African diasporic and Caribbean lens. In effect this dual lens enabled a ‘double consciousness’ (Dubois, 1903) whereby this Black English population could understand themselves as English and yet diasporic which has made the interviews “Sharon” and “Tracey” valuable.

Tracey Fisher in her book *What’s Left of Blackness*, chronicles the collapse of “blackness” where support was once provided, so the black individual is much more on their own. They might find themselves being “undercut” due to the fracturing of the anti-white supremacist movement. Fisher was not theorizing about a progressive stage, her text highlights that the blackness that has been established was changing form so it was the individuals who were faced with struggling on with less social support. Today, it’s even more individualistic. The broader collective sources of support have weakened considerably and the skills and the determination have become much more important than moving forward. I think that that moving forward. This has to be seen as a history of resistance. All along people are trying to respond to this form of white privilege.

Sharon and Tracey - “Birds of a feather flock together”

In the following section, I focus on two interviewees who are of Caribbean diasporic parentage, consider and share their insights of this very dilemma, being a part of society, higher education and the work space in an unconfined position. The old English epithet, “birds of a feather flock together”, is a proverb used to explain the “normalcy” or ordinariness of British people and their social groups. However, being Black, English and

professional is not seen as part of the norm in England, and it is not certainly not currently seen as ordinary. However, with growing numbers of English Black women being able to share their English lens –particularly when navigating education institutions as women of the African diaspora –these women occupy a unique position of being a small (but growing) social group whose experiences of professional and institutional marginalization is seen as simply being the norm in British society. The hyper-visibility of their ethnicity within their various tertiary education settings and professional settings deems them ‘invisible’ irrespective of class, region and profession as suggested by their similar testimonies and life experiences share.

Sharon and Tracey, which are the names which I have chosen to refer to the interviewees discussed in this chapter, are the names of the two main character’s in one of England’s long running sitcoms, *Birds of Feather*. The names, ‘Sharon’ and ‘Tracey’ are considered to be common names in England and also, they are considered to be what can be thought of as ‘typical’ English working-class women in Britain, (albeit typical White women) who are not merely grouped together due to their gender, they are grouped together due to their historical class designation. In the case of Black English women who have engaged in tertiary education, or are professional within the academy, what my research has revealed is that despite coming from various backgrounds and identifying with the African diaspora, within the academic space, whether at the undergraduate, graduate or professional level, African women within this space, their class designation, family upbringing —and therefore their social class assignment as defined by their educational attainment —appears to be a factor which is overlooked and deemed secondary to the class designation which is dictated by their ethnic and or their

historical immigrant status. . These women, whether academic or in other professions which require professional training –although different in their vision, insight, desire and career –are treated as being “all the same”. are treated as being “all the same”.

Whilst reared within English society and these Black women of Caribbean background, born in England, whether they are inclined to describe themselves as such or not, are considered as being part of the immigrant community due to their parentage who have come from the African diaspora, namely the Caribbean. Dr. Georgina, an academic researcher and journalist, born of a Jamaican mother and Panamanian father, was certain to affirm that

“I don't consider myself to have an immigrant experience since I was born here, so as far as I'm concerned, I'm living in my own country.”

Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the experience of women born in England to postcolonial parents is an authentic national identity, albeit a post postcolonial identity that is yet to be nationally recognized or indeed accepted.

The two professional Black English women of focus for this chapter have navigated tertiary education before becoming professionals, therefore defying expectations of that is often given to the uneducated immigrant, have had unique experiences whilst navigating the higher education terrain. These women identify as English, albeit, Black English women. As a result of this identification, which is clear that this claim to being authentically a part of English society, (and therefore hints of a permanent social group in England) poses obstacles which my interviewees shared as they navigated and struggled with scaling what I have termed as the societal “double portcullis”. This is the notion that much like the fortresses that were erected around medieval palaces, society, and in

particular, academic and professional society, poses several “barriers” that have been put in place to perturb and hinder the entry of these types of women who can be viewed as deriving from an immigrant diaspora background. The implication of this is what appears to be institutional attempts to prevent them from being able to permeate academic institutions both as students and professionally and realize true ‘life success’.

One of these barriers is that these women not only have to overcome other people's notions of Caribbean Black Britishness, they are also obliged with navigating and establishing the notion of authentic Black Englishness as part of navigating British society. This is particularly relevant to my experience as a British Black person who has always understood myself to be English, given that I was born in England.

Sharon - Racial Dynamics in the UK

Sharon, a warm, aimable middle aged woman, adorning a fresh natural hairstyle, freely demonstrated effortless beauty. Her curly brown hair was worn in a natural updo and matched her relaxed temperament. It accentuated her facial dimensions and she presented her appreciation for her Afrocentric self. She calmly and humbly positioned herself to take part in my interview and freely began a friendly conversation about life in England as a Black English woman.

As one of three siblings who were first generation Black offspring born of British Caribbean parents of the ‘Windrush’ era, Sharon expressed that being British was natural, and further, being English was instinctual as a native born woman. It was not a culture that she had to learn or assimilate to as it was already deeply ingrained into her mindset by her British Caribbean parents’ psyche that had instilled values of hard work

and professionalism. Therefore, having a strong work ethic which coincided with British values of and the desire for social elevation was instinctual. As one of two out of her siblings who worked within education and navigated the academy, Sharon shared that studying and achieving a profession or life skills was key to what she understood as the Caribbean work ethic, and this remained at the center of her understanding of herself. It was the expectation of her parents that both her and her brothers would reflect their British upbringing and “do well” academically. As Sharon shared what it meant to “do well” however for Black people in the 1970’s as a means to achieve social elevation, was limited and education was seen as the method to achieve. Education appeared to beat the center of her understanding of life success. Both of her brothers had also worked hard, one as an educator (school principal), the other a successful self-employed builder.

Both Sharon and her siblings reflected English authenticity. However, her brothers identified as Black British and Sharon’s identity claim was unique. One of her brothers who worked in construction, shared the identity typically seen in this area of work and was an authentic ‘Cockney’, and her Principle brother, like herself expressed himself in a standard middle-class fashion. Both of her siblings have succeeded beyond social expectations. Her brother who works in construction despite having a strong Cockney accent, still has a strong work ethic which defies the Black lower working-class stereotypes.

Born and brought up in London, Sharon considered herself to be nothing beyond the norm. She expressed herself in a Londoner’s tone, however it was not a cockney. However, she considered herself to be “ordinary” and questioned whether her insight into life and the academy was even providing valuable insight. Sharon did not interact in a

threatening manner and she clearly aimed to be cooperative. She operated in good faith and she is somebody who works hard, taking herself seriously.

The values of her parents clearly were that the road to life success was education. Sharon appeared accustomed to sharing her time and happily engaged with me in her interview and she spoke to me with a sense of camaraderie. She shared experiences as Black English women, her love and appreciation for the Caribbean. Every summer, Sharon visited Antigua which she treated as a second home, where she infiltrated the society as far as possible with her aunt who also engaged in community initiatives when she would visit Antigua.

Being a part of British society, an influential teacher and teacher trainer and growing up English, as expected, Sharon's identity had clearly been shaped by her experiences of being authentically English. Although Sharon stated that

“I don't think that I have had many racial experiences to say about and I don't know if it's because I haven't put myself out there.”

she appeared to understate her experiences as simply being a normal part of life in England. However, once probed she provided an interesting insight. Socialized to view English society in through a binary lens of “Black” and “White”, Sharon still considered British society to represent mixed racial categories. Although Sharon was aware and fully acknowledge her African diasporic roots, she considered herself to be authentically English and spoke freely about British society through what can be categorized as a Eurocentric lens. She stated;

I have to be honest as well in that a lot of my friends that I went to school with....um...I don't know, I also thought that a lot of them were Jamaicans, I didn't even realize that they were Bajan, Guyanese, Jamaican, initially on meeting them you just assume

that the other Black people were Jamaicans and us little Antiguan, we're now realizing not everybody is Jamaican.

This narrative is one that is very familiar in British society which has tended to homogenize all immigrants as being “Jamaicans” or immigrants, is one that was included in Sharon assessment of English society. Although racialized as Jamaican herself, she too considered other visible immigrant people in Britain, who may also have been Black English, to be “Jamaican”. Despite this, the juxtaposition of Sharon’s English characteristics appeared to some to be inauthentic.

They thought that I was too English because they thought that I spoke well. They just thought that ... I don't know, they thought that I was posh!”

Sharon expressed freely that by presenting what she considered to be her authentic self, she was seen to not be authentic. As her opening quote demonstrates, “speaking well” having a command of English, which cannot be deemed as creolized or indeed “broken” was not received positively by her work colleagues. Instead, it was deemed to be inauthentic and a signal that one had exceeded the expectations of their social status. Coming from Hornsey and living in Tottenham an area which experienced “white” flight around the time her family moved into the area in the 1980’s, Sharon described it as being a “mixed area” where she felt at home and was willing to ignore much of the racism of the area. Having a brother who would become a Principle of a high school, an uncle that would be a professor, working in education and using higher education to improve herself from the social status of immigrant afforded to her parent’s generation (postcolonials) who arrived in the UK in the 1960’s, was not extraordinary it was the norm.

