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**Black British Identities: The Dialogics Of A Hybridity-of-the-Everyday.**

Submitted for: PhD (Sociology).

Date of submission: September, 1999.



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## Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Shirley Tate.

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**Abstract**

This study looks at hybridity as an everyday interactional phenomenon using conversations on lived experience, amongst Black British people of Caribbean heritage between the ages of 16-40 who are from London, the Midlands and West Yorkshire. Black British identifications in talk-in-interaction are conceptualised as *texts of social practice* so as to look at Bhabha's notion of 'translated hybrid subjects' who function within a 'third space of hybridity' where there is a denial 'of a prior given original or originary culture'. The conversations are analysed using an *ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis*- a framework that I develop which is influenced by Foucauldian approaches to discourses, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis. I generate a model for looking at the *hybridity of the everyday* in talk-in-interaction, which is based on its constitutive components: *statement, translation as reflexivity, new addressivity*. Using analyses of the data I show that there is a simultaneity of hybridity and essence in Black identification talk. 'Essence' manifests itself as 'race', skin, roots, community, culture and politics and remains within any notions of translation or hybridity. 'The third space' is constituted in interactions in which speakers show their awareness of being positioned by discourses and then negotiate an-other positioning. Hybrid identities are critical ontologies of the self, the radical otherness of *different from the changing same* produced through dialogism, performativity and abjection. *Translation as reflexivity* shows the dynamics of hybridity in talk-in-interaction as speakers use dialogic analysis to critique their positioning and then re-position themselves within

identification discourses to produce *new addressivities*. These addressivities are hybrid identifications.

## Acknowledgements

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Chapters 3 and 5 have been given as conference papers and multiple copies have been distributed.

I dedicate this project to my father, Herbert Watt, who died three days before I was awarded my PhD.

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### Introduction

- D People feel like if yuh have a BLACK identity it's GOT to be like yuh know rice an peas an chicken on a Sunday, an<sup>1</sup>
- S Oh tell mi ah kno:w every- every Sunday as well yuh kya:n- yuh kya:n<sup>2</sup> have a break
- D An Nutriment
- S Yeah
- D Yuh know
- S An peas soup on Satiday an all dat
- D Yeah yeah an an yuh know .hhh if yuh DO:N'T do that yuh know?
- S Yeah ah know
- D An it's like awareness of identity to dem is based on how dark you are suh like
- S Mhm: ah kno:w
- D me I have to prove myself all the time
- S What happen to dem<sup>3</sup>

I chose this section of conversation from my data because this is an interaction between DF and myself as two 'light-skinned' Black women about the nature of Black identity. This places me very firmly within the concerns of this project rather than sitting somewhere outside it. As such, I began this thesis with a number of questions about identity and talk, both from my own experience and those of others like D who provided data for this project. These data were taped conversations with groups of friends, colleagues and family members about their life experiences. Based on these conversations I sought to develop both an argument for the construction of identity in talk and a method for examining it. Bringing together a range of debates about identity, hybridity, self-presentation, reflexivity and talk, I attempt to foreground a

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<sup>1</sup> This is a 'plain' transcript for ease of reading at this point. A fuller version is in the endnote for this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Kya:n translates as "can't".

<sup>3</sup> "What happen to dem" means "what's their problem?"



neglected dimension of their exploration. That is how, in everyday conversation speakers' constructions of self are orchestrated and fashioned.

Returning to the conversation, D and S speak some of the boundaries of Black identity delimited by 'dem': that is, other Black people. First, the fixed cultural practices of food being used to read off Black identity and second, the idea that awareness of identity is based on shade. The darker you are the more conscious you are of a Black identity<sup>4</sup>. These women also show us something else by placing themselves outside of the Black 'dem'. It is possible to critique discourses of Black authenticity from a position of otherness. Their critique introduces a space for the voices of Black women and men in an exploration of hybridity. Specifically for this project, *hybridity as a negotiation of identity positions in talk*. In this negotiation, discourses of Blackness are represented as trying to fix identities. Speakers then perform themselves as producers of other identities in opposition to discursive positionings. These latter are fluid but none-the-less dependent on a contingent essentialism.

Based on a collection of conversations like the one above, before I began this research I spent a considerable amount of time thinking about Bhabha's (1990) notion that essence was irrelevant to Black hybrid identities. My question was, could the claim that essence was not present in hybrid identities be made without looking

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<sup>4</sup> This is reminiscent of Frantz Fanon's (1986:112) 'racial epidermal schema'. However, here we see a different take on this within the voices of postcolonial Black people. It is about an Afrocentricity based on skin as a mark of authenticity, of Black pride, rather than the abjection of Fanon. This Afrocentricity also leads to exclusions and to situations in which light-skinned Black people like D have to constantly assert their Blackness in order to counter the abjection from Blackness itself based on shade.

at data drawn from Black individuals? Thus, I came to this research on identity with two related concerns. One of them was that work on Black identity with which I was familiar (Mama, 1995; Alexander, 1996; Baumann, 1996) seemed not to look at the process of identity construction in talk-in-interaction. The second was that much of the theorising in Black British Cultural Studies on identity and otherness (cf Mercer, 1994; Bhabha, 1994), the development of 'new ethnicities' (Hall, 1992) and hybridity (Bhabha, 1990), focused on the demise of the essential Black subject. Further, such theorising does not begin from the standpoint of Black individuals' accounts in order to support their claim. In this body of work on Black identity, then, the *process* of identity construction through talk based on lived experience was missing. Sociologists and cultural theorists seem to be unprepared to describe the methods that speakers use to account for their actions and the actions of others.<sup>5</sup>

The psychologist, Amina Mama's (1995) view is that Black women's subjectivities move along a continuum from "colonial integrative" to "Black radical discourse". Although she imposes binaries on her data, none-the-less she recognises the multiplicity of identity positions which individuals occupy. She also recognises the place of discourses within identities as individuals move along this continuum.

The anthropologist Gerd Baumann's (1996) account of identity in Southall is also centrally concerned with the manipulation of discourses in identity construction. In his view Southallis, including African Caribbeans, command and make use of a dual

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<sup>5</sup> Through these ethno-methods which are the subject of ethnomethodological enquiry, members' common-sense knowledge becomes a topic of study rather than simply a resource (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998:30-31).

discursive competence. "This means that they disengage the equation between *culture* and *community* that underpins the dominant discourse" (Baumann, 1996: 34). Individuals engage "not only in the dominant discourses about ethnic minorities, but also in an alternative, non-dominant or demotic discourse about culture as a continuous process and community as a creation" (Baumann, 1996: 36). He recognises then that people occupy a double consciousness as they negotiate identity discourses. However, I take issue with his assertion that African Caribbeans have a "perceived need to 'find' a culture that is not yet 'known'" and that this "is reflected in a view that African Caribbeans do not even 'have' a *culture*" (Baumann, 1996: 126). After this claim he then uses the work of Pryce (1979) to support his assertion (Baumann, 1996: 127). In doing this he obscures the issues of a much larger debate.

This could have been the place for him to look at the making of this 'fact' through dominant white discourses on Black identity. Indeed, this might have alerted him to his own part in keeping this 'fact' in circulation. As well as this he might also have begun to think about how such a denial of culture subverts his own point of view that cultures are constructed by individuals. The quote he uses from an informant of Yabsley's (1990) as an indication of this 'fact' that African Caribbeans are in search of their culture is, "West Indians have got not much culture. Jamaica belonged to the Arawak Indians... I like to see myself as an African" (Baumann, 1996: 127). This is itself worthy of closer examination. Alongside the assertion of 'no culture' there is also another assertion. That is, that for this Rasta woman informant, culture has to do with roots in terms of origin. She makes this apparent when she says that the original Jamaicans were Arawaks. Africa for her then is the seat of Black culture so why

should she be characterised as someone in search of culture? As well as this she asserts her own African identification and it should have been this on which Baumann focused in terms of looking at the development of a demotic discourse rather than seeing her words as indicating a search for culture.

In terms of Baumann's uncritical adoption of Pryce's point of view, just a brief look at the work of the Creole linguist Mervyn Alleyne's (1989) book *Roots of Jamaican Culture* would cause us to question its accuracy. Further, work such as David Sutcliffe and John Figueroa (1992) *System in Black Language*, attests to the continuing significance of Africa in Caribbean Creole languages and their Black British off-spring. Finally, African Caribbeans as "in search of culture" undermines Baumann's view of culture as dynamic and constantly in process because a search implies that something fixed and essentialized can be found.

Baumann maintains that four approaches can be distinguished in the search for an African Caribbean culture. These are the religious, the political, the historical and the musical. By choosing these approaches he denies the existence of differences of gender, sexuality, class, ability, heritage and location and how these would crosscut any unified putative search for culture. The examples he chooses to illuminate the approaches are just as limiting. Rasta is not the only religion which could be said to 'house' African Caribbean culture as can be shown by the rise in the membership of The Nation of Islam in recent years. Pan-Africanism is not the only basis for Black politics within Britain as the past impact of Black Power, anti-colonial movements for liberation and the continuing pan-ethnic Black Movement show. The impact of

reggae around the world cannot be disputed. However, what he outlines seems to essentialize culture and homogenise Black experiences in his own search for aspects of a demotic discourse.

Claire Alexander (1996) takes an ethnographic approach to look at how culture is continuously created and invented. There is then a cultural battle for the ideological space to be Black in which Black youth are actors. For her “identities were both fluid and transiently essentialized” (Alexander, 1996: 194). This is a significant viewpoint, but she does not show this occurring in the process of talk-in-interaction. Also whilst acknowledging double consciousness, she does not go that one step further towards looking at this fluidity and transience in terms of hybridity. She comments on the interplay between ‘race’ and hybridity when she says that ‘race’ “becomes one in a complex of factors through which identities are formulated and contested; part of the interplay of disparate elements in a ‘process of hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1990: 211) through which culture and identity are continually reworked and re-created” (Alexander, 1996: 192). However, hybridity as an interactional process in which Black identities are constantly created and recreated remains unexamined.

This is the recent work on African Caribbean identity in Britain which uses informants’ voices that forms the backdrop for my project on hybridity<sup>6</sup>. In common with my work they look at identity as multiple, the interaction between discourses and identity and the making of identity discourses at the local level. However, what they lack is any

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<sup>6</sup> Ifekwunigwe (1999:9-10) warns of an uncritical use of this term which does not recognise its historical connection to the ‘race’ science fiction of biological hybridities. In her view there has not been a culturally hybrid rupture which transforms the meaning of place and belonging.

way of describing the dynamism of Black identity which they claim exists. My view is that a focus on hybridity as a *process* in talk-in-interaction would enable such dynamism to become more apparent. A focus on talk meant that interactions with data were instrumental in the engagements I made with theory. I move below to look at how this 'method as process' informed the development of the project.

### Method as process

By looking at hybridity as a process in talk I am attending to the aim of this project. That is, to engage with the literary critic Homi Bhabha's (1990: 211) writing on 'The Third Space' where he denies the centrality of essentialism for hybridity by asserting that hybridity puts together only traces of other meanings and discourses

the act of cultural translation [...] denies the essentialism of a prior given original or originary culture [...] hybridity is to me the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge [...] the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like a translation so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses.

Extracts from conversations led me to question how any identification performed by Black women and men could be completely devoid of essentialism because in their stories of lived experiences individuals talk about their racialized skin. Blackness means that skin is "a site and a primary means of communicating with others, of establishing signifying relations; it is moreover an 'inscribing surface' for the marks of

those others” (Anzieu, 1989: 40). As racialized skin signifies, how can hybridity as identification<sup>7</sup> not have recourse to essentialism? This is the question I asked myself repeatedly and this led me to look at the possibility for the emergence of hybridity in talk, based on a number of themes to which I now turn.

### Talk as a ‘third space’

Bhabha’s words above also have impact in terms of the data used. Importantly he locates hybridity itself within the ‘third space’ of the negotiation of identity positionings<sup>8</sup>. This helped me to deal with the issue of how hybridity as a ‘third space’ of negotiation could be located within talk-in-interaction.

In Homi Bhabha’s (1994a: 178) view enunciation opens up the possibility for the emergence of other cultural meanings and narrative spaces<sup>9</sup>. The enunciative present for him is important because it provides “a process by which objectified others may be turned into subjects of their own history and experience” (Bhabha, 1994a: 178). At the everyday level talk assumes significance in the emergence of such agency as the “very question of identification only emerges *in-between* disavowal and designation” (Bhabha, 1994b: 50). This is the space within talk that is significant for my purposes. That between designation and disavowal, as this in-

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<sup>7</sup> See Bhabha, 1990:211.

<sup>8</sup> For Bhabha (1996a:204) “in [...] cultural translation there opens up a ‘space-in-between’, [...] both the return to an originary ‘essentialist’ self-consciousness as well as a release into an endlessly fragmented subject in ‘process’”. Hybridity thus does not allow for endless fragmentation: there are boundaries to the subject, some essence that remains even while it is being remade.

<sup>9</sup> Bhabha (1994a:178) talks about the enunciative as a more dialogic process which enables the subversion of “the rationale of the hegemonic moment [by] relocating alternative, hybrid sites of cultural negotiation”.

between space provides a location for “elaborating strategies of self-hood - singular or communal - that initiate new signs of identity” (Bhabha, 1994c: 1-2). This in-between space in talk is a space as directly lived and is deciphered, negotiated and transformed interactionally.

What can talk as a space tell us that other data cannot? It is not so much what it can tell us as what it allows us to see. Talk as a space allows us to see Black identifications in progress: as multiple, dynamic, fleeting with each passing word, whilst at the same time reproducing a contingent essentialism. It also allows us to see the negotiation and simultaneity of sameness and difference so central to hybridity<sup>10</sup> as a negotiation of positions.

The recognition of the significance of the in-between space in talk of designation and disavowal meant that the project could use extracts from interactions in which identity was negotiated, to locate the process of hybridity at an everyday interactional level. The issues of theory and method highlighted by this are looked at in Chapter 1. This chapter draws together the theoretical strands developed in the rest of the project to account for a ‘hybridity of the everyday’. It also looks at a method for analysing talk along with ethical considerations, data collection methods and researcher reflexivity.

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<sup>10</sup> Hybridity “makes difference into sameness and sameness into difference but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different”. Instead what we have is “difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity” (Young, 1995a:26).



### Black identities as texts of social practice

For Bhabha (1990: 211) the traces of discourses and meanings are important for hybridity. His thought made me turn to the conversations for a way of understanding what this meant for identity. This proved to be quite complex as individuals did not tend to say “I am Black because..” or “I think Black identity is..”. Rather, what they did was tell stories of their life experiences and those of others, through which it became apparent what identifications they were trying to make at that point in time. These identifications became apparent as interactants produced their own and others’ definitions of Blackness and applied or disavowed these in talk. A focus on hybridity introduced a level of complexity into my excursions into the data, as I had to look for hybridity in talk not focused on this as a topic in order to show its emergence at the level of the everyday.

Working through the conversations made me realise that I had to conceptualise Black identity as identification, but also something else (Chapter 2). This is so as for my informants, identity combined their personal worlds with the space of culture and social relations. Identities are therefore lived and have to be conceptualized as they develop in social practice. As *texts of social practice*<sup>11</sup> performed in talk, Black identities reflect what constantly occurs in the extracts as individuals spoke about their lives. That is *texts of social practice* highlighted the interplay of discourses in identity construction. The notion of ‘text’ is important because this concerns the

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Texts of social practice’ is my conceptualisation of Black identities. This term attempts to attend to the dialogical construction of identities as speakers negotiate discourses but also to acknowledge interpersonal interaction as discourse.

production and reading of meanings by interactants involved in conversations. 'Social practice' implies discourses that extend past the various acts performed during interaction, towards a more Foucauldian focus on discourses. Black identities as *texts of social practice* is significant for this project because it makes it possible to see the negotiation of positions in which speakers engage when they translate and apply / disavow discourses as they construct their identifications in talk-in-interaction. Within Chapter 2, 'texts of social practice' is placed alongside an exploration of the construction of the Black other within colonial discourse and hybridity, diaspora and difference within post-colonial Britain to show the continuing significance of discourses in Black identifications.

### *A hybridity of the everyday*

I have spoken above of the possibility for talk as a space of negotiation which allows hybridity to arise. Before looking at this in more detail, though, I had to understand how hybridity as a theoretical concept could relate to the conversations (Chapter 3). I had to do this because hybridity has been articulated in the literature without reference to how real-time phenomena are oriented to in the social<sup>12</sup> and talk. Through the work of Young, Bhabha, Gilroy, Hall, Spivak and Fanon, hybridity's conceptual threads and discontinuities were drawn out. These various understandings of hybridity were applied to extracts from talk on change in the younger generation of Black people. The extracts revealed the persistence of essence in the talk as interactants spoke of this change. What this alerts us to is the simultaneity of the 'same' and 'different' in Black identification talk. This is

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<sup>12</sup> An exception to this is Paul Gilroy's (1993d) "The peculiarities of the black English".

exemplified by extracts from a category in the data that I call strategic hybridity. Here individuals were translating from some essence and then transferring this to practices on / of the body to produce meanings about change. Hybrid identifications then are about constructing the meaning of 'different from the same' in talk-in-interaction. This helps to extend Bhabha's idea of the negotiation of identity positioning as well as to begin to show recourse to essence in identification talk. Such recourse to essence also illustrates the dialogical interaction between individuals and discourses of Black identity that occurs as discourses are translated in the making of identifications.

### Translation

Bhabha (1990: 211) makes a link between translation and hybridity whilst focusing on the importance of discourses and meanings for them. Looking at extracts of interaction it became obvious that there are more than just traces of other meanings and discourses in the making of identifications interactionally. Hybridity has its alterity, essence in talk. This essentialism was in some cases focused on notions of originary culture. The recognition that hybridity and essence are simultaneous in talk had a corollary. That is, that hybridity's linked concept of translation had to be redefined in order to account for how individuals negotiate positions in talk (Chapter 4). What underlay this was the continuing question: if what I had seen in the data was the use of essence to describe change in terms of authenticity / inauthenticity, how could it be possible that hybridity was a total break from essence? Looking at how interactants translate discourses of what is Black and what is not I began to notice something interesting. There was a positioning and repositioning occurring as

individuals applied 'authenticity' to themselves and others in talk about past events. It was at this point that it became apparent that reflexivity was involved in this negotiation of positions. Also it became apparent that people were producing more than just notions of Blackness relating only to their own viewpoint. This is so as similar ideas were spread across the data in terms of Blackness as skin, culture, 'race', community, consciousness and politics. There was then a continuation of ideas of origin in this anti-essentialist moment in theorizing Black identities.

Translation emerged from this as a way of describing the search for personal and group meanings from discourses in which speakers engage in their identification talk. Reflexivity is necessarily linked to translation because of the critical awareness of self and others in which interactants engage in the production of identifications using these discourses. *Translation as reflexivity* became a dialogic analysis (Chapter 6) that stands at the border between positioning and repositioning, between designation and disavowal: the negotiation of positions of which Bhabha speaks. Hybridity emerged in the repositioning, so *translation as reflexivity* is productive of a *hybridity of the everyday*.

#### Towards a model to account for a *hybridity of the everyday*

The interactions were replete with examples of the negative impact of identity discourses on speakers' lives. These particular examples and *translation as reflexivity* enabled me to turn to develop a theoretical model of how hybridity as a dialogic process could be present in conversation. This model though, had to draw

from two separate perspectives because of the positioning and repositioning which was so apparent in the extracts. In Chapter 5 and 6 I attend to this issue, first by looking at Foucault and then latterly Bakhtin.

After listening to the data I turned to Foucault to see how his work could contribute to my emerging understanding of hybridity as an everyday interactional phenomenon which involved the use of discourses in the negotiation of positions. I began to see how what I was observing in the data could be related to statements and therefore discourses as speakers linked the macro and the micro in producing positionings in talk (Chapter 5). Central to the analysis is a model gleaned from Foucault's work in which, there are diagrams of Blackness from which spring statements that act to position subjects. Foucault's idea of subjugated knowledge is also important in accounting for the speaking subject along with Bakhtin's dialogics (although this is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 6). The chapter looks at how people negotiate biopower and governmentality in the production of a critical ontology of the self through their identification positionings produced in life stories. In achieving this by using *translation as reflexivity* as a process to link global and local identity discourses, interactants demonstrate their participation at the local level in discursive constructions. *Translation as reflexivity* emerges as being productive of a hybridity that critiques identification discourses of the Black same. Critique occurs within the moment of narration so stories become sites of a hybridity of the moment producing spaces of difference from 'the changing same'.

However, even with Foucault's idea of subjugated knowledges he did not account for the repositioning which was occurring in the data as speakers produced critical ontologies of the self. I turned to Bakhtin to see what dialogism could contribute to the emerging model (Chapter 6). The data used for this part of the project focused on talk about the Black body as marked by discourses of 'race'. Using Kristeva's work I equated this marking with abjection. Through the *translation as reflexivity* implicit in dialogic analysis speakers construct themselves as radically other in their stories to counter abjection. Abjection assumes an important role then in repositioning as speakers produce different addressivities in their critiques of 'race' categories as the effect of discourses as well as the 'natural' ground for identity. These different addressivities were given the status of hybrid identifications. Dialogics in the form of co-being and addressivity therefore helped to account for hybrid agency.

The model drawn from Foucault and Bakhtin is that of hybrid identities in talk-in-interaction as being a continual process of *statement- translation as reflexivity-addressivities*, where statements are the discursive positionings and addressivities are hybrid positionings. This model provides the basis for the examination of a *hybridity of the everyday* as a process of the negotiation of positions in talk in which there is an interplay between abjection and the making of new addressivities. Hybrid identifications at the level of the everyday emerge as dialogical constructions in which there is simultaneity of the same and difference, so that they are at once new but also recognisable.

Chapter 7 applies the model of a *hybridity of the everyday as statement-translation as reflexivity- addressivities*. It does this by using a variety of examples to look at the production of hybrid positionings through the vehicle of essence. The meanings of events and actions are a means by which individuals claim identities and in so doing negotiate hybridity through essentialism. The radical otherness produced in hybrid identifications is simultaneously a radical sameness, as tellers both inscribe and produce discourses of Blackness in talk-in-interaction. Interlocutors' interactions provide an opportunity to interrogate Paul Gilroy's (1997) idea of Blackness as a 'changing same' in which essence is maintained and modified in a decidedly non-traditional tradition.

Through using extracts from interactions I examine Bhabha's notion of 'translated hybrid subjects' who function within a 'third space' of hybridity. I argue that essence remains within translation and hybridity and that the 'third space' is constructed within interactions in which people show their awareness of discursive positionings, abject these and negotiate other positionings. That is, a *hybridity of the everyday* is present in talk-in-interaction. Further, I claim that translation as a process is better thought of as *translation as reflexivity* in order to describe its role in the process of making hybrid identifications in talk.

### Conclusion

My aim is to critique Bhabha's claim that hybridity has no recourse to essence. In order to do this I had to use different theoretical approaches throughout this project.

This is a strength but it could also be a major weakness. It is a strength because my excursions into theory were driven by a need to try and account for what was happening in the extracts of conversation as I tried to allow for the possibility of the 'third space of hybridity' in talk. The weakness however, is that this project could be seen as an un-reconciled mixture of theoretical perspectives which are not interrogated in depth. These perspectives do use different approaches to power, agency, structure and identity. For my purposes though, what I could gain from them in terms of understanding hybridity as a process in talk was more important than these differences. Therefore I am not trying to reconcile these theories, but rather trying to use them to facilitate my analysis of emergent themes in the extracts. Themes of pride / shame; abjection / acceptance; belongingness / otherness; authenticity / in-authenticity; same / different. Using different theoretical perspectives offers a range of possibilities for what is still a work in progress, not a finished text that provides definitive answers to the question of hybridity.

What I have done is to try to create an approach for looking at hybrid identities in talk-in-interaction. An approach based on bringing Linguistics into dialogue with Cultural Studies theorising to account for the possibility of a *hybridity of the everyday*. I hope that in exploring the intertwined nature of hybridity and essence some of the ideas that emerged will be useful for others interested in hybridity. That is that:

- Black identities are texts of social practice;
- hybridity is an everyday interactional phenomenon in talk;
- hybridity is strategic;
- translation as reflexivity and abjection are central to the negotiation of positions in talk in which hybrid identifications arise;



- hybrid identifications emerge in talk through the process of *statement- translation as reflexivity- addressivity*;
- hybrid identifications are arrived at through essence as speakers develop critical ontologies of the self.
- and, the essences which Black individuals call on are those of Blackness as skin, culture, 'race', community, consciousness and politics.

Let us now turn to look at the interplay between theory and method which underlies this project.

#### Endnote

- D People feel like if yuh have a BLACK identity it's GOT to be: like yuh know? rice<sup>13</sup>  
an peas an chicken [ on a Sunday, an- ]
- S [ Oh tell mi ] ah know (.7) every- every Sunday as  
well yuh kya:n- yuh kya:n [ have a brea:k ]
- D [ An Nutriment ]=  
S =Yeah=  
D =Yuh know? (.6)  
S An PEAS SOUP on Satiday [ an all dat ]
- D [ Yeah ] yeah an an yuh know? [ .hhh if ]  
S [Yeah ah know]
- D yuh DO:N'T do that yuh know? an it's like AWA:RENESS of identity to DEM is  
based on how dark you are=  
S =Mhm: ah kno:w=  
D =Suh like ME: [ I have to PRO:VE ] myself all the time  
S [What happen to dem]

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix 2 for transcription conventions.

Chapter 1

Issues of Theory and Method

Tape 2 Side A LF: 54

- L To me a:hm pt (.6) ESPECIALLY EL:DERLY >WHITE PEOPLE< o:h yuh  
e:hm (.4) FI:RST they'll ask what YUH ARE:=
- Sh =Mhm (1.0)
- L So: the mere fact that they ask yuh what yuh are: means thay they can see  
that yuh're dif[ferent] that yuh're not like THEM=
- Sh [ Yeah] = [ °Yeah that's true° ]
- L [((.hhh .hhh .hhh) ) .hhh
- An then when yuh say ah'm BLA:CK (.4)
- Sh Yeah (.8)
- L But >yuh nuh (.)< what ah've said is >°ah've got a white parent an a  
Black parent but ah'm Black°< .hhh then they'll say WELL YUH'RE NOT  
BLACK RE:ALLY

This conversation follows talk in which LF has been sharing with me the problems that she has in being seen to be Black by other Black people because her skin marks her as 'mixed race'<sup>1</sup>. In the extract she illustrates the interaction of designation, translation and disavowal in the space of talk. In her first turn she shows us that because of her skin, *what* she is, is often questioned by whiteness. That is the nature of her negation as a woman who is not 'quite white'. After Sh's "Mhm" and a pause L translates the relevance of her experience in terms of being marked as different from whiteness irrespective of having a white mother. Sh agrees with this turn. L laughs in overlap and then after an inbreath begins talk that disavows the place of ambiguity in which she has been placed by whiteness. Within this

<sup>1</sup> Speakers use this term as a description of themselves and others. However, it reifies 'race' in my view. Ifekwunigwe (1999:17-19) provides a useful alternative in her discussion of *métisse*.

disavowal she repositions herself as someone who claims Blackness, explains her ancestry and then claims Blackness again. Her talk then continues based on even her claim not being seen to be enough as they still say “well yuh’re not Black really”.

In this extract LF shows us how she is positioned by discourses of ‘race’ in just ordinary everyday interaction. She has to surmount this positioning by repositioning herself within a different reading of this very same discourse. I also position myself as a researcher in terms of the readings I make of talk as conversations and texts as I listen to the tapes, transcribe them and read the transcripts. These conversations are constituted by a diversity of voices in dialogue: a layering of different ‘voices as speakers’ in the talk and in reported speech; in translation where the speaker’s voice critiques and undermines the talk of others. The movement between voices illustrates speakers reflexively positioning themselves in dialogue with another. A movement from a discursively positioned self, translation and speaker repositioning so that an-other self emerges through talk-in-interaction. This reading is my understanding of how hybridity arises in the interactions and shows particular orientations to the interaction of theory and method.

This chapter attempts to attend to the “interplay between theory, ways of knowing about the social world and methodology and practice in qualitative research” (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 1). In what follows I will try to show this interplay by looking at what made me decide to use talk-in-interaction as data; the ethical considerations which underlay the research; how the data was collected; the

interplay between Foucault and Bakhtin; and issues of analysis and reflexivity. This will take me in at times a bewildering number of directions. However, this is necessarily the case because this chapter acts to summarise what will be discussed subsequently and to look at how this relates to method.

### Talk-in-interaction as data

The literary critic, Homi Bhabha (1983) illustrates how the question of enunciation demonstrates the operation of a subject because of the repertoire of conflictual positions that constitute the subject in colonial discourse (Young, 1995a). This implies a link between individuals and macro-social structures in the discursive construction of identities. It could be then, that it is through life stories that we can get to the operation and meanings of these conflictual positions in the construction of individual and communal identities, and the interplay between the two in constructing an argument for a *hybridity of the everyday in talk*.

Looking at these life stories it must be remembered that history is always ambiguous and people remember and construct the past in ways that reflect their present need for meaning (Ang, 1994). So, in common with the post-structuralist view of the self as fiction, identities too might be fictions as speakers are remembering selectively and conferring meanings on experiences that did not possess these meanings at the time of their occurrence (Freeman, 1993). This problem would perhaps be viewed as insurmountable if one assumes that there are truths beneath the fiction (Freeman,

1993). However, if there is no such assumption what becomes meaningful for the analysis is that the earlier experience “therefore, is being predicated in retrospect, in narrative, as I gaze back and try to understand how I have gotten to be here, doing what I am” (Freeman, 1993: 14).

Stories of lived experience link both the past and the present and are a good source of data, therefore, on identifications. This is so as “narrational identities have to do with stories, acts and characters that make the world a cultural world” (Holland et al, 1998: 127). Within these stories speakers therefore reproduce positional identities in terms of “relations of hierarchy, distance or perhaps affiliation” (Holland et al, 1998: 128). However, using stories of lived experience entailed a careful personal debate about data collection and ethical considerations.

### Data collection

I started from three premises in the collection of data. Two of these will be mentioned below in terms of ethical dilemmas. That is that Black communities are suffering from research fatigue and therefore there was a need for empowering research. The third premise is that as a Black researcher I should think through for myself what I would see as empowering data collection interactions.

Whilst thinking this through I began to realise that if I was going to ask individuals to reveal aspects of their lives, themselves and their identifications, then I should expect that the talk would not always be about celebration. There would also be trauma involved because of the nature of our racialized position within the British context and the sorts of experiences which we are forced to endure. For me as a Black woman given this scenario, 'empowering data collection methods' therefore, began to take on a definite form. The concern should always be for the person as an individual, who should:

- a) feel free to express themselves as and how they feel 'right';
- b) decide whether or not to be involved in the research;
- c) feel able to reveal only what they want to;
- d) and, decide if the data they contributed should be used as it was produced.

What this meant in interactional terms was that I would feel most comfortable in a situation in which I felt that I was involved in a conversation with someone with whom I shared some commonalities and with whom I could explore traumatic experiences and differences comfortably. I think that I would also want to feel that whatever re-stimulation of trauma that emerged during the conversations would be left for me to work through, unless I specifically asked for intervention from other interactants. I would like the opportunity to begin from where I chose, to speak my life as it made sense to me, to stop wherever I chose, to build my own 'gestalt'. That is, if I was 'speaking my life' the researcher should not interrupt what I was constructing through

introducing their concerns, but should listen attentively and, if they wanted to follow-up anything or encourage more talk, to use my own talk as a resource for doing that. Last, I would like to know what theme the researcher was interested in pursuing and how what I had contributed would be used. A long list, but one which is necessary to allay my qualms about the ethics of research with Black communities.

These concerns impacted on my sampling and collection methods. I decided to use audio and video tapes to record interactions in contrastive story telling settings from individuals of Caribbean heritage born in Britain who lived in London, the Midlands and Yorkshire. This involved 36 informants and 58.5 hours of tape. I also decided that the sample would be made up of people who knew each other as friends, colleagues and family members in order for an immediate sharing of experiences to be comfortable. Since I would be starting with my own network and snowballing, much of the sample would have been or would still be actively involved in Black community politics. The collection methods used over the two-year collection period, varied according to the circumstances and the wishes of the participants. However, they shared the common features of respondents being aware that I was interested in looking at Black identity, there were no interview questions as I was interested in what they thought and they could turn off the tape recorder or the video at whatever point they wished. The methods used were:

1/ For those people easily tempted by a meal, I prepared dinner and invited groups of my friends over to my house. Some of the after-dinner conversations, as I call

them, include members of my family and myself. (This is why Pe, So and Sh do not appear in the list of participants in Appendix 1). People knew that I was interested in Black identity but at that point in the research I was particularly interested in what reminiscences could reveal about identity. So people started with stories of their childhoods in Britain and later produced general stories from their lives.

2/ There were some participants who chose to speak to me in a one-to-one, as they felt better able to talk about their experiences in this way. I asked questions only about what was being said, as one would in a conversation, and tried to listen attentively as much could be conveyed non-verbally as well. I also asked questions as prompts if people said 'I don't know what to say', as well as disclosing aspects of my own experience, thoughts and feelings. An issue that emerged as a result of starting from whatever the individual needed to talk about, is that speakers spent time attending to problems within their lives and it took some time for them to get on to the topic with which I was concerned. Another issue is that of 'leaving the field'. Interestingly, this arose in a situation in which I did not see myself as entering any 'field' as a researcher, as I was already known by people within the networks of individuals who volunteered to be respondents initially. However, what happened in these conversations is that speakers saw them as cathartic and wanted to continue the work on themselves. I was invariably told 'come back and we'll do some more' or 'I really enjoyed that, when are we going to do it again?' This was after we had sat for three or more hours talking! I worry even now, two years on, that I could not fulfil this need.



3/ Working with a group of five people from London and Birmingham who knew each other, sharing my research theme and brainstorming possible areas that they could speak about. I then left them with the tape recorder for seven months to decide where, when, how and with whom they would record their contributions. They had complete control over what was spoken about as I was not involved after the initial brainstorming. I need to acknowledge the central role of DF as a gatekeeper in getting me access to this group of people and, in fact, being the person who everyone spoke to.

4/ The approach of leaving the recording equipment with a group was again used with the young people's video project. I was fortunate to be able to call on the help of Lu as a gatekeeper, through whom I gained access to a group of young men who were going to be part of a discussion group on Black male identity. My only part in this was that I got the group a video recorder. Lu, decided in collaboration with me to do recordings entitled 'A Day in the Life Of..'. The work with this group brought me face-to-face with the issue of paying respondents for their time. This was an issue because I felt at the time that given high Black youth unemployment and the fact that they were acting as my consultant-experts then they should be paid. So, in consultation with Lu I will contribute to the coffers of their basketball team.

5/ Finally, I recorded a lunchtime conversation on the theme of Black identity which occurred between management committee members of a Black not-for-profit project in a town in West Yorkshire. I had access to this organisation because I am also a management committee member.

These different collection methods made very little difference in terms of the richness of the conversational data. What was important about these different methods of data collection was that they enabled me to collect talk in contrastive story telling settings. This was important because I was mindful of the fact that speakers' talk about their lives can be a product of the relationship between conversational interactants. Contrastive story telling settings could then produce multiple perspectives in which differing, complementary and even contradictory data could emerge. These settings made it possible to see if similar themes emerged across speakers and interactions. Leaving the tape recorder and thereby the responsibility for making the recording with individuals was a useful approach. Through this, speakers felt very much more a part of the research process and felt empowered to 'lead' the development of the research area. Giving speakers a copy of their tapes and asking for comments in terms of what I could use also made me confident that I was getting as close as possible to their 'ethno-methods' in terms of Blackness.

Whilst listening to all the tape recordings in order to pull out themes, I drew a smaller sample based on interactions from the 15 participants listed in Appendix 1. The majority of the participants were in their thirties and were employed in the public sector. They were all born and brought up in Britain and all had visited the Caribbean- usually their parents' birthplace- at least once. This selection was based on the need to analyse data that was conversational. The sample of young men was left out because their recordings were monologic and this was also the case for two members of the London group. The Black community group conversation was not included because it rarely contained enough examples of speaker repositioning

which was central to my analysis, as this repositioning tended to be accomplished by other interactants. There is another inclusion/exclusion which is relevant here. That is my decision not to focus the project solely on data from 'mixed race' participants or to regard the 'mixed race' category as separate from Blackness. My decision was based on two things. First and most importantly, speakers narrated themselves as belonging to the category Black irrespective of heritage. As a researcher to exclude them from a category of their choice would have been to reproduce them as others. This links into my second reason for this choice. That is that part of my ethical agenda was not to reproduce participants in ways that dis-empowered them, but rather to use their own categories of identification rather than ascribing one to them.

### Ethical considerations

Along with the choice of research participants there were ethical considerations which impacted on the approaches to sampling and data collection outlined above.

These considerations spring from:

1/ a point of view which exists in the Black community as a whole, that we are over-researched and can see no improvement in our lives from research that is done;

2/ and from my political attachment to the necessity for research which seeks to 'empower' participants by enabling them to lead the development of the research question.

Haraway's (1991) view that accountability, positioning and partiality are important aspects of feminist objectivity is central in order to see how my research could be seen to be empowering. To take account of empowerment 'the researched' must not be reproduced in ways which re-inscribe inequality. This means that the research report must attend to the micro-political processes involved in the research and, questions of difference must be dealt with in the design, conduct, write-up and dissemination of the research study. These issues became important considerations also in the 'research on' and 'research with' involvements in which I became engaged with informants.

To negotiate some of these issues, I decided to make the recordings of interactions overt. I also offered all of the informants a copy of the recording to listen to and to contact me if there were any aspects of it which, on reflection, they were uncomfortable about being used. However, problems will still arise in terms of representation as "when the researcher produces representations for an outside audience, control of the data and its meanings shift very much towards the researcher [...] so even the most deliberate discourses are likely to be re-interpreted" (Cameron et al, 1992: 132).

The idea of empowering research could also be about platitudes. This was graphically illustrated to me when people I was approaching to be informants asked me a simple question. "What is in it for me?" This question for one potential informant was framed within the context of being unemployed for five years and,

therefore, only being willing to participate if he was paid. Awakening to Black community realities such as this made me see myself as a Black researcher with a privileged position, unable to say that my research was really empowering because it would go no way towards changing the lives of those involved. I began to become somewhat clearer about what my data collection methods needed to be focused on if I was to begin to grapple with at least some of my ethical agenda.

Doing discourses ethnomethodologically: looking at translation as reflexivity in identification talk.

My approach to analysing the data is based on two concepts that I use to embed the analysis of the transcribed texts into a sociological understanding, *texts of social practice* and *translation as reflexivity*. In my view Black British identities are texts of social practice. This implicates discourses, in both the Foucauldian and interactional senses, in the production of identities as interactionally meaningful. My analytic approach though is not firmly rooted in any one tradition but draws from Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis to facilitate a blurring of the line between theory and story. This blurring is significant in looking at how a *hybridity of the everyday* works through *translation as reflexivity in talk*.

In the interaction of theory and story we have to be mindful of both what speakers do with their talk and the discursive resources they draw on. This is so because a focus on what speakers do with talk allows in the ethnomethodological preoccupation with the activity of constructing and claiming Blackness itself in talk. Also, looking at the

discursive resources drawn on allows us to explore “the role of discourse in the construction of objects and subjects including the ‘self’ “ (Willig, 1999: 3). This means that the researcher can “identify subject positions which may constrain or facilitate particular actions and experiences” (Willig, 1999: 2). Subject positions that is, that speakers construct in their dialogic stories.

Reflexivity is inherent to all aspects of my approach and *translation as reflexivity* is my conceptual tool for analysing the positionings and counter-positionings within discourses in interaction, in which hybridity is accomplished. By translation I mean the deconstruction, reconstruction and application of discourses, both global and local, such that social reality becomes part of interaction. Further, translation also relates to interlocutors constructing relevance in the telling. Reflexivity refers to how portrayals of social realities both describe and constitute these realities, so that these portrayals cannot be separated from what they describe or the language used to describe them (Garfinkel, 1967). This view of reflexivity as both describing and constituting realities is similar to Bakhtin’s idea that “it is not only being addressed, receiving others’ words but the act of responding, which is already necessarily addressed, that informs our world through others. Identity as the expressible relationship to others is dialogical at both moments of expression, listening and speaking “ (Holland et al, 1999: 172). In Bakhtin’s terms because the self is the nexus of a flow of activity in which it also participates, it cannot be finalised. Identities then are reflexive and dialogical.

For my purposes reflexivity also needs another meaning. That is, to encompass Merleau-Ponty's (1968) view that reflexivity is "constitutive of the self process [and] is built into the very 'flesh' of the body-subject" (Crossley, 1996: 57). He argues that there is a "reflexivity [...] in all perception because we are visible-seers, tangible-touchers, audible-listeners; that is, because we are part of the (perceptible) world that we perceive" (Crossley, 1996: 57). As visible, tangible and audible, the view of others is always necessary to complete the reflexive loop because we need this to recognise our perceptible being. What one 'means' to others and oneself is interconnected as, "interaction is reflexively accountable [ and ] an actor's response to another actor's behaviour will be taken as indicating the respondent's understanding of the behaviour" (Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 104). Bakhtin also sees the necessity for the view of others to complete the loop in terms of 'authoring the self'. The self authors itself and is thus made knowable, in the words of others. If to be perceptible to others we cast ourselves in terms of the other, then we do that by seeing ourselves from the outside. That is we assume a position of transgression<sup>2</sup> or outsideness (Holland et al, 1999: 173-174). As speakers put themselves into the texts, the 'genres of Blackness', they produce outsideness and through this translation as reflexivity becomes dialogical critique.

In dialogical critique the meaning of verbal interaction depends upon the organisation of actions and interactions in time and space. In Conversation Analysis

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<sup>2</sup> For Holquist (1991:32-33) "'transgradient' is reached when the [...] existence of others is seen from outside [...] their own knowledge that they are being perceived by somebody else, [and] from beyond an awareness that such an other exists. [In] dialogism [...] there is [...] no way "I" can be completely transgradient to another *living* subject, nor can he or she be completely transgradient to me".

interaction is produced and understood as “responsive to the immediate, local contingencies of interaction” (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997: 69). The contributions of interlocutors are shaped by what was just said or done. It is understood in relation to the prior, such that each contribution provides a new context for the next contribution (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997). Further, identifications “are part of producing and understanding conduct but that [...] conduct helps to constitute the identities of the participants” (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997: 69-70). A conversation analytic approach is therefore itself dialogical. These understandings of the interplay of reflexivity, discourses, authoring the self and translation as reflexivity has meant that my analytic approach has needed to become a creative fusion. This is so, as accounts are constructed out of strategies and resources that acquire coherence in the flow of the talk in which identifications are accomplished. So what this ‘hybrid’ analytic approach will do is enable a reading for discourses in talk in terms of how people place themselves within broader social, political, cultural and structural contexts. Let us see what this approach does not do even though its data are storied accounts.

#### Am I engaged in narrative analysis?

This is a question I have asked myself throughout this project. For narrativists, “life stories have beginnings, relations of cause and effect and intelligible conclusions” (de Peuter, 1998: 40). This points to the interiority of selfhood so my answer must be no. In the interactions there is a juxtaposition of multiple plots and voices of ‘the same’/‘other’ arrayed across time and space. This leads me to question the notion of a unified self that narrates itself. Bakhtin’s theory of the *transgression* of identity



challenges the concept of the interiority of selfhood by reinterpreting 'boundary' (de Peuter, 1998: 38). Boundary ceases to be exclusive of otherness and becomes, instead, a site of the dialogic definition of the self. In other words, there can be no same without other, no hybridity without essence. Identity becomes a dialogue on the boundary of same and other, a continuing dialogue between real or imagined interlocutors in which "the voices of others are equal partners in self-dialogues" (de Peuter, 1998: 38). Life stories become active dialogues of self and other such that

The dialogical-narrative self is not a fixed text, but is a multitude of situated dialogic reinterpretations, reordered with each telling and hearing in changing social contexts (de Peuter, 1998: 45).

Within the conversations there is a layering of voices (cf. Günther, 1998) as speakers tell their lives which shows the dialogical-storied self in motion. Prior to the next example, D has been talking about how her shade of skin means that she has been taken to be Iranian, Greek, Italian and Pakistani rather than a Jamaican ancestry woman. She continues to speak about her own identity using the voice of an 'authentic' Caribbean mixed race older woman who describes her as a chameleon. After her story of this encounter she translates and reflexively applies this woman's words to the meaning of her own identity. That is "so I look like all dese different things an like wherever I am it's like that part will be more prominent an all dat an to me dat kinah sums up my identity in a way". Her identity for her is fluid because of the ambiguity produced by shade.

Tape 1 Side B DF: 11-12

D >But dis ONE woman ah met in Barbadoes summed it up< she was MIXED  
 race [ she ] was eighty six (.8) [ .hhh ] an a:hm (.4) she was part Indian an  
 Sh [Mhm] [ Yeah ]  
 D part Afri:can=  
 Sh =Mhm=

She then goes on to say that this woman was her friends' mother and that she really liked her before she continues

D An one day she sat me down an she said to me yuh know yuh're from  
 MAGICAL breed (.) so I said what d'yuh mean? .hhh she said yuh're a  
 chameleon (1.0)  
 Sh °Mhm°=  
 D =An I sehs >what d'yuh MEA:N? yuh nuh? cos ah couldn UNDERSTAND<=  
 Sh =[ >°Mhm°<]  
 D [ An ] she said A CHAMELEON WHEREVER THEY ARE: (1.1) they  
 become the colour (1.1)  
 Sh °Oh yeah°=  
 D =Of whatever they're on (1.0) so like I look like all dese different (.7)  
 Sh = Yeah=  
 D = THI:NGS an like wherever I am it's like that PA:RT will be mo:re  
 [PRO]MINENT an all dat an to me: dat ki:nah sums up=  
 Sh [Yeah] =°Mhm::° (.5)  
 D My identity in a way:,

Such layering of voices illustrates the multi-voiced nature of life/self stories in which stories replay a multiplicity of positions. There is no linearity to these stories. We therefore have to draw on a more Bakhtinian idea about life stories. For de Peuter (1998: 40) the "dialogic/narrative model" draws on literary criticism and postmodern novelistic literature to expand storied selfhood. In the architectonic novel "linearity and order are disrupted as the subject is exposed from multiple perspectives; oppositional value-orientations co-exist, producing dynamic tensions which seek neither resolution nor assimilation" (de Peuter, 1998: 40-41). If this is applied to life stories what it illuminates is the dialogical movement of contrasting identity positions.

Multi-voicedness is privileged: the dialogic relationship among different voices rejects the myth of the unified self, speaking accounts from a centralised position. The disruption of the architectonic novel also relates to my use of different theoretical perspectives in order to show the agonistic struggle in which speakers engage in constructing hybrid identifications.

What I am attempting to do through looking at life stories is to seek out the “liminal self: the self on the border of identity and difference” (de Peuter, 1998: 45) in the textual interactions of voices. This is where a focus on Discourse and Conversation Analyses as methods and *translation as reflexivity* as process, are important. Conversation analysis, discourse analysis and *translation as reflexivity* allow us to see ‘essential identities’ unveiled as monologic voices of domination and the emergence of discourses of difference in talk. This dialogic story ensures that the self is never fixed but is constantly emerging and re-emerging.

Such dynamic interaction with discourses fits into my point of view that Black identities are *texts of social practice* which are in effect critical ontologies of the self produced during interaction. Following Schutz, these texts are ‘social’ because they are ‘other-oriented’ and intend the other as a conscious intelligent being, who can be affected to produce a response which is oriented back to the self (Crossley, 1996: 79). Identity is produced through and reflexively embedded in language use and it is through looking at how experience is described and oriented to by interactants, that we might get a glimpse of how identifications are made by speakers within their

milieus. As, “our sense of ourselves is based in stories which we tell about ourselves, which exemplify the sort of persons we feel that we are and which construct and sustain a sense of continuity over time. Autobiographies identify us both to ourselves and to others” (Crossley, 1996: 59).

Meaning is an important part of this production and reproduction of identifications. In speaking of meaning though, I do not want to focus on the mind “but rather [on] interaction, or social groups, or societal structures” (Van Dijk, 1997a: 9). This is the case because there is no authentic subject whose identity is independent of, or prior to, culture<sup>3</sup>. Further for Black identities as *texts of social practice* to be useful we have to think discursively as, “the notion of *social practice* usually implies a broader dimension of discourse than [the] various acts accomplished by language users in interpersonal interaction” (Van Dijk, 1997b: 5). My interest then is in looking at discourse at both micro and macro levels “in terms of the social actions accomplished by *language users* when they communicate with each other in *social situations* and within *society* and *culture* at large” (Van Dijk, 1997b: 14). In achieving a shared interactional world, speakers make that publicly observable to the researcher (Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 104). This leads to a need to look at the interaction between theory and story.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Foucault persuasively details the historical process of “subjectification by discursive practices, and the politics of exclusion which all such subjectification appears to entail” (Hall, 1996a:2). While for Holquist (1991:28-29) “the Bakhtinian just-so story of subjectivity is the tale of how I get myself from the other [...]. I see my self as I conceive others might see it. In order to forge a self, I must do so from *outside*. In other words, I *author* myself. [...] [but] in existence that is shared there can be nothing absolute, including nothing absolutely new”.

### Blurring the line between theory and story

Listening to the stories, transcribing them and reading the texts, made me appreciate identities as life stories in which experiences, thoughts and points of view are organised to be recounted to an audience. In Giddens' (1991a: 215) discussion of the reflexive project of the self, the telling of life stories informs identity, when individuals negotiate at all times where they are and who they are. Indeed, "it is through the individual's autobiography that [their] relationship to public or dominant discourses can be explored" (Birch, 1998: 175). Whether these data are called stories, narratives or autobiographies, the "telling about yourself and your experiences is the assembly of life episodes that the researcher can use to show how individuals see themselves and place their understanding of social life" (Birch, 1998: 178). Individuals, then, retell power and knowledge structures and place themselves in relation to these.

Storied accounts of experiences- or hypothetical experiences in some cases- are important analytically as speakers "construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives" (Riessman, 1993: 1). In this way "individuals become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their lives" (Riessman, 1993: 2). Individuals who face the "biographic disruption"<sup>4</sup> of racism and Black community exclusions, rebuild coherent selves in their identification stories which are generally thematically organised, but are sometimes

also episodically organised. In performing selves through their stories, what speakers do is create texts that are partial and selective representations of experience. Stories reveal not only what is being claimed to have happened but also, how tellers understood/understand those events. That is, the meanings which they attribute to the events. These narratives cannot be interpreted without reference to discourses such as those power/knowledge systems of 'race', class, gender, sexuality and ability within which tellers live and, within which, their talk has to be interpreted. Stories are then interpretative, but also require interpretation by interlocutors (and analysts). In these acts of interpretation, interactants produce theory in the Schutzian (1967) sense, of knowledge found in the thinking of people in everyday life. It is these theories which I look for and interpret as an analyst.

As I look for these theories, a focus on both process and content is important as whilst talking about themselves and others, individuals demonstrate their dialogic relationship with their milieus. They also contribute to, interpret and change this relationship. Such a focus on process and content is also important, first because the construction of identifications has a sequential and interactional basis as a result of our involvement in interactions where our talk is produced for specific others. Second, because the speakers in these interactions are involved in relations with the social. Identities then are social products, results of the identification work in which speakers engage when they interact (cf. Boden, 1994; Widdicombe and Woffitt,

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<sup>4</sup> For Riessman (1993:2) a biographic disruption arises in respondents narrativizations of "particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a break between ideal and real, self and society".

1995). Based on this I have set myself two clear analytical tasks to account for a *hybridity of the everyday*:

1/ to look at the fine, sequential, turn-by-turn detail of talk-in-interaction;

2/ to look at the use of discourses in talk-in-interaction.

As a result it is necessary to develop an approach to link a Foucauldian concept of discourses, Bakhtinian dialogics and ethnomethodological and discourse analytic concerns around people linking the macro and the micro in talk. The analytic interest is in both discourse in terms of specific interactions and how a discourse, or a set of 'statements' constitutes self and others. This fits both with my conceptualisation of Black identities as *texts of social practice* and my development of *translation as reflexivity* through interaction with the data, as a mechanism for looking at both of these versions of discourse in interaction. In trying to make this link between Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis, I am not interested in "discover[ing] indisputable facts about a single social reality" (Miller, 1997: 25), but rather in setting up a dialogic relationship between theoretical perspectives on the subject and methodological strategies, in order to understand how hybridity is present in the everyday, mundane activity of identity storytelling.

Hybridity means that I must also account for the agency involved in the deconstruction and remaking of Blackness that is apparent in the conversations. Rather like *bricoleurs* who build with existing materials "the meaning that we make of ourselves is, in Bakhtin's terms, "authoring the self" (Holland, et al, 1998: 173).

However, we are not agents able to author ourselves as we choose because of the intervention of the other. We represent ourselves to ourselves from the vantage point of others and these representations are important in our experiences of ourselves (Holquist, 1991). "The other is authored, captured and finalized in language [...]. And by the same token, in answering the other as its necessary counterpart, the self represents (and thereby finalizes) 'itself' through a collective language" (Holland, 1998:173). This is a point of meeting in Bakhtin and Foucault. That is that discourses work to position individuals. There is also a point of cleavage in these two perspectives though, in that for Bakhtin, discourses also provide individuals with the tools to re-create their positions. Speakers can therefore "reassert control through the rearrangement of cultural forms as evocations of position" (Holland et al, 1998: 45). Within this project addressivity as a repositioning produces such hybrid agency.

The hybridity of my analytic approach is necessary in my attempt to show the dynamism of identifications in interaction and the subtlety involved in the hybridity of the everyday that arises in talk. This approach allows me to read texts from a variety of angles so as to facilitate a blurring of the line between theory and story as speakers move in and out of analytical and conceptual frameworks (Miller, 1997). There is a link here with my ethical practice of giving voice to my respondents by having analyses which are theory constructing activities in which segments of interactions are the foci. I want, therefore, to put Black women and men and their stories at the centre of the analysis of identifications. By doing this I am acknowledging that knowledge is situated historically and socially.



Speaking from her vantage point within feminist theorising, Haraway (1991: 193,195 and 196) privileges the objectivity gained by 'partial sight' thus:

The topography of subjectivity is multi-dimensional, so, therefore, is vision. The knowing self is partial in all its guises, never finished, whole, simply there and original [...] I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives, the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring and structured body versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity [...] We seek the knowledges [...] ruled by partial sight and limited voice.

She thus highlights the need for the voices of the marginal to be accorded equity with mainstream voices in social science theorising. Haraway also makes the case that situated knowledges contribute to knowledge making by generating a fuller picture of 'the social' and, makes obvious the fact that situated knowledge requires "the object of knowledge [ to ] be pictured as an actor and an agent, not a screen or a ground or a resource" (Haraway, 1991: 198).

I, therefore, start from the interactional production of meanings, including what speakers and listeners take for granted and expand outwards. This privileges the

interactants' experiences. However, my interpretation of these experiences cannot be avoided. This is so, as, in looking at a *hybridity of the everyday* as the creation of different addressivities through *translation as reflexivity*, dialogical identification stories emerge as situated in interactions, as well as in 'social', 'cultural' and 'institutional' discourses, which must be brought to bear to interpret them. This underlies my rationale for linking Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis in analysing identification talk.

#### Foucauldian discourses and Bakhtinian dialogics

In Bakhtin's view language is not a system of abstract grammatical categories but a world that is ideologically saturated. "Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working towards [...] ideological centralization which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization" (Bakhtin, 1981: 271). This unitary language "produced by centripetal forces is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*] and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981: 270).

Heteroglossia is a way of conceiving the world as constituted by a multiplicity of languages each with its own distinct formal markers (Holquist, 1991: 69). The subject is surrounded by a myriad of responses, each of which must be framed in a specific discourse chosen from this available multiplicity. All "utterances are heteroglot in that they are shaped by forces whose particularity and variety are

practically beyond systematization” (Holquist, 1991: 70). Heteroglossia therefore reflects Bakhtin’s preoccupation with the double or multiple voicedness of human experience. However, his “dialogism is primarily oriented to the canonical spheres of ‘verbal’ art and this prevented Bakhtin from theorizing heteroglossia as a general paradigm for all social and cultural formations” (Sandywell, 1998: 209). In Holquist’s (1991: 70) view though the concept of heteroglossia “comes as close as possible to conceptualizing a locus where the great centripetal and centrifugal forces that shape discourse can meaningfully come together”. The space between centripetal and centrifugal forces therefore represents a ‘third space’ within Bakhtin in which heteroglossia allows agency in the dialogical production of texts of social practice.

Bakhtin’s unitary language as posited and opposed to the possibility of heteroglossia is reminiscent of the Foucauldian notion that in any era there is a deep-seated set of discursive regularities which determine what it is possible to see, think and experience alongside subjugated knowledges. At the level of language there continues to be a connection between Foucault and Bakhtin in terms of ‘the word’. For Bakhtin, ‘the word’ in living conversation is oriented toward an answer word and forms itself within the time and space of the already spoken and the as yet unsaid<sup>5</sup>. “The word in language is half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981: 293). Indeed, “all words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, an age group, the day and hour” (Bakhtin, 1981: 280). One must take the word from other people’s mouths and make it one’s own (Bakhtin, 1981: 294). Heteroglossia disrupts

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<sup>5</sup> The word forms itself within the context of “the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word” (Bakhtin, 1981: 280).

the centripetal forces and allows the emergence of hybridity in terms of the development of agency through talk. Methodologically what this means is that it "is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction ridden, tension filled unity of two embattled tendencies [..]" (Bakhtin, 1981: 272).<sup>6</sup>

So although Bakhtin operates in abstraction from the institutional sites in which the complex relations of discourse and power are actually negotiated (Pechey, 1989: 52), and allows for hybrid agency, we can draw parallels between his thoughts on 'the word' and Foucauldian discourses. This is so as "in any period, it is only possible to speak a few things, [..] because the rarefaction<sup>7</sup> of discourse [..] is crucially linked to the reproduction of relations of social domination through the control of meaning" (McNay, 1996: 75). What it is possible to say in any time and space cannot be considered in isolation from power and asymmetrical social relations (McNay, 1996: 75). Discourses and meanings are the sites of struggle as hegemonic social relations fix meanings. The construction of 'racial' identity through the stereotype or through 'race' is an example of this fixation of meaning. To resist such hegemonic meaning entails the disruption of naturalised forms of discourse. Bakhtin's heteroglossia shows us the possibility for such a disruption. This is a point of cleavage between Bakhtin and Foucault that is worth noting.

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<sup>6</sup> Contradiction is a part of a discourse analytic approach to looking at texts.

