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***What does work,
achievement and identity
mean to black British
women? The lived experience
of professional black British
women of Jamaican heritage.***

Counselling Psychology Doctoral
Thesis (DCPsych)

This thesis was written by Jacqueline Marcia Sewell and gained ethical approval from the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling and the Psychology Department of Middlesex University. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Counselling Psychology and is the author's own work.

Jacqueline Marcia Sewell

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experience of six participants who were professional black British women of Jamaican heritage, born in the UK to Jamaican parents of the Windrush Generation. To date, there has been little research within the field of counselling psychology into black existence in the UK. The aim of the research was to make known how the lived experience of these Windrush daughters shaped their relationship with their self and others as illustrated by their relationship to work and achievement. This was a qualitative study from an *existential phenomenological* perspective, using the critical narrative analysis Method (CNA). Two semi-structured interviews were undertaken to capture the participants' narratives. The participants' narratives were analysed using critical theories, in particular, *black existential philosophy*. Analysis of the findings showed that early experience of racism led to self-hatred. However, the 1970s black consciousness movements led many to adopt a new black identity, although others remained conflicted. For all, there was a realisation that their individual worth was linked to the value of all black people. Work and achievement became the means to demonstrate their value and that of all black people. The implication for practice is to recognise the unique tension between the self and other for black women such as these, and that their existence can only be understood through the lens of black existential philosophy.

Key words: *black British professional women, identity development, black identity, Jamaican identity, Windrush, work and identity, black existential philosophy.*

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1. Introduction

1.1 The aim of the research

The aim of this research was to give voice to the lived experiences of a group of professional black British women of Jamaican heritage; and to show how the experiences of these women have impacted on their relationship to their self and others. All the women in the study were educated to graduate level and were working or had worked in senior positions within the private or public sector in the UK. These women are the offspring of Jamaicans who migrated to the UK between 1948 and the mid-1960s as part of the Windrush Generation.

The critical narrative analysis method was used to capture the stories of these women as they lived their lives in a British context. I was keen to gain knowledge about: the impact of their parents' experiences in the UK on their 'sense of self'; what messages they received about their cultural identity; what being black and of Jamaican heritage has meant to them growing up; what it means to them now; and what for them, is their relationship with work and achievement. It has also been a key intention to understand the extent to which their experiences were historically situated and how social events at key stages in their lives, helped shape their identity.

1.2 The research and my role as a trainee counselling psychologist

My training as a counselling psychologist sits within the existential phenomenological tradition. The field of counselling psychology in general and existential phenomenological counselling psychology in particular, regards the development of an individual's identity as situated in a context. This existential phenomenological perspective is concerned with how individuals construct a 'sense of self' and create meaning from their everyday interactions in their social world (see Husserl,1913, Heidegger,1962[1927], Sartre, 2003[1943], Merleau-Ponty,2013[1945]). Therefore, how individuals gain meaning from the work they do and their relationship with work across their life span, is a key existential question.

The experience of how these women formed an identity or identities within the context of their lived experience; how they responded to the phenomena of racism and or sexism; how they navigated their Jamaican and British cultural heritage can contribute to the body of knowledge within counselling psychology about how individuals create a 'sense of self'. In addition, the individuals who are the subject of this research belong to a group that has historically been discriminated against and devalued because they are black.

By focusing on a group of women who have reached senior positions within a work context, can give us knowledge about what it meant for some women of this heritage to experience being devalued and what, through their experiences, they concluded they needed to do, to restore value to their blackness. This

research explores why these women felt they needed to focus on what may be considered to be *extraordinary* achievement; by examining the relationship between the historical context in Britain (during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s in which black existence was generally devalued) and the negative stereotyping of black girls of a Jamaican heritage. These women lived their lives during a time when to achieve in an 'ordinary' way may have been conceived by them as not enough to restore value to their blackness or, to give them enough power to make a difference for future generations of black people.

1.2.1 The importance of this research to counselling psychology

This research is important to counselling psychology as these individuals may present with symptoms such as burnout, anxiety and depression related to work, or struggling with issues of identity and belonging. The research is also important because it explores how some of the universal assumptions about human existence within European existentialism, for example, a fundamental principle that existence precedes essence, plays out in the real lives of these black women. This research will provide knowledge of how these black women lived their lives within the context of antiblack racism and how they negotiated the negative stereotypes of the value of blackness to construct a sense of self. The research also provides knowledge of how these individuals not only constructed their individual black identities; it provides knowledge on the different relationship that these black women had with the other depending on whether the *other* was white or black.

In January 2018, a presentation of the research and findings from the pilot study was made to the Black and Asian Counselling Psychologists Group (BACPG) a special interest group of the British Psychological Society (BPS). A presentation of the interim findings from this research was also delivered to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in London, in October 2018, as part of their Black History Month celebrations. In the spring of 2019, an article drawn from this research entitled: *'Identity and belonging: The experience of the Windrush Generation and their children'*, was published in the journal *Self and Society* (Sewell,2019).

1.3 The Windrush Generation – key events

In 1948, the Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury docks in the UK, carrying the first significant wave of black people to Britain. They were from the Caribbean and the majority were from Jamaica (Ochieng and Hylton,2010). This was also to be the case of the subsequent migrants (Sewell,1998). However, as Sewell points out, Jamaicans and other Caribbean people were not actually migrants, they were in fact British passport holders, subjects of British colonies. Jamaicans and other Caribbean people continued to arrive in Britain in significant numbers during the 1950s and 1960s, heeding the request of the British government to help rebuild post-war Britain (Mullard,1973). However, for many, the reception they received in Britain was one of hostility, rejection, discrimination and racism.

This hostile environment towards the Caribbean migrants saw a dramatic change in their attitudes towards themselves and towards Britain. They realised that they were not wanted, yet for many, they had already begun to establish

roots and to have children. The hope for many was that their children would fare better as they were born in the UK (Windrush,1998).

1.4 The context in which the research study was conducted

This research was undertaken between 2015 and 2019. In 2018, what became known as the Windrush Scandal, saw several individuals of Caribbean heritage who had, in some cases, lived in the UK for over fifty years, threatened with deportation, if they could not provide documentary evidence of their citizenship (Gentleman,2019). The scandal not only exposed what came to be known as the UK's 'hostile environment' it revealed that for Caribbean people, this environment had a long history (The Unwanted,2019). Notwithstanding the specific issues facing a number of people of Caribbean heritage who suddenly found that their British citizenship was in question, in 2018, the Windrush Scandal also brought to the surface the long-standing issue of race and the complex relationship between the black Caribbean diaspora, their sense of identity and their struggle for equality and a sense of belonging in the UK. As a child of Windrush migrants, this scandal brought back memories of my late parents' difficult early experiences in Britain (I will discuss this further in chapter 4) and for me and possibly many black people of my generation, our own questions about belonging. My experience growing up in Britain during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was that as a *black* person, I would never be accepted as truly British despite being born here. As I will discuss in this research, this experience led me to take a particular position towards being black. For me and others it began with self-hatred. However, over time and the experience of

particular social events during the 1970s, I and many others constructed a 'black identity', one that transcended any other identity.

At the time of undertaking this research, I had been working part time as a staff counsellor at a London NHS hospital. There is an irony that I should be working for the NHS which shared its 70th anniversary (in 2018), with the arrival of the Empire Windrush. With its maiden voyage, it brought Caribbean labour that was to contribute to the early development of the health service (Mama,1997). In my role in the NHS, I have experienced clients from a second-generation Jamaican and other Caribbean heritage who, despite their long service in the NHS, experience frustration that so few black people like them are in senior roles. Their experiences support the findings of a report showing disproportionately low numbers of black leaders in the NHS when compared to the total number of black people in the workforce (Kline,2014). In the light of this and my early personal experiences, I have approached this research with a view about this current study. I recognise that my views, and my intentions in carrying out this research are connected to my experience and as such I have remained mindful of the need to reflect on this throughout the research process.

1.5 Key concepts used in this research

1.5.1 The concept of race and 'blackness'

Drawing upon the theories of social categorisation exemplified in the work of Tajfel and Turner (1986), Livingstone Smith (2016) argues that the concept of 'race' and racial groupings is an example of a human tendency to categorise. The external differences between groups, rather than being evidence of any

biological difference, point to the diversity of humans. The complexity around the concept of 'race' as a social grouping is illustrated by one of the traditional external characteristics of 'race', that of skin colour. Livingstone Smith also argues that the term 'blackness' is a European invention. Hrabovsky (2013) argues that the term was used historically to denote something inferior and cursed and as a specific descriptor for African slaves who were perceived as 'damned' (Hrabovsky,2013). Livingstone Smith appears to be articulating a rational idea of race by focusing on biological aspects and phenotypical diversity of humans. What is missing is the experience of those who are not white, in particular, the experience of those of African descent. However, Livingstone Smith raises an interesting point about the historical use of the term 'blackness' by Europeans as a negative descriptor. Given this, how then, can black people talk about a black identity?

1.5.2 The concept of 'black' and black identity

During the 1970s, there was what Cross (1997) described as a 'negro to black' identity transformation (this will be discussed further in chapters 2 and 3). During this period there was a 'revaluing' of blackness among those of African descent (Cross,1997). The term blackness and a black identity became something with which black people could now embrace. However, the debate then shifted to the nature of this identity (again, this will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3) and this was exemplified by the use of the term 'black' as capitalised to 'Black' to denote a more politicized identity. For me, capitalizing Black suggests a single identity to be acquired by black people. Whereas in this study, I will argue that black identity is more complex and is different among

those of African descent and from different black cultures. In the case of Jamaicans, for example, black identity appears to be inextricably linked to a Jamaican cultural identity (Hall,1994).

1.5.3 The concept of a Jamaican cultural identity

In the current research, Jamaican cultural identity is being linked to the emergence of a black identity in Jamaica and throughout the Jamaican diaspora in the 1970s (Hall,1994 and Sewell,1987). This will be explored in detail in chapters 2 and 3. At this time Jamaicans began to engage with their African ancestry. Through the medium of Rastafarianism and roots reggae music, this newly found black consciousness was also made available to the Jamaican diaspora and their children (Hall,1994).

1.5.4 The concept of antiblack racism

Gordon (1999), describes racism as:

'The self-deceiving choice to believe that one's race is the only race qualified to be considered human or that one's race is superior to other races' (Gordon,1999:2)

While this quote makes no direct reference to any particular race, Gordon is in fact referring to the experience of antiblack racism perpetrated against those of African descent by those of white European ancestry. In calling racism self-deceiving, Gordon argues that the claim to superiority is not only a lie, (as Livingstone Smith makes the point, we are all human), this racism serves a purpose (Gordon,1999). The purpose is to allow the antiblack racist to hide from experiencing the universal human challenge of creating meaning from their existence (Sartre,2003[1943]) and as such to give themselves meaning and value

just because they are white. There will be a more detailed explanation of these existential challenges in chapter 3.

1.6 The chapters

In this chapter, chapter 1, we saw an introduction to this paper, the background and context to the research, and key concepts used in the study. In chapter 2, there will be a review of the existing literature related to this research area, which includes the rationale for this current study. Chapter 3 will explore the methodology underpinning the research and the research design. The findings are presented and analysed in chapter 4 and discussed in detail, with reference to the existing literature in chapter 5. In chapter 5, there will be discussion about the implications of the findings on clinical practice and training and recommendations for future research. Finally, the conclusion is presented in chapter 6. I now turn to a review of the existing literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background

Before embarking on this current study, I searched for existing literature related to my field of interest to discover work previously undertaken, and whether my research would add value. I used ResearchGate.net, JStor.org, Mendeley (literature search function) and the database PsychINFO as my main information sources. I used Ethos.bl.uk to search for related doctoral theses and Google Scholar for general searches. The keywords used in my searches were: black British professional women, identity development, black identity, Jamaican

identity, Windrush, work and identity, black existentialism, and counselling psychology. Before reviewing the existing literature, I will explain my selection criteria and how I have structured the review.

2.2 The Scope and structure of the literature review

The academic field of self and identity are well researched with key historical contributors to psychological research on identity including, Cooley (1864-1929) and Mead (1863-1931). An exploration of the work of these and other identity theorists is in chapter 3.

Criteria for what was included and excluded within the scope of the review was informed by the aims of this research as described in the Introduction. The scope was also constrained by word count limits. As mentioned in the Introduction, there is very little literature within the discipline of counselling psychology in the UK on the lived experience of black British women of Caribbean or Jamaican heritage. This is not true of other areas within the social sciences such as social psychology, sociology, education, cultural studies, post-colonial studies and critical race studies. The review of existing literature, therefore, includes research from these areas, as well as existential and phenomenological literature. The literature review is divided into four interrelated areas. All these areas connect with the aims and objectives of this current study.

I will firstly situate this current research within the wider field of counselling psychology with an overview of the history of the discipline and its main aims

and objectives. In doing this, I discuss key principles within the discipline, which challenge mainstream approaches to research and have ultimately underpinned this current study. It should be noted, that while Heidegger (1889-1966) is considered one of the founders of existential phenomenology, because of his association with Nazism, I do not feel it is appropriate to include an exploration of his ideas in this study. The discovery of Heidegger's notebooks known as his 'Black Notebooks' reveal the extent of his support for Nazism (Drabinski,2016). While I acknowledge his contribution to existential philosophy, his support for an ideology that led to the massacre of a group of people based on their ethnicity; which influenced white supremacists and antiblack racists has no place in a study about the lived experiences of black people.

Secondly, I will review literature specifically on black identity development, race and racism because the experience of black people is inextricably linked to the concept of race and antiblack racism. The issue of race and antiblack racism led me to select some literature that drew upon the experience of black people in general and not just specifically related to black women. There is an emphasis on literature related to the historical period between the 1960s and 1980s. This was a period that saw black consciousness and black identity movements in Africa, the Caribbean and America. Thirdly, I review the specific experiences of the Windrush Generation and their children and how this first significant group of black British people constructed their identity. This will be linked to existential phenomenological themes of belonging, freedom and choice, contextualised within the experiences of these six women whose parents arrived from a British colony as British subjects. The final area that will be reviewed, is

literature relating to the black British experience within the field of counselling psychology.

These four areas are directly related to my research aims and objectives covering as they do, literature related to the identity development of a group of black people, situated in a context. This aligns with the phenomenological principles of counselling psychology and that of this current research. To reiterate, the purpose of this review is to provide critical analysis of the existing literature and identify gaps that this research might address. I will now discuss how my research sits within the wider field of counselling psychology.

2.3 Situating this research within the field of Counselling Psychology

Counselling psychology emerged as a discipline in response to the dominance of the scientific model in psychological research and practice (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Inherent in the scientific model was the notion of natural laws, objectivity, single truths and cause and effect. In contrast, the principles underpinning counselling psychology stressed the subjectivity and relational aspects of human existence, with no single truth about reality, instead subjective realities constructed within a context. The emphasis on context recognises the impact of historical situation, culture, power relations and social structures on the construction of subjective views of the world (Gadamer, 1996[1975]; Foucault, 1979[1975]; Marx, 1818-1883).

It has only been since the mid-1990s that counselling psychology was established as a distinct division within psychology and recognised as such in the

UK, by the British Psychological Society (BPS) (Strawbridge & Woolfe,2010). However, the philosophical underpinnings of the discipline have roots in the ideas of three figures. William James (1890) saw the self as constituted by the effects of a myriad of relationships that an individual has with others. The work of Herbert Mead (1934) focused on what he described as ‘symbolic interactionism’, which describes the process by which individuals interact with each other to create shared understanding and meanings about their social world. The work of Cooley (1864-1929) saw the self being constructed through relationships with others, and our capacity to engage in self-reflection (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Therefore, we see, emerging from these ideas, a key concept enshrined in counselling psychology, namely, that individuals construct a subjective ‘sense of self’ as they relate to others and they do this within a context, always with the capacity for self-reflection.

Another key influence on the development of counselling psychology was the period during the 1960s and 1970s which saw a ‘crisis’ in psychology and other social sciences responding to wider social change such as the civil rights movements (Gough & Mcfadden,2001). In psychology, more critical theories emerged that challenged the mainstream emphasis on experimental research that had informed hitherto accepted practices. Such practices had traditionally been concerned with assessing client symptoms against standardized norms to try to locate the root *cause* of mental illness (Strawbridge & Woolfe,2010). In contrast, humanist theorists such as Rogers (1967) and May (1997) argued that psychology should be more concerned with therapeutic interventions based on

building human relationships with a client to engage with their world and their subjective experience of it.

We can now see the discipline of counselling psychology emerging from a more humanistic tradition and conceived as a way of positioning psychology as a therapeutic endeavour based on humanistic values. This is not to say that there is only one approach within the field of counselling psychology. In accordance with the belief that there is no single objective truth, counselling psychology as a discipline embraces a spectrum of orientations of which the existential perspective is one. What unites the different orientations is a commitment to humanistic phenomenological values which see humans as relational beings constructing their reality within a particular context (Manafi,2010). The role of the psychologist is not to take an objective stance towards their client as they too are relational beings within context; rather they are to be seen as a 'reflective practitioner' (Woolfe & Tholstrup,2010). In other words, the counselling psychologist adopts a stance of critically reflecting on the practical application of theory through self-reflection, supervision, and personal therapy. (Woolfe & Tholsturp,2010).

The emphasis on self-reflection and personal growth as a requirement of counselling psychology training is what significantly distinguishes the profession from clinical psychology (Woolfe,2012). So how does the development of a discipline, with its emphasis on humanistic values connect with the need for psychological research? Cannot this be left to clinical psychologists? As mentioned earlier, mainstream psychology of which clinical psychology is a part,

has a long history of experimental research. What is missing is research that captures the subjective experience of individuals and groups of individuals. Therefore, the challenge for counselling psychology is how to find an approach to research that adheres to standard research principles such as 'evidencing findings' yet allows for the focus to be on subjective lived experience.

The notion of the *scientist practitioner* appears to be the way in which counselling psychology attempts to integrate 'psychology' into the discipline (Strawbridge & Woolfe, 2010). Underpinning the concept of the scientist practitioner is the belief that the practice of psychology should be evidence based. This leaves the question, how can research into subjective experience be conducted, within counselling psychology, in a *human scientific* way, given its attempt to remain faithful to psychological principles still rooted in the mainstream scientific approach? (Langdrige, 2007). Before addressing this, I would like to briefly explain the history of science in the field of psychology.

Scientific principles can be traced back to the ideas of Wundt (1832-1920), considered the father of psychology. Wundt emphasized the importance of experimentation and believed that psychological processes could be analysed in the same way as processes in the physical world (Lane and Corrie, 2006). In contrast, James (1842-1910) believed that the range of human experience and behaviour was an indication that a single truth could not explain psychological processes. Accordingly, James maintained that any conclusions from scientific analysis of psychological process could only provide a partial explanation of human experience (Lane and Corrie, 2006). While it is James' perspective that

underpins the discipline of counselling psychology, both these two different views of psychology have dominated the debate about the place of science in psychological research and practice (Langdridge,2007).

The phenomenological method (see Husserl, 1913) proposes the application of a 'human scientific' model, one that offers (like natural science) an approach to research characterised by principles which enable a systematic approach to psychological research (Langdridge,2007). In chapter 3 there will be a detailed discussion on the phenomenological method and how from an existential perspective, it was the chosen methodology for this current research. I will justify the selection of this methodology as it connects with my values and beliefs that as humans, we are relational, and we derive a sense of ourselves and others as we encounter experiences in our everyday lives. It is these principles that drove my desire to capture the stories of the lives of the six women in my research, to make known how their experiences have shaped their identity and their way of being in the world. I will now turn to review previous literature concerned with the relationship between the development of a black identity, context and experiences and the relationship to work and achievement.

2.4 Black identity development theories

A search for previous literature on black identity development theories in psychology (that focused on the individual in context), yielded studies related to two main perspectives. The psychosocial perspective focuses on the relationship between individual mental processes and context in the development of identity (Erikson,1980[1959]); and the existential perspective which emphasises the

embodied nature of our experiences in context and how we attach meaning to these experiences as we develop our sense of identity (Langdridge,1997). These perspectives on how personal identity and notions of how the self develop in all individuals will be explored in detail in chapter 3. I will begin with reviewing literature drawn from a psychosocial perspective.

2.4.1 Psychosocial theories of black identity development

2.4.1.1 Racial identification and self-hatred

The focus of the early psychological literature was on the impact on black people of racial segregation in America prior to the 1970s (see Clark & Clark,1947, and Kardiner & Ovesey,1951). Clark and Clark were concerned with how educational segregation impacted on the self-esteem of black children and led to self-hatred. The rationale behind their 'Doll' experiments (Clark & Clark,1947) was to assess the level of racial identification. The experiments focused on whether racism was internalised by assessing how a child interacted with a given doll. For example, a black child favouring a white doll would indicate self-hatred. The work of Kardiner and Ovesey exposed the effect of racial segregation and discrimination on the personality of black Americans in general.

While these experiments were designed to show the impact of social policies on psychological function, they failed to capture what it *felt* like to be segregated and deemed inferior. Furthermore, self-hatred among black people was construed as a universal and enduring phenomenon. The work of Clark and Clark was undertaken only with children, while Kardiner and Ovesey whose work focused on adults, appeared to suggest that antiblack racism left a permanent

impairment in the relationship that black people had towards their blackness (Cross,1991). There is little sense in this early work, of black people exercising agency and developing different attitudes towards themselves and others across their lifespan as a result of their individual experiences.

The development of Erikson's eight stage model of personal identity development (1980[1959]) heralded new ways of thinking about identity development in general. His theory focused on the stages of individual identity development, recognising that this is influenced by context, relationships with others and different life stage experiences. He also stressed an inextricable link between a psychosocial personal identity and one's collective cultural group identity. Therefore to have a healthy personal identity would require that one regards their cultural identity as significant to them. Commenting specifically on the position of black Americans, he argued that, slavery, segregation and antiblack racism meant there was a need for a specific black identity (Erikson,1966).

Erikson portrays the experience of black people as one of alienation from their cultural identity; being confronted in their daily lives with the ubiquitous negative stereotyping of blackness. He describes the identity crisis besetting black people during the 1960s; the estrangement of black people from the world and from themselves, and their struggle to reject an imposed negative 'negro' identity (Erikson,1966). It was Cross (1971), inspired by the work of Erikson, who devised the first systematic model of black identity development. I will now turn to examine how this model originally devised to describe a process of a

'negro to black' identity development in the 1970s was then reframed as a measurement of black identity.

2.4.1.2 The 'negro to black' identity development

The rationale for Cross's five stage model of black identity entitled '*Nigrescence*' which he first developed in 1971 was to contextualise the concept of self-hatred. He regarded this phenomenon as one stage in the development from a 'negro to black' identity. This end state of black pride emerged during the black consciousness period of the 1970s (Cross,1991). However, in an update to his model in the 1990s, Cross seeks to emphasise that *Nigrescence* was not just an historical account of a 'negro to black' identity transformation in the 1970s. He argues:

*'whether we talk about the new Negro in the 1920s, the Negro-to-Black metamorphosis in the 1970s, or the search for Afrocentricity in the 1990s, the five stages of Black identity development remain the same: **Pre-encounter** (stage 1) depicts the identity to be changed; **Encounter** (stage 2) isolates the point at which the person feels compelled to change; **Immersion-Emersion** (stage 3) describes the vortex of identity change; and **Internalisation-Commitment** (stages 4 and 5) describe the habituation and internalisation of the new identity'* (Cross, 1991:190).

This updated model now known as the Cross Racial Identity Scale, was conceived as a means of assessing racial attitudes among black people (Cross,1991).

Cross's work was a significant shift away from previous research that too often characterised black psychological functioning as one of self-hatred. The strength of the model, I feel, lies in the way it captures the historical moment in the 1970s, when the rise of black consciousness enabled black people to reconstruct the previous negative notion of blackness into something of value. To this end, it fits with a psychosocial perspective that connects identity development with context. However, its weakness is its attempt to measure black identity. There appears to be an assumption that such an identity can be assessed objectively so that it can be said of a person they are 'black enough'. As an attitudinal study, what are missing are the stories behind the different attitudes that individuals express. There is, I believe, a need to understand what life experiences have led individuals to see themselves and others in the way they do and what it means to them to position themselves in a particular way towards their blackness and towards a black social group. I will now turn to explore the literature on blackness as a social group identity, to highlight the relationship between personal and social identity.