For women like Sharon and those who are also first generation born in England from postcolonial parents), I have referred to them as being post-postcolonial sons and daughters of the British Empire, claiming their rightful place of permanence in England, her institutions and professions- was a fatiguing exercise as her interview revealed. It was one where she was told what her identity should be and that she presented something that appeared to contradict notions of what she should be like based on her ethnicity and Caribbean background. In response, Sharon

We need to say that we are English rather than keep labelling ourselves as Black British because when are they ever gonna think that there are Black English people?"

For Sharon, vocalizing her identity as English, has always been important for her. As an experienced educator from Hornsey in London of Caribbean heritage (in particular of Antiguan parentage), Sharon was able to provide a candid insight into the hurdles that being an English Black person of Caribbean heritage faces. In essence, what Sharon had been able to share was the normalization of hostility experienced by Black people in Britain —whether they were fully assimilated to the culture or not, and whether they considered themselves to be authentic members of the society, i.e. English or not. Concerningly, despite providing information which referenced her marginalization and the discrimination which she has suffered due to being a Black woman in England of immigrant parents, Sharon did not present her marginalization and barriers to her professional growth as being a ‘problem’ per se. Instead, she seemed to accept and expect that she would continue to be treated as a marginalized member of society. Using Dubois’ concept of first sight to analyze Sharon’s lens of herself and her position within English society, it became apparent that despite asserting her identity as a Black

English woman, which is both evident without explanation due to her appearance dialect and accent, she was generally not comfortable vocalizing that she either considered herself to be Black or English first. Contrary to the notion of Blackness in British society which has tended to suggest to people of color within the British Isles that they are immigrants, she did not consider her African diasporic identity, (which is typically termed as simply “Black”) as being an identity which designated to an immigrant status. Nor did she consider her Blackness as being mutually exclusive when considered alongside her English identity. For Sharon, it was feasible for someone to be both Black and authentically English. However, as the interview continued, it became apparent that although Sharon believed, like her white counterparts born in the UK, that she too should be able to be considered as being authentically English.

Despite this, Sharon spoke about many of her interactions with others through what one might consider to be the majority or dominant “white” English lens. One that suggested that during the colonial period that there had been the colonization of Black land, countries and nations, there had also been the colonization of black minds which would permeate generations.

In essence, Black people born in England who have an awareness, appreciation and understanding their postcolonial Caribbean heritage, merely have an appreciation for their heritage may still consider and view their placement in England and British society through the “white” English lens, which can be viewed as the lens of their socialization and upbringing. Sharon expressed how English Blackness is responded to within the English context. She recalled;

“When you meet people and you say that you are English and you were born here, they say where are you really from?”

Fatigued by the constant challenge to her identity, Sharon believed that she should not have to continually claim but one that should have been accepted. However, after being worn down her stance on claiming her English identity outwardly started to show signs of shifting. Out of this feeling of exclusion and rejection, Sharon shared her acceptance of a new identity. It was one which freely claimed an affinity with her parents' Caribbean island, although she acknowledges her parent's identity as Afro-Caribbean, she identified herself as English and in what can be considered to be an attempt to navigate the hostile space of having to justify one's identity, she shared that her and her spouse, decided to take a different approach.

“Recently we would say that we're Antiguan, I think Black people will say what their family heritage is when they meet people.... they would say where their family's from.”

Interestingly, although Sharon did not describe herself in this manner and she openly acknowledged herself as a Black person, she provided a generalized assessment of how “Black people” in England referred to themselves. Without overtly stating it, Sharon highlighted that there is a degree of resistance that faces women like herself –Black women born in England and define themselves by their nationality. This suggests that much like Ralph Ellison's reminder of William Faulkner's assertion

“[W]hat is commonly assumed to be past history is actually as much a part of the living present”
(1995, p.xvi)”.

Being marginalized, excluded, othered is not remedied by extending the term ‘Black British’ to those born within the United Kingdom, as this categorization does not denote belonging of Black British people in the UK. As Landeg White recognized in his assessment of fellow Caribbean British Trinidadian writer V.S. Naipaul, Sharon is living

“With a foot in two worlds” (1975, p.43), contending with demonstrating that both her African- Caribbean and English culture are authentically part of who she is, something that Mr. Naipaul in White’s opinion found to be impossible to reconcile.

Notably, Sharon distinguished herself from these “other” Black people in England. In essence, this can be viewed as indicating, is that within the English culture, for Black people in Britain (or post-post colonials) there exists what I would term as the fracturing of this group, whereby various Black people in Britain, can be divided into various groups depending on whether they view (and indeed accept) their Britishness as being confined to the post-colonial definition of Britishness, ergo British Caribbean whereby Black people who are born in England, do not consider themselves as being authentically members of the nation of their birth or of the British Isles, (a consideration which is explored and discussed in regard to the interviewees of the following chapter). The implication of this opens the discussion into whether one is eligible to claim the nationality of a UK country in which they were born instead of having to align themselves with the historical territories of their Caribbean heritage (i.e. Jamaican, Barbadian, Trinidadian) and in doing this raises the question of whether they are opting to align themselves with an immigrant and perpetual postcolonial narrative that has been established and assigned by colonizing nations who have recruited post-colonials in the aftermath of the Second World War as books like Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* has highlighted as discussed in previous chapters.

Before Tertiary Education - The Struggle

Elementary school for Sharon was an exposure to various cultures including the culture of her two best friends that were of east Asian descent and culture. She believed

them to be of Indian or Pakistani background. Although Sharon considered her schools to be “mixed”, and as she stated multicultural, interestingly, she spoke of her school in bi-racial terms being based on two ethnicities, White and Black. It was a traumatic experience where she recalls being beaten up for being “too English”. Sharon recalls her time in a predominantly ethnically Black secondary School in Tottenham being not too dissimilar from experience as an educator due to her unexpected “Englishness”. “I spoke well...so it was difficult mixing there...they just thought that I was ... posh!” What becomes apparent, is that one’s ability to elevate social class for first generation Black English people was feasible through tertiary education, however it was not considered to be an expectation by educators and colleagues. With class elevation and higher-class socialization, one’s vernacular and dialect may have been impacted by this. However, this was another factor that was not considered to be authentic due to one also having a Black identity which denoted an ‘othered’ status which kept this group of people in Britain in a perpetual marginalized state.

Sharon describes her primary racial school experiences “There was a mixed bunch in our class, whites and black alike”. In her secondary school she explains how she started to experience the uniqueness of her identity. An identity where she authentically demonstrated her “Englishness” which was however received with contempt by other Black students in the Tottenham school –a predominantly “Black” school. Sharon described herself as being “an outsider” in this school and recalls being beaten up on her first day at school for being “too English”. Although Sharon was able to return to a Hornsey school after two years, (an area that she describes as whiter), she found that she was not received as well by her old friend who had as she explains “moved on”.

Sharon pointed to her experiences in secondary school as one where she noticed that she was alienated in one of her A level classes. She highlights;

Math and Chemistry were fine, I don't know if it was racism ... as I think that I was the only Black student. Was I the only student in the History class? I didn't do well in that subject and I do not know if the tutor really helped me. It became a bit of a joke that he always left the hard questions for me... you know the section "D" you know like "What are the socio-economic implications of whatever?" [...] the other students knew.

In this setting, and particularly as an educator with the benefit of hindsight, Sharon highlights that even at this stage of her education her unique English identity, deemed her to be an outsider.

The Tertiary Education Context

For Sharon, attending university in Eltham, South East London —an area that has become notorious for its racial hostility —was also fatiguing. Sharon remarked;

Apparently, it's quite racist down there, but... mainly I stayed on campus anyway [...]and it's about 40 minutes drive away ... but I would come home"

With her experience, it appears that she adopted a coping strategy for this hostile terrain. This may suggest that Sharon had chosen to not put emphasis on the racist hostilities around her in order to diminish the impact that this could have on her and could potentially thwart her larger agenda, that being of navigating the academy and obtaining life success, Sharon does not take the time (nor the interest) to "notice" the racism around her. This is not because there are not frequent instances of racism, but instead she demonstrates an ability to not allow herself to be distracted by what one could call the "racial white noise" which exists in society as a constant, this is the undercurrent of racial

hostility that is not over in society, but sets the context for racial disparities in British society.