<sup>7</sup> "The principle of rarefaction is offered as an explanation of why it is that in any era [..] in relation to the wealth of possible statements that can be formulated in natural language, only relatively few things

Although Bakhtinian heteroglossia contains the possibility for struggle, Foucault's assertion of the anteriority of discourse forecloses this as "power is transferred from the realm of the non-discursive into a formal principle of discursive regulation" (McNay, 1996: 74). Such discursive regulation means "discursive subject positions become a priori categories which individuals seem to occupy in an unproblematic fashion" (McNay, 1996: 77). For McNay (1996) the archaeological approach does not explain how individuals do not experience the dispersion of subject positions in discourse. Indeed, "archaeology brackets off a consideration of how ideology and meaning is mobilized to maintain asymmetrical social relations through the suturing of dissonant subject positions and the effacement of contradiction" (McNay, 1996: 77).

Post-colonial and feminist theorists praise the post-structuralist dissolution of the subject (McNay, 1996: 79). However, for these theorists problematizing the unified self also means the total rejection of any substantive notion of the self as a by-product of the archaeological method. The stress on the fragmentation of the subject denies groups excluded from mainstream discourse the space in which to construct alternative identities. So while acknowledging the fictional nature of the self they also recognize the centrality of the idea of the subject in political identities (McNay, 1996: 79). Post-colonial feminist thought problematizes Foucault's assertion that in the analysis of discourse it does not matter who is speaking because the "question of

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are actually said [...] rarefaction must not be understood as a principle of repression, that is that at any given time there is a great unsaid waiting to be uttered" (McNay, 1996:74).

who speaks and the issues of power and communication it raises are as important as how it is that subjects are positioned in a discursive structure” (McNay, 1996: 79). Further, the lack of a fuller analysis of the role of the subject in the discursive formation creates difficulties in terms of Foucault’s conceptualisation of the other. There is no interconnection or dialectical relation between the dominant and its others and “difference and alterity can only be thought in the problematic form of an epistemic break” (McNay, 1996: 80). Thinking of otherness as a radical epistemic break replaces the subject of resistance with a subjectless practice. Resistance cannot be initiated from below at the level of ordinary everyday interactions but must come from above in the form of an elite poetic practice (McNay, 1996: 82). Foucauldian discourses then need to also be supplemented by a Bakhtinian approach that sees the possibility for resistance in everyday language. A resistance which carries the presence of the other: the ambiguous other meaning.

#### Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis

Although different, these approaches focus on the role of reflexivity in talk as simultaneously describing and making realities, the multiplicity of social realities, and language in the social construction of realities. An ethnomethodologically focused discourse analysis goes from local interactions to global discourses by looking at how discourses are built from the bottom up. More Foucauldian based approaches look at how culturally standardised discourses impact on the “reality constructing activities of everyday life” (Miller, 1997: 27). In combination these approaches offer

“standpoints from which concrete, empirical aspects of social life may be seen and analyzed” (Miller, 1997: 26).

Foucault’s work also undermines the distinction between the public and the personal because of his emphasis on how public discourses become inscribed in our subjectivities (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 12). This construction of the self is mirrored somewhat in the work of Bakhtin and his collaborators as they tried to account for Marx’s view that “the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual...in its reality it is the ensemble of social relations” (Holland et al, 1998: 35). Bakhtin accounts for this by conceptualising individuals as always existing in a state of being ‘addressed’ and in the process of ‘answering’. Bakhtin presents us with the possibility for discourse and power characterised by the inscription of the social in linguistic hegemony in ‘discourse in life’, rather than discourse in the novel (Pechey, 1989: 49). In self-other relations the subject is translated into linguistic terms over which she has no control as their meanings are determined by the other. Dialogism allows us to look at the dynamic movement to the *position of an-other* that exists in the extracts as speakers disavow discourses through translation as reflexivity.

Foucault’s contribution to my method is that it allows us to see how speakers construct versions of public discourses and how they use or disavow these in identification construction. So, whilst concentrating on statements, I will be using the Foucauldian notion of discourses slightly differently. That is, in a much more

ethnomethodological way through looking at how 'subjugated knowledges' become unanimous across the narratives in the research, or come into being through talk. The focus is, therefore, on different power/knowledge forms. That is, those rooted in more privately oriented social settings and experiences in which people speak about their interpersonal relationships and the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live. This is where Bakhtin's work on addressivity<sup>8</sup> assumes significance.

Addressivity implies that meaning is negotiable because of the intervention of the addressee. Two questions central to ethnomethodology point to the instability of meaning in everyday life. That is, what are the circumstances in which socially constructed identities change and, in what ways do socially constructed identities change? This focus on the instability of meaning is important given my orientation towards looking at the *hybridity of the everyday* which is about 'the same as.. but different from' in interaction. That is, a Blackness in which the same and different are simultaneous. This Blackness draws on and re-makes discourses of Blackness because:

We enter into discourses as we go about the practical activities of our lives.

The discourses are conditions of possibility that provide us with the resources

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<sup>8</sup> "An essential (constitutive) marker of the utterance is its quality of being directed to someone, its *addressivity* [...] This addressee can be an immediate participant-interlocutor in an everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries [...] and it can also be an indefinite, unconcretized *other*" (Pearce, 1994:73-74). Addressivity in this project denotes the repositioning within discourses accomplished by speakers.



for constructing a limited array of social realities, and make others less available to us. We enter into discourses and use the resources that they provide to construct concrete social realities by engaging in discursive practices that are similar to the interpretive methods and conversational procedures analyzed by ethnomethodologists [and discourse analysts]. Realities so produced are reflexive, because the discourses that we enter into in order to describe social realities also constitute those realities (Miller, 1997: 33).

Hybridity is seen in this project as an identification that arises in the struggle over position within discourses. It is constituted by discourses of self/other and also comes to constitute those discourses. Hybridity as discursive, dialogical and reflexive means that I must be alert to the ways in which speakers move between and manipulate different discourses in making identifications in terms of "assumptions, categories, logics and claims- the constitutive elements of discourses" (Miller, 1997: 34). The focus must therefore be on the detail of speakers' interactions. This is where discourse analysis with its concentration on the ways in which identities are constituted in interaction assumes significance.

Why this emphasis on identities as constituted in interaction? It is important because it looks at what people say in order to accomplish social, political or cultural acts in interaction locally. As, "language users engaging in discourse accomplish *social acts* and participate in *social interaction*, typically so in *conversation* and other forms of

*dialogue*. Such interaction is in turn embedded in various social and cultural *contexts* [..]"(Van Dijk, 1997b: 2). The focus then, is on the strategic performance of speakers who work to make the discourses within which they are embedded coherent and meaningful, which has the reflexive function of constructing and displaying their identifications as Black individuals. So people "are using their language to *construct* versions of the social world" (Potter and Wetherall, 1992: 33). Interactants are actively engaged in the selection of accounts that are then used to 'construct' the reality of their Blackness in the sequential organisation of talk. To speak of construction implies that these versions are strategic and intentional, which makes us also look at how these versions emerge and what they achieve for the speakers. This bears in mind the idea that the "self is [..] articulated in discourse in ways that will maximize one's warrant or claim to be heard" (Potter and Wetherall: 108).

Identity is not then "treated as an explanatory 'resource' that we analysts haul with us to a scene where people are interacting, but as a 'topic' that requires investigation and sweat once we get there" (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 2). As an ethnomethodologically inclined researcher listening to the talk and reading the texts, my task is to look at a participant's display of ascription to/ disavowal of, the membership category 'Black'. I need to see what features this category carries as an identification and how these features are used in identification talk. This becomes obvious to me through looking at interlocutor understandings as :

membership of a category is ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored) in local places and at certain times, and

it does these things as part of the interactional work that constitutes people's lives. In other words [...] it [is] not that people passively or latently have this or that identity which then causes feelings and actions, but that they work up and work to this or that identity, for themselves and others, there and then, either as an end in itself or towards some other end (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 2).

To look at the representations of discourses in language means that I am mindful that people operate in and against discursive constructions that attempt to fix boundaries and that these discourses reflect power relations. Issues of power and inequality cannot therefore be erased from the analytic enterprise but making them transparent lies at the heart of analysis. For ethnomethodologists and more conversationally oriented discourse analysts, power is something achieved through work done by participants. Could this be a possible point of difference between the parts of my approach to analysing interactions? Maybe not, because what would be central would be to look at the distinctive knowledge and power relations that interactants speak in their identification stories. For example, how they resist these relations and construct different power/knowledge relations in their construction of hybrid positionings. This is reminiscent of Garfinkel's argument that ordinary members of society are "capable of rationally understanding and accounting for their own actions in society. Indeed it is precisely in this rational accountability that members come to be treated and see themselves as members of society" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 30).

A central notion of discourse analysis is that “by selecting [...] vocabulary from available cultural themes and concepts, and by its choice of their arrangement [a speaker] makes positive claim to a certain vision of the world” (Antaki, 1994: 7). Speakers, then, are strategic in their construction of reality through talk. As she reads texts the discourse analyst focuses on three key aspects of language: contradiction, construction and practice (Parker, 1999: 6). She does not seek to uncover an underlying theme that will explain the real meaning of the texts. Rather she seeks contradictions between different significations and the way different pictures of the world are constructed. It is then possible to identify dominant meanings and some studies of discourse then attempt to look at subordinate meanings and highlight processes of resistance (Parker, 1999: 6). Discourse analysts do not take meaning for granted but rather, try to look at how meaning has been socially constructed (Parker, 1999: 7). In terms of practice as discourse analysts “we are concerned with issues of power and we also want to open up a place for *agency*, as people struggle to make sense of texts. This is where people push at the limits of what is socially constructed and actively construct something different” (Parker, 1999: 7). Stories thus contribute to defining what Black identity is because they are latched to the outer world’s culturally available accounts. It is within this dialogic tension between accounts in interaction and culturally available accounts, that we can see the emergence of ‘the third space of hybridity’ in talk as people produce their own ‘critical textwork’<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For Parker (1999:7) ‘critical textwork’ in Discourse Analysis arises from our “attention to contradiction, construction and practice combined with an attention to the position of the researcher”. My point of view is that speakers use these same approaches in their ethno-methods in talk so that both speaker and researcher are engaged in critical textwork.

How can I be sure though that as a discourse analyst, I am not 'discovering' something that isn't really there? In this vein Widdicombe and Wooffitt (1995: 65) remind us of the negative consequences of discourse analysis thus:

although analysts may wish to use discourse analysis on behalf of powerless and marginalized groups, their analytic concerns do not give these groups a voice.

So by looking at talk only to evidence the influence of discourses analysts deny interactants voice by not looking at what they may be doing through their talk.

A focus purely on discourses has as its corollary that language becomes a resource for theorising rather than a topic in itself. Using language as a resource means that we can easily overlook the ways in which people construct and negotiate the meaning of the identifications that they make, in and through talk. My approach to discourse analysis has to be modified, therefore, to include the sequential practices through which Black identities are negotiated in interactions. As I analyse identifications made in talk I would take account of the constructions of the group and the meanings held in common about this. I would also look at accounts of individuals' views of Blackness, and themselves within that, as people struggling towards their own versions of authenticity, autonomy and difference. Asserting that people struggle for their own versions of Blackness, means that I am also saying

that meanings are transformed in interaction, so there is an on-going process of construction and change within the dialogic process of identity making.

I am seeing discourse at the local interactional level as intentional, strategic and continually made relevant by interactants trying to make sense of it. I have been saying intentional throughout because it seems to me from looking at the interactions that the making of identifications in action are “intentionally accomplished in order to realize or bring about something else, that is, other actions, events, situations, or states of mind: they have *goals* that make these actions meaningful or have a ‘point, and that make their actors appear *purposeful*” (Van Dijk, 1997b: 8). So, as I analyse the emergence of Black identifications in talk I am looking at “the social reasoning that people go through to make sense of their worlds, and (perhaps) impose that sense on other people” (Antaki, 1994:1). I am looking at talk on identification as dialogical, focused on speaker’s social practices rather than what is in their heads. For Bakhtin talk is never a mere reflection of something already existing and outside of it which is given and final (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 13). “It always creates something that has never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable, and, moreover, it always has some relation to value (the true, the good, the beautiful, and so forth) (Bakhtin, 1981: 119-20). Hybrid identities arise in these dialogical moments as we reshape the already existing historical and ideological influences that shape our ways of relating to each other and to our surroundings. ‘Value’, though, always reintroduces essence, so hybridity simultaneously replays its alterity in talk.

### Listening to voices

There are two issues for me as an analyst listening to Black British voices. Namely:

- 1) to what extent am I involved in hearing and not hearing?
- 2) and, what are the consequences of my translation of the talk into an academic framework?

Mauthner and Doucet (1998: 127) in looking at 'a voice-centred relational approach' to qualitative data analysis alert us to the importance of examining how we make theoretical interpretations of narratives and documenting these processes. As Riessman (1993: 4) reminds us

Precisely because they are essential meaning-making structures, narratives must be preserved, not fractured, by investigators, who must respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished.

Deciding what to include and how to transcribe the data has implications for how the talk as a transcribed text will be understood. Transcription is itself an interpretative practice because

Decisions about how to transcribe [...] are theory driven [...] by displaying text in particular ways, we provide grounds for our arguments [...] Different

transcription conventions lead to and support different interpretations and ideological positions, and they ultimately create different worlds. Meaning is constituted in very different ways with alternative transcriptions of the same stretch of talk (Riessman, 1993: 13).

Obviously then, the ways in which we represent and interpret participants' voices through transcription also reinforces academic power and knowledge hierarchies.

In order to look at the accomplishment of identifications with a focus on both the local and the global, I need to have a fairly detailed, more conversation analytic approach to transcription. Conversation analysts generally transcribe their tapes following conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997). A transcript in its format and the phenomena it emphasises marks out the analytic concerns of Conversation Analysis. That is the dynamics of turn-taking and the characteristics of speech delivery (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 76). Analysing pitch, pauses and other features allow interpreters to hear groups of lines together (Riessman, 1993: 15). "Narrators indicate the terms on which they request to be interpreted by the styles of telling they choose. Something said in a whisper, after a long pause, has a different import than words said loudly, without a pause. Tellers use elongated vowels, emphasis, pitch, repetition and other devices to indicate what is important. Emotion is also carried in these and other audible aspects" (Riessman, 1993: 19-20). Transcriptions that avoid these features of speech omit important information<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> These aspects of speech delivery are grossly marked when compared to, for example, phoneticians' transcripts. Noting the "prosodic characteristics in CA transcription [aims] 'to get as much of the actual



Bakhtin provides us with a link to conversation analytic transcription as a method through his focus on the importance of the creation of something new in utterances. Indeed for Bakhtin every utterance is shaped by other utterances both actual and anticipated (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 16). At the moment an utterance occurs it is two-sided and conversation analytic transcription allows for the representation of dialogic interactions. Further its use of sound and video recording allows for a continual replaying of conversations to look at the responsivity of utterances. However, I have chosen discourse analysis as a method because of the shortcomings of conversation analysis. That is that it tends to overlook the ideological aspects of language by concentrating on the proximal dimension of interactions (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 19). It, therefore, ignores the influences at work in 'the social'. Conversation analysis depends on the analyst stepping beyond its methodological limits that are based on the ethnomethodological principles of accountability and the sequential architecture of intersubjectivity (Taylor and Cameron, 1987). However, conversation analysts do not acknowledge the movement beyond its limits and its method remains wedded to looking at how the next turn displays an understanding of the first turn. Further, a conversation analytic description provides only an "intuitive characterisation of the understanding it displays" (Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 121)<sup>11</sup>.

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sound as possible into our transcripts, while still making them accessible to linguistically unsophisticated readers' (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson in Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998:77).

So a more ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis is preferred, allied with a transcription<sup>12</sup> which allows us to notice features of ongoing social practices in our languaged-activities. Interactants expect their utterances to be responded to meaningfully and such meaning is arrived at dialogically. As analysts we must notice that if speakers do construct their identifications in the temporal organisation of their behaviour, “then we need the same kind of socially shared, relationally responsive, perceptual understanding in our studies as we employ them in our daily lives together” (Shotter and Billig, 1998: 25). This is the Bakhtinian link with the ethnomethods of Sacks.

Conversation analysis provides useful approaches to making the interactions intelligible as one listens to and transcribes them as a researcher. These are basically, “choose a sequence, characterize the actions, examine the packaging of the actions, explore the timing and taking of turns, consider the implications of the packaging and turn taking for identities, roles and relationships” (Pomerantz and Fehr, 1997: 74). This underlies my preliminary search for meaning in the data, using my cultural competence to roughly identify categories. However, I then have to show how that category is used by interactants themselves “as they manifest their identifications in their subsequent actions and reactions” (Taylor and Cameron, 1987: 107). Although I do not claim that my analysis will be conversation analytic,

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<sup>11</sup> It is for these reasons that I cull conversation analysis for what it can provide in terms of analytical orientation to the data but that I have expanded my approach to what I call an ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix 2 for the transcription conventions used in this project.

what the psychologists Charles Antaki and Sue Widdicombe (1998: 3-4) describe as being “central to an ethnomethodological, and more specifically a conversation analytic attitude to analysing identity” is important. That is:

- to have an ‘identity’ means that “someone [...] displays or can be attributed with a certain set of features [so] is treatable as a member of the category with which those features are conventionally associated” (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 4);
- being a member of a category is “indexical and occasioned”, that is, “the meaning of an utterance (including, of course, one that ascribes or displays an identity) is to be found in the occasion of its production” (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 4);
- the identity is relevant to the on-going interaction as “identity work is in the hands of the participants” (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 4) not the analyst;
- an identity is visibly consequential, that is, it has some impact on the interaction (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 3);
- this is all visible in participants’ use of the structures of conversation (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 3).

I began transcribing the interactions in great detail using a more conversation analytic approach in the first two years of my research. However, towards the end of the second year it became obvious that though this was a more faithful representation, I was not using that level of detail in my descriptions of these interactions. Further, as a sociology project which is unlikely to be read by the more linguistically inclined, it seemed to make less and less sense to have such detail. The transcriptions now very rarely show features such as speed and stress. That is, features with which interactants infuse their speech as they construct meanings and

which I use as an analyst in understanding what was said<sup>13</sup>. Meaning seems to me to be impaired by leaving out these features. The irony is that my project involved using 'naturally occurring conversations', but in the end much of what made them natural has been erased<sup>14</sup>.

The alternative would have been to reproduce the interactions as blocks of text. It would have certainly been less time consuming than transcribing the interactions in their entirety. However, this would have missed the process in which speakers engage in order to negotiate identity positionings that I claim are what show hybridity in talk. I look at the transcriptions now though and I feel a sense of loss as much of what I hear when I listen to the tape recordings is not there to be 'heard' by readers of this project. There are aspects of people's lives that I have also removed from the sphere of hearing by being focused on hybridity in interaction, rather than for example, on how people saw themselves as adults and children. I did not ask individuals what it was about what they had said that they wanted to be used to represent them. I selected what I wanted to use and the rest remains in cardboard boxes.

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<sup>13</sup> For Ochs (1979:44-45) a useful transcript is selective rather than detailed and difficult to follow. The selectivity involved in transcription should be clearly related to the research goals and the state of the field. For the purposes of showing positioning and re-positioning in the dynamic development of Black identities in talk, a less detailed conversation analytic transcription is appropriate.

<sup>14</sup> Transcripts in Conversation Analysis, are not data. Data are recordings of naturally occurring interactions. "The transcript is seen as a 'representation' of the data; while the tape itself is viewed as a 'reproduction' of a determinate social event" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998:73-74).

My initial question in terms of transcription was, should I transcribe the speakers' words as closely as I could to how they were produced or should I translate them into Standard English? My informants did not speak Standard English though. They spoke regional dialects of English from London, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield alongside what is called 'street talk' by young Black people in Leeds. That is, a more creolized version of English (cf. Sebba, 1993 and Tate, 1984). To transcribe this as Standard English would mean that I was denying these speakers their right to determine who they wanted to be. If they had wanted Standard English to represent them I am sure that they would have used that, as language choice is a powerful form of identification. Therefore, I transcribed their words as closely as I could in order to attempt to represent them and their interactions with each other. This has meant that there are parts of the interactions that I have had to translate for the benefit of readers of this project who are not familiar with Caribbean Creole languages or their British versions.

I have transcribed the talk using the conventions established in studies of British Black English (cf. Sebba, 1993) using eye dialect spelling to roughly represent the phonology of the local dialects of English and the more Creole versions spoken by participants. Still the orthography is problematic as it is too variable for those who believe that consistency is important. That is because it depends on my own view of what the words sound like. This became the case as although there is an orthography for Caribbean Creole languages which I could have used, it did not take account of British Creoles or local dialectal forms. For example, the Black version of 'you know what I mean?' could have been written like that. However, if what was said

was 'yuh na: mean?' or 'yuh na:w mean?' or 'yuh na:t ah mean?', what would be the point of standardising this to Standard English or just one of the above forms? Another example is 'actually'. This sounded to me like 'achshally', whereas someone else could just as easily have chosen 'acshally'. I chose the former to show the breathiness around the initial part of the word –'ach'- which some people use. If that was not there it would become 'acshally' in the transcription. I have also omitted final consonants rather than reproduce words in a more Standard English form. For example, 'en' for 'end' and 'fac' for 'fact'. As well as this, 'th' became 'd' so 'within' would become 'widin', 'the' would be 'di' and 'there' would be 'dere'. In some cases I have left out 'r' if what people did was elongate the vowel instead. So 'start' would become 'sta:t'.

By transcribing as closely as possible I was attempting to represent interactants' speech: not to make them items of curiosity, but rather to try and ensure that they were not removed from the interactions. Although this was my intention I cannot account for the positions of those who will read this project. In the end what I would have preferred to do was undoable because of the parameters of the PhD as a project. I would have preferred to present the tapes without any mediation by me, with an indication of what sections would be used in my analysis. This seems to be the only way to remove the translations of the interactions that I have done as I made them only words. The intuitive connection between the meaning of the text and the researcher remarked on by Taylor and Cameron (1987: 121) in their critique of conversation analysis, leads me now to look at myself as a translator of interactions.

### The researcher as a translator.

I have said above that I am also involved in the interpretation of stories as an analyst. I myself am a story teller in terms of what I do with the data and theory interface, because in “the end the analyst creates a meta-story about what happened by telling what the [...] narratives signify, editing and reshaping what was told, and turning it into a hybrid story” (Riessman, 1993: 130). So my values, politics and theoretical commitments are taken with me into the analytic enterprise. What I hope is that by transcribing in detail, I leave my analysis open for other interpretations of the meanings being generated interactionally. However, having said this does not help me to circumvent the issue of power. Whose voice will really be represented in the completed dissertation? Is my text in the form of transcriptions as open to other readings as I assume? How am I myself located in the narratives I’ve collected and analysed?

I have to agree with Riessman’s (1993: 61) view that “the features of [a] narrative account an investigator chooses to write about are linked to the evolving research question, theoretical/epistemological positions the investigator values, and, more often than not, her personal biography”. I am in dialogue with the texts. As an analyst I myself am engaged in the reflexive translation of talk. This means that I

interpret how interactants deconstruct the membership category Black, by continuing to use it, to repeat it subversively and displace it from the contexts in which it has been used oppressively (Butler, 1992: 17). As a Black woman researcher involved in this process of collecting data, analysis and writing, I continually experience a conflation of the outsider / insider, researcher / participant binary, as the stories echo my own experiences and establish intimacy between my participants and myself. There are points in this project where I use extracts in which I am the main speaker. This was not intentional but show my involvement in the flow of the conversation. I was not a passive observer, but rather an interactant and a member of the Black community itself. My identifications are intimately intertwined with those of others. We cannot be separated as subjects produced within conflicting discourses and cultural practices because of the commonality of our racialized position and constructed community. My analysis and writing also analyse and write me: this is how translation as reflexivity for me as a researcher is embedded in the text.

It is further embedded as a dialogue because of the curiosity which drives me as I look at the data, "not the curiosity that seeks to assimilate what is proper for one to know, but that which enables one to get free of oneself" (Foucault, 1984/1985: 8 quoted in St. Pierre, 1997: 405). 'Getting free of oneself' is "a description of a particular deconstructive approach to both knowledge production and being in the world" which "involves an attempt to understand the structures of intelligibility [...] that limit thought" (St. Pierre, 1997: 405). So, in describing what interactants do as they perform hybrid positionings, that is, in looking at how they get free of themselves, I



am also doing this work simultaneously. I, myself become free from what limits thought as I become a co-researcher and a co-subject.

However, this takes me away from the central issues of the assumptions behind the knowledge I am producing and for whom I am producing it. As a Black woman researcher I place myself within these racialized, marginalized communities, but even this is a position of impossibility. This is the case, because as long as I am a doctoral student, I am wedded to the public academic audience. I engage in a process of making those who I have just called co-researchers and co-subjects, 'other'. This 'othering' occurs because of the necessity for me to translate the understandings produced by those good enough to share their lives with me, into a knowledge form that is intelligible and acceptable to the academy. This is the inescapable nature of my dominance as a researcher.

I have spoken above of my ethical concern to give voice to the people from whom I got the data. I think though that I need to acknowledge my powerful role in shaping the research process and what was produced. The data analysis stage, so central to any project, is one that is undoubtedly dis-empowering for informants. I sometimes wonder what people will make of my interpretation of their words as I sit in my study, far away from them and their lives and choose what particular issues to focus on in the analysis. Have I interpreted their words in ways with which they would be satisfied? Will they be concerned that I chose extracts out of context of their whole story? Will their concern increase as they realise that in choosing themes for the

analysis, their separateness as individuals seems to become lost? Their names and identities will be replaced for the purposes of anonymity by abbreviations, so they and their unique contributions will effectively be erased. So, although I make the claim of using the perspectives and words of contributors to my research, I become the one who speaks for them. I am therefore, “in the privileged position of naming and representing other people’s realities” (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 139). I am “appropriating their voices and experiences and further disempowering them by taking away their voice, agency and ownership” (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998: 139), because as a researcher I have to theorise their stories and place them within wider academic and theoretical debates. Although I could say at this point that much has been lost by participants in my move from talk, to text, to theory, by transcribing and representing their talk as carefully as possible and focusing on their ethnomethods, I have gone some way towards mitigating this potential silencing.

#### Practising an ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis

I did not approach the data with a particular question about hybridity in my mind or Blackness for that matter. This is so as I was trying to let the data speak to me rather than me speak to it. As I listened to the tapes I was trying to engage in “unmotivated looking” (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 94). I have said above that my initial approach to the data was to transcribe it in detail using the conventions of conversation analysis. I then looked at these transcripts and listened to the tapes in order to draw out themes that were emerging in terms of Blackness, for example shade. These themes helped to generate collections of sequences of talk in which

Black identity was being constructed through the use of discourses of Blackness. Such discourses in the talk positioned speakers and those being spoken about socially, politically and 'racially' as 'the same' or 'the other'. Once this basic pattern of discourses of positioning through talk was noticed in the data, I began to look for instances of a *hybridity of the everyday* in the sequential organisation of the talk. I had to do this because it is a given in conversation analysis that analysing "patterns in this way enables the analyst to make robust claims about the 'strategic' uses of conversational sequences: the ways in which culturally available resources may be methodically used to accomplish mutually recognizable interactional tasks" (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998: 93).

What I also noticed in the data was the talking into being of two sorts of discourses of positioning. One of them could be described as hegemonic discourses which sought to position speakers. There was also an-other discourse which sought to subvert the dominant discourses. I began to see that Bhabha's (1996b: 58) assertion that hybridity is about a space of negotiation of discourses made sense at the level of the everyday. As a result of this I began to look at the data for extracts in which positioning and repositioning occurred. An ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis was for me then, transcribing the data in detail using a conversation analytic transcription; locating the subject positions which were being talked into being; looking at the sequential organisation of positioning and repositioning and what facilitated the emergence of the latter. That is, I noticed the contradiction, construction and practice ( Parker, 1999: 6) in talk and this enabled me to notice the

orderly occurrence of sequences in the data as a whole in which a *hybridity of the everyday* emerged through speakers' engagement in:

-positioning;

-translation as reflexivity;

-repositioning.

I did not use all of the data but I listened to all of the tapes to see if this sequence and similar themes emerged. In the thesis itself I used a smaller number of extracts than was available because I wanted to illustrate the sequence as efficiently as possible without needing to leave out too much talk in-between translation as reflexivity and repositioning turns. I also used some extracts twice because they allowed me to do this well and because I wanted to illustrate the development of the model through my analysis.

### Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to look at the interplay between theory, ways of knowing about the social world, methodology and practice for looking at a *hybridity of the everyday*. As for the architectonic novel, because of the nature of my data, I seek to expose the subject from multiple perspectives by showing the agonistic struggle in which speakers engage in constructing hybrid identifications. This has evolved over the course of the project into looking at the intersections and cleavages between Foucault and Bakhtin on the subject, identity and discourses. First, with regard to what insights Foucault and Bakhtin offer in terms of looking at the

speaking subject. Second, a focus on ethnomethods and critical textwork. Third, in terms of how I listen to the data, read the transcriptions and give meaning to the texts of social practice which speakers perform.

I have said that Foucault does not adequately account for the speaking subject at the ordinary everyday level of interaction. Neither does his work account for the possibility of otherness: the difference so central in the production of hybridity in talk. Bakhtin's work on the self as other and the self as multiple and in process is needed to account for such a subject constituted in talk-in-interaction.

Foucault's focus on the role of discourses in the construction of subjects allows us to see discourse analysis as an important tool which "allows the researcher to identify subject positions which may constrain or facilitate particular actions and experiences" (Willig, 1999: 2). That is, to take a more ethnomethodological perspective, the subject positions which speakers themselves identify as having this effect. If we remember that subjugated knowledges have a place within Foucauldian thought, then we can see that he allows for a discourse analysis that focuses on contradiction, construction and practice. That is, the discourse analyst Ian Parker's (1999) 'critical textwork'.

A more Bakhtinian view of the self as dialogic is that there is always a possibility for challenge. The self as agentic and dialogic means that I have to look for the

readings and translations of discursive positioning made by speakers and the production of alternative self-positions in talk. The multiplicity of selves and the intimate interaction with otherness which this involves entails that hybridity as a process in talk-in-interaction need not imply a total break with discursively constructed essences. Rather, what should be looked at is how essence interacts with hybridity in talk-in-interaction.

Extrapolating from the work of Bakhtin onto analysis has meant several things. A turn-by-turn transcription allows the entrance of dialogics, so central to Bakhtinian thought, into the analysis. This is the case as this transcription shows the dynamic movement in the talk from positioning to repositioning: the negotiation of discourses of identity positionings that constitutes a *hybridity of the everyday*. Further, Bakhtin's heteroglossia allows an orientation to the data based on ethnomethods. That is, that speakers construct theory. So I look at speakers' translations of identification discourses based on their constructions of addressivity in the turn-by-turn performance of identifications. Therefore I analyse the data using a more ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis. The strength of this analytic approach is that it allows us to see the subject in process in talk-in-interaction as interactants speak their negotiations of identification discourses. Finally, Bakhtinian heteroglossia also links into my own ethical agenda of giving speakers voice through the method of transcription and orthography which I have outlined above.

The next chapter on Black identities as texts of social practice takes forward the themes of positioning, othering, agency and hybridity raised in this chapter.

## Chapter 2

### Black British Identities: texts of social practice

#### Introduction

In his conclusion to *Introduction: Who Needs Identity?* Stuart Hall (1996 a: 16)<sup>1</sup> alerts us to the continuing necessity and complexity of identity for the individual and for politics, while also reinforcing the issue of the psychic and discursive construction of identity. This chapter establishes my view that Black British identities are *texts of social practice* constructed through language and discourses as Black people make their lives known in talk. Producing these texts is a dialogical process as it involves answering other constructed texts. These latter are accepted or disavowed as speakers re-present identities as extents of identification with, or dis-identification from, these other constructed texts. To the extent that a speaker, in that time and space, chooses to identify with these texts, she is saying 'my identity is.. but it also is not..'. Black British identities as texts of social practice therefore contain spaces for difference to emerge. Spaces of othering and difference are looked at within the colonial and post-colonial contexts in order to show the possibility for the agency of difference.

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<sup>1</sup> "the question, and the theoretization, of identity is [...] of considerable political significance, and is only likely to be advanced when both the necessity and the 'impossibility' of identities, and the suturing of the psychic and discursive in their constitution, are fully and unambiguously acknowledged".



*Texts of social practice and spaces of authoring*

I have said in Chapter 1 that 'texts of social practice' implies a broader dimension of discourse than those acts accomplished by speakers in interaction. This removes the focus from the mind to interaction, groups and societal structures. Such a movement could be taken to imply that socially constructed identities are subject to positioning by discourses. This would lead to the denial of:

- a) agency in the form of resistance to this positioning;
- b) agents delineating parts of their embodied selves such as 'skin' and 'race' as enduring and using these in such a resistance.

Let us look at an extract to help us take up these latter points. Before the talk in the example below LF has been speaking about being a 'mixed race' Black child growing up in West Yorkshire. At lines 1,2 and 3 she positions herself as Black by asserting that she always hung out with a Black group rather than a white one. At line 4 S questions her place within that group in terms of whether or not she was accepted as a Black girl. L then enters into talk that shows her reading of a discourse of 'mixed race' as not being accepted in either Black or white circles. She distances herself from this by saying that this is the view of some mixed race people. She also speaks about facing hostility from other Black people which she did not let deny her a place in society as a Black woman (lines 7-17). From line 17 she asserts her identification as a Black woman whilst showing awareness that not all 'mixed race' people would use that description for themselves. In this extract then, LF shows us her interaction

with discourses of 'Black' and 'mixed race'. She also shows agency in that she speaks herself as someone who neither capitulates to the 'mixed race' position of being not Black and not fitting in either Black or white circles, nor to the Black position that 'mixed race' people are not Black. Rather she asserts a self-positioning as Black. The assumption can be made that she does this based on 'skin' and 'race' because of the earlier use of Black and white in the extract.

Example 1 Tape 1 Side A LF: 36

- >1 L Within SCHOOL ah always hung out with a Black posse d'yuh na:t ah  
 2 mean?=  
 3 S =M[hm ]  
 >4 L [ Ah ] never hung out in a WHITE posse it's just a =  
 5 S =An how was that then? hanging out with a Black posse? Did they  
 6 accept you as a Black girl like them ?=  
 >7 L =Yeah? yuh know, like yuh- yuh hear some mixed race people that say  
 8 that they don't feel accepted in EI:[THER] ci:rcle =  
 9 S [ Mhm ] =Mhm:=  
 10 L =An that int to say that ah hant had hostility from Black people becos I  
 11 have .hhh but ah've never felt that ah DIDN'T FIT IN [ OR ] THAT AH  
 12 S [Mhm]  
 13 L WUNT WHERE AH WUH MEANT TO BE [.hhh ] I APPRECIATE that  
 14 S [Mhm]  
 15 L yuh get hostility from all sorts of [ people ] .hhh an I'm not gonna let  
 16 S [ Yeah ]  
 17 L somebody's hostility .hhh deny me: MY place in society [ it's like (.) ]  
 18 S [°Mhm mhm°]  
 19 L I SEE MYSELF AS A BLACK WOMAN SHIRLEY yuh know?=  
 20 S =Mhm=  
 21 L =OTHER MIXED RACE PEOPLE yuh know maybe don't [ that's ] for  
 22 S [ Mhm ]  
 23 L THEM to say I see myself PURELY AS A BLACK WOMAN

The extract makes us see the continuing significance of embodiment in Black identities. What it is being taken to imply though is that first, there is no universally identical identity moulded by a static culture<sup>2</sup>. LF makes this plain as she shows the

<sup>2</sup> This is in contrast to Gerd Baumann's (1996) view spoken about in the Introduction.

contestation that there is in terms of the identity category Black. Second, identities are themselves practices embedded in 'the social'. LF demonstrates this as she shows her interpretation of the membership category Black that is embedded in discourses. It is through her interpretation and critique of these discursive texts that she arrives at her own *text of social practice*. Third, these social sites of identity are multiple. LF shows us three such sites in her talk. These are that some 'mixed race' people don't see themselves as Black and so wouldn't socialise with Black people; some Black people don't see 'mixed race' people as Black; and, her own position that 'mixed race' people are Black irrespective of ancestry. Her talk on identity therefore constantly uses and remakes the category Black through her dialogic engagement with discourses. In this engagement she produces her own position of difference within Blackness as 'skin' and 'race'.

The concept of 'text' implies both a specific piece of writing and much more broadly social reality itself (Pinar, 1993: 60). Therefore a view that identities are constructed texts, implies that actors write them in and onto social reality. So they are constituted by social reality but also come to constitute that reality. "Text implies that human reality is fundamentally discursive" (Pinar, 1993: 60), but also dialogical. Stuart Hall (1996b: 144) represents the dialogic nature of texts of social practice as " the articulation [.. ] between a social force which is making itself, and the ideology or conceptions of the world which makes intelligible the process they are going through, which begins to bring onto the historical stage a new social position and historical position, a new set of social and political subjects".

*Texts of social practice* seek to affirm the sameness and difference that become apparent in individuals' everyday talk as they negotiate the terrain of identity discourses. In this terrain there are a multiplicity of selves that are produced as speakers reveal differences between discourses of 'the Black same' and the identities that they are constructing in the stream of talk. Identities in talk develop at a boundary between the interaction of the social and the embodied self (Holland et al, 1998: 32). It is in this interaction that the self is authored as people always exist within dialogue (Holquist, 1991). That is, we exist always as 'addressed' and as 'one who answers'. Such self-authoring means that it "is not impossible for people to figure and remake the conditions of their lives" (Holland et al, 1998: 45) from positions with which they identify. For Bakhtin the cultural resources on which we draw in constructing identities can be transgressed as we reassert control through challenging discourses of position. Discourses therefore, work to both position speakers and provide the means to construct other positions: positions of difference.

Bakhtin's viewpoint is that we represent ourselves to ourselves from the perspective of others and this perspective (word) is significant to how we experience ourselves (Holland et al, 1998: 172). The other is finalised in language and in answering as its counterpart, the self finalises itself through a collective language (Holland et al, 1998). Identities are therefore made knowable in the words of others. In the genres, the texts of Blackness by which we see our-selves from the outside.

These texts carry elements of power within them from the social. We interact with texts dialogically such that we are always in the process of being addressed and answering from our particular positions. Texts will be in conflict as for Bakhtin "the

voices, the symbols, are socially inscribed and heteroglossic" (Holland et al, 1998: 178). So self-authoring puts these voices together as speakers construct their 'identities of the moment' through stories focused on conflictual positions. It is in this agonistic sense making that speakers "begin to liberate themselves from the authority of the other's discourse" (Bakhtin, 1981: 348). Such liberation allows for the emergence of hybrid identities in talk-in-interaction in the present time and space.

Seeing identities as being temporal leads us to Ricoeur's (1979: 84) view that social time is

not only something which flees; it is also a place of durable effects, of persisting patterns. An action leaves a 'trace' it makes its mark when it contributes to the emergence of such patterns which become the documents of human action.

He is concerned here with documents that are fixed by writing. However, identities as texts of social practice are being seen to be about writing, in that they leave a durable effect, a 'trace' on 'the social'. Indeed, without this inscription of the social, meanings could not be constructed and read by interactants. As these texts are inscribed, does this therefore mean that identities by necessity are fixed and essentialized, so as to ensure that they can be interpreted meaningfully? The answer must be 'no', as "like a text, human action is an open work, the meaning of which is in suspense [...] waiting for fresh interpretations which decide their meaning" (Ricoeur, 1979: 86). Being dependent on the interpretations of self and other to come

into the world, the quest for meanings produces the capacity for the emergence of difference and in so doing, secures the place of the multiplicity of identities.

Texts represent identities that are used as points of reference in order to cull the meanings of identities in interaction. Practice is here, then, operating in a dual sense of discursive construction and interpretation of that which is represented, from positions of partial sight in particular times and spaces. This partial position ensures that identity is not an already accomplished fact, but a production that is never complete (Hall, 1990). It is in the process of the narrativization of the self that individuals produce identifications from which their identity positions at that point in the talk can be read.

#### Identity and identification

For Diane Fuss (1995), identification involves the play of difference and similitude in self-Other relations. However, at the same time that identification is the stimulus for the recognition and mis-recognition that brings a sense of identity into being, it also immediately calls that identity into question. Identities, therefore, are highly unstable and endlessly open to change (Fuss, 1995). Identification as a process prevents identity from ever achieving the status of an ontological given, while at the same time enabling the formation of an illusion of identity as immediate, secure and totalizable as it

names the entry of history and culture into the subject, a subject that must bear the traces of each and every encounter with the external world. [It] is,

from the beginning a question of relation of self to other, subject to object, inside to outside (Fuss, 1995: 3).

Identity as identification takes us into the realm of the psycho-analytic which presents us with the difficulty that using psycho-analytic theory to explicate Black identity means that I will be using the same Western intellectual discourse which participates directly or indirectly in the subjugation of 'the Black Other' (Mama, 1995; Fuss, 1995; Spivak, 1993a; Venn, 1992 ). As such, we need to be aware of the necessity to question its concepts in terms of their universal applicability<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, texts of social practice as identifications forged through representation within the meaning systems of different discursive regimes, means that Black identities as texts can be looked at in colonial and post-colonial spaces. This will be done below centring on the key themes of 'the silencing of othering' and 'the coming to voice' of Black individuals and communities through hybridity, difference and diaspora.

### The Colonial Other

The sociologist Lola Young (1996: 88) rightly criticises Frantz Fanon for his exclusion of Black women, the construction of pathological models of the psycho-sexuality of women and "the evidence of a deep seam of fear and rage regarding Black women". Nevertheless it is clear that Fanon's work has contributed to contemporary theorising of 'racial' alterity and difference as well as to Black politics (Hall, 1996c). Fanon's

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<sup>3</sup> This is why Black identities as *texts of social practice* is used in this project drawing on LePage and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) work on identifications in talk as people say "I want to be seen as.. but also as".

(1986) *Black Skin, White Masks* makes clear to us the violence of identification in the colonial context. Identification is violent as it is about how white subjects accede to power and Black others learn subjugation. Fanon shows that in the colonial system of power/ knowledge sustained by 'the look' from the place of the Other, the bodily schema is culturally and historically shaped (Hall, 1996 c). Fanon reads 'race' as a discursive regime whose ultimate impact on the colonised is the internalisation of oppression. The colonised, in being centred on Europe, endeavours to be "elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness his jungle" (Fanon, 1986: 18). Black originated identities are negated in the representations of Blackness in the colonial context so the colonised accept that any originality or multiplicity must be denied, according to Fanon. The colonised other produces texts of social practice imitating the coloniser's ideas of Black essential difference generated in this discursive regime, as it is only this which will be allowed past the boundaries of cultural intelligibility into the realm of cultural signification. To allow anything else would be to undermine the cultural construct of 'the Other' designed to uphold and consolidate colonialist definitions of selfhood (Fuss, 1995).

However, Fanon also reminds us of the possibility of dis-identification which exists when Black men assert that "Negro experience is not a whole, for there is not merely one Negro, there are Negroes" (Fanon, 1986: 136). Producing a representation of Blackness which is counter to racist images facilitates the emergence of difference and the possibility for individuals/ 'the people' to free themselves from the mental colonisation of essentialism, whether this comes from Negritude or Imperialism's cultural and epidermal supremacy. One can then just "be a man among other men"



(Fanon, 1986:112), rather than existing triply and being “responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors” (Fanon, 1986:112).

In a similar vein to Fanon, Bhabha argues that the discursive construction of the colonial subject and the exercise and maintenance of colonial power through discourse, necessitates the production of racial and cultural difference as a hierarchy. The system of colonial representation contained within the racist discourse’s stereotype means that we already know “the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the African” (Bhabha, 1994d: 66). Identity, then, is fixed as the fantasy of difference. The colonised population, ever the white man’s burden, are imprisoned in the circle of representation and interpretation, so that, the only identities which are given meaning are those of the racialized other, as for Fanon. However, Bhabha (1994e) also highlights the possibility that exists, within this colonial totalitarianism, for the emergence of difference, as mimicry disrupts colonialism’s authority. This disruption emerges when “the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed and ‘partial’ representation re-articulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from essence” (Bhabha, 1994e: 89). Hybridity emerges in this space of disruption with its proliferating difference evading the eye of surveillance through its dis-identification with identity as racist essence (Bhabha, 1994f).

Robert Young (1995b:150-154) criticises Bhabha for not broaching the question of a gendered colonial subject and for the essentialism inherent in the notion of hybridisation. For Young (1995b:150), Bhabha’s theory of hybridisation “suggests the articulation of two hitherto undifferentiated knowledges, implying a pure

origination of both Western and native cultures". In *Signs Taken for Wonders* Bhabha (1994 f: 114-115) states "colonial hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures". Bhabha does not speak of a pure origination, therefore. Rather, he speaks of the existence of two contradictory knowledges about identity within the coloniser and the colonised based on an idea of 'where I'm from' ("takes reality into account") and 'where I'm at' (replaces "reality with a product of desire"). These contradictory knowledges become active in the space of hybridity so that

The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning- an essence (Bhabha, 1990: 210).

The two contradictory knowledges then are 'roots' and 'routes' such that for Bhabha (1990: 211) "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" and all positions within this process are partial.

An area of under-theorisation which often goes unnoticed in Bhabha's work is racism, as his post-colonial positioning ensures that we assume that this is embedded in the text. Winant, (1994: 29) looks at racism as a discourse and a practice based on 'race as hegemony' in which

opposition and difference are not repressed, excluded or silenced (at least not primarily). Rather, they are inserted, often after a suitable modification, within a 'modern' (or perhaps 'post-modern') social order. Hegemony is therefore oxymoronic: it involves a splitting or doubling of opposition which simultaneously wins and loses, gains entrance into the 'halls of power' and is

co-opted, 'crosses over' into mainstream culture and is deprived of its critical content.

It is a response to this hegemony that permeates Bhabha's work. This makes it possible to see the colonised as not being in a fixed position as the passive object of the colonial gaze, but as being one who engages in evasions and sly civilities through refusing to satisfy the demands of the coloniser's narrative (Parry, 1995: 41). Sly civilities reiterate a different knowledge of identities, a different positioning in terms of identifications. The theorising of 'race as hegemony' linked to the colonised response would have perhaps helped Bhabha to explore the impact of hybridity on both the coloniser and the colonised. Undoubtedly, this process was double. Co-option changed the coloniser's racist discourse and through co-option of its critical edge, the colonised counter-discourse of mimicry had to be transformed so that subversion emerged in the space offered by hybridity as a position of talking back to colonialism. Bhabha (1996b) takes up this view in *Culture's In-Between* in which he sees hybridization as a counter-strategy to colonial hegemony. This counter-strategy leads to the development of an 'interstitial agency'<sup>4</sup> which does not seek cultural supremacy, sovereignty, assimilation, nor collaboration. Rather, hybrid agencies deploy

the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole (Bhabha, 1996b: 58).

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<sup>4</sup> This arises from a hybrid negotiation of power that refuses binary representations (Bhabha, 1996b:58).

### Imperialism and the subaltern

It is also Gayatri Spivak's view that imperialism was a subject constituting project. In "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" (1995), she highlights the relationship of both the imperialist and indigenous patriarchal systems in the class and gender oppression of the subaltern. This entails that only certain types of speaking will be heard, will be interpreted and given meaning by these hegemonic systems. According to the post-colonial critic Benita Parry (1995: 36), from the discourse of *sati*, "Spivak derives large general statements on women's subject constitution/ object formation in which the subaltern woman is conceived as a homogeneous and coherent strategy" - a voiceless woman. In my view, what Spivak was pointing out, was that women's speaking could only be heard, only be 'meaninged' within the patriarchal and imperialist discursive regimes. Even the suicide of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri<sup>5</sup> was read, not as that of a militant insurgent, but as that of a woman tainted by illegitimate love.

Spivak still argues that the subaltern cannot speak - with all the implications this has for a politics of resistance or liberation, a speaking back to the eye of surveillance that is central to hybrid identities. Indeed, this view was repeated in *Echo* (1993a: 188)

In her own separate enclosure, the subaltern still cannot speak as the subject of a speech act.

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<sup>5</sup> Bhuvanewari Bhaduri's suicide happened at the age of 16 or 17 when she hanged herself in her father's apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide remained a mystery because as she was menstruating at the time it was clearly not a case of 'illicit pregnancy'. A decade later the reason

Spivak's definitions of speaking and subaltern, so central here, become clearer in *Subaltern Talk: Interview with the Editors (29 October 1993)* (Spivak, 1996)<sup>6</sup>. For Spivak, a subaltern is one who is denied entry to the lines of social mobility and prospects of militant insurgency. By 'speaking', she is not concerned with actual utterances but with a transaction<sup>7</sup> between the speaker and listener. So, " 'the subaltern cannot speak' means that even when the subaltern makes an effort to the death to speak, she is not able to be heard, and speaking and hearing complete the speech act" (Spivak, 1996: 292). This separates the 'not speaking' from the general condition of subalternity in which speech acts exchanged are only accessible to oral history, "or a discursive formation different from the investigation" (Spivak, 1996: 306). 'Not speaking', then, is the case of "the pure subaltern" (Spivak, 1996: 289) because the effort to represent oneself against the grain of official institutional structures of representation is not acknowledged, so that identities which are constructed as counter-discursive remain outside of social readings within representation. Difference though does emerge and is encoded in oral history.

In *Subaltern Studies- Deconstructing Historiography* Spivak (1993b) looks at subaltern subject-effects. A subject-effect is conceptualised as the effect of an operating subject that is part of an immense, discontinuous network or 'text' of strands- for example, related to politics, ideology, history, sexuality. Different configurations and intersections ("knottings") of these strands determined heterogeneously, although dependent on a myriad of circumstances, produce subject

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emerged. She had been a member of a group in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had been asked to commit a political assassination and unable to do this, she killed herself.

<sup>6</sup> In Landry D. and Maclean G. (1996) *The Spivak Reader*, pp.287-308.

<sup>7</sup> Transaction is important to Spivak as "within the definition of subalternity as such there is a certain not-being-able-to-make- speech acts that is implicit" (Spivak, 1996:289-290).

effects. The 'self' is always, then, a production "rather than a ground" (Spivak, 1993b: 222). This fits in with her ongoing critique of phonocentrism<sup>8</sup> based on *Can The Subaltern Speak?* However, in remembering to reiterate the issue of the complexity of the production of senses of the self, she enables the emergence of different subject effects, positions from which to speak identities, so that the speech act can be completed. Identification(s) and identities can be represented and recognised.

Embodiment as a signifier of identity and, the capacity for the representation of agency through embodiment, figure largely in the work of Spivak through her focus on the subaltern woman as insurgent. In the case of *sati*, or suicide, being a gendered body and being an immolated 'once- a- body' signifies the place of embodiment in determining spaces of the inscription of identity. That is, identity as representation is prescribed and proscribed under imperialism because of 'race', sex and class. So that even when identity claims are made within an anti-imperialist framework agency does not necessarily follow "as identity claims are political manipulations of people who seem to share one characteristic and therefore it is a sort of roll-call concept" (Spivak, 1996: 294). The use of one characteristic, in this case Blackness, to make identity claims as a part of a politics of liberation therefore is about the use of strategic essentialism. Strategic essentialism, for Spivak, thus denies agency as viewed as "the freedom of subjectivity in order to be responsible" (Spivak, 1996: 294).

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<sup>8</sup> For Spivak (1993b:223) to " 'describe speech as the immediate expression of the self' marks the site of a desire that is obliged to overlook the complexity of the production of (a) sense(s) of self". This highlights a central issue for this project's dialogic take on identity. Like Spivak speech is not being

In terms of my conceptualisation of identity as texts of social practice, Spivak's, Fanon's and Bhabha's work highlights the centrality of dialogism: of being involved in a process of being addressed and answering as identifications are constructed. Their work also reminds us of the place of discourses and counter-discourses in any account of Black identifications when they look at the importance of:

- (a) subject effects for the proliferation of identifications and the emergence of difference;
- (b) the sharedness of meaning as a necessity for representations to be recognised and identified with, given the partial locations of the production and interpretation of these representations;
- (c) remembering that difference is embodied as it is gendered, classed, 'race'd and sexualised, and these impact on the representations which can be constructed and heard;
- (d) the internalisation of oppressive essentialisms for the maintenance of racism and sexism as regimes of power/knowledge;
- (e) the idea that, liberation politics in the form of strategic essentialism can also deny differences being articulated from within social movements;
- (f) and, remembering that the colonised, the oppressed, do speak back even if this is only encoded in oral history.

Speaking back leads us to look at hybridity, difference and diaspora in Black identifications.

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seen to be the expression of the self. Rather identifications are seen to be performed in the negotiation

### The Third Space of Hybridity, Difference and Diaspora

Drawing on Homi Bhabha's work makes us see the strategy of hybridization as a counter-hegemonic project. This project is central to the notion of texts of social practice incorporating spaces of difference. The third space of hybridity for Homi Bhabha is not an identity but rather an identification which "puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses" (Bhabha, 1990: 211). At the moment at which the cultural sign attempts to become a generalised knowledge or a normalising hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation "where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal" (Bhabha, 1996b: 58). This leads to the emergence of interstitial agency. The third space iterates 'where I'm from' within the boundaries of 'where I'm at' (Ang, 1994). This allows other possibilities to emerge in both the present and the future based on the location of partiality.

This third space can be seen to have significance for both political and cultural identity in the British context. Dealing first, with 'where I'm from', it is necessary to acknowledge that the question of Caribbean identity has always been a difficult one. That is, if one supposes that identity involves a search for origins, as it is difficult to locate in the Caribbean an origin for its people (Hall, 1995). This is the case as Africa, Europe, India, China, Lebanon and the Jewish diaspora are the historical sources for Caribbean people (Hall, 1995). These are the cultural resources that allowed the construction of Caribbean identities in colonial spaces both during and

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of discursive positionings that arise in stories of lived experiences.



after slavery. Individuals have always required double or multiple consciousnesses in the Caribbean situation. Within the post-colonial space of Britain, to be Black British requires a double consciousness in a situation in which racist discourses orchestrate political relationships so that Black and British appear mutually exclusive (Gilroy, 1993a). Occupying the space of hybridity between these identifications in which Black British is possible is, therefore, both politically and culturally subversive.

In both Spivak and Fanon we see references to the negative impact of essentialisms in the emergence of difference. In Fanon, *negritude* was the object of critique. This critique can also be seen to be extendable to Pan-Africanism and Afro-centricity with their essentialist notions of Blackness. These arose out of Black anti-racist struggle and still have currency today within Black British communities in terms of identifications and identities. However, the “fact is ‘black’ has never been just there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally and politically. It too is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found” (Hall, 1987: 116). Such constructions lead to the emergence of new political identities and a new conception of ethnicity as a counter to the discourses of nationalism or national identity within post-war Britain.

A *pan-Caribbeanisation* occurred within Britain as a response to these racializing discourses, coupled with the undermining of island chauvinism, the resistance to the undermining of ‘cultural traditions’ and the valorisation of Blackness. In Britain now it is evident that Jamaican culture is hegemonic- in the Gramscian sense of leadership and influence- among Caribbeans as a whole (James, 1993). Again then people are

constructing *texts of social practice*. Within these texts “ ‘black’ is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed transcultural / transcendental racial categories” (Hall, 1993: 254), but must include difference as positions within representation of what it means to be Black and British simultaneously. Further, it is acknowledged that only “some of our identities are sometimes caught in that particular struggle” (Hall, 1992: 472). What we have here then are people who have been diasporised creating identities in the third space of hybridity. The point though is two-fold. First, since our ‘racial’ differences do not constitute all of what we are, we are always different negotiating differences of gender, sexuality and class. Second, these antagonisms refuse any simple reduction to each other. We are always in negotiation with a series of different positionalities and the identifications that they imply. So “at the very moment when celebrated Euro-American cultural theorists have pronounced the collapse of ‘grand narratives’ the expressive culture of Britain’s Black poor is dominated by the need to construct them as narratives of redemption and emancipation” (Gilroy, 1993b: 42). That is, communities are seeking a return to roots and reconstructing narratives of origin and Blackness at the same time as negotiating the possibility of being Black British.

As this is the case it is also important to go back to a point I made earlier. That is, that hybridity is compelled to be a two-way process between the coloniser and the colonised because there are no separate knowledges, no hermetically sealed identifications and identities. The impact of ‘Black culture’ on white Britain has been well documented in, for example, Gilroy (1993c), Sebba (1993) and McRobbie (1996). What has been written about less is the reverse of this, that which is implicated by the very notion of identity as texts of social practice. That is, the

identification with aspects of the white Other spoken about by Fanon. Fanon deals of course, with the internalisation of oppression, with the wanting to be white. It is vital for us to look beyond the internalisation of oppression to the dis-identification with white culture and politics that arises within *texts of social practice* because

If the oppressed is defined by its difference from the oppressor, such a difference is an essential component of the identity of the oppressed [...] in that case, the latter cannot assert its identity without asserting that of the oppressor as well (Sarup, 1996: 60).

Our stories as Black Britons contain a whiteness with which we constantly struggle. This is made obvious by the extent to which 'race' and colour continue to have salience in the lives of Black people as is asserted in the example below. Before the extract which follows L has been talking about the demise of Black culture and the fact that it now seems to be focused on rice and peas and chicken<sup>9</sup> on a Sunday and Carnival once a year. She then goes on to talk about being asked to do a presentation about the Black British experience and that she was not going to do a presentation on Caribbean culture which is what the Social Services Department was asking for. We join the conversation at the point at which she begins to talk about what she will talk about instead

Example 1- Tape 2 Side A LF:62-63

1 L Ah'm sta:tin my presentation next week with a quote from Spike Lee (.6)

2 S Ye[ah ]

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<sup>9</sup> Rice and peas and chicken is the stereotypical Caribbean Sunday meal.