2.4.1.3 Black social identity

Theories on black social identity, that focus on blackness as a social group, draw upon classic Social Identity Theory (SIT) closely associated with the work of Tajfel and Turner (1986). Tajfel and Turner's work on social identity appears to support Erikson's view that identification with a social group is critical to one's 'sense of self'. Furthermore, both Tajfel and Turner see that identification with a group is strengthened and maintained by a feeling of belonging to a group; and a

clear understanding of what makes you a member of your group and not another group (Tajfel & Turner,1986). However, the literature on black social identity reveals that the notion of a black social group identity is not a straightforward one.

Drawing specifically on the American experience, Shelby (2002) argues that there are two ways of conceiving black social identity which derive from two theoretical perspectives. In the common oppression theory, black people are united because of antiblack racism and the focus is on working together to improve the lives of all black people. The collective determination theory proposes a type of black nationalism in which black people as a group, see themselves with a *distinct* racial, cultural history and objective black identity. The focus in this latter theory is not so much on combatting racism more on an autonomous black social group focused on political, economic and cultural self-determination separate from other racial groups (Shelby,2002).

The two conceptualisations of a black social identity are historically rooted in the works of Du Bois (1994[1903]), Washington (1986[1901]) and Garvey (1970 and 2004). These works which are explored in the next section on black existential identity, inspired the black consciousness movements. Shelby suggests that black people have typically identified with either one of these group identities (Shelby,2002). However, there is a question as to whether this dualistic conceptualisation reflects the actual behaviour of black people. In these conceptualisations there is no account of what it means to the individuals in a context to hold a specific position towards their blackness. As I will discuss in

the next section and the section on the experience of black British people, identifications take many forms. They can be weak or strong, singular or multiple or a complex blending and reconstruction to form a new social identity. In the next section, I will explore black existential thought, a development of existential philosophy, focused on the existence of black people. While I will explore existential and black existential philosophy in more detail in chapter 3, what follows is a review of the literature that explores this perspective's approach to black identity development.

2.4.2 Black existential identity development

2.4.2.1 The emergence of black existential thought

Literature relating to the existence of black people, black existential philosophy, draws ideas and themes from European existential phenomenological philosophy that proposes that as humans we are devoid of essence and that our identities are shaped through our lived experiences (Gordon,1997, Langdrige,2007). Key existential thinkers such as Heidegger, (1962[1927]) Husserl, (1913), Sartre, (2003[1943]), and Merleau-Ponty, (2013[1945]) explored existential themes of embodiment, freedom, anxiety, isolation, choice and meaning, as universal human concerns. However, black existential philosophers such as Fanon (1952 and 1961) saw limitations within the European perspective when applied to black existence. The ideas of Fanon and other black existential philosophers will be explored in chapter 3.

Central to black existential thought is the belief that the historical negation of blackness and antiblack racism, means that the black subject is thrown into the world stereotyped as an inferior non-being (Henry,1997). In other words, black existence is fundamentally different from white existence, as it requires black people to prove their equal value as a human being in the world. This 'essence' of inferiority leaves the black subject facing a unique existential struggle to create their individual identity (see Fanon, 1986[1952]). A black identity is therefore crucial as a way of giving value to the black subject; freeing themselves from racial stereotypes so that they can experience and be experienced as black individuals.

Early black existential thinkers such as Du Bois (1994 [1903]) were concerned with the interaction between the social conditions of black people in segregated America and the impact of this form of apartheid upon their consciousness. Du Bois describes the notion of double consciousness in the black experience as black people seeing themselves through the eyes of the European who looks back at them in disdain. Du Bois uses the term 'second sight' to describe how black people see themselves from the position of white people and what they see is a 'negro', an inferior subject (Du Bois, 1994[1903]).

2.4.2.2 The perspectives on black existential identity

There are two broad perspectives that have emerged within the tradition of existential thinking on black identity (Hall, 1995 and 1996). One perspective appears to position black identity as something to be acquired, recovered from a pre-slavery black existence rooted in Africa. The other perspective focuses on

how identity emerges from the existence of being black (Gordon,1997). The work of Aime Cesaire (1935), illustrates the first perspective. Cesaire was a Martinican poet, closely associated with developing the concept of *Negritude* (a term from the French that means the process of *becoming black* in a white world). Cesaire (1935) saw this process as a way in which people of African descent could reject colonial identity and acquire their own Pan African identity.

Cesaire's position fits with the idea of a black African identity with pre-existing essence only to be interrupted by slavery (Garvey,1970). Not only was there a pre-slavery black identity it is conceived as singular in nature. This characterization of black identity runs counter to one of the fundamental principles of European existential thought, namely that we have no essence, and come into being through our experience.

For Sartre, whose ideas have significantly influenced black existential philosophy (Gordon,1997), the idea that our existence precedes our essence is central to his thesis on individual existence. He argues that this existence is characterised by three modes (Sartre,2003[1943]). *Being-in-itself* refers to an existence akin to a physical concrete object, it is a 'given fact' such as our context. The second mode, *being-for-itself* describes our consciousness, our ability to reflect on ourselves, our experience and context. The third mode, is our relationship with others, defined as *being-for-others*.

In this final mode, we react to the 'gaze' of the other and this impacts how we experience ourselves and the other. When we encounter another, we experience

ourselves being objectified and judged, alienating us from our subjectivity and challenging our freedom to be who we choose to be. This conflict with the other is further intensified, when in order to maintain our freedom (our subjectivity), we too construe the other as an object; therefore, limiting their freedom to be who they choose to be (Sartre,2003[1943]).

This early work of Sartre's focused on our individual relationships with the other. In his later work (Sartre, 1946,1960,1963), Sartre described relationships between groups, in particular between oppressed and oppressor groups. With regard to the relationship between individuals within oppressed groups and oppressor groups, Sartre developed his earlier notion that 'the look' has an equivalence of alienation and loss of freedom for *all* individuals in interpersonal relationships. We now see (in his later work), his argument that individuals in the oppressed group actually experience a *different* level of alienation. They are 'othered', as the look of the oppressor devalues their fundamental humanity, casting them with an essence of pre-existing inferiority (Sartre,2004 [1960]).

This research was interested in how individuals who have historically been part of an oppressed group managed to negotiate this experience of being 'othered'.

With specific reference to the black experience of being 'othered' (despite his key idea that for all humans our existence precedes our essence), Sartre, evoking the ideas of Césaire (1935), appears to see 'blackness' as an essence once lost and therefore to be re-acquired by black people (Sartre,1964[1948]). Sartre argues that because of slavery and colonialism it is important for black people to assert their blackness; to acquire 'blackness-for-itself', to develop a black

consciousness, and *become* black. However, how or who is to judge what 'becoming black' means? Fanon, a student of Césaire, and who considered Sartre a supporter of black peoples' fight against antiblack racism, challenges this characterization of black identity (Fanon,1986[1952]).

Fanon argued that Sartre's conception of Negritude was to '*seek the source of the source [black identity]*' (Fanon,1986 [1952]:134) and in doing so appeared to position black consciousness as pre-existing, a thing to be acquired. However, Fanon argues that black people wish to assert themselves as black, not through a pre-existing notion of an 'authentic' blackness or as an inferior being, instead as an individual, through their own existence as a black person (Fanon,1986[1952]). His critique of Sartre extends further to another fundamental principle of European existential philosophy, the concept of embodied experience (Fanon,1986[1952]).

While not directly critiquing Merleau-Ponty (2013[1945]), (his work is more fully explored in chapter 3), there are clear references to his work as Fanon describes how the body-schema proposed by Merleau-Ponty, is for black people, undermined by colonial racism (Fanon,1986[1952]). Merleau-Ponty proposes that all human beings experience the world through mind and body. These experiences are within a spatial realm, one which is characterised by a context, yet, temporary and ever-changing. What we experience and who we *are* in one context need not be the same in another (2005[1945]). What is considered universal, however, is our embodied 'humanness'; we are all thrown into the

world and our different subjectivities are created as we experience being in the world (van Deurzen,2010).

Fanon argues that slavery and racism stripped away the subjectivity of black people, reducing them to a fixed object, inferior to white people. In other words, black people are not 'thrown' into the world in the same embodied way as white people. They come into the world as something and that something is that they are inferior: *'I am over determined from without. I am the slave not of the "idea" that others have of me but of my own appearance'* (Fanon,1986[1952]:116).

When a black person encounters the world, they encounter it already as an inferior stereotype, and this stereotype remains regardless of context, time or space (Fanon,1986[1952]).

One of the essential principles of existential theory is that 'existence precedes essence' (Sartre,2003[1943]). However, for black people it seems that they are both something and nothing; their blackness which is the 'something' has no value. Black people's existence in the world is characterised by the need to demonstrate their value and one way they may choose to do this is to strive for high achievement in the work that they do. However, Fanon argues that even when black people strive to become more acceptable to white people, use their language, embrace their culture and reject their own, they still find themselves rejected. With echoes of the psychoanalytic perspective, Fanon argues that one of the results of this rejection and negation of blackness is self-hatred.

Furthermore, this internalised racism creates a collective sense of inferiority which is passed down the generations. Fanon's insight into the existence of

black people resonates with my experience as a black person. However, his evocation of self-hatred as an inevitable response to antiblack racism, and one which endures as intergenerational trauma, fails to recognise the agency among some black people to create a healthy relationship towards their blackness.

As with Fanon, Gordon (1999) references the work of Sartre. He draws on Sartre's concept of bad faith to describe how antiblack racism emerges as a phenomenon and is maintained by antiblack racists. In the concept of bad faith, we experience ourselves as nothing and yet have the freedom to make choices. This causes us anxiety and leads us to try to evade this freedom by creating something definite. Gordon applies this to the relationship between the racist and the black subject. In Gordon's thesis, the racist hides from the anguish of their nothingness by deceiving themselves to be a 'superior thing' because of their whiteness. This would mean that they too are thrown into the world with an 'essence', this time one of superiority. For Gordon this means:

*'the white is superior to the black. What this premise suggests is that the white's existence is justified, whereas the black existence needs justification. The black existence lacks something. This entails whites being, ironically, full presence **and** the standpoint from which others (non-whites) are seen.'* (Gordon,1999: 100)

The antiblack racist is in bad faith as they have constructed their being as complete, as 'something'. The black subject now experiences what it means to be nothing, a non-being.

Gordon further argues that antiblack racism comes into being and is maintained by the collective actions and beliefs of individuals hiding from their responsibilities and fears. In other words, it is enshrined in social institutions. However, in what he describes as a process of ontological self-recovery, black people need to exercise their existential freedom to consciously choose an existence not defined by the lie of black inferiority (Gordon, 1999). Gordon makes clear that these conscious choices are in the everyday moments: *'the specific choices [that we make in the everyday] reveal the fundamental choice'* (Gordon,1999:61). For Gordon this fundamental choice is not to live as a 'negro' (Gordon,1999).

While Gordon believes in the agency of black people and implores them to use this to make clear their equal value, he doesn't really explain how, in the context of existing within the presence of institutional antiblack racism, black people can fully *experience* this equality. Before exploring the literature on how black Jamaicans in Britain navigated this dilemma, I will turn to literature on black Jamaican existence in general.

2.4.2.3 Black Jamaican existence

Writing specifically from a black Caribbean experience, Henry (2005) draws on the work of Du Bois (1994[1903]) and argues that black people need to stop seeing themselves and other black people from a white European perspective. Henry observes that what Du Bois refers to as 'second sight' (double

consciousness) implies that there is a 'first sight'. This first sight enables the black subject to reclaim their *own* self-consciousness, to see themselves through their own eyes. Henry notes that one way in which Jamaicans historically have challenged the false consciousness of 'second sight' is through the theology of Rastafarianism.

Rastafarianism emerged from the Jamaican poorer classes in the early part of the twentieth century. The ideology drew upon key ideas of Garvey (1970 and 2004). Garvey encouraged the black diaspora in the early part of the twentieth century, to reject the European notion of Africa and blackness as inferior. Instead he encouraged black people to acknowledge the historical achievements of Africans and to see that black people could once again achieve greatness (Garvey,2004). However, Garvey didn't appear to see this as a return to a past Africa, instead it was a way of reframing black history to give black people pride in their past and hope for their future (Sewell,1987). To this end, the theology is: "*oriented towards a courage that reconstitutes the self in spite of such social phenomena as class/race domination and stereotypical redefinition*" (Henry,[in Gordon],1997:159)

This new black self is constituted with reference to the symbolic positioning of Ethiopia (the only African country not to be colonised) as the spiritual home for the 'free' black Rastafarian (Henry,1997). Within Rastafarianism there is an interpretation of biblical text that challenges dominant European translation. Rastafarianism evokes biblical metaphors such as the use of the term 'Babylon' to describe a physical and mental place of captivity. While the ideology offered

hope and a call to black pride, it manifested a more spiritual dimension than Garveyism which focused more on black self-determination akin to a type of black nationalism (Garvey, 2004, and Sewell,1987). Henry argues that the significance of Rastafarianism to Jamaica, the wider Caribbean and the Jamaican diaspora is that it provides a theology that challenges the legacy imperial social system that undermines both individual and collective black identity (Henry, 1997). Later in this section I will explore how this ideology influenced the black population in Britain during the 1970s.

2.4.2.4 Summary of chapter so far

Before moving on to discuss the experiences of the Windrush Generation and more specifically their children, I would like to summarise where we have reached so far in this discussion about the development of black identity. The early work on black identity revealed the impact of social factors, namely discrimination, on black psychological functioning, citing self-hatred as an inevitable and enduring response. The later work of Cross (1971 and 1997), demonstrated in the 1970s, black people's capacity to develop a humanising self-concept despite continued racism, with an assumption that such an identity could be objectively measured. Existential thinkers, or more specifically black existential thinkers, focus on different black experiences and we saw in this chapter, an exploration of black existence from a Jamaican perspective manifested in Rastafarianism. Gordon (1997 and 1999) challenged the basic lie of antiblack racism encouraging *all* black people to act authentically and assert their value as a human being. This is a compelling argument. However, while I understand and agree with the need for black self-recognition and value, black

people still live in a world with antiblack racism, which demands that they continually justify their existence and reduces them to stereotypes.

I will now turn to review literature on the lived existence of the first and second-generation of black people of a Jamaican heritage living in the UK; and how they responded to the challenge of constructing their individual identity within a British context of antiblack racism. The focus will be on the period from the 1960s to the 1980s.

2.5 The Windrush Generation and their children experience being black in Britain

Foner (1985) who describes the experiences of the Windrush Generation in the UK, noted that what Jamaicans found most shocking when they arrived was that because of their blackness, regardless of any other social signifiers, they were considered lower class and inferior to whites. The open hostility, racial attacks and discrimination reached a defining moment with the 1958 Notting Hill riots, the first race riots experienced in Britain (Sewell,1998). Sewell further maintains that one of the outcomes of the riots was how it changed Jamaicans views about their Britishness.

The riots revealed that the Jamaicans had no redress under the law (anti-discrimination and race relations legislation did not exist) and many felt unprotected by the police. Those who had previously considered themselves British, now having felt rejected by Britain, reasserted their 'Jamaicanness' (Sewell,1998). This manifested itself in Jamaicans creating their own communities including social clubs, credit unions (known as the 'pardna' system)

which helped Jamaicans to finance house purchases as they could not get decent private rented accommodation as a result of discrimination (Foner,1985).

This first generation hoped that their children, born in Britain, would be accepted (Windrush,1998). The reality was that the second-generation experienced their own challenges with regard to rejection, racism and discrimination. A study by Lowenthal (1978) explored the early experiences of the second-generation lived against a background of low educational achievement, high unemployment, racial violence and civil unrest throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The findings from this and other literature (see Mullard,1973, and Gilroy,1993) were that for this generation there was still a sense of not belonging and a search for identity. Their experience was that, like their parents, their blackness marked them out as not really British (Mullard,1973). However, born in the UK, they were not Jamaican. For many the solution to this dilemma was to focus on their blackness as their main identity (Foner,1998).

The black consciousness and black power movements in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s provided some of this second-generation with positive images of blackness. However, it was the cultural and social changes in Jamaica, following its independence from Britain in 1962, that were to arguably have a profound effect on the identity of this second-generation. The Jamaican born sociologist Stuart Hall's (1994) essay, *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, focuses on cultural identity as it relates to the African-Caribbean diaspora in general and Jamaicans in particular; and his work draws upon existential themes of fluidity, context, and the ever-changing nature of identity. Hall wrote specifically about

the experiences of the Jamaican diaspora in Britain from the 1960s to the 1980s. He argues that the focus on black identity in Britain emerged not only as a response to rejection and the sense of not belonging to Britain, but a resonance with the social struggles of the Jamaican poor as they attempted to establish a new postcolonial black Jamaican identity. As a result, the black British identity that developed at this time was characterised by its Jamaican cultural references (Hall,1994).

In some respects, the rise of the civil rights and black power movements in the United States and Rastafarianism in Jamaica during the 1960s and 1970's was an attempt to rediscover a lost African history. In Jamaica, during this period, Hall notes: *'the culture of Rastafarianism and the music of reggae – the metaphors, the figures or signifiers of a new construction of Jamaican-ness [emerged]'* (Hall,1994:231). As mentioned earlier, such metaphors included references to black people being in captivity in 'Babylon' yet reminding themselves of their value and their need to focus on freeing their minds *'from mental slavery'* (Marley,1980).

Hall sees the period of the early 1970s in particular as historic; the first time, Jamaicans in Jamaica and overseas *'discovered themselves to be black'* (Hall,1994:231). However, in doing so, they constructed a cultural identity of 'Jamaicanness' grounded in an Africa of the past but also reconfigured in the Jamaica of the present. In other words, the lyrics of roots reggae music described the contemporary daily lives of ordinary Jamaicans their struggle, oppression and the fight for freedom and referenced this to the historical

struggles of all black people. It appears that for many of the young second-generation in Britain (myself included) whether they were of Jamaican or other Caribbean heritage, they now had an identity of their own. While not all young people became Rastafarians, the roots reggae music and the sense of struggle and yearning for peace and freedom symbolized within Rastafarianism, seemed to resonate with their experience of alienation, isolation and search for meaning and identity in the UK. I and other black people felt they now had proof that they were of value. They had a rich history and a pride in their blackness. However, this generation still faced the reality that their existence was within a society that didn't appear to recognise this value.

Gilroy (1993) writes specifically on the experiences of the children of the Windrush Generation during the 1970s and 1980s. In Gilroy's thesis we see an evocation of Du Bois's (1994[1903]) double consciousness dilemma facing black Americans, repositioned within the British context. Gilroy poses the question whether it is possible to be both black and British. For me and for many other black people of my generation, the answer was no. As I discussed earlier, it was the specific experience of rejection that led many to conclude that they could not be both black and British and that is why, for many a black identity became *the* identity that they cleaved to. However, it is the specific nature of this black identity that many black young people constructed that Gilroy finds problematic, namely a 'discovered' singular 'authentic' black identity. A type of black nationalism (Gilroy,1993)

For Gilroy, the reality of the diasporic experience is that it is inextricably linked to European and African history. Therefore, the idea of a return to a distinct objective pre-slavery identity is as false as any white nationalist identity (Gilroy, 1993). Gilroy makes an important point and one which challenges, for example, Garvey's perspective on black social identity revealing how black nationalism is in bad faith. However, the reality of the experience of black people in Britain particularly during the 1970s and 1980s led many to fashion their black identity in a fixed objective way. For many it was a way of surviving their daily lives in the country of their birth, a country that rejected them. It is only by understanding the context of their existence at this time, that it is possible to understand how and why some black people adopted this position towards their blackness and what it meant to them to do this. However, as I will discuss in chapters 4 and 5 not all black people adopted this type of black identity. As will be illustrated in the findings, it was the lived experience of the individuals that gave rise to and made meaningful their relationship to their blackness.

While much of the literature on blackness and identity relates to the experience of both black men and women, the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of black feminist literature focused specifically on the experience of black women. In the next section, I will look at the history of black British feminism in general and then explore the experience of being a black woman of Jamaican heritage in Britain.

2.6 Being a black female of Jamaican heritage in Britain

2.6.1 History of black British feminism

Literature on the lived experience of black women written *by* black women has its roots in black American feminist theories, which emerged as a critique of existing white feminist theory and theories of blackness that focused on black male experience (Bryan, et al,2018[1985]). Traditionally, research into the lives of black women from an American perspective explored the impact of racism on these women. These studies reveal how black women contend with being stereotyped and the relationship between their experience and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression (hooks,1981, Hill Collins,1990). In the UK there have also been studies into the effects of racism on the psychological functioning of black people in general (Mental Health Foundation,2016).

Both American and British thinkers have identified how the struggle against stereotyping contributes to low self-esteem and depression (Graham,2018). Such stereotyping includes the phenomenon of the strong black resilient woman and the angry black woman. With the former, black women are seen to embody the belief that they can overcome all challenges even if it is to their psychological detriment (Reynolds, 1997). The trope of the angry black woman illustrates how black women's attempts to be assertive sees them perceived as aggressive (Speight,2007). Such labels as the strong black woman (SBW) and angry black woman appear to be universal black female experiences (Graham,2018). Speight further argues, that the cumulative effect of generations of racism manifest themselves as self-hatred and intergenerational trauma (Speight,2007). Given these conclusions about the experience of black women in general, it seems important to ask in what ways has the context of Britain shaped the

development of black British feminism and the experience of black women living in the UK.

One of the key features in the history of black British feminism, and one which differs from black American feminism, is that while black American feminism historically focused on the experiences of the descendants of slavery, black British feminism appeared to encompass the experience of non-white women from many different cultures (Mirza 1997). The social context for the emergence of this perspective was not only the early migration into the UK of the Windrush Generation from the Caribbean in the late 1940s to 1960s; in the late 1960s and 1970s, Asian immigrants who were British passport holders expelled from Kenya and Uganda, also came to the UK (Mirza, 1997). In a similar way to the early Caribbean migrants, Asian immigrants faced racism, discrimination and poor working and housing conditions. However, they were culturally different from the Caribbean migrants and their experience with and relationship to Britain was also different (Mirza, 1997).

As Mirza observes, Asian people would not ordinarily identify as 'black' as their cultural and religious heritage are more likely to be the main signifiers of identity. However, it is within this context that feminist writers like Mirza, developed 'black' British feminism in the 1980s (Mirza, 1997). It appears that the objective in labelling this perspective on feminism 'black' was to enable non-white women to become visible within the discourse of an ideology hitherto dominated by white women's experience. However, in doing so, I would suggest there was an attempt to homogenise the experience not only of black women,

but women from other ethnic minorities. Indeed, the use of the term 'black' to encompass these experiences is problematic. As previously discussed, blackness as an identity had a specific meaning for individuals of African descent and during the 1970s was a way of constructing a *positive* identity from a common experience of slavery and discrimination. For the second-generation of Jamaican people in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s the term 'black' was an identity rooted in African Jamaican culture and experience (Windrush, 1998).

2.6.1.1 Intersectionality

More recently, black British writers on black identity have cited the importance of taking an intersectional approach to understanding the lived experience and the complexity of identity formation among black women (see Nkansa-Dwamena, 2017). The concept of *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1989), points to the complex relationship between race and gender as it affects black women. Crenshaw writing from a black American experience, and coined the term intersectionality, argues that traditional anti-racist theory and feminist theory are based on experiences that do not adequately account for the interwoven aspects of race and gender. She further argues:

'These problems of exclusion cannot be solved simply by including Black women within an already established analytical structure. Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated.' (Crenshaw, 1989 :140).

From this quote, we can see that intersectionality, as initially conceived by Crenshaw, focused on the need to understand the importance of the intersection of *race* and *gender* in order to understand the twin oppressions that black women experience. However, other writers have increasingly emphasized the importance of focusing on the intersection of other factors such as class, age and sexuality as relevant to the understanding of identity development not only among black women, but other marginalized social groups (Nkansa-Dwamena,2017). Crenshaw's original project attempts to collapse the binary focus on the lives of black women (from *either* a feminist *or* a black antiracist perspective) and raises awareness of the interwoven nature of factors that impact the lived experience of these women. However, as Hill Collins observes, there are issues with the definition of intersectionality (Hill Collins,2015). It is not clear for example, whether it is a concept, a theory or methodology; or whether it should be conceived as a means of focusing only on a narrow group, or, as appears increasingly to be the case, to be used to reflect the interests of such a broad constituency, that it faces losing its meaning (Hill Collins, 2015, Nash,2008). Although (as Hill Collins notes), intersectionality appears to seek to describe the experience of key phenomenon (by individuals from marginalized groups), the philosophical perspective from which the concept has been developed, is not explicitly referenced. For example, is it referencing an existential phenomenological perspective on the nature of *being*? In this case, *being* a black woman?