Sharon, intimately understood the lens of the oppressor, a lens which categorized people like her as the outsider. Despite this, she understands herself as an authentic woman of the African Caribbean diaspora and an English woman, the two categories clearly not being mutually exclusive ethnic categories. Whilst demonstrating her first sight (Dubois), Sharon demonstrates ease moving between her first sight and ‘double consciousness’ much like a multilingual individual who intimately understands the languages –and indeed the cultural nuances –of each of their identities. Demonstrating her mastery and ownership of ‘first sight’, Sharon’s decision to “not notice” racism suggested that rather than simply “not noticing” racism, she made a choice to not preoccupy herself what she refers to as “hidden” racism. This is the discrete racism which is prevalent in all institutions and British society. Given Sharon’s abilities, her drive, her personality, she was ready to navigate the situations which she described to obtain her “life success”. Situations which for someone without this method for navigation, could have been mitigating circumstances. As far as possible Sharon “ignored” the racist overtones of the environment of her university and the surrounding areas rather choosing to focus on progressing. She commented,

If there is any racism, I haven’t experienced much if it myself...it’s not very blatant. It’s very hidden ...’cause I remember when my cousins came from America...it must have been the late eighties... no it was earlier and they were surprised that we had white neighbors, so we’re very mixed I think

Again, I didn’t notice it so much, I mean friends who came to visit me would notice, but I didn’t notice so much, but that might be just me in that I just... I just... I don’t.... Unless someone is in your face racist, I just carry on with what I am doing.

Interestingly, Sharon shared that she chooses to not notice racism. Although she stated that she did not “notice” or indeed react to the racial hostility, it appears that her solution to deal with this hostility, was to ignore or “not notice” these problems. Thereby choosing to not confront the hostile reception that she received in both her social, professional and academic spaces. However, her ability to recall instances which she claimed she did not “notice much”, remained memorable enough to share them during her interview.

The Professional Environment Mirrors the Social Environment

For Sharon, although she shared that she was classified by society and her work colleagues as Black British, despite having been born in England and despite identifying herself as authentically English, whilst working with her colleagues, her self-identification was continuously challenged. Therefore, this can be considered to suggest that being Black British and having to restate that one is authentically English, appears to signal the reclamation of voice for colonized people (and now their descendants) who — through the process of slavery and colonization — have been defined and redefined depending on the colonizers’ need. Instead, Sharon’s perception of herself is that of an authentic English woman, albeit a diasporic woman, which to some this may be seen as a contradiction in terms. However, her lens or ‘voice’, allowed her (without restriction), to authentically identify herself as being an English woman which matched her English nationality defined by the country of her birth.

Logically, Sharon could not consider herself to be anything but English. For once you are born in a country, the expectation in England is that you are given the identity of that nation. However, in the case of Black people in Britain (as Sharon revealed), there is

resistance towards Black people claiming the English nationality. Sharon is highly motivated to excel and to do well academically, it is important to hypothesize that similar to when whites saw excellence like Constantine, or writers like Stuart Hall, some people are allowed to “pass” over into professional spaces. The collective state of the struggle also affects how well and how far a black individual can advance in British society. Through her interview, Sharon highlighted a clear dichotomy that exists between ‘them’—The White English majority—and the Black English born minority, or ‘us’. Those who consider themselves to have authentic claim to Englishness and those, like herself and indeed myself, understand themselves to also have a rightful claim to deem themselves as English, but are rejected as being authentic members of the nation of our birth due to the Blackness of our skin. Sharon highlighted a clear distinction between how she categorized herself -English because she is born in England—and the rejectionists who preferred to “teach” her what her identity was. Which was one that was not determined by the country of her birth but by the color of her skin. Sharon commented;

There’s a debate at work, I say that “I am English!” and they were like, You’re Black British!.

Despite clearly recalling being told by her white English colleagues at work how she ought to define herself and be “allowed” to make some claim to a British identity albeit one that maintains her postcolonial heritage for perpetuity, Sharon remained steadfast in her understanding of herself as English. Choosing instead to ignore the hostilities of work colleagues and a society which has rejected its Black sons and daughters of empire who she believed had legitimate claim to call England, the country of her and their birth, home and therefore an authentic claim to categorizing and calling oneself English.

Sharon described British society as “being as everything racism.... which is very hidden”. For unlike in the United States, racist white people in Britain do not adorn themselves in white sheets and crosses. As recent action against those who immigrated to Britain around the Windrush period suggests, the ‘problem’ of Black permanence in Britain is an issue. Sharon was able to provide numerous examples of hostility which she has faced both as an educator and within the academy. Hostility which was egregious enough that she was perturbed from pursuing a higher level of career progression and instead opted to remain in teaching, which can be categorized as method of coping with the hostility. However, Sharon commented that,

I didn't really notice and thought that it might just be me[...] I don't know if it's a gender thing, I think that I am an easy target in my career.

What appears to be suggested by this is that Sharon appeared to normalize these experiences and yet revealed that although she didn't claim to have any specific negative experiences related to her ethnicity, she was able to shared that,

I don't think that I've had any negative... um ...experiences as a black femaleum... but as a teacher. ...when I was new to the job I has a headteacher that would walk into my classroom and fling open the windows and say “You're not in Jamaica now!...and then I would think when she'd leave the room... did she just say that? Did she just do that? Um... so, there were things then that I experienced which I thought...um these were not right.

Although Sharon was able to provide examples such as these, she seemed reluctant to categorize her experiences as being negative due to her Blackness, or gender.

Interestingly, she was able to separate her Blackness from the rest of her identity, and instead, Sharon attributed these hostilities to her responses to the work environment,

There were things that I experienced that I thought that they were not right. I'm not sure if I could put it down to gender, I haven't sought to be a deputy or a head teacher I do not know if that has knocked my confidence.

Sharon did not view herself through the lens that had been assigned to her by her host nation. That being, a black, foreign, immigrant lens. This is a lens which is based on second sight (Dubois) seeing one through the oppressor's lens. Despite being aware of the oppressor's lens and outwardly rejected this lens, it appears that Sharon had become so accustomed to this mindset, she did not consider this to be a negative comment to necessarily be indicative of racism and prejudice, both within the educational space and the work environment.

As a Black woman who has had to navigate both tertiary education and the professional education space as an educator, Sharon's interview was able to highlight how she considered her achieved status, which was that of an educator. This is a career which she described as being one of the two expected careers (secretary or teacher) that women of her generation entered - as being separable was from her ascribe status which she categorized as a Black English woman. Interestingly, Sharon did not equate her Black identity, English identity, and Black English identity which was nevertheless immigrantized by her employer as being "Jamaican", as being the factor that caused her to have experienced othering within the education setting.

Tracey In Britain

"Only, a colored woman is never quite respectable in the eyes of a white man" (Fanon, 1952, p. 25)

Depending on what group you are from there are shades...I call shades of racism where you will have people of different ethnic

backgrounds will be allowed to progress more easily than people from other ethnic groups. (Tracey)

As one of three sisters who were first generation Black offspring born of British Caribbean parents of the ‘Windrush’ era from Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada, Tracey also expressed the notion that being British was natural, and further, being English was instinctual as a native-born woman. It was not a culture that she had to learn or assimilate to as it was already deeply ingrained into her mindset by her British Caribbean parents’ psyche that had instilled values of hard work and professionalism. Her mother who had become a Magistrate judge, her elder sister a teacher and her younger sister University Faculty who focused heavily on legal issues, clearly obtaining careers and negating the impact of ‘othering’ was very obvious. She defined her life success as being defined by her careers in law and media as she considered this to be an avenue to give Black women voice. Not merely due to their presence but also their ability to mobilize in such positions. However, she shared an unsuspecting insight into the positionality of the Black English professional woman who aims to navigate the academy in order to obtain “life success”.

The importance of Education was considered to be a key factor that was already deeply ingrained into her mindset which had been instilled by her British Caribbean mother from Trinidad a retired Magistrate Judge. Tracey sat tentatively to answer my interview questions. Her light brown naturally colored hair which cupped around her head in a bob-style, made her more than unique. As a single woman, she appeared to be very focused on her career and education which she viewed education as a pathway to realize her own “life success”. It was however a life success which remained incomplete

as her aspirations were not only confined to achieving educational milestones which she positioned as first and foremost to her life's mission. It was also about having family and belonging.

Tracey believed that education was the only way to obtain both justice and life success for a Black woman in Britain and she could not rely on one career to guarantee this success. In a similar fashion as Dubois, who consider that; "The future woman must have a life work and economic independence. She must have knowledge" (1896, p.96), Tracey spoke openly on how she has prepared herself to navigate the double portcullis;

[I'm] not reliant on one particular profession, because I can see that when you're an ambitious black woman that you will be stopped quite early on. I have kept my two careers on a dual pathway so I... even though I predominantly am a lawyer, I make sure that I still do media work such as going into the newsroom and getting to practice news reads and doing any work that I can whenever the opportunity presents itself because literally I can see, that if you're a black person and you have one profession, you'll either be made redundant ...or something like that and I'm not prepared to do that so or go through that so I have the two going simultaneously.

Before Tertiary Education - The Struggle

Tracey shared where she encountered the opposition to her desire to become a professional whilst in high school. She recalls;

I made the mistake... If you sometimes tell white teachers or lecturers, they think that they aspire beyond your station and they would actively stop you...I didn't see what she [a German Language teacher] was talking about because as far I was concerned, I was an English girl.