- >3 L [Whi]ch says the the BIGGEST LIE EVER TOLD IS .hhh IT DOESN'T  
 4 MATTER WHAT CREED COLOUR OR NATIONALITY you are it's the  
 5 person that you are that matters and if yuh do a good job [ .hhh ] yuh  
 6 S [Mhm ]  
 7 L know blah blah blah an then it goes on to say .hhh BULLSHIT=  
 8 S =Mhm::=  
 >9 L =COLOUR (.8) MATTERS: =  
 >10 S =Mhm: it does, (.8)  
 >11 L COLOUR (.8) I- RACE MATTERS:=  
 12 S =Mhm=  
 13 L =IT'S EVERYTHIN IT HAS EVERYTHIN TO DO: WITH EVERYTHIN=  
 14 S =Mhm=  
 15 L =.hhh an that's how ah'm gonna start my:- my presentation next [week ]  
 16 S [Oh right]  
 17 L .hhh becos IT MATTERS=  
 18 S =Mhm=  
 19 L =IT SHAPES OUR WHO:LE LI:FE=  
 20 S =Mhm=  
 21 L =Yuh na: ah mean?=  
 22 S =Mhm=  
 >23 L .hhh an to me: (.8) AT THE END OF THE DAY YUH CAN HAVE ALL  
 24 YUH VARIATIONS SHIRLEY BUT AT T'END AH THE DAY WHEN YUH  
 25 BRING IT TO THE BA:SE LINE=  
 26 S =Mhm=  
 >27 L =It's between °Black and whi:te°=  
 >28 S =Y[ep ]  
 29 L [Yuh] na:t ah mean .hhh

She uses the words of Spike Lee to show her point of view that 'race' and colour continue to be significant in terms of Black experiences in that they shape our whole life. At line 10 S agrees that colour matters and again at line 28 but for the most part she produces "Mhm"s which could be taken to indicate a general agreement with L's point of view. L produces the upshot of her argument at lines 23-27 in which she claims that irrespective of variations it invariably comes down to Black and white. That is the fundamental dichotomy which exists in the world and which govern who it is possible to be. This is the double consciousness within which Black communities live within the British context that forms the resource for the identifications that they construct in talk. Essence then continues to be salient in identifications even in this anti-essentialist moment in academic theorising.

### Conclusion

I have argued above that Black identities are texts of social practice. These texts are dialogic as they assume 'address' and 'answer' as speakers negotiate identification discourses in talk. The dialogism of *texts of social practice* is maintained in both the colonial and post-colonial contexts as Black agents struggle for identities which are other than those which have been given to them by discourses. Such a struggle produces different, hybrid identities which still rely on essence to be meaningful. The place of essence in hybridity will be the focus in this project as we move to looking at how hybridity, as a negotiation of positions, occurs in talk through the use of discourses of 'race', skin, culture and community.

### Chapter 3

#### Hybridity as an everyday interactional phenomenon

##### Introduction

The problem with hybridity is that it has been articulated without reference to how real-time phenomena are oriented to in particular situations in the social. What I am interested in in this chapter is an initial exploration of hybridity, specifically how to develop some account of how it might be given meaning interactionally and, therefore, 'found' by those, like myself, who are interested in life stories as a 'source' of identity. Beginning with why I think that stories are interesting places to start from in terms of exploring identifications and hybridity, I look at the work of Young, Bhabha, Hall, Gilroy, Spivak and Fanon to draw out hybridity's conceptual threads and discontinuities. I use examples of what I call the *hybridity of the everyday*, to explicate my own point of view that hybridity is about the ongoing assemblage of identities as texts of social practice. This assemblage occurs within the context of the discursive constructions of authentic Blackness in terms of 'community', 'race', 'culture' and 'nation'. This hybridity is dialogical and is given the meaning of 'different from the same' within the times and spaces of life story performances. Within these performances the notions of 'same' and 'different' are also themselves interactionally constructed. Through looking at the interplay of 'the same' and 'different', I also isolate what I have chosen to call 'strategic hybridity' within the data. This latter is a hybridity which is not specifically looked at by theorists but which enables us to begin

to see that a *hybridity of the everyday* entails the translation and negotiation of identity positions in talk.

### Life stories and hybridity

I start from the point of view that identities are based on identifications, and as texts of social practice these identifications are reflexively embedded in interaction as fragments of experience. Life stories, therefore, become sites for looking at the identifications which people perform and thus, the identities that they are claiming, in different times and spaces. This is similar to Homi Bhabha's (1994a: 178) point of view in which he privileges social experience as the starting point in theorising about cultural identities thus

[..] nor does theory become 'prior' to the contingency of social experience. This 'beyond theory' is itself a liminal form of signification that creates a space for the contingent, indeterminate articulation of social 'experience' that is particularly important in envisaging emergent cultural identities.

The enunciative moment provides, in his view, a process in the articulation of culture by which "objectified others" can become "subjects of their history and experience" (Bhabha, 1994a: 178). The enunciatory present is a site then, for the emergence of cultural identifications. Identification itself is a practice which is located in specific social contexts as "a set of conditions that determine the way in which subjects orient themselves in relation to a larger reality which they define in defining themselves"

(Friedman, 1997: 88). This forms a link with my own particular view that hybridity could be seen to be a site of identifications in terms of the ongoing assemblage of identities as texts of social practice, located within the times and spaces of narrative performances. So, hybridity, like other acts of identity, becomes a question of practice and, in particular, the practice of attributing meaning (Friedman, 1997: 85) in the enunciatory moment. The enunciatory moment itself is conflict-ridden as, in Bakhtin's (1981: 272) view, every concrete utterance is filled with the tension of unifying centripetal forces whilst at the same time containing the contradiction of social and historical heteroglossia. This point of view would take us into the exploration of a *hybridity of the everyday* within the bounds of people's experiences and perceptions of self and community in terms of 'the changing same'. The paradox is though that 'culture', 'community' and 'race' are themselves hybrid whilst always being performed as essence, as the known, as the authentic.

#### Culture and hybridity

Robert Young (1995a: 30) sees culture's categories as never being essentialist, even when they aspire to be so because

[..] culture is always a dialectical process, inscribing and expelling its own alterity [...] it does not so much progress as constantly reform itself around conflictual divisions participating in [...] a complex hybridized economy that is never at ease with itself.



In speaking of culture as inscribing and expelling its own alterity and reforming itself around conflictual divisions, Young provides us with one solution to the puzzle of finding hybridity in the life story extracts. That is, to look for things described as conflictually 'other' by informants. An example of this follows in which individuals are talking about changes in politics across generations in terms of the demise of anti-racist Black- which term includes Africans, Caribbeans and Asians- politics in the 'younger generation' because of the impact of white racist thinking on their views and actions. The inclusion of white racist thought within Black thought and action is what is seen to be 'conflictually other' here by Lu who claims that the prejudice of Black kids is just "as venomous as any white racist " (lines 1-6). Sh asks for clarification about who are the targets of this prejudice (line 8) and Lu provides the information that this prejudice is against Asian people (line 9), while Lo agrees with this in overlap (line 10).

Example 1 Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:27

- ›1 Lu I have NEVER SEE:N (.) A SET OF MORE PREjudiced West Indian  
 2 descendants' kids than the kids of this ERA [ now ]  
 3 P [M[m: ]  
 4 Sh [Mm] =  
 5 Lu = I have NEVER an they are (.) the- the PREjudice is as VENOMOUS as  
 6 any WHITE ra:cist=  
 7 P =Mhm: what- =  
 ›8 Sh = What yuh mean? against oder CARibbean [people ? ]  
 9 Lu [Against [ Asian ] people=  
 ›10 Lo [Yeah Asian]  
 ›11 Sh =[Oh no] against the- =  
 12 P [Mhm ]  
 13 Lo =Yeah Asian

Examples like this in which people speak of change in Black community politics are what make it impossible to just relate hybridity to either high or popular culture in terms of the productions of 'migrants'. Neither is hybridity always about celebrating the positive. If hybridity is to be useful to this it must relate to identifications and social practice more generally. It must, then be about day-to-day actions to which interactants in talk attribute meaning. That is, it must be about how Black identifications emerge within talk-in-interaction.

### Hybridity within Cultural Studies

For Robert Young (1995a: 25) there are two models of hybridization. That which involves creolization is about fusion, the creation of new forms, which can then be compared with the old form of which they are partly made up. This process of comparison is what interactants are going through in the above extract when they talk about political change away from the anti-racist morality of the discourse of Black political activism. Another model of hybridity, "hybridization as raceless chaos", is not productive of stable new forms but something closer to Homi Bhabha's restless, interstitial hybridity. This "permanent revolution of forms" is also applied by cultural theorists to the British context (Young, 1995a: 25). Whichever model is chosen the argument remains that

Hybridity thus makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer simply different. In that sense it operates according to the form of logic that Derrida isolates in

the term 'brisure' a breaking and a joining at the same time, in the same place: difference and sameness in an impossible simultaneity" (Young, 1995a: 26).

This is the hybridity that has crossed over into Cultural Studies and, therefore, this is the 'impossible simultaneity' that I have to pursue in my quest for a *hybridity of the everyday*.

There is no doubt that Hall, Gilroy, Bhabha and Spivak's work on hybridity has encouraged a revision of the way problems are addressed in the study of cultural politics (Werbner, 1997b). Some writers, like Jonathan Friedman (1997), see the hybridity discourse celebrated by the 'new diasporic intellectuals' as being merely a form of 'moral self-congratulation', a description of themselves and a product of a group that identifies the world in such terms. However, by charting how these writers define hybridity we can do two things. First, we can break with the assumption that hybridity is itself a stable category in post-colonial theorising and, second, we can begin to see some continuities and perhaps get to a *hybridity of the everyday*. As will become obvious in what follows, what I constantly struggle with is that hybridity does not move beyond the contingent and the ephemeral, so it masks long-term social and political continuities and transformations. This, therefore, makes hybridity opaque as an analytic category. Let us look at the work of each writer mentioned above in turn to try to see if we can get an analysis of hybridity which is embedded in talk on lived experiences.

### Some conceptual threads and discontinuities

Whenever I mention the centrality of Homi Bhabha's work on 'the third space of hybridity' in helping us to understand what Black British identities in the 1990's could be, I get a standard sort of response. That is, "don't forget that Bhabha is a literary critic!" So I will start from here. From acknowledging that he does refer throughout to literary works, which provide his source material for descriptions, or 'theory' of social reality in the contemporary world (Friedman, 1997: 78). I also need to go a step further acknowledging that this approach- that is, the reading of literary texts as a gateway to the analysis of 'migrant culture'- could have limitations. This is so as, it is necessary to go beyond this analysis of literary discourses and representations to the social, political and economic contexts from which they arise (van der Veer, 1997: 95). I also need to ask the question "who are migrants here?" because of the issue of being Black and British which lies at the heart of Black politics within Britain. To go even further, Bhabha himself locates agency in the act of interruptive enunciation, a speaking back to essentializing discourses of containment. Surely, then, we should also privilege the insights of those who are not artists, poets, intellectuals or who would not describe themselves as 'post-colonial border crossers'<sup>1</sup> in terms of getting to these acts of interruptive enunciation as researchers? Doing this would mean that I would have to take on board the fact that hybridity does not only relate to 'border crossers' who read other 'border crosser's' poetry. It would mean that it could also relate to other identifications occurring elsewhere within social reality rather than being only deposited in the creative works of 'post-colonial migrants'. This moves us

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<sup>1</sup> Friedman (1997:79) uses this term.

away from always seeing hybridity as necessarily linked to 'migrant cultural production' and 'cultural mixing', to a point of view which starts from the realisation that

All cultures are always hybrid [.. ] To speak of cultural 'mixing' makes sense only from inside a social world. Hybridity is meaningless as a description of 'culture', because this 'museumizes' culture as a 'thing' (Werbner, 1997b: 15).

So if hybridity is meaningless as a descriptor of culture what does it truly describe apart from identifications? Homi Bhabha takes up this theme in his thoughts on the 'third space' of hybridity.

#### The 'third space' of hybridity

Homi Bhabha's (1990: 211) take on hybridity is that

[..] all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity[..] the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space', which enables other positions to emerge [..] [it is] not so much identity as identification [..] a process of identifying with and through another object, an object of otherness, at which point the agency of identification -the subject- is itself always ambivalent, because of the intervention of that otherness. But the importance of hybridity is that it bears the traces of those feelings and

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practices which inform it, just like a translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings or discourses.

Hybridity, then, is a new ambivalent identification that bears the traces of feelings and practices that inform it. For my purposes, I would like to site these feelings and practices within the context of the discursive construction of 'community', 'race', 'culture' and 'nation' in order to make hybridity less ephemeral. I have already spoken above in relation to Young's work on the possible importance of the 'conflictually other' in terms of hybridity. Here again, Bhabha speaks of ambivalent identifications with otherness as being central to hybridity. Interactants would, therefore, give meaning to their own hybrid identifications through recognising the otherness that they themselves embody. This, for example, is the case for Lo in example 2 who speaks about being Black and British at the same time. Identifying hybridity also extends to the community as is obvious in example 4 in which Lu talks about where it is possible for Caribbeans as diasporic people to belong.

Further, in Bhabha's view, hybridity is not confined to a cataloguing of difference, with its unity being a product of the adding together of its disparate parts, so creolization is not what he is talking about. Rather, it emerges from the process of opening up 'the third space' within which narratives of 'where you're from' interact with narratives of 'where you're at' in order for transformed identifications to arise. The interaction of these narratives of origin and location is what gives Bhabha's notion of 'the third space' some boundaries of its own. These boundaries are marked by 'difference as it becomes known' in terms of identifications explored in life stories.

Hybridity has meaning boundaries which are achieved interactionally through noting difference/change. This in turn would entail that Bhabha's 'third space' is based on opposition to its own others (Friedman, 1997: 78). So even though Bhabha is opposed to a recourse to essentialism with his language of liminality and in-betweenness organising hybridity, this opposition implicates such a recourse.

I have said before that Bhabha locates agency in the act of interruptive enunciation, and it is to this point that I wish to now return. In the colonial context, Bhabha (1994b) talks about hybridity as being a displacement of the eye of surveillance through mimicry, a speaking back which produces something other than was entailed through colonial discourse's construction of the other. Identity is constructed here through a negotiation of difference, within which the presence of fissures, gaps and contradictions is not necessarily a sign of failure (Papastergiadis, 1997: 257) but of the emergence of difference. I would like to take this talking back to discourses as one way of looking at hybridity through life stories by

[..] reading into the present of a specific [..] performance, the traces of all those diverse disciplinary discourses and institutions of knowledge that constitute the condition and contexts of culture (Bhabha, 1994: 313).

An example of this follows (example 2<sup>2</sup>), in which Lo speaks about her own identification as not African but Black British in opposition to what she presents as negativity and lack of Black political knowledge on the part of her white colleagues at work and the state (Parliament) (lines 1-7). She situates her identification within the state's confusion in terms of what is a politically correct term for Black people. As well as this, she demonstrates her awareness of how colour signifies difference, whereas being a Norwegian does not count- note her derision at the end- because after all, whiteness is the colourless, neutral but all pervasive norm. She thereby, like Bhabha (1994), criticises the implied homogeneity of the white 'nation' and speaks back to the discourse of white supremacy which would deny her Caribbean heritage- "AH'M NOT A:FRICAN" (lines 9-10 )- her nationality as British and her right to assert the political identification Black in conjunction with her nationality claim (lines 12-17). A case, perhaps, of the white discourse of ethnicity -"my ancestors came from Norway" (lines 26-27)- coming face to face with Black British political identification forged from struggle. This example of white supremacist discourse brings to mind Bakhtin's (1981: 270) view that there are forces which seek to overcome heteroglossia and centralise verbal-ideological thought by creating a firm stable nucleus (in our case, not language but the nation), or else defending this nucleus from the pressure of growing heteroglossia:

Example 2 Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:35-36

- 1 Lo This lot- this lot at wor [k     ] THEY JUST MA:KE ME LAUGH THEY
- 2 Lu   [Mhm]
- 3 Lo TRY AN DISCUSS THINGS LIKE .hhh they say to me WHAT
- 4     WOULD YOU CALL YOURSELF Lo YUH NUH? with all them- we were
- 5     talkin about this- it wuh something in Pa:rlliament (.) about these p- yuh

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<sup>2</sup> This example and the two that follow are discussed more fully in Chapter 7.



6 nuh what- what p- what politically what politically correct way t- to CALL a  
 7 Black person, [YUH NA:W ] like A:FRICAN or whatever=  
 8 Sh [Oh al:right ] = Ye [ah ]  
 >9 Lo [Ah ]  
 10 said we:ll AH'M NOT A:FRICAN (.)  
 11 Sh Mhm =  
 >12 Lo = Why can't ah call mahself BLACK a:hm BRITISH yuh know [because]  
  
 13 Sh [Yeah ]  
 14 Lo if THEY can say [(( .hhh ))] WHATEVER THEY SAY IN AMERICA=  
 15 Sh [ Yeah ] =Yeah=  
 16 Lo = [An she sehs]  
 17 Lu = [\*AFRICAN ] AMERICAN =  
 18 Sh =M [hm]  
 19 Lo [BU]T SHE: SAYS NO: YUH CA:N'T SAY THAT [ AH SAYS ]  
 20 Lu [Clears throat ]  
 21 Lo WE:LL WHY CAN'T AH?  
 22 (0.6)  
 23 Sh Mhm,=  
 24 Lo = DUH YUH NA:T AH MEAN?=  
 25 P =Yuh can say what yuh want=  
 >26 Lo = THEN SHE SEHS- SHE SEHS AW:: BUT THEN I COULD SAY I'M (0.6)  
 27 MY (0.4) ancestors CAME FROM NOR:WAY: AN STUFF LIKE THA ah  
 28 said o:h gi mi a break

(\*This was said in an 'American' accent)

### Hybridity and 'double consciousness'

Bhabha stresses the importance of 'the migrant' in producing liminal spaces of identification created by the performative transgression of grand narratives. 'The migrant' is able to open up this performative space of enunciation because of their double consciousness, a double vision that ensures that people are in two places at once and maintain a double perspective on reality. Gilroy (1993a) also speaks of this double consciousness. Is this concept of doubleness useful in relation to analysing data? I think that it might be useful to listen to Bhabha's (1994g: 4) words

The 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully within cultural discourse, when we *think* we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'.

Perhaps what should be looked for in the data are examples in which speakers themselves acknowledge their difference from Britishness as well as insisting on this Britishness as being a part of who they claim to be, as in example 2. The oscillation between the axioms of foreign and familiar as the sociologist Nikos Papastergiadis (1997) would have it. The subtlety and instability of revealing any division of meaning into an inside and outside which Bhabha (1994: 314) describes thus

[..] hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture which suggests that the similitude of the *symbol* as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the *sign* is, in each specific social practice, both different and differential. It is in this sense that the enunciation of cultural difference emerges *in its proximity* [...] we must not seek it in the 'visibility' of difference for it will elude us.

So, difference is always there but so much like a second skin that it is invisible! Perhaps Nikos Papastergiadis's oscillation should be viewed as being to do with constructing identity as bricolage in order to account for such subtlety. The fact that it is not just about the transferral of the foreign into the familiar but, rather, also about the "untranslatable bits that linger" (Papastergiadis, 1997: 277-278). Looking at the

process of identification, therefore, requires recognition of the negotiation of positions with which people engage within this doubleness. In example 3 Sh's talk continues from example 2 and centres around being Jamaican and British simultaneously, while drawing attention to the contradictions in the discourse of British nationality and citizenship in terms of who can vote (lines 1-3). To stress 'came from Jamaica' implies that this is the 'roots', the cultural home, the source of the untranslatable bits that linger, which shows 'where I'm from' being simultaneous with 'where I'm at' (Britain) and 'where I also belong' if "ah wanna bi British" (lines 13-14):

Example 3 Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:39

- >1 Sh AN THE THING IS the THING is as well yuh nuh THE:SE people have  
 2 such STRA:NGE THINKIN becos when I came here from JAMAICA in  
 3 nineteen seventy five ah could VOTE  
 4 (1.4)  
 5 P Mhm=  
 6 Sh =NOW TO ME FROM DI TIME AH KYAN VOTE ah BELONG in THAT  
 7 COUNTRY [ right? ]  
 8 Lu [ Yeah ]=  
 9 Sh =If- If we go LIVE in America we kya:n vote yuh nuh until we  
 10 BEcome A:MERICAN CITIZENS right? so if mi ah vote an ah mek  
 11 decisions bout who should govern me [ we:ll ] TOUGH pan dem yuh na:h  
 12 Sa [Yeah]  
 >13 Sh mean? ah'm BRITISH [ AN DAT'S ] IT if ah WANNA [ BI BRIT ]ISH  
 14 Lo [Well that's it ] [Yeah ]  
 15 Sh AH can CA:LL mahself that

One way in which 'roots' and 'where I'm at' can be combined in a politically informed double consciousness is provided by Lu's argument which follows in example 3a, that British is not a 'race' but a nationality (lines 1-8). This neatly subverts New Right discourse about the white British nation as a 'race' and makes it possible for Lu and the other interactants as Black people to be both 'Black' (a 'race') and British (a

nationality) at the same time without any contradictions (lines 22-23). The 'they' here is white people who deny Black claims to Britishness. The claim being made by Lu is for inclusion within 'the nation' as people who are different, who are Black, but who nevertheless belong. Interestingly, other interactants also share the point of view that 'British' equates with nationality, so to claim that is not to claim whiteness in any way as "we're not saying that we're English, or we're Scottish or we're Welsh" (lines 13-16) just nationals of Britain.

Example 3a- Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:37-38

>1 Lu WHAT THEY'VE ALSO GOT TO REALISE IS BRITISH (.) THEY  
 2 MAKE OU(T) BRITISH IS A RA:CE [ BRITISH] IS NOT A RA:CE=  
 3 Lo [It's horrible] =Yeah=  
 4 Lu =Yeah?=  
 5 Sh = It's a nationality  
 6 (.7)  
 7 Lo Nationality init?=  
 8 Lu =[ YEAH ]  
 9 Sh [ National ]ity ] =  
 10 P [ Mhm ]  
 11 Lu = AN- AN if PEOPLE ARE DENYING PEOPLE NATIONALITY, (.)  
 12 Sh Mhm (.)  
 >13 Lu WE'RE NOT SAYIN WE'RE ENGLISH [ OR ] WE'RE [SCOTTISH ]  
 14 Sh [ Yes ]  
 15 P [Mhm ]  
 16 Lu OR WE'RE WELSH=  
 17 Sh = No we're [sayin BRITISH ]  
 18 Lu [WHICH IS SEP- A SEPARATE RA:CE [ (.) ] yeah?  
 19 Sh [Mhm ]  
 20 Lo [Mhm ]  
 21 (1.0)  
 >22 Lu We:ll yuh (( .hhh .hhh )) ah MEAN ANY COUNTRY YUH LIVE IN  
 23 YUH'RE A NATIONAL OF THAT COUNTRY

Through the speakers' use of identity categories the examples above remind us of the historical specificities of Black identifications and that such identifications are a negotiation of the position 'Black'.

### Identity, hybridity and position

The cultural critic Stuart Hall's (1996f: 502) view on cultural identity continues in a similar vein to Bhabha's in that cultural identity

[..] is not fixed, it's always hybrid. But this is precisely because it comes out of very specific historical formations, out of very specific histories and cultural repertoires of enunciation, that it can constitute a 'positionality', which we call provisionally, identity. It's not just anything. So each of these identity-stories is inscribed in the positions we take up and identify with, and we have to live with this ensemble of identity positions in all its specificities.

Identities aren't 'just anything', they are positionings which are constantly being transformed and are thereby never complete as ideas, world views and material forces interact with each other and are reworked. This is at base a description of a process of change. Hall's anti-essentialist perspective on identity has had significant impact on the debates about extracting ethnicity out of its anti-racist paradigm (Papastergiadis, 1997: 275) in order to recognise that we are all ethnically located. A case of the margin speaking forcefully to the centre!

The margin is important in Hall's work as a site of counter-hegemony. The margin challenges the centre through a three-pronged strategy. First, through an opposition to the given order; second, via recovery of broken histories and the invention of appropriate narrative forms; third, through the definition of a position and a language

from which speech will continue (Papastergiadis, 1997: 275). This seems to encapsulate the development of the Black Movement in Britain but what of individuals' identity positionings?

Although Papastergiadis (1997: 274) claims that nowhere in Hall's "work is there a theoretical model which could be transferred to particular sites of struggle and used to 'read off' examples of hybridity", Hall's analysis of the challenge from the margin seems to me to be useful. The first prong of the strategy speaks to me in terms of a "talking back" in opposition to monolithic essentializing discourses as I have explored above in Bhabha's work. The second strategic strand includes the possibility of changing conceptions of self and community in the construction of social memories through individual or group narrativization. The third aspect of the strategy is the conscious and self-conscious practising of difference which is recognised as "different from" but "the same as" by the self. People then, construct hybrid identifications within the constraints of specific 'histories', 'cultures' and 'communities'. For example, being Black and British as in Bhabha's and Gilroy's view of double consciousness and in the previous example.

It is to Hall's second strategic strand that I want to turn because of its focus on narratives of change and the possibilities this offers for analysing a hybridity of the everyday. In the example<sup>3</sup> which follows (4) Lu explores his point of view about the interaction of identity, community, 'race' and nation within an understanding of

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<sup>3</sup> This example is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

ourselves as diasporic people. That is “yuh’re livin in Englan- in Britain an yuh’re African Caribbean” (line 4) who don’t really belong to/in Britain as that appellation “twice removes you from where you are” (line 7), but whose only place to be must be here as “they can’t go back to [...] the Caribbean” (line 12). Indeed, they don’t want to, because the way of life is completely different (lines 18-21). This shows the narrative construction of a changing community as well as changing selves across the generations, so that, this community and these selves are seen to both belong within, but also simultaneously to be outside of, the nation.

Example 4- Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:39

1 Lu ((\* African Caribbean )) YUH KNOW AH’VE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST  
 2 THAT because to me I- I ALWAYS say to di kids yeah? LISTEN  
 3 (0.8)  
 >4 Lu yuh’re livin in England- in Britain [ (.) ] an yuh’re A:FRICAN CARIBBEAN  
 5 Sh [Mhm]  
 6 Sa [Mhm]  
 >7 Lu (.) that TWICE REMOVES YOU:=  
 8 Sh =[ Mhm ]  
 9 Sa [ M [hm ]  
 10 Lu [From] where you: ARE (.)  
 11 Sa Mhm (.)  
 >12 Lu THEY CAN’T GO BACK TO TO- TO [ THE CARIBBEAN ]  
 13 Sh [They can’t go back to ]  
 14 the Caribbean no:=  
 15 Lu =Yeah? THEY DON’T WUNUH, ((.hh[h .hhh .hhh ] ) ] why SHOULD  
 16 Sh [No this is right]  
 17 Lu they? [((.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh ]  
 >18 Sh [ It’s different too di ]fferent=  
 19 Lu =[ ((.hhh .hhh .hhh ) ) ]  
 20 Lo [Yeah the only problem is IT’S] A CO:MPLETELY DIFFERENT WAY OF  
 21 LIFE ALTOGETHER INIT?

Lu’s recognition of ‘diaspora’ in example 4 leads us to the work of Paul Gilroy.

### Diaspora

The cultural critic Paul Gilroy's (1993a) project in *The Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness* is to explore diaspora and double consciousness in order to challenge both essentialism in the form of 'Afro-centricity as authenticity' and anti-essentialist claims which see Blackness as an unwarranted construction. As is clear in example 4, 'diaspora' opens up a historical and experiential rift between the place of residence and that of belonging. This in turn sets up a further opposition as consciousness of diaspora affiliation stands opposed to the power of nation states, as diaspora identification exists outside of the political forms and codes of modern citizenship (Gilroy, 1997: 329). Gilroy's notion of outsidership and its paired insidership have been explored by the interactants in examples 2,3,3a and 4 above.

Through his metaphor of the ship/travelling we are presented with the 'Black Atlantic' as a hybrid 'counter culture of modernity'

[..] one that expresses an authenticity not located in New York or London but in opposition to a dominant modernity and that has moulded strands and fragments into something shared at the level of the 'structure of feeling' and expressed as a kind of holism where the aesthetic, the political and the moral are one (Friedman, 1997: 74).

Again we can read 'opposition' as a talking back to dominant discourses. However, what has been moulded from disparate strands and come to be shared in terms of



politics, aesthetics and morality is unclear here. As well as this, Gilroy's notion of 'the structure of feeling' is unclear. What is clear, though, is that there has been a pan-Caribbeanization and a consciousness of global Blackness that has been at the base of the Black anti-racist movement within Britain. This has been important in the forging of Black communities through using the discourse of Blackness.

Are we to assume then, that this 'holism' of which Gilroy speaks means that as diasporic Black people we share something akin to Negritude? If this is the case then, obviously, while Gilroy is opposed to Afrocentricity he himself is positing some quasi-transcendental spiritual core- 'something shared at the level of feeling'- that unifies all Black souls in the diaspora. Isn't this merely another appeal to essence, no matter how alluringly phrased? If we take Gilroy's point of view about this shared holism, what would we do with an example (5, below) in which Black young people are negatively presented as being "Yorkshire through and through"? What would an oppositional authenticity mean? What would the shared aesthetic and moral strands be here?

Example 5- Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:41

1 Lu LIKE WHEN WI WENT to MALta  
 2 (0.6)  
 >3 Lu wi had these guy- an if yuh HEARD these guys asking about CHIPS an  
 4 BLOODY EGG ((.hhh .hhh [ .hhh .hhh ])) yuh know [ ]  
 5 Sh [Ah know IT'S JUST LIKE [ D ] THAT ]=  
 6 P [EXACTLY Mhm]  
 >7 Lu =AN- AN THEY GETTIN GOOD- GOOD yuh nuh BRAZILIAN BEEF  
 8 ((.hhh [.hhh ])) [((\*An] dey wantin egg an CHIPS an want  
 9 Sh [Mh[m]  
 10 Lo [Ge]tting DECENT-[yeah]

11 Lu egg RUNNY an ah just thought GO:D  
 12 (0.4)  
 13 Lu YOR[ KSHIRE ] MEN [ THROUGH an THROUGH ]))  
 14 Sh [Just a- ] [ Ah KNOW ]

By performing an identification as Yorkshire men through food choice (lines 3-4 and 7-8) these young men being spoken about are, in the speakers' view, practising difference from other Caribbean people who I guess would prefer the good Brazilian beef! The oppositional authenticity would, therefore, be related to the interactants' view of what it is to be a Black person. The shared aesthetic and moral strands would obviously come from this view. So, there is an essence of 'the Black person' which individuals are using to interpret the behaviour of others who are being judged as different.

My point here is that in looking at hybridity, as something recognised to be the same but different, part of the changing same, to be interested in solidarity but difference, we can maybe begin to ground Gilroy's arguments in the world of the everyday. This would take us somewhere towards muting Friedman's (1997: 74) very correct criticism that Gilroy's

[...] argument is about transnational Blacks, intellectuals all, and it is directed to other intellectuals. It attempts to define Black identity in a new way. The question is for whom and how?

Looking at the question of for whom and how leads us to turn again to Gilroy's view of an anti-essentialist diaspora. For him diaspora can be used to instantiate a new

model that allows “us to perceive identity in motion- circulating across the web or network that they constitute” (Gilroy, 1997: 334). Here, ‘dispersed people’ recognise the effects of spatial dislocation as rendering the issue of origins problematic (Gilroy, 1997: 335) (see examples 3-4 above). Space is transformed when it is seen through the lens of diaspora in terms of communicative circuitry that has enabled dispersed populations to converse, interact and synchronise elements of their social and cultural lives. Examples of this within the British context can be found in the pan-Caribbeanization of reggae, soca, Jamaican Creole (cf Tate, 1984), carnival and the influence of Black American music in Black British culture. This helps us to see that, “people do make their own identities but not in circumstances of their own choosing and from resources they inherit that will always be incomplete” (Gilroy, 1997: 341). In this process individuals speak back by not privileging the institutional order, problematize origin and have networks of culture and politics across space and time. This is how hybridity as a performance in the everyday becomes amenable to analysis through extracts from interactions. That is to say, if Blackness is seen as an open signifier which “seeks to celebrate complex representations of a Black particularity that is *internally* divided: by class, sexuality, gender, age and political consciousness” (Gilroy, 1993e: 123).

There is then no unitary idea of Black community even given this Black particularity as is clear in the following example. Here we see some of this interconnectedness in terms of networks across time and space as people discuss the relevance of the Nation of Islam for the English situation. Even within the notion of a shared Black

racial particularity contained in Lu's use of "brother" (line 5), we are also made aware of divisions with regard to Black British political consciousness and that of Black America (lines 8 and 11). This Black British particularity is also asserted by Sh's view that Farakhan's ideas are alright for the American context "but not for this particular one here" (line 13).

Example 6- Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:42

- 1 Lu ((\*Ah'm)) listenin to the likes of FARAKHAN an ah'm sayin  
 2 (1.0)  
 3 Lu Uh we:ll why are pe:ople in Engla:n LISTENIN TO IM?  
 4 (1.3)  
 >5 Lu AH DON'T DISAGREE WITH WHAT THE BROTHER'S SAY[IN,]  
 6 Sh [No ] no  
 7 Sh [I don't th-]  
 >8 Lu [Yuh nuh ] POLITICALLY an EVERYTHIN [ HE'S RIGHT ON FOR  
 9 Sh [Yuh're talkin to the  
 10 converted right here]  
 11 Lu THE ] AMERICAN SI:T[U:A:TION fi:ne]  
 >12 Sh [ Yes but ] NOT for this  
 13 particular on[e here]  
 14 Lu [But the] way people are takin im ON

The assimilation of other voices and speaking

A theme above in trying to get to grips with a 'hybridity-of-the everyday' so that it becomes amenable to research, has been to see it as a talking back to discourses of

domination. In *Can the Subaltern Speak?* The post-colonial critic Gayatri Spivak (1993c) denies that this speaking back can happen in terms of it being heard by the colonisers. She does not, however, say that speaking back does not occur. In fact she provides an example of just such a speaking back by using the suicide of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri as an example. Her act is rendered invisible because it does not enter the dominant discourse. It is not acknowledged by it because it does not speak in a way that is allowed within the circle of meaning. In order to be heard one, I assume, has to speak in 'an assimilated tongue'. Nikos Papastergiadis's (1997: 277) view is that "Spivak, unlike Hall, seems to limit the concept of hybridity as a metaphor for cultural identity", because she rightly disputes the applicability of the concept of hybridity to the subaltern condition.

However, in looking at Derrida's *Of Grammatology as a Positive Science*, Spivak (1993c: 89) seems to speak directly to Bhabha's view of hybridity as identification with and through an object of otherness when she says

To render thought or the thinking subject transparent seems, by contrast, to hide the relentless recognition of the other by assimilation [...] Derrida does not invoke 'letting the other(s) speak for himself' but rather invokes an 'appeal' to or 'call' to the 'quite-other' (tout-autre as opposed to a self consolidating other), of 'rendering delirious that interior voice that is the voice of the other in us'.

One way in which this could be read is that this is about undoing the assimilated other in us which enables us to get to an-other position in terms of protest as in

Bhaduri's suicide. This would be similar to Robert Young's (1995a) view of hybridity as being to do with the conflictually other within. So, by looking at the assimilation of other voices in us, Spivak is speaking about hybridity. This is so as assimilation implicates doubleness, almost of one thing masquerading as another. Such assimilation as doubleness is spoken about in the extracts through, for example, being Yorkshire, British, as well as Caribbean, as in the examples above. Below, in a continuation from example 5, one of the women speaks about the impact of the space of Yorkshire on someone who has lived here since he was four, in terms of his assimilation to the Yorkshire dialect. Sh talks about the sameness of D (as a Jamaican, lines 4-6) along with his simultaneous difference (he talks like a Yorkshire man, lines 1-2). Jamaican-ness as essence means that the masquerade of a Yorkshire accent as assimilation to Britishness is undone

Example 7- Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:41

>1 Sh JUST LIKE D TOTALLY A- YUH KNOW THE WAY HE TALKS  
 2 YORKSHIRE MAN, RIGHT?[ it's EXACTLY like that]  
 3 Lu [ ((.hhh .hhh .hhh)) ]((.hhh [.hhh .hhh  
 >4 Sh [He was born  
 5 Lu .hhh .hhhh .hhh .hhh )) ]  
 6 Sh in JAMAICA? I JUST CAN'T BELI:EVE] THAT JUST like COMIN [HERE]  
 7 Sa [Mhm ]  
 8 Sh WHEN YUH'RE FOUR CAN change you so: dramatically

*A hybridity of the everyday*

Hybridity is undeniably a slippery concept. I have tried above to pin it down to a few categories of 'identity assemblage' within the space of life stories where people speak about change from some Black same. This has been done in order to try to

make some sense of it through the extracts as a *hybridity of the everyday*. These are:

- acknowledging 'the conflictually other' within;
- speaking back to dominant discourses;
- double consciousness and the negotiation of identifications;
- positionality;
- changing conceptions of self and community;
- and, assimilation.

I look at some of this list and I am forced to think about the work of Frantz Fanon (1986) in *Black Skin White Masks*. Could it be that he was an unacknowledged precursor of hybridity theorising? I think that this is an important question given the dominance of Hall, Gilroy and Bhabha in this area. Fanon speaks of double consciousness when in *Black Skins, White Masks* he looks at the psyche of the colonial Martiniquan who only feels like a whole man when he sees the boat at the pier that is to take him to France, the motherland. This double consciousness of colonialism also extends to the ways of being within Martinique in which those who have been to France only speak French to show their difference from erstwhile comrades. There is then a conflictually other within. This Fanonian double consciousness is more reminiscent of the DuBoisian one as it relates to assimilation in its more damaging negative facets. That is that double consciousness in which aspects of identification are denied in order to be something or someone else. However, Fanon's view is that that there is not one "negro" but many "negroes". This establishes the multiplicity of identities that is a part of hybridity. Fanon's work also

encompasses a talking back to dominant discourses, whether based on the Afro-centricity of Negritude or white supremacist essentialism, whilst looking at change within the identifications produced by the discourses of Blackness.

What about strategic hybridity?

I started with the point of view that hybridity becomes a site of identifications through the practice of attributing meaning in the enunciatory moment within the space of conversations. I want to return to this. It is obvious that at base hybridity is about change, but a specific sort of change, that of Derrida's 'brisure' in which the same and different are simultaneous in identification talk. In the *hybridity of the everyday* which I have spoken about, we have speakers giving meaning to this 'difference from the same' through the prism of a Black authenticity which they themselves define. The 'third space of hybridity' would, therefore, be identifications as difference from some 'same' that were performed between people in interaction. Bearing this in mind what would I be able to make of the following extract?

Example 8- Tape 1 Side A Sa,Je,Sh:56-58

- 1 Sa We were all punks THEN yuh know cos it wuh fla:res?=  
 2 Sh =You were a punk as well?  
 3 (.3)  
 4 Sa Yuh know fla:res were out then,=  
 5 Sh = Oh yeah.=  
 >6 Sa = An ah was one of the first people to wear drain pipe jeans,  
 7 (.4)  
 8 Sh Oh right?=  
 >9 Sa =They were wearin- THEY WEREN'T EVEN DRA:IN PIPE they were  
 10 quite still fla:red but they were much NARROWER than the (.) other ones,  
 11 (6.1)  
 12 Sh Ah can't imagine yuh as a punk [San ]





who built a picture of her punk identity as being based on style- jeans, shirt and safety pin (lines 6,9,10,20,23 and 25). She was only into style as it turns out that she “really achshally hate the punk”, (lines 34 and 35) though no such disclaimer is given for her love of soul music (lines 29-31) as this has a taken for granted place in diasporic Black culture. What do we see so far then? First we see her negotiating the identity positions of punk/ not punk really, but definitely Black. Second, we notice that this move to the definitely Black position is done through the expulsion of that which has been made conflictually other in the conversation. That is, punk. Last, we also notice that the Blackness that is claimed is based on ideas about culture<sup>4</sup> and belonging to the Black community of Birmingham.

Sa also mentions above the use of style in identification making. This highlights the strategic nature of hybridity. Sarup’s (1996: 100) view is apposite here as it provides us with another possibility for looking at hybridity as a practice of attributing meaning in the enunciatory moment as

Insofar as identity is increasingly dependent upon images, this means that the replication of identities, individual, corporate, institutional and political, becomes a very real possibility.

This presents us with the possibility of a *hybridity of the everyday* being constructed through simulacra, which in some way transgress the accepted boundaries of Black identity. How Blackness is transgressed is made obvious by all the interactants in the previous extract in terms of Sa’s punk dress and musical taste as well as her original

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<sup>4</sup> This makes us question Baumann’s (1996) view that Caribbeans are in search of culture.

claim to a punk identity. Again though we continue to see an interaction between some idea of difference from a Black same being negotiated in the interaction.

There is another area that I think needs to be considered that concerns the use of the term 'Black' itself. Black has been used and continues to be used as a political term to unite disparate communities. I think that this should be seen as a case of strategic hybridity, but this time in terms of generating Black political activism. This would again remove hybridity from its usual coupling with cultural production. To get to what I mean, look at the following extract. Here SoT responds to Sh's question about what she thinks that Black identity is. Her answer is that it shifts (line 5) but her ideal is of a Black political identity that acknowledges the differences produced by ethnicity (lines 11-24).

Example 9- Tape 1 Side A SonT:128

- 1 Sh If you were going to tell me what Black identity is to you what would you  
 2 sa:y?=  
 3 So =.hhh o:h::  
 4 (.7)  
 >5 So .hhh it SHIFTS for mi=  
 6 Sh =M [hm ]  
 7 So [It ] SHIFTS because of the experiences that ah ha:ve,=  
 8 Sh =Mhm=  
 9 So =Ah:m with regard to Asian people=  
 10 Sh =Mhm=  
 >11 So =.hhh my IDEAL is where BLACK IDENTITY SHI- is a POLITICAL one=  
 12 Sh =M[hm ]  
 13 So [An ] where .hhh yuh know because of the shared experience  
 14 of racism=  
 15 Sh =Mhm=  
 16 So =A:hm  
 17 (1.3)  
 18 So .hhh people whatever their ethnicity,  
 19 (.4)  
 20 Sh Mhm  
 21 (.4)

- 22 So Are able to come together in order to be able to fight racism [ (.) ]  
 23 Sh [Mhm]  
 24 So collectively, but recognising ethnic differences,=

Could this be a case of strategic essentialism producing a hybrid Black identity in the struggle against racism? Perhaps so. Underlying this collective political hybridity though always is, as SoT says so eloquently, the need for the recognition of 'ethnic' differences. These differences bring us back to a view that there is a particular essence to a group, again troubling the notion of Black identities as translated hybrid identities, whilst reintroducing Gilroy's (1997) idea of 'the changing same'<sup>5</sup>. This idea of a political hybridity would also mean that 'double consciousness' would have to become 'triple consciousness', because individuals would be constructing identifications strategically within the 'ethnic', 'racial' and a political identification that is Blackness within the British context. They would be engaged in negotiating 'ethnic', 'racial' and political discourses as both the addressed and one who answers.

Robert Young's (1995a) view that hybridity is dialogic is significant for understanding the notion of translated hybrid identities as recognisable with reference to an essence in terms of a 'difference from the changing same'<sup>6</sup>. Individuals are engaged in a process of translating Black essence and using this to read off practices of the body and of language as more or less Black or not Black at all. This has been obvious in the previous examples in which interactants spoke about differences of

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<sup>5</sup> "This 'changing same' is not some invariant essence that gets enclosed subsequently in a shape-shifting exterior [...] The same is retained without needing to be reified. It is ceaselessly reprocessed" (Gilroy, 1997:335-336).

<sup>6</sup> Difference from the changing same is my reformulation of Gilroy's (1997) 'changing same' to acknowledge that this latter is itself subject to essentialisms, no matter how contingent.

age and generation within Black communities and in example 8 when the possibility of Sa as a Black punk was questioned. The next examples will serve to illustrate that this translation of an essence to read off practices as Black or not, happens within people's recollections of the use of signifiers of Blackness.

In the conversation that occurred prior to example 10, D has been talking about her Jamaican parents continuing the tradition of calling their children 'pet names'. That is, names of endearment rather than official names. D, for example was called "Babs". In this extract D shows her selective use of language to construct her authentic Blackness and her continuing connection with Jamaica. She describes herself then as a Black woman who uses language to be playfully deceitful in both claiming the space of authentic Jamaican-ness (lines 1-5) and covering up inadequacies in her language by claiming Jamaican-ness (lines 8-16), even though she was born here. Interestingly she also uses a notion of what is English, to claim that she doesn't speak English "how they expect yuh to speak English" rather her language is "broken up [...] some Jamaican words come in here and there" (lines 27 and 29). D thus uses language strategically in the first part of the extract to claim sameness. In the second part of the extract she uses her heritage identity- made obvious through 'skin' and language- strategically to cover up what she sees as her shortcoming. These are cases in which both her interactant and herself are translating from essences and using them to judge her claims to authenticity and difference.

Example 10- Tape 1 Side A DH: 171-175

›1 D And it's like some people older (.6) I'll say o:h yeah ah wuh born in

- 2 Jamaica yuh na:t ah mean? [ an ] I'll start talkin an now it's like °e::neh mi  
 3 Sh [Mhm]  
 4 D kyan tell<sup>7</sup> (.5)  
 5 Sh [((.hhh ))]  
 6 D [ Ah ] think yeah ((.hhh)) ah wun't ((ah wuh born here\* (.)))=  
 7 Sh = ((.hhh .hhh )) =  
 >8 D =An ah mek excuses [ some ] .hhh an ah can ah can rea:lly mek  
 9 Sh [((.hhh))]  
 10 D some excuses to some peo[ple ] ah'm talkin right?=  
 11 Sh [Mhm] =Mhm=  
 12 D =An I'll sa:y summat an it'll s:- come out wrong? (.8) I'LL SAY WHAT DUH  
 13 YUH EXPECT AH WUN'T BORN HERE YUH KNO:W?=  
 14 Sh = ((.hhh .hhh))=  
 15 D =O:h where were yuh born?=  
 16 Sh =((.hhh))=  
 17 D =O:h Jamaica [ oh ri:ght? ] NOW I UNDERSTAND [ °ah'm thinkin ] so:ft<sup>9</sup>  
 18 Sh [ ((.hhh) ) ] [ ((.hhh .hhh) ) ]  
 19 D .hhh=  
 20 Sh =Ah kno:w ((.hhh .hhh))=  
 21 D =I say ah ca:n't becos ah ca:n't speak English=  
 22 Sh =Mhm=  
 23 D =Yuh na:t ah [ mean? ]<sup>8</sup>  
 24 Sh [ ((\*What)) d'yuh speak then? ) ]=  
 25 D =Ah SPEAK ENGLISH YUH NA:T AH MEAN?=  
 26 Sh =Yeah=  
 >27 D =BUT IT'S NOT HOW (.6) THEY EXPECT YUH TO SPEAK English=  
 28 Sh =Mhm=  
 >29 D =Mine are broken up these [ words ] come an: .hhh some Jamaican  
 30 Sh [ Mhm ]  
 31 D [words]come in here and there .hhh  
 32 Sh [ Mhm ]

Both women enter into talk on their respective pronunciation problems and that of their children. For example, Sh claims to not be able to say “ask” or “desk”. The former becomes ‘a:ss’ and the latter ‘des’ if she hasn’t got time to think about it. D talks about putting an ‘h’ in front of everything and also about her children’s inability to say ‘three’ as it emerges as ‘tree’. D continues to talk about her children in the continuation of the conversation:

<sup>7</sup> This translates as “Yes I can tell”.

<sup>8</sup> This translates as “you know what I mean?”

Example 11- Tape 1 Side A DH 171-175

- 1 D An it's like them two it's (.7) cla:t=  
 2 Sh =Ye[ ah ]  
 3 [It's ] not CLOTH=  
 4 Sh =Yeah yeah=  
 5 D =An they used to think .hhh well they can't- they u:sed to sa:y they ca:n't  
 6 talk right but they CAN TALK ri:ght=  
 7 Sh =Mhm=  
 >8 D =But it's jus what they've hea:rd in the HO:ME=  
 9 Sh =Yeah yeah [ yeah ]  
 >10 D [ An ] ah WON'T stop em from usin [ that ]  
 11 Sh [ No: ] it's what they  
 12 feel comfortable with isn't it? (.4)  
 13 D Ah won't sa:y (.)  
 14 Sh Mhm=  
 15 D =Oh no: don't go out there sayin that=  
 16 Sh =Mhm=  
 17 D =An they do:n- but sometimes they say- yuh mus- ah wi<sup>9</sup> sit down an talk  
 >18 an ah think (.5) ((\*huh whe<sup>10</sup> yuh two comin from)) [ ((.hhh .hhh)) ]  
 >19 [ ((.hhh .hhh)) ] ((\*born  
 20 an brought up in Bradford))=  
 21 D = Y [eah]  
 >22 Sh ((\* An] ta:k like Jamaican?) [((.hhh))]  
 23 D [That's] it [ but ] it's good it's GOOD  
 24 Sh [((.hhh))]  
 25 D though?=  
 26 Sh =It is good it is [ good ]  
 27 D [ Ah ] think it's good for em

In this extract D in interaction with Sh shows that her children are continuing to access Jamaican-ness through language, as well as establishes her own position that this is good for them, again collaborating with Sh in this. She asserts that the language her children use has been “heard in the HO:ME” (line 8) and thereby makes herself an authentic bearer of Jamaican culture. She continues this construction of authenticity by asserting that she “WON'T stop em from usin that” (line 10). She also shows pride in her son's use of Jamaican Creole in her smiley

<sup>9</sup> “ah wi” translates as “I will”

<sup>10</sup> “whe” translates as “where are”

voiced “whe yuh two comin from?” (line 18) followed by laughter. After laughing Sh shows her uptake of D’s point about her children in her smiley voiced “born an brought up in Bradford an ta:k<sup>11</sup> like Jamaican?” (lines 19, 20 and 22), followed by laughter. D agrees with this uptake before both women enter an agreement sequence around the continuation of such a cultural tradition as being good for her sons. Strategic hybridity here then is about the use of a heritage language form rather than succumbing to whiteness.

In the next extract TS and DF show another side to strategic hybridity when they critique the use of the signifiers of whiteness- straight, blonde or highlighted hair, light skin, non-brown eyes and a way of dressing and speaking which is not too Black- by Black women. In the extract both women exchange what for them are practices which show a denial of Blackness on the part of those they are critiquing. D speaks about “the growth of the Black blond in the la:s couple ah years” and the use of European and Chinese hair for weave-ons as fascinating (lines 1 and 3). Practices of the hair mark one’s level of Blackness according to D. T begins to speak after a (.7) pause about being amazed at the shade changes which Black actresses can go through in an advertisement, in the films and on TV (lines 6-12). This she relates to their “always [having] the same image they’ve always got the long hair that’s been straightened and highlighted [...] the right amount of makeup but not too Black [...] the right kind of clothes but not too Black clothes”. It is also significant that they don’t speak “like Black people” (lines 10-17). These women are using notions of Blackness

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<sup>11</sup> “Ta:k” translates as “talk”.



as essence in terms of skin, hair, language, clothes and dress in order to read an other's practices as less Black. In doing this they also perform themselves as more authentically Black.

Example 12- Tape 1 Side B TS:84-85

- >1 D To me: the- the growth of the Black blo:nd in the la:s<sup>12</sup> couple ah years is  
 2 so: fascina:tin=  
 3 T =Oh [ G:O:D ]  
 4 D [An the ] kind of the use of li:ke European and Chinese hair and blue  
 5 contacts? (.7)  
 >6 T It's like ah'm ama:zed at (.9) what am ah say- (.3) when ah look at the  
 7 television an yuh- yuh see a film bein advertised an it's got (1.1) a young  
 8 Bla:ck actress in it (.6) pt an she's SUDDENLY TU:RNEDE (.3) A SHA:DE  
 9 D =Mhm=  
 >10 T =When she's in the film .hhh an then yuh see her in a magazine an  
 11 she:'s a DIFFERENT sha:de .hhh an then yuh see her bein interviewed  
 >12 an she:'s a DIFFE:RENT sha:de they always have the same image an  
 13 they've always got the long hair that's been straightened .hhh and ki:nah  
 14 HIGHLIGHTED a little bit .hhh an they've always got the right amount ah  
 15 makeup BUT NOT TOO BLA:CK a makeup an they always wear the right  
 16 kind of clothes but not too BLA:CK clothes .hhh an ah'm thinkin yuh  
 17 know? duh the:se women rea:lly know what the'yre duhin (.7) ah mean  
 18 it's very rare yuh hear any ah dem spea:kin like Black people

What can "strategic hybridity" tell us about a *hybridity of the everyday*?

The position being taken in this project is that Black identities are texts of social practice which are performed and given meaning by co-interactants. This links in to Friedman's (1997: 85) view that

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<sup>12</sup> "la:s" translates as "last".

[..] hybridity is always, like all aspects of identity, a question of practice, the practice of attributing meaning. It can be understood only in terms of its social context and the way in which acts of identification are motivated.

I have already said in Chapter 2 that texts of social practice has a dual sense of both discursive construction and interpretation of that which is represented. The necessity for an awareness of the social contexts of acts of identification in order to give them meaning suggests that a dialogic theory of practice is needed in order to look at a hybridity of the everyday. This would expand on Robert Young's (1995a) assertion that hybridity is dialogic by going some way towards grounding it in the daily practices of individuals who negotiate positionings for themselves and others through being addressed by and answering identification discourses. This answering though is not in the affirmative as the negotiation of positions implies the emergence of difference from a same that is being contingently talked into being.

Turner's (1994: 123) picture of practices is decidedly non-dialogical as he sees practice not as a

word [..] for some sort of mysterious hidden collective object, but for the individual formations of habit that are the condition for the performances and emulations that make up life. No one is immured by these habits. They are rather, the stepping-stones we use to get from one bit of mastery to another.

Identities as practice by this reckoning would be about habits that our practices of representation enable us to construct as identities. 'Identity as habit' is undone however by looking at those who are outside of representation. Those subaltern others who Gayatri Spivak says cannot speak. Identity as habit is somewhat impoverished because it does not take account of the unequal power relations with regard to whose habits are taken up into representation and given voice by being given meaning and whose are silenced. Habit does not take account of the reflexivity and manoeuvre within and between meanings that become apparent if we look at the examples above. These identifications are embodied and talked into being for the consumption of other interactants. However, in being focused on habit, Turner forgets that social embodied action is at the heart of meaning, meaning itself is produced by agents for the consumption of interactants and the agent is subject to historical systems of historical inscription.

The idea that meaning is constructed by interactants for others adds the flavour of intentionality to looking at hybridity. Strategic hybridity as intentional brings us to de Certeau's (1988) idea of tactics. This makes hybrid texts strategic and political acts, practices which both constitute and are constituted by the social and "which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality" (de Certeau, 1988: xix). These texts made through talk are "already practices. They say exactly what they do. They constitute an act that they intend to mean. There is no need to add a gloss that knows what

they express without knowing it, nor to wonder *what* they are the metaphor of” (de Certeau, 1988: 80). Interactants are engaged in constructing meaning in the manner of bricolage “that is, an arrangement made with the materials at hand” from a position which is “simultaneously inside and outside, dissolving both and mixing them together” (de Certeau, 1988: 174). This means that the identifications produced during talk-in-interaction are open to reinterpretation, challenge, negotiation and change in the course of the interaction. That is, to an ongoing reading and making which itself produces hybridity.

This ongoing reading and making of identifications points to a dialogics of hybridity in which individuals engage in translation as readers and makers of identifications. That is, in the recognition, acceptance or denial of discursively constructed meanings in terms of the identifications they wish to perform. Dialogism and translation become important then in hybridity theorising within the context of the ‘raced’ habitus in which hybridity arises through the binary oppositions of Black/white, Black self/Black other, as these are negotiated across time and space.

### Conclusion

I have attempted to make hybridity less of a nebulous concept analytically through anchoring it in the day-to-day interactions of individuals. This *hybridity of the everyday* is focused on interactants using discourses of a Black authentic same

strategically in terms of 'culture', 'community', 'race' and 'nation' in order to look at the difference in Black individuals and themselves produced by the context of Britain. There is a simultaneity of 'same' and 'difference' in identifications: hybridity and essence are intertwined as speakers construct *difference from the changing same*. In highlighting their position and that of others in talk, individuals speak back to dominant discourses and through this demonstrate double consciousness by acknowledging the conflictually other- which has to be excluded- within changing conceptions of self and community. The exclusion of the conflictually other is looked at in more detail in Chapter 6 in terms of the abjection of 'the voice of the other within'.

It is the changing conceptions of self and community that are spoken into being that alert us to the dialogic nature of a *hybridity of the everyday* defined as a *negotiation of identity positionings in talk*. This change is itself translated as a change by using essences of Blackness as a template with which to make comparisons based on 'skin', 'culture', 'race' and 'community'. These Black essences will be looked at throughout the project (beginning in a more detailed way in Chapter 5) as essentializing discourses with, through and against which speakers identify as they construct identities in talk. Translation has emerged as being quite central to a *hybridity of the everyday* within talk-in-interaction and it is to this that we now turn.

## Chapter 4

### Translation, Stories, Identities

#### Introduction

What will be looked at in this chapter is the possibility of an inter-subjective 'third space' created by translation in talk on identity. This talk arises in the reconstruction of memories and their performance as tellable stories. The specific focus will be on translation as a process in talk-in-interaction in which speakers translate the relevance of what they are saying in terms of their own Black identifications. The extracts reveal that there is a negotiation of essentialist, political and cultural discourses of Black authenticity in the talk. This Black authenticity of the 'same' is placed alongside the inauthentic 'other' Black identities. Speakers construct identities through "what we might call 'a practice of narration', *the invention of the [...] self*, producing a fixed belongingness in rather the way we construct, after the event, a persuasive, consistent biographical 'story', about who we are and where we came from" (Hall, 1996d: v).

It is Homi Bhabha's (1990) view that the 'third space' is the site of the negotiation of hybrid identifications. Whilst not seeking to look at hybridity at this point, it is necessary to locate a negotiation of identities in talk-in-interaction. In negotiating the identity of 'authentic Blackness' the general structure of the interaction seems to be one in which:

- a) a turn asserts the position of self/ others in terms of authenticity;
- b) there is a translation of the relevance of this by the speaker/ other interactant;

c) there is a repositioning of self/ others.

Issues of authenticity implicate the continuation of a notion of essence as being fundamental to Blackness as an identification. Blackness as an identification is perceived by interactants in the data as being inscribed on the body through the discourses of 'race', culture and community. This continuation of essence is the challenge to hybridity theorizing raised by these interactions. What the data also reveals is the reflexivity that is involved in the construction of Blackness inter-subjectively. Reflexivity as a process of negotiating a critical awareness of self/ others in the talk, connects with translation as an analytic tool for looking at the links that individuals make between discourses and themselves/ others.

#### Translation, hybridity and the originary.

The social anthropologist Pnina Werbner (1997a: 228) sees essentialism thus:

To essentialise is to impute a fundamental, basic, absolutely necessary constitutive quality to a person, social category, ethnic group, religious community, or nation. It is to posit falsely a timeless continuity, a discreteness or boundedness in space, and an organic unity. It is to imply an eternal sameness and external difference or otherness [...] essentialism is a performative act.

As a performative act, therefore, Blackness as essentialism calls on both its reiterative power as a discourse and the power of individuals to bring the category 'Black' into being through translating and applying this discourse.