Central to the existential phenomenological philosophical perspective that underpins this research and is described in detail in chapter 3, is the notion that

all humans construct their identities through their embodied experiences in context (Sartre, 2003[1943], Merleau-Ponty, 2013[1945]). This research is interested however, in the extent to which universal existential phenomenological philosophy is sufficient to understand the embodied experience of black people in general and black women in particular. In doing so, this research, which is situated within the existential phenomenological tradition, focuses on the existence of black people. However, I recognise as Crenshaw does, that focusing on black existence in general, is not enough. To this end, one of the aims of this research, is to add to the canon of literature on black existence, by making known the experiences of a specific group of black people, black women or more precisely, black British women of Jamaican heritage.

Another criticism of intersectionality is that it lacks a clear method to analyse how individual factors intersect and impact on the individual (Nash,2008). In this research, critical narrative analysis, rooted in existential phenomenological philosophy, is used as the method to capture the narratives of the lived experience of these black women. The method (which is described in chapter 3), includes a step in which critical theories on race, gender, class, cultural heritage and historical situatedness (among others), are applied as a way of interrogating the narratives; to uncover the meaning to the individual of the experience that they describe and how their experience of their experiences (of different phenomena) shapes their sense of self.

Having discussed the history of black British feminism in general, I now turn to review the literature as it relates to women from a Jamaican heritage.

2.6.2 Black British Jamaican feminism

An attempt to position black British feminism within the historical experience of the women from the Caribbean who were the first significant wave of black women in Britain, is described in the work of Bryan et al,(2018[1985]). Writing in the 1980s, the authors tell the story to date of black women's experience in Britain. *"Our aim has been to tell it as we know it, placing our story within its history at the heart of our race, and using our own voices and lives to document the day-to-day struggles of Afro-Caribbean women in Britain over the past forty years"* (2018[1985]:2). Bryan et al explore how slavery, colonisation, racism and discrimination did not appear to crush an enduring spirit of self-reliance, insight and resistance in the Caribbean woman either in the Caribbean or newly arrived in the UK. The following verse from a poem by the Jamaican poet, Louise Bennett, captures how Jamaican women appear to perceive themselves and their personal power in a different way than black American feminist writers have typically portrayed black women:

Jamaica 'Oman (Woman)

*"An long before 'oman Lib, bruck out
Over foreign lan'
Black female wasa work out
Her Liberated plan!"* (Bennett,1986)

The whole of this poem, written with Bennett's typical wit and insight, attempts to paint a picture of Jamaican women having a sense of their own personal power. In the selected verse, Bennett states that Jamaican women were way ahead of white European women when it came to women's liberation! Despite

the humour, the poem does illustrate a difference in the experiences of Jamaican women and how they viewed their position with regards to men and to work. The poem also acts as a reminder to Jamaican women of how they have overcome historical abuse and have the capacity to aspire to great things. This is in line with Garveyism as mentioned earlier, with its call for black people to focus on achievement. Another verse from the same poem references a Jamaican national hero, a runaway slave called Nanny of the Maroons, who led other slaves in fighting and defeating British slavers in Jamaica during the 1700s. Bennett draws a direct line from Nanny's self-belief (that led to her achievements) to the same self-belief that drives the accomplishments of Jamaican girls in education. This is illustrated by Bennett when she references their specific success in spelling bee championships:

*"From maroon Nanny teck her body
Bounce bullet back pon man,
To wen nowadays gal-pickney tun
Spelling-Bee champion" (Louise Bennett, 1986)*

Bryan et al (2018[1985]) argue that the oral tradition exemplified in the work of people like Louise Bennett has allowed the passing on from one generation to the next, a sense of what it means to be a woman of Jamaican heritage. Indeed, the reference to the spelling bee champion, speaks to how hard work and achievement has long been an important focus for black women of Jamaican heritage, arguably rooted in an historical experience of existential survival.

Bryan et al identify aspects of African culture, which continue in various forms in Caribbean culture. They appear to link the role of women in slavery particularly with regard to work, with how women's attitude to work prevails in

contemporary Caribbean diasporic cultures. They suggest that since slavery black women have had to work hard and manage family life. What is interesting is how this conceptualisation of the Jamaican woman appears to reinforce the stereotype of the SBW and how, research has positioned this phenomenon as often associated with mental health issues. However, this is more complex. I do not deny that for some women seeing themselves as strong and resilient may lead to them feeling they *always* have to be this way, and this may indeed lead to psychological difficulties. However, some women draw upon images and stories around successful, creative and hardworking women as a source of strength to negotiate the reality of antiblack racism. For example, the achievements of Nanny were not just confined to physical strength, it was mental strength and intellect that saw her achieve her goals. These are powerful symbols and as Louise Bennett argues in her poem, gave women of Jamaican heritage a sense of their equal value at a time when Western feminism was demanding such rights (Bryan et al, 2018[1985]). Of interest to this research was, to what extent the image of Louise Bennett's Jamaican woman was passed down from the Windrush Generation to their daughters. I will now turn to review literature on the lived experience of black British Jamaican women in general and then black professional women of Jamaican heritage in particular.

2.6.3 The lived experience of black British women of Jamaican heritage

Regarding literature on the lived experience of black British women of Jamaican heritage there are examples in fiction, from authors of Jamaican heritage. Riley (1985) writes of the experiences of a young Jamaican girl who arrives in the UK in the early 1960s; while Levy (1995, and 1996) wrote a series of novels on the

existence of being a black girl of Jamaican heritage growing up in post Windrush Britain. In Levy's novels we see stories about the existence of Jamaicans like her parents and an illustration of alienation, despair, and agency experienced by her Jamaican parents and their British-born daughters (Levy, 1995).

As for research studies into the lived experience of black British women of Jamaican heritage this appears to be lacking, as too is any research on professional British Jamaican women. However, there is a growing body of literature on the experience of women from a general African or Caribbean heritage.

Bailey-Morrissey (2015) undertook educational research into the lived experience of black secondary school leaders. The study focused on the phenomenon of being a senior leader in a secondary school in the UK. The qualitative study was undertaken from a social constructionist interpretivist paradigm with reference to the intersectional factors of race, class and gender. Narratives were the main source of data. The participants were all black women of either African or Caribbean heritage, some born in the UK and others born either in Africa or the Caribbean. The main findings from the research were that despite the challenges that these women experienced within their role as senior leaders (which were mainly based around racism and microaggressions) they felt it was their duty to encourage other black women into the profession by acting as role models. What would have also been interesting to know was how their different cultural heritage and historical context impacted on their experiences of racism.

Rollock (2019) conducted a study in the same sector and focused on the career experiences of black female professors. As with Bailey-Morrissey's work, this study appeared to be primarily interested in the *phenomenon of the experience* of being a black female leader, more specifically the experience of 20 of the 25 black female professors within the UK. The qualitative research was interested in how these women navigated their route to professorship and what strategies they used to sustain themselves in their career. The main findings revealed that many of the participants had experienced racial stereotyping, racial microaggressions, and being overlooked for promotion in favour of less qualified white female colleagues. Despite these challenges, the professors adopted specific strategies to minimise the effects of these experiences. However, most attested to how such strategies such as being hypervigilant about how they presented themselves and the constant self-monitoring, resulted in psychological stress. These women appeared to be self-monitoring for fear of messing up. They persevered despite the challenges; because to give up would possibly reinforce the stereotype that black people are not good enough.

In contrast to the studies above which are from a sociological or social psychological perspective there is little previous literature within the UK-based discipline of counselling psychology on the experience of black professional women in Britain. However, Ade-Serrano (2010) undertook a study which explored how a group of black professional women self-define and maintain their individuality. The participants were drawn from African and Caribbean backgrounds and their ages ranged from 22 to 57. The objective was to

understand how this group of women constructed a 'sense of self' and maintained their individuality across their lifespan. The research highlights how a group of black women undertake this universal existential phenomenological challenge and concludes that the individuals struggle to self-define and maintain their individuality. While the study captures the narratives of the lived experience of black professional women, contributing much needed knowledge to the field of UK counselling psychology, the age range and different cultural heritage of the participants makes it difficult to assess the impact of historical and cultural situational factors on their identity construction.

The current research was interested in how black British-born professional women of Jamaican heritage, born to Windrush Jamaican immigrants constructed their identity and how their particular heritage and context contributed to their 'sense of self' and their relationship with work and achievement.

I now want to turn to how the counselling psychology profession has responded to race and the black experience.

2.7 Counselling psychology's response to race and the black experience

Neville and Carter (2005), have written on the approaches that counselling psychologists need to adopt when engaging with matters of race and the black experience. Writing specifically from an American experience, they acknowledge that the discipline of counselling psychology has taken steps to engage with the challenges of how to approach race in a clinical setting. However, they argue

that there should be a move away from just acknowledging someone's racial background. Counselling psychologists should instead focus on exploring with their black client, their relationship with their black identity, with stereotypes, racial and cultural group identity. In his paper *The Issue of Race in Counselling Psychology* (2005), Wade points to how psychologists need to be aware that an individual's perspective on race may differ because of the historical and social context in which they were raised. The paper also calls for training to include discussions with white students on their attitude to race and racism, as he points to evidence that trainees and qualified psychologists are reluctant to raise issues of race until the client broaches the subject themselves.

In the UK the issue of race, appears to have been and continues to be, a challenging issue for the discipline. In 2014, a proposal was put forward to the Division of Counselling Psychology (DCop) by the Black and Asian Counselling Psychology Group (BACPG) recommending changes to the training of counselling psychologists and encouraging research into themes related to race culture and identity (Ade-Serrano and Nkansa-Dwamena,2014). The paper proposed among other things, that there be a specific module on race, culture and ethnicity on every counselling psychology course throughout the duration of doctoral training. There is little evidence that this proposal has so far been acted on by the DCop in a way that would see the proposals become a mandatory part of training throughout doctoral courses. I believe this illustrates one way in which counselling psychology in general and that practiced from an existential perspective, appears wedded to universal philosophical principles which assume that we are all equal human beings. If a black person's existential concerns are

always framed by antiblack racism and a positioning as an inferior 'being' then these concerns can only fully be understood with knowledge of the existence of *being* black and more specifically being black in the UK.

2.8 Summary and rationale for this current research

As demonstrated in the review of existing literature, research into black identity development in general has a long history in America and Jamaica. While there is a literature on the lived experience of Jamaicans in the UK, within the field of counselling psychology, such work appears absent. Counselling psychology in general and that from an existential perspective in particular, has largely ignored the lived experiences of black British people. While there is a growing field of research from a black existential perspective in America, Africa and the Caribbean, there isn't such a movement in the UK. Why British existential psychologists do not appear to grasp the importance of such work is not clear. However, what is clear is that there is a gap in this knowledge. Any research, as with this current study, which has the stated intention of capturing the lived experience of black people, needs to acknowledge that this experience is not singular. There is a diversity of black British cultures that contribute to a diversity of experiences, lived across different contexts. However, all contemporary black British experience is influenced by the experiences of the first significant black British population, the Windrush Generation and their children. For example, anti-discrimination and race relations legislation, hitherto non-existent, emerged from the experiences of this black population. That they lived their lives in Britain during the historical events of the 1970s

makes their experiences even more important in the understanding of black British existence and identity development.

Finally, the rationale for focusing specifically on professional women is twofold. Firstly, the ideas of Garvey (1970) and that of other black philosophers were used by the black consciousness movements in the 1970s to urge black people to achieve and reclaim their place of equal value (Hall, 1994). Also, I was interested to explore the *meaning* that working hard and achieving gave to my participants. To this end the research question was: *What is the lived experience of second-generation professional black British women of Jamaican heritage, what did this experience mean to them and how did it shape their relationship with work and achievement?*

The next chapter will explore the methodology and method that was used to address this question.

3. Methodology and Method

3.1 Background

Having discussed in the previous chapter, the rationale for this current research in the light of the review of existing literature, I now turn to how it aimed to address the key research question: *What is the lived experience of second-generation professional black British women of Jamaican heritage, what did this experience mean to them and how did it shape their relationship with work and achievement?*

In considering how to undertake this research, I was mindful of how to organize it within a paradigm. A research paradigm defines a set of beliefs and principles for how I, the researcher, understand how knowledge of the world is produced (Langdridge,2007). Traditional theories of how we gain knowledge (about ourselves and the world), focus either on the mind as central to the creation of knowledge *or* sensory experience. In the former perspective, known as *rationalist epistemology*, consciousness is separate from our experience of it. When we perceive an object, we engage solely in cognitive processes to determine certain facts about the object. From the other traditional perspective, known as *empiricist epistemology* our knowledge of the world is derived solely from our sensory experience (Seale,1999). These dualistic epistemological positions have dominated the approach to psychological enquiry and have become the mainstream research approach.

In contrast, in a more *critical phenomenological* epistemology this separation of mind and body, thinking and experience, is collapsed. From this perspective, the belief is that we cannot separate our experience of an object from our perception of it. When we encounter an object or a phenomenon, it becomes meaningful to us in some way (Langdridge,2007).

These different ways of viewing knowledge or different epistemological positions lead to different approaches to research enquiry and the knowledge being sought from this enquiry. The more mainstream perspectives arguably lead to a more experimental approach that seeks factual data to support a hypothesis or develop a theory. In contrast, the critical phenomenological

perspective aligns more with a qualitative approach and seeks knowledge about human experiences (Langdrige,2017). Both these perspectives on the production of knowledge and the methodologies aligned to them will be explored in this chapter.

My personal belief about what I know about the social world and who I am, is rooted in the critical phenomenological perspective. It is my belief that my knowledge is gained through my lived experience and that this lived experience is characterised by my relationships with others, within and across different contexts, over my lifespan. As a researcher, my personal beliefs ultimately drew me towards seeking a particular type of knowledge from this research, namely the lived experiences of my participants. However, it was not only my personal interest in lived experiences that led me to want to seek this type of knowledge, a review of the literature demonstrates a lack of this type of knowledge about my participant constituency within the field of counselling psychology.

Notwithstanding this, with regard to this current research, I still had to explore two fundamental questions. What methodologies and methods could be used within this research and how would I justify the selection of the methodology and method? (Crotty,1998).

With regard to this specific research, I considered a third fundamental question. How would the concept of race be addressed within the chosen methodology and method? The subject of race, specifically with regard to the black Caribbean diaspora, could not be ignored from my considerations about the choice of methodology and method. For example, would existing critical theories suffice?

Were there other theories that explored the impact of the complex history of slavery and blackness on the experiences of the black diaspora? To address these questions required a reflection on the purpose of the research. What was the research aiming to achieve? What knowledge would be acquired from the research? How would the knowledge produced from the research be viewed? Is the research searching for facts or perspectives, objective or subjective truths? (Crotty,1998).

In this chapter I will explore how I considered the fundamental research question. I will begin by exploring the different perspectives on the production of knowledge (epistemology). I will then discuss how my chosen epistemology led me to select a qualitative approach to this current research, underpinned by a hermeneutic existential phenomenological theoretical perspective and how these fit with my choice of research method; critical narrative analysis.

3.2 The production of knowledge

There are broadly two perspectives on the nature of knowledge production. The mainstream dominant perspective that underpins the scientific experimental approach to research focuses on mental or experiential processes involved in grasping an objective reality. In contrast, critical theories such as existential phenomenology focus on subjective lived experiences within a context. While it is the phenomenological perspective and social critical theories that dominate the discipline of counselling psychology, it is the mainstream perspective that has a longer tradition and still dominates much of general psychological research

(Langdrige,2007). In order to understand how psychological research began to embrace critical theories and phenomenological philosophy as a challenge to the scientific method, I will begin by exploring the mainstream perspective.

3.2.1 Mainstream perspective

Within the mainstream perspective, the nature of consciousness of our social world focuses on the cognitive processes involved in perceiving objects in the world. Drawing upon the ideas of Descartes, (1596-1650), the belief that underpins this view of how knowledge is produced conceives the mind as separate from the body. In what has come to be known as the Cartesian split, the mind is considered as the only part of our being involved in gaining knowledge of the world (Gough & Mcfadden,2001). This Cartesian view holds that when we perceive an object, we engage solely in logical mental processes or reasoning that lead us to conclude certain facts about the object. Our body becomes a subject that is split from our mind. With our mind we can then objectively observe and engage in logical reasoning about experience. Similarly, we can apply this objectivity to phenomena we encounter in the world. However, in reality when we encounter an object, we encounter it as *something*, it is always meaningful to us (Langdrige,2007). For example, thinking about this current research, not all black people who encounter racism will ascribe the same meaning to the phenomenon. Some may deny that it is racism, others will challenge it head on, while others still may internalize the experience and use it as proof of their lesser value. Each will attach their own meaning to their encounter with this phenomenon.

Drawing upon Descartes' belief that '*reason is the best way to generate knowledge*' Comte (1798-1857) argued that only scientific knowledge in the form of logical reasoning could reveal the truth about reality (Kaboub,2008). Comte is a key figure within the positivist perspective on the production of knowledge. This perspective will now be explored below.

3.2.1.1 The positivist rational epistemology

Positivists such as Comte proposed that society has natural laws similar to the physical world. The belief is that individuals grasp knowledge of these natural laws that govern their social world. It suggests only one objective truth and a direct connection between the phenomenon and our perception of it (Willig,2013). Applied to psychology, the positivist epistemology asserts a belief that it is possible to explain psychological thinking and behaviour through observation and logical analysis (Kaboub,2008). Therefore, by conducting experiments in controlled conditions and according to scientific principles of repeatability and the control of variables, we can derive a truth.

Known as the *inductive* method, positivists claim that it is through a number of scientific observations that it is possible to derive a theory that points to the 'truth' about a phenomenon (Willig,2013). With regard to a social phenomenon such as anxiety, from a positivist perspective this would be seen as a real entity. The purpose of experiments would be to discover the universal conditions that bring about its existence and therefore develop treatments to cure it (Morrow & Smith,2000). Within the positivist paradigm, the assumption is that the researcher *discovers* knowledge, in this case she has identified the *causes* of

anxiety. Popper (1902-1994) argued that there were both practical and logical issues with this inductive approach; in particular the premise that a number of observations would mean that it would *always* be the case that one action would cause a given result (Popper,2002[1935]).

Adopting what came to be known as *critical rationalism*, Popper proposed an alternative approach: *hypothetico-deductivism*, which relied on the presentation of a hypothesis, a theory that could be tested by experiment or observation. Popper argued that theories are derived from observations already in existence. In other words, we engage in speculative solutions or reasoning or hold a hypothesis about an issue or phenomenon and then we put this to the test (Seale,1999). With regard to research, an experiment would be established to test a theory about behaviour. For example, we could put forward a hypothesis that there is a relationship between lack of sleep and performance of a particular task. The experiment would be setup to deprive people of sleep and then observe their behaviour performing a given task. From this the researcher is able to test the hypothesis and by repeating the experiment a number of times (and gathering more data) propose a strong correlation between sleep deprivation and task performance.

One criticism of both the positivist and critical rationalist approaches is that they reduce human behaviour and experience to a set of statistical tests. What is missing is any knowledge about an individual's experiences or feelings. For example, what are an individual's feelings about anxiety? What is their bodily experience of anxiety? What meaning does anxiety have in their lives?

Nonetheless, the positivist and critical rationalist approaches have formed the basis of mainstream psychological research and still dominate approaches today (Langdrige,2007). However, during the crisis in psychology in the 1960s and 1970s, postmodernist and critical theories began to challenge these mainstream approaches (Hepburn,2003 and Langdrige,2007). These theories were 'critical' of existing structures of modern society, particularly those structures believed to have contributed to the creation and perpetuation of the oppression of certain groups. In addition, these theories were also critical of the field of mainstream psychology itself (Hepburn,2003). These critical ideas included existential phenomenology, Marxism, feminism, social constructionism, postcolonial theory, and Africana or black existential philosophy. I will now turn to these critical perspectives on the production of knowledge. Firstly, looking at how the adoption of phenomenological ideas provided psychological research with a mechanism to enquire into the lived experiences of individuals.

3.2.2 The 'critical' perspectives

3.2.2.1 The Phenomenological perspective

Phenomenology was an approach developed by Husserl (1913) as an attempt to identify the fundamental concepts that distinguish each of the sciences, for example, to identify what concepts constitute the science of psychology (Langdrige,2007). To this end, Husserl sought to identify these concepts: *'through a rigorous analysis of the way the objects of study in each science appeared to us in our experience of them'* (Langdrige,2007:11). With regard to psychology, this would be a rigorous analysis of the way *psychological* phenomena appears to us in our experience of them (Langdrige,2007).

Husserl defined certain characteristics within the phenomenological approach. The concept of *intentionality* challenges the long-established Cartesian split between mind and body as described earlier, which traditionally characterised the entire field of psychology. For example, the Cartesian view of consciousness focuses on our cognition and inner mental states (Husserl,1913). In other words, when we perceive an object or phenomenon, we trigger certain mental processes. While this is certainly the case, it does not tell the whole story. The concept of intentionality speaks to the notion that when we are conscious of an object, when we see this object, we *also* experience it as something, we have some relationship with it (Langdrige,2007). This leads to another characteristic of phenomenology, the experience and the nature of the experience itself. Husserl makes a distinction between what is experienced (noema) and the way it is experienced (noesis) (Langdrige,2007). When we encounter a phenomenon then it will appear to us as a material entity or experience which can be described in factual terms, for example a tall older man with short hair, will be *noema*. How we experience this man, what he means to us as we relate to him will be *noesis*. Together this forms our experience of the phenomenon.

In employing the phenomenological approach, the first step is to challenge our preconceived assumptions (Langdrige,2007). Husserl was aware that one of the challenges facing any scientific research is that, as researchers, it is likely when we encounter someone who describes a similar experience to one that we have had, we will then presume knowledge and understanding of their

experience. As described earlier, there are shared social narratives and beliefs that we as researchers may hold as the norm and there are also individual beliefs and values that I as a researcher hold that may not necessarily be so widely shared. The problem here is that as researchers we are trying to capture individual subjective experiences, the way the participant sees the world. To enable this process, Husserl proposed that researchers engage in the process of *epoche*. This process relies on the researcher 'bracketing' assumptions, not pretending they aren't there but being open to the possibility that some new knowledge about the world may emerge, a different way of thinking and responding to a given phenomenon (Langdrige,2007).

As a clinician and researcher, I have found the process of bracketing challenging but when consciously applied, I have found myself surprised at a different way of seeing how others see the world. For example, it is very easy to assume that because an individual hails from a particular cultural background that all individuals from that background will experience phenomena in the same way.

The second step in Husserl's phenomenological approach is to focus on description as opposed to seeking an explanation for the phenomenon. In doing this we challenge the mainstream psychological research emphasis on deriving hypotheses and theories which detract from our focus on the lived experience of the research participant (Langdrige,2007).

Existential thinkers have developed Husserl's ideas and this *existential turn* in phenomenological philosophy shaped the post-modern paradigm of

contemporary qualitative research within the social sciences (Langdridge,2007). Such existential ideas relate to what are described as *givens* of human existence such as: choice, freedom, death, meaningless, responsibility, isolation ‘thrownness’, and temporality (see Kierkegaard (1994[1844]),Heidegger, (1962[1927]) Sartre (2003[1943]), Merleau-Ponty (2013[1945])). Although I acknowledge that Heidegger’s ideas on the nature of ‘being-in-the world’ (Heidegger,1962) have had a significant influence on existential phenomenological philosophy, as I discussed in chapter 2, because of Heidegger’s association with Nazism and fascist thinking, I did not feel it was appropriate to extol his ideas in a research study about black identity.

Existentialist theories that focus on the nature of our existence, had a significant impact on mid twentieth century critical thinking. The ideas of Sartre in particular, influenced social science theories and political thought from Marxism to postcolonial theory (Judaken, 2009). In his seminal work, *Being and Nothingness* (2003 [1943]), Sartre espouses his belief about the nature of human consciousness. In Sartre’s work we see consciousness conceived as without essence, it has an emptiness or ‘nothingness’ (Sartre, 2003[1943]). As discussed in chapter 2, Sartre proposes three modes of existence (*being-in-itself, being-for-itself and being-for-others*). With regard to how we might enquire into the nature of human knowledge, Sartre rejects the notion that we can be studied as objects, as if we have fixed identifiable concrete properties such as natural world objects (Langdridge,2007). Sartre emphasizes that out of our nothingness, our consciousness, our knowledge is continually created through our lived experience (Sartre,2003[1943]). Furthermore, this experience is embodied; there

is no mind and body split, as the only way in which we can experience the world is through our body.