Tracey shared her experiences of marginalization within the education setting at various levels of her educational and professional journey. Within each of the settings, she was reminded of her ‘othered’ identity which was reflective of Fanon’s assessment of the predicament which faces the black man which is equally applicable to black women.

Fanon stated that “wherever he goes, a black man remains a black man” (p.150).

Similarly, it can be assessed that although Tracey may have attached herself to notions ‘belonging’ and she too belongs to a social group known to be the gentler sex, this notion of being the gentler sex, is not necessarily extended to the Black woman who often navigate life alone and are not afforded the protections of traditional relationships based on a patriarchal norm of both Western and African-Caribbean culture.

What Tracey represented however within her various education establishments, was that she has navigating her socializing in English society, coming from what she described as the leafy suburbs of west London, she seemed to not to acknowledge the limitations that may have impacted her. Rather like Sharon, she did not preoccupy herself with her rejection and social ostracization. Instead, she chose not to focus on her “blackness” and focused on her positionality as a member of the second sex (De Beauvoir). Tracey commented;

There’re not really limitations. If you’re a woman who wants to get married and have children, you will definitely be left out, particularly for minority ethnic women,[...] for me because this is not a reality of mine because I am single, I can still climb like men and sometimes earn more than my mentors but I can see that if I dare get married or have children I’m right at the bottom again.

Although Tracey was able to see herself as facing these potential hurdles, she did not categorize them as limitations. Instead, she aligned herself with her male counterparts and

highlighted that she was able to avoid these limitations by simply not engaging in marriage or mothering, in a sense presenting these experiences as being the only mitigating factors that predominantly hinder career progression. In a sense, Tracey presented how she redressed her secundarization of her gender by not focusing or engaging in the development of her own family.

Tracey's interview highlighted what can be considered to be the loss first sight (Dubois), that could reasonably be expected for diasporic people within Western settings. This is due to two reasons. Firstly, first sight and conceptualizing oneself through an African ethnicity, is not a an option for people descended through the African-Caribbean experience who have no knowledge of their African ethnic group due to the implications of slavery and colonization.

Secondly, in a society which marginalizes those who are considered to be immigrants due to their racial appearance and categorization, appears to prompt some people of African ancestry to align themselves with the culture which they are most familiar even if they are marginalized within this community.

In an attempt to mitigate the identity discrepancy that this creates, what materializes from this loss of first sight where the ethnically African person cannot conceptualize themselves as being ethnically African and views themselves through the oppressor's lens, thereby "racing" themselves as black is a superficial acknowledgement of her ethnicity. As according to Fanon, "So, unable to blacken or negrify the world, she endeavors to whiten it in her body and mind" (Fanon, 28) wittingly and or unwittingly herself. As in this case, this can be seen as one aligning herself with white women's struggle within the work environment against white men, neglecting to recognize or

indeed accept 'hierarchies of oppression' (Lorde, 2009) which situate those who can be categorized as Black/diasporic women at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Tracey's lens appeared to be one which suggested that the voice which she spoke through, although she presented it as being her authentic lens, it was one where she did not situate the diasporic experience as being significant to her, but in doing so, it was evident that what was being shared was a diasporic voice which reflected many of the cares and trauma of the diasporic experience. It was a voice that was well accustomed to recognizing and accepting the secondarization of women (albeit white women) to which she appeared to align herself which was indicative of her experiences within professional and educational. However, Tracey spoke of herself as being able to compete and even surpass her male colleagues as she had not 'compromised' her career by getting married or having children. Therefore, she considered that her experience of tertiary education and her profession, should have enabled her to be respected. Respect was a significant factor which Tracey shared.

As part of this respect, Tracey had to contend both colleagues and educators being taken aback by the quality of her English.

Tracey can be considered to be a proponent of education and Justice. As a Barrister (British lawyer), she provided a candid insight into the educational experiences and the professional journey of black women in the United Kingdom into higher education.

Notably, Tracey identified herself as Black English rather than the typical and or expected identity designation of Black British subject. This is particularly noteworthy because Britain incorporates not only England but also Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland.

The undertaking of calling oneself English opposed to British, appears to suggest that the individual does not associate herself with the other nations that creates the British Isles, much in the fashion of a very patriotic citizen of any of the British nations. In keeping with this sentiment, Tracey considers herself as English within the British space with no true connection with the rest of the UK. Interestingly, Tracey identified her nationality as one that could be hyphenated, in a similar fashion to the more commonly used Black British identity. In doing so, Tracey's self-identification, hints at the making a subgroup and yet a legitimate English authentic ethnicity distinct due to one's color or ethnicity. This identity was said with prowess and purpose and it was by no means an identity that was presented as being in a formative stage. For she, like I and others in this research project, understood herself as English and Black.

Tracey highlights,

The difficulty hasn't only come from white people, it has come from other immigrant communities, like direct Africans from Africa, who don't seem to appreciate diversity which was a huge shock.

The shock element highlighted by Tracey, is that she was the marginalized other of the marginalized group. Ergo the anomalous black woman among group of very few black people in her profession, and a minority who herself as authentic belonging to the UK as an English woman. She remarks

Oh my gosh...they see me as Black Caribbean which I'm not...my parents come from the Caribbean, I don't come from the Caribbean I come from England. But they, they almost will stick together depending on what country they come from. So Nigerians stick with Nigerians and Ghanaians stick with Ghanaians, they sometimes have a Nigerian Ghanaian collective, but if uh, if you're not one of those I found that I've actually be shunned.

In order to mitigate these hostilities from various levels and various direction, Tracey's approach was to prepare herself with more than one career knowing that her "acceptance" and performance in any one career for a diasporic black woman was certainly uncertain.

By highlighting the perils of having an immigrant background and much like her ancestors in the Caribbean that were seen as disposable, Tracey has tried to mitigate what society sees as a its disposable people, by navigating the academy successfully and having a dual career.

I've found that's my accent sounds typically white middle class.
And therefore, I have been able to navigate much more easily than
somebody who does not sound white.

Tracey was able to share a salient identity which is not typically associated with black diasporic people. This is one's class designation, inherited or achieved, that once attached to the black English person, it is sometimes perceived with skepticism, as though it is a "fake" attribute, one that cannot be authentically owned by the black English person.

As sociologist Elijah Anderson's work on presentation of self suggests, certain Black people in North American who choose not to be associated with lower class 'Black' norms or practices, to him, embraced a "false" persona to denote their middle-class status, differentiating themselves from lower class blacks. However, although focusing Black people in Philadelphia, his work does not allow for there to be any authenticity in a black elevated class. Similar to American society, British society - including both Black and non-black alike - appear to have overlooked the possibility that class elevation is a possibility that can be experienced by the black person, making one's class mannerism authentic and more than merely a showcase of impressions to be "posh" or of a higher class. Tracey continued,

[A]nd I also don't have a foreign sounding or an ethnic sounding name, and so I can, generally navigate to progress by speaking to people who don't have a clue that they actually speaking to a black person. So, what I have found is that if I talk to a professional, so let's say in law for example, they'll be very helpful to me if they believe that I am a white woman trying to find her feet in the legal profession and they'll give me all the tips and give me everything that I need to do. And if I presented myself as a black person I find - more often than not, but not all of the time, they will be less likely to be so open and they will give me less tips on how better progress my career.

What becomes apparent by this respondent's testimony is that "whiteness" (ergo traditional "Englishness") was not dictated merely by one's presentation but also one's diction.

Sometimes they say "gosh you sound so white!", some ... when I worked in central government I was asked if I was adopted...Meaning that I must have been raised by white people to sound so middle English... which means from a middle-class background (Tracey)

"Speaking the Queen's English you have to assimilate in brackets, assimilate in a way that doesn't offend" (Hannah)

Presenting oneself as authentically speaking the Queen's English, was no longer a prerequisite for being allowed into the higher echelons of society and a demonstration of one's education. Instead once coupled with Blackness, it could be deemed as inauthentic as it does not fulfil the Black stereotype.

Tracey's interview was particularly insightful as at the basis of her testimony, she premised the notion of attaining and maintaining 'respect' as one of the most significant factors of her professional achievement. Although the focus of Tracey's interview, appeared to focus on respect, it was a level of respect that she appeared to believe should be afforded to Black people who were firstly authentically English. Secondly, she

appeared to emphasize her social status as a professional black woman with several post-graduate degrees which afford her ‘entry’ into a higher-class designation and ‘entry’ into being able to be considered to be authentically English, distinct from the immigrant narrative. Even though “They seem to think that you must be Jamaican.”, Tracey was very clear that she was English and a middle-class English person due to her socialization and education. This notion is not foreign in the English-speaking Caribbean society which as Mary C. Waters highlighted in her book, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*.