Black British identities as texts of social practice produced within the constraints of one's cultures, society and social group urge us to question the idea of the "end of the innocent notion of the essential Black subject" (Hall, 1996e: 443). Hall (1996c) continues this theme of the end of the essential Black subject through looking at identity as strategic and positional. This anti-essentialist view of identity does not signal some core of the self unchanging and identical to itself across time. Further, in terms of cultural identity, there is not taken to be any true self, "hiding inside the many other, more superficially imposed 'selves' which a people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common, and which ensures an unchanging cultural belongingness underlying superficial differences" (Hall, 1996a: 3-4). Identities instead, are increasingly fragmented and multiply constructed across different discourses, practices and positions.

In this anti-essentialist moment "'roots' has given way to 'routes', with metaphors like 'diaspora' challenging fixed, essentialised identities" (Hall, 1995 cited in Pile and Thrift, 1995: 10). Diasporic individuals construct new kinds of cultural identity by drawing on more than one cultural repertoire. They are translated people who live with and speak from difference within the interstitial spaces of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 1993a). What is translation, though? Stuart Hall (1995) sees translation as a process of cultural change where going from one space to another, for example, means that cultural



practice becomes translated, becomes different from what it once was because of the impact of the new space and time. For Bhabha (1990: 210) "cultures are always subject to intrinsic forms of translation" as people act to objectify cultural meaning. Further,

[..] translation is also a way of imitating, but in a mischievous, displacing sense-imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it *can* be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the 'original' is never finished or complete in itself. The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning- an essence (Bhabha, 1990: 210).

As the act of translation negates the essentialism of an originary culture, then culture itself is continually in a process of hybridity defined as "the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge [...] [that] displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives which are inadequately understood through received wisdom" (Bhabha, 1990: 211). Like a translation, hybridity bears the traces of the feelings and practices of other meanings and discourses which inform it, without giving them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original. "The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" (Bhabha, 1990: 211). It is important to look carefully at these arguments as anti-essentialism, whilst denying the originary, must have some recourse to a reification of what came before, in order to make claims such as new identities are constructed drawing on

different cultural repertoires. Or that they are multiply constructed drawing on different practices and discourses. Or that something is new and unrecognisable. Otherwise, how could 'new', 'multiple' and 'different' be conceptualised? We are dealing with more than a trace of feelings, practices, meanings and discourses.

Let us go back to Bhabha's view that 'people act to objectify cultural meaning' and what this could mean in terms of 'received wisdom'. Received wisdom implies the idea of more than just anteriority. It invokes the idea of 'tradition'. Tradition arises when people act on the anterior in order to "assert the close kinship of cultural forms and practices generated from the irrepressible diversity of Black experience" (Gilroy, 1993a: 187). Translation then ceases to be viable in Bhabha's terms of producing culture as simulacra in a mischievous displacing sense, as tradition is invoked to underscore the historical continuities which make the notion of a distinctive self conscious Black culture plausible (Gilroy, 1993a: 188). Further, the idea of tradition asserts the legitimacy of a Black political culture vis-a-vis white supremacy's discourse on 'the other' (Gilroy, 1993a: 202). What is also asserted is "the discourse of the same- a homology- which co-existing with its more recognisably political counterpart helps to fix and stabilise the boundaries of the closed racial community" in the present (Gilroy, 1993a: 202). So, within the present, tradition works to construct an essence, an origin in terms of the political and cultural discourses of 'the other' and 'the same'.

Paul Gilroy (1993a: 1-2) reminds us of the continuance of such an origin within contexts in which Black people have been racialized, thus:

The contemporary Black English, like the Anglo-Africans of earlier generations and perhaps, like all Blacks in the West, stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages [...] At present they remain locked symbolically in an antagonistic relationship marked out by the symbolism of colours [...] Black and white. These colours support a specific rhetoric [...] of nationality and national belonging as well as the languages of 'race' and ethnic identity.

Translation then cannot deny essence as will become obvious in the examples below.

#### What can life stories tell us about translation?

The 'death of the essential Black subject' implies social practice changes at the level of the individual. In example 1 we see a challenge to the idea of the death of essence in alongside an admission of change within Blackness. This is an extract from an after dinner conversation in which the interactants claim that the Black community no longer exists because of the changes in the younger generation. Lu (line 1) begins his positioning of the Black community as now being non-existent with the question "what Black community are we talkin about?" He then translates the relevance of this claim for his interactants. He does this by using discourses of Black community as reducible to language, food and links with Jamaica as origin, to show that for the younger generation

Blackness as cultural knowledge and practice is not something with which they are familiar (lines 3-19). In fact, Lu equates their lack of knowledge about the use of Jamaican Creole as a Black community language to being the same as "white kids" (lines 7-9). This shows us his view of young Black kids as assimilated to whiteness. His interactants agree with him throughout (see especially lines 13, 16, 18 and 19) and Lu reasserts his claim that "our Blackness does not exist" (lines 20-21) as a summation of the conversation.

Example 1-Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:15

- 1 Lu What's- what Black community are we talkin about?=  
 2 P = Mm =  
 ›3 Lu = Yuh know? PEOPLE used to say oh: it was a Black community because  
 4 there was links with JAMAICA there was the STREET SLANG everythin ah  
 5 mean WE:LL come on (.)  
 6 Sh Mhm (.)  
 ›7 Lu Whe- WHERE'S THAT THERE ANYMORE? when- AH'VE GOT- WHEN  
 8 YUH'VE GOT BLACK KIDS WHEN THEY HEAR SLA;NG an they're achshally  
 9 comin up an sayin to yuh [ ( . ) ] are yuh from JAMAICA:? jus like ((^white kids))=  
 10 Sh [Mm]  
 11 P =Mhm=  
 12 Lu ((^ Ah mean it's ))=  
 13 Sa = It's awful =  
 14 Lo = Mm (.)  
 15 Lu ASK HOW MANY BLACK kids who eat West Indian FOOD? =  
 16 Sh = Yes ah know =  
 17 Lu = Yeah ?=  
 18 P = [ Mm ] none of em do really =  
 19 Sh [Not a lot ]  
 ›20 Lu = Yeah so:: (.) yuh know whatever they talkin about about our Blackness out  
 21 there it DOES NOT EXIST, (.)  
 22 P Mhm

In example 1, Lu uses the conceptual bridge of 'community' to connect 'culture' with 'ethnicity' and politics, to analyze the 'hybridity' of the younger generation in terms of

difference from an essence, a true self, which understands cultural practices related to food and language (lines 4 and 15). Further, this extract points to a shared awareness that Blackness as a unifying cultural identity existed through the globalization of Jamaican culture and links with that country but that this no longer exists, nor does the monolithic Black community (lines 20-21). What exists instead in his view are different ways of being Black because he still refers to "Black kids". This particular observation by Lu serves to dissolve the dominant Black discourse which equates community and culture. On the other hand, in bemoaning this lack in terms of community and cultural identity, individuals act as if there are such things which they themselves are a part of and which they themselves practice. Sa's "It's awful" (line 13) latched completion of Lu's "Ah mean it's" (line 12), which is then agreed with by Lo (line 14) is an example of interactants bemoaning this lack. It is this community and this cultural identity as a unified object as translated by the interactants from the discourse of Blackness which is being seen to not exist because of the dis-identification from this culture and the 'creolization'<sup>1</sup> within the British context which young people are practising. Lu is drawing on common-sense ideas of language and food as repositories of culture to reify culture, community and 'race' as self-evident homologues within a political imaginary of what Blackness is about. Obviously, then, for the participants in this interaction 'Black' has some recourse to essentialist ideals about what constitutes that signifier at the levels of meaning and social practice. So, a shift towards a post-modern condition should not, however, mean that the power of Black subjectivities and the ideas of the Black movement around nationality, ethnicity, authenticity and cultural integrity have disappeared (Gilroy, 1993a). This is so as the 'roots' metaphor of the Black movement

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Gilroy, 1993d.

still continues to have meaning for these individuals. To speak then of Black identities as translated in terms of hybrid identities as does Bhabha might be to ignore this recourse to origin as 'invented tradition' in producing identities as texts of social practice.

In terms of identification, the cultural critic Avtar Brah (1992: 142) asks a useful question. That is, "how is the link between social and psychic reality to be theorized?" Taking the point of view that Black British identities are texts of social practice puts the focus more firmly on the process of translation with which individuals engage in applying and critiquing identity discourses. Translation, therefore, assumes centrality in this account as a way of describing a two-fold process in terms of the resolution of discourses of the self and the social. First, *how* discourses and practices position us as social subjects of particular discourses. Second, the processes by which individuals interact reflexively with these discourses in order to choose whether or not to identify with these subject positions. This two-fold process is perhaps best captured in the words of Walter Benjamin (1970: 78) when he describes translation thus:

Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original mode of signification, thus making the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.

Translation thus contains within itself similitude and difference, the presence of alterity within the 'I', the discourses of the 'we' in any 'I' that is constructed: identifications as fragments of identity. This points to the notion that some origin remains and also, an "understanding of performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler, 1993: 2). Blackness is such a discourse, which whether from within the Black communities in Britain or without facilitates certain Black identifications and disallows others. Identifications then are regulated practices that are given meaning by individual acts of translation in the process of identification/ dis-identification. To say that regulated practices are given meaning by individuals, also entails however, the second meaning of performativity, in

which a subject brings into being what they name. This implicates translation in terms of how subjects "fashion, stylize, produce and 'perform' these positions, and why they never do so completely, for once and all time, and some never do, or are in a constant agonistic process of struggling with, resisting, negotiating and accommodating the normative rules with which they confront and regulate themselves" (Hall, 1996a: 14).

Translation at the level of the subject then is also about producing:

[..] an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirding the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of *restructuring* that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives (Soja, 1996: 5).

What exactly though is this critical thirding as a process which is located in space and time? The notions of 'thirding' and 'space' brings Bhabha's (1990) view of 'the third space' of hybridity to mind. So perhaps then, hybridity could be seen to be a site of identifications in terms of the processes of the assemblage of identities as texts of social practice, located within the times and spaces of the creative re-construction of memories and their performance. People translate events located in the 'there and then' from the vantage point of the 'here and now'. In doing this they create through stories, inter-subjective third spaces and times which entail a life as lived then and now, to be lived in the future based on the past being used for personal and collective growth and transformation whether political, emotional, aesthetic or cultural.

In the extracts that are to be used, translation also has significance, as life stories, by their very nature, have been translated across time and space. So, while being formed according to the meaning of the original, these narratives are now different because they are 'meaninged' by the present and future orientation of the individual. Indeed, "no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original [...] in its afterlife- which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living- the original undergoes a change (Benjamin, 1970: 73). It is within this process of change that reflexivity assumes importance.



### Translation and reflexivity

Anthony Giddens (1991b: 33) in *The Consequences of Modernity* asserts:

in the context of a post-traditional order, the self becomes a *reflexive project* [...] the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change [...] The process of 'reaching' back into one's early experiences [...] is precisely part of a reflexive mobilising of self-identity.

This reflexive process of connecting personal and social change is what is at the heart of translation. As such it implies practices of the self at the level of critical self-awareness. In this self awareness the 'struggle of being against non-being' is the perpetual task of the individual, not just to 'accept' reality, but to create ontological reference points as an integral aspect of 'going on' in the contexts of day-to-day life

(Giddens, 1991b: 48). One such ontological reference point being life stories in which self identity is routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual (Giddens, 1991b: 51). Self identity is, therefore, the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography with continuity across time and space also being subjected to reflexive interpretation (Giddens, 1991b: 53). There is then, a process of rewriting the self by which one's past and oneself is figured through interpretation (Freeman, 1993: 3): or in other words, translation.

As well as being interpretive, this process is also a recollective one, where we explore our own histories in order to make and remake sense of who and what we are (Freeman, 1993: 6). A person's identity is, therefore, to be found in the capacity to keep a particular story going. However, the individual's biography cannot be wholly fictive but must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' of the self (Giddens, 1991a: 54). The individual must integrate information deriving from a diversity of mediated experiences with local involvements in such a way as to connect future projects with past experiences in a reasonably coherent fashion ( Giddens, 1991a: 215). In this way then, there is more of a transformation which occurs because of reflexivity. Translation as a reflexive process is also, therefore, about routines of alteration that people make to their identities. To be reflexive is to have a sense of diverse paths and patterns which are evaluated so as to arrive at different outcomes. Reflexivity is about the transformations in thinking about oneself or one's actions in the past action or state, in a present telling in which social memory is creatively constructed and reconstructed interactively.

In the following example we see such a transformation being brought about in interaction. Sh in lines 1-16 outlines for her interlocutors an experience from her past in which D and herself were made 'other' by Black colleagues because of their 'light skin'. Shade of skin is presented by Sh then as still being influential as a determinant of authenticity in Black politics. Apart from the mirth surrounding So's (she was twelve at the time) question about whether or not Alf was from the Australian soap "Home and Away", the story is delivered and received without humour. This indicates the seriousness with which the interactants view this issue of the divisiveness of colour

consciousness within Black communities. In her telling Sh shows her positioning by this discourse of 'shade equals authenticity', by setting it up as an ordinary encounter "An we're jus sittin there an all of a sudden this man [...] burst out with [...] well ah mean yuh [...] aren't really Black people are yuh?". Lo (line 17) agrees with Sh's point of view that this status of inauthenticity because of shade is quite common. In this way she translates the relevance of Sh's story by taking it from a specific instance to a more general level.

Lu continues this translation when he relates Sh's story to his own position in line 18 "E:h now yuh know why half of em say I've got a problem". After a micropause Sh laughs briefly in response. Lu continues by now re-positioning himself in relation to those who say he's got a problem, in terms of what his actions as a light-skinned Black man would have been if he had been in Sh's shoes. That is he would not "put up wid dat crap [...] [he] would lick<sup>2</sup> im right there an then". Sh's turn in overlap (line 21) after some initial laughter is an agreement with Lu's proposed action. In this way through the support gained from Lu's repositioning of himself Sh also begins to reposition herself (lines 24-30) as Sh assumes Lu's approach as a way of dealing in the present with a past situation "I shouldah did cla:t im to yes [...] yeah I shoulda done dat I shoulda done dat"<sup>3</sup>. Sh is helped then to arrive at a new position for herself which moves from her positioning as an 'other' outside of the space of Blackness, to that of a woman who claims Blackness by enacting her outrage at being excluded because of skin.

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<sup>2</sup> "Lick" translates as "hit".

<sup>3</sup> "I shoulda did cla:t im to yes yeah I shoulda done dat I shoulda done dat" translates as "I should have definitely hit him very hard".

Example 2-Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa.Pe,Sh:23-24

- ›1 Sh ME- me an mi frien D right, she's- her family come from St. Elizibet in  
 2 Jamaica so she's quite pale an that (.) mi an her went to Scotland to- to- to  
 3 get trained up as trainers for N Black Workers' Groups [ yuh nuh ] in the  
 4 Sa [ Mm ]  
 ›5 Sh country an everythin .hhh AN WE'RE JUS SITTIN THE:RE an all of a  
 6 sudden this MAN called A (.8 )  
 7 So A? (.)  
 8 Sh He's- he's like OUR MATE now rea[ lly ]  
 9 So [ From ] Home and Away?=  
 10 Sh = No not him,  
 11 [(( Joint laughter )) ]  
 12 Sh [ He just everythin- ] HE just BUR- BURST out with we:ll ah mean Sh yuh  
 13 an D aren't really Black people are yuh? ah mean LOOK at yuh an he went  
 14 on like that on like that for half an hour an NOBODY else in the room said  
 15 anythin like how dare [ you ] talk to this woman like that?=  
 16 Lo [Yeah]  
 17 Lo = Becos they beli:ev ed em didn't they?=  
 ›18 Lu E:h: now yuh know why HALF of em say I've got a PROBLEM (.)  
 19 Sh ((.hhh .hhh )) =  
  
 ›20 Lu = Yuh think I gwine put up wid dat CRA:P [ (.) I would LICK im RIGHT there  
 21 Sh [((.hhh .hhh)) .hh Yuh see wha:  
 22 Lu an then ]  
 23 Sh mean right? ] ye:ah exacly=  
 ›24 Lu = I WOULD LICK IM [ right dere an de:n ]  
 ›25 Sh [ I SHOULDAH DID ] CLA:T IM TO YES =  
 26 Lu = An den ah would LI:CK di TUTOR TOO:=  
 27 Sh = Yeah I [ SHOULDA DONE DAT] I [SHOULDA DONE DAT]  
 28 Lu [ ((.hhh .hhh .hhh )) ]  
 29 Sh I shoul da [ done dat ]  
 30 Lu [I have no problem dere] [YUH JO:KIN ]

To be reflexive is to have a sense of diverse paths and patterns which reaches inwards as people evaluate and implement different outcomes. So, reflexivity is being taken to mean transformations in thinking about oneself or one's actions in the past action or state, in a present telling, in which social memory is creatively constructed and reconstructed interactively. Memory becomes the 'activator' for the insertion of the past into the present. To give such a central place to memory in the process of reflexivity

also highlights the centrality of the creative language work which exists in reminiscence narratives in terms of identities as texts of social practice which are performed. To claim that this re-play is creative is not to say that people lie or mislead, but that accounts change because of the ongoing process of reflexively looking back at one's life, in which people remember and construct the past in ways that reflect their present need for meaning.

What example 3, next, makes apparent is that reflexivity arises in the interaction between collective subjectivity, individual subjectivities and discourses. The talk follows Sh's story about a 'mixed race' woman who would not call herself Black. In lines 1-12

Lu, Sh and P's interaction establishes the self-positioning of "quite a few mixed race kids" as being one of reluctance to admit to Blackness. Sh agrees with Lu's assertion that "they will not call demselves Black" (line 5) in her overlapping talk "dey won't come out with it" (line 6). Lu completes the self positioning of 'mixed race kids' on line 9 with "they can't see anythin that associates em with being Black" which receives overlapping "mhm"s from Sh (line 10). P and Sh (lines 13 and 14) simultaneously begin to reflexively translate this position. P's turn locates the lack of fit between the inability of 'mixed race' kids to see anything that associates them with Blackness and their positioning as Black by police racism ("when the police start beatin them up"). Sh's turn is "an ah fi:n [find] dat amazin". Sh then gives up her turn at talk and enters a section of conversation with P which serves to reposition 'mixed race' kids as Black because of skin and the racism practised by the police and other people (lines 13-20). Sh continues this positioning by recycling "that's what ah fi:n amazin" (line 21) and using this as a preface to her own

turns on the significance of skin for the Black experience. For her "i: nuh matta if yuh mumma white or not"<sup>4</sup> (line 24), "when people are ready fi beat up Black people" "yuh gwine get some cla:t to right?"<sup>5</sup> (line 27). So for Sh, the situation of this continuing denial of Blackness in the face of both state racism and racist violence because of one's skin is incredible.

Example 3-Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Pe,Sh:18

- 1 Lu Ah mean dere's dere's quite a few ( 0.9)  
 ›2 Lu Mixed race kids who do not call demselves Black anyway =  
 3 Sh = M [ hm ]
- 4 P [Mhm] =  
 ›5 Lu They will NOT [ call demselves ] Black they're [ NOT BLACK ]  
 ›6 Sh [ Dey won't come out with it ] [ Yeah it's like]  
 7 her yuh see=  
 8 P =M[ hm]  
 9 Lu [An ] they can't see ANY:THI:N [ (.) ] that associates em [ (.) ] with being  
 10 Sh [Mhm] [Mhm]  
 11 Lu Black[ (.) ]=  
 12 Sh [Mhm]  
 ›13 P =[When the ] [WHEN ] the police start (.)WHEN the police start  
 ›14 Sh [AN AH ] FI:N DAT [AMAZIN]  
 15 P BEATIN them up =  
 16 Sh = WELL THAT'S IT =  
 17 P = The police will call them Black won't they? =  
 18 Sh = EXACTLY [ that's what ah fi:n amazin ]  
 19 P [ ((\*THEY WON'T CALL ] DEM nutn else will they? )) ((.hhh  
 20 .hhh .hhh ))=  
 21 Sh = That's what ah fi:n amazin beca: when people are ready fi beat up Black  
 22 people=  
 23 P = Uh =  
 ›24 Sh = i: nuh matta if yuh mumma white or: not: =  
 25 Sa = M [m, ]  
 26 Lo = M [m, ]  
 ›27 Sh [Yuh] gwine get SOME cla:t to RIGHT? =  
 28 Sa = Mhm (.)  
 29 Sh Just the same an dat's what ah fi:n so INcredible

<sup>4</sup> "It doesn't matter if your mother is white or not".

<sup>5</sup> "When people are ready to beat up Black people you are going to get badly beaten up too right?"

In the examples there has been a linking of the past to a present telling as speakers negotiate discourses. Time is therefore, significant in terms of the translation that speakers accomplish through stories and it is to this that we now turn.

### Translation, Stories, Time

Translation has a further significance for the use of this particular data in terms of the representation of discourses as lived and being lived with, within the talk as "a translation issues from the original- not so much from its life as from its afterlife. For a

translation comes later than the original [...] their translation marks their stage of continued life" (Benjamin, 1970: 70). This involves therefore, a past, present and future orientation to identifications or dis-identifications in terms of the hidden significance of discourses which stories attempt to make visible. However, it must also be remembered that translations cannot be replicas of originals so these accounts should be approached from the standpoint of individuals constructing fragments of a life which lead to the possibility of the collection of fragments of identifications which together articulate a 'whole'.

Important for the use of stories as data is Barbara Adam's (1990: 142-147) view that:

Past and future can only be lived, experienced, related to, interpreted, sought out, captured, recaptured, or preserved in the present [...] the contemporary

reliving is always inclusive of the intervening years [...] these years are fundamentally implicated and resonate through the experience. The relived experience is different because of it [...] The past is reconstituted in the present as Mead (1959) asserts because each moment is recreated, reselected and reinterpreted, preserved and evoked afresh in the light of new knowledge. This makes the past revocable [...] We are shown to relive the past and to learn from it, to use it for future action and to make a puzzling present manageable, for creating reality and for changing it, for legitimating existing practices and for personal and social control and power [...] people do not merely undergo their presents and pasts but they shape and reshape them.

So, stories of the past are also stories of the present and the future. In short, stories which are subject to translation in Benjamin's terms of resembling an original but not being an exact replica of that original. Life stories, though, are as intrinsically and revealingly spatial as they are temporal and social (Soja, 1996: 7). Indeed, all social relations become real and concrete, a part of our lived social existence, only when they are spatially 'inscribed'- that is, *concretely represented*- in the social production of social space (Soja, 1996: 46). "*There is no unspatialized social reality*" (Soja, 1996: 46). What is being translated in terms of time and space, is the social production of social space and time as we are historical-social-spatial beings participating in the 'becoming' of histories, geographies and societies (Soja, 1996: 73).



In order to look at stories, it could be useful to see translation as "a means of bracketing time-space by coupling instantaneity and deferral, presence and absence" (Giddens, 1991b: 25 ). Translation then would be about dis-embedding, "the 'lifting out' of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across time and space" (Giddens, 1991b: 21). So, in sum, translation as a process in talk can be seen to be a "mode of insertion into time and space" (Giddens, 1991b: 20) in which there is a reflexive appraisal of identifications in the light of continual inputs of knowledge affecting the actions of individuals and groups. This 'translation as reflexivity' as I call it, organizes identity across time and space synchronically (who am I at this moment?) and in time (who am I compared with yesterday or tomorrow, compared with memory or projection?) in order to produce an ongoing story of the self. In linking time and space in this way interactants in the extracts narrate themselves as the same across time and space. They are the same because of skin as essence. This is at odds with the notion of Black identities as translated and hybrid, subject to variation and change across time and space.

The clinical psychologist Alberto Melucci (1997: 63) gives us an example of such hybridity theorizing when he asserts the importance of the multiplicity that derives from uncertainty and the paradox of choice

Our self simultaneously comprises a number of components, and the deepest-seated aspect of uncertainty is structured precisely by our difficulty in identifying with only one of them, and by the requirement that we should do so in order to act. Hence, not only is it difficult to identify ourselves over time and to state that

we still are who we used to be; also- and perhaps even more so- it is hard to decide at any particular moment which self among many is ours.

However in speaking themselves as Black, interactants seem to be negotiating discourses of Blackness as 'race', culture and community. This takes as a point of departure that we are still who we used to be as Black identified people and that this self is always ours as a site of anchorage. This site of anchorage is also presented as the only choice to make within the British context in which we are constructed as racialized others. A Black 'same' is necessary if we are to become subjects. The notion of the reflexive translation of discourses of a Black same within talk introduces the centrality of the nature of practices of the self and performativity for Black identifications.

#### Translation and Performativity

"From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art" (Foucault, 1984a: 351). The kind of relationship that the individual has to her 'self' can, thus, be understood as a 'creative activity' in which an ethics of the self confronts individuals with an obligation to endlessly re-invent themselves. This process is not about liberating a true or essential inner nature but is about seeing one's life and identity as a process of self-creation and, therefore open to change and re-creation (McNay, 1996: 146-148). Open to translation, in other words. However, an ethics of the self is placed within the context of culturally determined notions of identity. Herein lies the paradox in terms of practices of self-production. On one level an individual is free to be, whilst on another level, how to be is

constrained. Identities then, comprise both freedoms and constraints in which "the boundaries of identity can be conceived of as the recognition of constraints and the interplay between their aperture and closure" (Melucci, 1997: 65).

The process of creating and re-creating identities does not entail the straightforward reflection of cultural dynamics within individual identity nor, is it voluntarist self-fashioning (McNay, 1996: 154). It is a mediated process in which the individual constitutes herself in an active fashion through practices of the self "that is, the patterns found in their culture which are imposed, suggested and proposed by [...] society and social group" (McNay, 1996: 154). One aspect of this mediated process is, then, performativity. Performativity functions at the level of the individual in terms of practices of self-production according to what Foucault calls a 'regulatory ideal'.

In the examples which follow interactants present us with some aspects of a Black regulatory ideal in terms of their notion of 'a Black same', as they speak about the struggles for Blackness of other Black people. The Black regulatory ideal emerges in interactions in which individuals show themselves as authentically Black while speaking of these others. Their claims to Black authenticity are hidden but visible within the text, as for Foucault (1984b: 112) "the text always contains a certain number of signs referring to the author". Authenticity here, is not that view which says that we have to be ourselves in order to be authentic. Rather, authenticity is more about the kinds of selves that are allowed to emerge through the discourse of Blackness as a regulatory ideal. Authenticity is not performed in the extracts by saying 'I am a real Black person'. That is,

producing a finished text to be read or abstracted with a fixed representation (Stewart, 1996). Rather, Blackness as a discourse is reflexively translated in terms of its essentialist- that is skin and 'race'<sup>6</sup>-, cultural and political facets and it is these which are used to demonstrate the authenticity of the speaker and the inauthenticity of those being spoken about. This is the interpretive space of authenticity that is negotiated by speakers as they show who they are by showing who they're not. They are at one and the same time visible and invisible in the text "creating a space into which the [...] subject constantly disappears" (Foucault, 1984b: 102). It has been said above that Blackness as a discourse has within it essentialist, cultural and political aspects. These aspects will be used to organize the discussion of the examples that follow.

### Essentialist

The discourse of Blackness contains within it notions of 'race'. These may be based on one's physical appearance, culture, language, history or nationality. In the next example however the friend wants to be seen, Lo defines African features as 'not Asian'. Irrespective of her friend's protests, Lo denies that it is possible to be both Jamaican and Asian Muslim. Lo thus references the body as a symbolic base for identification with a group. This struggle of Lo's friend to assert difference, to voice Asian-ness against the discourse of Blackness, reminds me, ironically, of Gayatri Spivak's (1995) contention in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* that subaltern discourse is essentially untranslatable to

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<sup>6</sup> I make this distinction here just for ease in terms of looking at the data. I do not want to imply though that

imperialist discourse. The friend's striving for a position of Muslim is undermined by Lo's use of the ontological essentializing discourses of 'race', culture, nationality and ethnicity and her contention that her friend's positioning of herself is fraught with difficulty. How in all this though is there translation, negotiation of position and the revelation of a claim to Blackness by Lo?

The extract follows the conversation in example 3 and Lo's turn at line 1 is in fact latched to Sh's final turn in that example. This talk then follows the general theme of the confusion of 'mixed race' people. However, here 'mixed race' refers to African Caribbean and Asian. At lines 1-6 Lo establishes her friend's self-positioning as a Muslim. She then translates the relevance of the story for her interactants with "ah looked at her no yuh're not yuh're bloody Jamaican an she goes ah'm not ah'm a Muslim yuh know" (line 8). This helps to begin to show the confusion around identity which Lo feels her friend exhibited. Lo continues to talk about how culturally Muslim her friend was but that she still was not accepted as Asian, before Lo and Sh enter a sequence which provides an explanation for this based on the messages of the body (lines 10-13). Sh's explanation is that it is "because she looks too African", to which Lo agrees in a latched next "yeah she does". This repositions her friend as African. Following a micropause, Lo claims such a position for herself with "she just looks like me she has the same everything". She then is authentically African-Jamaican so she can read this in other people's bodies and cultural practices.

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culture and politics are not themselves essentialisms in terms of discourses of Black identity.

Example 4- Tape 2 Side A Lu, Lo, Sa, Sh, Pe:19.

- >1 Lo = Yuh're talkin to em an dat (.) like MY friend the one who's mixed race she  
 2 .hhh DOESn't associate with ANYbody she's tryin to associate with the  
 3 A:SIANS cos she's half (.) well whatever somethin Asian [ (.) ] an her  
 4 Sh [Mhm]  
 5 Lo MOTHER'S Black an (.) she went to the Asians an said oh yeah ah'm a  
 4 Muslim=  
 7 Sh = Mhm=  
 >8 Lo = Ah looked at her no yuh're not yuh're BLOODY JAMAICAN an she goes  
 9 AH'M NOT ah'm a MUSLIM yuh know

Further into the story she continues

- >10 Lo = an also the ASIANS would NOT accept any- [any:thin about her ]  
 11 Sh [ It doesn't make any difference]  
 12 because she looks too African probably=  
 >13 Lo = Yeah she does (.) she just looks like ME she has the same everything

The identification categories of Jamaican and African are themselves highly politicized within Black communities and are subject to contestation as the next example makes clear.

Political

The extract<sup>7</sup> below follows Sh's story of being judged not to be Black by an African student at University because her Caribbean heritage meant that she came from a society in which there would have been 'miscegenation' because of slavery. Lo takes up this theme (lines 1-11) by talking about being positioned as Caribbean heritage students by Africans as nothing and nothing to do with African (line 8 and 11). At line 12 Sh's turn after a micropause is one of understanding agreement. This, when linked to her prior on line 9 gives the impression that the experience of such a positioning by Africans is quite common.

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<sup>7</sup> A fuller version of this is example 2 in Chapter 6.

At line 13, Lo reflexively translates the relevance of her story by showing the lack of comprehension with which their positioning was met by the Caribbean students amongst whom she places herself (see "us lot"). The other interactants are asked for comment by Lo's turn final "yuh na:t ah mean?". Sh produces a latched continuer and Lo asserts her right to claim Blackness with "well we are Black". In doing this, she repositions herself and other Caribbean heritage people. Sh agrees with this repositioning in overlap with Lo's turn final laughter.

Example 5-Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:21-22

- ›1 Lo WE had this BLACK [ society ]  
 2 Lu [((Clears throat))]  
 3 Lo whatever at COLLEGE (.) an we were- yuh nuh we were- decidin our na- we  
 4 said why can't we call ourselves AFRO-CARIBBEAN [or ] whatever it was  
 5 Sh [Mm ]  
 6 Lo at that time [that ] was political ah can't remember=  
 7 Sh [Mm ] =Mm=  
 ›8 Lo =An (.) NO YUH'RE NOT (.) YUH'RE NOTHIN TO DO WITH A:FRICAN [ (.)  
 ›9 Sh [That's  
 10 right ]  
 11 Lo yuh've] YUH'RE NOTHIN YUH''RE NOT BLACK YUH LOT ARE:N'T BLA:CK=  
 ›12 Sh =It's AWFUL isn't it that? =  
 ›13 Lo = An us lot were like WHAT they on about? yuh na:t ah mean?=  
 14 Sh = M[m ]  
 ›15 Lo [ Well ] WE ARE BLACK [(.hhh .hhh .hhh)]  
 16 Sh [ Yeah yeah ]

The dispute over the right to claim African-ness within the discourse of Blackness is an interesting one for Black politics in terms of nationalism, ethnicity and a search for roots, as well as for theorizing about Black identities as diasporic or hybrid. On the one hand, African students in Lo's related experience view one's Blackness as contingent on

African-ness in terms of being 'newly of the continent', which does not relate to diasporic Africans. Claims to identity, therefore, relate to place quite strongly. While for Caribbean heritage individuals being Black, Caribbean and African presents no dissonance in terms of political and heritage identities. This is a result of the mobilization which occurred around Blackness in the 1970's and 1980's in which a Black community had to be forged in order to address the issues of racism on a broad political front. Lo shows this in her story through her juxtaposition of the signifiers 'Black', 'Afro-Caribbean' and 'African' and through her obvious outrage as she relives the experience of being told that she is not Black by other Black people.

This demonstrates the importance of the identifications that arise from the dominant discourse of Blackness in forging Black identities. In *The Sublime Object of Ideology* Slavoj Žižek (1989: 109) points to issues with regard to identifications that might be useful here:

in imaginary identification we imitate the other at the level of resemblance- we identify ourselves with the image of the other in as much as we are 'like him', while in symbolic identification we identify ourselves with the other precisely at a point at which he is inimitable, at the point which eludes resemblance ( quoted in Chow, 1993: 36 ).

Within the Black Movement, the politics of Blackness entailed both types of identifications in order to be inclusive of the aspirations of those within the African diaspora. From as long ago as the 'Back to Africa' tenets of Marcus Garvey, for example, Africa has been seen to be the origin to which it is possible to return even if as



diasporic women and men we no longer 'resemble the other'. What Lo is demonstrating in terms of identification with the discourse of Blackness is the formation of a de-territorialized identity which is a focus within diasporization - "the striking of roots outside the current place of residence" (Friedman, 1997: 84). Further, she is also practising "self essentialising [...] a rhetorical performance in which an imagined community is invoked" (Werbner, 1997a: 230). Routes and roots thus find no contradiction in being combined as she claims Blackness. Routes and roots are also shown at the level of culture in talk-in-interaction.

### Cultural

In example 6 Lu constructs himself as authentically Black through establishing his own street credibility in terms of his cultural awareness around food and his use of the cafe on the Frontline<sup>8</sup>. His view of himself as authentic is shown at:

- 1) lines 10-11 in which he claims that "the kids [...] [in] the basketball team [...] are talking about soul food like it's a new discovery", implying that for him it is a part of his life;
- 2) on lines 18-19 he claims that "ninety five percent of their mothers are white", which shows him as culturally authentic because this is not the case for him;
- 3) and, his assertion on lines 25-26 that "they not going back on the Frontline to go into the cafe or [...] anywhere like that", which positions him as someone who does just that.

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<sup>8</sup> This is the Frontline in inner city Bradford.

In terms of the negotiation of position which translation as reflexivity allows, this example demonstrates a repositioning of what Lu claims in lines 1-3 as "so much change in the kids". This general positioning is translated in lines 8 and 10 as kids being "so far removed" from Blackness. That is followed by an example of their lack of cultural knowledge around soul food to support his positioning of them. On lines 18-30 Lu repositions these changed Black kids as 'mixed race' ("ninety five percent of their mothers are white") who are without access to Black culture because of a lack of interest on the part of their fathers. He repositions them then as Black kids who are just discovering a Blackness which they have been denied because of their heritage.

Example 6-Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:7

›1 Lu = An ah see so: MUCH CHANGE ah've ah've SEEN SO MUCH CHANGE IN  
 2 THE KIDS [ (.) ] yuh nuh, with the BASKETBALL team we've got about forty  
 3 Sh [Mm]  
 4 P [Mm]  
 5 Lu kids in there, (.)  
 6 P Mhm  
 7 (1.4)  
 ›8 Lu An when yuh HEAR the CONversa:tion  
 9 (0.8)  
 ›10 Lu they're SO: FAR REMOVED (( clears throat)) THEY'RE TALKIN about  
 11 SOU:L FOOD like it's a (.) NEW DISCOVERY (.)  
 12 P [ Mhm ]  
 13 S [ Mhm ]  
 14 (0.5)  
 15 Lu O:h ah went an tried this an that the other day an ah tried this an ah tried  
 16 that an ah an ah'm sayin to em WHY?  
 17 (0.5)  
 ›18 Lu a:h well I don't HAVE that BECAUSE NINETY FIVE PERCENT OF THEIR  
 19 MOTHERS ARE WHITE =  
 20 S = Mh [m :: ]  
 21 P [Mhm] =  
 22 Lu = An the fa:ther: well IF THEY'RE THERE they can't be bloody BOTHERED  
 23 (((. hhh .hhh ))) to cook THAT for em ANYway =

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24 S [ Yeah ] = Yeah that's right actu [ally ]  
 >25 Lu [THEY]  
 26 NOT going back on the FRONT line to go into the cafe [ or ] any- anywhere  
 27 P [Mhm ]  
 28 Lu like that=  
 29 Sh =Mhm=  
 30 Lu =So it's NEW for em

What Lu has to say about this change in the culture of young Black people is important in terms of hybridity theorizing. Here Black young people are presented as growing up in a void as far as Black culture is concerned, but now at that point in their lives being spoken about in which they are actively seeking this out irrespective of their white heritage. These young people are therefore seeking to construct their own texts of authentic Blackness through using essence in terms of cultural practices. In doing culture through narratives interactants demonstrate their continuous scanning for signs translated as culture and the continuous re-presentation of a culture of 'the Black same'. Culture is about translation then as this re-presentation can be "understood properly only as the historically negotiated creation of more or less coherent symbolic and social worlds" (Werbner, 1997b: 15). In this negotiation people engage in accounting for what they do say and might think in a mutually meaningful way (Baumann, 1997: 211). Culture becomes a cause of "why those who have it act as they do" (Baumann, 1997: 212). These narratives thus provide interpretive spaces in the telling for the questions of "what is Black identity?" and "who can claim Blackness?" through its focus on a culture of 'the Black same' as authentic.

Conclusion: translation as reflexivity

In this chapter translation has been looked at as a central part of the intersubjective negotiation of identities which occurs in talk-in-interaction as people move from assertions of identity positionings to identity re-positionings. Translation has been removed from its limits in the literature on Black identities within which it has been coupled with hybridity to now being a process that individuals use to mark the negotiation of discourses in these identity positionings<sup>9</sup>. As a process of negotiation it has been shown to involve a linking of time, space, performativity and reflexivity in the intersubjective construction of identities. It is this intersubjective negotiation of positions in talk which constructs and reconstructs the borders of Blackness which enables the claim to be made that 'the third space' exists in conversation. A focus on the role of translation in this process has helped us to see the possibility for the emergence of hybridity as a site of identifications as people assemble identities as texts of social practice in the creative performance of life stories.

Reflexivity for Harold Garfinkel (1967) is axiomatically implied in social interaction and is therefore essential to any form of social being. Reflexivity has been spoken of above as the transformations in thinking about oneself and one's past action or state in a present telling. This auto-critique can be highly effective in opening up one's past activities to critical scrutiny. It has also been spoken about as interactants' interpretations of discourses in the interaction between collective and individual identities as speakers

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<sup>9</sup> In Chapter 5b, translation as reflexivity will continue to be extended and will take on the meaning of dialogic analysis.

construct their identifications in talk-in-interaction. What has emerged here is that people both speak their identities as a fixed common-sense fact, but also see Blackness as a socially constructed representation which is a matter of interpretation. Such interpretation hinges on a reading of the body, cultural practices and politics for Blackness. Both translation and reflexivity link together to provide a connection between individuals and their negotiation of discourses of Blackness through auto-critique. *Translation as reflexivity* is the process by which individuals reveal their identification with, through and against Blackness in a present telling. The place of *translation as reflexivity* in the making of identifications will continue to be explored throughout this project.

The use of extracts has helped to show that there is still a recourse to discourses of Black authenticity from a "starting point within culture or practice' from which practices are recognised" (Turner, 1994: 103). This recognition points in turn to the continuation of origin within this anti-essentialist moment in theorizing Black identities, thus leading to a questioning of the status of a hybridity which is devoid of a recourse to essence. Although within the data essentialism in the construction of authentic identities was obviously displayed, what was also shown were the age/generation, shade, political and cultural differences which exist in the Black communities of the speakers and which act as divisive forces within Blackness. It is these divisions which provide the impetus for the negotiation of identity positionings in talk as speakers strive to show difference from discursive constructions of the same. These divisions will continue to be looked at throughout the rest of this project.

The next two chapters will attempt to construct a theoretical model about discursive positioning and repositioning in which translation as reflexivity is pivotal. This negotiation of position itself is going to be seen as the process that allows hybridity to arise in the 'third space' of talk-in-interaction because of auto-critique. I will look first at how Foucault can help to illuminate 'discourses of Blackness'; and second, I will turn to Bakhtin's addressivity in order to account for the speaking subject who can create hybrid positionings in talk. This exploration should support the claim that Black hybrid identities as texts of social practice are dialogical and have a 'same but different' orientation simultaneously. The next two chapters thus look in more depth at the theme of this project. That is that hybridity has its alterity essence in the everyday negotiations of identity in talk-in-interaction.

## Chapter 5

### Texts of social practice and critical ontologies of Blackness

#### Introduction

The work of Bhabha (1994b and c), Gilroy (1993a), Hall (1996a), Spivak (1995) and Fanon (1986) all focus on the centrality of discourses and counter-discourses. For example, Bhabha's mimicry and hybridity; Gilroy's double consciousness and hybrid cultural productions in the British context; Hall's (1996a: 6) view on "identities as points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us"; Fanon and the discursive construction of otherness in the colonial context with the necessity for maintaining difference against the colonial assimilationist project that this entails; Spivak's view that only some discourses (white, male, middle class) are allowed into the circle of meaning in the colonial context irrespective of the nature of counter narratives.

This chapter continues to look at the construction of Black authenticity in talk in order to examine how:

-discourses of containment<sup>1</sup> impact on people's lives through being translated and reflexively reproduced in talk on identity;

-interactants produce counter-narratives and practices through translation as reflexivity, in the performances of their identifications through the talk.

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<sup>1</sup> By discourses of containment I mean those monologic discourses on identity to which people are required to conform by friends, family, colleagues and society.

### Linking the macro and the micro

The focus of this chapter will continue to be on interactants' accounts in order to understand how they use discourses in constructing identifications in talk. Discourses will be understood from the bottom up, so to speak, through looking at the micro-physics of power as it is relayed in individuals' stories of lived experience. This focus is based on the understanding that "structures, systems, cultures and so on are "occasioned" phenomena which exist [...] in the practices of participants" (Watson, 1992: xx). Participants constitute what they see as 'the system' in interaction with others. Having constituted this system participants orient themselves to it as if it had an objective existence prior to and independent of their interaction. So constraint and agency are to be found in the interactional practices of individuals in which they conjoin the macro and the micro (Watson, 1992: xx). The work of Schutz and Foucault on culture and reflexivity will be drawn on initially below to link the micro and the macro levels of analysis at a theoretical level.

How will discourses become susceptible to analysis though in terms of the sequential organisation of conversation? Paul Gilroy's concept 'the changing same' provides us with a possibility for such an analysis. For Gilroy (1997: 335-336):

This 'changing same' is not some invariant essence that gets enclosed subsequently in a shape shifting exterior with which it is casually associated. It is not the sign of an unbroken, integral inside protected by a camouflaged husk [...] The same is present but how can we imagine it as something other



than essence generating the merely accidental? The same is retained without needing to be reified. It is ceaselessly reprocessed. It is maintained and modified in what becomes a determinedly non-traditional tradition, for this is not tradition as closed or simple repetition.

What are we to make of this though when we have seen in earlier chapters that individuals talk about themselves and others as though Black is the sign of an unbroken integral inside, as invariant essence because of the intervention of 'race' in their lived experiences? Further, how can 'the same' be re-processed without recourse to such reifications? Although 'the changing same' could be useful as a phrase to describe what emerges in the interplay between the same and different in identification talk the impact of discourses of Blackness needs to be acknowledged. This is so as these discourses serve to reify Blackness and are what individuals negotiate as they construct identities. However, *the maintenance and modification of 'the same'* in talk is what is of particular interest here. As, if the analysis focuses on the variant that is critiqued then the invariant should become clearer. It is in this invariant that it should be possible to locate discourses of Black essence as they appear in the talk.

In order to look at the variants and invariants that exist in the talk of individuals and the possibility for counter-narratives which arises through their interaction, I am going to use a model gleaned from Foucault's work. Central to this model are "diagrams" and "statements". In this model there is a diagram of Blackness on which statements are based which are expressive of the diagram's relations of force and

knowledge. The translation as reflexivity in which speakers engage shows their awareness of statements. This awareness is either used or contradicted in identity positionings. The analysis that I will develop centres on how people negotiate bio-power and governmentality in the production of a critical ontology of the self. In achieving this, interactants demonstrate their participation at the local level in discursive constructions through their talk, by using translation as reflexivity as a process to link the macro to the micro in interaction.

Translation as reflexivity will be taken to be that point in the talk in which individuals show their identification through, with and against the subject positions constructed for them by discourses. Through this translation as reflexivity it therefore, becomes obvious the meanings of Blackness which individuals identify with, through and against, as they subject themselves to the discourse's rules and become the subjects of its power/ knowledge. In identifications against the discursive positionings of Blackness, translation as reflexivity is productive of hybridity as a 'speaking back to the eye of power' at the moment of narration. Stories then become sites of a hybridity of the moment, producing spaces of 'different from the changing same'<sup>2</sup>.

### Schutz, Foucault and culture

In Schutz's (1967: 10) view:

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<sup>2</sup> That is, bearing in mind that 'the changing same' also includes discursive reifications of Blackness.

[..] the world is an intersubjective world of culture [..] because from the outset the world of everyday life is [..] a texture of meaning which we have to interpret in order to find our bearings within it and come to terms with it [..] This texture of meaning, however, [..] originates in and has been instituted by human actions, our own and our [..] contemporaries and predecessors.

I have started with Schutz for a number of reasons. First, he stresses the intersubjective nature of culture and its constitution of the world. Second, his point of view that the world is a 'texture of meaning' which has to be interpreted. Finally, his idea that meaning originates through and is instituted by human actions through time and space. This point of view links closely to my own position that Black identities are texts of social practice which have to be 'meaninged' in interaction. Further, Schutz also highlights the centrality of translation as reflexivity by speaking about the importance of interpretation in coming to terms with a world which we ourselves make. Foucault's point of view would be that it is through this interpretation that individuals come to understand themselves within the context of culturally determined notions of identity by large scale cultural patterns manifesting themselves at the level of individual identity through a process of mediation

[..] in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion by the practices of the self, these practices [..] are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group (McNay, 1996: 154).

Again then, Foucault focuses on translation as reflexivity through this mediation process as well as noting the centrality of culture/society/social group in identities. He, thus, usefully juxtaposes the micro-level of practices of the self against the macro-level of the determining social horizon (McNay, 1996: 155). In his work on the history of sexuality Foucault (1984c: 333-334) treats “sexuality as the correlation of a domain of knowledge, a type of normativity and a mode of relation to the self; it means trying to decipher how [...] a complex experience is constituted from and around certain forms of behaviour: an experience which conjoins a field of study [...], a collection of rules [...], a mode of relation between the individual and himself”. For both Schutz and Foucault, therefore the “study of forms of experience can thus proceed from an analysis of “practices” “ (Foucault, 1984c: 335).

These practices are those in which individuals both speak from within discourses and construct counter-discourses in their micro-strategies for dealing with the variant and the invariant of Blackness in constructing identification narratives. Both the variant and the invariant become obvious in the following example. Here Lu produces the variant at lines 5-7 by being scathing of Dominicans- while speaking as a knowledgeable member of the wider Black community. On the other hand he is also supportive of their position as someone of Dominican ancestry himself. This is where the invariant becomes obvious (lines 22-24). The extract begins by Sh talking about the bad reputations of Jamaicans in Britain. This is not denied by the other interactants. Lu then gives a Dominican’s view on why Dominicans marry Jamaicans. That is, because of the fear of inbreeding. For several turns interactants show their agreement with his point of view through laughter and affirmations (lines 8-17). When Lu is asked about “loads of inbreeding” by his Jamaican girlfriend in what she

later confesses to have been a joke, there is no uptake by him of this as a joke. What he does instead is to defensively talk- in a more recognisably Creole form- about inbreeding within the wider Caribbean context, ending in "o:h:" to show his anger. Lo then begins to talk about this generally, thus, defusing the situation. For both the interactants in this conversation and for myself as an analyst, there has to be shared knowledge in terms of the topic. Knowledge goes beyond interactional rules such as turn taking to shared cultural knowledge to get the joke as well as understand the more serious side about inbreeding where, in the Caribbean cousins do not as a rule marry each other, no matter how distant the relationship:

Example 1- Tape 1 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe:2-3

- 1 Sh Ah'm amazed that anybody bothered marryin Jamaicans here apart from  
 2 Jamaicans ((.hhh .hhh)) ((^achshally))=  
 3 P [((.hhh))]  
 4 Sh [ We've] got such a BAD reputation here ah couldn believe i(t)=  
 >5 Lu =NO I'LL TELL YUH WHY  
 6 (1.0)  
 7 Lu Cos if yuh're Dominican dey good to be yuh bloody cousin<sup>3</sup>,=  
 >8 Sh = Ah true (.) [ ((.hhh .hhh))]  
 9 Joint [((.hhh [.hhh ] .hhh ) .hhh)]=  
 10 Sa [VE:RY TRUE]  
 11 P =Well dat's it yeah=  
 12 Sa =AH TRUE::=  
 13 P =Yeah ah know=  
 14 Sh =Dat's no lie=  
 15 Sa =°Or the° aunty of (.)  
 16 P No Inbreeding (1.0)  
 17 Sh Dat's true: that is (.)  
 18 Lo Loads of inbreeding in't there Lu though?=  
 19 P =Cos sh- erh:=  
 20 Lu =What LOAdS of inbreedin?=  
 21 Lo =((.hhh )) ah was jokin (1.0) ((.hhh .hhh)) (.)  
 >22 Lu Is di siem inbreedin yuh fi:n in any one ah di islands okay<sup>4</sup>=  
 23 Lo =Yeah [ah know ]  
 24 Lu [((^Ah ] can tell yuh dat now o:h:))=  
 25 Lo =Ah was seein Tri- is it Trinidad, or was dat programme about a:hm: (.)

<sup>3</sup> "Dey good to be yuh bloody cousin" translates as "they are likely to be your bloody cousin".

<sup>4</sup> "Is di siem inbreedin yuh fi:n in any ah di islands" translates as "it's the same inbreeding which you can find in any of the islands".

## 26 Sh No it's Barbadoes

There are two other points to this very long, though interesting example. First it shows interactants' recourse to Black community ideas about taboo relationships, and through this how discourses of culture are established through intersubjective action by which meanings become possible. Meanings become possible through the translation in which people engage. The specific discourse of culture being talked into being by the interactants is that to do with inbreeding as taboo. Interactants spend several turns at talk from lines 7-17 to establish that this aspect of Caribbean culture is shared as people translate Lu's claim on line 7 as being true. P on line 16 then provides an upshot of both Lu's turn and the agreements so far with "No inbreeding", with which Sh agrees after a (1.0) pause.

What is also interesting in this example is the way in which hybridity arises. Lu (lines 5-7) is actually the interactant who introduces the topic of the potential for inbreeding amongst Dominicans. Lo's attempt at a joke about this on line 18 could be seen to be a positioning of Dominicans in terms of this particular taboo of inbreeding. Lu in fact interprets it as such a positioning when in his translation as reflexivity sequence he challenges Lo with "what loads of inbreedin?" (line 20). After Lo admits to her turn being a joke supporting her assertion with laughter, Lu repositions Dominicans in terms of inbreeding being a possibility for all of the Caribbean islands. In this repositioning Lu demonstrates hybridity through the 'speaking back' he does to the discourse of positioning which he himself names initially.

Diagrams, statements, stories and analysing local practices

The interaction of the variant and the invariant above in the negotiation of identity in which Lu claims both Dominican-ness and a more general Black identity highlights the complex interplay between forms, meanings and actions of discourse. To speak of forms, meanings and actions of discourse points to a link between daily practices and what Foucault (1995: 74) calls a 'system of formation', which is:

[..] a complex group of relations that function as a rule: it lays down what must be related, in a particular discursive practice, for such and such a concept to be used [...] To define a system of formation [...] is therefore to characterize a discourse or a group of statements by the regularity of a practice.

So Blackness as a discourse could be a system of formation which arises through the regular quotidian practices of constructing it through statements. The system of formation is not atemporal and involves transformation of discourses over time. "Discourse and system produce each other" through "rules that are embodied as a particular practice by discourse" (Foucault, 1995: 76) to the extent that "one remains within the dimension of discourse" (Foucault, 1995: 76). If we remain within discourse what does this mean for agency? That is the agency which is central to Black identities as texts of social practice, in which translation within identification talk is about the reflexive construction of a self as "different from but the same as" across time and space.

I think that we need to be clear that “the subject position delivered to us by modernity is not an ontological necessity, other subject positions will be historically possible in terms of the contingencies of the present moment” (Schrift, 1994:198). The construction of hybridity through narratives is one site where such a contingent construction arises through reflexivity which “encourages us to consider the way a text [...] is a version, selectively working up coherence and incoherence, telling historical stories, presenting, and indeed, constituting an objective out-there reality” (Potter, 1997:146). This ensures then, that there can be no foundational unified discourse. Rather

‘discursive discontinuity becomes primary and constitutive’ in as much as the ‘identity’ of the democratic subject is always in process, producing itself in response to and being produced by the contingent antagonisms and alliances that constitutes the social. (Laclau and Mouffe (1985) quoted in Schrift, 1994: 199).

Deleuze (1988) in *Foucault* points to these discontinuities when he looks at Foucault’s ideas on a spatio-temporal multiplicity in the concept of a diagram. Diagrams are intersocial and evolving to produce new kinds of reality, new models of truth (Deleuze, 1988: 35). Diagrams make “history by unmaking preceding realities and significations, constituting hundreds of points of emergence or creativity, unexpected conjunctions or improbable continuums” (Deleuze, 1988: 35). As well as being a connector of points, diagrams also contain relatively free or unbound points, points of creativity, change and resistance. In terms of their role as a connector of points, diagrams are “the presentation of the relations between forces unique to a



particular formation [...] the distribution of the power to affect and the power to be affected" (Deleuze, 1988: 72-73). So whilst there is the presence of hybridity produced in the points of creativity, change and resistance, subjects are affected by the power/knowledge forces of the diagram. "Foucault's fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them" (Deleuze, 1998: 101). Foucault rejects, then, a uni-directional and repressive notion of power, reconceptualising power as a positive force, permeating all levels of society, producing a multiplicity of relations besides those of domination (McNay, 1996: 90). Power circulates, is exercised through a net-like organisation and individuals circulate between its threads simultaneously undergoing and exercising power (Foucault, 1980a: 98). So "if power generates a multiplicity of effects, then it is only possible to discern these effects by analysing power from below, at its most precise points of operation- a 'microphysics' of power" (McNay, 1996: 91). A 'microphysics of power' in itself implicates an analytical focus on daily practices.

I would like to turn to Foucault's idea that statements are the building blocks of discourse. Further, I would like to begin to establish a link between statements and narrative texts which build an "out there" reality. For Foucault the analysis of statements does not pose the question of the speaking subject, rather "it is situated at the level of the 'it is said' [...] we must understand by it the totality of things said, the relations, the regularities, and the transformations that may be observed in them, the domain of which certain figures [...] indicate the unique place of a speaking subject and may be given the name of author. 'Anyone who speaks', but what he

says is not said from anywhere. It is necessarily caught up in the play of an exteriority” (Foucault, 1995: 122). The speaking subject is an author of statements located somewhere who, through reading and deciphering the traces of memory reproduced in stories “makes it possible to snatch past discourse from its inertia and, for a moment, to rediscover something of its lost vitality” (Foucault, 1995: 123). So, a statement is susceptible to analysis at the local level as for Foucault (1995: 86-87) it is:

[..] a function of existence which properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they ‘make sense’, according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation (oral or written) [...] it [...] is [...] a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space.

The ‘repeatable materiality’ of statements means that they are “[..] one of those objects that men produce, manipulate, use, transform, exchange, combine, decompose and recombine, and possibly destroy [...] the statement circulates, is used, disappears, allows or prevents the realisation of desire, serves or resists various interests, participates in challenge and struggle, and becomes a theme of appropriation or rivalry” (Foucault, 1995: 105). At base then, the statement is about social practices. In terms of identifications these are specifically practices of positioning which can be investigated at the local enunciative level “by the analysis of

the relations between the statement and the spaces of differentiation, in which the statement itself reveals the differences" (Foucault, 1995: 92). Foucault himself, thus, introduces translation as reflexivity into the analytic frame by focusing on these spaces of differentiation in which the statement functions to produce positions for speakers.

Reflexivity is central to Foucault's theory of the self as the autonomy of the person can only be affirmed through the reflexive self-monitoring of the construction of oneself. However, he undercuts this idea's importance by arguing that the establishment of analytical links between the self and the social context must be rejected (McNay, 1996: 160-161). This arises because of his concern to escape the regimes of truth imposed on the body and its pleasures by the juridico-moral codes of Christianity, psychoanalysis and science (Sarup, 1996: 90). In effect he does not want an ethics of the self to become a reverse essentialism (Sarup, 1996: 90). These analytical links are important, though, bearing in mind Schutz's view that practices of the self are mediated by social and symbolic structures and in turn affect them, and indeed, by Foucault's own view that an author is located somewhere. In fact, it is important for us to remember that these structures have a place in helping individuals to acquire some insight into the implications of their actions (Sarup, 1996: 90). Maybe for Foucault, then, the "possibility that is not admitted is that the process of reflexivity may never be fixed and complete, but may nevertheless involve a systematic interrogation of the way in which self representation is imbricated in wider cultural dynamics" (McNay, 1996: 161). This systematic interrogation of the arrangement of self-representation within the everyday practices of culture is about translation as reflexivity, in which matters of identification are managed in the

sequential organisation of the talk itself. How could Foucault help us to account for a stretch of talk like the following?