This emphasis on embodiment is central to the work of Merleau-Ponty (2013[1945]). Merleau-Ponty's 'body-subject' thesis has had the most direct impact on phenomenological psychology (Langdrige,2007). Another key aspect of Merleau-Ponty's ideas that influenced the phenomenological approach to research is his belief that individuals adopt positions in the world (Merleau-Ponty,2013[1945]). Faced with freedom we act in the world in ways that are meaningful to us. Furthermore, the way in which our actions in the world become meaningful is related to how we perceive the world. We focus on the world in particular ways in alignment with the stance or position we take up; we then create meaning from our interactions from this stance and perceptual focus (Merleau-Ponty,2013[1945]).

This turn to existentialism is consistent with Husserl's concept of the *lifeworld*. Husserl believed that one of the main underpinnings to any phenomenological research was a focus on experience as lived in a concrete daily existence. However, in this current research, a key issue is how the objective fact of antiblack racism can be addressed by applying a phenomenological existential approach (Gordon,1999). In chapter 2, I discussed how black existential philosophy focused on the existential concerns of black people. I explore this and postcolonial theory later on in this chapter when I discuss the influence of critical theories on psychological research methodologies. The complex fact of antiblack racism for people such as my participants in this current research may

mean that existential concerns are viewed through a different lens. Nonetheless, these concerns remain; as to how individuals thrown into a world create meaning from their lived experience. It is the uncovering of this meaning, that is the focus of the phenomenological research endeavour (Langdrige,2007).

This quest for uncovering and understanding meaning led to what is described as the 'hermeneutic turn' in existential phenomenological philosophy (Langdrige,2007). Hermeneutics can be defined as: '*the theory of the operations of understanding in their relationship to the interpretation of texts*' (Ricoeur,2016[1981]:3). Ricoeur (2016[1981]), was concerned with interpreting text and the relationship between language and understanding. However, for Ricoeur, there was a difference between the individual words we use (defined as *language* and *discourse*) and how the language comes together to form sentences which in turn convey a meaning (Langdrige,2007). Ricoeur identifies four characteristics of discourse to illustrate its importance in the existential phenomenological approach. There is a temporal nature to any discourse as it is capturing an understanding of a moment in time. With discourse, there is always a subject who speaks from the position of 'I'. A discourse is not abstract, the language used may be, yet the discourse will always have some meaning, it will always be about something. Finally, the discourse will always be towards and related to an 'other' (Langdrige,2007).

Ricoeur saw that understanding discourse always involves interpretation. The process of interpretation involves what can be described as a movement back and forth between explanation and understanding. This process was what

Ricoeur described as the *hermeneutic arc* (Ricoeur,2016[1981]). The process involves reviewing the text objectively from a distance, analyzing the words used by the participant, the narrative function and tone, and what the participant says in the text. The second level is to consider the context, what the interviewee reveals about themselves and what meaning the researcher believes they are trying to convey. Ricoeur describes this interpretive process as the *hermeneutic of empathy or meaning recollection* (Ricoeur,2016[1981]).

What distinguishes Ricoeur's work from interpretative phenomenology (see van Manen,1990) is his use of what he terms the *hermeneutics of suspicion*.

Traditionally employed as a mode of analysis by psychoanalysts, the purpose here is to uncover hidden meanings underneath the text, and to cast 'suspicion' over the meaning revealed within the initial hermeneutic of empathy (Langdrige,2007). In the psychoanalytic tradition this would involve uncovering unconscious processes hidden from the conscious awareness of the participant (Langdrige,2007). While Ricoeur saw that Freud applied hermeneutics of suspicion, he also recognised figures such as Marx with his exposition on the role of economic power and social control as a key factor in shaping social identities and meaning making (Langdrige,2007). Furthermore, Ricoeur described that in the process of research; hermeneutics of suspicion should not be applied solely to the participant. Instead, the researcher, who after all is shaped by her own experiences and context, needs to subject themselves to a process of revealing the hidden contextual factors (political, social, racial, cultural) that have shaped their way of being-in-the world (Langdrige,2007).

Ricoeur arguably was himself suspicious of the attempt by the phenomenological researcher to bracket their preconceptions. In other words, as Merleau-Ponty claims, take up positions in the world and perceive the world from these positions. The work of Ricoeur has significantly influenced the development of critical narrative analysis, the method of analysis developed by Langdrige (2007), which will be used in this research. I will discuss in detail how these ideas of Ricoeur apply to critical narrative analysis in the Method section.

In Ricoeur's later work in *Time and Narrative* (1990[1983]), we see more of an existential focus in which Ricoeur moves beyond discourse and focuses on the narratives, the stories that individuals tell about their lived experience. It is through these narratives that individuals not only convey meaning about their lived experience, they also construct a sense of identity (Ricoeur,1990 [1983]).

While Ricoeur's work focused on the uncovering of *meaning* within text, it was Gadamer (2013[1960]) who stressed that all understanding and knowledge is situated within a culture and historical time and place (Langdrige,2007). For Gadamer, the use of language was the key tool by which we convey our understanding of the world and our 'subjective position'. In other words, within our discourse or narratives we adopt a position, a worldview, which is shaped by our history, culture and experiences (Langdrige,2007).

The phenomenological approach described above was increasingly adopted as a mode of social enquiry from the 1960s and 1970s, in response to a growing dissatisfaction with the positivist approach (Gough & Mcfadden,2001). This

coincided with wider social and political changes and challenges to existing theories around social class, gender and race. Emergent critical theories such as Marxism, feminism and postcolonial theories were also adopted as an approach to social science research that was increasingly underpinned by phenomenological, hermeneutic and existential ideas (Gough & McFadden,2001). Social scientists and the emerging discipline of counselling psychology were interested in how wider issues that were being played out in society during the 1960s and 1970s (racial, gender and class inequality) impacted on the lived experience of individuals and groups (Strawbridge & Woolfe,2010). I will now turn to examine these major critical theories and their impact on psychological research.

3.2.2.2 The Marxist perspective

The development of critical social psychological ideas owes much to Marxist, feminist and social constructionist thinking (Gough & Mcfadden,2001). However, the ideas of Marx (1818-1883) appear to have had the most significant impact on early critical psychological thinking (Gough & Mcfadden,2001). Marx drew attention to the relationship between power, ideology and subjectivity (Hepburn, 2003). Writing specifically on the economic conditions of the nineteenth century, he explored the link between what he saw as the oppression of the working-classes by a privileged few and a conscious attempt to maintain a capitalist society. In psychological terms, Marx saw that as a result of the working-class having to sell their labour to a privileged elite in order to survive, they were reduced to commodities (Hepburn,2003). Marx regarded this labour transaction between the working-class and the elite as dehumanizing.

Individuals were left alienated from themselves, from fulfilling their own desires and being free to determine their own lives.

The concept of power relations in Marxist theory centres on the relationship between the elite, who, as Marx described, not only owned and controlled the means of economic production and so wielded economic power, they also ensured the continuation of social class division by perpetuating an ideology that supported these social relations (Hepburn,2003). In other words, ideas such as those about individual endeavour and intellectual capability equating to economic success were championed as legitimating capitalism and social class divisions. Those who succeeded did so because they were more capable and industrious. (Hepburn,2003). As Marx believed that the sole purpose of these ideas was to shore up the capitalist state, then it was not sufficient for the ideas to change. Instead, what was needed was a revolution in the form of the overturning of capitalism by the working-classes in favour of an egalitarian socialist society (Hepburn,2003).

Parker (1996), who describes himself as a Marxist psychologist, argues that mainstream psychology has been complicit in maintaining capitalism: '*all the elements of alienation and reification that characterise capitalism are condensed in the discipline of psychology*' (Parker,1996, cited in Hepburn,2003:47).

Furthermore, mainstream psychology and capitalism are complicit in the oppression of specific groups in society mainly women, non-white people, and the working-classes. Although the ideas of Marx have undoubtedly had a significant impact on all the social sciences, there have been critics of some of

Marx's original ideas and the implementation of his beliefs by some of his followers. One notable critic was Foucault (1978).

Foucault challenged the central tenet of Marx's thesis, namely his concept of power relations. As mentioned earlier, for Marx power relations were binary in nature. Those who owned and controlled the means of production held power over those who did not. Foucault however, regarded power relations as more diffuse in nature, operating at all levels of society indeed within all human interactions. Furthermore, for Foucault, power is used whenever one person seeks to influence another (Foucault,1978).

A general critique of Marx is that his ideas were too mechanistic (Hepburn,2003). Marx positioned the working-classes as in some way all being the same with the same motivations; a homogenous oppressed underclass pitted against an equally homogenous elite. In psychological terms, Marx's ideas did not account for the vagaries of individual differences within groups (Hepburn,2003).

Another major criticism of Marx's thesis that is particularly relevant to this research is the argument that human relations are mediated solely through social class positions and as such, class inequality is the most significant social factor impacting an individual's lived experience. However, in this current research the participants, by virtue of their profession and earnings, may be considered part of the bourgeoisie. However, the fact of their blackness, and the experience they have as black women may (or may not) be perceived as more important in how they see themselves and their place in the world. They may

therefore consider their blackness and not their class position as the main reason for them being treated less favourably by white society.

3.2.2.3 The feminist perspective

With the crisis in the social sciences during the 1960 and 1970s, feminists argued that the experiences of women in general had been poorly served by psychological research (Willig,2013). Although feminist criticism has not, as yet, resulted in alternative epistemologies and methodologies, the main focus of such critique has been to challenge the traditional norms inherent in some psychological research (Willig,2013). While both the Marxist and feminist critiques both consider how the power relations between groups serve to perpetuate inequalities, they do not examine in detail from a critical perspective, the socio-psychological mechanisms involved in bringing about our individual perceptions and knowledge of the world and our place in it. In other words, how, as we interact with others in our social world, we construct or build our knowledge of the world and 'sense of self'.

3.2.2.4 Social Constructionist perspective

Social constructionism is primarily a sociological concept closely associated with the ideas of Cooley (1864-1929). Cooley's 'Looking Glass Theory' proposes that our 'sense of self' is inextricably linked to how we imagine others see us. This notion that I am who I think you perceive me to be, encapsulates the complex relationship between our perceptions and our experiences with others, and our sense of what we believe we know our world and ourselves to be (Rahim,2010).

At the core of social constructionism therefore is the notion that knowledge is constructed in relationship with others. We do not create knowledge purely as a result of internal mental processes; rather we create meanings from our experiences as we interact with others in our daily lives (Seale,1998). Furthermore, as Willig observes, these experiences are: '*mediated historically, culturally and linguistically*' (Willig,2013:48). In other words, our experiences and our construction of reality are situated within a particular time and context and we make known our experiences through our use of language as a communicative tool.

Psychologists such as Harre (1994), Shotter (1993) and Gergen (1993) developed social constructionist ideas, and in doing so placed the role of language at the centre of the construction of the self and the world (Hepburn,2003). Language, it is argued, is used between individuals to communicate meaning and shared understanding of social phenomena. Therefore, any account of the world or self develops and is sustained over historical time through culture, social processes and language rather than through the grasping of an objective reality (Hepburn,2003). In this current research, my participants talk about their experiences within and across different time periods and contexts. However, even as they share their narratives it is a version shared only at that particular moment and within a specific context.

Following the crisis in psychology, critical theories such as Marxism and feminism and postmodernist ideas such as social constructionism, and

phenomenological existentialism critiques have been the dominant 'critical' theories applied to mainstream psychology (Hook,2005). As described earlier, these critiques emerged not only as a criticism of society and social structures that created and perpetuated inequality, prejudice and oppression, but also as a critique of mainstream psychology itself. However, as Hook (2005) observes, what appears conspicuous by its absence from this canon of critical psychological theory is postcolonial theory. I will now turn my focus to perspectives that critique European 'critical' theories.

3.2.2.5 Postcolonial theories

Postcolonial theory is historically rooted in the notable works of Cesaire (1935), Fanon (1952 and 1961), Sartre (1964), Biko (1978) and Hall (1994) and arguably provides an invaluable contribution to critical psychology. As with Marxism, feminism and social constructionism, which illustrated the relationship between the political and the individual, and the impact that this relationship has on the psychological, postcolonial theory references psychological themes to demonstrate the link between black identity and the political and social context of slavery and colonialism (see Fanon, 1952, Biko 1978, and Hall 1994).

The work of Fanon (1986 [1952]) and Hall (1994) are of particular relevance to this current research as they speak to how the experiences of black people of the Caribbean diaspora within the context of the postcolonial Caribbean, has impacted on the development of self, identity and subjectivity of all people of Caribbean heritage. For example, in Fanon's work he seeks to understand by

reference to psychoanalytic formulations, the psychology of 'racialized' power as a way of understanding the brutality and total domination of one group over another; extending beyond any Marxist notion of pure economic and political factors. (Fanon, 1986 [1952]).

3.2.2.6 Black existential philosophy

Black existential philosophy is influenced by postcolonial theory and the ideas of black philosophers such as Fanon (1952), Du Bois (1903), Ellison (1952), Garvey (1970 and 2004), Henry (1997) and Gordon (1997 and 1999). However, the focus is on how existential ideas relate to the specific existence of black people of African descent. Black existential philosophy draws particularly on the ideas of Sartre (2003[1943]) and Merleau-Ponty (2013[1945]) and frames these within the experience of black people who, as a result of slavery and antiblack racism, have been cast as inferior human beings (Gordon, 1997). The philosophy (based on the cultural particularity of people of African descent) critiques phenomenological existential philosophical ideas purporting to be universal yet, it is argued, is in fact limited to the cultural particularity of the European subject (Henry, 2005). Furthermore, Gordon (1997) appears to draw a distinction between 'existentialism' which he regards as: '*a fundamentally European historical phenomenon*' (Gordon, 1997:3) and 'existential philosophy' which encompasses concerns such as: '*freedom, anguish, responsibility, embodied agency, sociality and liberation*' (Gordon, 1997:3). What makes this a *black* existential philosophy is that these concerns are applied to the situated lived experience of black people: '*Implicit in the existential demand for recognising the*

situation or lived-context [is the specific existence] of Africana people's being-in-the-world' (Gordon,1997:4). Therefore, the systematic negation of blackness and the ontological claims of inferiority demand a different lens through which to explore and understand black existence. This current research was interested in the extent to which the negation of blackness impacted on the black existence of six black women.

Having discussed the knowledge that my research was endeavouring to produce and the different perspectives on *how* knowledge is produced, I will now discuss the specific epistemology underpinning this research.

3.3 Epistemology underpinning this current research

The epistemological position is driven by the question that this research aimed to answer and the knowledge that was being sought. The objective of the research was to understand the lived experience of a group of black British professional women of Jamaican heritage, by capturing their stories as they narrate key events and experiences across their lifespan. My aim was to make known the stories of women from this group, stories that have very rarely been told. I wished to reveal the complex relationship between their 'sense of self', their experiences within specific contexts and how this shaped their relationship with work and achievement. I wanted to make known how the narratives of these women were linked to their parents' experiences and narratives and to the wider historical narratives and the experiences of generations of people from the black diaspora. While I wanted to draw some themes across experiences, the main focus was on each woman's subjective lived experience.

In making assumptions about the world and importantly, how we come to be in the world, my epistemological position is drawn from the ideas of Sartre (2003[1943]), and van Deurzen (2010), inspired by Heidegger (1962[1927]), who focus on the 'nature' of *being* and how we come to *be* a particular type of human being through our everyday experiences. This focus on *ways* of being implies that there are a multitude of attitudes, actions and behaviours that an individual can avail herself of as she experiences her world in her day to day interactions (van Deurzen,2010). While acknowledging these ideas, I also drew upon critical theories such as black existential theories which I felt were of particular relevance to me and this research. As the researcher, I saw myself as central to the research process, as a co-constructor of the knowledge produced. Also, I acknowledged that my own subjective experience, would contribute to shaping how this research was conducted and the subsequent findings that I felt were significant. Finally, my epistemological position informed the choice of a theoretical perspective rooted in the hermeneutic existential phenomenological tradition and a method of analysis, critical narrative analysis that engages critical social theories to enquire into the role of context in the construction of narratives.

Before moving on to discuss the method used within this research there are three important considerations that I would like to explore that I feel are relevant to any qualitative research enquiry. These issues are around the validity and rigour of the research process, the process of reflexivity, and the consideration of ethics. I will turn first to the issue of validity and rigour.

3.4 Validity and rigour

One of the persistent challenges faced by qualitative researchers is how to counter the charge that such research lacks validity and objectivity when compared to experimental and quantitative research. With regard to this challenge, Yardley (2017) sees that the very nature of qualitative research means that what might be seen as confounding variables (such as culture, class or age) form an intrinsic part of the qualitative research project. The qualitative approach provides the researcher with a richer picture of the participant. This picture that includes their lived experience and social influences is therefore valid and valuable knowledge (Yardley,2017).

In response to criticism about objectivity, researchers using the qualitative approach argue that the researcher cannot detach from the research. From beginning to end, the researcher is influencing and shaping the study (they draft the question, select the sample, interpret the data) and therefore they are not a passive observer and identifier of knowledge, they are central to the creation of the knowledge itself (Coolican,2009).

3.5 Reflexivity – situating the researcher at the heart of the research

The qualitative methodology that underpins this current research fits with the existential, social constructionist, postcolonial and black existential theories of knowledge production inherent in my epistemological position. Additionally, in this qualitative approach, I see myself as the researcher as being central to the

co-construction of knowledge along with my participants. However, this role is complicated not just because as a researcher I believe I cannot be separate from the knowledge construction, but because of my cultural, gender and racial connection to my participants. This means that I need to own my beliefs, values, assumptions and biases, make these explicit, and take steps where possible, to minimize their impact. One way in which a researcher can identify and make known their bias and preconceptions of the world is to actively engage in the process of reflexivity (Finlay,2002).

Patnaik (2013) describes the process of reflexivity as the '*act of the researcher directing enquiry towards the self*' (Patnaik,2013:98). As discussed earlier, the crisis in psychology saw a shift towards an acknowledgement that knowledge is constructed within a social context. This coincided with a recognition that it was important for researchers to adopt self-reflexive practices (Finlay,2002).

However, Finlay further argues that for the process of reflexivity to be robust there needs to be a clear and consistent 'map' to guide this process. One of the first of these reflexive challenges requires the researcher to engage in a process of *introspection*.

The process of introspection is arguably the key starting point to any qualitative research. At the point when you begin to reflect on your own experience, and the meanings that you have derived from those experiences, this places you in an authentic place to be curious about the experiences of others (Finlay,2002). In this current research, the process of introspection for me began when I first thought about what it was that I wanted to know and why. I knew I was

interested in work and achievement but when I began to explore the idea with my family, I realised that what I wanted to know was why work and achievement were so important to *me*. Also, at this time, I had a growing awareness of how my relationship with work had changed over my lifetime. Nonetheless, my lifetime was a lifetime of lived experiences as a black British-born woman of Jamaican heritage who had striven for high achievement in a work context. Thus, as a researcher enquiring into the experiences of other professional black British-born women of Jamaican heritage, I could not escape the fact that my beliefs and my values, my view of what I felt it meant to be such a woman, would influence all stages and aspects of the research.

While acknowledging the importance of self-enquiry, Finlay argues that the researcher should not view the process of introspection as an end in itself, '*but as a springboard for interpretations and more general insight*' (Finlay,2002:215).

For Finlay, the challenge for the researcher is to make transparent the connection between what is claimed to be knowledge and the 'situatedness' of the experiences and the subsequent knowledge that is constructed both individually and between the researcher and the participant (Finlay,2002). In the Method section, I will describe how this was addressed in this current research.

While Finlay acknowledges the importance of individual introspection, she is mindful of not falling into the dualistic trap of separating individual activity from context. To this end, Finlay considers the importance of *reflexivity as intersubjective reflection* (Finlay,2002:215). This process requires the researcher

to, as Sartre described (2003[1943]), reflect on their relationship with others, specifically our reaction to and experience of 'the look' of the other (Sartre, 2003[1943]:276-326). In psychodynamic terms this can be described as the unconscious mechanisms at play (projections, identifications) when we relate to the other (Finlay,2002). Even researchers from a more phenomenological perspective need to be encouraged to pay attention to the dynamics between them and their participant. For example, what motivates them at a particular moment during an interview to ask *that* specific question to *this* particular participant? Finlay proposes that all researchers should engage in therapy in order to explore the intersubjective nature of the research; to enable the researcher to engage with aspects of themselves (their motivations, beliefs, bias) that they may have not previously acknowledged but have been triggered by their encounter with their participants (Finlay,2002).

In this current research, recognition of the relationship between the participant and me extended beyond the dynamics thrown up by the everyday interactions with the other. As a qualitative researcher, I accept that I that need to engage in reflexivity, and I believe that knowledge is co-constructed within the encounter between the participant and myself. To this end, as part of my approach, after an initial analysis of their interview transcript, I met with participants for a follow up interview. The purpose of this follow up (described in more detail in 3.9.7.2) was to not only elaborate and clarify the interview transcript, it was also an opportunity to reflect upon the knowledge that was being created between us. In addition to engaging in reflexivity and also personal therapy (to manage my

bias and reflect on the research), I was mindful of my ethical responsibilities to my participants.

3.6 Ethical considerations underpinning this research

Within the field of psychology adherence to ethical principles is regarded with great importance. This research is underpinned by the guidance within the BPS Code of Human Research Ethics, 2014. The guidance describes a number of ethical principles covering research with humans. As a researcher, I feel it is important that these principles are understood and adhered to, not only because it is within the BPS guidance, but because they relate to my personal values and my desire to avoid doing any harm to my participants. I will explore four key concerns that I believe are fundamental to this current research.

1. Informed consent

This ethical principle is fundamental (Langdrige,2007). Participants need to have sufficient information about the research in order to understand what is expected of them, what their rights are, and the responsibilities of the researcher. In the Method section, I describe how this was the first step that I undertook before starting the interviews. However, in reality, it was at the recruitment stage, the first contact that I had with the participant, when I first discussed what they were expected to do in the research, and their rights. Most importantly, I stressed the right they had to withdraw from the research at any time.

2. Confidentiality and anonymity

While the principle of confidentiality was an important consideration, because the research will be in the public domain, there are limits to this confidentiality.

Notwithstanding this, steps were taken to ensure that all the data related to this research was securely stored both in digital and paper form. To preserve the anonymity of the participants, they were all given pseudonyms and only essential demographic information such as their age and a brief description of their role was revealed in the report (see profile of participants in the Method section). There was a challenge when it came to present my analysis of the stories told to me by the participants. I needed to balance not losing the essence of the story against the risk that the story itself might lead to the participant being identified. For example, in each case, pseudonyms were also given to characters in the stories and only very general references were made to locations.

3. Deception

The practice of deception does occur within psychological research (Langdridge,2007). However, this research adhered to the principle of openness and transparency at the heart of phenomenological research.

4. Risk of harm

Following on from the discussion about deception, although I believe that there was transparency and openness in the relationship between the participants and myself that does not mean that there was not a risk of harm to them. The main risk was that they would succumb to psychological distress or harm as a result of reflecting on personal memories. During the recruitment process, at the stage of the initial phone call to prospective participants, I asked general questions about current lifestyle and explicitly stated the risk of emotional distress. To minimize

this risk further, at the start of the interview, I told the participants that they could stop the interview at any time, for whatever reason.

3.7 A summary of the chapter so far

In this chapter, I have so far focused on the methodology. I began the section by reflecting on how I could approach an enquiry into my research question: *What is the lived experience of second-generation professional black British women of Jamaican heritage, what did this experience mean to them and how did it shape their relationship with work and achievement?* My aim with this research question was to explore how these women developed their 'sense of self', as they lived their lives in Britain as daughters of Jamaicans from the Windrush Generation.

By exploring the history of psychological research and how the 'critical' discipline of counselling psychology emerged, I considered that my research question fitted with the aims and objectives of a discipline concerned with subjective experiences. I then explored how my epistemological position that regards knowledge as constructed through lived experience, within a social context, aligned with the different theories around how knowledge is produced. This led me to select a phenomenological existential approach rooted in the hermeneutic tradition. Such an approach enabled me to explore the nature of the lived experiences of my participants as they engaged with existential concerns such as meaning, freedom and choice, through a narrative method (critical narrative analysis) that engages with critical social theories about race, gender and class.

I will now turn to discussing, in more detail, how I came to select the specific method of critical narrative analysis to answer my research question. I will then explore how I conducted the research and analysed my findings using this method.

3.8 Method

Having arrived at an epistemological position and theoretical approach, the next step was to select a research method consistent with this position and approach that would enable me to answer my research question. I focused my evaluation of the different methods to those that were consistent with a phenomenological approach and my epistemological position. I then reviewed the extent to which I felt each method would enable me to answer my research question. Based on this criterion, I selected critical narrative analysis (CNA) as the most appropriate research method. CNA is a relatively new method within the canon of phenomenological research methods (Langdrige,2007). Before discussing why, I selected CNA and describing how it was applied to this current research, I will discuss two other methods that are more widely used within phenomenological research. Both Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Narrative Analysis, which are discussed below, were considered because they appeared to have characteristics that were closely related to the criteria for my research method.