English-speaking Caribbean [upward] mobility between blacks at the bottom of society and the middle category of light-skinned people, but not all the way to the top category of whites” (1999, p.29).

Within the English context, “speaking eloquently”, as suggested by my respondents here, can be viewed as being synonymous with the “whitening” of the Black person. For these two professionals who appeared to be distinctive not only due to being educated but also for their dialect which was noticeably refined compared to what is typically expected for “immigrant” Black people. Both Sharon and Tracey were critiqued for sounding “posh” which can be viewed as the “whitening” of these women. Interestingly, these women did not feel comfortable with accepting a position. Rather, they considered their demeanor as being indicative of their English status.

Waters highlights that;

Race is more of a continuum in which shade and other physical characteristics, as well as social characteristics such as class position, are taken into account in the social process of categorization. (op.cit)

This may well be the case in the US context, however in the British context, race appears to be the most salient characteristic to determine who is authentically English, and authentic in their professional roles as these interviews revealed. Also, when Black English women also express themselves with dialects that denote an elevated social class, this is also challenged as being inauthentic as both Sharon and Tracey suggested.

The Professional Environment Mirrors the Social environment

Britain is commonly considered to being comparative to a ‘melting pot’ whereby all cultures “blend in” together. However, rather than a “melting pot” using a Caribbean dish for a reference point, Britain appears to represent more of a pilau (pilaf) whereby society comprises of many different types of people and communities that do not blend but exist within the same society and are included (or present) to various extents. Tracey described British society as being one that is “superficially cohesive and realistically divisive”, similar to Sharon who shared that racism in England was “hidden”. Tracey considered herself to have had access to more of a privileged experience and having had the opportunity to enter into a higher earning bracket compared to others who shared both her gender and ethnicity. Her privilege that she cited most significantly was focused on the respect that comes with her profession as a Barrister. However, Tracey did not claim that her professional training and tertiary education provided her with a profession which afforded her a level of success. Without reservation, Tracey categorized herself as using a hyphenated identity of Black English due to her being a Black woman, born in England who had navigated various tertiary educational establishments, she considered tertiary

education as having. “made [her] have access to have more of a privilege experience more than the average person”.

Notably, Tracey seemed hesitant to describe her tertiary education as having had limitations as she considered the difficulties which she had faced to have improved her life. Despite this, she shared that there were several experiences that uniquely affect the Black woman’s professional experience,

When you are an ambitious Black woman, you will be stopped quite early on[...] People are not expecting people [this] from an ethnic minority ... so it affords me more respect. [...]

Interestingly, although Tracey acknowledged that there appeared to be resistance towards women of color succeeding in professional field, she seemed hesitant to state it thereby accepting the true extent of the racism and sexism at play within the professional realm.

...Hmmm, I don’t there’re not really limitations but I think the way your career develops overtime... If you’re a woman who wants to get married and have children, you will definitely be held back because, even if you do go on maternity leave or take some time out, in the pecking order you go back to the bottom.

Although Tracey spoke of her educational journey and experiences with lecturers that were predominantly white who appeared to only help white students to succeed, she was not perturbed by this.

The Double Portcullis

Fanon wrote

“There is nothing more sensational than a black man speaking correctly, for he is appropriating the white world”
(Fanon, 1952, p.19).

For these two female interview respondents who reported that they were said to either “sound posh” or “speak well”, they too were thought of as speaking correctly, that being without a soupcon of a Caribbean dialect or accent that could be used as “evidence” to reinforce the notion that they did not belong to England. Also, not only were they appropriating the white world in England, and white “successful” society through their professions, they were able to redefine Englishness through their mere presence and presentation of their authentic English selves.

With both the testimonies of Sharon and Tracey, it was very apparent that like Fanon “[They] refuse[d] to be treated as outsiders; we are truly a part of French [and in the case of Sharon and Tracey, English] drama”. Both Sharon and Tracey noted that their dialect was one that made them distinct from other immigrant offspring as they were questioned about being either “posh” as was the case of Sharon, or even being adopted as was the case with Tracey. It is from this premise that this chapter provides insight into a social problem which is typically not spoken of or written about. It is the dilemma that faces those who occupy a space in England where they are both part of the country, due to their education, socialization, upbringing and cultural exposure. However, as they fit a category of those who are raced as Black, they appear to be perpetually marginalized. Tracey defined life success as “getting the job that you want and keeping the job that you want” and although both respondents suggested that they were doing what they thought that they wanted, their testimony appeared to denote a degree of dissatisfaction with the course of the educational experience to obtain their professions. In essence, Sharon and Tracey’s testimonies appeared to suggest that they were included to be excluded in a

society which now has had to evolve to include people who can be considered to be reminders of a colonial past and continue to be 'othered' in the present society.

Being raced as "Black" supersedes one's nationality, and it reinforces is a social designation which permanently designates people who are visibly descended from the African diaspora to an othered position. It is a position which also challenges their ability to thrive within tertiary education setting and within the professional setting.

As a result, for those who are faced with navigating the tertiary education environment whether as professionals or whilst training to be professionals, they can exist in what can be described as an in-between space. One where their ethnicity and color challenges the status quo, has the potential to redefine what it means to be English and at the same time, this space, for some may be uncomfortable and it may cause discomfort to others for having to face, consider and understand their marginalized, excluded, difference and yet a longing - and perhaps sometimes guilt - for wanting to claim belonging to a country that does not claim you as their own. As indicated by these interview responses, this can cause what can be considered to be the 'ostrich syndrome' whereby those who are navigating from this positionality, earnestly attempt to minimize the rejection that they experience due to being both female, black and professional and instead they attribute their struggle to potentially being due to a plethora of other factors.

Fanon wrote

“[W]e should not forget that there are Blacks of Belgian, French, and British nationality and that there are black republics”
(Fanon,1952, p.150)

Although this is undoubtedly true, it is important to recognize that many of these Black people do not merely have a European nationality, it goes further than this. As this

chapter revealed, there are Black people who are born within European spaces who view themselves, thru the lens of the host nation and see themselves as authentically European albeit with African heritage. In the case of this chapter, interviewees considered themselves to be authentically English, which seems reasonable as ethnicity does not and should not restrict an individual for claiming a nationality and feeling as though they have managed to overcome the double portcullis and be an authentic member of the society in which they were born, in this case English society.

Black British and Black English Identity

Being British for non-white people has meant being a part of what had been the British Empire. It is a term that for many is used interchangeably with being English for those who are born in England. However, for Black people born in the UK, the vast majority of them being born in England, identifying as a British Black person compared to an English Black person is more than merely being British as was shared by some of my interviewees. Due to the connotations attached to the categorization of Black people from the African diaspora and notion of Black people as being reminders of the British Empire, the categorization of one being British has the ability to suspend the development of Black people in England to being continuously in a postcolonial stage. In effect, Black British people born in the UK, who do not freely claim the country of their birth as their nationality, for example English if you are born in England, and instead resort to identifying only with the country of the parents, appear to be in a position of suspension and arrested cultural development.

Black English: The Marginalized Other of the Marginalized Group

Being Black and British and using these categories to identify oneself, within the British context, is by its very nature an acknowledgement of not belonging to the country of one's birth and one of the countries of the British Isles. As Britain comprises of four countries as discussed previously, Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland and therefore, by using the term British and not identifying with the specific region of one's birth, it appears to denote a degree of acceptance of an in status of being an outsider. Reminiscent of the British empire and its influence in foreign lands —and indeed upon foreign people— claiming only the British identity when one has been born in the British Isles, hints at what can be considered to be a bygone era but not a bygone undercurrent of marginalization. It was an era where Britain claimed foreign territory and people for its own purposes and not to the benefit the people who would be given the opportunity to claim a hyphenated identity British from areas far and wide across the world the ergo the British Caribbean, The British Virgin Islands and so forth.

Interestingly, hyphenated British identities denote 'otherness' thereby distinguishing 'foreign' Britishness from native, or Elementary school for Sharon was an exposure to various cultures including the culture of her two best friends that were of east Asian descent and culture. She believed them to be of Indian or Pakistani background. Although Sharon considered her schools to be "mixed", (and as she had stated multicultural), interestingly, she spoke of her school in bi-racial terms being based on two ethnicities, White and Black. It was a traumatic experience where she recalls being beaten up for being "too English". Sharon recalls her time in a predominantly ethnically

Black secondary School in Tottenham being not too dissimilar from experience as an educator due to her unexpected “Englishness”.

“I spoke well...so it was difficult mixing there...
they just thought that I was ... posh!”

What becomes apparent, is that one’s ability to elevate social class for first generation Black English people was feasible through tertiary education, however it was not considered to be an expectation by educators and colleagues. With class elevation and higher-class socialization, one’s vernacular and dialect may have been impacted by this. However, this was another factor that was not considered to be authentic due to one also having a Black identity which denoted an ‘othered’ status which kept this group of people in Britain in a perpetual marginalized state.