Example 1A Tape 1 Side A LF:2-3

- 1 Sh Yuh say yuh wraps then I'm interested in yuh African wraps becós [like (.)]  
 2 Lo [hhh ]  
 3 Sh I've never [seen yuh with one before yuh know,]  
 4 Lo [ It's funny yuh should say that ] oh ah wear em all the time  
 5 now [yuh know] yeah ah wear em to work now yeah =  
 6 Sh [ Really? ] =Oh right=  
 7 Lo =Yeah ah wear em to work an that=  
 8 Sh =°Oh right°=  
 >9 Lo =Ah'm MAKIN a STATEMENT (.) I'm goin back to my a:h: .hhh CULTURAL  
 10 IDENTITY an that=  
 11 Sh=Mh[ m ]  
 >12 Lo [Ah'm] SICK ah WESTERN influences an stuff like that [°Shirley°] ah jus  
 13 Sh [ Mhm ]  
 14 Lo wanna .hhh AH WANNA BE ME:: AH DON'T WANNA HAVE TO CONFORM  
 15 TO WHAT SOMEONE'S CONSTRUCTED FUH MI=  
 16 Sh =Mhm=  
 >17 Lo =AN AH THINK OUR CULTURE IS SO: BEAUTIFUL .hhh WE'VE BEEN  
 18 MADE TO HATE IT FOR SO: LONG [yuh know?] WHICH WE'RE RUNNIN  
 19 AWAY FULL SPEED FROM .hhh (.3) AFRI:CAN stuff an den- and I LO:VE  
 20 Lo it I love the carvins ah love African drum music [ (.) ] ah've got two  
 21 Sh [Mhm]  
 22 Lo BEAUTIFUL AFRI:CAN ah:m ROBES I'll bi [ wearin ] one to this  
 23 Sh [Have yuh?]  
 24 Lo presentation next week=  
 25 Sh =Mhm=  
 26 Lo=An ah wear a wrap a lo:t

Lo constructs for us her identification as an African centred Black woman in this extract. Sh begins by positioning Lo within the variant of those who would deny Blackness when she says "I'm interested in yuh African wraps because like I've never seen yuh with one before yuh know". Lo's response to this begins in overlap and is a denial of this positioning as she wears "em all the time now". In fact she wears "em to work now". Wearing a headwrap to work is a very public declaration of Blackness. After Sh's quietly produced claim to understanding "oh right" on line 8, Lo

produces a translation as reflexivity sequence in which she clearly states the reason for her use of African headwraps to her interlocutor. That is, that she is “makin a statement”, she is “goin back to [her] cultural identity” (lines 9-10). Following this Lo begins to reposition herself as an African identified woman by claiming that she is “sick ah Western influences” (lines 12-15) and because she wants to be herself and not “have to conform to what someone’s constructed for her”, she has turned to African culture. African culture is here presented as the invariant essence with which she has identified in terms of culture. She shifts her positioning to that of an identification with African-ness even though “we’re runnin away full speed from African stuff” (lines 17-18). In this latter she also performs a character reference for herself as someone who is embracing African-ness through her dress and love of African cultural practices.

So far, a reliance on Foucault alone presents us with a problem in terms of the identification work being done in this extract. This is so because an analysis of statements does not necessarily lead us to see the subject speaking back to the eye of power displayed in this extract as Lo translates the relevance of her headwrap to her identification. This is a problem because it denies the systematic interrogation of position in which Lo is engaged. Further, it does not account for the self-representation that occurs within this extract. Finally, Foucault’s account in terms of statements does not allow for the use of counter-statements in the strategic repositioning which Lo undertakes in talk. So it would be difficult for us to say that his account helps us to see identity talk as a reflexive activity in which bodily practices

are translated by the speaker as making identification claims based on the use of the membership categorisations African and Western.

Perhaps it is this notion of shared membership categories that could help us to see how these counter-positionings could be conceptualised using Foucault. In “*Lecture One: 7 January 1976*” in which he seeks to delineate the genealogical project, Foucault talks about “the local character of criticism” which “indicates in reality [...] an autonomous non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one that is to say whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought” (Foucault, 1980a: 81). This is about then “an insurrection of subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980a: 81). These subjugated knowledges have been seen as insufficiently elaborated because they involve a popular knowledge (*savoir de gens*) which is incapable of unanimity but which are at the heart of the criticism of the claims of a unitary body of theory. I would like to claim that people in their production of repositionings are in the process of making valid a *savoir de gens*. This, however, does have unanimity being established in the process of the talk through its interaction with discourses of Blackness. So we move one step further from the statement as a positioning as a function of existence within discursive formations (Hitchcock, 1993), towards being able to respond to the question of what allows the speaker to make a statement.

It is in looking at this question that Mikhail Bakhtin enters the frame as, the speaker is a subject in process where an utterance context always establishes and re-

establishes a position from which to speak (Hitchcock, 1993). (This will be looked at in more detail in the next chapter). Foucault only allows for agency in the position of the subject produced by the statement but for Bakhtin struggles reside with sign but also in the access to signification. This is what marks the subject as agent rather than just the subject as position produced through relations of power (Hitchcock, 1993). If statements are about performing acts of position then the statement conceived at the local level as a 'storied' text of social practice can be seen to simultaneously speak, and speak through, discourses of identification. This becomes obvious when we look at the positions occupied by speakers as they articulate and apply these identification discourses to either themselves, or to concrete issues, persons and events. In example 1 for instance Lu establishes himself as at once a British Caribbean person and a British Dominican person by:

-establishing his position of knowledge about these communities "NO I'LL TELL YUH WHY" before going on to talk about the problem of kinship for those looking for marriage partners from within the Dominican community: "Cos if yuh're Dominican dey good to be yuh bloody cousin" ;

-then, becoming offended at the remark about inbreeding among Dominicans leading to his more Creole response "Is di siem inbreedin yuh fi:n in any one ah di islands okay ah can tell yuh dat now o:h:".

Whilst speaking of others through different discourses of identification he reflexively locates himself socially, culturally and communally.

Bio-power and identifications

What is also clear in example 1 because of its focus on the community taboo of inbreeding, is that Blackness as community is about a discourse of surveillance, normalisation and control as it is based on a “regime of truth [...] that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true” (Foucault, 1980b: 131). Blackness is itself, thus, a diagram, a relation of power/ knowledge that becomes apparent in talk. A further example of this is provided by the difference of politics between The Nation of Islam and a Caribbean identified woman who is an activist in the following extract, which follows on from a discussion about the irrelevance of The Nation of Islam to the British context:

Example 2 Tape 2 Side A Lu, Sav, Lo, Sh, Pe: 45-46

- 1 Sh FRAM DI TIME ah went to dis conference right? ah went to this ah:m  
 2 BLACK CAUCUS conference in Liverpool an dey had some like Black  
 3 Muslims there right, an there was this one guy (.) that was from America an  
 4 he had a:ll the clothes on yuh nuh, [like ] this an (.) everything an ah:m he  
 5 Sa [°Mhm°]  
 ›6 Sh wa:s there: an is like DI ROOM PACK OUT WID UMAN TO YUH NUH? an  
 7 he’s like TA::KIN<sup>5</sup> an STUff and and I SAID SOMETHing an Shanaz said  
 8 something cos I’d gone with her an he looked at us an he said YUH  
 ›9 KNOW THE PROBLEM WITH YOU SISTAS IS YOU DON’T REALISE  
 10 WHERE YOUR PLACE SHOULD BE YOUR PLACE IS AT HOME BRINGIN  
 11 UP THE RACE AN NURTURING THEM INTO THE CULTURE HE said  
 12 yuh’re not supposed to be out here on the FRONT Line it’s US MEN who are  
 ›13 supposed to do dat WELL YUH CAN IMAGINE WHE MI AN SHANAZ SEH  
 14 TO HIM=  
 15 = [Joint laughter ]  
 16 Sh [Yuh know,°i: never mek much dif-°] yuh can imagine (.) FIE:ST[INI:SS:?=  
 17 Lu [((.hhh)) ]  
 18 Sa =Mhm: yeah.=  
 19 Sh = TELLIN US (.3)  
 20 Sh Like US CARIBBEAN WOMEN ESPECIALLY [that we ] MUS BE AT  
 21 Lo [Yeah ]

<sup>5</sup> Ta::kin translates as talking.



22 Lu [(.(hhh) )]  
 23 Sh [HOME ] BRINGIN UP DI [RACE ] AN NURTURIN DEM AN NOT on di  
 24 Lu [(.(hhh))] [(.(hhh))]  
 25 Sh FRONT line IS WHE IM COME FRAM?=  
 26 Sa = [(.(hhh ).hhh )]=  
 27 Lu [(.(hhh))] =AN ALL: OF A SUDDEN DEM GOT SUIT SHIRT AN  
 28 TIE?=  
 29 Sh =YEAH? [yuh na: mean?]  
 30 Lu [WHEN I ] WEAR SH- SUIT SHIRT AN TIE DEY CALL MI A  
 31 WHITE MAN [(.(hhh ).hhh .hhh) ((\*A::H:: GOD EXCELLENT YEAH))  
 32 Pe [(.(hhh))]  
 33 Sa [(.(hhh))]  
 34 Lu ((.hhh) (.) ((.hhh .hhh ))

In this extract, Sh first sets the scene in terms of the specifics of the audience “Di room pack out wid uman to yuh nuh?”<sup>6</sup> (line 6) in order to highlight for her interlocutors the insensitivity and arrogance of the men with whom she disagrees. These men position Black women as “sistas” who don’t realise where [their] place should be [...] at home bringin up the race an nurturing them into the culture [...] you are not supposed to be out here on the front line it’s us men who are supposed to do dat” (lines 9-13). This is the variant that is here being constructed as an object of critique by the men. In her (raised volume) “Well you can imagine whe me an Shanaz seh to im”<sup>7</sup> (lines 13-14) she shows her outrage, through an appeal to her listeners which interrupts her own story, drawing laughter from other interactants (line 15) who wait for what is to come.

What comes after this laughter though is not a continuation of her account, but rather a translation as reflexivity sequence which is her own viewpoint on the

<sup>6</sup>“ Di room pack out wid woman to yuh nuh” translates as “the room was full of women too you know”.

<sup>7</sup>“Well yuh can imagine whe mi an Shanaz seh to im” translates as well “you can imagine what Shanaz and I said to him”.

reported comment with “Fiestiniss” (ckeek) (line 16) produced loudly. To call it cheeky places it at the level of an affront. After laughter from Lu and an agreement from Sa, she then goes on to contextualize the nature of her disagreement with the Nation of Islam point of view, through her use of the discourse of “the Caribbean woman”. In this discourse, which exists both in the Caribbean and diasporic communities, “the Caribbean woman” is someone who has forged a place for herself outside of the sphere of the family and home within the world of work and community politics. Throughout Sh’s turn at talk others agree minimally or laugh in agreement. This agreement suggests the sharedness for these speakers of the idea of “the Caribbean woman”. After making her objection to the Nation of Islam explicit, Sh goes on to construct their point of view as being outside of the Black experience within Britain by asking “Is whe im come fram?”<sup>8</sup>. Sa responds with laughter at line 26, indicating that she gets Sh’s point that the attitude of the man being spoken about is outrageous. In constructing her story Sh makes the sexist viewpoint of the Nation of Islam an object of ridicule by calling on the counter-discourse of the Caribbean woman within which discourse she places herself through the re-positioning of herself as a Black sister in which she engages throughout the talk. She calls on the invariant of Caribbean woman to therefore undermine the viewpoint of the man being spoken about. Further, Lu also shows distancing as a Caribbean heritage man from the Nation of Islam. He does this through making their “uniform” the butt of his joke “When I wear a sh- suit shirt an tie dey call mi a white man”, the point of which is not lost on Sa and Pe who join in with his laughter.

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<sup>8</sup> “Is whe im come fram” translates as “which planet is he from?”

What is reflexively shown here is that for The Nation of Islam there is a true Black essence which exists at the level of daily gendered practice. Further Caribbean heritage women deviate from this because of the continuation of their tradition of working outside the home and being involved in the politics of protest. The Nation of Islam point of view is derided by the woman telling the story as is shown in Sh's comments to her interlocutors "Well yuh can imagine whe mi an Shanaz seh to him", "yuh can imagine [...] fiestiniss" and "Is whe im come fram?", as well as by the other interactants who join in with laughter. In doing this they are speaking back to those discourses of 'a Black (woman) same'. Hybridity is thereby produced through the talk in which people represent themselves as having minds and politics free from the strictures of The Nation of Islam, even though it is becoming part of the way of life and politics of many Black Britons. Discourses of Blackness which emanate from Black communities while undoubtedly being liberatory also simultaneously operate and are operated, as a panopticon with its statements of 'who is authentically Black'<sup>9</sup> acting as the gaze. "An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over and against himself" (Foucault, 1980c: 154-155).

The idea of becoming one's own overseer brings us to governmentality. Foucault's notion of governmentality distinguishes between violence, domination and those power relations that characterise relations between individuals as well as seeing power as both an objectivizing and a subjectivizing force. Power, therefore, is not unidirectional through the inscription of material effects on the body, but it is an

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<sup>9</sup> By this I mean that it is the panopticon that is talked into being as there is a prevalence of talk in the data about who is 'really Black'. This thus makes the whole community into a panopticon.

agonistic struggle that takes place between free individuals (McNay, 1996: 85). Power and freedom are, thus, inextricably linked. This is demonstrated in the above extract by Sh's establishment of the place of Caribbean women outside of the domestic sphere, even while being denied this by an African diasporic man.

This link between power and freedom is also shown in the next extract. Here Sa speaks about being simultaneously a punk in her life in the city in which she lived in order to fit in with her white friends in terms of fashion and Anti-Nazi politics, while in Birmingham with her Black friend Sandra she went to soul clubs. She begins positioning herself as a punk in terms of fashion (drain pipe jeans rather than flares) during her youth (lines 6-10). Je and Sh both see punkyness as the variant as they can't imagine her as a punk. After this challenge Sa goes into more detail of her punkyness as being to do with fashion in the form of wearing grandad shirts and a safety pin in her earring (lines 18,20,23 and 25). In this way she provides a translation as reflexivity sequence which makes it obvious that for her punk was "a clothes ting"<sup>10</sup> (see Je line 26). She repositions herself as Black in opposition to punk by talking about her Black music practice with her friend in Birmingham (lines 29-31). Through using this call to Blackness she produces the invariant which is reinforced when she then goes on to say that she actually only pretended to like punk because of her white friends in the town in which she lived (lines 34-5).

By speaking of her being a punk as a clothes thing but also being about fitting into a regime of whiteness, she simultaneously shows the operation of her own freedom to

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<sup>10</sup> "Ting" translates as "thing".

work against this regime as well as its power to attempt to define who she was capable of being. She exercised freedom by also choosing to have a Black life, however, in Birmingham with her best friend Sandra, which Black life is presented as based around soul music. She presents for us then two other important things for her in terms of identification. First, the importance of peer group subculture in shaping identifications as well as the significance of space as practised place (de Certeau, 1988: 117) in this process. Finally, she also demonstrates for us the double consciousness of which Gilroy speaks, as a pragmatic orientation to her situation which becomes obvious through her bodily practices:

Example 3 Tape 1 Side A Je, Sh, San: 61-62

- ›1 Sa We were all punks THEN yuh know cos it wuh fl:a:res?=  
 2 Sh =You were a punk as well?  
 3 (.3)  
 4 Sa Yuh know fl:a:res were out then,=  
 5 Sh=Oh yeah.=  
 6 Sa=An ah was one of the first people to wear drain pipe jeans,  
 7 (.4)  
 8 Sh Oh right?=  
 9 Sa=They were wearin- THEY WEREN'T EVEN DRA:IN PIPE they were quite  
 10 still fl:a:red but they were much NARROWER than the (.) other ones,  
 11 (6.1)  
 ›12 Sh Ah can't imagine yuh as a punk [San ]  
 ›13 Sa [((.hhh)) ] ah wasn't re- ah wasn't a re:al  
 14 punk=  
 ›15 Sh °A cold punk, °=  
 ›16 Je =Ah ca:n't even begin to imagine yuh,=  
 17 Sh =N[o:, ]  
 ›18 Sa [Ah ] wasn't- ah was like- ah'd we:ar- ah'd we:ar e:hm:  
 19 (.9)  
 20 Sa a PIN a hair- a- a- a safety pin in mah earring (.3) right?=  
 21 Sh =O:h: right,=  
 22 Je =Yeah =  
 23 Sa Ah- Ah used to wear grandad shirts.=  
 24 Sh =Yeah=  
 25 Sa And [ a:h:m: ] dat was punk dat was punky for dem days=  
 26 Je [Yuh got- °yuh got a clothes ting°] =Yuh  
 27 want to get dat idea NOW, [((.hhh .hhh .hhh )) ]  
 28 Sh [((Yeah ah think so\*))]=  
 ›29 Sa =Yeah ah think ah should an then- but at the same time ah use to go to

30 Birmingham to be wi my other fri- MY BEST friend SANDRA an I'd go to  
 31 SOUL does- ah was into SO:UL the sort of FORMation dancin,=  
 32 Sh=[((Oh right?\*))] [((.hhh yeah]  
 33 Je [Mhm ]  
 34 Sa [ SO AH ] mean ah really- ah really achshally HATE  
 35 the PUNK but ah used to pretend to like it but ah didn like it at all:

Example 4 follows the previous conversation. Here Je speaks of being a “rude girl”<sup>11</sup> showing in contrast to the former speaker her total power in choosing how to be to the extent of putting “Rankin Roger the Beat” on her jacket. To say “Rankin” is very much about declaring Jamaican culture within the Two-Tone subculture of which she was a part. She therefore constructs herself as being somewhat separate from the Two-Tone subculture because of her assertion of Blackness and shows the variant being critiqued. That is a Black woman who just assimilates to Two-Tone as a white subculture. Being a “rude girl” relates very closely to the globalisation of Jamaican culture and its permeation within Britain. It is even said by the speaker to be possibly something she has taken with her from her youth in terms of her attitude, which is recognised by other Black women as being that of a “rude girl”.

How identification stories of the past inflect identification construction in the present becomes apparent here. In positioning her identification as a rude girl she recalls herself as being Black and British and confident about this. Sh and Sa acknowledge this confidence by the joint explosive laughter at line 7. She locates herself, then, very much as an individual who is Black within the Two-tone subculture, and feels no

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<sup>11</sup> In working class Jamaican culture of the 1970s there were ‘rude boys’: young men who were trend setters in terms of fashion and musical tastes but who went against the grain of society. They did this latter by asserting their rights to criminal activity. The female equivalent of this were ‘rude girls’.

discomfort with that. The only discomfort she now feels is about whether she has still taken the rude girl attitude into her adult life (see lines 15,16 and 18). However, after Sh's laughing affirmation that she is still a rude girl "yuh're a rude girl yeah" she agrees with this and then goes on to speak about the continuation of this throughout her life. Through this she establishes the "rude girl" attitude as being an invariant for her in terms of her Black attitude. This, then, is what she wanted to establish about herself interactionally. That is, that she still has the oppositional Black attitude of her youth and that this is obvious to others. She begins the extract by relating the incident in which she was asked by a young woman with whom she worked whether she was a rude girl or not, then going into the youth culture of the time at which she was a rude girl and then goes on:

Example 4 Tape 1 Side A Je, Sh, San:62-63

- 1 Je But like- like the thing is °I was a ru:de girl as far as I was concerned° yuh  
 2 na:t ah mean?=  
 3 Sa =Mhm=  
 >4 Je =Like rankin- BLACK harrinton<sup>12</sup> save up- save up- save up all- all mah money  
 5 from the papers ah did .hhh to buy a Black harrinton an pu- an put  
 6 Rankin Roger The Beat on the back,=  
 >7 = ((Explosive joint laughter))=  
 8 Je =(( Yuh na:: mean?\*)) but ehm: a:hm:  
 10 (.9)  
 11 Je Like a:hm:- but like a:hm:- but like I- but like it- it shocked mi becos °she said  
 12 yuh used to be a rude girl an ah looked at her an ah° sehs how duh yuh  
 13 know ah sehs? (( JUST YOUR ATTITUDE. ^))=  
 14 =((Joint Laughter))  
 >15 Je BUT I- IT FRIGHTENED ME COS AH THOUGHT °God am ah still a rude  
 16 girl?°=  
 17 Sh =((.hhh)) ((°Yuh're a rude girl yeah°\*))  
 18 Je =YUH NA::H MEAN? Cos ah used to be like- twelve (.) thirteen (.) fourteen

((^)) Speaking like the young woman

In terms of the positioning and re-positioning which is being claimed is occurring in talk this example provides us with a deviation from the usual patterning established thus far. Je spends several turns at talk (lines 1-6) establishing that she used to be a rude girl in her youth. At line 11 she goes on to show her positioning as this as an adult by another Black woman, both in her youth and now, because of her attitude. After joint laughter, Je enters a translation as reflexivity sequence in which she reveals that this observation made her think about her present status as a “rude girl” (lines 15-16). This seems to imply some uncertainty on Je’s part at the time. She goes on to affirm Je’s rude girl status now and in a latched next Je agrees with this positioning with “yuh na:t ah mean?”. This agreement is produced with raised volume which serves to indicate the certainty of this rather than her uncertain questioning in her translation as reflexivity sequence.

There is also, though, a ‘white’ side to Blackness as an eye of power (as shown in examples 3 and 1A) and this should not be ignored. Whiteness’s discourses of containment that are determined by, but also constitutive of the power relations that permeate ‘the social’, becomes clear in the following examples. Here the Black body *as marked* reveals the operation of power on the body’s possible identities as well as its occupation of space. This seems to encompass a notion of constant judgement, a control through normalisation, as in the panoptic principle, because of the constant visibility of Blackness as a constructed phenomenon within Britain. As an example of this in terms of a Black occupation of the racialized space of Britain, we have interactants next recalling the New Cross Street massacre and its impact on her:

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<sup>12</sup> Harrinton is a harrington jacket



Example 5 Tape 1 Side A Je, Sh, San:49-55

- 1 Sa [They ] threw- threw a petrol bomb or somethin in the letterbox an  
 2 Sh [Yes: ]  
 3 Sa everyone- ba:h not everyone died but a lot of people DIED=  
 4 Sh =Mhm=  
 5 Je =°God° yes (.4) I remember THAT [JESUS,]  
 6 Sh [Mhm: ] Mhm:

Much further into the conversation Sa claims this event as her awakening to what could happen to Black people and her entry into Rock Against Racism politics:

- 7 Sa An ah remember thinkin how AW:FUL IT WAS AH REMEMBER THEM  
 8 SAY- AH REMEMBER THE NEW- SORTA PEOPLE. (.4) BR:AGGIN, AH  
 9 REMEMBER THERE'S- OF REPO:RTS ABOUT THESE GUYS BRAGGIN IN  
 10 the pub about .hhh °oh ah just killed some niggers tonight, [it was ]  
 11 Sh [Mhm ]  
 12 Sa great fun,°  
 13 (.5)  
 14 Sh Mhm: (.3)  
 15 Sa Ah THAT'S- that's what- °which is° my AWAKENING which is kind of the  
 16 AW:FUL thing that went on

After some more conversation Sa then says:

- 17 Sa Ah think that was the reason ah was- ah was actin- ah've never been active  
 18 before college,=  
 19 Sh =Mhm(.)  
 20 Sa When ah left school I was- I was in this ah:m  
 21 (1.2)  
 22 Sa Actin- ah was in dis ROCK against racism club (.6) is is the punk e:ra=  
 23 Sh =Oh were [ yah? ] yeah (.) yeah=  
 24 Sa [Mhm ] =Is the punk era then an ah was ah was like-  
 25 ah was into this a:hm ah'm (.) we're all the same ah'm just a different colour  
 26 [ ki:na ] person at the time=  
 27 Je [Mhm ]  
 28 Sh =Mhm mhm=  
 29 Sa =An tryin to fi- basically get to find out who ah was really ah suppose=  
 30 Sh =Mhm=  
 31 Sa =But ah was- ah had white friends white middle class trendy lefty (.) type  
 32 friends=  
 33 Sh =Mhm=  
 34 Je =Mhm=  
 35 Sa =An they were all middle class an no one- no one really liked mi they just  
 36 thought ah was- ah was their token BLACK friend ah think=  
 37 Sh =[Mhm]  
 38 Je [Mhm]

Here we see Sa establishing her position within the Rock Against Racism club as someone at that time in her life who was not politically attuned to her own racialized position as she was “into this [...] we’re all the same ah’m just a different colour ki:na person at the time” (lines 24-26). Here for her the variant is to do with lack of Black consciousness resulting in her positioning herself within white culture. In her translation as reflexivity sequence she relates this positioning of herself as being to do with trying to find out who she really was (line 29). She goes on to reposition herself as a Black woman who was a token Black friend within the “trendy, lefty” middle class circle within which she socialised (lines 35-36). The invariant which she establishes here is that to do with ‘race’ essence and the fact that because of this one can only be included in white circles as a token.

The body as racialized is a key feature in the extract 6. This deals with Sa’s memory of wanting to be the same as/ fit in with white people when she was a child and her use of a hot comb to at least inscribe their straight hair on a Black body, thus deracinating one aspect of herself. This variant then is to do with internalisation of oppression in terms of white standards of beauty. We might think hair is hair, merely organic matter produced by the body. However, hair is a “medium of significant statements about self and society and the codes and values that bind them, or do not” (Mercer, 1994a: 100). So in contexts where “‘race’ structures social relations of power, hair- as visible as skin color, but also the most tangible sign of racial difference- takes on another symbolic dimension [...] within racism’s bi-polar codification of human worth, black people’s hair has been historically devalued as the most visible stigmata of Blackness second only to skin “ (Mercer, 1994a:101). It

is, therefore significant that she chose to change this aspect of herself and to reveal this to women who only know her as a conscious “sister” with locks. In fact she pursues a response to her revelation on line 9 when none is forthcoming. After Sh on line 10 finally acknowledges what she did she again speaks her transgression against her Black body:

Example 6 Tape 1 Side A Je,Sh,Sa:65

1 Sa Ah know- ah THINK  
 2 (.6)  
 3 Sa Ah dun know REALLY ah jus always try to be the SA:ME as them ah  
 4 used to go home an wish mah h- an wish ah was [(4) ] AH ALWAYS TRY  
 5 Je [°Mhm°]  
 6 Sa TO BE THE SA:ME AS THEM AN TRY TO NE- PO- HO- CO- yuh know HOT  
 7 co:mb mah hai:r  
 8 (1.1)  
 >9 Sa Yuh kno:w, h=  
 >10 Sh =O:h yuh did, [ yuh HOT ] cuo:m, mhm:=  
 >11 Sa [ Yeah ] =HOT co:mb mah hai:r,

This brings to mind Michel Foucault’s (1980d: 215-216) thoughts on the ‘confession’ in *The Confession of the Flesh*:

What I mean by ‘confession [...]’ is all those procedures by which the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his sexuality which is capable of having effects on the subject himself.

I want to re-read this in terms of the confession being about producing a discourse of truth about one’s Blackness, one’s Black identity. In identification stories the confession takes place as an intersubjective practice and is designed to produce the effect of solidarity, empathy, sameness through being the heroine/hero of your own stories. So, Sa was just a girl trying to fit in with white people when she hot combed

her hair. These stories themselves can be seen to express an individual's awareness of the effects of various discourses' 'will to truth' on their bodies- as in example 6- through the various categorising strategies of biopower, in which:

power relations materially penetrate the body in depth without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representations. If power takes hold on the body, this isn't through its having first to be interiorised in people's consciousness. There is a network or circuit of bio-power, or somato-power, which acts as the formative matrix of sexuality itself as the historical and cultural phenomenon within which we seem at once to recognise and lose ourselves" (Foucault, 1980e: 186)

I, of course, would like to replace the "sexuality" of the above passage with "Blackness". Identification stories, though, could also be seen to be about individuals regulating themselves through a constant search for their innermost identity, their own 'truth' which "simultaneously problematizes [their] relation to the present, [their] historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject" (Foucault, 1984d: 42) through constructing this truth. This is the tension that tellers negotiate in their narratives. What begs the question here is what sort of truth is being sought? I think what becomes clear if one looks back at the last example and forward to the next (a continuation of this former conversation), is the nature of this truth. That is, that it is assimilation of 'whiteness' as ideas and bodily practice that is being purged from the self. 'Whiteness' then becomes 'other', the object which has to be ejected in the search for this truth, a critical ontology of the Black self.

The ejection of the 'white' subject from the Black self becomes obvious in the extract which follows, in which Sa continues to speak about her hair. She uses her changing relationship to how it should look as a marker of her own changing politics and Black awareness. Her plaits and her Afro hair become her trying to be a Black woman (see line 26). Here again hair is significant but this time in terms of signifying the Black invariant. She presents herself as a heroic figure (who can actually stop hot combing her hair), but one who is nevertheless scared of white people's reactions- thus, again implicating the action of biopower and governmentality- so she wears a scarf, even though her hair was stylishly plaited. She begins by positioning herself as someone who tries to assimilate to whiteness by hot combing her afro hair (lines 1-2) rather than plaiting it (lines 2-8). Her translation as reflexivity sequence is at line 10-12 when she reveals herself as someone who wanted to plait her hair and wear it to school (lines 12-13). However, because of the markedness of Black hair at her school she wears a scarf over her plaits:

Example 7 Tape 1 Side A Je, San, Sh:65-68

- >1 Sa Yeah Primary school age like I- like when ah was at HIGH school  
 >2 ah used to try an HOT COMB mah hair an stuff like this an the moment ah  
 3 STOPPED doin that ah thought ah'm gonna PLAIT mah ha:ir:  
 4 (.)  
 5 Je Mhm=  
 6 Sa =Cos it was all AFRO: or combin it back yuh know or wha(t)e:ver,=  
 7 Je =Mhm=  
 8 Sa = Ah never PLAITED it  
 9 (.8)  
 >10 Sa This time ah plaited it an ah was so: embar- ah was jus so:  
 11 (1.1)  
 12 Sa Cos ah like plait mah hair at HOME but ah thought ah wanna go to  
 13 school an ah do:n care? yuh know?=  
 14 Je =Mhm=  
 15 Sa =°So ah plaited mah hair° .hhh with it ah did i- down the middle an  
 16 ah did like separate plaits down this, yuh know?=  
 17 Je =Mhm=  
 18 Sa =To j- join together down bo:th sides:,=

19 Je =Mhm  
 20 (.8)  
 21 Sa And a:hm:  
 22 (1.6) an ah WENT TO SCHOOL BUT AH DIDN DARE- AH HAD TO PUT A  
 23 SCARF ON MI HEAD

After some more talk in which she speaks about her hatred of the school and the fact that she still has nightmares about it, she speaks about plaiting her hair and going to school braving all the disgust and amazement from the white children. She uses this to show that she was not ashamed of being a Black woman. She, thereby, repositions herself (lines 24-30) as claiming the space of the Black woman (as invariant because of hair) irrespective of the discipline with which she is met:

›24 Sa BUT like that was-  
 25 (.5)  
 26 Sa that was me tryin- bein tryin- bein- tryin- bein a BLA:CK woman=  
 27 Je=[Mhm]  
 28 Sa [An ] not bein ashamed of bein a Black woman kind of thing?=  
 29 Sh =Mhm:=  
 30 Sa A BLA:CK GIRL ah suppose at the time(.3)  
 31 Je Mhm=  
 ›32 Sa =Cos- cos ah think if ah was at school in- if ah was at school in- a:hm:  
 33 (1.2)  
 34 Sa in- in CHAPEL TOWN for example ah THINK or Lee- or ROUND here,  
 35 (.7)  
 36 Sa ah wouldn't be asha:med about mah hair in plaits,=  
 ›37 Je =Mhm=  
 38 Sh =No yuh wouldn't would yuh?=  
 39 Sa =°Ah [wouldn't,°]  
 40 Sh [That's ] tru:e

Further, in the telling, (lines 32-36) she locates the problem surrounding her afro hair. She places the problem with the white people in her school because if she had been to a different school with more Black people she would have felt no shame because of her plaits. There is then an affirmation sequence around this assertion

performed by Je, Sh, Sa and Sh (lines 37-40). What does this confession of past shame achieve in the present? Quite apart from the heroic aspects remarked on earlier and getting a sympathetic hearing, it makes us aware that making counter identifications can also involve traumatised feelings in the affirmation of Blackness, whatever your age. The assertion being made by Sa is that as Black people we are not born with shame about our difference from whiteness but are made to feel shame because of the racism of whiteness. Black membership in a racialized context is, then, about struggle, both emotional and physical from first awareness of Blackness onwards. Sa narrates herself as a Black woman who is not limited and delimited by discourses of containment around Blackness produced from outside of Black communities by the hegemony of 'race', 'culture' and 'community'. Limitation and delimitation are obviously not the case for Sa. These have also not been the case for Black women and men as a whole, because there has always been a speaking back to the eye of power both in colonial and post- colonial times and spaces, releasing the transformational potential of hybridity.

#### Hybridity and a critical ontology of the self.

A hybridity of the moment of narration then means that Black women and men rather than being seen to be people in search of 'identity', 'home' and 'culture', must be acknowledged to be forming and reforming these within Britain. They must be seen to be involved in these transformational processes because of the situatedness of the identifications being deployed within the fragments of life being narrated. Interactants are then in the process of seeing, thinking and narrating themselves as Black at different times and spaces of the life course and, in the process,

establishing Blackness as a unique individual experience through their own historical ontologies. The extracts from life used in these ontologies, when deciphered, seem to serve almost as metaphors of 'the same' and 'different' in the transformative task of being and becoming. This has implications for discourses of Blackness from both Black and 'white' communities, which would see identity in essentialized ways. If we look again at Sa's remembrance of being a punk who is also into dub and soul music we see something interesting. That is, that for her at the point of her life about which she is speaking, identity was very much about commodification of musical forms and fashion and their use in the performance of identities within different spaces. Her identities as narrated now, become simulacra, images which can be called up in later life and identified as being to do with a particular identification, for example for Sa her practice of still wearing one earring even now; for Je her rude girl attitude.

What then constitutes a Black woman/man in those discourses of Blackness which rely on essentialism? This question becomes salient as it has become obvious that identities can be about performance involving simulacra, whilst at the same time maintaining some recourse to an assumed Black essence, an invariant, which for example for Sa makes soul music her music of choice. This question also has implications for those researchers who still write of Black women and men as in search of 'home' and 'culture' (c.f. Baumann, 1996; Alexander, 1996), both in terms of how they define culture and how they interpret the responses of individuals/ apply the responses of individuals to stereotypical ideas about communities. Indeed, Baumann's whole book was itself a case study of the adage 'Asians have culture so are worthy of study but Caribbeans have no culture apart from ones based on deficit'. Indeed, I want to go a step further or even perhaps in another direction and



see the hybridity of a speaking back to the eye of power as individuals uncoupling the power/knowledge of discourses of containment at the local level. Bearing this in mind we can see that notions of Black identity as fixed political, social and cultural entities are potentially troubled.

They become troubled because as people go through the process of revealing their life through reminiscences and look at how they were constrained by or acted against power, they produce themselves as subjects both with and within identifications. This highlights the performative nature of identity categories. So there doesn't seem to coincidentally be this necessary separation between political, social and cultural identities by interactants. Instead, these identifications operate simultaneously in talk. If we return to extract 2 for example, we see that Sh's story can be looked at as embodying these identifications simultaneously in terms of its themes. The legitimacy of The Nation of Islam versus Black British politics; patriarchy versus women as workers; the notion of a diasporic culture in which Black women place themselves outside the home; the lack of relationship between African American and Black British thought in all cases. Two further points will have to suffice at this stage. First, that notions of hybridity also need to deal with loss, nostalgia, pain, change and feelings of lack which are not about a return to roots. Second, each life is a story and this relates to how cultures are built, so cultures might be phantasms, as self-production is imbued with fantasy.

In acknowledging that there are Black British identifications which arise through autonomy, reflexivity and critique I seem to be aligning myself to Foucault's view that through a critical ontology of the self it is possible to develop alternative viewpoints from which individuals can resist the government of individualization. Critique is characterised by Foucault as a "limit attitude" entailing a reflection on how what is given to us as universal can also contain places for possible transgression, of going beyond the limits imposed on us (Foucault, 1984d: 45). Criticism is, then, "a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying [...] it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think" (Foucault, 1984d: 46). Interrogating the established limits of identity results in autonomy, an increased capacity for independent thought and behaviour (McNay, 1996:145).

Such an interrogation of what are held to be the necessary boundaries to identity which then becomes "a practical critique that takes the form of a transgression" (Foucault, 1984d: 45) implicates translation as reflexivity. Foucault (1984d: 50) elaborates further for us what a critical ontology of the self is about in that it is "conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them". There are two aspects to this, first a critique of what we are through an analysis of the limits imposed on us; and, second, trying to get to a possibility of being beyond these limits. It is this critical ontology of the self which has been looked at in the data in examples 7, 5, 3 and 2. This practical critique occurs through translation as

reflexivity when speakers rationalise acting against the eye of power in terms of establishing for other interactants “how they are/how they choose to be/how they have come to be” as Black women and men invented through the process of story telling.

In the next extract Sa continues to talk about not liking punk music even though she was a punk in her youth. She sites herself as someone who liked listening to dub music by laughing in embarrassment that her friends wanted to listen to punk as well. This is the variant which she is critiquing. That is, someone at that stage of her life who was operating in both a Black and a white world, but who was being positioned by her white punk friends’ assertion of a punk lifestyle in terms of their music choices (line 11). For her though, as is recognised by Sh in a translation as reflexivity sequence at line 15, she was living a life which goes beyond this, in which punk, dub and soul music all play a part. The normality of this doubleness for the Black ‘you’ is affirmed by Je in line 18, with “Ah suppose yuh do though don’t yuh?”. However Sa disagrees with this with “Ah dun know” before she then continues to show her commitment to Blackness by claiming not to remember the punk music, but only the soul and dub as a way of further distancing herself from the constraints of punk (lines 20-21). Musical preference becomes again a way of showing the Black invariant for Sa:

Example 8 Tape 1 Side A Je,San,Sh:58-60

- 1 Sa An AH TRIED TO LIKE THEM THE ONLY THING- THE ONLY THING IS  
 2 WHEN YUH WENT TO THE CLUB IS THAT THEY HAD A:HM MAVERICK  
 3 used to play there,=  
 4 Je =Mhm=  
 5 (.6)  
 6 Sa THEY were pla:yin.  
 7 (.6)  
 8 Sa An yuh’d- yuh’d listen to DUB MUSIC  
 9 (1.1)

10 Sh Oh yeah?=  
 >11 Sa =Yes an they were askin for punk °as well° ((.hhh [.hhh\* ])) .hhh oh  
 12 Je [Mhm ]  
 13 Sa Go:d  
 14 (1.3)  
 >15 Sh What a life punk AN DUB music AN, soul music all mix up together.  
 16 (1.8)  
 17 Sa °That's [what I ]  
 >18 Je [AH SUPPOSE] YUH DO THOUGH don't yuh?  
 19 (.5)  
 >20 Sa Ah dun know, ah didn remember pu- ah ca:n- ah can remember the soul  
 21 but ah can't remember the punk MUSIC,

((\*)) Embarrassed laugh

She continues after some talk by Je about punk music being rubbish and punks always seeming dirty to her, by repositioning herself as Black by saying (see line 22). This takes the form of a claim that she wasn't really a punk but was only trying to fit in with white middle class punks who were quite clean. Like a fool, she said, she tried to "emulate those people an follow fashion", thus, showing that she now sees that phase as a regrettable part of her life. More than this, however, she also shows us that emulation was also a way of being like her 'friends' but not being like them. That is, that she was always Black and knew this to be the case. She demonstrates this in her use of "an follow fashion" (line 35). In Jamaican Creole this means to imitate. Her choice of words then is very interesting in terms of Bhabha's (1994b and c) work on hybridity in which he invokes mimicry as an important part of the process of speaking against the eye of power. So, while also a punk, she was always a Black woman perhaps unknowingly subverting punk by her racialized presence, but always

knowingly doing this through her musical tastes which went counter to the punk lifestyle:

- ›22 Sa Ah was- ah suppose ah achshally wasn't a punk but I was tryin to fit [in ]  
 23 Je [Mhm]  
 24 Sa with everybody else an ah was like,  
 25 (.4)  
 26 Sa The middle class people were quite clea:n  
 27 (.4)  
 28 punks yuh na:h mean?=  
 29 Je =Mh [m ]  
 30 Sh [Mh ]m=  
 ›31 Sa =So ah just used to just a:h: EMULATE tho:se people=  
 32 Je =Mhm=  
 33 Sa =°Like a fool°  
 34 (.8)  
 ›35 Sa An follow fashion.

### Conclusion

What became apparent through the extracts is that people are engaged in the process of translation as reflexivity in the talk. That is, in a process of demonstrating awareness of their own and others' positioning by discourses and their production of counter-positionings through their talk. The emergence of critical ontologies through translation as reflexivity, therefore, potentially destabilises and reverses power relations at the local level through the stories, in which people 'speak' themselves as engaged in the negotiation of bio-power and governmentality. Such negotiation reveals the emergence of critical ontologies of the self as being a profoundly dialogical process. These critical ontologies of the self are those which emerge from a recall of selectively appropriated sets of memories and discourses through which interactants represent themselves to themselves and each other. They represent

themselves specifically as people in a process of change whilst occupying the space of the 'same'- the racialized subject of the discourses of Blackness. This change is shown through a repositioning within these critical ontologies which speaks back to discourses of racialization. Hybridity, thus, becomes located within the moment of narration as such a positioning, a space of 'different from the changing same' in which people transform themselves into sites of resistance and change through the abjection of the variant and the affirmation of the invariant of Black essence.

I would like to turn now to a consideration of what the particularities of Blackness which emerge from the data means for Foucault. I think first, such data make us revisit Foucault's work in terms of its applicability to hybrid identifications as positionings to discourses which people produce/reproduce in talk. His work does not acknowledge the agency involved in hybrid positionings and must, therefore, be supplemented in order to be useful for this project. What has also emerged through the data is the double consciousness which people occupy in making these identifications. This doubleness is not acknowledged in Foucault because of the focus on the panopticon of ethnicity and racist discourses as determinants of identity through the dual process of representation and internalization of oppression in terms of 'the gaze'. This panoptic view in terms of identifications in a racialized context is problematic because it leaves no room for the daily practices in which people seek to usurp this gaze by making themselves radically other in their critical ontologies of the self. The next chapter seeks, therefore, to add to the emerging model of *statement-translation as reflexivity* in order to describe the process of Black identities being constructed in talk drawing on three areas which have become apparent in this chapter. These are the abjection of discursive positioning, becoming radically other and the dialogism which is apparent as people negotiate the variant and the invariant

in critical ontologies of the self. Without these the emerging model cannot account for the speaking subject engaged in the repositioning so central to hybridity.

Chapter 6That is my Star of David: abjection, dialogism and Black British identity.Introduction

So That is MY STAR OF DAVID=  
 Sh =Mhm=  
 So =Mi ca::n tek it a::f (.)[ right?<sup>1</sup> ]  
 Sh [Yuh know at ah mean?]

This chapter draws on data which deals with the lived experience of the Black skin as marked. The focus will be on accounting for the speaking subject who negotiates and thereby transforms discourses of identification. As was noted in the previous chapter a more Foucauldian account denies this speaking subject. Bakhtinian dialogics with its emphasis on co-being and addressivity is what is drawn on below to account for such a subject.

I have taken the words "That is my Star of David" from SoT because it is both a poignant reminder of our position as Black women and men within Britain and apposite for the task at hand. She describes her skin as her "Star of David". Her mark of ethnicity, status, identity and selfhood: the invariant that cannot be removed. To equate her skin with the Jewish experience speaks to me of the discursive construction of otherness within which she lives. Following Kristeva (1982) I equate this marking of the Black body with the abjection which arises from daily experiences

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<sup>1</sup> "Mi ca::n tek it a::f right?" translates as "I can't take it off right?"



of racism. Racism produces dominant identity discourses which are reproduced in talk as 'the voice of the other within'. This voice also extends in the analysis to identity discourses emanating from Blackness.

In Chapter 4, translation as reflexivity emerged as interactants' interpretation and critique of dominant identification discourses as they showed their identifications with, through and against Blackness. I will extend this conceptualisation of translation as reflexivity below in two ways. First by placing abjection within it and second, by drawing on the notion of dialogic analysis to more clearly define the process of critique in which speakers engage. In this dialogic analysis speakers critique the discursively constructed otherness produced by their racialized skin.

In line with seeing translation as reflexivity as a dialogical analysis, I will also focus on trying to account for the speaking subject through co-being and addressivity (Holquist, 1991). Interactants construct themselves as radically other within stories by critiquing and thereby, abjecting discourses of othering. They are not powerless in the face of the abjection of racism, therefore, but construct counter-narratives of the self. These range from the strategic essentialism of Black politics, to rejecting whiteness and deconstructing and claiming identities as African Caribbean diasporic people. Through this repositioning within the space of radical otherness individuals create new addressivities.

New addressivities in this project are equated with hybrid identity positionings. This focus does two things. It claims that abjection of discourses of othering is central to hybridity. It also extends the model produced in the last section. The model that now emerges in order to account for the construction of a *hybridity of the everyday* is one which captures the dynamic movement of identifications in talk. First, the speaker produces talk which I have called 'the voice of the other within'. That is, talk which shows their discursive positioning as abject. Second, their dialogic analysis critiques and abjects this positioning. Last, they perform a new addressivity for themselves by making themselves radically other within their stories. Let us now turn to look at some of the ways in which 'skin' impacts on the lives of Black women and men at a quotidian level.

#### Examples of racism as identity talk.

In the previous chapter, I came to understand that speakers were constructing critical ontologies of the self through their life stories. I want to continue this focus on life stories as critical ontologies of the self by looking at one specific way in which individuals talk about identities. That is, in terms of the impact of their 'skin' on their daily experiences.

I will start with an example of what I mean. In what follows, Sa is talking about her experience of being on a bus with a driver who had deliberately nearly trapped her in the doors as she got on and refused to apologise, making her even more angry. We join her recollection of the event at the point at which she asks him for his number:

Example 1 Sa, Je, Sh Tape 1 Side A:83-84

- 1 Sa He st- he looked an said WHAT? what's yuh number? an he started- an he-  
 2 before- befo:re he got to stop but instead of brakin gently like he did he put  
 3 the brakes on really HA:RD so that EVERYBODY went LU:RCHIN  
 4 FO:RWARDS [ RIGHT? INCLUDIN ] ME::  
 5 Sh [(°What an idiot° \* ) ]  
 6 (1.0)  
 7 Je Mhm  
 8 (.6)  
 9 Sa HE DID IT ON PURPOSE OBVIOUSLY so ah sehs ah:m WHAT'S YUH  
 >10 NUMBER? HE SEHS OH GO SUCK ON A BANANA YUH NIGGER  
 11 (.9)  
 12 Sh REA:LLY? (.)  
 13 Sa °Ye:a:h:°  
 14 (1.4)  
 15 Sa HE SAID IT QU- he said it LO:W but ah could hear him it's clear enough  
 16 (.8)  
 17 Sa I was just- ah was so ANGRY: before ah th- before ah wouldah thought no:  
 18 I'll just report this ah shouldah just DONE that  
 19 (.5)  
 >20 Sa But ah couldn ah just slapped him ah just TU:MPED him in his face=  
 21 Sh =Yuh know?=  
 >22 Sa =((Two years ago\*)) dis yah big o:l woman ah went WHAT BUFF<sup>2</sup> ((an  
 23 just got off the bus\*))

What does Sa reveal about Blackness as a position within Britain? A central aspect of looking for answers to this question is that in defining others according to our own criteria we also identify ourselves (Jenkins, 1996: 83). "Thus the categorisation of others is a resource upon which we draw in the construction of our identities" (Jenkins, 1996: 87).

Sa reveals the power of a name 'nigger' to exert white supremacy by making a Black woman feel all of the power to know and categorise her. This 'always already known' of the stereotype which she encounters springs from the knowledge base of the ideology of white supremacy. She is told to "go suck on a banana" which relates to

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<sup>2</sup> Dis yah big o:l woman" means "this mature woman" and "Buff" is the punch she gave the driver.

the white racist assumption that Black people are all from the jungle (line 10). Her adult status did not save her from this abuse, nor did it ensure that she got what she wanted. That is, the driver's number so that she could complain about his behaviour. The driver at an individual level becomes the locus of the power/knowledge of white racist supremacy by making Sa other through naming. Sa in turn, though, acts against this othering by "tumping"<sup>3</sup> him in the face before she got off the bus, thereby asserting her position as an equal not an inferior and transgressing the boundaries prescribed for her by racist ideology (line 20).

She narrates herself as someone embodied in opposition to whiteness and living in and with that opposition. Within this opposition that which is visible, her skin, her inscription of Blackness, acquires significance in being and becoming a subject in opposition to a 'white' other. In this narration of the self she highlights for us the difficulty of being Black within a racialized context. That is that 'skin' means that identification is always conflict ridden because of othering. As Calhoun (1994: 20-21) rightly says:

It is not just that others fail to see us for who we are sure we really are [...] We face problems of recognition because socially sustained discourses about who it is possible or appropriate or valuable to be inevitably shape the way we look at and constitute ourselves with varying degrees of agonism and tension.

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<sup>3</sup> Tumping means hitting hard.

Calhoun very accurately describes here the struggle with 'the voice of the other within' produced by racism. These are the socially sustained discourses with which speakers have to struggle to become subjects. One way in which this is performed in the conversations is to acknowledge one's otherness while also making whiteness other. Sa does this when she repeats her naming by the bus driver alongside her response to this. This is the point at which abjection assumes significance.

### Abjection and otherness

I have said before that individuals construct themselves as Black in opposition to whiteness. This is not particularly surprising or revelatory. There is though a very interesting process at work here in these stories. The first part of this process involves disavowal and the second is about establishing oneself as a Black subject. Taking example 1 again, Sa's disavowal comes in terms of her reported response to the appellation "nigger" and to the words "go suck on a banana". She takes a stand for both herself and other Black people by punching the driver. Her action disavowed Black submission to the power/ knowledge of white racist supremacy. This disavowal also enables her narration of herself to be interpreted within a framework of expelling 'the conflictually other' (See Chapter 3). It is here that Julia Kristeva's (1982) seminal work on abjection becomes apposite.

The object for Kristeva (1982: 2) is an object which is radically excluded but which still challenges 'its master'. Although it is something rejected it does not become

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excluded totally from the self but continues to disturb borders, positions, rules as the in-between, the ambiguous. Abjection is a “danger to identity that comes from within” (Kristeva, 1982: 71), a “[..] threat issued from the prohibitions that found the inner and outer borders in which and through which the speaking subject is constituted” (Kristeva, 1982: 69). Abjection is a device of discriminations, of differences in order to protect the symbolic order from this danger by inscribing limits on that which is abject because it cannot be totally excluded. It is through verbal communication, the word, that the abject is disclosed (Kristeva, 1982: 23). That which is ‘conflictually other’- ‘the voice of the other within’ - is disclosed in the word.

These stories of quotidian racism then, are abjection stories in which speakers expel ‘the voice of the other within’ in order to become subjects. In other words, in order to narrate myself as Black

I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which “I” claim to establish *myself* [...] it is that that *they* see that “I” am in the process of becoming an other at the expense of my own death (Kristeva, 1982: 3).

The myself that is expelled is the discursive positioning which seeks to make the speaker abject because of their racialized skin. This myself is the danger to Black identity which comes from within. In the double motion of abjection and becoming subject, an-other myself, the myself of racialized ‘skin’ dies. Unlike Kristeva I do not claim that there is revulsion or creeping of the flesh. What I claim instead is that that which disturbs the borders of Black self-narrativizations is expelled in interpersonal

interaction. Speakers then cease to experience the humiliation of aversive, avoiding or condescending behaviour, but instead speak against it. They critique these reported behaviours in order to keep the borders of the Black self firm.

Abjection as an action of simultaneously expelling myself in order to become another is what is significant in terms of the place of abjection in a hybridity of the everyday. Abjection and becoming an-other are integral to the process of positioning and repositioning which I claim accounts for the construction of hybrid identifications in talk-in-interaction. Being abject and making others abject in order to become subjects underlies the next example.

Some friends in an after dinner conversation are reminiscing about their childhood and demonstrate for us their early awareness of themselves as abject through talking about the names that they were called. In her story, Sa makes the young white children who were doing the name calling abject by positioning herself as the object of their racism (lines 1 and 2). She abjects them further by saying that the children who taunted her, as all racists in her child's view, were "dirty an scruffy an nasty an didn wash" (lines 2-5). This latter also serves as her translation as reflexivity sequence which is boundaried off by a (1.3) pause at its beginning and a (.7) pause at its end. To a Caribbean person not washing is considered to be repulsive, so to equate these racists with filth makes them abject. In lines (5-7) she gives examples of the various names she was called to support her positioning as the object of their racism and also relates her affront at this by saying that these scruffy people were "callin US NIGGERS". Following this there is an interchange between the

interactants (lines 8-10) in which these racist names are clarified. The exchange of racist names between Je and Sa continues until Sa shows that even at the age of six she was not a victim as she participated in a stone throwing war against these racists (line 21). In this repositioning as subject she acts in opposition to othering.

Example 2- Tape 1 Side A Sa, Je, Sh:84-85

- ›1 Sa Ah think ah can remember my very first experience of ra:cism when ah was  
 ›2 when ah was about six: (1.3) an then these little- these scruffy white- AH  
 3 ALWAYS THINK RA:CIST PEOPLE- AH USED TO THINK RA:CIST people  
 4 were dirty an scruffy an nasty an didn wash an they- (.7) an they's SCRUFFY  
 ›5 PEOPLE (.7) callin US NIGGERS not niggers they DIDN SAY NIGGER  
 6 ACHSHALLY it wasn't a word then it was a:h:m BLACK SAMBO: AND:  
 7 GOLLYWOG (.5)  
 ›8 Sh Really [ they used ] to call yuh gollywog as well?=  
 9 Sa [ AN BLACKY]  
 10 Je =Yeah Blacky [ was the ] one=  
 11 Sa [ Ah was six then] = Yeah ah was in Birmingham  
 12 [ (. ) IT WAS BLACKY ] AN S: SA:MBO AN BLACKY AN GOLLYWOG (1.3)  
 13 Je [An sambo an gollywog]  
 14 Sh Nnh:nh:<sup>4</sup>=  
 15 Sa =Nigger wasn't a word [ then ]  
 16 Je [DARK] DARKY was a word (.) °as well° =  
 17 Sa =Darky is a bit (.) yea:h (.4) it wasn't yea:h it was BLA:CKY [ (. ) BLACK  
 18 Je [ It was- it was  
 19 Sa SAMBO BLACK SAMBO<sup>5</sup>]=  
 20 Je mainly BLACKY ]=Yeah that's right=  
 ›21 Sa =An we'd throw stones at ea:ch other an have a war .hhh

What is also interesting in this example is the socially constructed nature of racist names which Sa and Je make obvious in their comparison of what was and was not in circulation during their childhoods. Further, in reducing individuals to stereotypes, to *sambo*, *blacky*, *darky*, *gollywog*, *nigger*, racist discourses make Black people invisible as subjects but also simultaneously highly visible within the parameters of

<sup>4</sup> “Nnh:nh:” is a sound of commiseration and disbelief.

<sup>5</sup> She sings “Black sambo, black sambo” like the children used to.



the stereotype and the Black skin as marked. Stereotypes of 'Blackness as skin' are also gendered as one respondent KC makes obvious in example 3.

For KC there is a legacy of Blackness to do with stereotype that he walks with as a Black man which means that he is never really seen. So even though he is trying to create his own Blackness, this legacy ensures that to white people he is all of the stereotypes of 'the Black Man'. This legacy to him seems to be "bigger than any man can imagine unless they feel it themselves". The extract follows a report of a conversation between KC and a colleague at college in which KC is accused of being a teacher's pet because he will not get involved in pranks. He goes on to say that he had a reason to be at University, that being to get a degree and continues:

Example 3- Tape 1 Side A KC:96-98

- 1 K It's this whole struggle of living Black=  
 2 Sh =Mhm=  
 3 K =Ah've got this °Black°ness ah've gotta walk with (.8) an ah'm tryin to create  
 4 (.8) MY: Blackness=  
 5 Sh =Mh[m ]  
 6 K [Be]cos ah'm °con°stantly walkin with (.) a LE:gacy of others=  
 7 Sh =Mhm=  
 8 K =An always will do:=  
 9 Sh =Mhm=  
 10 K =When people see me: they see .hhh a le:gacy=  
 11 Sh =Mhm=  
 12 K =Whether it be the (.6) °der°ogative things which another person has done=  
 13 Sh =M[hm ]=  
 14 K [But] when they see me they see a:ll ah them things=  
 15 Sh =Mhm=  
 16 K =If they see a pop star they see mi=  
 17 Sh =Mhm=  
 18 K =Yuh kno:w, they don't really- they never- do they ever ever really see mi?=  
 19 Sh =Mhm,=  
 20 K =Yuh know? ah seh- ah turn to im then I'm wa:lkin with a le:gacy which is  
 21 (.8) bigger than any man can (.) imagine (.)
-

- 22 Sh Mhm::=  
 23 K =Unless they feel it themselves=  
 24 Sh =M[hm: ]  
 25 K [That] when people see: yah (1.1) who do they see? (. )  
 26 Sh Mhm=  
 27 K =Which person have they .hhh had some (1.1) contact with which has  
 28 created what they THINK of yuh=  
 29 Sh =[Mhm]

KC begins by positioning himself at line 1 within the “whole struggle of living Black” where the “Blackness [he’s] gotta walk with” positions him as other even though he is trying to create his own Blackness. His translation as reflexivity sequence is at line 6 where he shows us that he is aware that the derogatory Blackness which surrounds him means that he constantly has to walk with the legacy of others and always will. He then gives examples of this legacy as “the derogative things which another person has done” and “if they see a pop star they see mi”. Next he sums up the point so far “yuh know they don’t really they never do they ever really see mi?” (line 18), which is followed by a report of what he said to his colleague (lines 20-28). He repositions himself as a person outside of these stereotypes and others such as mugger or womaniser in the rest of the extract (lines 30-46). He does this by saying that he meets people like me (line 30) and he “deals with them directly<sup>6</sup>” rather than having to negotiate the legacy of “all these other bullshit things which has to be attached to yuh by people” (lines 40-44). These “other bullshit things” are the labels of mugger, pop star and womaniser. In his repositioning then he makes these racist stereotypes abject and states that even though he is “constantly walkin with things [he’s] walkin [his] tightrope but walkin it proud” (lines 46-47)

30 K [For] ah can meet people an ah’m .hhh dealin with them directly,=

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<sup>6</sup> Deals with them directly means talks to them as equals.