3.8.1 Evaluation of established methods that support phenomenological research

3.8.1.1 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA is the most commonly used method in phenomenological psychological research (Langdrige,2007). IPA is concerned with hermeneutics and interpretation. Within IPA, the emphasis is on selecting groups of individuals who are intentionally homogenous or in other words, individuals who share the same experience. The method can be described as *idiographic*. This means the findings are specific to the group under analysis and the objective is not to make any claims or draw conclusions for any other group beyond the one being studied (Langdrige,2007). In this current study, the main focus is not on each individual's experience of a single shared phenomenon, rather, the enquiry is into the numerous experiences that each participant has encountered over their lifetime. In this research as with IPA, homogeneity of the sample is important. However, it is important because the aim of this current research is to understand the *life* experiences of individuals from the same gender, racial and cultural group and of a similar age.

3.8.1.2 Narrative Analysis

Narrative Analysis is concerned with the stories that individuals tell about their lived experience. As Labov (2006[1967]) observes, we communicate how we see ourselves (and ourselves in relation to others) as we tell our stories about our everyday experiences. The stories we are told (and tell) about our past, the stories about our present and our imagined future are one of our most powerful tools for us to convey our sense of identity to ourselves and to others. Labov argues that these stories tend to follow a specific structure: the abstract, what

the story is about; the orientation, when and where the story happened; the complicating action, the plot and who did what; evaluation, the point of the story; the result, how the story ended and the coda (the concluding event) which links the story to the present (McLeod,2011:190).

When undertaking narrative analysis, the researcher is concerned with capturing key events and experiences typically across an individual's lifespan. The objective is to capture a biographical account. The main analytical tool is typically thematic analysis. The researcher's objective is to interrogate the narrative to identify themes within or across, for example, key life stages. Within this current research, I am concerned with each participant's stories, and how they position themselves and others in the stories they tell in the way that Labov describes. I am also interested in the rhetorical function within the narrative, in other words, what do I feel the participant is trying to convey by their use of tone and specific language (Langdridge,2007). With regard to thematic analysis, there is a step within CNA in which I do identify themes and thematic relationships. Although narrative analysis would have gone a long way in meeting my criteria, what I needed was an element that would enable me to critique the narratives (including my own narrative) through the lens of critical theories. It was CNA, which I will turn to next, that provided the method to apply this critical lens by engaging in '*a hermeneutic of suspicion*' to uncover the tacit layer of meaning within the narrative (Langdridge,2007).

3.8.1.3 Chosen method - Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA)

CNA is a method devised by Langdrige (2007) and is underpinned by hermeneutic existential phenomenology, chiefly around the ideas of Ricoeur (2016[1981]). The stages of this method are described in detail in section 3.9. As with narrative analysis, the key source of data is the narrative, the story that the individual tells about their experiences. CNA is concerned, like other qualitative methods, with accounts of subjective experience in a context. However, CNA specifically applies critical theory to the production of knowledge about subjective experience. It is this turn to 'critical' theories around the impact of race, class, gender, sexuality and power relations that makes this method most relevant to this research (Langdrige,2007).

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the phenomenological perspective, particularly with regard to the work of Ricoeur (2016[1981]). I explored how Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach includes applying hermeneutics of suspicion to narratives. In the six stage CNA model devised by Langdrige, the hermeneutic of suspicion is applied to the researcher's own narrative in the first stage and then to the narrative of the participant in stage 5. It is important to make clear that in Langdrige's model, hermeneutics of suspicion are not intended to evoke psychoanalytic concepts. Instead Langdrige, advocates using 'imaginative' hermeneutics of suspicion which involve the use of ideas from critical social theory to offer an alternative explanation of the participant's or researcher's meaning (Langdrige,2007).

The CNA method enabled me to enquire into the lived experiences of some second-generation black British-born women of Jamaican heritage. I will now

move on to describe how I conducted the research and in particular, how I applied CNA to analyse my findings.

3.9 Conducting the research

3.9.1 The research setting – the wider social context

The research study took place in London from 2015 to 2019. All the interviews took place in London, where all the participants lived and worked. The first interview was conducted in 2017, while all the other interviews were conducted in 2018, at the time that the Windrush Scandal (discussed in the Introduction) was the centre of a national political debate within the UK.

3.9.2 Participant sample – inclusion criteria

The main criteria for the sample were that the participants needed to be second-generation, professional black British-born women, of Jamaican heritage who had reached senior or executive positions in their career. The definition of second-generation black British Jamaican in this research relates to women who are of African-Caribbean descent, descendants of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and born in Britain to Jamaican parents who migrated to the UK between 1948 and the mid-1960s. Furthermore, all the women had to have been educated to degree level or equivalent and were working (or had worked) in graduate, postgraduate or senior roles within the private or public sector.

The sample size in most qualitative research appears to be much smaller than quantitative studies (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). The objective of CNA is to enquire into the lived experience of an individual and to this end, it is

recommended that only a small number of participants are included in research; indeed Langdridge (2007) is in favour of a single case study. I wanted to present in depth, the lived experiences of some black British women of Jamaican heritage. However, I also wanted to give voice to a range of these women, to provide some knowledge about their experiences, which I feel have been largely ignored. I arrived at a sample of six participants as I felt that this would allow me to maintain the richness of each narrative yet also give a flavour of the breadth of different stories that reside within the black British Jamaican experience. The sample size of six allowed for an in-depth exploration of a range of lived experiences from this generation of black women. As these were experiences across these individuals' lifespan (and given the word count limitations of this research), any larger sample would have offered a less richly detailed enquiry into their experiences.

3.9.3 Recruitment

To recruit participants, I designed a flyer that described the purpose of the research, and the criteria for participation. The flyer also referred to the method of data collection, two face-to-face interviews. The flyer contained my contact details and the name and contact details of my primary supervisor. The recruitment of participants to this research study did pose challenges and I had to be creative in my approach. Initially, I posted my flyer in the offices of one of my clinical placements and also circulated the information to contacts in the Black and Asian Counselling Psychology Group within the BPS. Unfortunately, this strategy did not yield any results. I then approached my own family and friendship networks, and through these connections I recruited my first three

participants. The most difficult challenge seemed to be recruiting the final three. I analysed lists of nominees and winners of The Black British Business Awards, which is an annual event. Any of the candidates that met my criteria, I contacted by email and sent them a flyer. However, it was only when I used social media, specifically a 'Black Lives Matter' WhatsApp group, to circulate my request, that I was inundated with at least fifty enquiries.

While the fifty enquiries were unexpected and very moving, it did present its own challenges, as I had to spend a great deal of time responding to each individual. In all cases, prospective participants who had received the flyer or responded to me by email were contacted and a mutual time was agreed for me to telephone them. The purpose of the telephone conversation was to firstly thank them for their interest, to confirm that they met the criteria, explain the research to them and what was expected in terms of commitment. I made it clear to each enquirer that I was seeking only a further three participants, and most were happy to be contacted again if for any reason my first-choice candidate had to withdraw. Candidates who met the criteria and wished to proceed were sent a participant information pack (see Appendix A). Prospective participants were encouraged to review the information pack and to contact me again to confirm whether they wished to proceed. Once I received confirmation, then interview dates were agreed.

3.9.4 Profile of participants

Table 1 below shows the profile of the six participants who took part in the research. All the participants were given pseudonyms. The demographic

information of relevance here is age as all the participants are of Jamaican parentage and were born in the UK. I have deliberately excluded specific information about their job title in order to protect their identity. However, they all met the criteria of being graduates and were working in senior management or professional roles.

Table 1 – Profile of the participants

Pseudonym	Age	Current Profession
Rachel	50	Partner
Natasha	61	Chief Executive
Cynthia	51	Senior professional in the public sector
Georgina	50	Senior professional in the private sector
Melanie	52	Senior Civil Servant
Lorraine	62	Senior professional in the public sector

3.9.5 Pilot study

A pilot study was undertaken using the participant ‘Rachel’ who was the first recruit to the study. The purpose of the pilot was to test the responses to the interview questions to discover if they elicited the information that I was seeking. As a result of the pilot, I included a general question inviting participants to reflect on what the concept of identity meant to them. The data from the pilot was collected and analysed in the same way as the full study, as described below.

3.9.6 Data collection design

When considering how to design the method for data collection, I was mindful of selecting a method that was consistent with the epistemology and research aims.

To this end, questionnaires did not seem appropriate neither did very structured interview questions. These methods of data collection are more suitable to a research enquiry that is seeking objective answers to questions rather than what I was seeking, which was for my participant to reflect on subjective meaning. I decided to use pre-prepared questions in a semi-structured interview, designed to facilitate the process of open dialogue between the participant and myself. The interview questions focused on *meaning*. This was intended to explore the participant's experiences beyond a description of the phenomenon or event, to uncover the *experience* of the experience for the participant. This is consistent with Husserl's concept of intentionality (as described in chapter 3), which depicts the correlation between *what* is experienced and what the experience *means* to the individual (Husserl,1913).

The questions used are listed in the following table.

Table 2 – Interview Questions

1	What does the word identity mean to you?
2	What does being a black woman mean to you?
3	What does being of Jamaican heritage mean to you?
4	What does being British mean to you?
5	What does work mean to you?
6	How has being a black woman of Jamaican heritage influenced your

	choice of career and life choices?
7	What aspirations did/do you have with regard to work?
8	How has work affected you as an individual, both good and bad?
9	When you reflect on your experiences and influences, what have been the most positive and what the most negative?
10	What role has religion or spirituality played in your life?
11	Reflecting on being both black and a woman, how have you experienced sexism and racism?
12	What knowledge do you wish to pass on to the next generation?

The questions were not necessarily asked in a particular order. My approach to the interview was to give the participant space to tell their story and in doing so, often the questions were addressed without me having to specifically pose them. The purpose of the first interview was to capture the participant's narrative. The second interview was designed to give the participant the opportunity to clarify and elaborate on their narrative to further the joint understanding between us. I will now describe the steps that were taken to collect the data.

3.9.7 Data collection – procedures

Prior to each interview I assigned the participant an alias to protect their identity (see *Table 1*). All the interviews were conducted in an office in London. Having previously explained to each participant during the recruitment process what

would happen during the interview and having also previously sent them a participant information pack, the first part of the interview involved reiterating the procedures. I began by restating the purpose of the interview and asking them if they had any questions regarding the information in the participant pack. I explained my responsibilities to them as a researcher and their rights as a participant. This was to ensure that I obtained informed consent to proceed with the study.

3.9.7.1 Informed Consent

I was aware of the importance of obtaining informed consent from my participants. The term 'informed consent' requires that individuals are supplied with clear and understandable information about the aims and objectives of the research; how their data will be used in the study; how this data will be stored and protected; how their privacy and identity will be respected and their right to withdraw their consent. Although all of this information was contained within the participant information document, I thought it important to restate this again before the interview commenced. The participant was then asked to sign a consent form to state their agreement to the terms stated in the participant information document.

3.9.7.2 The interviews

Each participant's first interview typically lasted for 90 minutes. The interview was captured on two digital recorders. This was the participant's overall narrative. The participant was asked a series of questions (see *Table 2*) relating to different stages of their life (formative years, adolescence/university years, early career, present day). At the end of the interview, space was given to the participant to reflect on the process. The participant was given a debrief sheet

which contained information about sources of emotional support if they felt that they needed to explore issues raised during the interview. After the interview, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim and key areas of the transcript that needed clarification and elaboration were highlighted on the transcript. This first interview was analysed using the CNA steps described in 3.9.8. A follow up interview of 30 minutes was then arranged. This interview was also recorded using two digital recorders.

The follow up interviews were designed to give the participants the opportunity to reflect on the experiences described in the first interview. The focus was on clarifying and elaborating on particular stories, described in the first interview that appeared to have had emotional significance for the participant. As such, any references from the follow up interview, in the analysis of the first interview transcript, were only used to add richness and clarity to statements made in the first interview. Therefore, the follow up interview itself was not analysed using CNA.

At the second follow-up interview, the participant and I focused on the highlighted areas from the first interview transcript, the areas that required clarification or elaboration. This gave the participant and me the opportunity to ensure that we had between us, as far as possible, a shared understanding of their story. This second interview was then transcribed verbatim. As mentioned earlier, the first interview transcript only was analysed using Langdridge's six-stage model of CNA (Langdridge,2007). The process of analysis is described below.

3.9.8 Method of Analysis

As mentioned earlier, each first interview transcript was subjected to an initial analysis to identify areas that needed clarification or elaboration. This process of clarification and elaboration was undertaken during a follow up interview. The transcript of the overall narrative from the initial interview was analysed using Langdridge's CNA model. Prior to this analysis, there was a first stage that involved an analysis of my life narrative.

Stage 1 - Critique of the illusions of subjectivity

The purpose of this stage was to reveal my own subjective position in the world. In this stage, I applied critical theory as a hermeneutic of suspicion to my own narrative, as I reflected on events and relationships across key stages of my life, my formative years, adolescence/university years, early career and present day. While I was writing my narrative, I reflected on key events that happened to my family or me. I also reflected on the relationships that I had with my family and others at different points in my life. I wrote about what these events, encounters and relationships meant to me. I wrote about different stories that appeared to mean something to me and I also wrote about key messages or things that people had said that resonated with me. Once I had written my narrative, I looked back at key historical and political events that occurred at the key stages of my life and reflected on how some of the personal meanings I ascribed to my experiences connected with wider social political and cultural theories.

Stage 2 - Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

From this stage onwards the focus of the analysis was on each participant's narrative. The purpose of this stage was to identify all the different stories contained in the overall narrative from the initial interview.

I read through the narrative twice. On the second reading, I focused on identifying each specific story as they occurred, and the narrative developed. Within the stories, I looked for the main plot and characters, and how the participant positioned herself in the story in relation to the other characters. I looked for places in the transcript where I had noted if the participant's tone of voice had changed, what words were being emphasized and what words or phrases she struggled to bring to mind. As I read the narrative, I attempted to understand what the purpose of the story was. For example, was the participant trying to explain or justify something or persuade me to see her point of view? Where one story ended, and another began was also identified within this stage of my analysis.

Stage 3 – Identities and identity work

The importance of this stage was to identify, through the narrative, how the participant constructed their 'sense of self'. Who did they think they were? As Langdrige acknowledges, there is a great deal of overlap between this stage and the previous stage (Langdrige,2007). This was particularly the case in this research as it was concerned with identity. However, I looked for points within the narrative where one identity became more salient than other identities. What I also looked for was how the participant constructed their identity in relation to how they saw others construct theirs. For example, a participant may

have seen herself as black in a particular way and in doing so, question the 'blackness' of another who phenotypically looked like her but didn't 'behave' like her.

Stage 4 – Thematic priorities and relationships

The purpose of thematic analysis in CNA is not, as is more typical, to decompose themes into ever smaller units of analysis. Instead, the objective is to identify the major high-level themes that occur within the narrative. In this stage, the participant's narrative was interrogated to identify themes that occurred across the participant's life stages; across their formative years, adolescence or university years, early career and present day. There was also analysis of themes occurring *within* a particular life stage.

Stage 5 – Destabilizing the narrative

The purpose of this stage was to return to the hermeneutics of suspicion, and this time to apply suspicion to the participant's narrative. During this stage, specific reference was made to critical theories and specific social narratives arising out of historical and cultural events, in order to understand the impact, they had on the participant's narrative and their meaning making.

Stage 6 – Critical synthesis

At this stage the whole narrative was reviewed again. The task was to bring together all of the other stages in order to ensure that the participant's subjective narrative was not lost by the need to divide it into the stages for the purposes of the analysis. This was achieved by summarizing each individual

narrative, paying attention to existential themes such as, the nature of 'being in the world', choice, freedom, responsibility, meaning, temporality, and isolation.

3.9.8.1 Common themes and individual differences

Two final steps in the analysis, involved identifying common themes across all the participants' narratives and an analysis of the individual differences between the participants. The process involved in undertaking these final steps is described in Chapter 4.

3.10 Managing my bias – reflexivity in action

One of the assumptions that I had about black identity is that everyone would share a similar connection with being black and of Jamaican heritage. We would all see being black in a 'positive' way (my definition of positive) and would have arrived at this construction at a particular historical moment, around about adolescence, when we embraced black consciousness. This, of course, ignored my own complex relationship with my black identity. Approaching this research, I was aware that I wanted to tell a 'good news' story of black women overcoming adversity to achieve in the workplace, against the odds. After all, that is what I wanted to believe was my story. It was only through the process of engaging with the research, hearing stories and worldviews both similar to mine and very different, that I actually realised what this research was about! Why should black women and their experiences and perceptions of themselves be any different from anyone else's?

I became aware of my perceived similarity to my participants. I am a black woman of Jamaican heritage born in the UK to parents of the Windrush Generation. I am no more representative of these women than they are of me. So, while we had some shared history and experiences at a meta-cultural level, we each had a unique understanding, interpretation and sense of what those experiences meant to us as black women.

On reflection, although I started out wishing to tell these women's stories to try to balance what I saw as negative stereotypes of black women I came to recognise that I had an ethical responsibility to represent these women's stories as accurately as I could. I also became aware of the imbalance of power between the participants and me; for example, that they may have wanted to please me by trying to give me the 'right' answer instead of saying what they really felt. It was important to me to establish quickly a relationship with the participant that enabled them to feel safe and empowered to openly express their feelings and share their experiences. To this end, I began the initial interview by asking a very general question about their background, whereabouts in Jamaica their parents were from and when they came to the UK, in order to establish a rapport between us. I also undertook the following steps in an attempt to manage my bias:

- Immediately after each interview, I noted down my feelings about the dialogue between us, what I felt about the participant, what I was experiencing during and after the interview, what things resonated with

me. I then listened to the audio and noted my feelings on hearing the dialogue between us again.

- Each initial interview was analysed and key areas that required clarification were identified and reviewed in a follow-up interview to enable myself and the participant to confirm our joint understanding.
- Throughout the research process I maintained a reflexive journal in which I reflected on how my personal values, history and worldview were affecting the research process from the choice of topic and questions, selection of participants, analysis of data, choice of data to be presented and my findings.
- I worked with my personal therapist throughout the research process to explore key themes that had connected with me during the research process. I will discuss how the process of this research has impacted on me in the reflection section in Chapter 5.

The next chapter describes the analysis of the findings of this research. The chapter begins with an analysis of me, as I describe my background and my lived experiences as a black British-born woman of Jamaican heritage.

4. Analysis of Findings

4.1 Chapter scope and objectives

In this chapter the data obtained from the research was analysed using Langdridge's six stage CNA model:

Stage 1 - Critique of the illusions of subjectivity

Stage 2 - Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

Stage 3 - Identities and identity work

Stage 4 - Thematic priorities and relationships

Stage 5 - Destabilising the narrative

Stage 6 - Critical Synthesis

In addition to undertaking analysis using the model, additional analysis of the data was also conducted. This consisted of analysis of the individual differences between the participants and an exploration of the common themes that emerged. The first step in the analysis and the first stage of the CNA model was an analysis of my life story.

4.2 My Story - Critique of the illusions of subjectivity

I am a black woman of Jamaican heritage, British, born to parents of the Windrush Generation. I am not sure that I would have always described myself like this. Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s in the UK it was difficult for me to describe myself as 'British' because during this period there was a sense that only white people could be British. This was often reinforced by the ubiquitous question asked of me (and other black people) when encountering a white person for the first time, 'Where are you *really* from?' However, I now feel more comfortable with the description that I use. I am firstly black; a woman of Jamaican heritage and I am British born. Today, to call myself black and to be of Jamaican heritage are the most important parts of my identity (they are inextricably linked). Being a woman runs a close second. For me to be black, links me to an experience and a group of people descended from the African trans-Atlantic slave trade. To be Jamaican links me to my parents and my wider Jamaican family and a culture and heritage that I came to embrace as my own

when I first visited the island in my late teens. The Jamaican part of my identity has become even more important to me since the death of both my parents.

However, British, for me, only describes my nationality.

My parents came to the UK from Jamaica in the 1950s as part of the Windrush Generation. My father came first joining other relatives in south London among a growing Caribbean community. Most of this community had also arrived as part of 'Windrush' at the invitation of the UK government and most hailed from Jamaica. Post-war Britain was focused on rebuilding its infrastructure and was experiencing a shortage of labour. Public services such as the newly established National Health Service, British Rail and London Transport actively recruited labour from the Caribbean. My father joined London Transport and became a bus driver.

When my mother arrived, she and my father married and then, as they told me when I was younger, began the search for accommodation. This was the first time that they faced overt racism, hostility, discrimination and humiliation. Like many of their fellow Caribbean arrivants, they were regularly refused private rented accommodation and had to initially settle for run down shared accommodation. My mother told me stories of how she, my father, and soon my two older brothers, had to live in a single damp and rodent infested room. My mother was greatly affected by her living conditions. She had come from a relatively comfortable home in Jamaica and was appalled by the poverty and hostility that she encountered when she arrived in the UK. While both my

parents were affected by their experience, they appeared to respond to it in different ways.

While my father always wanted to return 'home' to Jamaica 'land that he loved' and never seemed to settle in the UK, my mother seemed focused on ensuring that her children (myself and my two older brothers) secured a good education. Although neither of my parents were church goers, my mother, insisted we attend a (predominately white) Church of England church. My understanding from my mother is that she only attended the church in order to ensure that we were eligible for a place at the school. It seems to me that for my mother a church school was the way that her children could get a good academic and moral education. It is not to say that my father wasn't interested in formal education, but when I reflect, what appeared to be most important to him was that we knew we were black and Jamaican.

What was to eventually become our family home was a very Jamaican home. Finding it increasingly difficult to endure shared accommodation, my parents took up the offer of a mortgage scheme run by the Greater London Authority, in order to buy a house which was to become the family home for the next fifty years. My father's brothers regularly visited our house and brought with them the music and stories from Jamaica. Food was also an important part of our Jamaican culture. There were not many black people where we lived and so my parents would make a weekly visit to Brixton to purchase all the Caribbean food that they needed for the week ahead. In my early years, apart from when I went to church, I don't remember interacting with any white people at weekends. At

weekends and holidays, we only saw our family members or 'aunts' and 'uncles' who were my parents' close friends.

School was very different. The main thing I can remember about starting school was the unfamiliarity of the food. It was so different to what my mum cooked and most of it I didn't like. When I settled into primary school, I was quite happy. I was popular and was even made a Prefect. I was hard working and loved reading. I was not aware of experiencing any direct racism from teachers but there was racist name calling from other children, which quite frankly was commonplace even on the television in the 1960s and 1970s. What I was uncomfortable with was how I looked.

From an early age I had a difficult relationship with my blackness. In an almost exclusively white school, I was different. I was black of dark complexion and my natural hair was a nightmare. I spent a lot of time wishing I had long straight hair and that I could blend in with my white friends; I wanted to be 'white'. This was until one of my favourite cousins introduced us to his new girlfriend. She looked so beautiful with a big Afro. When she and my cousin came to our house, they talked about black consciousness, the civil rights movement and that being black was to be beautiful and gifted. This period in the 1970s coincided with Muhammad Ali coming to prominence. As children, myself and my brothers would be allowed to stay up late at night to watch Ali's boxing matches beamed live from America and to witness him defeat all comers. And when in later years the West Indian cricket team dominated the sport, regularly beating England on their trips to the UK, they instilled in us a sense of pride in both being black and

Caribbean. This is however, my memory of how I saw my family growing up. My brothers will certainly have different memories and have experienced our family life both in similar and different ways to me.

From an early age I saw achievement at work (academic work) as critical to my 'sense of self'. I became aware from early on that societal perceptions of me as a black female and one of Jamaican heritage were negative. During my formative years in the 1970s, 'West Indians' (the prevailing adjective used at the time to describe individuals of Caribbean heritage) were portrayed (by the media especially) in negative terms; and the low level of educational attainment of children from this group perpetuated the stereotype that there was something 'deficient' in the 'West Indian'. I was aware that I wanted to consciously counter the negative stereotypes of women like me and this led me to strive for academic success and for success in the workplace. However, there was always another part of me that was aware that this drive for success was quite punitive. I was aware of the contradiction between on the one hand, not wanting to be defined by white society that saw me in negative terms but still I was driven to constantly counter the negative stereotype of white society. In other words, white society's opinion of me did (and does?) matter.

4.2.1 Interrogating my narrative with hermeneutics of suspicion

The hermeneutics of suspicion that are relevant to my story can be drawn from postcolonial and black existential theories; the concept of internalised racism, and the existential theme of bad faith.