British born people of the British Isles who are referred to by the country of their birth, ergo Scottish, Welsh Irish or English, thereby ensuring that the outsider-insider position of Black people in Britain is maintained for perpetuity as once you are recognized as Black and assigned the identity of British you do not necessarily have claim nor permanence to life in Britain (as has been seen with the treatment of some of the Windrush generation who have been deported from Britain).

Social Construction

The social construction or the dominant discourse of Blackness in Britain for the women in this study is based on what appears to be a binary construction when it comes to being British. Whereby for one to be considered an authentic Briton, one is typically identified by the historical definition of what it means to be British. This is a British identity without hyphenation, one that is not coined with another ascribed status or ethnic characteristic, ergo ‘whiteness’. For example, as in the case of the population of this

research study, the identity of being Black British (which can be considered to represent a subcategory of Britishness), is one that hints of a deliberate cultural separation of people who can be categorized as belonging to a group that is not truly considered to be a part of the population which defines what is considered to be British. As to be British, has been (and as indicated by this hyphenated identity which is assigned to people of color), was historically used to reference people of color who were from British territories. However, with increasing numbers of diasporic people being born in the UK and in the event of the marriage of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle with their child who will be born in the UK, to a woman of color who has Caribbean heritage, and from an African American mother, this begs the question, at what point is a person of color who is born in the UK not merely British and can claim to be English?

To many, (consciously or subconsciously), as these interviews and the literature reviewed for this research study has revealed, being a Briton (ergo being identified as being authentically British, English, Scottish Welsh or Northern Irish), is dependent on the British person as having an appearance of belonging this European region based on ethnicity—which is dependent on whether one is Caucasian or not. Being identified by a national identity, i.e. English, reinforces ones claim to permanence within the British space and appears to be a rejection of one’s ethnic marginalization.

Being British is a term that conjures images of what some may categorize as historical grandeur and prowess derived from an unscrupulous British empire that was able to pillage land and rule over many people and as a reminder of this history, millions of people and their history and identity has touched, impacted by the label of being British. For some, although not specifically stated—as this would clearly be blatantly

discriminatory —the term British has come to mean different things for different members of the British population. It is a term which is associated with historical grandeur and the prowess that Britain has represented to many across the Empire. However, it has come to mean different things for different people. It also provides insight into the extent that a person (or ethnic group) is considered to have both claim to and permanence in the United Kingdom and is able to experience success.

I consider these women as being authentically British and English as they are born in the United Kingdom, however, I considered the challenge faced by post-post colonials, Black people who are restricted to a type of Britishness which has a different connotation as it is a hyphenated with the color designation of people of the African and African-Caribbean diaspora, that being Black British. The hyphenated identity Black-British does not provide those who bear this label with true entry to claiming themselves to part of a Briton's identity. Instead the hyphenation of Britishness with Blackness, reinforces the marginalization and othering of Black people, who are born in Britain and therefore are authentic British identity. In effect, it is the secondarization of the British citizenship assigned to those of areas that were categorized as the British Caribbean, automatically designates a hierarchical form of British with a lesser — and on some cases — no claim to an identity of being from Britain proper for people of color. It is a status which hints of a tentative position and at the very least, a marginalized position.

In essence, this type of Britishness denotes a hierarchical structure of and those who have been conditioned to expect the dominant discourse, you are either Black British and physical embodiment of the remnants of Britain's colonial exploits. In other words, you are a diasporic person, African or Asian, who has descended from people of color who

have been touch, moved and removed from one's original home most commonly as invited immigrants to colonial mother country. Or else you are English and Black, occupying an unacknowledged category and undefined space as the interviews reveal, does not appear to be authentic.

As demonstrated by the educational involvement and activism of my interviews, it seems undeniable that they have not been responding passively the exclusionary dimensions of British society. In a sense it can be seen in a similar fashion to how W.E.B. Dubois addressed his unique positionality in his fight against American racism. Of a Haitian father, Dubois had inherited the notion that education is a ladder to climb over these barriers. Growing up in a white supremacist society, he both learned, understood and demonstrated that one who engages in becoming professional, the performance and climbing the educational ladder, is challenging the status quo. Although due to their socialization they may not be able to recover African first sight, it does appear that double consciousness which is developed, allows people in this unique position to develop a new form of first sight based on one's own achievement. If I can develop an alternative way of seeing m self, I have a basis for rejecting the stereotypes and can redefine life success based on this.

What was apparent from my interviewees is the inheritance of looking at education as the ladder to which will get them over the double portcullis, barriers to both their race and gender entering into professions in the UK. This is their unique and innovative way to respond the racism, sexism and classism of the society. This is something that she inherited from her parents and her family and I think that this is the "way up" for most people is education.

Conclusion

Much like the moats which surrounded most medieval castles, the portcullis (the weighty wooden drawbridge/gates) were not only able shut out those trying to cross into the life beyond a castles' rigid walls, it symbolically demonstrated that there was a difference between those who 'belonged' and those who did not. Navigating higher education for Black women in Britain can also been seen as an experience of who is allowed entry, allowed to thrive, and who 'belongs' and who does not belong to the academic environment. However, it is not the sort of entry where individuals who fulfilled this ascribed status could approach this society based on the constraints typically applied to people who were considered to be a part of the society, for the simple reason that Blackness and Black people were not considered to be a part of this society, where one was still willing and eligible to change their social positioning thereby providing them with entry into an elevated social group.

The portcullis, (and indeed the 'double portcullis'), is therefore the perfect metaphor for the experience for Black English women who have navigated tertiary education to become professional and have had various experiences in the academy as they have aimed to become professional. This is because these women who are excluded from sharing in the experiences afforded to white women, and are treated as though their mere presence in these arenas is an "assault" on the status quo and an attack on the "normal" order of the academe as they avidly try to scale the academic portcullis for higher education qualifications, professional recognition and entry into the professional careers of their choice.

Further to this, the notion of a portcullis also enlightens us into a modern-day version of a society where people are deliberately excluded, hindered and discouraged from entering this level of professional success and social elevation. This time, the barriers which are used are not at castle walls and fortresses, but are deeply entrenched into the social structure of society, institutions and by social understandings of who 'rightfully' exists and who can be thought of as authentically 'belonging' once they have entered into their professional communities based on one's racial ethnicity and gender expectation, each presenting various barriers to the women who I have interviewed in my research study, hence the notion of a double portcullis.

In essence, although a physical portcullis is not used in today's society in the literal sense, it appears that in the realm of the academy, pursuing further education and achieving professional careers, particularly for minority women who consider themselves to be Black in the United Kingdom, there still exists a hypothetical portcullis which is for the most part remains active where due to one's race and gender, barriers are erected to hinder one's entry into the field of their choice. This has meant that those who can be identified as "immigrant" within the British space are hindered within the academy and whilst on their journey towards professional and academic success. Also, as will come through the interviews of my respondents, when occupying a position of a Black British women navigating the academy, one has to contend with the various levels or gradients of the academic portcullis being 'ajar' or simply closed. In other words, whether the portcullis can be thought of as being at an obtuse or right angle (ergo allowing for some entry, at an obtuse angle which would suggest that there is the some allowance into the academy, what can be considered to be 'open' or a right angle, thereby providing full

entry into the academe or finding success having navigated tertiary educational establishments), there are several recurrent themes that occur in the interviews which I have collected.

The notion of scaling the academic portcullis is also a sentiment reflected in wider British society and in particular, English society when it comes to the consideration of Black British women as being considered as full members of society. Therefore, the portcullis can also be viewed as a metaphor for acceptance into all sectors of professional arenas and social life for the Black English woman.

In this part of the study, I considered the experiences of two women who had experienced tertiary education in Britain but have work professionally in separate areas. These personal interviews were able to provide an in-depth and exploratory account of the nature of life success and professional growth for the population of my research study, Black women who have navigated tertiary education in an attempt to realize 'life success'. Further, these interviews were able to highlight how women who identify as Black English whether inside or outside of the educational realm, experience, marginalization, othering and social exclusion even when they self-identify as English. For academic Black women, which for the purposes of this study, (I have defined as being women who have navigated tertiary education and or work within the academe), navigating the 'ivory tower', whether as students or educators, their journey and experiences do not necessarily allow them to integrate and develop professionally in the normal fashion with the expected support as their non-Black counterparts.

As I expressed when describing my experience at school, for women who fit this category, ergo Black British and claiming their Englishness, one's Blackness presents a

degree of hypervisibility, which yet deems one invisible and therefore ignorable for being inauthentic for merely embracing the professional values of their society. This sentiment of ignoring Black English women is not one that is merely present in the professional arena. As described by my interviewees, it is a sentiment long established throughout their education. Further it is long established before these women entered into the professional realm.

As this chapter revealed, the Black women who were born within European spaces who view themselves, thru the lens of the host nation may see themselves as authentically European albeit with African heritage, however they are still faced with having to navigate a society that can be a hostile terrain to obtain career success. As George Lamming, surmised “It is the collective human substance of the Village itself which commands our attention” (1991, xxxvi).