- 31 Sh =Ye[ah ]  
 32 K [Is this-] well ah'm seein=  
 33 Sh =Yeah=  
 34 K =What yuh're sayin to me: is ah'm dealin with dat=  
 35 Sh =Ye[ah ]  
 >36 K [Ah'm] not walkin with (.9) you look like the same as that mugger up  
 37 there an .hhh=  
 38 Sh =Yea:h=  
 >39 K =An yuh're that pop star there or you look like the sort who (.) does this or  
 40 [ (.) you're] the- the MAN who ketch nuff girl<sup>7</sup> ALL THESE other [bull ] shit  
 41 Sh [ Mhm ] [Mhm]  
 42 K things which [ .hhh ] HAS to be (.3) attached to yuh=  
 43 Sh =M[hm ]  
 44 K [By ] people=  
 45 Sh =Mhm=  
 >46 K =So ah'm tellin em well wi .hhh constantly walkin with things so .hhh I'm  
 47 walking my tightrope but walkin it proud

For Sa as a child (example 2), her self was constituted by the language of the Other, access to which is outside her control and the meaning of which was determined by the other. For KC (example 3) as a Black man he was a stereotype, the always already known. The contexts are different as are the people, but the relations of domination based on the abjection of Blackness by racism is a common thread which runs through these accounts. Iris Marion Young (1990) relates Kristeva's concept of the abject to Joel Kovel's (1970) account of aversive racism in order to understand the behaviour and interactions that express group based fear or loathing. For her "those in the despised group threaten to cross over the border of the subject's identity because discursive consciousness will not name them as completely different" (Young, 1990: 146). Black speakers who would be subject though, have to construct that which is abject as completely different from themselves. They have to make the borders clear in talk.

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<sup>7</sup> Ketch nuff girl translates as seduces a lot of girls.

Speakers are engaged in a process of abjecting their otherness in which they reflexively locate themselves within discourses, as both subjects and objects of discourses, whilst at the same time constructing discourses of the self via life stories as

Identity turns on the inter-related problems of self-recognition and recognition by others. Recognition is vital to any reflexivity, for example, any capacity to look at oneself, to choose one's actions and to see their consequences, and to hope to make oneself something more or better than one is (Calhoun, 1994: 20).

Calhoun's words imply a notion of existence as dialogue (Holquist, 1991: 14) and brings us to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin.

#### Co-being, addressivity and identity

Bakhtin tried to understand human behaviour through looking at the use we make of language and in so doing proposes a dialogic concept of language (Holquist, 1991 :15). In dialogism consciousness is based on otherness (Holquist, 1991: 18). The self is dialogic, a dialogue between self and other in which there is a relation of simultaneity within space and time. Being is simultaneous, "it is always co-being" (Holquist, 1991: 25). Co-being does not seem to necessitate relations of equality and

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this is important given the inequality that is part of the daily lives of Black people in Britain today.

Further, "conceiving being dialogically means that reality is always experienced not just perceived, and that it is experienced from a particular position" (Holquist, 1991: 21). One event, then, can be experienced differently because we regard the world and each other from different centres in cognitive time/space. Abjection of both self and other is a necessary aspect of claiming Blackness because, in order to see ourselves we must use the vision of others in order to author ourselves (Holquist, 1991: 28). This has implications for the notion of hybridity because the question that it begs is, how free are we then to author ourselves given that the materials available for identities are always provided by the other? Perhaps the answer is, "not free at all", because to be perceived as a whole, as finished, a person must be shaped in the time/ space categories of the other. That is, unless one speaks oneself as not whole, as unfinished, as an-other<sup>8</sup>.

For Bakhtin, it is possible for speakers to remake the conditions of their lives because cultural resources are marked by social position. Speakers can therefore, reassert control through the rearrangement of cultural forms as evocations of position (Holland et al, 1998: 45). Voice as a means of expression and social force works to position individuals. However, voice also provides speakers with the possibility to reposition themselves: in other words, in a practice which could be seen as "you abject me, I abject you", "you make me other, I make myself an-other".

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<sup>8</sup> For Young (1990:124) rather "than seeking a wholeness [...] we [...] should affirm the otherness within ourselves, acknowledging that [...] we are heterogeneous and multiple in our affiliations and desires".

Holquist (1991: 38) asks a useful question for my purposes here

If my "I" is so ineluctably a product of the particular values dominating my community at the particular point in its history when I co-exist with it, the question must arise, "where is there any space, and what would the time be like, in which I might define myself against an otherness that is other from that which has been 'given' to me?"

We could see this time and space as being that of the narrativization of the self. First, speakers construct themselves as Black and second, they reject capitulation to the norms and stereotypes of whiteness. The stereotypes as abject have to be spat out in order to establish Blackness. This helps to focus our attention on the fact that "dialogism is based on the primacy of the social, and the assumption that all meaning is achieved by struggle" (Holquist, 1991: 39). A struggle which encompasses addressivity, "the event of constantly responding to utterances from the different worlds I pass through" (Holquist, 1991: 48)<sup>9</sup>. One's story of the self is about negotiating different addressivities in order to be other than that which has been given to us, so hybridity arises in this negotiation.

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<sup>9</sup> "The world addresses us and we are alive and human to the degree that we are answerable, i.e. to the degree that we can respond to addressivity. We are responsible in the sense that we are *compelled* to respond, we cannot choose but give the world an answer. Each one of us occupies a place in existence that is uniquely ours; but far from being a privilege, far from having what Bakhtin calls an *alibi* in existence, the uniqueness of the place I occupy in existence is, in the deepest sense of the word an answerability: in that place only am I addressed by the world, since only I am in it. Moreover, we must keep on forming responses as long as we are alive" (Holquist, 1991:30).

I only exist if I mean. I would like to explore this co-being within a world in which Black people are denied being. We are invisible or, if visible, we are one-dimensional stereotypes so never really seen. KC in example 3 tells us something about the nature of this invisibility within visibility. Through dialogic analysis- that is, critique from his particular position - he demonstrates translation as reflexivity, in that he distinguishes his position within the racialized scheme of things by demonstrating how the ideology of white supremacy works to position him at the local level. He is abjecting this discourse while being located within it. Žižek (1995: 19-20) writes about this in terms of ideology:

An individual subjected to ideology can never say to himself 'I am in ideology', he always requires *another* corpus of doxa in order to distinguish his own 'true' position from it.

What enables him to recognise his position is a discourse of Blackness which is a continuing counter-production of and from a politics of Black resistance in Britain. Through awareness of this counter-knowledge, translation as reflexivity then ensures that white supremacy as a discourse and a practice becomes transparent. This transparency means that white supremacy loses some of its effects in terms of the subjective position of, for example inferiority, invisibility or over-visibility, that it implies because "the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective" (Žižek, 1995: 8).

What does this Black invisibility imply for addressivity in this racialized world of inequality? It would mean that speakers would have to construct themselves as Black in ways which define themselves “against an otherness which is other than that which has been given to [them]”. KC shows this for example when he describes himself as someone who is trying to create his own Blackness. From this position of an-other individuals negotiate identifications through engaging in strategies in talk to abject that which would deny them equality in terms of their lived experience. This step in constructing oneself as Black is taken by speakers in the direction of the radical otherness spoken about by Holquist (1991). Let us now turn to look at one such example.

#### Constructing oneself as Black

The next example (4) is an interesting one as it shows us that abjection is the driving force behind hybridity in the social, where the doxa and orthodoxy of white racist supremacy try to exclude heterodox voices. In the extract KC talks about football, drinking and sexism as ways of avoiding racism at the interpersonal level. He relates his addressivity-“I was able to engage okay” (line 24)- here to being the result of both place -“becos ah was born here”(lines 19-20)- and life experiences -“I played sport..ah drink..ah worked at football grounds”. This clearly shows hybridity in terms of creolization<sup>10</sup>. However, this creolization seems to be more strategic as he calls on aspects of lifestyles that he sees as ‘European’- that is, not of you and your community- to his advantage in order to survive on a daily basis. That is why I would call this strategic hybridity.

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<sup>10</sup> According to Robert Young (1995a) hybridization “as creolization involves fusion, the creation of a new form, which can then be set against the old form, of which it is partly made up”.



This is an important point to make because his actions could be taken in daily life to be about assimilation. Assimilation is a process which is willingly entered into in order to become like the other, to cease to be different. Perhaps what we are seeing is imitation masquerading as identification because of the strategic use KC makes of the distinction between what he sees as 'Black' and what he sees as 'European'. Such distinctions we must remember, though, can themselves become traps in terms of their essentialist nature. However, this "double consciousness" within which strategic hybridity places him brings to mind Bakhtin's (1981: 360) view on the hybrid as a conflictual interaction of different points of view on the world

The hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented [...] but is also double-langaged; for in it there are not only ( and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two voices, two accents as there are [doublings of] socio-linguistic consciousnesses, two epochs [...] that come together and consciously fight it out [...]. It is the collision between differing points of view on the world that are embedded in these forms.

This collision speaks to me of a landscape of Black strategic hybridity in which the dialogic analysis of translation as reflexivity ensures continual critique of "Blackness" and "whiteness" as possible points of identification. In this critique speakers enter into dialogues of 'self and other'. KC engages in this continual critique below with regard to the categories 'Black' and 'European' and what these mean in terms of lifestyle. He locates himself as a Black man on line 1 but then qualifies this by saying that he is a Black man who is able to play sport and drink. In the beginning of his

translation as reflexivity sequence he links his talk back to line 1 by recycling “if you’re able to” (line 8) before going on to say how sports and drinking then fit into the Eurocentric life-style of “football sexism an all that stuff”. All of this means that as a Black man you can “engage okay” because “yuh can fit in”. “Fit in” that is, with that particular form of whiteness (lines 10-24). After Sh’s continuer and a short pause KC begins his repositioning at line 27. Here he claims that it was only those Eurocentric characteristics that saved him from the “bloody nightmare” of life, “becos we have [...] nothing which keeps us [...] common”. That is as Black people we have nothing in common with Europeans. In this way he abjects Eurocentricity and makes himself other from that which he could practice easily.

Example 4 KC Tape 1 Side A:94-95

- ›1 K An ah- ah think from a male- a male Black view if you- if you’re able to  
 2 (1.4)  
 3 Yuh know I played spo:rt=  
 4 Sh = Mhm =  
 5 K = Ah drink  
 6 (.7)  
 7 Sh Mhm=  
 ›8 K = If yuh’re able to engage in THAT ki:ndah thing=  
 9 Sh = Mhm =  
 10 K = Yuh’re o:kay [becos] it’s a Eurocentric [life ]style football  
 11 Sh [Mhm ] [Yeah]  
 12 (1.0)  
 13 K Sexism here =  
 14 Sh =Yeah =  
 15 K =Football sexism=  
 16 Sh =Yeah =  
 17 K =An a:ll that stuff=  
 18 Sh = Yeah=  
 19 K ((clicks fingers)) Yuh can fit in coo:l and fortunately I am able to: becos ah  
 20 was born here an .hhh=  
 21 Sh =Mhm =  
 22 K = Ah worked at football grounds an stuff=  
 23 Sh = Mhm =  
 24 K = So: (.) I was able to ENGAGE okay=  
 25 Sh = Mhm=  
 26 (.4)  
 ›27 K If I didn’t have them little eh:m CHARACTERistics=  
 28 Sh = M[ hm ]  
 30 K [Ah ] think I wo- it would have been a BLOODY nightmare=

- 31 Sh = Mhm=  
 32 K =Becos we have (1.1) we have NOTHING=  
 33 Sh =Mhm=  
 34 K =Which keeps us a:h:m (1.0) °common°

KC shows us in his repositioning sequence that in order to construct himself as Black there is a need to reject his otherness as the abject within so as to become subject. This negotiation brings to mind Bhabha's (1996b: 58) description of hybridity as interstitial agency

[..] At the point at which the precept attempts to objectify itself as a generalized knowledge of a normalizing, hegemonic practice, the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation [..].Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representations of social antagonism.

I would like to differ slightly from Homi Bhabha's general view though as what has become obvious and will be reinforced by the examples below, is not so much that Black hybrid identifications refuse binaries. Rather, what we have is these binaries being juxtaposed in talk in order to perform one's radical otherness. Binaries are not so much refused as acknowledged and integral in the act of producing hybridity through abjection. The binaries of Black and white in the examples above relate very clearly to the use of essences in the talk. How then can we say that essence is relevant for radical otherness?

Abjection and being radically other through essences

Producing hybridity through abjection means that there is an interrogation of the border between self and other because

If it is true that the abject simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject, one can understand that it is experienced at the peak of its strength when that subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very *being*, that it is none other than abject [...] (Kristeva, 1982: 4).

Whilst being disturbing, finding the impossible within- 'the voice of the other within'- is an important aspect of coming to be Black within the British context. Being abject and finding the abject within is part of the Black experience and is an important basis for identification and politics. This could be then why individuals tell their identities in terms of their experiences of being made abject because of racism. Indeed many people talk about when they first experienced racism or realised they were Black or different from the white norm. For Ch (example 5) this happened at the age of six at primary school.

Ch speaks at length about the difficulties that she had in eating the food at school which then resulted in her having to take a packed lunch. This is where her problems really started. The significant aspect of this story for her initially seems to be to establish the nature of her tormentors. This is obvious because she spends some

time reporting the fact that they were four ten year old white boys. She then goes on to say about this arrangement of being seated with these boys “seems good doesn’t it?” (lines 1-7). This implies that to the outsider she was not being segregated because of her colour. Colour did not in fact matter. However, her experience of being taunted because of her “jungle juice”, of being thus positioned as the Black other because of this link between her and the jungle, deny that colour did not matter. She was effectively positioned as inferior by the boys (lines 13-14).

Example 5 Ch and J Tape 1 Side B :135-138

- 1 Ch A:hm so: the ONLY other people who were havin packed lunch were these  
 2 FOUR °boys° who were TEN,=  
 3 J =M[hm ]  
 4 Sh [Mhm]=  
 5 Ch =Four white boys [ so: ] I was put on the table: (.) with these fo:ur ten year  
 6 Sh [Mhm]  
 7 Ch old white boys which was really quite seems quite °good° doesn't it?=  
 8 Sh =Mhm  
 9 (.5)  
 10 Ch And a:h so: they just ca:me with all these jokes an everyday mah mom s-  
 11 ah used to have Ribena everyday,=  
 12 J =Eheh<sup>11</sup>=  
 13 Ch =And a:h: had it in this bottle: and a:ll I remember is they always used to  
 14 call it mah ju:nгле ju:ice[ ((\*they'd ] say yuh've)) got ju:nгле ju:ice again?  
 15 Sh [Go:sh ]

She says that she can't remember how long she actually endured this for but she then stopped eating her lunch. Her translation as reflexivity sequence on lines 16-17 begins to show her abjection of whiteness and her own self othering in terms of her not having to sit with the boys. When she again began to eat her lunch because of her mother's concern, she ate this in the coat rack in order not to sit with those white boys. She constructs herself as a six year old made separate because of her “skin”, who then makes this place of difference for herself in order to do the ordinary: to eat her lunch. Her otherness of skin produces for her a survival strategy based on a

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<sup>11</sup> “Eheh” is a way of saying “yes” and “my goodness”. I call it an “agreement in commiseration”.

repositioning of herself as not of the school community. These latter are “everyone else” (line 25).

- ›16 Ch What ah did (.) just in order to be: able to eat mah lunch but not have to  
 17 sit with the:m (.) ah don't know if they have them up here in different parts  
 18 of the country=  
 19 Sh =Mh[m ]  
 20 Ch [But] coat racks=  
 21 Sh =Mhm=  
 22 Ch =Which are e:hm like a kind of BIG thing like that and it had a kind of a  
 23 WIRE [bit ] at the bottom, °and yuh could get in it° so I used to  
 24 Sh [Oh yeah ]  
 ›25 Ch hide in the coat rack in the classroom [ right, ] so everyone else went  
 26 J [Yeah yeah]  
 27 Ch to eat their school dinner [ an ah ] ((\*used to SIT in the coat rack )) right,  
 28 an eat mah lunch

In life stories individuals ceaselessly confront their own “otherness, a burden both repellent and repelled, a deep well of memory that is unapproachable and intimate: the abject” (Kristeva, 1982: 6). They use their tales of abjection as locations of identification to show what their nominal identification “Black” means over time and across space to them as its bearer in terms of their experiences. According to Jenkins (1996: 77-78) distinguishing between nominal and virtual identifications is important for a variety of reasons. Identification is not just a matter of a label, the meaning of an identity lies in the difference it makes to an individual's life. Further, there is likely to be substantial internalisation if the label and its consequences are in agreement. The consequences or meaning of nominal identifications vary across time and space, so that there can be a plurality of virtualities as the same nominal identity produces very different virtual identifications and very different experiences. However, whilst there is obviously an individual component to identifications and experiences, individual differences and identities are to some extent constructed out

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of collective identities based on “skin”. Essence still remains within any radical otherness.

How do people show this expulsion of the abject in ‘the social’ though? Ch shows us one way, when at the age of six she separates herself from those who were her racist tormentors. This separation from whiteness is also accomplished through the oppositional thought and practice of a Black politics. In the next example (6), this is about Rastafari<sup>12</sup>. KC describes this as a symbolic dismantling of the wickedness of the “Babylon system” through language, rejection of the local dialect of English in favour of a “raw” form of Jamaican Creole, an attempt to get in touch with some African essence through the practices of reasoning<sup>13</sup>, drumming and food, and talking about repatriation because this is not home to Black people, rather it “is di da:g home”. “Di da:g” here refers to white racists within the white racist “Babylon system”. This then is a practice of radical otherness from the viewpoint of a Black political movement with its birthplace in Jamaica in the 1930s during colonialism. This Black politics was being replayed in 1980s Britain because it was still held to be relevant both for political analysis and action at the individual and group levels.

Before this extract KC had been talking about knowing more about white history and only ever having had access to negative images of Black people because of the education system in Britain. This meant that he carried negativity around with him from a very young age. This is why he turned to Rasta in his teens because of its African centred approach to life, society, culture, religion and politics. On lines 1-5 he

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<sup>12</sup> The terms Rasta and Rastafari are used in Black communities, so these will be used in this project.

<sup>13</sup> “Reasoning” are discussions based on a Black centred reading of the Bible to educate and empower.

continues to locate himself within Rasta but now he speaks about Rasta as a system in opposition to Europe. His use of the word “dem” on line 3 should not be taken to be a sign that he is distancing himself from Rasta at this point. Rather, it is a way of saying as “Rastas would say” (as dem wouldah seh right?). In his translation as reflexivity sequence at line 7 onwards he shows us that he is also part of the “dem” by placing himself as a user of the words and ideas of Rasta. Through the numerous examples that follow he shows his separateness from whiteness. The essence he speaks of trying to get to at line 25, through various cultural practices, is an African one in his view. This links to his later assertion of where home is which is also his repositioning of himself completely outside of the Babylon system (see lines 34 onwards). Here he relates the homes of different groups of people to the different continents of origin. This is then a very clear statement of ‘racial’ difference based on origin that he uses to perform himself as radically other.

Example 6- KC Tape 1 Side B:113-114

- ›1 K Rasta come now  
 2 (2.2)  
 3 K DISMANTLE BABYLON as dem wouldah seh right,=  
 4 Sh =Mhm=  
 5 K =DISmantle dis ki:n of SHEGGERY<sup>14</sup>=  
 6 Sh =Mhm=  
 ›7 K =Yuh know ah won't use some of the words we've used [CRAMP AN  
 8 Sh [°No: is awright°]  
 9 K PARALYSE] ALL WICKED MAN AN ALL WICKED CON°ceptions°=  
 10 Sh =Mhm=  
 11 K =Yuh know certain words which were USE:D=  
 12 Sh =Mhm=  
 13 K =Which USE:D to .hhh  
 14 (.8)  
 15 K Yuh know, a complete DISa:rmament of (.) the Babylon system=  
 16 Sh =Mhm=  
 17 K =Yuh know, even the LANGU:AGE .hhh yuh nuh? .hhh we  
 18 STOPPED talkin in a certain .hhh colloquial form=

<sup>14</sup> “Shegery” is a swear-word which means “rubbish” or “crap”.



- 19 Sh =Mhm=  
 20 K =In the sense ah we: ta::k how we wa:nt ta::k=  
 21 Sh =Mh[m ]  
 22 K [As] RA:W as possible=  
 23 Sh =Mhm=  
 24 K =Yuh know, wi go into it DEEP wi guh to REASONING wi play CONGO drum  
 >25 wi was trying to bring back some °African° essence=  
 26 Sh = Mhm=  
 27 K = Play drum (.) wi nyam<sup>15</sup> food [outah] pot=  
 28 Sh [Mhm] =Mhm=  
 29 K =Stop eat meat,=  
 30 Sh =Mhm=  
 31 K =Wear a certain clo:thin (.) kha:ki yuh nuh,=  
 32 Sh =Mhm  
 33 (1.4)  
 34 K Ta:lks of RE:patriation which didn come to fruition but .hhh those talks  
 35 of RE:patriation that DIS IS NOT OUR HOME=  
 36 Sh =Mhm=  
 >37 K =DIS IS DI DA::G home dis ah nuh fi wi home  
 38 Sh =M[hm ]  
 39 K [Ca: ] wi all have places which was quite important=  
 40 Sh =Mhm=  
 41 K =Africa for Africans Asians fi Asia an Europeans fi Europe

In example 7, which is another extract from KC's talk, we see separation from whiteness being done at the level of spirituality. For KC reasoning with his Rasta brethren meant that his Christian readings of the Bible formed within a Euro-centric perspective were undermined by a re-reading of the Bible from a Black perspective. This re-reading led to the creation of a Black Jesus, renamed "Jehsus" in order to show the distinction from the white Jesus. The impact of this Black focused spirituality was instilling pride in being Black. KC begins by positioning himself along with other young men just becoming aware of Rasta who used to go to Church, since that had been the family tradition. His point of view though is that not everyone went to learn about Christian spirituality but instead it was about going because everyone else did ("we guh fi falla fashion") and also to participate in the leisure activities. On

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<sup>15</sup> "Nyam" translates as "eat". According to Alleyne (1988:145) nyam is an African word "not specific to any culture [which has] also survived in the Jamaican language, showing how tenacious are the

line 4 he begins his translation as reflexivity sequence about the impact of Rasta on their spirituality. This is followed by examples in which he shows the connectedness of Samson to Rasta as he had seven binds and makes the claim that on a Rasta reading of the Bible Jesus was Black. At lines 15-24 he repositions himself then within an African centred Rasta doctrine which made them proud of themselves and in which there was a Black Jesus which he sees as being natural anyway because “everybody wants Jesus to be like them”.

Example 7 KC Tape 1 Side A- 111

- ›1 K We ah REA:SON an rea:lly some of us went to Church to learn (.8) but we  
 2 guh fi falla fashion and to play table tennis an games=  
 3 Sh = ((.hhh ))=  
 ›4 K = An IT WAS tru: RASTA now wi sta:rt .hhh lookin to di Bible (.7) an get a  
 5 spiritual[ness ] about ourselves=  
 6 Sh [Mhm ] =Mhm=  
 7 K =Yuh know? wi sta:t lookin to (.) .hhh REVELA:TIONS right? seh things like  
 8 (1.0) his hair was as [curly ] as a l[amb ] an his foot was as Black [°as  
 9 Sh [Mhm ] [A lamb] [Mhm  
 10 K whatever°] wi start lookin into dat wi start lookin into .hhh ah dun- ah dun  
 11 Sh Mhm ]  
 12 K kno:w which section it is that Samson had SEVEN bi:nds an A:LL these  
 13 things=  
 14 Sh =Mhm=  
 ›15 K =An we: dr- we: drew our comparisons that yea:h, (.6) Rasta an (1.5)  
 16 JEHSUS or Je:sus as [they ] ca:ll im .hhh was BLACK=  
 17 Sh [Mhm] =M[hm ]  
 18 K [Yuh]  
 19 know, [be ]cos everybody wants Jesus to be: (.4) like them=  
 20 Sh [Mhm] =Mhm=  
 21 K =Everybody wants that (.) I con=  
 22 Sh =Mhm=  
 23 K =So that brought (1.0) an understanding about (.6) RASTA at THAT time  
 24 started to make us be PROUD of OURselves

As well as producing abjection of whiteness and new addressivities as a response to Euro-centricity at the level of religion, culture, ontology and politics, Rasta was also

productive of a visual imagery which itself showed radical otherness. The next extract (8) presents us with an account of engaging in a production of radical otherness by attempting “not to fit in wid di Babylon system”. So as a young Dread you would “look as dreadful and as wra:tfu:l as possible” (lines 1-4). KC in his translation as reflexivity sequence talks about his appearance as a young Dread as being something which shows a disturbance of Babylon’s boundaries. He in fact uses his appearance to remind others of “lightening and thunder” because his “life is like dat to ra:”, as well as show his opposition to the Babylon system. His intention was to go “against the grain of society”, to be radically other through his dress (lines 7-14).

This long translation as reflexivity sequence is followed by an example from his youth about how his African-centred location impacted on his personal relationships. He speaks of his friends and family as being bewildered by this change. He then repositions himself as someone who still spoke like this (that is in a local dialect of English) but who chose to look as wrathful as possible through his dress. This dress was a “full uniform” including short trousers and handkerchief and signified that he wanted his location as a Rasta to be known as he was “in this thing ah not hidin nuttn<sup>16</sup> ah’m it to di max” (lines 26-32).

Example 8 KC Tape 1 Side B:119

- >1 K AT DAT TIME DI IDEA WAS as ah said was to (.5) NOT fit in wid the  
 2 ((\*Babylon system)) [(.hhh) so] the i:dea was to look as (.) Drea:dfu:l? [an ]  
 3 Sh [Yeah ] [(.hhh)]  
 4 K as wra:tfu:l, as possible=  
 6 Sh =Yeah ye[ah ]  
 7 K [Because] yuh goin against di [gr:ain ] of so:ci[ety ]  
 8 Sh [Yeah ] [Yeah]  
 9 K yuh kno:w we’re creatin a disturbance now [ (. ) ]

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<sup>16</sup> “Nuttn” translates as “nothing”.

- 10 Sh [Yeah yeah]  
 11 K a:n from yuh si me: yuh mus see my appearance an my appearance mu:s  
 12 remi:n yuh of lightnin an tundah<sup>17</sup>=  
 13 Sh =Mhm [mhm ]  
 14 K [Ca: ] my ((^life is like dat to ra:::)) [ ((.hhh)) ] suh yeah<sup>18</sup>=  
 15 Sh [ Mhm ] =Mhm =  
 16 K =Suh me: now because ah look a bit young an ah wouldah look younger  
 17 THEN mah good friends and (.) family friends (.) why have yuh turned yuhself  
 18 like this?=  
 19 Sh =Mhm=  
 20 K =Suh ah had to go through a lot of flak (1.0) fuh cha:ngin my appearance to:  
 21 what people didn't expect of me: cos ah'm supposed to be a smart lad an  
 22 [.hhh ] ah'm doin summat which they didn perceive [ as ] sma:rt but I'd still  
 23 Sh [Yeah ] [Yeah ]  
 24 K .hhh in my opinion I'd still speak like this=  
 25 Sh =Mhm=  
 26 K =Which is- which ah ah could look as wra:tful as possible=  
 27 Sh =Mhm=  
 28 K =Wear di sha:t trousers mi hankichi:ef [ I'd ] have on mah FU:LL U:NIFORM<sup>19</sup>=  
 29 Sh [Yeah] =Right=  
 30 K =I GOT MAH UNIFORM ah'm part of a thing [ ah ] want it to be known [ I ]  
 31 Sh [Yeah] [Mhm]  
 32 K in THIS THING ah not hidin NUTTN (.9) ah'm IT to di MAX

Could this creation of excess be about making yourself a stranger to those you construct as other while being rooted in your own practices of being? If so it would put KC in a place in which estrangement is an accepted aspect of radical otherness: it goes with the territory of othering oneself. Perhaps in this opposition we can also see glimpses of hybridity as a strategic performance based on decisions about what would make a statement about unequivocal difference as a position of identification and politics. This position is not ambivalent as speakers themselves construct their selves by rejecting belonging to “them” (for KC the Babylon system) and “us” (for KC his family and friends). KC simultaneously signals “the impossibility of being located at only one definite territory, which is identical with itself” (Diken, 1998: 126) and so

<sup>17</sup> Lines 11-12 translate as “and the moment you see me you must see my appearance and my appearance must remind you of lightening and thunder”

<sup>18</sup> Line 14 translates as “because my life is like that ..so yeah”.

<sup>19</sup> Line 28 translates as “I'd wear the short trousers, my handkerchief. I'd have on the full uniform”.

“blurs, problematizes and removes the limits drawn unambiguously as borders” (Diken, 1998: 126). As a stranger KC is both inside and outside. In a zone in-between the same and the other: the stranger as “both/and”. This then is the nature of radical otherness. Such radical otherness as KC makes us aware is performed in opposition to both Blackness and Englishness. Let us move to looking at the radical otherness of stranger in a few more conversation extracts.

Being radically other and separate from Englishness.

Prior to the talk in example 9 CaF has been speaking about not being treated like a colleague in the workplace. Here she shows us another way of expelling the white abject by relating this to her “spirit not being here” which she explains in terms of locating herself as a stranger (lines 1-4), someone who does not belong here. She boundaries off this location of herself with “d’yuh know a:t ah mean?”<sup>20</sup>, before her translation as reflexivity sequence in which she translates this for her interlocutor as being about feeling that she “should be somewhere else in other words” (lines 6-7).

Example 9 CaF Tape 2 Side A:129-130

- >1 Ca Even though ah'm livin- it's like ah don't kno:w (1.5) ah just don't (.5)  
 2 FEE:L as though (1.0) I belong HERE (.3)  
 3 Sh Mhm=  
 4 Ca =D'yuh know a:t ah mean?=  
 5 Sh =<sup>o</sup>M[hm ]<sup>o</sup>  
 >6 Ca [It's ] like there's so- it's like there's somewhere- like ah should be  
 7 somewhere- like ah should be somewhere else in other words

Further on in the conversation she says that even though she has to admit that living here does have some “impact on you” in terms of assimilation to “English ways” she

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<sup>20</sup> “D’yuh know a:t ah mean?” is “do you know what I mean?”

still "identifies" herself as separate from "the whole English system" and chooses not to "identify with them dough". She repositions herself in a space of radical otherness as someone who talks "how ah wanna talk dress how ah wanna dress an [...] ah do what ah wanna do" (lines 10 and 13). Following a (1.3) pause (line 15) she does concede though that living in the space of England does have some impact and that there is a possibility for assimilation to "some elements of it". She reaffirms this point of view on line 18 after Sh's continuer. There is a long (2.3) pause before S's agreement with C's point of view on assimilation. After C's overlapped agreement with Sh's turn there is a (1.3) pause before C reiterates her identification as "separate [...] from the whole English system".

- >8 Ca I don't identify with them dough=  
 9 Sh =Mhm=  
 >10 Ca =Ah don't me (.) ah talk how ah wanna talk dress how ah wanna dress=  
 11 Sh =Mhm  
 12 (1.0)  
 13 Ca And a:hm ah do: what ah wanna do:=  
 14 Sh =Mhm=  
 15 Ca =°An that (.9) °but yeah° (1.3) but ah think yeah livin yeah livin here DOES  
 16 have impact in a sense yuh do: take on some elements of °it°=  
 17 Sh =["Mhm°]  
 >18 Ca [Yuh ] do:  
 19 (2.3)  
 20 Sh Yeah yuh're bound to rea[lly ]  
 21 Ca [Yeah]  
 22 (1.3)  
 >23 Ca °I dun know° [AH ] STILL identify myself as bein separate dough (.) from  
 24 Sh [Mhm]  
 25 Ca the whole English system

Separation from and abjection of Englishness is performed by J and Ch next in terms of the politics of naming in a discussion about what people would feel comfortable calling themselves and why this is the case. The positioning segment of the interaction is at lines 1-8 in which Ch and J deny "English as a description" for

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themselves because it has too many “racist connotations”. J then admits to preferring British and Ch uses British only as a description of nationality. J agrees with this before Ch’s translation as reflexivity sequence on line 10 with which he also agrees. They both then would not use British as a description for themselves. The abjection of both British and English is therefore complete.

Example 10 Ch, J and Sh Tape 1 Side B:138-139

- >1 Ch AH WOULDN'T NOW like- ah wouldn't ever de:scribe °myself as English°,=  
 2 J =Uh uh AH DON'T- AH DON'T DESCRIBE MYSELF AS ENGLISH EITHER  
 cos fuh me: it carries too much a:hm [RA:CIST] CONNOTATIONS to fuh me:  
 3 Ch [ Yes: ]  
 4 J right, [a:hm ] ah'm ah- ah dun know, ah prefer BRITISH: [to be ] honest  
 5 Sh [Mhm ] [Mhm ]  
 5 J [ ( indecipherable ) ]  
 6 Ch [British British ] I use it a:hm as a- in terms of (.4) officially it's my  
 7 nationality,=  
 8 J =[Mhm ] that's it yeah ahm=  
 9 Sh [Mhm ]  
 >10 Ch But it's not like ah would [ (.) ] choose it as a description for myself  
 11 J [No:]

Further on in the same conversation (example 10a), after giving examples of when British as a nationality would be appropriate, Ch repositions herself as Black. This location is based on her claims to Antigua, the Caribbean and a connectedness to the African diaspora and “other [...] Black people as well” because “ah do want to distance myself from what ah see as white British people”. A part of this distancing is a refusal “to use British” or to use it “very reluctantly” (line 12 onwards below).

Example 10a Ch, J and Sh Tape 1 Side B:139

- >12 Ch It's not just that ah see mahself (.) as Antiguan [.hhh ah] see mahself  
 13 Sh [Mhm ]  
 14 Ch very much as connected to people who: are of Caribbean origins [and to  
 15 Sh [°Ah know°]  
 16 Ch people] of African descent=  
 17 Sh =Mhm=  
 18 Ch =globally=

- 19 Sh =Mhm=  
 20 Ch =and other yuh know Black people as well °ah just feel° AH DUN KNO:W  
 21 ah just (1.1) BRITISH: is just (.7) ah suppose (.) in a sense mainly because  
 22 ah do- ah do want to DI:STANCE myself from what ah see: as .hhh white  
 23 British people °I refuse to use British° yuh know,=  
 24 Sh =Mhm=  
 25 Ch =and: ah DON'T really (1.2) ah dun know,=  
 26 Sh =Mhm=  
 27 Ch =but I use British very reluctantly

When I asked her why she would not use English then her response continued on the theme (see the extract 10b below) of making herself other. Now, though she began to talk about this in terms of why this is a necessary thing to do as a Black woman within Britain, as “if people seek to exclude you after a while do you really want yuh na:t ah mean do you really want to be part of them anyway?” (line 28). This is her positioning of herself within the discourse of racism and it is through this that she continues to show her abjection of whiteness. Her translation as reflexivity sequence at line 31 is an answer to her question of “no” because she in fact doesn’t want to be like English people anyway. She concludes with “yuh know” before she repositions herself as someone who’s “reached that stage where I’m not strivin for that in fact I’d seek to distance mahself I think ah’d make mahself more different if ah can” (lines 34-40). This striving for distance from whiteness and making herself more different are important aspects of abjecting whiteness and producing radical otherness by choosing the place of stranger.

Example 10b Ch, J and Sh Tape 1 Side B:139-14

- ›28 Ch It’s like what J is sayin it’s like in terms of IF people seek to exclude you  
 29 after a while DO YOU REALLY WANT [yuh na:t ah mean,] DO YOU REALLY  
 30 J [Mhm ]  
 ›31 Ch WANT TO BE PART OF THEM?[(.) ] ANYWAY? (.) NO:: I’ve reached  
 32 Sh [Mhm]  
 33 Ch that I don’t wa:nt to be: (.4) °right, I’m not English° fine I’m not English  
 ›34 [I don’t] wanna be: like you anyway [ yuh ] know I’ve reached that sta:ge



35 Sh [ Mhm ]  
 36 Ch °where=  
 37 Sh =Mhm=  
 38 Ch = I'm not strivin for that,° [ in fact ] I'd seek to distance mahself I think ah'd  
 39 Sh [ Mhm ]  
 40 Ch make mahself yuh know a bit ((\*mo:re different if ah can,))

Making oneself radically other seems therefore to be connected to the abjection of a whiteness within which one is the abject. Individuals use translation as reflexivity to analyse and comment on their positioning by such whiteness before they reposition themselves outside of the racialized order. KC though has shown us a similar process at work in terms of being positioned as the other of a Blackness which emanated from the Black community because of the discourse of respectability with which he was faced as a young Rasta. Speakers in talking about their life experiences make these identification discourses that they negotiate known as 'the voice of the other within'. Through the dialogic analysis of translation as reflexivity, critique ensures the abjection of these voices before speakers claim their own positions. What do dialogic analysis and abjection therefore, mean for hybridity?

### Dialogism<sup>21</sup>, abjection and hybridity?

I have said above that individuals are engaged in a process of constructing themselves in opposition to being made the Black other by whiteness. They are involved in their own dialogic analysis of the relations between self and other, which becomes obvious as they narrate their lived identifications as a process emanating

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<sup>21</sup> "At a very basic level, then dialogism is the name not just for a dualism, but for a necessary *multiplicity* in human perception. The multiplicity manifests itself as a series of distinctions between categories appropriate to the perceiver on the one hand and categories appropriate to whatever is being perceived on the other. This [...] is not [...] one more binarism, for in addition to these poles dialogism

from their nominal identification 'Black'. I have called this analytic process in which they are engaged translation as reflexivity above. In this dialogic analysis individuals reveal the power/ knowledge complexes in which they become subjects by fighting against the powers of abjection. By doing this they transgress the boundaries of Blackness and 'whiteness' given by the dominant discourses. In this sense then we can say that they are hybrid subjects as they 'speak back to the eye of power' by making themselves radically other. They are other than the otherness which has been given to them. Being radically other means that they can stand outside of the discourses in which they would be named and instead to name them and make them abject. However, a central idea of dialogism is that existence "is not only an event, it is an utterance [...] [ it ] has the nature of dialogue in this sense; there is no word directed to no-one", we are all co-beings (Holquist, 1991: 27). This is important because it means that hybrid identifications no matter how defined, are not free-floating. Rather, their meanings are tied to the constraints of the simultaneity of relations. What this means then is that a subject who is radically other must be able to interact in different contexts in meaningful ways whilst also producing an excess, a difference. This is another facet of hybridity. Addressivity, being meaningful in different contexts through creatively using the boxes that we are enclosed within in the performance of identifications.

What of abjection though? If we see hybridity as a negotiation of identification positions in which there is a transgression of limits through radical otherness, then the act of making whiteness abject is itself an act of hybrid identification. This too is the case for those discourses emanating from the Black communities about who are

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enlists the additional factors of situation and relation that make any specific instance of them more than a mere opposition of categories" (Holquist, 1991:22)

Black others: who are abject and to be abjected. These discourses of Blackness can be just as containing in terms of the global discourse of 'how to be Black', an ethics of Blackness, which uses cultural markers and is given primacy. It is against this which individuals have to act. They have to act in order to become subjects because in-group essentialism is linked to the suppression of some identification discourses. The discourse of Blackness emanating from our communities becomes the gaze.

Ch speaks below (example 11) of such a gaze. Here it is the dominance of Jamaican-ness as an African Caribbean identity within Britain, which she negates by claiming Antiguan heritage. She begins by locating herself as different (lines 1-11) in that she does not use Caribbean food as a marker of authenticity. In her translation as reflexivity sequence at lines 15-18 though she shows that her food choice has the potential to position her as the other of the dominant authentic Blackness. Sh agrees in overlap and J laughs because he can see her point that her food choice could have marked her as not Black enough. Her translation as reflexivity sequence is followed by an example in support of her food choice in which she begins to show her difference as she had never seen her mother even cook ackee<sup>22</sup> before. So affected is she by this encounter over food and what it means for her claim to Black authenticity- "I just thought then he's feelin really chuffed now cos ah'd already had a patty which wasn't Black enough right? an now I hadn't eaten ackee"- that she actually asks her mother about ackee. She thus discovers the truth that it is a Jamaican, not a Caribbean, dish so as an Antiguan she does not have to be familiar with it in order to be Black (25-28). She thereby repositions herself as other than the Blackness which was given to her while still being Black because of "skin".

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<sup>22</sup> Ackee is West African word which remains within Jamaican lexis. It is a vegetable that is cooked

Example 11 Ch, J and Sh Tape 1 Side B:144-145

- >1 Ch I chose to have a patty or somethin he had ackee and [salt ] fish [or ]  
 2 Sh [Mhm]  
 3 J [An cod ]  
 4 Ch something ah can't remember something with ackee anyway [ .hhh ] and  
 5 Sh [Mhm]  
 6 Ch he said to me duh yuh like ackee? an ah sat there an ah think ° well°  
 7 achshally °ah don't kno:w°=  
 8 Sh =Mhm=  
 9 Ch =And it just then occurred to me ah'd never TA:STED it but ah thought ah  
 10 know what ah'm like lots ah things we used to have at home ah don't eat this  
 11 [ah ] ca:n't be [bothered] yuh know what it's like?=  
 12 Sh [Mhm] =Mhm  
 13 J [Mhm]  
 14 (.5)  
 >15 Ch An: ah thought °ah've never eaten it° [an ] I just thought then he's feelin  
 16 really chuffed [now ] cos ah'd already had a patty which wasn't  
 17 J [Ah bet he did]  
 18 Ch Black enough right? [an ] now I hadn't eaten ackee ]  
 19 Sh [Mhm]  
 20 J [((.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh )) ]  
 21 Ch an then ah was thinkin about it an ah thought (.5) it's not only that ah've  
 23 never had it but ah can never remember see- ah can honestly never  
 24 remember seein mah mom cook it not only not cook it but ah've never heard  
 25 her talk about it an next time ah saw mah mom ah said (.4) MOM DO  
 26 PEOPLE EAT ACKEE IN ANTIGUA? an she said no: it's Jamaican  
 27 [AND ] AH FELT LIKE THAT WAS QUITE FUNNY  
 27 Sh [No ] [Yes it is ]  
 28 J [Ah know ]

J speaks next on the discourse of Blackness also. Specifically about how for some Black people “the problem [...] with the Black identity...[is] that we [...] stereotype ourselves” as “do white people as well” (lines 1-4). He positions Blackness then as being about essentialist views before boundarying off this location with “yuh know a:t ah mean?” Ch agrees in overlap with his inbreath and then J produces a translation as reflexivity sequence “how can you break out of that?”(lines 4 and 6 ). He explicates his rhetorical question in a series of examples of Black authenticity/

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with salted cod to make Jamaica's national dish, “ackee and saltfish”.

inauthenticity. For example Black people cannot “like [. . .] classical music”, and must speak or dance in a certain way or eat certain things in order to be authentically Black (lines 6 onwards) . For J then we, as Black people, are negating our own heterogeneity in favour of a stifling sameness. This is encapsulated in his point of view expressed in his repositioning sequence. That is that we, as Black people, are more than just a skin colour but then we are also simply that, made so by the policing of the borders of Blackness by Black individuals with essentialist notions of who is authentically Black (lines 28 and 30).

Example 12 Ch, J and Sh Tape 1 Side B:142-143

- 1 J The problem with the Black identity is that- that we eh:m (.) NOT ONLY  
 2 WE: STEREOTYPE OURSELVES well certain amount of Black people do=  
 3 Ch =Mhm=  
 4 J =So do white people as well so: yuh know a:t ah mean, [.hhh ] how can  
 5 Ch [Oh yeah,]  
 6 J yuh break that? .hhh ah mean B- wh- wh- WHEN- WHEN ON THE  
 7 ONE HAND WE'RE SAYIN THAT THEY- THEY- YUH NA:T AH MEAN?  
 8 THEY- THEY'RE stereotypin us right? [an ] yuh na:t ah mean? BUT IF  
 9 [Mhm ]  
 10 J A BLACK PERSON SAY THAT THEY like ahm: °ah dun know° they like  
 11 classical music or [d'yuh ] na:t ah mean, a lot ah cos a lot ah- cos rec- cos  
 12 Sh [Yeah ]  
 13 J they not- they not seen as REALLY BLACK [COS ] THEY COULDN'T  
 14 Sh [Yeah ]  
 15 J SPE:AK A CERTAIN WAY [THEY ] SPOKE AND YET YET AT THE  
 16 Ch [° Oh yeah°]  
 17 J SAME TIME YUH WANT TO BE ACCEPTED as- as e:hm yuh na:t ah  
 18 mean? we're dive:rse yuh na:t ah mean? [becos ] we can be DOCTORS  
 19 Sh [Yeah ]  
 20 J WE CAN BE RESEARCHERS COLLECTORS we can be ANYTHIN yuh  
 21 na:t ah mean? [yet ] at the sa- on the other hand right, yuh na:t ah mean?  
 22 Sh [Yeah]  
 23 J IF A BLACK PERSON ISN'T SEEN AS BLACK ENOUGH [ah dun kn-] the  
 24 Sh [Yeah yeah]  
 25 J food they e:at, the way they speak .hhh the way they dance what kind ah  
 26 music they like then yuh kno:w ah mean?=  
 27 Sh =Yeah=  
 28 J =[So: IT'S ] MO:RE THAN JUST: BEIN A SKIN COLOUR BLACK yet in  
 29 Ch [An it's an it's]
-

30 J a sense IT IS, SIMPLY just skin colour right, cos that's how yuh differentiate

The borders of Blackness extend beyond such tests of authenticity. Black individuals police these borders to ensure respectability remains intact. "Respectability consists in conforming to norms that repress [..]. It is linked to the idea of order [..] not crossing the borders" (Young, 1990: 136). KC makes the borders of Black respectability obvious in example 13 below, alongside his position within the epidermalized world produced by white supremacy.

KC's talk introduces the theme of the impact of Black sub-cultures on individuals feeling a lack of fit with both Black and white communities. He speaks about inter-generational conflict along with having to "fight flak from the Europeans" with regard to his Rasta lifestyle. He speaks himself as being positioned as other by both communities (lines 1-5). In his translation as reflexivity sequence he sees himself as being "in the middle of this problem" (line 7) of not "pleasin this lot cos ah don't fit in an ah'm not pleasin dat lot cos ah don't fit in" because he was a Dread. He repositions himself as "this lot" (line 12) and thus as being unaffected by the abjection with which he is faced. He saw himself as someone who was a dismantler of both sides of oppression, on the one hand from those who were living under colonialism (Black individuals) and the colonisers. He in fact makes them abject by saying "you lot can fuck off". "You lot" being in contrast to "this lot" earlier. To him Rastas were "movin in a certain direction an wi nuh business"<sup>23</sup> they did not need the approval of anyone because this would lead them back into oppression anyway.

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<sup>23</sup> "Moving in a certain direction and we don't care".

Example 13 KC Tape 1 Side B:120-121

- >1 K Suh ah HAD to fi:ght this flak from yeah di Europeans who were shit sca:red  
 2 of .hhh this character.=  
 3 Sh =M [hm ]  
 4 K [An ] then ah had to fa:ce the NEGATIVI:TY: of my own kind who felt  
 5 what ah was doin at that time was (.) rubbish as well=  
 6 Sh =Yeah yeah=  
 >7 K So: ((kiss teet))<sup>24</sup> AGAIN now ah'm in the MIDDLE of this PROBLEM  
 8 (1.0)  
 9 K ah'm NOT pleasin dis lot cos ah do:n't fit i:n an ah'm not plea:sin dat lot cos  
 10 ah do:n't fit in=  
 11 Sh =Mhm=  
 >12 K =°Ah'm this lot° but DAT COO:L becos this is the ai:m ah want ah'm  
 13 DISMANTLIN the BOTH si:des of this=  
 14 Sh =M [hm ]  
 15 K [YOU] lot are under colo:nialism .hhh yo:u lot can FUCK off=  
 16 Sh =Mhm=  
 17 K =Here we are now we're MO:VIN in a CERTAIN DIRECTION [ an ] wi nuh  
 18 Sh [Mhm]  
 19 K °business°

KC's "wi nuh business" places him on the margins in a place of radical otherness. Whilst still being embodied as Black he abjects that whiteness and Blackness which would make him other. How can a radical otherness performed in talk be linked to hybridity though?

Radical otherness and the translated hybrid subject.

In the examples individuals speak themselves as occupying a space of radical otherness by critiquing the givens of Blackness. However, the abject we will remember is never fully expelled and returns constantly to challenge its master. Black individuals have to find answers to the question from other Black individuals, 'are you Black enough?' Further, we have seen from the examples that we are

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<sup>24</sup> Kiss teet is a sound which represents derision, humour and disbelief. An account of its phonetic

always preceded by a Blackness which is 'always already there', whilst it is also in the process of being constructed. This makes it necessary for us to answer for the particular places we occupy across time. Our response to this question of Blackness should be 'yes'. This would then have implications for the construction of the self in talk because

Each time we talk we literally enact values in our speech through the process of scripting our place and that of our listener in a culturally specific social scenario (Holquist, 1991: 63).

So even within 'yes' individual differences will be established thus expanding the category Black. In answering "no" in terms of the doxa but "yes" in terms of the multiplicity that is a part of Blackness as skin, we present Black interlocutors with the possibility of a space of multiple addressivities. But then, this is perhaps the place occupied by those who would be subjects within the time and space of life-stories. To make yourself so radically other means that your perspective expands from just that of the subject's vantage point of seeing the world as if from a frontier (Jefferson, 1989: 154). "The Other [...] has a perspective on the subject that enables him both to see the external body that constitutes the subject's vantage point on the world, and also to see that body as part of that world. This is a perspective that is at once radically different from that of the subject, yet also serves to complete it" (Jefferson, 1989: 154). This is what the dialogic analysis of translation as reflexivity allows individuals to engage in. It is a combination of the issue of addressivity and making yourself radically other which holds a key to understanding what "translated hybrid subject" means interactionally. Those who say 'no .. but' , who construct



themselves as African Caribbean and Black to denote origin and connectedness to the diaspora, but also something else. You are multiple irrespective of skin and, in fact, because of it.

What I am trying to capture here goes beyond Paul Gilroy's idea of double consciousness even though it does incorporate that very way of being. I say this because double consciousness implies a notion of being aware of your situation but not necessarily acting against it. I also think that this non-action within awareness also relates to the dialogic notion of co-being. So one would remain within skin and disciplined by the panopticism of ethnicity and white supremacy rather than challenging them to reveal other ways of being. Placing yourself in a space of radical otherness in talk involves the agentic process of abjecting 'the voice of the other within' and of making yourself subject in that very movement of abjection.

I have said elsewhere in this project that 'the third space' exists within the time and space of the narrativization of the self. Dialogism provides an extension to this in that it sees identity arising in the relations between self and other. Making oneself radically other is accomplished through the performance of where you're from, or where you are marked as being from (the past African Caribbean); where you're at (the present African Caribbean within Britain); and where you want to be (future possibilities for developing African Caribbean-ness based on the identification work I do now). In terms of how people practice identities as texts of social practice, they can decide which aspects of discourses to use and which to discard in the reflexive

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translation processes which dialogic analysis entails. That is they can perform new addressivities in the ongoing flow of the talk.

In the examples, Black identities as texts of social practice become the reflexive practice of dealing with the aporias produced by "skin" as other / same. Discourses of the other produce discourses of the same. So, to become subject one has to be radically other, through abjecting constructed otherness and producing unrecognisable excess. Making oneself other then, can also be a space and time of transformation as we locate ourselves within critique, so as to resolve the aporias of "skin as other/same". Black speakers are not border or liminal. Rather, what is at play here is a process in which they negotiate the irresolvable tensions of the possibilities of belonging to/ in the social world in the past, present and future, given the mark of their "skin" and their negotiation of the terrain of Blackness and whiteness.

What looking at discourses of whiteness and Blackness as 'the voice of the other within' contributes theoretically, is the ability to look at the power/knowledge complexes in which people live and which they struggle to surmount. Whilst power/knowledge makes the person abject, the individual simultaneously speak themselves as fighting back against the powers of abjection, thereby transgressing the boundaries of Blackness and 'whiteness'. This is where the reflexive translation of discourses comes into the emergent model for looking at a hybridity of the everyday, in the form of dialogism. Dialogism produces the speaking subject, which a reliance on only a Foucauldian based account would obscure. What people are engaged in as they recount their abjection stories is a process of the negotiation of positions which leads to new addressivities. That is, hybrid identity positionings.

These new addressivities emerge following translation as reflexivity sequences. In the repositioning of new addressivities speakers show interactions with the social in which they are subjects who can act against abjection. If we go back for example to extract 1, we can see the process as being something like this:

1/positioning as Black other through abjection- Sa being called banana sucking nigger;

2/ translation as reflexivity- understanding being made other in terms of the implication of what was said;

3/abjection of the position of Black other- hitting the bus driver in the face;

4/radical otherness- seeing herself as someone who wouldn't have done that in the past but now as "dis yah big o:l woman" being able to, so a new form of addressivity is being established.

As speakers produce critical ontologies of the self, the process of abjection and the dialogic analysis entailed in translation as reflexivity, constructs an-other ethics of Blackness. Within this, acting as a subject engaged in critique of both 'the margin' and 'the centre' from the space and time of radical otherness, is at the heart of individual identities. To quote bell hooks (1991: 153)

I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as a site of resistance- as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination, We come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to

be that which pleasures, delights, fulfils desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world.

### Conclusion

New addressivities as central in the interactional accomplishment of a hybridity of the everyday has implications for Homi Bhabha's (1990) notion of hybridity and 'the third space'. Perhaps if he had seen the necessity for address as part of his theorizing on hybridity, he would also have seen that the third space does not "displace the histories that constitute it", but rather "puts together [...] meanings and discourses" (Bhabha, 1990: 211) from these histories. These meanings and discourses are also more than just traces as they are quite central in hybrid identifications in the interactions. Bhabha (1990: 211) also claims that hybridity does not give meanings and discourses "the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior". However, in the interactions there are discourses of Blackness which people use in hybrid identifications which are based on 'race' and 'cultural' essence as original. There is not a sense in which hybridity gives rise to something completely new and unrecognisable as Bhabha (1990: 211) claims. The point which emerges from the extracts is that hybridity and essence are simultaneous in identifications in talk-in-interaction.

What I will continue to show in the next chapter is that hybrid identity positionings are arrived at through essence as 'skin', 'race', 'culture', 'community' and a shared experience of racism. I do not take hybridity therefore to be a change which is total because of translation. What we have instead is a palimpsest in which positionings, drawing on essence, are put one against the other to produce a 'difference from the changing same'. This 'difference from the changing same' shows the interaction of difference and sameness in an impossible simultaneity. The movement from same to different is marked in talk by abjection as critique in the translation as reflexivity sequence.

In the chapter on claiming Black identities which follows I will use the model<sup>25</sup> which I have developed through Chapters 5 and 6 to look at the talking into being of 'the changing same' which occurs in interaction. This model is constituted by:

- talk which demonstrates the interactants' awareness of being positioned by discourses through the replaying of their everyday experiences;
- followed by the process of abjection and dialogic analysis in a translation as reflexivity sequence where interactants show their identification with, through and against discourses of Blackness;
- and, talk which builds a version of the self that leads to different addressivities in terms of the nominal category 'Black', thereby allowing hybridity to emerge in talk-in-interaction.

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<sup>25</sup> This model which accounts for the *hybridity of the everyday* in talk-in-interaction will be spoken of more briefly in Chapter 7 as *statement, translation as reflexivity, addressivity*.

## Chapter 7

### Claiming Blackness as the performance of critical ontologies of the self : the use of identity clichés in conversation.

#### Introduction

This chapter will look at the construction of Black identifications in talk in which interactants use identity clichés<sup>1</sup>. Identity clichés are present in those turns at talk in which Black identity is claimed. In order to be unquestioned as identity claims by interlocutors these clichés must be shared socially. This is where we can therefore see the operation of discourses at the level of statements. Identity clichés operate both to show interactants' narration of themselves as positioned by discourses and their repositioning of themselves in relation to these discourses. It is this positioning, translation as reflexivity and re-positioning which leads to the development of critical ontologies of the self.

The approach of looking at positioning and repositioning in talk-in-interaction is based on a model which seeks to account for the dialogic interaction between essence and hybridity in Black identifications. This model of *statement- translation as reflexivity-addressivity* draws on Foucault's (1995) concept of statements as the building blocks of

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the examples have been used before. Their reuse will show the progression in the model.

discourses. These statements in the form of identity clichés are reproduced in identification narratives as "points of temporary attachment" (Hall, 1996a: 6) to the positions constructed for us by discursive practices. We can therefore see these statements when we look at the positions occupied by speakers as they articulate and apply these identification discourses to themselves, concrete issues and events.

Translation as reflexivity is the connector between individuals and these statements as points of temporary attachment. Through translation as reflexivity speakers show their awareness of discursive positioning before abjecting this and constructing new addressivities in the talk. The notion of the creation of new addressivities in the talk is an important one, as it illustrates the operation beyond the limits imposed on us (Foucault 1984d: 45) which is so central to critical ontologies of the self. These addressivities by speaking back to discursive positioning create counter-statements which are the basis for counter-discourses in talk-in-interaction. New addressivities in this formulation thus signal the hybrid moment in identification talk. However, what becomes obvious through looking at the data is that this hybrid moment is arrived at through essence in the form of identity clichés. In the talk there is a re-membering of the membership category Black as a label of alterity, whilst simultaneously being rooted in Blackness as 'skin', 'race' and culture. Blackness as an identification is at one and the same time therefore, a tautology and a negotiation of positions. The performativity of Blackness as a discourse emerges through the interaction of essence and hybridity in the interactional accomplishment of Black identifications. In these interactions individuals resist ascribed categories through

establishing accounts of biographical authenticity whilst simultaneously rooting themselves in the ascribed category Black.

The extracts that follow are focused on how Blackness is constructed in the talk and are grouped under themes which recur in the interactions thus:

- 1/ the question of being Black enough;
- 2/ if you're not white you're Black;
- 3/ critiquing assimilation;
- 4/ using character references to claim Blackness.

#### Finding answers to the question, "Are you Black enough?"

This was one of the most common claims to Blackness in the data and they are interesting because of their focus on the abjection of the speaker by others. The central kind of focus here then would be on how it is that speakers make their claim to Blackness through and against those discourses that have sought to deny them this right to the name "Black". I will try to represent below some of the structures that these particular claims took. The first extract follows talk about the racism of television and a discussion about the programme on Yardies which the interactants see as being linked to the criminalization of Black people.