In my story, the concept of a black identity and a Jamaican identity are very much rooted in the historical period of the 1970s, when as Hall (1994) describes, the black Jamaican diaspora 'became black' in a way that was different from other historical periods. However, I held on to an identity that appears quite fixed, as if there was an authentic way to be black and Jamaican. The purpose for doing this was to reduce my anxiety about who I wanted to be and the conflict I had about where I belonged. However, I was born in the UK and not Jamaica and my experience and culture are both Jamaican and British. To deny the British side of me is to deny the experience that I have had as a black woman born in Britain of Jamaican heritage. Such a denial would in existential terms, be an example of bad faith.

I recognise that my approach to work and achievement has been to fulfil the dreams and make meaningful the sacrifices of my parents. It has also been to reduce the anxiety that I as a black woman experience of feeling that I must prove my value by overachieving. My experience of often being the first or only black person (on my degree course at Bristol University in the 1980s) or in much of my previous career as a management consultant) has led me to sense that I was being judged in a different way to white colleagues. If I failed or indeed if another black person failed, then there was a sense that this would be a judgement on the abilities of all black people.

In undertaking this research, I am aware that I am keen to tell the stories of women like me, stories that I believe have been largely ignored by the field of

counselling psychology. I want to find out if, as I believe, there are women like me who have used work as a way of challenging negative stereotypes of them. I am aware that in undertaking this research that I am still seeking to influence the views of white society or at least the counselling psychology field so there is a danger that I may try to overcompensate for what I perceive as the negative social and psychological positioning of black women of Jamaican heritage. In the end, I feel that these stories reveal universal existential concerns through the lens of the experiences of six black women. However, they also reveal that the reality of antiblack racism is ever present for these women and add another layer of existential struggle, framing the relationship they have with themselves and their social world.

4.3 The participants' stories

There were two interviews of each participant and therefore two separate transcripts produced as part of this research (the Initial interview and the Follow Up). References made to lines from the **initial** interview are coded with 'I' followed by the line number, while references to lines from the **follow up** interview transcripts, are preceded by 'FU' and then the line number. Each participants' initial transcript was analysed using stages 2 through to 6 of Langdrige's model. The analysis of the participants' narratives begins with Rachel's story.

4.3.1 Rachel's story

Rachel is aged 50. She works as a partner within the private sector. In her spare time, Rachel provides mentoring to black women to encourage them to join her profession.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

The narrative begins with Rachel describing her earliest memory of what she wanted to be when she grew up:

25	<i>R: I remember distinctly telling my auntie, and I can remember the exact</i>
26	<i>R: circumstances under which, Uh - that I wanted to be a barrister</i>
27	<i>J: Okay</i>
28	<i>R: and I think I must have been like eight, and of course she laughed and</i>
29	<i>R: said you know - don't be silly - Umm - effectively but - good for you - but</i>
30	<i>R: don't be silly - Umm and I think must have forgot about it, because I don't</i>
31	<i>R: remember then again thinking about what I wanted to do</i>

This is the first time in the narrative when Rachel appears to be confronted with the limitation of others. Her response to this was to 'forget' her dream and focus on another career.

The narrative then switches to her early experiences at secondary school. There is a noticeable shift in her tone, and it becomes less upbeat. Rachel recalls achieving the highest 'A' level results for her year and for this she received a prize. However, she also recalls with a tone of disappointment, not receiving any career's advice. Again, it appears that Rachel's sense of her own potential is not matched by the recognition she receives from others:

43	<i>R: I don't remember there being a stitch of career's advice even though,</i>
44	<i>R: Umm, I think I did quite well at A Levels - I got a prize - I remember</i>
45	<i>R: getting a prize - fifty pounds I got for getting the best A Level results in</i>
46	<i>R: the school that year, Umm- but I don't remember any [advice]</i>

Rachel describes her school as being in a poor area. She then moves on to describe her family life, and one of the first things she mentions is that her family were working-class. Immediately she states her pride in this and how she noticed how hard both her parents worked:

67	<i>R: I think that my family were - were working-class - Umm and I am</i>
68	<i>R: quite proud of that - rather than anything else - my parents worked</i>
69	<i>R: really hard - so my dad would work during the day and my mum would</i>
70	<i>R: work nights so that there was always somebody around for us - Umm</i>
71	<i>R: but as a consequence, my mum was always incredibly tired.</i>

When Rachel recalls the long hours that her parents worked this is said in a downbeat tone. Rachel's tone of voice picks up again when she describes in rich detail her happy childhood and she appears reconciled that her parents' hard work achieved their objectives, to give herself and her siblings a happy childhood.

Rachel mentions for the first time that she belonged to a church when she was younger and at this point, she begins a story about the part that religion played in her early life:

105	<i>R: [my] upbringing which was very much based around the church and religion</i>
106	<i>J: So that was quite important in your family?</i>
107	<i>R: Ah - huge it was everything - so Sunday church Umm and</i>
108	<i>R: there would always be something at lunchtime - my dad was a deacon</i>
109	<i>R: my mum was in charge of all sorts of things - it was an incredibly</i>

110	<i>R: important part of our lives - everyday there was something</i>
111	<i>R: related to church - Umm and as, as stifling as that could be at times</i>

While Rachel acknowledges that the church has been a great support to her and has kept a watchful eye over her behaviour, there appears to be a conflict in Rachel's relationship with the church; she experiences both comfort and again limitation from the church which she identifies as '*stifling at times*' (ll111).

Rachel then appears to resolve this conflict by justifying the church's watchful role:

143	<i>R: Umm because or even from a perspective of respect of my</i>
144	<i>R: parents not wanting them to have somebody view their parenting in</i>
145	<i>R: a poor way by the way that I behave. Of course, yeah. Goes without</i>
146	<i>R: yeah.</i>
147	<i>J: Okay (Laughs)</i>
148	<i>R: (Laughs) You know you are their child you know my parents are</i>
149	<i>R: very about that in terms of the way they brought us up, what you do,</i>
150	<i>R: how you do reflects on me. Yeah.</i>

What is noticeable from the above transcript, is in ll149-150, Rachel recognises that what she does and *how* she does is important as it reflects on her parents.

It appears that Rachel received a strong message from an early age that her behaviour would be seen as representative of the behaviour of others.

In response to a specific question about what it is like to be a black woman, Rachel talks about being black (not a woman) as being core to her identity:

157	<i>R: Well it's a core - it's the - the - my blackness is the first part of my</i>
158	<i>R: identity Umm and obviously being a woman comes a close second but</i>
159	<i>R: Umm it is, it is something that I am objectively aware of at all times</i>

Rachel then proceeds to describes what it means to her to be black in a work context:

180	<i>R: [...] I am the first ever black</i>
181	<i>R: partner that they have ever had. So, my firstness - my blackness is a</i>
182	<i>R: constant part of that and I don't suppose that their recruiting me or</i>
183	<i>R: making me partner had anything to do with my blackness but my</i>
184	<i>R: being there makes it a thing and it's not a thing that's discussed or is</i>
185	<i>R: important to other people but it's something that is relevant to me</i>

What is notable in this part of her transcript is how in line 184-185, Rachel suggests that her 'firstness' her 'blackness' may not be of significance to the white people she encounters in her work, but it is *significant* to her.

Rachel continues by reflecting on the fact that there are so few senior black people in her company and with this, there is the start of a new story about why black people are so underrepresented at her company and companies like hers:

192	<i>R: Yeah and that's even with a firm who is I think incredibly open,</i>
193	<i>R: welcoming, and is interested only in talent - I don't think that they</i>
194	<i>R: overtly Umm discriminate in anyway - there may be some subtle</i>
195	<i>R: things but I think the thing that happens is a combination</i>
196	<i>R: of Umm the personality of the firm, it being a kind of City firm Umm I</i>
197	<i>R: think the perception of black X and black trainees who think</i>

198	R: <i>about whether this is the right firm for them.</i>
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Rachel appears unsure if her firm discriminates although she tenuously speculates as to whether there are subtle forms of discrimination. She suggests it is because of the *nature* of the firm, it being a 'City' firm which may be a reason why, so few black people apply to the company.

Rachel then goes on to admit that she would not have applied to the firm had she not been headhunted despite achieving partnership at her previous firm:

208	R: <i>[..] I became a partner within three years which is</i>
209	R: <i>unheard of, Umm, you know three years post qualifying, all those</i>
210	R: <i>things so it's not that I wasn't ambitious, but I just didn't think that</i>
211	R: <i>firms like this were the right place for me Umm [PAUSE] so I [STRESSED THE</i>
212	R: <i>'I] limited myself, Umm and had they not sought me out I don't think</i>
213	R: <i>I would have moved - Umm [LONG PAUSE]</i>

What is notable is that immediately after stating her achievements and how ambitious she is, Rachel states that she would not have approached her current firm. After a slight pause she states firmly that the reason she didn't apply was because *she* limited herself (ll212). There is a long pause after she states this which indicates the realisation of something uncomfortable to Rachel. Rachel proceeds to question why she would have limited herself:

219	R: <i>Umm, you know: why did I do that? you know because I'm fairly</i>
220	R: <i>together you know, I'm quite good</i>
221	R: <i>but then having said that you</i>

222	<i>R: know, I still see it so when I look at the recruitment Umm, here, I don't</i>
223	<i>R: see you know - in terms of what comes out at the end of it, even where</i>
224	<i>R: I've been involved in the recruitment, Umm, you know what comes out</i>
225	<i>R: the end of it, you know there aren't that many black applicants - you</i>
226	<i>R: know, Umm, and in, you know and what I'm trying to do is find ways to</i>
227	<i>R: [PAUSE] manage that by, you know, and it's a pain in the arse</i>
228	<i>R: sometimes, but if somebody contacts me on LinkedIn, or phones up</i>
229	<i>R: and says I want to talk about careers and I want to talk about applying</i>
230	<i>R: to your firm, I will do my best to find at least five or ten minutes to say</i>
231	<i>R: these are the sorts of things that you need to think about to put</i>
232	<i>R: yourself in the best position to do that to you know. Umm so that we</i>
233	<i>R: can increase the number of people who apply with confidence to firms</i>
234	<i>R: that are more varied you know. I see lots of black people black</i>
235	<i>R: X's doing the usual suspect type of work [PAUSE] Umm [PAUSE]</i>

Rachel's tone is one of frustration, even though she knows that the reasons that black people are not applying to firms like hers are the same reasons that she didn't apply. Yet her frustration implies that the fault lies *with* the black professionals who settle for the 'usual suspect' type of work(11235).

Rachel is now asked to reflect on what it was like for her to be a black girl growing up. Rachel states that she didn't really notice her blackness growing up. As she recalls, at school, all her friends were black; her church was black and the friends of her parents and visitors to her house were mainly black. It was only when she went to university that she says in a jokey voice that '*something was a bit missing*' (11268). Rachel goes on to explain that she sought out black people and when she found a place where all the black people did hang out, she relaxed.

In the narrative she takes a sharp intake of breath, breathes out and recalls saying to herself at the time *'I'm good now'* (11284).

The narrative moves on to discuss her relationship with her Jamaican cultural heritage. Rachel describes living in a very Jamaican household and that her cultural identity is very much Jamaican:

316	<i>R: [...] Umm yeah so, our holidays were Jamaican. My parents</i>
317	<i>R: bought land; it was in Jamaica. When my parents went on holiday, it</i>
318	<i>R: was to Jamaica, you know even when they went without us. Umm the</i>
319	<i>R: food all the rest of it - I mean I know there is kind of a cross over and</i>
320	<i>R: a lot of that, but so our predominant identity in terms of our culture</i>
321	<i>R: was very, very Jamaican.</i>

Rachel uses the device of repetition, repeating the word *'very'*, in an apparent attempt to convey the strength of her Jamaican identity.

This story of her Jamaican heritage is a lengthy tale told in rich detail and an upbeat tone. Her tone changes and becomes more matter of fact when she speaks about her British identity. Rachel makes it clear that for her being British is about her nationality:

384	<i>R: [so] nationality, it's where I work, it's where my life is, it's where my life is</i>
385	<i>R: based, it defines my rights, it defines my obligations - Umm and I am</i>
386	<i>R: proud of it. But I'm a black (STRESSED the word 'black') British</i>
387	<i>R: woman. Umm and that means my experience of being British is</i>
388	<i>R: different to my husband's - he's a white British male - Umm and so I</i>

389	<i>R: feel as British as he does but my experience is different and of course I</i>
390	<i>R: have an option when it suits me, to be less British and more something</i>
391	<i>R: else</i>

What is notable is the brevity of the description of what it means to her to be British in contrast with the lengthy story about being Jamaican. In fact, Rachel does not use the word ‘identity’ to describe being British she uses the term, ‘nationality’. The last point that Rachel makes in this part of her narrative in line 390 – 391 suggests that Rachel feels that she can switch between being more Jamaican or more British and that she doesn’t feel completely fixed into one *cultural* way of being.

Rachel’s narrative moves on to the subject of work and what it means to her:

393	<i>R: Oh God it, it just invades everything I do. Umm I have a fantastic</i>
394	<i>R: job which I really, really enjoy. And I get to do some incredibly</i>
395	<i>R: interesting things I get to travel, I get to apply my intellect. I get</i>
396	<i>R: to represent women, I get to represent black people represent as in</i>
397	<i>R: demonstrate that we are incredibly capable and as capable as anyone</i>
398	<i>R: else and when you add my blackness then that is extra added bonus</i>
399	<i>R: that you get in this package. Umm because it allows me to bring</i>
400	<i>R: another dimension, another view, another experience</i>

What is notable is this story of work and its meaning to her is told in lengthy detail. Rachel uses the rhetorical device of repetition in line 394, when she states that she ‘*really, really*’ enjoys her job, to convey her enthusiasm for the work she does. Her enthusiasm is underpinned by the sense that she has personal power

as a black professional woman because her blackness means she has knowledge and experience that white people do not have. Rachel suggests in line 396-397 that the way she is as a professional, portrays to others the capabilities of *all* black people rather than just specifically her capabilities.

Rachel continues with this story to describe how she is towards work:

413	<i>R: [...] people sometimes say to me you know - what are you trying to</i>
414	<i>R: prove? it's not that I'm proving anything - Umm I expect to be excellent</i>
415	<i>R: you know Umm that's the expectation that I have of myself, Umm</i>
416	<i>R: and Umm (Pause)</i>
417	<i>J: And do you know where that comes from at all?</i>
418	<i>J: where does this come from you think?</i>
419	<i>R: It comes from, it comes from my parents you know if you are</i>
420	<i>R: gonna do it do it properly you know</i>

When Rachel says in line 414, '*I expect to be excellent*', she appears to link this expectation of herself with how she saw her parents work hard (ll419). She also recalls that her parents, especially her father, placed a great deal of emphasis on her obtaining a good education and working hard. As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that there is another reason why Rachel strives to be the best:

429	<i>R: [...] I, set out to be the best Umm and that means</i>
430	<i>R: you have to work hard. Umm and I don't want Umm ever [stressed</i>
431	<i>R: 'ever'] to give people the opportunity to suggest that I have failed to</i>
432	<i>R: achieve that mark for any reason particularly because - given my</i>
433	<i>R: position, part of that reason might be "I wonder if it's because she's</i>
434	<i>R: black?" You know - I don't think anyone would ever say it like that but</i>

435	<i>R: the take-away from that might be and I can't afford for that to be an</i>
436	<i>R: option in terms of their perception regarding me</i>
437	<i>J: Because?</i>
438	<i>R: Well because if I fail to do something it's got nothing to do with that</i>
439	<i>R: but I can't control - Ahem I can't control what other people think. I</i>
440	<i>R: know that but I just don't give them anything to think is the only way</i>
441	<i>R: to control that so I work really hard [LAUGHS]</i>

It appears that for Rachel, her greatest fear is that someone might say she failed *because* she is black. Rachel is conflicted, as she suggests that although someone might not say this, they might *think* it. While she recognises that she can't control what people think there is a part of her that nonetheless tries to do this by being excellent. In line 441, Rachel's laughter appears to suggest that she recognises the contradiction and possibly that she is trying to do the impossible - to control what others think of her. At the same time, she denies that this is what she is doing. This story about work concludes as Rachel explains that she regards herself as a trailblazer because of her experience of often being the only or first black woman in the room:

449	<i>R: Yes, so I do feel a little bit like a trailblazer in this</i>
450	<i>R: context, Umm in this sort of firm, in this sort of area, at this level and</i>
451	<i>R: that's not that there aren't other black partners in similar firms but we</i>
452	<i>R: are few and far between you know - so I spend a lot of time in the</i>
453	<i>R: room where I am the only black person in the room. Women not a</i>
454	<i>R: problem - lots of women doing this kind of work now</i>

What is notable about this part of the transcript is that throughout her discussion about work, it's her blackness that Rachel is most acutely aware of.

Indeed, in line 454, she sees this as more significant when she recognises the other aspect of her identity being a woman, which in her eyes, is well represented in the room.

In response to a question, about her experience of racism and sexism, Rachel, who up to this point had spoken with confidence and fluidity, appears hesitant. She focuses on the question of her experience of racism:

467	<i>R: [...] It's not like people will say "Oh you can't have that job</i>
468	<i>R: because you're black" -it's much more subtle than that and I wouldn't</i>
469	<i>R: want to, without good reason, say that the reason that I didn't do this</i>
470	<i>R: or that happened to me was because I was black and that's not to</i>
471	<i>R: suggest that I'm in some sort of denial - that suggest that these things</i>
472	<i>R: don't happen.</i>

This reaction to this question comes immediately after her apparent struggle with what people might be thinking about her and that the last thing, she wants them to say is that she is not capable because she is black. It is possible that she perceives her strive for excellence as a shield in the workplace with the belief that she cannot be discriminated against overtly if she is the best.

When Rachel reflects on her experience of racism when she was younger, she again appears hesitant, before recalling an experience following the death of a friend:

493	<i>R: Yeah, yeah - so I remember - just silly things like I had a friend who</i>
494	<i>R: was run over and he died, and I don't know whether it was it must be</i>

495	<i>R: something I was told or me over hearing 'big people's conversation' but</i>
496	<i>R: my take-away from that is that they had said that Umm he was crossing</i>
497	<i>R: the road and he was black, wearing dark clothing and they couldn't see</i>
498	<i>R: him. Yeah, you know Umm, I remember thinking "how's that okay?"</i>

Rachel then remembers why her parents didn't let her and her siblings watch the 1970s drama 'Roots':

507	<i>R: [...] My parents sought to protect us from that sort of</i>
508	<i>R: thing whereas now those are exactly the sort of things that I spend</i>
509	<i>R: time watching, reading, talking about with my children, Umm</i>
510	<i>J: What do you feel they were protecting you from?</i>
511	<i>R: [PAUSE] I feel probably from being upset or angry. You know my</i>
512	<i>R: parents' response to the disappointments of the attitudes and</i>
513	<i>R: experiences that they had in the UK was to keep your head down</i>
514	<i>R: work hard and the Lord will make a way. [LAUGHS]</i>

What is notable is in line 514, when Rachel describes her parents' saying, she laughs as if *she* doesn't feel that working hard and trusting in God is enough.

Rachel's narrative then returns to work and how through her work she seeks to effect change particularly, ensuring that more black people access her profession and rise to senior and powerful positions. Towards the end of her narrative, she returns to this sense of being a role model for other black people:

608	<i>R: I feel that I have a responsibility which I hope I'm discharging, being a</i>
609	<i>R: good role model, being the best that I can be means that somebody sees</i>
610	<i>R: how you would do it</i>

Identities and Identity work in Rachel's narrative

Rachel describes being black as core to her identity she also explains that most of her close and meaningful interactions during her formative years were with black people (at school, family, the church). However, in the middle part of the narrative, when she reflects upon starting university, she recalls that this is the first time she notices that she is 'different' as she is among mainly white people and very few people who look like her. This is the first time she thinks about her black identity.

Rachel appears to construct a positive black identity through the medium of work. Work is therefore an important aspect of her identity. She works hard to achieve the best and to be seen as excellent (ll414). Working hard is so that others (people who are not black) see her, as a positive representative of black people and therefore will be inclined to see other black people in a good light.

Rachel does not appear to attach significance to a gender identity and only makes one specific reference to gender.

There is only one direct reference made to social class, at the start of her narrative (ll67-94). However, when Rachel speaks about being working-class, she stresses that her family were hard working. Rachel identifies strongly with her parents and particularly how hard they worked. This identification appears

to be present in her own attitude to work and is summed up in her statement in line 393: *'It, it just invades everything I do'*

Thematic priorities and relationships in Rachel's narrative

Theme 1 - *Being black*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Rachel'	<i>I didn't notice [I was black] because I was black, my friends were black the whole church was black</i>	<i>I didn't start to think of my identity until I went to university....it was incredibly white</i>		<i>[Being black] it's core, the core of who I am</i>

Theme 2 – *Limiting and being limited*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Rachel'	<i>[When I said what I wanted to be when I grew up] She laughed and said, you know, don't be silly</i>	<i>As stifling as it could be at times [church] it was a safety net, even though I didn't think of it like that at the time</i>	<i>I don't say I limited myself Why did I do that?</i>	<i>You cannot limit me, limit my children or black kids</i>

Theme 3 – *Sameness/Difference*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Rachel'	<i>They [my parents] had a different way of dealing with [racism/disappointment]</i>	<i>Something was different and strange</i>	<i>They sought me out because I was different</i>	<i>I'm unusual and different My experience is different</i>

Theme 4 – *Rejection/Belonging*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Rachel'	<i>[church] was a useful safety net</i>	<i>[When I arrived at university] where are all the black people? [I found some and thought] I'm good now</i>	<i>I think it was because I was like, they don't want somebody like me</i>	<i>I can't afford for that to be an option in terms of their perception of me [that I have not achieved the mark because I am black]</i>

Theme 5 – Working hard and achievement

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Rachel'	<i>My parents worked hard</i> <i>Work really hard and be the best</i>		<i>I was very good at my job, a leader in my field</i>	<i>I need to make sure that I don't muck up [for other black people]</i>

Destabilizing Rachel's narrative

Rachel sees being black as the core to her identity. A hermeneutic of suspicion, rooted in social constructionism, existential, postcolonial and black existential theories is relevant to the interrogation of Rachel's narrative. Both Fanon (1986) and Hall (1994) reject the notion of an objective and authentic single black identity to be grasped. While it is important to note that, the *acquiring* of a core black identity for Rachel, needs to be seen through the prism of the historical context of her living through specific cultural and social events of 1970s and 1980s, throughout her narrative we see that blackness appears to be an objective reality. Rachel also sees herself as representing all black people yet at the same time she feels she is judged for being a *black* person and not for being Rachel.

Another hermeneutic of suspicion is offered with reference to Foucault's concept of power relations (1979). In her narrative, Rachel appears to recognise that she does have power. Rachel reconstructs her blackness and experience of being black in a way that gives her some influence, as she describes it, as a bonus. Rachel uses this 'bonus' to influence others in the workplace, because she recognises that she has an experience that they (white people) don't have. However, there is a risk that this again can lead to her being fixed by others into

a position of being representative of and for *all* black people. This leads to another hermeneutic of suspicion that of Sartre's concept of bad faith and Gordon's reinterpretation of this concept in relation to black people's reaction to racism.

The concept of bad faith is relevant to this narrative, as Rachel appears to see her approach to work, being the best, being excellent as inextricably linked to her 'sense of self'. This is who she thinks she *is* in real concrete terms. The function of this for Rachel appears to be to reduce one of her worst anxieties, the fear that white people should see her fail and believe that this failure is down to the fact that she is black.

The concept of social constructionism as a hermeneutic of suspicion also appears relevant to Rachel's narrative particularly regarding how Rachel accounts for her parents' stance towards racism and injustice during the 1970s and 1980s and her different stance today. Using this concept, it is possible to see how our knowledge of the world and our construction of our place in it, is influenced by the historical time period.

Critical synthesis of Rachel's narrative

Rachel positions herself in her narrative as someone who started from humble beginnings to become, through hard work, one of the best professionals in her field and a committed role model for other black people. However, she is also conflicted by the limitations she places upon herself as well as those that she

perceives others place upon her. A sense of pride runs through the narrative, rooted in a strong sense of being black. Rachel notices being different (as a black person) and by the end of her narrative constructs a positive narrative around this difference.

It appears that Rachel takes on her parents' message of hard work, holding on to this, but deciding not to keep her head down but instead raise it up. This illustrates a level of confidence and recognition of the power that she has in way that her parents didn't.