Therefore, diasporic women, who fulfil both a racial and gendered marginalized community and face a ‘double portcullis’ to obtain success in British society, need to be considered as a growing collective community that occupies a permanent position in British society, so that their positionality and marginalization can be considered and steps can be taken to redress these injustices that face those who are not readily deemed to be authentically English. In the case of this chapter, interviewees considered themselves to be authentically English, which seems reasonable as ethnicity does not and should not restrict an individual for claiming a nationality and feeling as though they have managed to overcome the double portcullis and be an authentic member of the society in which they were born, in this case English society.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: SURPRISE OF NO SURPRISE: IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Therefore, in a just society the liberties of equal citizenship are taken as settled; the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.” (Rawls,1999, p 3-.4)

As a child growing up on the outskirts of London, not too far from Windsor Castle, I was always taken by the majestic portcullis which faced those who wanted to explore the world behind the castle walls. It was both captivating and awe inspiring that such a gate—a “wall” of sorts - could be used to keep the lower classes and undesirables out from being part of society behind the castle walls. Was that fair or just? In essence, the medieval castle appears to be a physical metaphor of British society and her colonial empire. As Britain in the colonial era was supported by what was beyond her coastline, the Atlantic Ocean acted as the “moat” which kept her “safe” from her colonial offspring. Britain had been a society which was designed to physically “keep out” certain individuals whether this is due to their class and later their race. The society has been designed, —much like a castle with a portcullis —with opportunities for entry, however this entry pathway is restrictive, and few people are able to gain access to what is presented as an elevated standard of living and desired world.

The major aim of my dissertation was the creation of a critical theory that would deepen and expand our understanding of the subjectivities of Black female Caribbean immigrants to Britain.

Implications for my Hypotheses

As I described in Chapter 2 in the section entitled ‘Anique’s Critical Theory’, this theory had five critical layers of concepts. The first were concepts design to specify the

nature of racial difference in Britain. The second, was to explore the nature of gender difference in Britain. Third was the set of Autoethnographic and ethnographic concepts, the fourth was a set of concepts that provided the opportunity to theorize the variety in the responses gathered from interviewees, and fifth were the strategies of resistance and a set of concepts that allowed for various strategies of resistance that would lead to overcoming interruptions, ergo blockages to achieving “life success”. Integrating these layers of concepts has been a generalized narrative of interrupted self-formative processes and how these interruptions can be challenged and overcome. The major impulse for creating this theory was to move beyond the subjective postcolonial spaces opened up by theories of Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy Hazel Carby, Zadie Smith and others.

In making use of this theory, I developed a number of hypotheses in order to explain interruptions in the subjective formation of Black Caribbean immigrants to Britain that could not be accounted for by the earlier theories examined in my literature review. The first of these hypotheses was that the structure of racial difference in Britain took the form a “double wall” of what I have called the “double portcullis”. More specifically I identified these two walls as being one of “Britishness” and one of “Englishness” and that the first would be the easier of the two to get over.

The second of these hypotheses was that the nature of gender in Britain would make the experience of scaling these two walls different for men and women. Using Simone De Beauvoir, I theorized this difference using the concept of female secundarization. Thirdly, within this categorization, I further hypothesized that the combination of race and gender in the case of Black women would make their experiences quite different from that of white women in general and white immigrant women to Britain.

The fourth major hypothesis would be the experiences of “interruptions” and blockages in the self-formative processes of these women as they encountered the exclusionary practices associated with the two walls of racial difference in Britain. The fifth hypothesis that I developed in using this theory, was that education would be one of the major strategies employed by Black women in scaling the double portcullis. Sixth and finally, I developed the hypothesis that Black Caribbean women who were born in Britain would be eager to consider themselves as moving beyond the first portcullis and claiming their English identity.

Going into the field I was considering that women who had navigated higher education and were considered to be Black British, would, like myself, not be satisfied with the Black British identity. One that I considered to be a postcolonial designation for Black people despite being born in England. However, one of my biggest surprises was to find that some of these who were born in England, could not bring themselves to claim what I considered to be their national birthright, the right to claim an English identity. Before I discuss the ethnographic findings related to this hypothesis, it is important to consider the implications of my findings for the first, second and third hypotheses.

From the experience of interviewing 15 women who claimed the Black Caribbean immigrant identity in Britain, they consistently acknowledged experiences of the binary between Black British and Black English. The fact that all of these women acknowledged these experiences constituted strong evidence in support of my first hypothesis regarding the existence of a double portcullis. In spite of the differing responses to this double wall and their ambivalent feelings towards it, they all recognized and acknowledged its

existence. I did not encounter any interviewee who did not know what I was referring to. This I consider to be strong confirmation of my first hypothesis.

My second hypothesis was the claim that Black women would experience scaling this double portcullis differently from Black men. With regard to this hypothesis the ethnographic data was not as clear as in the case of my first hypothesis. The discussions of gender differences did not emerge as sharply as I had envisioned. Particularly, in light of De Beauvoir's theory of secundarization that the classic issues of patriarchy that informs De Beauvoir and other white feminists did not emerge with the sharpness with what feminist theories would have predicted. This was most evident in the attitudes of my interviewees towards working outside of the home. Their experiences of oppression did not grow out of the suburban model of the 'housewife' of restriction and subordination to male counterparts. In my interviewees there was already a very strong expectation of a lifestyle that included working outside of the home. The expectation that they would have to get some sort of education or pursue training that would enable them to work outside of the home was a normal expectation. It was something which I encountered with all of my interviewees. None of them revealed the expectation of not working and being the 'housewife' that would be provided for. In short, they articulated a model of feminism and experience of secundarization that was quite different from De Beauvoir's classic account. It also emerged from the data that there was an experience of loneliness as a theme for most of my interviewees and that the role of romantic relationship was desired but not considered to be the ultimate indicator of life success.

A possible explanation for this could be that the effort expended in getting over merely the first portcullis proved to be such an exhaustive feat that many of these women did not

have much time, energy, motivation and the will to persist in such ventures and thus they became secondary. In short, my claim that Black women would experience the walls of racism in Britain differently than Black men, was definitely supported by the data but not as unambiguously as my first hypothesis.

My third hypothesis made the claim that the combination of race and gender in the case of Black women would make their experiences quite different from that of white women in general. This hypothesis was given much stronger support by the ethnographic data I collected. The major difference that this data revealed was that these women attributed the major part of their sense of exclusion and oppression to race over gender. That the sense of threat that they felt to their chances of “life success” and personal growth was seen as being more related to their blackness over their femaleness. Their testimonies revealed several instances where race was in fact very explicitly chosen over gender in accounting for their experiences of marginalization and exclusion. Therefore, given the preponderance of these responses, I have concluded that this particular hypothesis was strongly supported by my ethnographic data.

My fourth major hypothesis was that my interviewees would report major blockages in their self-formative processes leading to both personal and professional success. This hypothesis receives strong confirmation as the testimonies of my interviewees included several references to blockages in both their personal and professional development but particularly in the latter case. One striking example of this was seen with interviewee ‘Sharon’ where she expressed that she did not pursue her desire to be a headmistress or her desire in to work in the natural sciences where she felt she had promise. These were clear examples of blockages that changed the course of her life. Sharon spoke very

passionately about these blockages, her sense of regret about them and the possibilities that they closed off. Even in the case of ‘Hannah’ who was a successful university professor, her interview was pervaded by a sense of having to overcome blockages all along her career path. This was also true in the case Prof. Gabby.

The fifth hypothesis was that education would be employed by Black women in scaling the double portcullis in order to realize “life success”. My data showed that most of these women did use education as a means to achieve certain professional goals. These professional goals enabled them to get over the first portcullis. Using education many of them were able to achieve respectable middle-class lives as professional (lawyers, teachers, professors, psychologists etc.) to enable their ability to get closer to their goal of life success. However, the data suggests that most of these women were unable to reach their goal because many reported experiences of loneliness.

My sixth and final hypothesis was that Black Caribbean women who were born in Britain would be eager to claim their English identity. However, data suggested that some of them did not desire to claim the nationality of their birth, others did not have an emotional affinity to Englishness and instead, they felt more comfortable to remain Black British. Remaining Black British suggests many possibilities. One possibility is that they are comfortable in what I consider to be the postcolonial / Black British phase. This is because this phase provides a loose attachment to the country of their birth, (England) and allows for a claim to Caribbean societies which they may have found more welcoming and therefore they did not want to surrender this connection. The data also suggested that interviewees were hesitant to claim the English identity as they viewed the

Black English identity as an internally oppositional identity, in other words being mutually exclusive.

Perceived this way, such space was seen as hostile and unrealistic. To some of the women, the embrace of the English identity, would signal a rejection of one's Caribbean heritage and possibly one's Blackness. This was a position that many were not comfortable with. Without a lessening of this real or apparent contradiction, the eagerness to claim one's English identity will remain blocked. Given this reluctance by my interviewees who were born in Britain to claim the English identity, I must say that this was particular hypothesis was not confirmed or supported by my ethnographic data.