Example 1- Tape 2 Side B Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe: 35-40

- ›1 Lo This this lot at wo[rk ] THEY JUST MA:KE ME LAUGH THEY TRY  
 2 Lu [Mhm]  
 3 Lo AN DISCUSS THIIINGS LIKE .hhh they say to me WHAT WOULD YOU  
 4 CALL YOURSELF LORNA YUH NUH? with all them- we were talkin about  
 5 this- it wuh something in Pa:rlia:ment (.) about these p- yuh nuh what- what  
 6 p- what politically correct way t- to CALL a Black person, [YUH NA:W ]  
 7 Sh [Oh al:right ]  
 8 Lo A:FRICAN or whatever=  
 9 Sh =°Ye[ah]°  
 ›10 Lo [Ah] said °we:ll° AH'M NOT A:FRICAN (.)  
 11 Sh Mhm=  
 ›12 Lo =Why can't ah call mahself BLACK a:hm BRITISH yuh know, [because] if  
 13 Sh [Yeah ]  
 14 Lo THEY can say [.hhh ] WHATEVER THEY SAY IN AMERICA =  
 15 Sh [Yeah] =Yeah=  
 16 Lo [An she sehs]  
 17 Lu [((!AFRICAN ] AMERICAN))=  
 18 Sh =Mh [m ]  
 19 Lo [BUT] SHE: SAYS NO: YUH CAN'T SAY THAT [ ah SAYS ] WE:LL  
 20 Lu [clears throat]  
 21 Lo WHY CA:N'T AH? (.6)  
 22 Sh Mhm,=  
 23 Lo =DUH YUH NA:T AH MEAN?=  
 24 Pe =Yuh can say what yuh want=  
 25 Lo =THEN SHE SEHS SHE SEHS AW:: BUT THEN I COULD SAY I:M (.6)  
 26 MY (.4) ancestors CAME FROM NOR:WAY: AN STUFF LIKE THA °ah said  
 27 o:h gi mi a break°=  
 28 Sh =Ye[ah she kya:n kiarry a:n if she want BUT NUHBODY NUH WA:N NUO:  
 29 Lo [((.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh  
 30 Sh DAT ]  
 31 Lo .hhh))] [ Yeah ] ((\*GIVE US A BRE:AK)) YUH NA::H MEAN?  
 32 Lu [clears throat]

((!)) Speaking in an American accent

Looking at the extract we can see that Lo is involved in a process of claiming Black British-ness for herself in interaction with others. In lines 1-8 she clearly shows her discursive positioning by establishing the context for her claim to Blackness. She establishes this by immediately distancing herself from the white people she will be

talking about by calling them "this lot at work" (line 1). Furthermore she does not use the names of anyone throughout. She therefore sets up a situation of 'us' (Black people) and 'them' (white people). She adds to this a negative character reference for 'them' with "They just make me laugh they try and discuss things" (line 1). To say that someone tries to discuss things is to put the thing being discussed out of the realm of their understanding. She then gives an example of the sort of thing that they try to discuss. That is, what is the politically correct "way to call a Black person". In this part of the turn she also addresses the state as she says that this was actually being spoken about in Parliament in terms of Black people being called African (lines 3-8). Sh performs an understanding sequence in overlap and latched to the completion of Lo's turn (line 9). Lo then begins a report of her response to "this lot at work" which was a denial of the right of the state to impose the label African on her "well ah'm not African" (line 10). This is her translation as reflexivity sequence.

She continues this refusal of the label by presenting what she says next as if in argument with her colleagues by producing her preferred appellation allied to a statement about her nationality "Why can't ah call mahself Black ah'm British yuh know" (line 12). In this turn she produces a new addressivity for herself before going on to draw parallels between her position and the American one. There are agreements throughout this part of her turn from Sh, with Lu providing the American name. This latter is not oriented to by Lo which could mean that it is actually not the answer she wanted and that she was probably looking for 'Black American' instead. Lo then continues to share the argument with her interlocutors in terms of her colleague's denial

of her right to name herself both Black and British "But she says no yuh can't say that" followed by her question "Well why can't I?" She then pauses briefly and Sh produces a continuer<sup>2</sup> (line 22). This does not appear to be enough to deal with the egregious nature of the complaint which Lo is making against her colleagues as she produces a latched "Duh yuh na:t ah mean? as a next. Pe provides her with the support she requests with "Yuh can say what yuh want" produced speedily. At this point she presents us with the position of her white interlocutor "But then I could say my ancestors came from Norway" which she undermines by saying "ah said oh gi mi a break" as her reported response. Sh's latched agreement is next which is characterised by a codeswitch "Yeah she kya:n kiarry a:n if she want but nuhbody nuh wa:n nuo: dat" (yeah she can carry on if she wants to but nobody wants to know that). Virtually the whole of Sh's turn is overlapped by laughter from Lo and an agreement with Sh's position. Lo then goes on to include all of the Black people in the room in her derision of the lack of Black political awareness on the part of her colleague, by recycling parts of her prior turn but inserting a pronoun change to us in "Give us a break". This change to "us" is interesting in that it appears after Sh's turn at talk in support of her position which is done in Creole. Lo's "Give us a break" is intimately tied to the identification work which is being done by Sh in her codeswitch. That is Sh is demonstrating her Blackness through language use which Lo acknowledges by the switch to the inclusive "us".

I want to stop here and think about what this sort of a reading tells us about translation as reflexivity in terms of the discourses being deployed as well as what it can say about

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<sup>2</sup> For Schegloff (1982:80) this is a token like 'mmhm' which shows understanding a turn is incomplete.

hybridity. First, in terms of translation we see Lo using an event from an unspecified past with unspecified people, the veracity of which is unknowable by the other interactants, to make an identity claim in the present. Looking at the interaction we can see that Lo is engaged in a process of creating an 'us' and 'them' in terms of colour. To do this she calls upon Black community discourses around the politics of naming and presents herself as someone who is claiming Blackness and Britishness quite unproblematically. She also shows us the discourses which exist with regard to the difference between Blackness and nationality in claiming British-ness. By showing us the stupidity of 'this lot at work' she re-presents the common sense white racist discourse that Britishness does not equate with Blackness. As well as this she simultaneously shows the lack of political awareness on the part of those who say that, to call yourself Norwegian because of your ancestry is the same as calling yourself Black British. I say this because of the turns at talk taken by both Lu and Sh next (see below), who pick up the theme of being Black and British. Discourses are continuously being translated and reflexively applied to themselves and others by speakers in interaction. In terms of hybridity, what the interaction in Lo's talk presents us with is speakers presenting themselves in opposition to whiteness as well as simultaneously operating within double consciousness. Here double consciousness relates to both Black discourses of naming and Black individuals speaking themselves as having the right to choose what to be called, as well as discourses of whiteness which would disallow the simultaneity of Black and British as a possible identification. Before we return to the after-dinner conversation from where we left off, I just need to say that this extract has been included to show the flow of the conversation rather than positioning and re-positioning for reasons of analysis which will be clearer later:

1 Lo ((\*GIVE US A BRE:AK)) [YUH NA:: MEAN?]  
 2 Sh [DEM NUH WA:N ] NUO DAT AH MEAN DID YUH  
 3 SEE: ah ah READ IN THIS BOOK RIGHT? ABOUT THE CENSUS the nineteen  
 4 ninety one CENSUS right? when yuh look at the census categories it have  
 5 WHITE (.7)  
 6 Sa Mhm=  
 7 Sh =Den it have Black er: Black (.) Caribbean Asian Bangladeshi Pakistani di di  
 8 [ di di ]  
 9 Lo [Yeah yeah ]=  
 10 Sa =DIVIDE all the Asian=  
 11 Sh =Yeah yeah=  
 12 Sa =[It DE ]FINITELY does=  
 13 Lu [clears throat]  
 14 Sh =An divides up a:h Black (.) African Caribbean (.) like this =  
 15 Sa =Mhm (.5)  
 16 Sh BUT WHITE IS WHITE [SUH ] SHI DUO:N STAN A BLO:ODY  
 17 Lo [Yeah]  
 18 Sh CH[A::NC]E: SUH SHI KYA:N GWA:N TALK BOUT SEH SHI NO:RWEGIAN  
 19 Lo [Chance yeah]  
 20 Sh [UN ]TIL SHI [ DEAD ] IT NUH MEK NO DIFFERENCE=  
 21 Sa [Yeah] [((\*Yeah))] =[Yeah ]  
 22 Pe [ ((.hhh .hhh)) ]

In this section of the conversation, Sh continues to speak on the theme of Lo's colleague's Norwegian heritage being irrelevant within Britain through the use of an example. This example centres on the Census categories and its delineation of ethnic and colour categories. She starts the sequence off by reasserting the irrelevance of her Norwegian-ness "Dem nuh wa:n nuo: dat" ( "they don't want to know that"- line 2 ) before she goes into her example which she places within the context, first, of information from a book and, second, a specific time "the nineteen ninety one Census". This example gives us a clue that by "Dem" she is referring to Parliament because otherwise it would have made fine interactional sense for her to have simply said "We". Through using this example she provides a warrant for her claim that "Dem nuh wa:n

nuo: dat" as she establishes through her talk on the Census categories that in Britain "white is white" whereas Black groups are named in all their possible variety. Both Sa and Lo produce turns in agreement or support throughout. In Sh's view because the state sees white as just white, Lo's colleague doesn't "stan ah bloody chance suh shi kya:n gwa:n talk bout seh shi Norwegian until shi dead it nuh mek no difference" ("stand a bloody chance so she can continue saying that she is Norwegian until she dies it won't make any difference"- lines 16,18 and 20). Lo produces a collaborative completion "Chance yeah" (line 19) in overlap with this turn, while Sa produces agreements with it (line 21) and Pe laughs latched to the end of the turn (line 22). This last turn by Sh translates for her interactants and us the relevance of the example as a way of undermining Lo's colleague's claim to a state endorsed ethnic category of 'Norwegian'.

Here again we see speakers' awareness of the making of ethnic and colour distinctions by the state. That is, that it is Black people who have ethnicity because of their mark of colour and white people do not because "white is white" (line 16). In using this example Sh also supports Lo's claim that her colleague lacks political awareness. Further, Sh also shows her awareness of how the state reproduces discourses of colour and ethnicity and also who belongs in the nation in something as ordinary as the Census categories. This happens because of its use of other nationalities and regions to describe people who live here, the majority of whom were born here. The theme of colour and belongingness is taken up by Lo in a continuation of the conversation:

1 Pe ((.hhh .hhh ))=

2 Lo =AH SAID WELL NOBODY CAN LOOK AT YUH- ah said when people look

3 at us they're just seein BLACK THEY DON'T SEE (.4) A PERson DO THEY?=  
 3

4 Sh =Ye [ah ]  
 5 Lo [TH]EY SEE yuh SKI:N? FIRST then they see the PER- [well they  
 6 Lu [YEAH  
 7 Lo MIGHT THEY LOOK AT YOU: AN JUS] SEE (.4) [YUH DO:N FIT IN HERE]  
 8 Lu BUT ((clears throat)) ah mean [ BUT WHAT- WHAT  
 9 THEY'VE] ALSO GOT TO REALISE IS BRI:TISH (.) THEY MAKE OUT  
 10 BRITISH IS A RA:CE [ BRITISH ] IS NOT A RA:CE=  
 11 Lo [It's horrible] =Yeah=  
 12 Lu =Yeah?=  
 13 Sh = It's a nationality (.7)  
 14 Lo Nationality init?=  
 15 Lu =[YE:AH ]  
 16 Sh [National] ity ]=  
 17 Pe [Mhm ]  
 18 Lu =AN- AN if PEOPLE ARE DENYING PEOPLE NATIONALITY, (. )  
 19 Sh Mhm (. )  
 20 Lu WE'RE NOT SAYIN WE'RE ENGLISH [ OR ] WE'RE [ SCOTTISH ] OR  
 21 Sh [ Yes ] [ Mhm ]  
 22 Pe [ Mhm ]  
 23 Lu WE'RE WELSH=  
 24 Sh =No we're sayin BRItish=  
 25 Lu =WHICH IS SEP- A SEPARATE RA:CE [ (.) ] yeah?  
 26 Lo [Mhm]  
 27 Sh [Mhm]  
 28 (1.0)  
 29 Lu We:ll yuh [ ((.hhh .hhh )) ] MEAN ANY COUNTRY YUH LIVE IN YUH'RE  
 30 Sh [THAT'S THE SAME]  
 31 Lu A NATIONAL OF THAT COUNTRY ((\*AREN'T YUH?)) (([ .hhh ] .hhh .hhh .hhh  
 32 Pe [Mhm ]  
 33 Sh [Yes ]you are: that's  
 34 RIGHT YUH NUH THAT'S WHAT AH:M SAYIN]  
 35 Lu .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh )) ]

Let's take the first eleven lines of this extract in which Lo continues her replay of her talk to her white colleague where she claims that colour is what is significant in Britain in interpersonal relations "ah said when people look at us they're just seein Black they don't see a person do they?". It is interesting here that she chooses to use "us" rather than "me". This has the function of placing this claim beyond just the realms of the personal towards something that is applicable to Black communities as white people do

not see Black people, they only see the skin colour. After an agreement from Sh (line 4) she continues to speak on this issue and claims that because of colour white people think that Black people "do:n fit in here" (line 7). She is here drawing on the discourse of 'race' and nation as Sh had done previously in order to make her point to her interactants. Black people's lack of fit based on a look, within Britain, is compared with the position of white people as she begins her talk with "nobody can look at you" (line 2) which contrasts with what comes next in terms of the position of Black people.

Lu's talk on the topic of British nationality makes up the rest of the extract. He begins in overlap with Lo's turn and addresses his comments to the white people of Lo's example and perhaps to white people as a whole through "yeah but [...] what [...] they've also got to realise". He also keeps his talk on the topic by using Lo's "they" and in doing this speaks backs to whiteness as a whole. This has the simultaneous effect of producing a Black 'us' of the interlocutors present. He presents us with his own version of the New Right's 'race' and nation debate which 'they' don't realize as "they make out British is a race British is not a race". In this assertion he makes a critique of nationalist and New Right rhetoric. Lo's "It's horrible" orients to his argument, with a latched "yeah" at the end of Lu's turn produced speedily so as not to occupy the floor (line 11). Lu then proceeds to ask for more claims to understanding through "Yeah?". This is provided by Sh's "It's a nationality" followed by a (.7) pause (line 13). Lo takes up this line of argument by trying to ascertain that this was indeed what Lu had in mind with the question "Nationality init?" (Nationality isn't it?) (line 14). Lu agrees in overlap with Sh's and Pe's agreement. At this point only Sa has said nothing so there is largely



agreement on what British is. To equate British with nationality only is interesting because what these interactants are clearly doing is separating out notions of 'race' which is to do with Blackness and whiteness from those of nationality and citizenship. Obviously, while being British nationals they can also be something else, some 'other' at the same time. This 'other' does not commit them to sharing cultural and other heritages which 'race' could be taken to imply from the way in which Lu uses it. This links back then to Lo's first claim to naming herself "why can't ah call mahself Black a:hm British yuh know?".

I have just said that the conversation has produced an understanding that 'race' and nationality are separate and, indeed, Lu goes on to demonstrate this in his talk. As well as this though he also expands on Sh's comments on the census categories as acting to place Black people outside of the boundaries of the British state. This turn shows his discursive positioning. To do this he again refers back to Lo's first claim to naming and gives his own gloss on the situation as being one in which she was being denied her nationality ("an [and] if people are denying people nationality"- line 18). This is his translation as reflexivity sequence. Interestingly here, he uses 'if' to show the possibility for negotiation around his particular understanding. Sh quickly produces a continuer, followed by a micro-pause before Lu continues his line of argument. Here he reproduces some of the 'race' and nation rhetoric by naming English, Scottish and Welsh as separate 'races'. He also establishes the disconnectedness of Black people from them through "We're not sayin we are" (line 20), thereby, implying that Black people are not part of these indigenous people but something other. This is oriented to by Sh who agrees in overlap "No we're sayin British" (line 24), keeping the connectedness between

Black and British alive in the conversation. Lu then produces what he presents as the obvious upshot of his argument "any country yuh live in yuh're a national of that country, aren't yuh?" followed by laughter (lines 29 and 31). This is his repositioning and produces a new addressivity in terms of the discourses of nationality and citizenship.

In this part of his turn he shows the simplicity of the connectedness between 'Black' and 'British' which white people don't seem to be able to understand. Sh agrees with his summation in overlap with his laughter "Yes you are that's right yuh nuh that's what ah'm sayin" (lines 33-34). "That's what ah'm sayin" is doing two things other than just agreeing with Lu. First, it links back to Sh's own statement that British is a nationality and second, it also links forward to her own example of why she can call herself British which comes next in the talk:

>1 Sh AN THE THING IS the THING is as well yuh nuh THE:SE people have such  
 2 STRA:NGE THINKIN becos when I came here from JAMAICA in nineteen  
 3 seventy five ah could VOTE (1.4)  
 4 Pe Mhm=  
 5 Sh =NOW TO ME FROM DI TIME AH KYAN VOTE ah BELONG in THAT  
 6 country [ right? ]  
 7 Lu [Yeah ]=  
 8 Sh =If- if we go LIVE in America we kya:n vote yuh nuh until we become  
 9 A:MERICAN CITIZENS right? so if mi ah vote an ah mek decisions bout  
 10 who should govern me [ we:ll ] TOUGH pan dem yuh na:h mean? ah'm  
 11 Lu [Yeah ]  
 12 Sh BRITISH [ AN DAT'S ] IT if ah WANNA [ BI BRIT ]ISH AH can CA:LL  
 13 Lo [°Well that's it°]  
 14 Sh mahself that

Sh contextualizes her example with the preface "the thing is as well yuh nuh these people have such strange thinkin" (lines 1-2). 'These people' here relates to white people and the state as she then goes on to make clear in what she says next "becos

when I came here in nineteen seventy five I could vote". This is her positioning sequence. To say 'these people' also creates distance from whiteness and its 'strange thinkin' that a non-British citizen could vote. After a (1.4) pause Pe produces a continuer, but nobody else takes the floor. She then reflexively translates the relevance of her example so that she can be sure that others in the room are on the same track that she is. That is, that the ability to vote in a country means that you "belong in that country" (lines 5-6). She reinforces this point after Lu's agreement through using the example of her understanding of American citizenship and voting, before going on to make the link again between being British and being able to vote "so if mi ah vote an ah mek decisions bout who should govern me we:ll tough pan dem yuh na:h mean? ah'm British an dat's it"<sup>3</sup> (lines 9,10 and 12). She also equates being British with being in the position of being able to choose such an appellation in her repositioning sequence "if ah wanna bi British ah can call mahself that" (lines 12 and 14). She thereby creates a new addressivity for herself. After this there is a (2.3) pause before Lu begins to talk about the name African Caribbean and its relevance (see the next example). Throughout Sh's turn both Sa and Lo produce agreements in overlap with her talk.

The conversation continues below after a (2.3) pause, and in common with the rest of the conversation is also about Black Britishness as a necessary choice. This time, however, the discourses involved are to do with the politics of naming with regard to why the term African Caribbean is inappropriate to describe Black British people. This is argued in terms of Black people within the space of Britain being different from people in

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<sup>3</sup>“So if I vote and make decisions about who should govern me well tough on them you know what I mean

the Caribbean and is accomplished in several moves. First, Lu notes his opposition to the discursive positioning of the name African Caribbean. His translation as reflexivity sequence follows on the inappropriateness of this category. After other interactants produce continuers, Lu constructs a new addressivity in opposition to African Caribbean in interaction with Sh ("They can't go back to the Caribbean yeah? they don't wannuh [..] why should they?") Then, Sh and Lo participate in an agreement sequence about the Caribbean as too different, in partial overlap with Lu's laughter.

- ›1 Lu [((\*°African Caribbean°))] YUH KNOW AH'VE ALWAYS BEEN AGAINST  
 2 Lo [An ah sehs to him ]  
 ›3 Lu THAT because to me I- I ALWAYS say to di kids yeah? LISTEN (.8)  
 4 yuh're livin in Englan- in Britain [ (.3 ) ] an yuh're A:FRICAN CARIBBEAN (.)  
 5 Sh [Mhm:] [Mhm]  
 6 Sa [Mhm] (.)  
 ›7 Lu That TWICE REMOVES YOU:=  
 8 Sh =[Mmh]  
 9 Sa [M[hm ]  
 ›10 Lu [From ] where you: ARE (.)  
 11 Sa Mhm (.)  
 ›12Lu THEY CAN'T GO BACK TO TO- TO [ THE CARIBBEAN ]  
 13Sh [°They can't go back to] the Caribbean°  
 14 no:=  
 ›15Lu =Yeah? THEY DON'T WUNNUH ((.hhh [.hhh .hhh .hhh])) why SHOULD  
 16 Sh [No this is right ]  
 17 Lu they? ((.hhh .hhh [.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh]))  
 18 Sh [ It's different too different ]=  
 19 Lu =[ ((.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh)) ]  
 20 Lo [ Yeah the only problem is IT'S ] A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAY  
 21 [OF LIFE ALL TOGETHER INNIT?]  
 22 Sh [Yeah CO:MPLETELY DI] FFERENT

This part of the example continues the theme of establishing a discourse of appropriateness around naming and the politics of claiming a right to the British space, specifically the appropriateness of the term "African Caribbean" to describe young Black

people in Britain. Lu starts by showing us his opposition to the discursive positioning of the term African Caribbean itself, which he avers "twice removes you from where you are" (lines 1,3,4,7 and 10). That is, this term looks to Africa and the Caribbean in terms of establishing an origin myth almost, rather than locating people within Britain. Not locating people within Britain is also a political act of exclusion from the state itself. There are continuers throughout this turn from both Sh and Sa. Lu then goes on to the implications of this naming because of the impossibility of a return to the Caribbean. This impossibility of return is also linked to a lack of desire for such a return that is understandable anyway (lines 12,15 and 17). Sh provides a reason why such a lack of desire is understandable that is agreed with by Lo in overlap with Lu's laughter. That is that "it's a completely different way of life altogether" (lines 20-21). This in turn is agreed to by Sh (line 22). The link in this agreement sequence is the notion of the Caribbean as too different from Britain.

Hybridity occurs in this part of the extract first, by Lu providing a speaking back to those discourses which would create distance between Black British people and the space of Britain through naming. Second, young Black people are represented as different from some notion of people in the Caribbean ("it's too different") because of being assimilated into Britishness. In speaking of young Black people in this way interactants also reflexively place themselves as Black people who maintain some notion of their own Caribbean-ness even within Britain. Further, they also place themselves as people for whom a return has become problematic because the Caribbean is too different. This

very much means then that they are setting out the parameters for a Black British identification in opposition to that prescribed by whiteness.

Sh's talk also has some relevance for the issue of hybridity. First of all she locates herself in opposition to the power of whiteness to name her as an outsider by stressing that voting means that you belong in that country. She also simultaneously shows belonging elsewhere in terms of her origins in Jamaica as being totally compatible with being British as a citizenship choice because of where one lives. Being British is also presented as a choice in terms of using it as something to "call mahself", showing some distancing from it. This narration of choice in naming has been the theme of this long extract and alerts us to hybridity's strategic performance of double consciousness. It also makes us aware too that whilst people are un-problematically British citizens in their heads, their experiences of being other are also reflexively called upon to maintain distance from this British-ness which is also white "English, Scottish and Welsh" in Lu's terms. Such experiences of the abjection of othering are re-presented in Lo's account where she cannot lay claim to what she wants to be and where in her view white people see Black people's skin first. There is then, recourse to shared discourses of 'race' to establish difference from whiteness, both of which are necessarily presented in the essentialized terms of 'race' and nation.

It has been shown in this example that interactants translate discourses and reflexively apply them in talk on identifications. However, how speakers themselves construct discourses in interaction also needs to be looked at. This can be done by looking at how

interactants collaboratively construct a warrant for the relevance of the category 'Black British'. To do this we now turn to examining those sequences in the talk in which the interactants engage in handing over turns at talk to others. If we look at the first part of extract 1 we can maybe begin to see this in operation. This talk revolves around Lo's assertion of Black British as an identification category, in the face of rejection by white colleagues. The handover begins with Sh's agreement with Lo's position, followed by Lo's agreement with Sh's turn after which Sh continues to talk. This is done as a series of latched and overlapped talk which indicates that not only is a turn at talk being sought, but also that the relevance of what is being proposed as a next must be approved by the main turn taker before such talk can continue. A similar patterning emerges in the other sections of the extract.

In part 2 of the extract on the theme of 'white is not ethnicity but colour', Sh links what she has been saying back to Lo's assertion that Norwegian is not an ethnicity, with Lu producing agreements in overlap. These agreements do not take up the joke which Pe and Sa see and Lo produces a next in the clear that attends seriously to the topic of skin colour. Sh then agrees with this before Lo continues. In part 3 of the extract Lu agrees with Lo in overlap in terms of the significance of 'skin' in Black people's lives and continues much of his turn at talk in overlap with her talk. Lu's intervention is agreed with by Lo ("It's horrible" and "Yeah"). Lu then asks for more of an informed uptake of his point. He receives this from both Sh and Lo in the form of British not being a race but a nationality, before he continues his talk. In part 4 of the extract, Sh's talk is in agreement with Lu who laughs throughout. Her talk then attends to the laughter as

serious in terms of the irrationality of trying to deny someone nationality. She continues talking on this theme. After a long pause (1.4) and a minimal agreement from Pe she translates the relevance of the example for the conversation and concludes with "right?". This is a request for support around the relevance of what she is saying for the conversation so far, which Lu gives her with a "yeah" in overlap with this turn. She then continues to talk latched to this agreement. She thus could be seen to be actively seeking out the agreement of the former main speaker, Lu, before continuing her talk.

The handover of turn-taking sequences are done with the collaboration of interactants and take the form of:

1<sup>st</sup> speaker initiated topic

2<sup>nd</sup> speaker agreement

1<sup>st</sup> speaker agrees with second speaker's turn

2<sup>nd</sup> speaker continues the talk on the agreed on topic.

Something needs to be said about the structure of the talk in which a speaker produces a topic and then the interactants provide examples. This is one way in which it becomes obvious to us through the sharedness and lack of dispute around these examples that what we see being produced in interaction are discourses of Blackness. This lack of dispute is being asserted because the first speaker asserts the example's relevance to the general identity claim before it is fully expounded by the example giver.



Through this sequence interactants establish the sharedness for them of these self / group generated discourses on identification. The fact also that there does not appear to be disagreement helps us to think that these discourses are taken for granted. The other thing which is important to remember is that these discourses are being translated and reflexively reapplied by interactants through these agreement sequences. This relates to their relevance for the discussion in terms of the aspects of the discourse of Blackness which are chosen for inclusion in the interaction. That is, Black British as a more relevant category of naming than African; white as a colour not an ethnicity within discourse; skin as significant in Black people's lives; British as a nationality; Black people also have citizenship rights here. The fact that speakers choose these rather than others in interaction and that these are agreed on shows the making and replay of a discourse of Blackness in interaction.

What has become clear through the analysis is that people both experience and create their society and culture through talk. In the extracts speakers have been particularly oriented to the reflexive construction of Black British as a membership category which is constituted in talk along with whiteness. Just as a sense of Blackness is reflexively constituted by reference to whiteness, the reverse is also the case. Speakers worked in their turns to collaboratively accomplish the creation of Black and British as compatible, through a series of 'reasoned' accounts which were not contested by others. There was not even disagreement about Lo's claim to not be African. In order to make Black British a category, members assumed and revealed cultural knowledge around the impact of white racist thinking on the possibility for the existence of this category. This category, then, is continually and consciously built in opposition to whiteness. Further, they also

revealed their standpoints on the 'race' and nation debates that proliferate in British society. There is a very particular take on British-ness that does not seek to assimilate with or claim whiteness, but to remain distant from it within an interactionally constructed Blackness.

What has the interaction shown about translation as reflexivity as a process that occurs in interaction? First, speakers reveal through the interaction the discourses in which they have to operate. In talk they translate these discourses' relevance or irrelevance to them and in that way reflexively apply them to the identifications that they are attempting to make. Second, interactants translate the relevance of what they are saying for the topic of the interaction in order to ensure everyone's understanding, especially if there has been no uptake of, or minimal agreement with, their point. Finally, discourses of the self and others are reflexively created in the talk interactionally, through membership categories like Black British, African Caribbean and white.

It also becomes obvious through looking at the extracts that hybridity is itself instantiated through talk. However, it is important to establish what it is that is taking place through this process of translation as reflexivity which could lead to a claim being made that hybridity arises during the course of the interaction. First, let us turn to the issue of naming and Lo's comment about not being African but being Black British. In terms of hybridity here she is showing three things:

- 1/ a marking of difference (i.e. Black British) from an essence (i.e. African);
- 2/ a speaking back to white discourses on 'race' and nation which would deny her being Black and British;
- 3/ the possibility that there is a double consciousness involved in being Black and British.

In Sh's comments we see again a double consciousness, but this time it is based on existing within the identifications 'Jamaican' and 'British' simultaneously. This shows us the operation of identifications based around 'the changing same' and the influence of space on identities. There is also the issue of critical distancing within the strategic naming of herself as British while placing herself as coming from elsewhere. Lu's comments establish difference from white British-ness, so while claiming British-ness as a nationality, speaks back to the white eye of power.

Example 2 provides us with an interaction in which the question of Blackness is raised from within Blackness itself. Here Black British-ness and African-ness are presented by interlocutors as occupying two different spaces because of the attitudes of African people who position Caribbeans as not being Black:

Example 2- Tape 2 Side A Lu,Lo,Sa,Sh,Pe: 21-22

- ›1 Lo But there were very few: Black people like the A:frican Black wouldn't  
 2 associate themselves with us cos we were not proper BLACK=  
 ›3 Sh =No that's right we're not ah found that a:h REALLY funny as well this guy  
 4 at college called NE: right, he's ki:na mi mate now anyway he- he ONCE  
 5 said to me ah:m (1.0) that the problem with all- all you West Indians is that

- 6 yuh're all MONGRELS [ but- ] that yuh're descended from slaves an yuh're  
 7 Lo [Yeah]  
 8 Sh all mongrels cos yuh all have (.) WHITE ancestry. (.) so ah just looked at im  
 9 an ah said yeah so? like this yuh know, (.) °ah thought yuh CHEEKY  
 10 BASTARD°=  
 11 Lu =[[(.hhh .hhh)]]  
 12 Lo [They make ] an issue of it though don't they?=  
 13 Sh =YE:AH=  
 14 Lo =We had- we had a:h:m=  
 15 Sh =Ah was [ REALLY ANNOYED:]  
 ›16 Lo [We had this ] BLACK [ society ] or whatever at  
 17 Lu [Clears throat]  
 ›18 Lo COLLEGE (.) an we were- yuh nuh we were- °decidin° our na- we said why  
 19 can't we call ourselves AFRO CARIBBEAN [ or ] whatever it was at that time  
 20 Sh [Mhm]  
 21 Lo that was political ah can't remember=  
 22 Sh =Mhm=  
 23 Lo =An (.) NO YUH'RE NOT (.) YUH'RE NOTHIN TO DO WITH A:FRICAN (.)  
 24 [ yuh've ] YUH'RE NOTHIN YUH'RE NOT BLACK YUH LOT ARE:N'T  
 25 Sh [That's right]  
 26 Lo BLACK (.)  
 27 Sh It's AW:FUL isn't it that?=  
 ›28Lo An us lot were like WHAT they on about? yuh na:t ah mean?=  
 29 Sh =M[ hm ]  
 ›30Lo [Well] WE ARE BLACK [((.hhh .hhh )) ] an they- an they got °really really°  
 31 AGGRESSIVE an so EVERYbody [ just ] walked out of the meetin an there  
 32 Sh [Mhm]  
 33 Lo were FOUR of us who were like West Indian right? an the rest of em were  
 34 A:frican an we jus got up an WA:LKE:D out (1.5) an it wuh REA:LLY it took  
 35 us A:GE:S to get back into a meetin [ an so ]  
 36 Sh [Mhm ] well it would wouldn't it? (.)  
 37 Lo ((.hhh)) [ (.) ] AH COULDN BELIEVE IT THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I  
 38 Lu [ ((.hhh)) ]  
 39 Lo EVER CAME ACROSS IT THOUGH yuh're not Black=  
 40 Sh =O:h no I came across it quite a LOT in (.8) yuh know like [ NALGO] Black  
 41 Lo [Mhm ]  
 42 Sh Workers an all that=  
 43 Sa =Yeah?

There are several discourses of Black authenticity at play in this extract. These are based on the opposing points of view that Caribbeans are "proper Black" because putative white heritage does not make one less Black; and the right to be called Black is

based on origin in Africa. As for example 1, the initial claim in terms of positioning (lines 1-2) is made by Lo which then receives support from an interlocutor (lines 3-10), before a continuation of the story by Lo (lines 18-35) which includes her new addressivity.

This is mostly a conversation between Lo and Sh with minimal laughter from Lu at points. Lo starts with a claim of positioning that even though at her university there were so few Black people, African Black people would not associate with Caribbean heritage people, because they did not see the latter as properly Black. Sh produces a rather long latched turn, begun by an agreement and then immediately followed by a story about her experiences. This story is presented to Lo and the other interactants as a support for Lo's claim in the form of a reason why African people do not see Caribbeans as Black. That is, because of the possibility of their white ancestry resulting from the miscegenation of slave societies. Sh ends by repeating her derision towards Nee and therefore, this idea (lines 3-6 and 8-10). Lu laughs in support (line 11). Lo's turn, in partial overlap with this, supports Sh's view. Lo's turn also is about taking the same derisive point of view as Sh by asserting that Africans make an issue out of the possibility of white ancestry being enough to make Caribbeans as a whole not Black. Sh agrees with this assessment after which Lo attempts to begin a turn at talk.

However, Sh produces a latched turn at a hesitation point in Lo's turn which describes her emotional state at the time of the event, perhaps because such upset had not been attended to by her interlocutors (line 15). There is still no comment on the emotion

which underlay Sh's experience as Lo restarts her talk in overlap with this. Lo's turn is a continuation of her topic with her own example of how African Black people view Caribbeans. This talk continues the theme of Blackness as a category that Africans reserve for themselves. She expresses this through her loudly produced turn (lines 23,24 and 26) in which the African view of Caribbean people as not Black is also about us being "nothing to do with African" and in fact being "nothing". Sh's two agreements (lines 25 and 27) show her evaluation of the impact of this incident on Lo and her Caribbean colleagues. This evaluation (line 27) is responded to as such by Lo, rather than as a question which needs a reply, as Lo then goes on to speak about the amazement they felt at the time "an us lot were like what they on about yuh na:t ah mean?" [you know what I mean?] (line 28). This turn is her translation as reflexivity sequence as she shows her interlocutors the vast difference in perspective between Caribbeans and Africans.

This is followed by her assertion of Blackness as a new addressivity in opposition to the African positioning of nothingness "Well WE ARE BLACK" and an embarrassed laugh (line 30). After all of this context setting she introduces an 'us' and 'them' type of contestation by speaking about the impact of their outburst on 'us lot' (lines 30-35). The story represents a speaking back to the ideas of 'racial purity' as the only warrant for African-ness. She joins her re-assertion of Blackness to a portrayal of the African students as aggressive, which led to the West Indian students walking out of the meeting. So what started out as the need to establish an Afro-Caribbean Society/ Black Society for reasons of solidarity and proclaiming a Black presence on campus, became

a moment of deep division, based solely on African views of Caribbeans as not Black. Lo continues to speak about the impact of this on Caribbean people with Sh agreeing. She then produces a summary of her example (lines 37 and 39). This summary is used as the basis for Sh's next latched turn at talk on the same theme (line 40).

How can it be said in such an assertion of essence that hybridity is simultaneously present? What it is important for us to do is to look at the politics of naming in which Lo and Sh are engaging in opposition to the African students. The latter see 'purity of African blood' as the essential ingredient in Blackness. However, Lo and Sh are performing a Blackness in opposition to this, a speaking back and a repositioning of themselves as diasporic Black people who are Black because they are of Caribbean heritage. Who is authentically Black then is re-designed as "there are different ways to claim Blackness as a politics of skin". This in itself sets up the possibility of a multiplicity of Blackness within the sameness of Black skin.

Black skin can also be ambiguous, however, because of shade. Such ambiguity provides the possibility for other identifications if one chooses to pass or is passed by whiteness. In example 3, L speaks about the visibility but deniability of Blackness which exists for her as a 'mixed race' Black woman. The discourses being used here are those of 'race' as a genetic inheritance as opposed to 'race' as an identificatory choice.

Example 3- Tape 2 Side A LF:54-56

>1 L To me a:hm pt (.6) ESPECIALY ELDERLY WHITE PEOPLE o:h

2 yuh a:hm (.4) FI:RST they'll ask yuh what YUH ARE:=  
 3 Sh =Mhm (1.0)  
 >4 L So: the mere fact that they ask yuh what yuh are: means that they can  
 5 see that yuh're dif[ferent] that yuh're not like THEM=  
 6 Sh [Yeah ] =[°Yeah that's true°]  
 7 L [((.hhh.hhh .hhh)) ] an .hhh  
 >8 an then when yuh say ah'm BLA:CK, (.4)  
 9 Sh Yeah (.8)  
 10 L But yuh nuh, (.) what ah've said is °ah've got a white parent an a Bl[ack  
 11 Sh [Mh  
 12 L parent] but ah'm Black ° .hhh then they'll seh WELL YUH'RE NOT BLACK  
 13 Sh m:: ]  
 14 L RE:ALLY, an then they'll seh=  
 15 Sh=Mhm=  
 16 L = Well REA:LLY YUH KNOW YUH COULD MAYBE PASS FUH .hhh YUH NUH  
 17 PEOPLE HAVE SAID TUH MI AH LOOK ORIENTAL (.) people have asked mi if  
 18 ah've got Chinese in mah family =  
 19 Sh=Yeah =  
 20 L =They'd say ah look flamencoish (.) very Spanish=  
 21 Sh=Spanish yeah=  
 22 L =An [ stuff like that ] .hhh IT SEEMS AH CAN LOOK LIKE ANY:THIN yuh know  
 23 Sh [That is true ]  
 24 L but I'm jus BLACK

L shows her discursive positioning by the question from elderly white people who “first [...] ask what yuh are” (lines 1 and 2). This question in itself places her not as a person but as an object of curiosity. After Sh’s latched continuer there is a (1.0) pause, followed by L’s translation as reflexivity sequence “so the mere fact that they ask yuh what yuh are means that they can see that yuh’re different that yuh’re not like them” (lines 4 and 5). Sh agrees with L’s point of view on the reason for the question of “what are you?” before L then repositions herself as Black on line 8 following initial laughter. On lines 10 and 11 L qualifies her Blackness in terms of her heritage - “ah’ve got a white parent and a Black parent”- before again reiterating her position as a Black identified person “but ah’m Black”. She repositions herself therefore as choosing Blackness and continues this theme in the rest of the extract in which she relays



people's views of her as "not Black really", as oriental or Spanish because of her skin (lines 12-24). On line 24 in reasserting her re-positioning as "jus [just] Black" she reproduces the simple fact of her own Black politics and that of some of the Black community, that irrespective of white heritage Blackness can be unproblematically claimed. In doing this she denies the centrality of purity of 'race' as the sole criterion of identification and instead asserts the centrality of consciousness of 'race' in Black identifications. This is the nature of her new addressivity.

Example 4 follows the conversation of the previous extract. Here LF also speaks in terms of Black identity as being about consciousness of 'race' irrespective of shade. She does this by replaying for us an encounter with a Black woman in which she emphasizes her own Afro-centricity in contrast with the woman being spoken about. The discourse of Blackness that she draws on is that Blackness is not solely about the darkness of one's skin, rather it is about being proud of being African-centred. Added to this, it is therefore not necessary to reassure white people who might be uneasy about such an open identification with Afrocentricity. What she does in the telling in terms of developing a critical ontology of the self is that she narrates herself as someone who chooses a space of otherness from those Black people who are 'coconuts'. That is, those who are Black but with an assimilated 'white consciousness' so are afraid to embrace our African origins and who only feel comfortable as assimilated Black English. In choosing this space of otherness she reflexively translates herself as someone satisfied with her position on the margins, in fact, as someone who performs her marginality through the bodily practice of wearing an African headwrap. However, this marginality also speaks the centrality of African essence in Black consciousness. In this

telling she speaks of herself as occupying the hybrid space of double consciousness (white and Black as essences), in which she embodies her speaking back to these discourses of containment. Her speaking back to assimilated Blackness though is not that of making it absolutely abject. Rather, it is one based on showing critique alongside forgiveness for lack of Black awareness. This intimates some level of solidarity based on skin whilst acknowledging that individuals will have different politics because of assimilatory pressures.

Example 4 -Tape 2 Side A LF: 58-60

- 1 L .hhh Ah was walkin in town an ah met a Black (.6) girl who ah used to go to  
 2 school we were friends fuh year[s she's ] Mike's godmother an I'm  
 3 Sh [Mhm ]  
 4 L godmother to her S:ON=  
 5 Sh =Oh right=  
 >6 L =But she's totally submerged in (.6) white culture [ an ] yuh na:t ah mean, an  
 7 Sh [Mhm]  
 8 L stuff like that an that's why ah get annoyed when some pe- when some  
 >9 Black people say to me: ah've (.7) just found mi Blackness cos [people]  
 10 Sh [Yeah ]  
 >11 L BLACK LIKE THAT [ AN ] THEY'RE CO:CONUTS [yuh na:t ah mean,]  
 12 Sh [Yeah ] [Ye:s ah know ]  
 >13 L SO DON'T ATTRIBUTE IT TO THE SH[A:DE] OF MAH BLACKNESS  
 14 Sh [Mhm ]  
 >15 L [ AH'M ] BLACK IT'S NOT DOWN TO HOW MUCH MELANIN [ AH'VE ] GOT  
 16 Sh [Mhm ] [Mhm ]  
 >17 L d'yuh na:t ah mean? an she sehs to mi WHAT'S THAT STUPID THING  
 18 yuh've got on yuh hea:d?=  
 19 Sh =Did she?=  
 20 L =Yes she did (.6)  
 21 Sh °Flippin°[ heck ]  
 22 L [She di:d] an ah thought yuh st- but yuh have to- yuh have to be  
 23 rea:lly forgivin an think °it's just ignorance°=  
 24 Sh =Mhm=  
 25 L =D'yuh na:t ah mean?=  
 26 Sh =Yeah=  
 27 L =But at one time ah could ah got rea:lly hostile about it BUT AH THINK NO:  
 28 jus- yuh know, like FORGIVE THEM [ THE:Y ] KNOW NOT WHAT THEY  
 29 Sh [Yeah ]  
 30 L SA:Y=  
 31 Sh =Yea:h=

- 32 L =D'yuh na:t ah mean? WHAT'S THAT- yuh know but nobody white'd say-  
 33 she wuh with a white girl that never said anythin,=  
 34 Sh =Go:[ sh: ]  
 35 L [But ] she said what's that stu:pid thing yuh've got on your head yuh  
 36 know as if she had to .hhh IMMEDIATELY (1.0) a:hm assure this white person  
 37 that SHE: WOULD NEVER wear [ anyth]in like that =  
 38 Sh [Yeah ] =But a LOT of Black people  
 39 don't want to (.) own up to Africanness though=  
 40 L =No: they don't especially elderly=  
 41 Sh =Yeah=  
 42 L =Don't call me: African=  
 43 Sh =Yea:h that's right=  
 44 L =I'nt it?=  
 45 Sh =That's right=  
 46 L =Yuh na: ah mean? so:=  
 47 Sh =°Yeah°

The structure of this claim to Blackness is different from the examples so far because to begin, with a character reference is established for another Black person (lines 6-11). This character reference also contains her translation as reflexivity sequence that positions her within discourses of “the ‘mixed race’ condition” “that’s why ah get annoyed when some [...] when some Black people say to me ah’ve [...] just found mi Blackness cos people Black like that an they’re coconuts” (lines 8, 9 and 11) . This is boundaried off by “yuh na:t ah mean,” before she produces her new addressivity “so don’t attribute it to the shade of mah Blackness ah’m Black it’s not down to how much melanin ah’ve got” (lines 13 and 15). Following this she goes back to the character reference for the woman who used to be her friend to show her lack of Afro-centric awareness as opposed to her own. Next there is an agreement sequence after S’s uptake of the topic of denial of African-ness by Caribbeans (lines 38-46).

To flesh out this structure then. L spends some time initially establishing two things about her protagonist. First, they used to be close friends to the extent of being godmothers for each other's children. Second, that this person is submerged in white culture. The first was important to establish in order to produce the assessment in a way which could not be challenged by Sh. She then goes on to the point of her story, that is, her claim to Blackness. This claim is connected to her politics being undermined by darker skinned Black people who say that she has just found her Blackness. In this way she is positioned outside of Blackness. After her translation as reflexivity sequence in which she positions her detractors as "coconuts" the second part of the claim is based clearly on her assertion of her own Blackness irrespective of shade. In this new addressivity which she has established, Blackness for her is not about the amount of melanin one has but about consciousness. She goes on to demonstrate this in her replay of her interaction with her past friend who ridicules her headwrap, along with her interpretation of this as being to do with her former friend's coconut status, "she said what's that stupid thing yuh've got on your head yuh know as if she had to [...] immediately [...] assure this white person that she would never wear anything like that" (lines 17-18 and 35-36). Sh agrees with L's assessment in overlap and then in a latched turn translates the relevance of L's claim to Blackness to the wider Black community thus, "But a lot of Black people don't want to own up to Africanness though" (lines 37-38). This is then the focus of an agreement sequence before talk shifts to talking about ethnicity categories.

Let us now move to looking at some more examples of the use of the binaries Black and white in identity making in the talk of a 'mixed race' research participant.

If you're not white you're Black

Example 5 was preceded by talk by LF in which she asserts that she refuses to go along with what people want her to be whilst at the same time denying herself her chosen identity as Black. This extract has been included because of its stress on genetics in the making of a claim to Blackness by a 'mixed race' Black woman. This focus on genetics is used in order to build up a case for her right to claim a place with her "own people" and to justify her claim to Blackness irrespective of her 'mixed race' category ascription. L both draws on and remakes the discourse of 'I am Black irrespective of ancestry' which is a recurrent theme in the interactions, through the use of the notions of Blackness as a genetic inheritance and Blackness as a choice to make based on consciousness. She does this by using two positioning and repositioning sequences in her talk.

First her positioning as being placed outside Blackness also establishes her claim to Blackness in "sometimes it's your own people that attack yuh the most" (lines 1 and 2). Sh agrees with this before L's translation as reflexivity sequence "that's where ah'm comfortable ah'm comfortable around Black people" (lines 4-6). A repositioning with the cliché "I identify as being totally Black" (line 6) then produces a new addressivity. Last she provides arguments to support her re-positioning of herself as Black. These arguments to support her claim to Blackness deserve some detailed attention. Her first

example is based around her assertion that Black identity is what she has chosen as a 'mixed race' woman. In doing this she positions other 'mixed race' people (lines 9-11) as not being like her. This is so as they "don't take the standpoint I take they would not choose they would say I'm mixed race an that is it an they would see that if yuh choose one or the other then yuh're denyin half ah yuhself". She then locates her own position in relation to this in a translation as reflexivity sequence "I don't see it like that" (line 14). After an agreement from Sh (lines 15-16), L reasserts her claim to Blackness through positioning herself with the cliché "ah'm Black" (line 17). Through this cliché she establishes a new addressivity. The second example she uses is based around Black identity not being a choice because of the dominance of the Black gene. She positions 'mixed race' people as Black because of the Black gene (lines 24-37), which is followed by Sh's agreement "yuh can have a Black child", before she reiterates her assertion about the dominance of the Black gene "yuh na:t ah mean yuh're gonna have a Black child" (line 39). She therefore locates identity as being to do with genes and environment.

Example 5- Tape 1 Side A LF: 22-24

1 L BUT (.3) a:hm (.) sometimes it's your OWN PEOPLE that attack yuh the mo:st  
 2 ((.hh[h .hhh ])) ] yuh na:t ah mean?=  
 3 Sh [O:h ah know] =((\*Ah know it [is ])) ]  
 4 L [They] attack yuh the  
 5 MOST [ but ] (.4) THAT'S where ah'm COMFORTABLE ah'm comfortable  
 6 around Black people I identify as bein TOTALLY BLACK=  
 7 Sh =°Mhm°=  
 >8 L=Technically I am mixed race I have got a Cauca:sian parent an .hhh  
 9 I have mixed race friends who DON'T take the standpoint that [I ] take  
 10 Sh [Mhm]  
 11 L THEY WOULD NOT CHOOSE THEY WOULD SAY I'M mixed race an that  
 12 is i:t [ .hhh ] an they would see that if yuh choose one or the other then  
 13 Sh [Mhm ]

- >14 L yuh're denyin half ah [ yuh self ] I don't see: it like that?=  
 15 Sh [Mhm ] =No I don't ah must  
 16 admit=  
 >17 L =Ah don't °see° it like that? ah'm BLACK [.hhh ] and: (.7) ah:m [ (.) ] I believe  
 18 Sh [Mhm ] [Mhm]  
 19 L that most rix- mixed race people if they were left on their o:wn and NOT  
 20 INFLUENCED,=  
 21 Sh =Mhm=  
 22 L =THEY would gravitate more towards the BI[ack side] BECOS whether yuh  
 23 Sh [Mhm ]  
 24 L want to get scientific about it or technical a:hm ge- in GENETICS the BLACK  
 25 GENE is DOMINANT=  
 26 Sh =Mhm=  
 27 L =An the WHITE GENE is RECESSIVE=  
 28 Sh =Mhm=  
 29 L =Yuh know?=  
 30 Sh =Mhm=  
 31 L =An DOMINANT means STRONG [reces]sive means WE:AK:=  
 32 Sh [Mhm ] =Mhm=  
 33 L =So: it doesn't matter whether you have a BLACK woman an a white man (.)=  
 34 Sh = Mhm (.7)  
 35 L Or a BLACK man an a white woman=  
 36 Sh =Mhm=  
 37 L =YO:U are goin to have a child of colour, (.)  
 38 Sh °Yuh can have a Black child°=  
 >39 L =Yuh na:t ah mean? yuh are gonna have a Black child=  
 40 Sh =Absolutely=  
 41 L =Becos the Black gene is dominant whether it's the male or the [fe:male ]  
 42 Sh [Mhm mhm]  
 43 L an so: yuh know? I think there's le:ssons in that an .hhh not only that  
 44 SOCIETY AS A WHOLE sees you: as a BLACK per[son ] yuh [na:t ah ] mean,  
 45 Sh [Mhm] [Absolutely]  
 46 L [.hhh ] they see yuh as DIFFERENT [an ]  
 47 Sh [Absolutely] [Mhm]

In terms of her views on 'the dominant Black gene' though, both interactants enter an agreement sequence around what kind of a child will be born from Black and white parents. That is, a Black child. Nothing more, nor less. Through this sequence L is continuing her own claim to Blackness based on this example whose upshot is "You are goin to have a child of colour" (line 37). I spoke above of L's assertion that identity is a result of the interaction of genes and environment. She translates the significance of her

example in this regard for us by saying "I think that there's lessons in that [...] not only that society as a whole sees you as a Black person". So, for her, to be Black is not just dependent on society seeing us as Black but also us as Black people acknowledging our Blackness irrespective of being 'mixed race' because of our genetic inheritance. What is happening in this interaction is that L and Sh are carving out a positionality which is one in which Black 'mixed race' people cannot be excluded from the category Black because of their heritage, but must be included in spite of it. This position is an important one given the historical and continuing debate about Black 'mixed race' people as 'hybrid', 'not quite Black', 'half-caste', 'in-between' people who occupy a no-person's land between Blackness and whiteness. That is, people who are nowhere and nothing. L positions herself *somewhere*, that is, within Blackness which is where she feels comfortable. In making this claim of belonging, of being totally Black she draws very powerfully on discourses of 'the mixed race condition of confusion' and Blackness as certainty in essence, in the form of genetics, to support her claim. Once again then an example of hybridity as a negotiation of discourses of the 'mixed race person' using a recourse to 'race' essence to produce such a re-positioning.

Example 6 follows talk by LF in which she has been speaking about her experiences of visiting the Caribbean and New York where people did not think that she was 'mixed race' just light skinned and did not place her outside of Blackness because of this. She saw this as being different from her experiences of not being considered Black in Britain. The extract then is an example from her own experience to support her assertion.



Example 6- Tape I Side A LF: 31-34

- 1 L Ah'm not an ((^apologist fuh white people))=  
 2 Sh =Mhm mhm =  
 3 L =Yuh na:t ah mean?=  
 4 Sh = Mhm =  
 5 L =An some people say how can you: be how g- how can you: sa:y some of the  
 6 things yuh sa:y L because when ah see: injustice an stuff like that I  
 7 spe:ak about it=  
 8 Sh =Mhm=  
 9 L =People say well how can y- AN I TALK VERY STRONGLY [ yuh ] know ah  
 10 Sh [Mhm]  
 ›11 L DON'T mince mah words an stuff an they seh to mi .hhh we:ll how can yuh  
 ›12 ta:lk like that when yuh've got a white pa:rent ah said havin a white pa:rent  
 ›13 dun't change my reality [ ah ] said ah'm a Black woman,=  
 14 Sh [Yeah] =That's right=  
 ›15 L =Ah said I: could bi trav- I could travel with my mother to Spain next week  
 16 Shirley an wi get to Customs they'll let her through=  
 17 Sh =Ehm=  
 18 L =An they'll stop me=  
 19 Sh =Ehm=  
 20 L =Cos statistics show that one in s- seventy Black people they stop one in two  
 21 thousand Caucasians=  
 22 Sh =Mhm=  
 ›23 L =Yuh know THE FIGURES .hhh SO: HAVIN A WHITE MOTHER don't protect  
 ›24 me [ in ] this society [ SO: ] ah might as well jus own up to the fact=  
 25 Sh [((.hhh))] =°Jus bi yuh man,°=  
 ›26 L =Jus bi ME:=  
 27 Sh =Mhm=  
 28 L =An IDENTIFY WI BEIN BLACK BECOS [.hhh ] if I: see mahself as white  
 29 Sh [Mhm]  
 30 L ah'm gonna have a re:ally bg PROBLEM,=  
 31 Sh =Mhm=  
 32 L =Becos people aren't gonna bi able to see mi as white?=

The discourse being used and established above is that of an unambiguous claim to Blackness irrespective of heritage because at the everyday level colour counts. The structure of this identity claim is slightly different from the others looked at above as she begins by producing the character reference for herself "ah'm not an apologist for white people" (line 1). This character reference then forms the basis for her identity

positionings as the conversation progresses. She speaks of herself as being positioned by "some people" who ask her "how can you say some of the things yuh say L [...] how can yuh talk like that when yuh've got a white parent" (lines 5-12). LF then goes into a translation as reflexivity sequence without a prior agreement from her interlocutor which she presents as a reply to her positioning "havin a white parent dun't change my reality" (lines 12 and 13). Sh's overlapping agreement follows, as LF continues to talk (line 14). LF then re-positions herself and produces a new addressivity in opposition to being positioned because of her heritage through the cliché "I am a Black woman" (line 13). S produces a latched agreement "that's right" and L follows this with an example to support her re-positioning (lines 15-23), before reiterating the necessity to claim Blackness irrespective of heritage (lines 23-32) because of the impact of 'race' on her daily life.

The example used by LF to support her re-positioning is based around the treatment of Black people at the hands of the state in terms of immigration. So, this is about her being positioned as Black by the State as she would also face this treatment irrespective of her white mother. This latter is shown when L then begins a summing up to her claim based on her recycling of her previous theme that "havin a white parent dun't change my reality", this time saying "so having a white mother don't protect me in this society". In this way she repeats the earlier translation as reflexivity sequence. This gets a laugh in agreement from Sh. L states what the upshot of her positioning by the state is in terms of her own identification, "so ah might as well just own up to the fact" of Blackness as it is a necessary choice given the reality of Blackness. This is itself a continuation of her new addressivity. Sh agrees with this in her latched comment "Jus bi

yuh man", to which L agrees with a recycling of Sh's turn "Jus bi me". L then proceeds after Sh's continuer to say what just being me is all about and so continues her addressivity sequence. That is, identifying with being Black, as after all colour counts and if she sees herself as white then she will "have a really big problem". In seeing colour as being significant for 'mixed race' people as a marker of 'race' L uses essence to get to a hybrid positioning in opposition to those people who think that it is strange that she can speak out so forcefully against injustice as a 'mixed race' woman.

The discussion of the extracts above has highlighted the interactional construction of distance from whiteness, that is the abjection of whiteness, as a signifier of Blackness. Indeed, distance from whiteness is sought irrespective of having a white parent in some of the extracts. The next section takes this distancing as the theme as we turn to look at how interactants construct the need for distance from whiteness in order for Black identity claims to be made.

#### Distance from whiteness is important- critiquing assimilation

Extract 7 follows a conversation between Sh and LF in which the latter has stated that because she is so rooted in Blackness as a 'race' and a culture, she could never marry or have a relationship outside of the Black community. As a part of this she mentioned that she wears African head-wraps, which is where we pick up the conversation.

#### Example 7- Tape 1 Side A LF: 2-4

- 1 Sh Yuh say yuh wraps then I'm interested in yuh African wraps becos [like (.) ]  
 2 L [ .hhh ]

- ›3 Sh I've never [seen yuh with one before yuh know,]  
 ›4 L [It's funny yuh should say that ] o:h ah wear em a:ll the  
 ›5 time now [yuh know] yeah ah wear em to work now yeah=  
 6 Sh [Really? ] = Oh right=  
 7 L =Yeah ah wear em to work an that=  
 8 Sh =°Oh right°=  
 ›9 L =Ah'm MAKIN a STATEMENT (.) I'm goin back to my a:h: .hhh CULTURAL  
 10 IDENTITY an that=  
 11 Sh =Mh[m ]  
 12 L [Ah'm] SICK ah WESTERN influences an stuff like that [°Shirley°] ah  
 13 Sh [Mhm ]  
 14 L jus wanna .hhh AH WANNA BE ME:: AH DON'T WANNA HAVE TO  
 15 CONFORM TO WHAT SOMEONE'S CONSTRUCTED FUH MI=  
 16 Sh =Mhm=  
 17 L =AN AH THINK OUR CULTURE IS SO: BEAUTIFUL .hhh WE'VE BEEN  
 18 MADE TO HATE IT FOR SO: LONG [ yuh know?] WHICH WE'RE RUNNIN  
 19 AWAY FULL SPEED FROM .hhh (.3) AFRI:CAN stuff and den- and I LO:VE it I  
 20 love the carvins ah love African drum music [(.) ] ah've got two BEAUTIFUL  
 21 Sh [Mhm]  
 22 L AFRICAN ah:m ROBES I'll bi [ wearin ] one to this presenta:tion next week=  
 23 Sh [Have yuh?] =Mhm=  
 24 L =An ah wear a wrap a lo:t=  
 25 Sh =Mhm=  
 26 L =Yuh na:t ah mean? .hhh an like a:h have yuh seen Erykah Badu the- the  
 27 o:h man wonderful

The discourses of Blackness being used by L centre on two things. First, the need to celebrate our African cultural traditions and roots as diasporic Black people rather than “runnin away full speed from [...] African stuff” (lines 18-19) and, second, the negation of one's African-ness which results from living ‘the self’ which has been constructed by Western influences (lines 12, 14 and 15). This example differs slightly from the others above in that the earlier extracts have been based on a speaker's report of being positioned by others. However, here we see such a positioning being accomplished by Sh on lines 1 and 2 when she states that she has “never seen [L] with one [i.e. a head wrap] before”. So Sh positions L as someone who does not assert her African-ness through wearing head wraps.