Rachel wants to pass on to the next generation the knowledge and experience that she has gained and to act as a role model. However, in doing this she feels she needs to ensure that she never messes up because she is a representative of all black people

4.3.2 Natasha's story

Natasha is 61, she started her career in the public sector and now sits on several company boards both in the private and public sectors.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

In the first part of the narrative, Natasha describes her family's initial experience of the UK:

101	<i>N: so that sense of - oh my God it's just so hard. They talked all the time of going back home: 'when we</i>
102	<i>N: go back home'. You know, because they'd come here temporarily to get money and go back home</i>

103	<i>N: Umm, and so the shock of getting here and not being able to find anywhere to live and umm,</i>
104	<i>N: the 'no blacks, no dogs, no Irish' so that was all part of my hinterland of growing up - I have a sense</i>
105	<i>N: of anger. Umm, sorrow, sorrow - you know "I can't understand how it could be like this".</i>
106	<i>N: Sorrow but still a sense of hope I think - that the children would do better</i>

As Natasha recalls her parents' experiences she does so in a downbeat tone. It feels as if Natasha is embodying her parents' shock and sadness, and possible regret at coming to the UK, and is conveying this through the way she tells this story.

Natasha's tone changes and becomes more upbeat when she recalls her parents buying their first home. She vividly describes happy childhood memories of getting a sense of Jamaica from two perspectives:

91	<i>N: [...] my father was more politicised. My father talked more about Bustamante, and the first Manley</i>
92	<i>N: and he was obviously - if not involved, very interested in politics - you know labour politics.</i>
93	<i>N: They were both PNP people. But kind of like - labour - employment politics and strikes and so on</i>
94	<i>N: again - so - I have this from my father - a sense of Jamaican politics - from my mother - I don't know</i>
95	<i>N: just - umm, kinda - the colour and glory of Jamaica. You know when she talked about Jamaica</i>
96	<i>N: it was just full of kind of love and affection about Jamaica.</i>

Her tone changes, and Natasha inhales deeply when she tells the story of her memories of primary school:

183	<i>N: I was sort of good at everything. And I remember we went to K infant and junior school</i>
184	<i>N: this is all very vivid. I went to K school. It was around the corner. it was five minutes away and umm,</i>
185	<i>N: it was mixed - so umm that's where I started to realise that - realising that I was different</i>
186	<i>N: that I was black - or whatever it was I called it - probably called it coloured then.</i>

It is interesting that Natasha uses the word 'it' to describe her 'blackness'. This apparent ambivalent way of describing herself is a recurrent theme, particularly in the early part of her narrative and is further illustrated in the following recollection:

198	<i>N: I have recollections of children asking me questions. 'What was my hair?' Wanting to touch my hair.</i>
199	<i>N: 'How did I know when I was dirty'? Umm and I am not even sure if those were vicious questions</i>
200	<i>N: but they were embarrassing questions.</i>
201	<i>N: I felt embarrassed by this kind of like constant, constant - people being interested in me.</i>

Natasha appears to notice that she is different from the other girls in the school because *they* point out her differences. When she describes her memories, there is a noticeable change in her mood and tone of voice. This is followed by a long period of silence; the only time during her whole narrative when there is such a noticeable period without speech.

Natasha breaks the silence by recalling that school was: '*a mix of good at it but not quite fitting socially*' (11209). She then starts a new story about how education was important to her parents:

253	<i>N: I remember at one point - this is much later, telling my father that I wanted to work in a pet shop</i>
254	<i>N: He went completely mad because education was really important to them (Laughs)</i>
255	<i>J: Do you know why?</i>
256	<i>N: Because it was the only way I was going to get anywhere, I had to work hard, I had to work twice as</i>
257	<i>N: as hard as any white person because it was the only way I was going to do well</i>

Natasha continues to stress the point about how important education was to her parents and how they appeared to invest so much in her being the one to achieve:

263	<i>N: very, very important it was like my way out - it was how I was going to do well.</i>
264	<i>N: So, they had come to this country, it had not been what they'd imagined, umm and their hope</i>
265	<i>N: that the children - me actually because I was the bright one - would do better</i>

It is notable how Natasha uses the rhetorical function of repetition in line 263 to stress how important education was for parents. Natasha ends this story and begins a new one about her experience at secondary school:

285	<i>N: [...] The whole time I was there, there was one other black pupil who was a year or two below me</i>
286	<i>N: but you didn't talk to people who were below you - so she might just as well have not been there.</i>
287	<i>N: It was isolating in the sense of race -I had like friends but I was a minority and aware of it</i>
288	<i>N: I mean I kind of remember, umm in assembly, we would all be in the hall down the bottom</i>
289	<i>N: there was this balcony and the 6th formers would be there, and I remember, I remember</i>
290	<i>N: each morning thinking - they can all see me, they can all see me because I was the one black child</i>
291	<i>N: And that sense of just feeling visible and not liking it at all</i>

On the face of it, Natasha appears to have a very different experience at school to home. She had earlier described a very Jamaican and quite politicised household. However, as her narrative continues it becomes apparent that although she received a strong sense of culture at home, the messages about the value of blackness and 'Jamaicanness' were mixed. These mixed messages revolved around language (patois wasn't to be spoken by her or her siblings), and more particularly about the attractiveness or otherwise of black features:

304	<i>N: 'good hair' and 'good skin' and fair colour and all of that was part of a growing up</i>
305	<i>J: And what did you make of those comments?</i>
306	<i>N: I didn't have 'good' hair. I mean my Mum didn't have [laughs] I mean none of us had 'good' hair</i>
307	<i>J: [laughs]</i>
308	<i>N: Good hair was straight hair, good hair was straight hair.</i>
309	<i>J: And good skin?</i>
310	<i>N: light skin</i>

What is noticeable at this point is how often Natasha uses laughter as a device to temper the pain of the memory of certain events that she has encountered in her life. This ambivalence about her blackness and culture appears linked to comments made by her parents about what it meant to look good as a black person.

Natasha describes the effect of these comments by her parents on her self-esteem:

353	<i>N: Confusing - just difficult, difficult. It led to me not having a sense of good, it led to me not being</i>
354	<i>N: proud of my blackness. We didn't talk about black, in those days. It led to me, not having a</i>
355	<i>N: sense of pride in who I was even though, my mother in particular had so many stories [about Jamaica]</i>

The rhetorical device of repetition (difficult, difficult) strongly conveyed the profound struggle the young Natasha had in relating to herself. Natasha's final point (ll355), illustrates the confusion. At this point, her narrative switches to describe her experiences at her 'white' secondary school:

379	<i>N: I was sitting next to Y and in front of me was X and Z. And X used to draw golliwogs on</i>
380	<i>N: a piece of paper like this. So, she's sitting here and I'm there and she'd go like this paper] [Laughs]</i>
381	<i>N: I know it's not funny - it was horrible. So, the class would be going on, and she'd would be doing that [points at a piece of paper]</i>
382	<i>N: with the golliwogs and 'go back home' and all these awful things would be written on it.</i>
383	<i>N: That was kind of like my welcome to this school and I have never. and she said all sorts of things</i>
384	<i>N: she wasn't the only one, but she was the ring leader one. And one lesson I remember just losing it</i>
385	<i>N: lost my temper. I have never known of this ever happening to me before and jumping up in my seat</i>
386	<i>N: and punching her - I punched her hard</i>

Natasha describes this incident in dramatic terms and with emotion as if to convey the pain she felt at being bullied by this girl and possibly the pent-up hatred she felt towards herself. With a further dramatic turn, Natasha describes how despite this girl's behaviour, she became friends with her and some other white girls, and all of them misbehaved at school:

394	<i>N: and X became one of my closest friends - which is why I remember. So, X and Y we were a group of six</i>
395	<i>N: and we were kind of quite tight. They used to call me 'Nat' my name was 'Nat' and they'd say things</i>
396	<i>N: like they don't like black people but not you - you're different - you're different to the others.</i>
397	<i>N: I mean that's what it was like - and I kind of was - not okay with it - but that's just the way it was</i>

While this story of hanging out with a group of white girls and messing about with them was told with a mixture of laughter and incredulity at the mischief they got up to, it is notable that Natasha recalls that these friends didn't like black people. However, it feels that she had with them, a sense of belonging. Natasha is then asked what happened to change her attitude to school work:

394	<i>N: So, what changed? This is very vivid again. When I was 15 - so I'm now in the fifth year</i>
395	<i>N: So, we have had this whole school life of me being at odds with my mum and dad</i>

396	<i>N: it was all very, very, difficult. Mum sent me to America for a holiday - for six weeks and I met Marcia</i>
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The story of Aunt Marcia and her influence on Natasha is told as if it was an epiphany:

485	<i>N: [Aunt Marcia] - she introduced me to the Soledad Brothers, and</i>
486	<i>N: George Jackson - I don't mean introduce me to him the person, but these books.</i>
487	<i>N: And, umm I think back in England - it was the 'young gifted and black' era, so that had started but</i>
488	<i>N: hadn't touched me in any big, big, way - I was still surrounded by these white friends, and it meant</i>
489	<i>N: nothing to them. This was important at home - but I was in this white school. But with Marcia - it's</i>
410	<i>N: like [sigh] 'I want to be like you', 'I want to be like you'. I remember umm. we still talk about this</i>
411	<i>N: because Marcia is my favourite aunt now - I adore her, and - I think she saved me.</i>
412	<i>J: What did she save you from?</i>
413	<i>N: Oh, she saved me from a life of self-hatred</i>

Natasha describes in upbeat tones how her aunt introduced her to black literature, politics and culture in a way that she had not previously experienced. (ll 485-486). Natasha then describes her return to the UK, again in dramatic terms, stepping off the plane not only feeling different, but dressed differently as if to underline her transformation:

512	<i>N: So, I was completely different by then. So, from America - I go back home and arrive back in London.</i>
513	<i>N: My parents pick me up at the airport. I've got big black - big glasses.</i>
514	<i>N: Marcia bought me these. They were very fashionable, and she bought me two, three, pairs</i>
515	<i>N: I had two - I've still got the two holes in my ears which somebody with a needle did.</i>
516	<i>N: not just one. I had two earrings and dungarees. My mum was like 'Who's this?'</i>
517	<i>N: I didn't want those friends any more. I decided - overnight - I was going to work hard at school</i>
518	<i>N: I was going to get my exams. I was a different person. And I don't know how it happened in 6 weeks</i>

519	<i>N: but it was overnight. I came back and I worked hard in school</i>
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As with other statements in her narrative the use of hyperbole (for example, in line 151 her change was ‘overnight’) as a rhetorical device, is used to illustrate the dramatic twists and turns in Natasha’s identity journey. It appears that in retelling this story in such a theatrical manner, that Natasha was seeking to convey in the strongest of terms the transformation in her relationship with her blackness.

By the time Natasha had reached university, she states in the transcript below that, *‘I was black’*:

528	<i>J: So, there you are now - at university. How would you describe yourself now in terms of your identity</i>
529	<i>N: Oh, I was black. I was. I had fairly radical views about racism, sexism. I was reading about gender</i>
530	<i>N: politics, race politics umm, umm. I did a degree in X which was all about power.</i>
531	<i>N: I had an Afro, I mean I was happy as well. I was kind of like you know - I knew who I was.</i>

What is notable is how Natasha makes the point that her transformation includes wearing her hair in its natural Afro state as an apparent potent symbol of her transformation. Natasha continues and describes how she specifically chose to go to a university which had several black students which she recalls was unusual during the 1970s:

528	<i>N: Yes, it was amazing. So, I'm now at X [university]. I'm black, I'm one of the group. X is a hotbed of political unrest</i>
529	<i>J: So, we're talking about now - give me some dates here?</i>
530	<i>N: '76.</i>
531	<i>J: 76</i>

What is notable is that Natasha is now an active member of the black students' group who are very politically active. This contrasts with the group that she belonged to at school who 'accepted' her but not her blackness.

Natasha's narrative now moves on to her early career as a teacher. She works in a school with several black children. Natasha positions herself in this story as someone who appears to be on a crusade to help these children; going beyond she says, what would have normally been expected from her role:

583	<i>N: So, I got a job in X, I knew I wanted to work in X London in a diverse school. So, I worked in a very mixed</i>
584	<i>N: black school. I enjoyed it except I didn't like working with my teachers much - they didn't seem to like the kids</i>
585	<i>N: which offended me - because I loved them. Umm I didn't see that I was going to go fast enough as a teacher</i>
586	<i>J: And that was important to you - to go fast?</i>
587	<i>N: Yeah - well, yeah, I, because I wanted more authority - I wanted to be able to do more. Umm when I became</i>
588	<i>N: a teacher I was one of a group of young black teachers in X - there were a group of us - we pulled together</i>
599	<i>N: we loved being in each other's company and we set up a Saturday school</i>
600	<i>N: in our spare time. The X Saturday school which is still there. It was for black kids -to fast track them. We did</i>
601	<i>N: things like that. I did loads of stuff with my students - I was like a one woman - I remember visiting their parents -</i>
602	<i>N: doing home visits outside of school - because they wouldn't come - the black parents weren't coming</i>

This desire to effect change and in particular change in the lives of young black people appears to be underpinned by a drive to ensure that these children had an education that connected them with black Caribbean culture to develop a positive self-image (ll599-600). This can be contrasted with how Natasha felt about herself as a young black girl at a similar age.

For the most part, the story of her early career is delivered with energy and an upbeat tone, reflecting perhaps the energy and drive that she exhibited at this time. As Natasha describes progressing in her career taking on senior leadership roles, when asked about any challenges she faced during this period, her tone changes. At this point in her narrative, Natasha initially appears conflicted about the effect that negative experiences have had on her:

640	<i>J: And what about negative things in terms of work or your experiences of work</i>
641	<i>N: Negative, negative. Umm [pause] that's harder to answer.</i>
642	<i>N: So, the two jobs that I have found the hardest. If I find things hard that's very difficult for me</i>
643	<i>N: I am not good at finding things hard. I umm, I don't like it at all. It's not an experience that I enjoy</i>
644	<i>N: just kind of be struggling with something.</i>
645	<i>N: if you - you know [stops talking]</i>

When Natasha starts to speak again after a long pause at line 645, she implies that she just shrugs things off as she doesn't wish for them to impact on how she sees herself or her life. Her tone suddenly drops as she remembers a particularly difficult work experience, working with the leader of an organisation, in her first directorship role:

655	<i>N: She was just a horrible person. I remember when I got the job, I remember 'L'</i>
656	<i>N: my new boss saying to me umm, I have to tell you - that X is very difficult to work with - I said don't</i>
657	<i>N: worry I can charm anybody [laughs]. Because up until that point, I could - it will be fine.</i>
658	<i>N: This was how confident I was. My God, no, I could not charm X. She was horrible. Umm, she made me</i>
659	<i>N: feel miserable - she made me feel that I couldn't achieve because nothing was ever good enough</i>

What is notable is when she finds herself in a difficult situation; Natasha has a belief that she can use her charm and her social skills to change the relationship.

The fact that this didn't work for her in this situation, appears to have had a profound effect on her. In the follow up interview, Natasha expands on what it's like for her to feel like she hasn't achieved something or been good enough:

FU112	<i>N: [Pause]. Horrible, [Pause], Okay, umm, ohh - I hate it. What does it feel like? What does it feel like?</i>
FU113	<i>N: Embarrassing. That - I've cheated myself. That mum and dad would be so disappointed.</i>
FU114	<i>N: That others would see that I am stupid. You know - yuk - horrible</i>

What is notable is how Natasha links her failure to failing her parents. There also appears to be a palpable fear that others may think that she is stupid. The narrative ends on an upbeat note as Natasha describes how in the current stage of her career, she feels that she has 'banked' a good reputation and is frequently invited to sit on corporate and public boards. When she does this type of work it is always important for her to add value. Natasha explains the reason for this:

FU45	<i>N: I am sort of doing what I'm supposed to do - to succeed - I am supposed to - be able to umm account</i>
FU46	<i>N: to myself or to somebody - I don't know who that somebody is. If I, just go to these meetings</i>
FU47	<i>N: just sit on these boards - people do that - I don't understand what they're doing - I don't understand</i>
FU48	<i>N: why or how they could do that - I couldn't. Umm I, I need to feel that I have had some purpose</i>

It is notable that Natasha feels that she needs to add value although she notices that others don't appear to feel the need to do this in the same way (FU47-FU48). Towards the end of her narrative, Natasha reflects that one thing she has learnt is that black people, men and women cannot afford to make mistakes in the same way white people can in the workplace, 'because you have to do better, you have to work harder, you have to get it right' (FU142).

Identities and Identity work in Natasha's narrative

Natasha's identity seems to be closely connected to her relationship with her family. Much of her early narrative is rich in description about her early experiences with them. However, what also emerges is a complicated relationship with her blackness and her Jamaican cultural identity.

Throughout her narrative Natasha talks about her relationship to her Caribbean and Jamaican identity. She uses the term Jamaican and Caribbean interchangeably but appears to use Caribbean more often. However, Natasha recalls mixed messages about the *value of her* blackness and Jamaican culture leading to a confused identity. Natasha speaks about her life of self-hatred only changing when she meets her aunt. From this point, Natasha describes a pride in her blackness.

Work is another identity that runs through Natasha's narrative and her attitude to work changes when she meets Aunt Marcia. What makes work important to her 'sense of self' and meaningful to her is when it relates to social justice and fighting inequality. It is significant that Natasha's early work, appears to focus on rescuing black youngsters who she feels have not only been failed by the education system, but who lack education about their cultural heritage.

Natasha doesn't mention belonging to a particular social class. The only reference to social class is when she recognises that she lives in a white working-

class area (11219). Similarly, there is no strong identification with feminism.

Natasha describes her sense of identity now as a black, Caribbean, Londoner and links the development of this identity to her experiences at university during the 1970s (11562-570).

Thematic priorities and relationships within Natasha's narrative

Theme 1 - *Being black*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Natasha'	<i>I didn't like it, I wanted to be like my white friends</i>	<i>Not being proud of my blackness</i> <i>[By the time I got to university in the 1970s] Oh, I was black</i>		<i>I am black before I am a woman</i>

Theme 2 – *Sameness/Difference*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Natasha'	<i>I have a recollection of realizing that I was different</i> <i>Home life was Caribbean; so, school was very different</i>	<i>Feeling visible and not liking it</i> <i>They would say they don't like black people but that I was different</i>	<i>I had a different way of thinking about the pupils I was teaching</i>	<i>I have a clear sense that there are certain differences I need to make</i> <i>[Making a difference means] I add value.</i>

Theme 3 – *Rejection/Belonging*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Natasha'	<i>We were all sort of one family</i> <i>Not quite fitting in socially [at primary school]</i>	<i>There were loads of black students [at university] I was one of all of them</i>	<i>I was one of a group of black teachers there was a group of us we pulled together</i>	<i>People from those organisations [who I have worked with in recent years] I now count as friends</i>

Theme 4 – Working hard and achievement

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Natasha'	<i>I had to work hard, I had to work twice as hard as any white person</i>	<i>I disappointed my parents because I started to not do so well at school</i> <i>[When I came back from America] I didn't want those friends any more. I was going to work hard at school</i>	<i>I was clear before any job I went to what I wanted to achieve</i>	<i>It means I add value. It means that I am important</i> <i>What does it feel like [not to achieve]? Embarrassing. That I've cheated myself That mum and dad would be disappointed</i>

Theme 5 – Adoration/Being Adored

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Natasha'	<i>And the librarian would know me, and she would give me a pile of books</i> <i>I was the favourite child</i>	<i>But with Aunt Marcia it was like 'I want to be like you'</i>	<i>[The other teachers] didn't seem to like the kids which offended me because I loved them</i>	<i>I've got a really good reputation</i>

Destabilizing Natasha's narrative

One hermeneutic that can be applied to Natasha's narrative is found in the postcolonial theoretical concept of internalised racism, a form of self-hatred (see Speight, 2007). In her narrative, Natasha describes her 'ambivalent' relationship with her blackness. She further describes how this ambivalence was compounded by the mixed messages she received from her parents about the value of blackness particularly dark skin and Afro haired black people.

Another hermeneutic of suspicion that can be applied to Natasha's narrative draws upon the existential concept of 'bad faith'. Natasha appears to see work and working hard as a way of demonstrating her *intrinsic* value. Sartre (2003, [1943] and Gordon, 1999).

Critical synthesis of Natasha's narrative

In the early part of her narrative, Natasha recalls her parents engaging with Jamaican politics and a house full of Jamaican people and culture. She also noticed her parents' unease with living in Britain, their disappointment and sadness and her parents encouraging her to work harder than her white friends. However, Natasha is ambivalent towards her blackness. At school she is singled out as different in a negative way because of how she looks. This ambivalence is compounded by the mixed messages she receives from her parents, who at home, appear to celebrate their blackness and Jamaican identity, but then also extol the virtues of being lighter skinned with straight hair. Natasha's response is to become self-destructive and misbehave at school. However, meeting her Aunt Marcia in her mid-teens proves a dramatic turning point for Natasha. Her relationship with her blackness becomes more positive and her attitude to work and achievement also change.

With work Natasha initially finds herself drawn to working to encourage and support other black Caribbean children develop a positive identity and to focus on work and achievement. As Natasha herself, moves up the career ladder, she appears to see herself as a more solid and integrated person. However, she finds it hard to deal with the prospect of not achieving as she appears to feel that she not only would have let herself and her parents down but that others would see her as stupid.

Natasha’s narrative was interrogated with a postcolonial and Africana existentialist hermeneutic of suspicion. Within postcolonial theory, the notion of internalised racism can be conceived along a line of continuum from the trauma of discrete acts of racism right through to the cumulative effects of intergenerational trauma and institutionalised positioning of blackness as inferior to whiteness. Natasha’s story reveals another layer of complexity. Both Natasha and her parents may have been trying to find ways of surviving and belonging. For Natasha’s parents they held on to their cultural identity in the face of hostility when they came to the UK. However, they may have felt that for their daughter, outside of the home at least, it was important for her to fit in with British culture (to get an education, not to speak Jamaican) and that this would ensure that she thrived. As an adult, Natasha feels it important to achieve, to not disappoint her parents and ensure that she is seen to add value.

4.3.3 Melanie’s story

Melanie is aged 52, a senior civil servant. She has a special interest in increasing diversity and equality in the workplace.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

Melanie’s narrative begins with her describing what identity means to her:

4	<i>M: It's about the fact that I am - a black woman, umm - that I come from a very</i>
5	<i>M: a Jamaican heritage - umm. Identity is not just my heritage - it's about</i>
6	<i>M: where I was born, where I was brought up. Because I am a south Londoner -</i>
7	<i>M: I am a south London woman. Umm - and I see that very much as my identity</i>
8	<i>M: as well in terms of my class. So, it's about my ethnicity, it's about my class</i>

Melanie's narrative moves on to describe her parents' arrival in the UK. She describes how both her parents came to the UK when they were teenagers.

Melanie's mother had arrived from Jamaica in the 1960s to join her parents who had come to the UK some 10 years previously. Melanie's father also came to the UK as a teenager on a scholarship, which looked set to secure him a bright future. Having noticed earlier that Melanie referred to class twice in line 8, at this point, she is asked to elaborate on how she sees her social class:

49	<i>J: You mentioned earlier about class. How would you define your class?</i>
50	<i>M: Very, very working-class - as in my parents and my grandparents worked</i>
51	<i>M: lower working-class - I mean - so my grandparents - my grandmother</i>
52	<i>M: was a seamstress in the Caribbean - Jamaica - and when she came to this</i>
53	<i>M: country she did that to supplement her income, but she worked</i>
54	<i>M: mainly in the hospitals</i>
55	<i>M: You know kind of doing - you know she wasn't a nurse - she wasn't a professional as such</i>
56	<i>M: she was there to do the orderly type work - you know - the work that supported a nurse</i>

What is notable is how Melanie uses the rhetorical device of repetition when in line 50 she describes herself as 'very, very' working-class. As if to further emphasise this, Melanie mentions that her parents and grandparents were all lower working-class. It seems important for Melanie to convey how working-class her family were. However, she immediately proceeds to describe how her grandfather was not only middle-class, but upper middle-class:

63	<i>M: So, it was very kind of upper middle-class I suppose - he always had a very very posh</i>
64	<i>M: accent. It was really kind of weird because my grandmother didn't (laughs)</i>
65	<i>M: And he had very different values - in terms of the kind of aspirational values</i>

66	<i>M: So, he was brought up by white people in Jamaica - umm - and if you know</i>
67	<i>M: Jamaica - is - or was - it probably is still - very much colour caste. And my</i>
68	<i>M: granddad was quite dark - umm but because he was brought up by</i>
69	<i>M: white people - he was considered to be quite a different class as it were</i>
70	<i>M: My grandmother is mixed Asian - quite light and so I suppose</i>
71	<i>M: that marriage happened because he was middle-class - she was quite working</i>
72	<i>M: class but she was mixed Asian</i>

In this story of her grandfather's social background, it appears that her grandfather would have normally been considered working-class because he was dark skinned however, being brought up by white people conferred upon him not only a middle-class but an upper middle-class status. However, Melanie notices that although her grandfather married a working-class woman, because she was of mixed heritage and light skinned it appears that it was *this* that gave her status and made her suitable to marry an upper-class man (ll71-72).