Other Implications for my Hypotheses

In addition to confirming and disconfirming some of my hypotheses, my data also suggested that I needed to revise two concepts that are integral to my critical theory. The first of these is the concept of Caribbean identity in Britain and the second is the need to distinguish between race and ethnicity in my use of the concept of Black Britishness. Firstly, the data highlighted that the concept of the Black Caribbean identity was not restricted to Black British people who had direct Black Caribbean heritage. Instead, the data indicated that the term 'Caribbean' is an identity which was claimed by people who were from outside of the Caribbean. This included those who were from the African diaspora and Europe. It also was an identity claimed by some interviewees of Asian background who felt comfortable to claim the "Black" identity. Thereby widening the definition of Black Caribbean beyond what I had understood it to be prior to conducting my interviews.

To explain this phenomenon, I would suggest that it has been the high visibility of Caribbean popular culture which has made this peculiar phenomenon possible. Umbrella concepts of Blackness have emerged before in Britain. A wider conception of Blackness has existed in Britain before as it appeared right after World War II. In this earlier instance of an umbrella conception of Blackness, it too had a very strong Caribbean inflection. It centered around the Caribbean Carnival, Caribbean music, Caribbean Cricket and Caribbean Literature. These areas of creativity stood out more prominently than corresponding areas of creativity by African and Asian immigrants to Britain. Hence the rallying around a conception Blackness a conception of immigrants that had this strong Caribbean inflection. This I think is the reason why that these women appeared in my sample of interviewees.

The second of these additional implications of the data for my critical theory is the need make distinction between race and ethnicity in relation to the concept of Black Britishness. The term Black British for several of my interviewees did not provide enough space for the to articulate their experiences of Caribbean ethnicity. The term privileged their race over Caribbean ethnicity. This prioritizing of Blackness was the result of the intensity of the struggle to denegrify the earliest identities imposed on Caribbean immigrants to Britain. It points to the pain that these early immigrants experienced from their negative radicalization. Thus, in the struggle for a more positive image within the British space, the focus was more on devalorizing Blackness than on asserting a Caribbean ethnicity. Hence the need suggested by the ethnographic data to make clearer this distinction between race and ethnicity when examining the Black

British identity. For many of my interviewees, holding on to their Caribbean ethnicity was much stronger than the term Black British would suggest.

This issue of holding on to their Caribbean ethnicity was much more important for immigrants born in the Caribbean than for first generation British born women. However even among this latter group, there was significant variations in the extent to which they wanted to hold on to the Caribbean ethnicity. So, as I revise my critical theory I will definitely have to make this distinction integral to the basic structure of the theory.

The third and final of these ‘other implications’ relate to my conceptualization of the Black English ethnicity as an ‘unfinished’ one. The interviews suggested that I needed to make this concept clearer, more explicit and more fully developed. This I think I can do by posing such as “What are some of the major factors behind the ‘unfinished’ nature of this ethnicity?” One of the most important factors is the absence of a clear model for the full and permanent integration of immigrants and in particular, Black immigrants into the core of British society. For example, the multicultural model is what has facilitated a pathway for assimilation in Canada and the USA. The “*évolué*” model has provided a pathway in the French model. However, there is yet to be a pathway to establish a Black English ethnicity for those born in England.

Therefore, one needs to consider how a pathway or bridge, can be forged between the first and second portcullis. As demonstrated by my interviewees, gaining “acceptance” for the Black English women who use education as a strategy to gain social integration, and indeed elevation as a precursor to “life success” in English and wider British society, does not provide entry into ‘Englishness’ nor can it be seen as a method

which signals assimilation. There was no evidence to suggest that pursuing higher education and professionalism provided entry this restricted category of Englishness.

Looking Forward

As a child, I remember being taunted by some of the English white children in my neighborhood and school who would recite the cockney epithet “There Ain’t no Black in the Union Jack!” they would then shriek with laughter as they ran off to celebrate the success of their contribution to racial hostility towards those who they had learned “did not belong” in the country of both their and my birth. However, with the small but increasing numbers of Black female academics (which increased even as I conducted this research study), there is certainly evidence to suggest that there are indeed increasing numbers of successful examples of female “Blackness” within the core of English society’s institutions, who therefore have the potential to shape and change the social and educational landscape of Britain. Therefore, with time, it seems reasonable to suggest that there remains the potential for progress and more specifically, educational development and “life success” within the British/English social landscape.

Perhaps with the marriage of the Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, one can reasonably argue that a bridge has been forged between the double portcullis discussed whereby we can start to recognize that women of color, ergo Black English born women and women who identify as such, will have to be acknowledged within the higher echelons of British and English society both in social and professional settings. As my research has revealed, progression may be currently slow in terms of the inclusion and assimilation of Black women in English society and

her highest institutions and the academe, however there is an increasing and undeniable growing presence within these restrictive areas.

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APPENDIX A

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENT 1 - FRONT

SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE		
NUMBER	DATE	PAGE
HRP-503a	5/1/2018	2 of 3

Anique John under Principle Investigator Prof. Elizabeth Swadener will be conducting the interviews. Participants will be recruited through snowballing recruitment techniques starting with Prof. Heidi Mirza at the Institute of Education London and Francoise Hamlin Brown university.

7 Procedures Involved
Describe all research procedures being performed, who will facilitate the procedures, and when they will be performed. Describe procedures including:

- The duration of time participants will spend in each research activity.
- The period or span of time for the collection of data, and any long term follow up.
- Surveys or questionnaires that will be administered (Attach all surveys, interview questions, scripts, data collection forms, and instructions for participants to the online application).
- Interventions and sessions (Attach supplemental materials to the online application).
- Lab procedures and tests and related instructions to participants.
- Video or audio recordings of participants.
- Previously collected data sets that that will be analyzed and identify the data source (Attach data use agreement(s) to the online application).

- The participants will be interviewed by Anique John for approximately an 60-90 minutes up to two different occasions
- The interviews will take place in the Summer 2018.
- Participants will be asked the questions attached.
- Participants will be asked for their consent for the interviews to be recorded and will sign scripts

Compensation or Credit
8

Compensation will not be given

9 Risk to Participants

The risks are minimal for participants. But in the interest of confidentiality, pseudonyms may be used to reference

10 Potential Benefits to Participants

Potential for participants is to create greater understanding regarding navigating higher education for Black British/Caribbean Academics and obtaining fulfillment and "life success"

11 Privacy and Confidentiality
Describe the steps that will be taken to protect subjects' privacy interests. "Privacy interest" refers to a person's desire to place limits on with whom they interact or to whom they provide personal information. Click here for additional guidance on [ASU Data Storage Guidelines](#).

Describe the following measures to ensure the confidentiality of data:

- Who will have access to the data?

APPENDIX B

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENT 1 - BACK

SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE

NUMBER	DATE	PAGE
HRP-503a	5/1/2018	1 of 3

<p>Instructions and Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on the nature of what you are doing, some sections may not be applicable to your research. If so, mark as "NA". When you write a protocol, keep an electronic copy. You will need a copy if it is necessary to make changes. 	
1	<p>Protocol Title Include the full protocol title: Caribbean Women and the Black British Identity: Academic Strategies for Navigating an 'Unfinished Ethnicity'.</p>
2	<p>Background and Objectives Provide the scientific or scholarly background for, rationale for, and significance of the research based on the existing literature and how will it add to existing knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the purpose of the study. Describe any relevant preliminary data or case studies. Describe any past studies that are in conjunction to this study. <p>This purpose of this study is to contribute to an academic theory "life success" by conducting a qualitative study that focuses on the specific set of obstacles that have challenged the socio-economic integration of Black British Caribbean female immigrants into British society and higher education. I will examine the organizing strategies and particularly the individual projects of academic achievement that have been among the responses of Caribbean women to these obstacles as a means of obtaining justice. Previous studies include:</p>
3	<p>Data Use Describe how the data will be used. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissertation, Thesis, Undergraduate honors project Publication/journal article, conferences/presentations Results released to agency or organization Dissertation, Publication/journal article, conferences/presentations Results released to participants/parents Results released to employer or school Other (describe)
4	<p>Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria Describe the criteria that define who will be included or excluded in your final study sample. If you are conducting data analysis only describe what is included in the dataset you propose to use. Indicate specifically whether you will target or exclude each of the following special populations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minors (individuals who are under the age of 18) Adults who are unable to consent Pregnant women Prisoners Native Americans Undocumented individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black British Caribbean Female Women who have had experience in higher education/the academy
5	<p>Number of Participants Indicate the total number of participants to be recruited and enrolled: 12</p>
6	<p>Recruitment Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe who will be doing the recruitment of participants. Describe when, where, and how potential participants will be identified and recruited. Describe and attach materials that will be used to recruit participants (attach documents or recruitment script with the application).