L asserts the everydayness of her bodily practice of wearing headwraps in her translation as reflexivity sequence (line 4) and then proceeds to translate the relevance of this bodily practice in terms of identity “ah’m makin a statement [...] I’m goin back to my [...] cultural identity” (lines 9,10,12,14 and 15). Last, she establishes a new addressivity as she goes on to claim aspects of African culture as her own (lines 17-24). L thus, in this claim, talks about the use of headwraps as a performance of difference from ‘the West’ which we could read as whiteness. In creating this distance of difference she also performs a strategic act of hybrid political identification. She translates for us the relevance of this bodily practice as her public statement of her return to her cultural identity rather than that identity which has been constructed for her by Western influences and in doing this establishes distance from whiteness. She then provides other reasons on the level of the beauty of “our African culture” (line 17-22) for her strategic hybrid performance, even whilst simultaneously using essentialized ideas about culture. What she also does is establish a character reference for herself as an aware Black woman by comparing herself to those other Black people who are running away from Blackness, whereas she is embracing it.

Example 8 next, is the continuation of a conversation in which L has been talking about the use of chromatism<sup>4</sup> in slave societies to divide Black people which shows her understanding of the historical root of the problem which she then discusses in the extract. The talk on positioning from L is about the understandable hostility that ‘mixed

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<sup>4</sup> Chromatism refers to colour consciousness. During slavery in the Caribbean, societies were established in which light skin and white ancestry meant privilege and the possibility to become free.

race' people sometimes experience from other Black people because they believe they "are [...] in a [...] more elevated position than somebody that's dark skinned" (lines 1-6). Through saying "wi deserve the hostility" she also places herself within this group because of her skin and therefore assumes this positioning. In her translation as reflexivity sequence she claims to "understand that" but at the same time will not let it "deny [her] where [she] want[s] to be" (lines 8,9 and 11). That is, within the Black community which is where she feels comfortable. This is how she begins to show distance from whiteness. The repositioning as Black made by L here is based on a centering of herself as a Black woman who "moves totally in Black circles" with every sphere<sup>5</sup> of her life being "from a Black perspective" (lines 12 and 14).

This new addressivity continues to show distance from whiteness, which is reinforced when she goes on to provide examples of aspects of her cultural and community life, theatre, music and friendships, which for her revolve around Blackness. Through this she establishes herself as a 'mixed race' woman who does not feel the privilege of 'skin' that others feel, refuses to live within whiteness but chooses Blackness instead. Sh agrees throughout or provides continuers for L's talk. L's position on friendships is interesting here, as she introduces a potential source of contention into her talk. That is, her right to discriminate outside of work in terms of who she spends her time with. After this admission she pauses briefly and Sh produces a "Yeah" during this micro-pause. L then goes on to translate for Sh what she means by discrimination just to be sure that it

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<sup>5</sup> She says "spear" in the interaction but this is probably a slip of the tongue.

is understood that for her discrimination is not about "bein disrespectful or harmin other people". It is merely choosing to spend time within Black community and with Black people, as far as is possible. This example further demonstrates her distancing of herself from whiteness.

The discourses being developed are those based on Blackness as culture and community and living in Black community as a choice based on consciousness and comfort. Hybridity arises in establishing herself as the other of whiteness through choosing to participate in Black cultural practices and productions predominantly and choosing to have only Black friends. She justifies her friendship choices, as this could be potentially contentious, by talking about it as her right to discriminate in terms of who she spends her non-work time with. Her point of view is that she has to work with white people but she doesn't have to socialize with them. She is, therefore, someone who performs herself as deciding on her right to Black spaces in a white world and then actively constructing that for herself.

Example 8- Tape 1 Side A LF: 17-20

- >1 L An SOME m- SOME mixed race people DO ACHSHALLY BELI:EVE that they are  
 2 a:hm in a- in a (.4) more ELEVATED position [ than ] somebody that's DARK  
 3 Sh [ Mhm ]  
 4 L skinned [ and ] (.4) so: SOMETIMES WI DESERVE the HOS[TILITY] d'yuh na:t  
 5 Sh [Mhm ]  
 6 L ah mean?=  
 7 Sh =Mhm=  
 >8 L =Ah can .hhh UNDERSTAND THAT .hhh BUT .hhh ah- ah'm not gonna let THAT  
 9 deny me: where I want to be: [an ] where I feel com[fortable] an I feel .hhh  
 10 Sh [Yeah] [Yeah ]  
 >11L so:: COMFORTABLE in Black community, I've got to a stage now Shirley where  
 12 I'm gonna be thirty four next month [right? ] .hhh and I (.) move TO:TALLY (.) in  
 13 Sh [Uhuh ]  
 14 L Black circles .hhh EVERY SPEAR OF MY LIFE is (.7) within a Black e:hm pt

- 15 perspective, [.hhh ] I very rarely go to white theatre I DO NOW AND AGAIN  
 16 Sh [Mhm ]  
 17 L becos ah'm interested in SCRIPT WRITIN an stuff like that [ suh ] yuh have to  
 18 Sh [Right]  
 19 L go an=  
 20 Sh =Ye[ah ]  
 21 L [See] every[body's work ] but it's PREDOMINANTLY BLACK theatre  
 22 Sh [See other things]  
 23 L that ah go an see=  
 24 Sh =Mhm=  
 25 L =Ah very RARELY go to the cinema unless it's a Black mo:vie,=  
 26 Sh =Mhm=  
 27 L =Although there are exceptions, .hhh I: (.5) if I were to go out an dance an stuff  
 28 which I don't do very much of now, it would be: where I kne:w for a fact we were  
 29 gonna get Black music [AND ] NOT ONLY WERE IT GONNA BE BLACK  
 30 Sh [Mhm]  
 31 L music but there were gonna be Black people there: [.hhh ]  
 32 Sh [Mhm mhm]  
 33 L Yuh na:t ah mean? ah::m mah FRIENDS, (.)  
 34 Sh Mhm (.3)  
 35 L Ah have COLLEAGUES that are white, =  
 36 Sh =Yeah=  
 37 L =But in mah OWN time (.) ah discriminate [ (.) ] YUH KNOW, AH  
 38 Sh [Yeah]  
 39 L DON'T THINK [THERE'S ] NOUGHT WRONG WI DISCRIMINATION  
 40 Sh [°Yeah yeah°]  
 41 L AS LONG AS YUH NOT .hhh ah:: bein disrespectful or harmin other people?=  
 42 Sh =Yeah=  
 43 L =OUTSIDE AH WORK I DO DISCRIMINATE AH THINK this is my time [ an ]  
 44 Sh [Mhm]  
 45 L ah spend it with whoever I want to [I don't] have the CHOICE when I'm at work  
 46 Sh [°Mhm°]  
 47 L [I ] have to work with (.) white people [an ] stuff like that  
 48 Sh [Mhm] [Mhm]

The interaction in example 9 is an after dinner conversation in which the women are reminiscing about their childhoods and what it was like for them to grow up in Britain. As for the extract above in which LF talks about her use of a head wrap to show Afrocentricity, this is also about claiming Blackness through bodily practices. Sa in her talk uses the discourse of Black naturalness in terms of beauty through the signifier 'hair' as



a marker of assimilation or distancing from whiteness (lines 1-18 and 29-34). Natural hair is performed as about being authentically Black (lines 25,26,27,29 and 30). Linked to this is another discourse, that is, that celebrating natural Blackness as a bodily practice needs a Black community in order to flourish (lines 36-38). Hybridity is very clearly shown here as a speaking back to the assimilatory pressures of whiteness from the double consciousness produced by occupying both a Black and white world simultaneously as Sa claims Blackness by talking about her change from hot combing to plaiting her hair. The structure is one in which Sa positions herself initially as assimilating to whiteness (lines 1-7). Je continues this positioning in her talk on emulating white hair (lines 8,9 and 14) and in so doing includes the wider Black community in this form of assimilation. Sa then reflexively translates the relevance of her hair plaiting as her trying to become a Black woman without shame because of her hair (lines 29,32 and 34). Then she repositions herself then (and now) as someone who needs to be within a Black community in order not to feel the shame which whiteness's discipline of hair would dictate (lines 36-38).

Example 9- Tape 1 Side A Je,Sa,Sh: 65-69

- >1 Sa Ah dun know REALLY ah jus always try to be the SA:ME as them ah  
 2 used to go home an wish mah h- an wish ah was [ (.4 ) AH ALWAYS TRY TO  
 3 Je [Mhm]  
 4 Sa BE THE SA:ME AS THEM AN TRY TO NE- PO- HO- CO- yuh know HOT  
 5 co:mb mah hai:r, (1.1) yuh kno:w, h- =  
 6 Sh =O:h yuh did, [ yuh HOT ] cuo:m, mhm:=  
 7 Sa [ Yeah ] =HOT co:mb mah hai:r, (.8)  
 8 Je Didn't yuh used to put JUMPERS on yuh head?=  
 9 Sa =°Jumpers?°=  
 10 Je =An use- an use it as a-  
 11 Sa =O:h ah was much younger then wasn't it- ah was- ah was like (.4)  
 12 [ PRIMARY ] SCHOOL days yeah =  
 13 Sh [ How o:l ]  
 >14Je =Ah'm just say:in that ((\*wi all EMUlated

15 that didn't, ))=  
 16 Sh = [ °Mhm° ]  
 17 Sa [ YEAH ]=  
 18 Je =((\*Na:t ah mean?))=  
 19 Sa =Yeah primary school age like i- like when ah was at HIGH school ah  
 20 used to try an HOT COMB mah hair an stuff like this an the moment ah  
 21 STOPPED doin that ah thought ah'm gonna PLAIT mah ha:ir: (.3)  
 22 Je Mhm=  
 23 Sa =Cos it was all AFRO: or combin it back yuh know, or whate:ver,=  
 24 Je =Mhm=  
 25 Sa =Ah never PLAITED it (.8) this time ah plaited it an ah was so: emba- ah  
 26 was jus so: (1.1) cos ah like plait mah hair at HOME but ah thought ah  
 27 wanna go to school an ah do:n care? yuh know?=  
 28 Je =Mhm=

Sa continues to talk about going to school with her hair in plaits and the negative reaction of her white school-mates. She then goes on to talk about hating her school and still having nightmares about it before this:

>29 Sa =BUT like that was- (.5) that was me tryin- bein tryin- bein- tryin- BEin a  
 30 BLA:CK woman,=  
 31 Je =[Mhm]  
 32 Sa [An ] not bein ashamed of bein a Black woman kind of thing?=  
 33 Sh =Mhm:=  
 34 Sa = A BLA:CK GIRL ah suppose at the time. (.3)  
 35 Je =Mhm=  
 >36 Sa =Cos- cos ah think if ah was at school in- if ah was at school in a:h:m: in-  
 37 in CHAPELTOWN for example ah THINK or Lee- or ROUND here (.7) ah  
 38 wouldn't be ashamed about mah hair in plaits,=  
 39 Je =Mhm=  
 40 Sh =No yuh wouldn't would yuh?=  
 41 Sa =°Ah [ wouldn't,°]  
 42 Sh [That's ] tru:e (1.1)  
 43 Sa There's NO ONE to- THERE'S NO MODELS IN A- there's NO- NOBODY  
 44 THERE to sort of (.7) to sort of sh- to sort of (1.2) there's no IMAGES there  
 45 for me to like EMULATE at all=  
 46 Je =Mhm:  
 47 (3.1)  
 48 Je °Stra:nge°  
 49 (2.0)  
 50 Je It's not stra:nge rea:lly, (.8)  
 51 Sh °Ah think it was quite common°

The interactants all participate in the sequence on position in which Sa begins by performing what seems to be a confession (lines 1-5). I say a confession because she waits for (1.1) seconds after she admitted what she had done, then when no response is forthcoming attempts to get one by saying “yuh know” and cutting off on what would have probably been “hot combing”. Listening to the tape I get a feeling that she is ashamed of the fact that she used to try and alter the natural texture of her hair. All she gets from Sh though is a latched clarification sequence to which she agrees, before she does a repeat of her action. After a (.8) pause Je gives her own example of emulating whiteness in terms of hair in “Didn't yuh use to put jumpers on yuh head?” (line 8). The implication here is that these jumpers doubled for the long straight hair of whiteness which was desired in their youth. Her turn at talk then ensures that Sa knows that she was not alone as a child emulating whiteness through the signifier of hair as “wi all emulated that didn wi?” (lines 14 and 15). The three interactants subsequently engage in a very tightly organized agreement sequence which ends with Je's smiley voiced agreement “Na:t ah mean?”. Sa begins to speak about making a choice between straightened hair and plaiting her natural afro hair for school. That is, she represents herself as someone who risked taking a cultural practice usually reserved for home into the public domain of her predominantly white school. She has a negative reaction to the new her from her school-mates and later in the conversation she reflexively translates for us the relevance of her action at that time. It was her way of performing herself as a Black woman/ girl at that time in her life.

She goes on to place her shame as a child onto the requirements of whiteness to be as assimilated as possible, even if that means changing your hair texture. In her view if she had been located in a school with more Black students her hair in plaits would not have been problematically a source of shame. This is her repositioning of herself as a Black identified woman. Je (line 39) agrees with this evaluation, as does Sh (line 40) who asks for reconfirmation of that point of view. Sa provides this and Sh produces an agreement (line 42). This agreement sequence helps us to see the unproblematic acceptance by the speakers of a notion of Blackness as something that needs to be nurtured in community with other Black people. The reason for this is then given by Sa in her turn where she rehearses the necessity for Black role models/images for us to emulate as Black women, which are not available in predominantly white environments (lines 43-45). Je then enters into an interesting sequence, by first agreeing with Sa, waiting (3.1) seconds before her evaluative "strange" (line 48) and then after a (2.0) pause contradicting herself by saying "it's not strange really" (line 50). When it is obvious that she won't say anything else, Sh agrees with her last turn at talk by asserting that Sa's experiences of a lack of role models 'was quite common' in terms of the experiences of other Black people. After this turn, Je begins talk on her own 'hair experience' at school.

I have mentioned the use of character references by speakers above. I would now like to move to look at some more examples of these.

### Why can't they be Black like me?- character references in claiming Blackness

In interactions in which Blackness is constructed character references are often used to establish oneself as more Black or more authentically Black than others. Such character

references are generally performed as oppositional to the positions of other Black people. These latter are constructed as being negative or in some way lacking. Character references then are assertions of one's identification at that point in the talk.

LF has been talking before extract 10 about the difficulties that 'mixed race' children face growing up with white mothers who know nothing about skin or hair care for Black people and whose fathers are largely absent so that they can't instill Black culture into the child. The claim to Blackness here takes the form of a character reference in which L produces a hybrid positioning through establishing Blackness for her as being to do with anti-racist politics rather than just the prevailing Pan-Caribbeanized Black British culture. Once again then the discourse of Blackness as consciousness is being used. Her claim to Blackness- with agreements from Sh- begins to be made through her assertion that Black identity is being reduced to food and Carnival and that that makes her angry (lines 1-2, 4 and 6). This positions other Black people as inauthentic and she goes on to reinforce this in her derision of them on lines 8, 10 and 12. She places herself as a Black woman through her translation as reflexivity turn "Ah think yuh nuh? wi wanna wake up yuh know" (line 14), which is followed by Sh's continuer. She then shows herself as someone who is awake to the problem by establishing a new addressivity for herself in opposition in terms of her politics (lines 16-17). That is, as someone who does not relate race and culture solely to food. Sh agrees with her position with "Good for you" followed by laughter, before L goes on to talk about what she will put in her presentation as an example of her new positioning (lines 19 and 20). This makes obvious to us that for her Black identity and culture cannot be divorced from the history of slavery and exploitation which Caribbean heritage people have in

common. After some talk on the spirituality of Blackness, Black music and politics, immigration and the Black experience generally, L again locates herself as Black through "our people" when she re-affirms her political position to not reproduce Black people as food and carnival "Because I'm not reducin our people to a:h rice an peas on a Sunday an carnival once a year" (lines 21-28).

Example 10- Tape I Side B LF: 36-38

- ›1 L Yuh nuh .hhh it rea:lly angers mi becos BLACK: IDENTITY AND CULTURE  
 2 is bein reduced to rice an peas on a Sunday an a piece ah chicken=  
 3 Sh = Yea[ h °ah know° ]  
 4 L [An CA:RNIVAL] once a year=  
 5 Sh =Ah know=  
 6 L =AN- an that REA:LLY ANGERS MI:=  
 7 Sh =Mhm=  
 8 L =((+Yeah man my children have dem rice an peas on a Su-)) [ .hhh ] IS THAT  
 9 Sh [Mhm ]  
 10 L IT? [IS ] THAT- IS THAT WHAT WI AMOUNT TO? [ (.) ] RICE AN PEA:S  
 11 Sh [Mhm] [Mhm]  
 12 L ON A SUNDAY?=  
 13 Sh =Mhm mhm=  
 ›14 L =Ah think yuh nuh? wi wanna wake up yuh kno:w?=  
 15 Sh =Mhm=  
 ›16 L =Becos ah've been asked to do: a presentation next week on race an culture  
 17 an I AIN'T TALKIN ABOUT RICE AN PEAS IN ONE PART OF IT=  
 18 Sh =pt:: Good for you [ ((.hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh .hhh)) ]  
 19 L [Ah ain't talkin about rice an peas Shirley] ah'm talkin about  
 20 how wi GOT to be: in deh WEST in the first place=

L continues to talk about what will be in her presentation re immigration, music as political, spiritual and Black people's experiences generally and then continues

- ›21 L AH'VE TO:LD EM IF DEY WANT SOMEBODY TO DO IT LIKE DAT, GO AN  
 22 ASK SOMEBODY ELSE,=  
 23 Sh =Yeah=  
 ›24 L =Becos I'M NOT REDUCIN OUR PEOPLE=  
 25 Sh =Mhm=  
 ›26 L =To A:H: rice an peas on a Sun[ day ] an an Ca:rnival once a year [ ah ]  
 27 Sh [°Mhm°] [Mhm]

28 L REFU:SE to do tho:se sorts ah presentations

((+ )) Speaking like the men

SoT has been talking before example 11 about the difficulties she had with the Union representing both her and her harasser when she had lodged a formal complaint at work. She is now not in a Union because she would prefer to hire a solicitor given her past experiences. In the extract SoT is establishing a discourse of Blackness as 'raced' and gendered in opposition to the institutional lack of recognition of her gender- "it ain't gonna happen to mi with regards to gender because they do NOT recognize mi: as a wo:man" (lines 8,10 and 11).

Example 11- Tape 2 Side A SoT:134-135

- 1 Sh Yeah that's [ better go outside]  
 2 S [ .hhh BECOS ] AH'M NOT GOIN tell ANY:BODY, [ .hhh ] THAT  
 3 Sh [Mhm]  
 4 S IS GOIN TO REPRESENT=  
 5 Sh =Mhm=  
 6 S =MY MANAGER because that's the ONLY REASON I'm gonna need [ it ] is IF  
 7 Sh [Mhm]  
 ›8 S something happen to me [ .hhh ] with regards to ra:ce becos it ain't gonna  
 9 Sh [Mhm ]  
 10 S happen to mi with regards to gender because they do NOT recognize mi: as a  
 11 wo:man,=  
 ›12 Sh =Ah know an that's the other thing they don't do they? (.9)  
 13 S Ah'm NOT a woman (.5)  
 14 Sh That is so: interestin as well that we're not women (.6) we're just this (.4) blob  
 15 ((.hhh))=  
 16 S =>A Black blob at that<=  
 17 Sh =((.hhh)) ((^a Black blob)) [ ((.hhh .hhh )) ]  
 ›18 S [ ((.hhh .hhh )) ] you kno:w these a:hm ah remember  
 19 st- these students these two white women students sayin to me Sonia duh yuh  
 20 see: yuhself as .hhh a Black person or a woman?=  
 21 Sh =Oh ye:ah=  
 22 S =Ah said WHAT? (.6) ah see miself as a Black person a:nd a woman=  
 23 Sh =Mh [ m: ]  
 24 S [No:] but do: yuh see yourself as a Bla- AH SAID I AM A: BLACK

25 WOMAN=  
 26 Sh =Mhm::=  
 27 S =An they just no: no: no: but d'yuh=  
 28 Sh [ Yea:h ]  
 29 S [ An ] it was just a wa:ste of time=  
 30 Sh =I kno:w=  
 31 S =It was just a wa:ste of ti:me=  
 32 Sh =I know

She reveals her positioning through her assertion that 'race' is all that seems to count in terms of the institution in which she works. She is Black and genderless (lines 8,10 and 11). The translation as reflexivity sequence is done jointly when Sh agrees with this (line 12) and S reiterates her assertion of her positioning as gender-less "Ah'm NOT a woman" (line 13). After a (.5) pause Sh continues to agree with S's assertion with a joke "we're just this blob" followed by laughter (lines 14 and 15). S agrees with her speedily produced joke "A Black blob at that" (line 16), which Sh receives as a joke, as she laughs, recycles "A Black blob" with laughter bubbling through before laughing again (line 17). S laughs in overlap, and following this provides an example about being asked about whether she saw herself through the prism of 'race' or gender. This is used to establish her new addressivity. For her being Black is not gender-less as she is simultaneously 'raced' and gendered. "AH SAID I AM A: BLACK WOMAN" is replayed as a speaking back to her questioners (lines 22 and 24). Her character reference then is developed in terms of S choosing to go against the grain of the institution in which she works in which her womanhood is not acknowledged. However, the questioners even though her students, do not accept her position. What she is doing here in terms of using her students in her example is positioning these two white women as whiteness in general, given her earlier assertion that "they do NOT recognize mi: as a wo:man", in



order to establish her hybrid position in opposition to whiteness as someone who is both Black and gendered. Students are less powerful than their lecturers in the institutional hierarchy but such is the power of whiteness that students can question her right to assert that both 'race' and gender are pertinent for her identification as a Black woman.

The extracts looked at above have been focused on showing how it is possible for essence and hybridity to be simultaneous in talk. The examples have focused on interactions in which there is a process of discursive positioning, a critical awareness of that positioning and a repositioning. What has perhaps been less clear is how the performativity of Blackness facilitates the use of discourses in claims to Black identity and how difference and sameness operated in the identifications produced in talk-in-interaction. It is to these issues that we now turn in order to see what the extracts can tell us about 'the third space' in interaction.

What can the interactions tell us about the location of 'the third space' in talk-in-interaction ?

Claiming Blackness and performativity

The construction of the claims to Blackness as part of the ongoing sequential organization of the talk works towards the emergence of shared discourses on Blackness. This is reminiscent of Butler's (1993: 2) view of performativity. For her, performativity is both 'the reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains' and 'the act by which a subject brings into being what he/she

names'. Her notion of performativity is brought to mind quite forcefully, for example, if we look at one of the basic structures of these claims:

- claim to Blackness is made by speaker;
- there is an example from the speaker or other interactants to support the claim;
- the claim is repeated in a summary to the turn before entering into a connected theme or a new topic.

The power of discourses to regulate and constrain resides in the claim to Blackness itself, which shows the speaker as being discursively located- example 1 above shows us quite powerfully the significance of naming. To say "I am Black", to name oneself, is at one and the same time to locate oneself politically, socially, intellectually, philosophically, culturally, 'racially' and emotionally. Naming is identity constituting as it "orders and institutes a variety of free-floating signifiers into an 'identity', the name effectively sutures the object" (Butler, 1993: 208). The data remind us that

recognition is not conferred on a subject, but forms that subject. Further, the impossibility of a full recognition, that is, of ever fully inhabiting the name by which one's social identity is inaugurated and mobilized, implies the instability and incompleteness of subject-formation (Butler, 1993: 226).

When I say I am Black then, I anchor myself within an essence "without which I cannot speak" (Butler, 1993: 226), as well as constructing myself in opposition to otherness by asserting my position on the margin through becoming an-other. The supporting talk

which follows the initial claim is where we see the speakers' own take on Blackness coming into being. That is, speakers translate for us the ways in which they interpret their Blackness claim/ or the claim of another speaker. This reminds us of Laclau's point of view that "if the process of naming of objects amounts to their very constitution, then their descriptive features will be fundamentally unstable and open to all kinds of [...] rearticulations" (Butler, 1993: 210). These are the rearticulations which become apparent in the talk through the dialogic process of translation as reflexivity. This is where we also see the instability and incompleteness of subject formation as speakers critique and thereby abject discursive positioning.

Translation as reflexivity is therefore an important aspect of performativity for the analyst. Such translation as reflexivity becomes apparent in the talk through speakers' activities. Some of these activities are:

- linking discourses of identification to themselves and others through the translations which they do for their interlocutors of the relevance of what is being said;
- using experiences of the past and translating their relevance for identity now;
- using hypothetical examples based on ideas of a common Black experience of racism to make claims to Blackness translatable to the experiences of others;
- and, translating the relevance of bodily practices for identity.

So, through translation as reflexivity interactants engage in an agency "[which] would then be the double movement of being constituted in and by a signifier, where 'to be constituted' means 'to be compelled to cite or repeat or mime' the signifier [Black] itself" (Butler, 1993: 220).

However, within this miming of the signifier Black there is a

failure of the signifier to produce the unity it appears to name [...] [which is] the result of that term's incapacity to include the social relations that it provisionally stabilizes through a set of contingent exclusions (Butler, 1993: 220-221).

This is shown for example, in terms of how individuals chose to answer the question "Are you Black enough?" Here, it is the exclusions which are used to establish Blackness. These exclusions, whilst being a part of individual experiences, also have vested in them the discourses of oppositionality which exist in Black politics. For example in extract 1, the idea of Black people as outside the nation because of 'race', but belonging to that nation because of citizenship; and in extract 4 being African centred rather than assimilating to whiteness as a 'mixed race' person. 'Black' emerges as a site of discursive contestation as well as interactionally constructed agreement, in terms of sameness to and difference from itself. It is within this space of sameness to but difference from, that we see the movement of performing hybridity through the vehicle of essence, which characterizes the data. This happens as people narrate their Blackness as the product of a politics of 'choice' at the same time as it is the "forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissoluble from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment" (Butler, 1993: 232).

### The impossible simultaneity of sameness and difference

What do these interactions in the making of identifications mean for hybridity? Let us remind ourselves of the central argument in terms of hybridity which Young (1995a: 26) makes:

Hybridity [...] makes difference into sameness and sameness into difference but in a way that makes the same no longer simply different. In that sense it operates according to the logic that Derrida isolates in the term 'brisure' a breaking and a joining at the same time, in the same place: difference and sameness in an impossible simultaneity.

The notion of sameness and difference in an impossible simultaneity is an important one as it enables us to make two connections. One is to the abjection of the same to get to an-other position. The other is that the retreat into essence which characterizes much of the data as itself being a hybrid act of positioning. Essence here is represented by individual translations of discourses of 'race', 'culture' 'community' and politics which are then reflexively recognized and applied, or disavowed and rejected in terms of the identity positionings of themselves and others. However, the movement between discourses of essence and difference is not as stark as I have just now implied. Rather, what we see are positionings of individuals one step removed from those discourses that would seek to position them as other. These discourses originate in both the 'white' and 'Black' communities, as becomes obvious in the interactions. What we are seeing then is the operation of brisure in talk as hybridity doesn't necessitate massive disjunctures to arise. This is the case as hybridity allows a number of discourses of

Blackness to be used in talk-in-interaction without apparent disjuncture because of the negotiation of positionings that it entails.

A call to essence provides a variety of possible positionings as people make clear what this essence is about for them in the translations in the talk. Within this recourse to essence there is a denial of being made 'other' by discourses of containment whilst living with this otherness daily. This denial of otherness is constituted through a conversationally generated discourse of sameness within Blackness because of the projected sharedness of 'race', 'culture', 'community' and politics encapsulated within 'Black', as people share their experiences and perceptions of these. In this way a recourse to essence is a hybrid act of positioning as it denies the relevance of a discursively constructed 'other'/self and replaces it with a self-defined, conversationally constructed 'other'. It is in conversations that this is interactionally accomplished through the dialogic nature of the identification stories which people tell. These stories are "told not through one long conversational turn taken by the 'story teller', but through a series of [...] turns by both 'teller' and 'audience' [...]. This dialogic form of storytelling means that the distinction between 'storyteller' and 'audience' becomes blurred, because what is happening is that the speakers are collaborating in a story telling" (Cheepen, 1988: 53-54).

An example of this is above in which L (see example 7) speaks about the relevance of her bodily practice of wearing a headwrap for her as a Black woman in Britain. It is important to note that the headwrap itself is imbued with meanings of Afro-centricity, not

Caribbean-ness, for her. This then, is a return to a constructed essence based on a diaspora consciousness, one in which there is almost a nostalgia for return. This example could even be seen to speak to us of a triple consciousness. She replays for us a consciousness in which she places herself in the Caribbean and England simultaneously but through the prism of Afro-centricity. This bodily practice which shows a return to essence for her is about performing distance from the culture of the West that would seek to make her conform to what they have made for her. Her distancing of herself from whiteness through essence is a repositioning in terms of identification. Through this repositioning she speaks against the grain and subverts both 'Black' and 'white' disciplinary notions of Caribbean-ness in the process. This notion of hybridity within essence links with Paul Gilroy's (1997 ) notion of 'the changing same'.

Difference from 'the changing same' as a strategic performance of essence and  
hybridity in interaction

I think what these claims show us is that hybridity is a strategic performance of self. In this performance, to be Black is presented as being about being placed or placing yourself in a struggle based on oppositionality. That is, the purposive construction and use of difference which you yourself have defined as alterity, for example, in terms of language, dress or thought. This oppositionality and self-defined alterity is based on a double consciousness formed by the interaction of narratives of 'what is Black' and 'what is not' within particular times and spaces, in order to show identity positionings.

What these claims make us aware of is that hybridity is a strategic practice. This aspect of hybridity becomes explicit if we remember the strategic use of signs, for example, language, bodily practices and claims to cultural and communal knowledge, in the construction of identity. Hybridity then, could be viewed as transiently essentialized to paraphrase Alexander (1996). This transience exists within the boundaries formed by the categories 'Black' and 'not Black', on which speakers draw in their individual positioning of self.

Gilroy (1997: 335-336) uses Leroi Jones's idea of 'the changing same' to expand the idea of diaspora. Diaspora identities are "creolized, syncretized, hybridized and chronically impure cultural forms, particularly if they were once rooted in the complicity of rationalized terror and racialized reason". The changing same is "not some invariant essence that gets enclosed subsequently in a shape-shifting exterior with which it is casually associated [...] The same is present but how can we imagine it as something other than an essence generating the merely accidental?". Gilroy's (1997: 336) answer to this question is to make 'the changing same' something that is not reified but maintained and modified in "a determinedly non-traditional tradition".

The data throughout this project has shown us though that essence, no matter how contingent, is used in identification construction. Further, in being brought into being through talk 'the changing same' fleetingly becomes reified. Gilroy's concept of the changing same needs to be altered slightly for my purposes in order to adequately



account for hybridity in talk-in-interaction. Through talk speakers show difference from 'the changing same' as they make new addressivities. The claims to Blackness illustrate for us that speakers construct themselves as living within 'difference from the changing same'. Identity thus becomes a bricolage. This bricolage has recourse to 'essence' and difference in order for it to be strategically performed in talk as sameness, through the agreements produced in interaction. There is also a sense of the constitution of essence itself within these claims. Such a construction is based on tropes of 'race'- for example, skin, origin, language, community, dress- and their use strategically. What speakers are doing is reflexively building statements of Blackness. That is, discourses of Blackness. These discourses of Blackness are made through talk about their own views/ practices of the membership category Black. The statements themselves both draw on discourses of Blackness whilst simultaneously representing individual differences at the local level. This is where the positioning of addressivities is made obvious.

Conclusion: what's in a name?: competing discourses of Blackness.

What I have developed above is an approach to looking at how speakers claim Blackness in talk through using essence to get to hybrid identity positionings. Hybridity was largely made obvious in the data through double consciousness, and the oppositional positionings produced through addressivity so that what we saw was

the construction of cultural authority within conditions of political antagonism or inequity [...] [so that] At the point at which the precept attempts to objectify itself as a generalized knowledge or a normalizing, hegemonic practice the hybrid

strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation [..]. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an 'interstitial' agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism. Hybrid agencies [..] deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part of the whole (Bhabha, 1996b: 58).

Bhabha's view point is a seductive one. What is significant for us in Bhabha's ideas is what he says about an interstitial agency that refuses binary opposites. First, people in my data seem to use these binaries in order to establish hybrid positionings in the talk as quite obviously Black is constituted by what it excludes as much as by what it includes. The fact is also that these positions shift constantly in the talk through a call to discourses which are constructed in the talk. These counter-discourses in themselves, whilst speaking against the grain, can also be seen at the same time to be about the interactional construction of an-other normalizing hegemonic practice. This is so as speakers use versions of discourses of Blackness which exist in the Black community. Where then does hybridity really come in here? We seem to be forever caught in a loop of essence-hybridity-essence in the performance of identifications and that is what we should recognize. We should recognize that both essence and hybridity are open to subversion at any time by anyone.

There are two other aspects of Bhabha's view-point that I must deal with in order for it to make more sense with regard to the data. First, let us look at the notion of partial culture. Although partiality emerges in the strategic use of signs and practices in the telling of life stories, I do not think that the data speaks to me of anything partial, nor do I think that the speakers would see their culture as partial. Second, he seems to me to be setting up an 'out there' agency-structure dichotomy. However, in common with Boden and Zimmerman (1991: 4), I see "social structure as something humans do". Further, "what a participant *does* in talking or in responding to another's talk is warrantably used as information concerning his or her intentions, motives, character and the like" (Boden and Zimmerman, 1991: 11). This is the agency "that organizes social interaction" (Boden and Zimmerman, 1991: 11). Social structure and agency, therefore, both arise in conversation as participants select, adapt and combine accounts to reflexively reproduce and produce Blackness.

I have said throughout this project that hybridity arises in 'the third space' of conversational interactions and this has emerged above in the analyses. This then is the 'interstitial agency' of which Bhabha speaks in which essence and hybridity emerge in the conversational space being constituted by interactants. Hybridity always has its own 'other' essence in talk-in-interaction. I think that this is what seeing 'the third space' as existing in some sort of nebulous zone, rather than within interaction and the meanings that are constantly constructed and deconstructed, tends to miss. It misses the dialogic engagement between hybridity and essence in

order to get to this interstitial agency, this subjugated knowledge, which is important in the production of critical ontologies of the self.

## Conclusion

### The dialogics of a *hybridity of the everyday*: a positioning in which essence matters.

The aim of this project was to critique Bhabha's (1990:211) claim that essentialism is not central to hybridity. I have argued for a *hybridity of the everyday* in which speakers negotiate identity positionings in talk-in-interaction. I have developed a method for looking at hybridity as dialogical at the everyday level as well as a theoretical model to account for the negotiation of positionings. In this way it became possible to show that hybridity has its other, essence, in talk-in-interaction, in that speakers arrived at new addressivities through the vehicle of essence.

The conclusions that could be drawn from my analysis of a hybridity of the everyday may be summarised as follows:

- 1/ the idea that Black British identities are texts of social practice;
- 2/ a dialogics of hybridity as an everyday interactional phenomenon which locates the 'third space' in interaction as a strategic negotiation of identity positions through the model of *statement, translation as reflexivity and new addressivity*;
- 3/ an analytical method for looking at a hybridity of the everyday which I call a more ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis;
- 4/ the idea of the centrality of abjection to hybridity within talk;
- 6/ the suggestion that establishing new addressivities in talk is necessary for hybrid identificatory strategies;
- 7/ the recognition that performativity is important in Black hybrid identifications;

8/ placing hybridity within the development of critical ontologies of the self.

A problem with much of the theorizing on hybridity is that it has been divorced from the voices of Black women and men. What I have tried to do in this project is to address this imbalance by engaging with Black speakers and putting their experience at the centre of theorizing. By talking about their lived experiences, what speakers in the data show us is that 'race', racism, skin, community and culture, cannot be left out of theorizing Black hybrid identifications. What the data also allow us to establish is that any theorizing which seeks to include a Black particularity must critique white supremacy and whiteness as the norm. Such theorizing must be centred on Black experiences and, must be capable of establishing a space for Blackness as a discourse of containment to be critiqued and for differences to emerge.

I have said in this project that awareness of discursive positioning (i.e. statement), translation as reflexivity and addressivity are important in theorizing hybridity in interaction. This acknowledges the power relations of white/Black, same/other within which people are embedded in their daily lives. These racialized relations are important to remember because they are the catalysts in the identifications that are performed in the everyday. I am not saying that our identities as Black individuals are just dependent on our experiences of racism as that would make us into merely reactive ciphers. Instead what I am saying is that hybridity in terms of Black identifications should not be moved out from the loaded discourse of 'race' to a more neutral zone of identity and cultural fusion which is what some theoretical

approaches to hybridity suggests. To do this would be to deny the salience of racism and 'race' in our lived experiences as the life stories testify. It is also important to remember that Black subjects themselves also use discourses which locate us as homogeneous because of the continuation of discourses of authenticity within Black communities and that these discourses equally have to be struggled with in order for difference to emerge.

I want to turn to looking at hybridity as a strategic identificatory performance that arose in the data. I have said that contexts of racialization are significant in terms of theorizing hybridity. Their importance extends to the implications of 'skin' in this racialized context, in terms of exclusion and the strategic methods for inclusion and distancing with which speakers engage. Examples of this in the data are based on, for example, wearing African headwraps, speaking a more Creole language and 'acting English'. In Chapter 5 in the discussion following example 8, I have referred to the latter as mimicry, that is part of the process of speaking back to the eye of power. In retrospect, such strategic hybridity needs to be considered also as a radical otherness in which assimilation has a place. Bhabha (1994f: 121) shows us the connection between mimicry and hybridity thus:

To the extent to which discourse is a form of defensive warfare, mimicry marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance. Then the words of the master become the site of hybridity- the warlike, subaltern sign of the native- then we may not only read between the lines but even seek to change the often coercive reality that they so lucidly contain.

What is acknowledged by Bhabha here, and by Spivak in *Can the subaltern speak?*, is that such a strategic form of hybridity does necessitate assimilation of the master's discourses. The link between hybridity and assimilation underlies Gilroy's viewpoint on double consciousness, as well as Bhabha's view of mimicry as an ambivalent third choice bordered by black skins/ white masks. This means that assimilation itself can be viewed as a hybrid act of identification although being 'submerged in whiteness' or acting in ways seen to be 'white', is critiqued across the data by speakers. As we have seen throughout the dissertation, some of the data sees the words of the master emanating from Black community generated discourses of Blackness. So who is the master and who is the native when interactants perform, recreate and change these discourses, as is the case for those which spring from whiteness? This makes us recall that it is not just discourses of whiteness that coerce, but discourses of Blackness as well. Power and how to undermine its grip are central to a strategic hybridity which is itself constructed and shifting.

What a *hybridity of the everyday* enables us to see is that speakers treat whiteness and Blackness as partial hegemonies which are susceptible to resistance and transformation. The politics of embodied difference is maintained while at the same time entering into dialogue about the boundaries of Blackness. This produces 'difference from the changing same'. There is no necessary always already fixed point of belonging and while skin, culture, politics, 'race', racism and community continue to be employed to convey a sense of inclusion; what this inclusion means, is now a matter of contingency. Black speakers live within and negotiate the tensions of being both inside and outside Blackness. This allows them to deconstruct the always already said, and to create new addressivities. The dialogic negotiation of the



'third space' means that "we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as others of ourselves" (Bhabha, 1994h: 39). In emerging as others of ourselves we transgress a constraining Blackness and affirm multiple Black identities.

To say that there is a dialogics involved in hybridity is unremarkable as this has been said before (cf. Young, 1995a). However, what is not available in the literature is any notion of what this dialogicality entails in terms of making Black identifications in talk. Through using data I have looked at a triple dialogics of hybridity. First, translation as reflexivity is a dialogical analysis, a critique of discourses of the same/other in which abjection is a central process (Chapter 6). Second, that interactants link the micro and the macro in their use of discourses to perform identity positionings (Chapter 5). Third, we have also seen a dialogicality in which hybridity and essence are intertwined in the construction of texts of social practice (Chapter 7). New addressivities- that is hybridity- are given the meaning of 'different from the changing same' in talk-in-interaction as speakers construct difference whilst using discourses of fixed, authentic, 'racial' identities in this process. Within hybrid identities sameness cannot be taken for granted as these identities are dialogical, relational and dependent on the relationship with the other in order to come into being. So identity must be demonstrated in relation to the alternative possibility of differentiation, because we are not what we were (Gilroy, 1995: 26).

'We are not what we were' reminds us that what emerged in the data is that there is now a new politics of skin in which skin no longer can be taken to signify Black authenticity. Authenticity has to be performed as a 'difference from the changing same'. This gives a new perspective to Gilroy's cultural reprocessing linked to the

fragmentation and dispersal of diaspora as the same becomes different and the different becomes the same, even whilst being contingently essentialised in talk-in-interaction. For Hall (Papastergiadis, 1997: 275) there is the possibility of changing conceptions of self and community in the construction of social memories. Change implies the existence of a same. If skin no longer signifies authenticity, how can we support Hall's claim that change occurs in the social construction of social memories? Where would we be able to site the self and community outside of the authenticity of racialized skin? The data shows us the possibility that we have another set of authenticity constructs in operation within Black communities. Racialized skin is re-produced through radical otherness via authenticity tropes, for example Blackness as consciousness in terms of a Black/ African centred politics; pride in roots and heritage; an anti-racist world view; and resistance to assimilation to whiteness. These tropes of Black authenticity come into being through the performative potential of storied memory. In life stories community and identity as 'skin' become fluid and contingent whilst simultaneously being routed through 'roots', culture, politics and space.

I have shown that in life-stories new addressivities, an identification of different from some same, becomes known through the telling. 'Different' and 'same' are themselves subjected to slippage within the boundaries of 'the third space'. However different and same also form the boundaries of 'the third space' which is achieved interactionally. This helps us to revisit Bhabha's notion of hybridity as being a process of identifying with and through an object of otherness. If skin no longer signifies authenticity then we have to become the others of ourselves through talk in order for 'the third space' to emerge. As Black interlocutors we make Blackness-whether generated from white or Black discourses- 'other' through abjection in order

to become an-other within the space of radical otherness. Othering then is itself a double movement in which speakers are performing Spivak's "rendering delirious the voice of the other within us" (1993c: 89) in order to claim Blackness at one step removed from the changing same.

Abjection is not looked at in theories of hybridity, per se. However, as abjection of 'the voice of the other within' in interaction (Chapter 6), it emerged as being quite central to hybridity in terms of the data. Abjection here was double. First, it related to people's lived experiences of racism or being made the other of a disciplinary Blackness in which they are made abject. Second, abjection of one's discursive positioning enables the construction of new addressivities in the talk. These new addressivities are the sites of difference from the changing same of discursive positioning. Abjection emerges as critique which keeps the borders of the Black self firm even though these borders change in the on-going flow of the talk. The notion of borders is significant in terms of how speakers bring Blackness and whiteness into being through talk. Blackness is performed as racialized, authentic, political, but always with the potential for difference at every turn. Speakers also racialize whiteness in talk. Through this whiteness ceases to be invisible and becomes a fixed and essentialized racial position of domination which is to be critiqued and usurped. That is to say, Blackness and whiteness are simultaneously produced in talk. This shows us the dialogical nature of third space performativity in which the other is fixed and it is only the self, 'the changing same' which can be different.

I have also attempted above to produce a model for looking at a hybridity of the everyday as well as applying it in Chapter 7. Producing a model involved a review of

the different starting points and foci of ethnomethodology, discourse analysis Bakhtin and Foucauldian approaches to discourse. This was important to do if I was to get beyond the structure/agency dichotomy and see agency as arising in the links that people made between the macro and the micro in their talk as they read discourses and re-used them subversively. Through looking at the data I developed a model based on Foucault, on the one hand, by interpreting people's talk as linking the macro and the micro; and Bakhtin on the other, by building an account of a speaking subject engaged in dialogic interaction with discourses. I did this in order to be able to look at hybridity as an everyday interactional phenomenon. This model took the form of *statement* (discursive positioning)- *translation as reflexivity-addressivity* (hybridity). In order for this model to work well I have had to refine the notion of translation as reflexivity through looking at the data itself. Simply put, this occurs in the talk at the point at which the speaker makes herself known to her interlocutor as a visible-seer. That is, when she comments on or critiques her discursive positioning before entering into a new addressivity in relation to this positioning. Translation as reflexivity as a dialogical analysis therefore emerged as quite pivotal to the development of a *hybridity of the everyday*. The model helped to show how people work in and against discourses in order to construct identifications, whilst being aware of being positioned by them.

The analytic method for looking at hybridity as dialogical also arose from my pre-occupations with the connectedness of the data to Foucauldian conceptualisations of discourses, Bakhtinian notions of voice and ethnomethodology's viewpoint that speakers construct theory. However, in trying to apply the analytical model it became increasingly clear that there were limits to a purely Foucauldian approach and this

has been commented on in Chapter 1 in terms of the feminist and post-colonial critique of Foucault's lack of involvement with 'who is speaking'. Conversation analysis for its part was also inappropriate because of its inability to get beyond the interaction itself, a fundamental drawback given that I saw Black identities as texts of social practice. Narrative analysis was not used because of its focus on the interiority of selfhood. The more dialogical conception of 'Black identities as *texts of social practice*' which I have used in this project could not sustain such interiority because of the interaction of self and other which it entails. The method which turned out to be the most appropriate for my purposes was one in which discourse analysis was combined with a more conversation analytic approach to transcription and meaning making in the selection and analysis of the data. That is, an *ethnomethodologically inclined discourse analysis (eda)*.

Although *eda* did help to show the sequential way in which subject positions were negotiated in the talk, it was less good at making obvious the diversity of subject positions with which speakers constantly engaged. The potential lack of multiplicity of subject positions mentioned earlier could also be the result of my focus on 'race' following my critique of Bhabha. This meant issues of difference- for example, gender, sexuality and generation- were not foregrounded enough in the analysis. The focus on 'race' and its subsequent playing out in analysis meant that the complexity of Black British identities is potentially lost because of the need to show that 'the third space' is in the sequence, identified as *statement, translation as reflexivity, new addressivity*, across the data. Further, *eda* as sequential told me little about the connections between meaning, power and knowledge because I focused on 'doing hybridity'. Throughout the analysis I had to then pull back from this into a

more discourse analytic focus on the notion that we are drawn into relations of power when we make meaning and it makes us who we are. The differences in analytical foci of discourse analysis and conversation analysis were a constant, though productive, tension in the analysis of data.

This study has raised the whole question of 'just what is the third space anyway?' This area has become open to questioning because of the use of empirical material. The research has shown that 'the third space' exists in talk-in-interaction as the negotiation of positionings in which speakers engage when they translate and reflexively apply discourses to themselves or disavow these discourses in terms of the new addressivities that they construct. The data supports the thesis that has underlain this project. That is, that essence and hybridity are simultaneous in Black identifications. Essence is hybridity's alterity. A question that arises at this point is, if Blackness is inscribed as essence how is it the 'other' of the hybrid Black speaker? Blackness as essence becomes the other in talk as speakers construct new addressivities at one step removed from that identity positioning which has been given to them. For example, Sa in Chapter 4 (example 7) speaks about her hair as her inscription of Blackness. She at first deracinates this by straightening it in order to fit in with whiteness's idea of what is not racially marked. However, she also acts against this inferiorisation of hair by asserting its centrality to her identity as a Black woman by ceasing to straighten her hair and wearing her afro hair in plaits. It is in the negotiation of identity positionings in talk-in-interaction in which Blackness as the other emerges. For Sa here it is an assimilated Black other who shows this through straightening her hair. The interaction of essence and hybridity was focused on in Chapter 7 which looked at the discourses of Blackness that tellers both inscribe into

claims to Blackness and produce collaboratively. Through the analysis it was clear that essence was part of the production of hybrid positionings. This linked to the notion of 'different from the changing same' to show the contingent essentialism of 'the changing same'.

Speakers use essentialized definitions of 'race', 'culture', 'community' and 'politics' to construct those 'racial' boundaries within which they are located as other and within which they would be subjects. In doing this they establish for us a fluidity within a fixedness which is the Black experience. Their construction of difference within the continuity of the changing same makes us see the necessity for essentialism within the definitions of racial boundaries in the hybrid moment in talk. Within this negotiation of same and different, essentialist notions of origins, roots, kinship, genes, community and shade are placed alongside new emergent definitions of these essences in talk. For example, authentic Blackness as being about consciousness and politics rather than dark skin shade; being rooted within the Caribbean, Africa and Britain simultaneously as a part of Blackness; and being Black irrespective of white kinship. Through this negotiation the 'racial' boundaries both expand and remain the same.

In talk, performativity becomes a part of 'difference from the changing same' as 'race' becomes simultaneously a constraint and the site of agency in the emergence of Blackness. Some of this performativity in terms of 'difference from the changing same' relates to shade and the centrality of the visual in Black identities. Within the talk there is resistance to Blackness as reducible to skin colour alongside a need to perform identity through bodily practices in order to make Blackness visible. The

visual is important then in making claims of identification and difference. The shade of one's skin potentially sets up different addressivities within Blackness. For example, 'light skin' sets up a question of Blackness, a counter aesthetics, an addressivity of 'the different', through its dialogic engagement with and unsettling of the discourse of 'dark skin equals Black authenticity'. Shade expands the boundaries of Blackness itself in terms of who can claim that space as skin performs difference from the changing same. The gaze of Blackness is unsettled and returned from a position of difference. This tells us that 'racial' identities cannot be assumed based on just skin colour. This would be too tenuous a criterion. There are different ways to claim Blackness as a politics of skin when the changing same of 'race' cannot be assumed by a look. The look must be diverted to some other way of signifying Blackness. Shade forces those who would be Black irrespective of the mark of white ancestry to perform themselves as conscious of Blackness as a politics, a way of life, an origin, a community and a 'race' through, for example, dress, talk, hair and life-styles. This has been captured in the project by looking at hybrid identifications as critical ontologies of the self. Therefore, Foucault has a place in theorising Black identities where 'the changing same' will always be dynamically changed through the critical ontologies of the self that are performed in 'the third space' of radical otherness (see Chapter 7).

### Future directions

As with any project of this type there are still questions left unanswered and issues left unresolved. One area that needs to be further developed is that of translation as reflexivity as a process in identification talk. The specifics of this are to do with elaborating on translation as a reflexive appraisal of identifications in which it



organises identity across time and space. This organisation is at both the level of 'who am I at this moment?', and the interaction of memory and the future in order to produce an ongoing story of the self. Further, the interaction of translation as reflexivity and performativity within life stories as identities are talked into being would also be interesting to explore. Specifically how translation as reflexivity through its dialogic analysis cites the norms that constitute the community, group or individual. This would help us to perhaps see more clearly how subjects are constituted through racial discourses but also how these same discourses are used for difference to emerge. This has "always been the question of how to find agency, the moment of that recitation or that replay of discourse that is the condition of one's emergence" (Bell, 1999: 165). What might be a useful way of looking for this moment of replay and emergence in talk is codeswitching.

Codeswitching in Black identification talk has been commented on at various points in the analysis. It bears repetition that when we speak we inscribe ourselves within positions and linked to this, what has not been done above is to look at how the code used is linked to the emergence of agency. For example in Chapter 5 (example 1, lines 22 and 24) we see Lu speaking in a more Creole form after he is placed by Lo as coming from a community which has loads of "inbreeding". His turn at talk makes inbreeding an issue for the whole Caribbean community rather than just the Dominican one and interestingly here the Creole he uses is British Jamaican rather than the Dominican Creole of his own community. Also in example 2 of the same chapter Sh (lines 13, 20, 23 and 25), ridicules her protagonists who would try to place her only in the domestic sphere, by using a more Jamaican Creole form. She continues to use this form as she talks about herself as a Caribbean woman. Switching to a more Creole form keeps 'the changing same' rooted in terms of Black

British identities but also keeps it routed in terms of its links to the Caribbean. Language use itself becomes a performance of identity within the hybrid moment as it links global Blackness to local practices through citation. The language used becomes the constitutive norm of the community, group or individual but can itself signal the emergence of hybrid difference in talk-in-interaction.

In the context of research on Black identifications, what also needs to be explored is how an approach which looks at identities as *texts of social practice* as a 'layering of voices', could help to illuminate the dynamism in the turn by turn replaying of identification narratives based on lived experiences. This would link into the discussion above in terms of the abjection of 'the voice of the other within' and Bakhtinian voice, as well as Bhabha's (1990: 211) idea of hybridity as identifying with and through an object of otherness in a more psychoanalytic turn to the analysis. Further, the notion of identities as *texts of social practice* could be pursued both theoretically and empirically using identification talk from non-Black British communities.

In this study, hybridity was focused on above as a negotiation of identity positionings. However, the data was replete with other examples of Black identities as entailing diaspora awareness, double consciousness and differences of gender, sexuality, generation and shade which would have been worthy of examination in terms of looking at hybridity as change.

Finally, I have only begun to look at the connections between Foucault, Bakhtin, ethnomethodology and discourse analysis above. Such links and cleavages deserve a more sustained debate in terms of developing a method for analysing 'the third space' as it arises in talk-in-interaction.

This project has been both challenging and exciting. I began three years ago with the view that hybridity existed only in the musings of academics. What I now hope is that some of the insights of this research will contribute to debates on Black identity and hybridity. What this project certainly reminds us of is that we need more empirically based studies of Black identities if we are to further our critical understanding of how identities are constructed, lived and continuously transformed in everyday life.

Appendix 1

LF – is 34 years old and lives in the town in West Yorkshire in which she was born and brought up. Her father is from Carriacou and her mother is from Barnsley. She is a lone parent- having been divorced- and works for the Social Services Department of the town in which she lives as a Sickle Cell Support Worker. She has visited Carriacou and plans to visit again.

DF – is 39 years old. She was born and brought up in a town in the Midlands but has been living in London for the six years. Her parents are both Jamaican and she has visited Jamaica several times. She eventually intends to return to Jamaica to live since her parents have now retired there. She is a Social Worker for a London borough specializing in fostering and adoption work focused on Black communities. She is married and had her first child in December 1998.

Lu – is 36 and was born and brought up in a town in West Yorkshire by his Dominican parents. He is employed as a Youth and Community Worker in the town where he lives. He has visited Dominica and Jamaica several times. During the research he became a father for the first time.

SoT- is 38 and was born to Jamaican parents in a town in the Midlands. She is a Senior Lecturer in Youth and Community Studies at a university in the town in which she lives. She has also lived in Jamaica for two years where she was a Social Worker. She is married and has a daughter.

GB – is 36 and his parents are both Jamaican. He was born and brought up in the Midlands, where he still lives. He is a Care Worker for the local Social Services Department. He has been to Jamaica twice to visit his mother who has retired there. He plans to move to Jamaica in the near future.

TS – is 34 years old and was born and brought up in a town in the Midlands. Her mother is Irish and her father is Jamaican. She has not been to either Ireland or Jamaica. She is married and has three children. TS is in the process of training to be a Nursery nurse.

Sa – is 34 years old and was born and brought up by her Jamaican parents in a town in West Yorkshire. She is a Youth and Community Worker for her Local Authority and is on a degree course in Applied Youth and Community Studies at a nearby University. She has visited Jamaica twice.

Lo – is 32 years old and a Computing Specialist at a college in the town in which she lives in West Yorkshire. She was born in the same town and brought up there by her Jamaican parents. She has visited Jamaica twice. She became a mother for the first time during the course of this research.

KC – was born and brought up in a Midlands town but now lives in West Yorkshire. He is 34 and had recently qualified as a Social Worker at the time in which he participated in the research. Both of his parents are Jamaican and he has visited Jamaica as well as several other Caribbean islands.

CaF – is 30 and is a lone parent. Her parents are Dominican and she was born and brought up in a town in West Yorkshire where she now lives and works. She is a Youth and Community Worker specializing in work with young women sex workers and drug use. She has visited Jamaica and now wants to visit Dominica.

DH – is 36 and a lone parent. Her parents are Jamaican and she was born and brought up in a town in West Yorkshire where she still lives and works. She is a part-time Youth and Community Worker for a voluntary sector community centre in an inner city area. She manages the after-school care provision.

San – was born and brought up in a town in the Midlands by her Jamaican parents, but now lives in West Yorkshire. She is 33 and is a lone parent. She works for a neighbouring Local Authority in Health Promotion specializing in HIV and Aids and drugs awareness in peer group education. She has visited Cuba, Jamaica and Gambia.

Je – is 26 was born and brought up in the Midlands by her Jamaican parents. After qualifying as a Youth and Community Worker on a degree course in Applied and Community Studies she moved to London. She now works there in the area of women and the justice system. She has visited Jamaica once.

Ch – is 27 and was born and brought up in London by her Antiguan parents. She did her first degree at a Scottish University and is now completing her PHD at a university in the Midlands. She has visited Antigua and wants to work at the University of the West Indies.

Ja – is 26 and had just completed his degree in Sociology at the time of the research. His father is Nigerian and his mother is Jamaican. He was born in a town in the Midlands but spent until the age of 10 in Jamaica being raised by his grandparents.

## Appendix 2

### Transcription Conventions

The examples embody an effort to have the spelling of the words roughly indicate how the words were produced. Often this involves a departure from standard orthography. There will be variations in the spelling, therefore. For example, “woulda” and “wouldah” are used with the latter showing more breathiness. Otherwise:

- ((.hhh ))      Laughter.
- [              Left side bracket indicates where overlapping talk begins.
- ]              Right side bracket indicates where overlapping talk ends, or marks alignments within a continuing stream of overlapping talk.
- °              Talk appearing within degree signs is lower in volume relative to surrounding talk.
- (0.7)          Numbers in parentheses indicate periods of silence, in tenths of a second.
- (.)            A dot inside parentheses indicate a pause of less than 0.2 seconds.
- :::            Colons indicate a lengthening of the sound or letter just preceding them.
- (t)            Glottal stop
- becau-        A hyphen indicates an abrupt cut-off or self-interruption of the sound in progress
- > <          Indicates talk is faster then surrounding talk



- ? High rise in pitch.
- ,
- = Equal signs indicate latching- no silence between turns at talk.
- (( )) Empty parentheses indicate talk too obscure to transcribe. Words in these parentheses indicate the transcriber's best estimate of what is being said.
- HE** Bold letters indicate loudness.
- ((kiss teet)) Is a sound produced with voiceless pulmonic ingressive air flow. It begins with bi-labial closure with tongue tip firmly placed behind the top teeth. The lips part, the bottom lip approximately to the top teeth and air is drawn into the lungs around the sides of the tongue. The cheeks are firmly compressed and the in-flowing air creates saliva friction. I transcribe this as kiss teet which the community use to describe this sound of derision, irony or lack of resolve.
- ((\*)) Words in parentheses are delivered with smiley voice.
- ((^)) Words in parentheses are said with laughter bubbling through.
- .hhh Inbreath.
- .
- Indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
- > In the left margin indicate specific parts of the extract discussed in the text.

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