The next major story involves Melanie's parents and in what becomes one of several dramatic turns in her narrative, Melanie reveals that when her mother arrived from Jamaica as a teenager, she was already pregnant with twins (Melanie's older half siblings). Melanie tries to make sense of how this could have happened and describes with a tone of sadness, how families, including her own, were fractured because of serial migration:

106	<i>M: But you know - I think what happened with a lot of families as they came over</i>
107	<i>M: to this country - there was a breakdown in the nuclear family - umm other people</i>
108	<i>M: were looking after your children back home - and somewhere in the mix of things</i>
109	<i>M: things happened. So, for my mother - she would describe what happened to</i>

110	<i>M: her as not rape - there was consent - but she was a child</i>
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Melanie reflects on what it must have been like for her mother to find herself in the predicament of being a young black single mother. Melanie then re-introduces her father into the story and how he met her mother (who had already had the twins) and subsequently married her. When her mother becomes pregnant with Melanie, her father is forced to withdraw from the scholarship:

181	<i>M: Umm and yes, they got married and very soon I was born - and then it seemed to be</i>
182	<i>M: working as a unit - but they were very, very young - and they were</i>
183	<i>M: faced with the fact that neither of them were highly educated</i>
184	<i>M: or gone through the system - you know - my mother hadn't finished her</i>
185	<i>M: education. Umm and my father - the whole point was that he had stopped</i>
186	<i>M: his education to do his scholarship. So, he went into as I said, welding</i>
187	<i>M: welding. Umm my mother - got little jobs in shops and various things</i>

It appears that Melanie is trying to explain how both her parents came to live their lives. In another dramatic turn, Melanie then reveals that after her younger sibling was born, her parents 'abandoned' her and her sibling:

200	<i>M: and so, they divorced and went their separate ways. Umm</i>
201	<i>J: And did you stay with your mother?</i>
202	<i>M: At that point we were in Care</i>
203	<i>J: Oh right</i>
204	<i>M: I went into Care with my younger [sibling]</i>

While this story is told in a downbeat tone, Melanie’s tone quickly becomes upbeat as she describes being placed in the care of a Jamaican couple who she remembers with affection. However, the tone changes and becomes more downbeat as she recalls the visits from her mother who she appears to adore ‘*she was amazingly beautiful*’ (11253). Melanie recalls the visits as difficult because she didn’t want to let her mother go. This period of her life, coincided with her starting primary school, and a new story begins:

270	<i>M: [...] I think I found it [school] really difficult because that whole thing for me of being</i>
271	<i>M: abandoned and left - I had no sense as a child that someone would come back</i>
272	<i>J: Right</i>
273	<i>M: So, going to school - I would suddenly get quite frightened because were they going to</i>
274	<i>M: come back for me</i>

In this story of her early school experiences, Melanie describes her fear of abandonment and rejection, which as her narrative unfolds, it becomes clear is a key feature of her life.

When asked about her earliest memory of what she wanted to be when she grew up, Melanie recalls that she wanted to be a teacher. She notes that her family (she eventually returned to live with her mother) did not regard education with any importance, and at primary school she initially struggled academically. At this point, Melanie also recalls tensions between herself and one of her older half siblings who saw her as a rival when she and her younger sibling returned to live with her mother. Melanie proceeds to explain the roots of this rivalry:

313	<i>M: [...] because my [full] brother - my father is Indian - Indian Jamaican - so we're</i>
314	<i>M: obviously Indian - mixed and my older [half sibling] wasn't. It was always that kind of</i>
315	<i>M: difference in the family once we came back into the family - and the wider</i>
316	<i>M: family - we were always slightly different viewed - not in a necessarily negative way</i>
317	<i>M: because Caribbean families are funny about Indian mixes - they quite like it</i>
318	<i>M: 'Oh the pretty ones are coming - the one's with the long hair'</i>

This is the first time in her narrative that Melanie mentions that her father is of Indian Jamaican heritage. Melanie appears to see her mixed heritage as a source of jealousy on the part of her older half sibling:

321	<i>J: [...] I am wondering how in terms of your identity as a black woman</i>
322	<i>J: has been shaped. What was your earliest sense of that?</i>
323	<i>M: I think for me - particularly if you compare me to my four siblings - umm - as I said</i>
324	<i>M: younger brother was quite young at the time so there always this catching up</i>
325	<i>M: there was an expectation about the way you looked was the way you were</i>
326	<i>M: for me I think - so whenever I was brought into a black situation - which is what</i>
327	<i>M: I spent most of my childhood in - particularly when we went back to the family</i>
328	<i>M: because I was mixed - for some reason - that somehow meant that I was</i>
329	<i>M: somehow smarter - somehow was going to do better in life</i>

Melanie then proceeds to describe how she felt that the teachers in her primary school also saw her as different from other black children:

351	<i>M: And so, the teachers related in a different way as well. But I think there was - now</i>
352	<i>M: looking back - at the time it's difficult - when you're a child - but now looking</i>
353	<i>M: back I think people had an expectation of difference with me. Umm - what I also</i>
354	<i>M: found that once I got into school - so once I understood the mechanics of school</i>

355	<i>M: and it wasn't any longer this alien environment - because I'd learnt to read and write</i>
356	<i>M: that I was actually quite good at school. Umm and quite academic</i>

What is notable in both the story of the rivalry with her older half sibling and being treated favourably by her family and the teachers, because they expected her to be smarter than other black children, Melanie suddenly realises in line 356 that she is smart. She appears to have internalised this.

Immediately after her recognition that she is smart, Melanie then describes how despite this, she was placed on the second to bottom table in her class along with another black girl and Chinese girl. In the following transcript she appears to make sense of this:

360	<i>M: [...] Even though the teachers were quite kind - many of them were white</i>
361	<i>M: and they didn't understand black kids - we spoke with different accents - we</i>
362	<i>M: wrote in a different way - you know. And they had just made assumptions</i>
363	<i>M: about your intelligence and knowledge - you know. And so, I sat for most</i>
364	<i>M: of my primary school time - because I'd moved primary school with my mother</i>
365	<i>M: at the kind of - not the bottom table - but the second bottom table</i>

This apparent benign attitude towards the teacher expressed in line 361, reveals that at this time, Melanie, although recognising that she was doing well at school, didn't really have cause to question her place at the second to bottom table. However, this dramatically changes when Melanie passes the Eleven Plus with the highest grade in her local authority and is still not moved to the top table:

405	<i>M: So that was quite a shock for teachers because they had very much pigeon holed me as well</i>
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406	<i>M: I pigeonholed me - but they had pigeon holed me - and I pigeon holed me</i>
407	<i>M: based on what they had pigeonholed me - as it were. Umm so that was quite</i>
408	<i>M: a shock for the teachers and they didn't know what to do about that</i>
409	<i>M: And so, I thought when I'd come in the next day or when they, they got the results</i>
410	<i>M: that they would obviously move me up a table - but they didn't. They kept</i>
411	<i>M: me on the second to last table - which I think - that's at the point where I think</i>
412	<i>M: probably had then thought to myself - these people don't know what they're</i>
413	<i>M: talking about. It was the first time that I think - I thought - I had a different sense</i>
414	<i>M: of myself and didn't trust the teachers' assessment of me.</i>

As Melanie tells this story her tone of voice starts off as high pitched and excitable, and then becomes more downbeat. Melanie uses the metaphor of a pigeonhole to describe being categorised not just by others but by herself. She repeats the phrase four times in a sentence to underline the significance of apparently internalising the low expectations of her teachers. Melanie recalls that she thought that the reason she wasn't moved was because the teachers were cross with her. This story ends with Melanie seeing the incident as significant, as the point in time when she realised that she was quite smart.

Melanie's narrative shifts immediately from a story about how she recognises that she is smart, to appearing to recognise that being smart was not enough:

470	<i>M: So, I didn't go to the grammar school - where I should have gone to</i>
471	<i>M: Because again I went to the grammar school interview at the last minute</i>
472	<i>M: you know because my mother didn't apply for a grammar school because no one was</i>
473	<i>M: expect - that wasn't my trajectory - but suddenly it was - oh she should go</i>
474	<i>M: for the interview and I went for the interview and just completely bombed the interview</i>
475	<i>M: because - whatever they were expecting - I was not that.</i>

476	<i>J: So, you didn't have that preparation?</i>
477	<i>M: There was no preparation at all - I went into the interview - and I remember</i>
478	<i>M: them asking me a question - do you have posters? Because again they had on paper</i>
479	<i>M: this child - a name - and then this child walked in - that didn't fit the name or image</i>
480	<i>M: they had - umm this was a grammar school - that didn't have any black children</i>
481	<i>M: you know - but had a clear colour line. You know we were going to school</i>
482	<i>M: at the time when there were colour lines - even if they weren't formally in place</i>

Melanie describes this experience with tone of disbelief. She had excelled at the Eleven Plus, yet not moved to the top table and now she has been denied a place at the grammar school. For the first time Melanie concludes that the only explanation for this is because she was black (11482). Up until this point in her life, it appears that Melanie had internalised a sense that she was different in positive way (smarter and prettier). However, the story of the Eleven Plus and the grammar school suggests that for the first time she feels she is being treated as a 'black' child and experiences 'difference' in a negative way.

The narrative moves on to the story of secondary school. Melanie now appears very confident about her intellectual abilities yet apparently still angry about not being at a grammar school:

513	<i>M: Yes - so when I got to secondary school - and again - now I know - I am quite smart</i>
514	<i>M: I'm at bog standard secondary school - I am not in a grammar school - I am at</i>
515	<i>M: bog standard secondary school - at a pretty rubbish secondary school actually</i>
516	<i>M: - you know it's X Girls - I don't if you know about schools - but at that</i>
517	<i>M: time it was one of the worst. Very few girls came out with anything from X</i>
518	<i>M: Girls. So, I got to secondary school - with this added self-esteem now</i>
519	<i>M: that I think I kind of know something - you know. And - the colour bar was</i>

520	<i>M: put back up again. There were no black girls in the higher umm - the higher</i>
521	<i>M: stream - top stream - no black girls.</i>

What is noticeable is how dismissive Melanie is of her school she repeats the phrase ‘bog standard’ to emphasise the lowly status of the school. Although Melanie’s tone does not display anger, the words she uses appear to suggest this. When she describes how she and all the other black girls at this ‘pretty rubbish’ secondary school are in the bottom stream, this appears to add to Melanie’s growing sense of injustice and she once again uses the phrase, ‘colour bar’ (ll518-519).

Melanie proceeds to describe in rich detail the conflict between her knowledge of her intellectual capabilities, reflected in the grades she is achieving, and the lack of recognition of her abilities by her teachers:

525	<i>M: So even though now I recognise I am getting the top grades in everything</i>
526	<i>M: in my maths - de de de de da - I am hitting those grades - because I am getting the</i>
527	<i>M: papers back - so I am hitting all the grades - they’re saying - particularly after the</i>
528	<i>M: first year when they start to sort of grade - start to put you in the streams</i>
529	<i>M: I was told you know - the teacher would say [puts on a patronising voice to mimic the</i>
530	<i>M: the teacher’s] you know - Mel or Melanie or whatever they would want to call you</i>
531	<i>M: you know you wouldn’t feel very comfortable there - you know - stay with your friends</i>

There is a sense of growing frustration even as Melanie recalls this. Her response to her frustration was to talk back to the teachers and be disruptive in class:

543	<i>M: [...] I was mouthy - so I was constantly either suspended</i>
544	<i>M: or truanting - because I was bored - I was in the lower streams - I was completely</i>
545	<i>M: bored. Umm and completely disenchanted with it - so - and there was always a kind of</i>
546	<i>M: you know if you carry on - we're going to have to expel you</i>
547	<i>M: Given that I was the only girl guaranteed to get any qualifications out of this place</i>
548	<i>M: [this was said with a tone of disdain] in any stream - they didn't - they held on</i>
549	<i>M: to me</i>

Melanie continues with the story in rich and rapid detail as she describes how she feels the teachers had a poor perception of black girls:

558	<i>M: I was very angry - you know - so my anger meant that I really wasn't going to take criticism</i>
559	<i>M: at that point - and racism was the answer to every question that they asked me</i>
560	<i>M: well you're racist, aren't you, was my answer - and obviously they got defensive</i>
561	<i>M: and aggressive around that</i>
562	<i>J: And did you feel that was it then?</i>
563	<i>M: I felt - yes - the school I went to which had a high proportion of black girls - particularly</i>
564	<i>M: black Caribbean girls was not educating those girls - that school had the attitude</i>
565	<i>M: which was basically - put up with them - half of them are going to leave</i>
566	<i>M: before - early because they are going to get pregnant anyway and the rest of them</i>
567	<i>M: well they are not interested.</i>

In this story about secondary school, there is potentially a conflicted situation for Melanie. She recognises and is passionate about the discrimination against black Caribbean girls, but *she* wants to succeed and to be recognised. The only way she perceives she can do this is to be in the higher stream. However, she feels that this route is blocked because she perceives that the teachers think that *all* black girls are lazy and lacking ambition. Melanie's response to her dilemma is to become disruptive in class, to openly accuse teachers of racism, and to frequently

abandon her studies and truant. She now becomes difficult and aggressive; ironically fulfilling another stereotype of black Caribbean girls. Although Melanie's actions seem self-destructive, in her narrative there appears to be a growing recognition that she has power. Melanie explains that her academic achievements meant that she wasn't expelled (ll547-548).

Having previously described the teachers at her school as '*rubbish teachers*', (ll569) Melanie singles out one particular white teacher for her kindness:

590	<i>M: [...] we ended up building up a really good rapport</i>
591	<i>M: and I felt that she was really genuinely interested in me (STRESSED 'ME')</i>
592	<i>M: so beyond - just another black girl</i>

It feels that at last, Melanie has found someone who sees *her*. '*I felt she was genuinely interested in me, so beyond, just another black girl*' (ll591). What Melanie doesn't mention is what, if any, tensions she experienced in her relationship with the other black girls and what they made of her wanting to be more than '*just another black girl*.'

With this teacher's encouragement, Melanie tells a vivid story of how she immersed herself in a social science subject, managed to remain in school and excel in her 'O' levels and 'A' levels. Against all the odds, Melanie wins a place at 'Oxbridge'. A new story begins about her experience at university:

679	<i>M: absolutely a shock. Absolutely a shock</i>
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680	<i>M: Complete culture shock</i>
681	<i>J: In what way?</i>
682	<i>M: So, working-class black girl used to being in a working-class environment</i>

Melanie uses the rhetorical function of repetition in line 679-680 to convey the level of disorientation she experienced at this elite university. However, not only did Melanie feel she didn't fit in with the white privileged students in her class, when she joined what she called the 'Black Society' she felt that she didn't fit in there either:

699	<i>M: [...] So there were a few black people there but they</i>
700	<i>M: came from very upper-class African diplomats - you know - boarders that came</i>
701	<i>M: from very rich families - you know ambassadors' children - well-to-do children</i>
702	<i>M: You know it was that kind of background. If there were black people umm</i>
703	<i>M: so, there was a Black Society and they immediately didn't want me to be</i>
704	<i>M: in that society - because the black people really didn't want to mix with me</i>
705	<i>M: because I was far too working-class for them</i>

When asked how it felt to not fit in either with her classmates or other black people, this experience evokes deep memories of past rejections:

738	<i>M: Because it felt - even though I didn't particularly want to be their friends either</i>
739	<i>M: which was absolutely fine, but I did feel that I was being separated</i>
740	<i>M: which is always difficult - always a challenge.</i>

There is a contradiction in how Melanie states quite strongly in line 703 that she wasn't concerned that she was rejected because of her class, and what she says in line 740. Melanie responds to this rejection by using her familiar tool, her intellect, and states in line 720-721, *'in class I was the superstar. The lecturers*

were enamoured with me'. What becomes clear however, is that despite resorting to her familiar coping skills, demonstrating her knowledge and intellectual prowess, Melanie seeks out friendship with others, who she perceives are more like her, in terms of intellect:

747	<i>M: [...] as I worked through the first term - I suddenly discovered</i>
748	<i>M: international students. So, I discovered international students mainly</i>
749	<i>M: postgraduate students - they weren't like me doing an undergraduate degree</i>
750	<i>M: these were people who were doing their masters and their doctorates but they</i>
751	<i>M: were international. So, they were European, they were Chinese, they were</i>
752	<i>M: just a multitude - Asian, Indian - those were the people I hung out with</i>
753	<i>J: So, you felt much more at home with them?</i>
754	<i>M: So, I ended up hanging out - the people I hung out with were the people who</i>
755	<i>M: were astrophysicists, umm who had no idea what I was doing - but I was interested</i>
756	<i>M: in what they were doing. They mostly had - they were doctorate level</i>
757	<i>M: umm and so they were not even hanging out with undergraduates. Umm but they</i>
758	<i>M: were all international students. They were Asian, they were Spanish, they were</i>
759	<i>M: middle eastern - they were very, very smart people - you know - very smart people</i>

With these students she found a home. She describes her new friends as *'very, very smart people'* (l1759). Again, we see the use of repetition to underline the intellect of her friends. This story illustrates how when Melanie has found herself in emotionally difficult situations, she appears to resort to her intellectual abilities as a way of coping with rejection or separation.

Melanie picks up on the theme of separation and her narrative turns to reflect on this theme. Melanie starts by returning to her experience at secondary school and talks about this being a time when she had a real sense of her identity as a black person (l1775-776). Melanie describes how reggae music and

Rastafarianism became important to her, and that this was the time that she, *'relinquished any Asian or Indian identity that I had which was my father's side and focused more on my African identity, diaspora identity as it were, and would have described and still describe myself as an African, black African woman'* (ll784-787). So here we have Melanie, just after describing her rejection by African students at university, telling a story of her late teenage years, just before university, in which she positions her identity as a black African woman.

When asked about what being British means to her, Melanie reflects that she used to adopt a very political stance:

828	<i>M: So very much my Britishness was about I suppose - recognising not in a kind of</i>
829	<i>M: patriotic way - it wasn't that kind of jingoism - or patriotic way - not I am proud</i>
830	<i>M: to be part of Britain - but you know what I am British - I come from - whether</i>
831	<i>M: I liked it or not - a family that was dragged out of Africa and stolen into slavery</i>
832	<i>M: and we are British - whether you like that or not.</i>

Melanie goes on to reflect that she holds fewer radical views today and she muses at how for a lot of young people, being British means being in some way 'Jamaican' (ll849). This story ends with Melanie's narrative moving to the present day and how the work she does now fits with her experiences of feeling excluded or rejected.

Melanie does not describe in detail her early work experience, instead, in response to the question about what work means to her, Melanie states how hard she works:

886	<i>M: So, working hard is something that I do, and I have very high standard that</i>
887	<i>M: I set myself and probably started setting myself high standards quite a long time ago</i>
888	<i>M: umm wherever I work - I work at my standard - not the organisation's standard</i>

Melanie reveals how it is important for her to set her own high standards. Later, in her narrative she notes that her current organisation has echoes of her experience at university. However, this time, having gone through the university experience, Melanie states that she is prepared and more confident being in a place which she describes as an extension of the 'Oxbridge' culture (11934).

Melanie continues to reflect on how black people are typically positioned within her organisation:

963	<i>M: And where are they [the black people]? They're the cleaners - the security guards - they're the caterers</i>
964	<i>M: but I'm always incredibly polite - these could be my mothers - my sisters - my mothers</i>
965	<i>M: my aunts - grandparents - these are my people. Umm and I feel an affinity</i>
966	<i>M: to those people</i>
967	<i>J: They're your people?</i>
968	<i>M: They're my people - as far as I am concerned, and it pains me to see that in this place</i>
969	<i>M: they're in service roles when I know many of them are talented people and I want to do</i>
970	<i>M: something about that - but I still see those people as my people</i>
971	<i>M: Umm however, when on the odd occasions when I have been in a meeting</i>
972	<i>M: where a member of my staff who may be white and male - who's my member of staff</i>
973	<i>M: they've looked at me and expected me to pour the tea - I would be quite belligerent</i>
974	<i>M: and say no - I don't think so - I think you are looking at the wrong black person here</i>

There appears to be conflict here for Melanie. She sees other black people in service roles as 'my people' (11965) yet she wants to make sure that white people see her as different from these black people who 'pour the tea'.

Melanie's narrative moves to its final stages and she returns to speaking about her family. Melanie begins this story by reflecting on coming home for the first time after she went to university and experiencing being treated differently by her family and friends. Her tone of voice is downbeat as she recalls:

1016	<i>M: [I was] treated very differently by family and friends and I suddenly realised - I'd crossed</i>
1017	<i>M: the line and I would never go back - and I really grieved for that - and what I mean by that</i>
1018	<i>M: is the best china came out - and people spoke to me differently - and even their accents</i>
1019	<i>M: changed - you know - I was a kind of a stranger to people that I'd known - and I was</i>
1020	<i>M: introduced - you know</i>
1021	<i>J: So, do you feel that they saw you differently?</i>
1022	<i>M: Absolutely - treated completely differently by people</i>
1023	<i>M: And I found that really - I found that really painful</i>
1024	<i>M: And that's when I realised that I am no longer what I was - I have stepped over the line</i>

In the follow up interview, Melanie describes the pain of the realisation that she no longer belonged to her family and what she describes as her 'community' in the same way. Despite this realisation that she had crossed a line and would never be who she was before her university experience, Melanie ends her narrative by declaring that: '*I am still Melanie, the London black girl*' (ll1041).

Identities and Identity work within Melanie's narrative

Melanie mentions being a black woman of Jamaican heritage as key descriptors of her identity (ll4-5). There is then very little mention again of her Jamaican heritage in her narrative when compared to her sense of a black or working-class identity. In the early part of her narrative, *her* blackness is explained with

reference to her being of mixed Indian/African Jamaican heritage something she mentions for the first time in line 313. As an assertion of her black identity, Melanie rejects her Indian heritage in her teens (ll784) and positions her identity as firmly African (ll786), only to find herself later rejected by African born students at university (ll704).

The other identity that is evident is a working-class identity. The first time Melanie mentions being working-class is in line 4. She then regularly refers to this throughout the rest of her narrative. There is a sense that Melanie holds on to a working-class identity more aligned with her past, particularly if she feels under threat for example at university. Towards the end of her narrative, while she accepts, she has changed, as a result of her elite education and privileged upper middle-class job, she still sees herself as the same girl.

The other prominent identity for Melanie is the sense that she is smart. This identity is constructed after she passes the Eleven Plus. This identity appears frequently throughout her narrative and particularly at times when she appears to experience rejection. At this point, this identity becomes the most salient aspect of her 'sense of self'.

Thematic priorities and relationships

Theme 1 - *Being black*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Melanie'	<i>[Being mixed Indian] you really stood out... it was difficult</i>	<i>We were a generation that were proud of black [1970s/80s]</i>		<i>I am a black woman</i>

		<i>I felt a real sense of pride of my black identity</i>		
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Theme 2 – Sameness/Difference

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Melanie'	<i>My grandfather had very different values [from my grandmother] Whatever they were expecting, I was not that</i>	<i>There were no black girls in the higher stream [At university] I was far too working-class</i>		<i>People speak to me differently when they realise my background ('Oxbridge')</i>

Theme 3 – Being smart

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Melanie'	<i>[They thought] because I was mixed that somehow meant that I was smarter</i>	<i>In class [at university] I was the superstar</i>	<i>I am an expert</i>	<i>[Being smart for me] It's a form of power. It's a form of superpower</i>

Theme 4 – Rejection and belonging

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Melanie'	<i>I found it really difficult because that whole thing for me of being abandoned</i>	<i>I don't want to hang out with them; and they don't want to hang out with me [When I came back from university] I didn't just fall in anymore</i>		<i>I still see myself as working-class</i>

Theme 5 – Working hard and achievement

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Melanie'	<i>I worked my way through the school library quite quickly</i>	<i>I was racing through text books</i>	<i>And I've had to work incredibly hard to build up to the position that they [white people] are already in</i>	<i>These [black people] are my people and I feel an affinity to them... they are in service roles... I want to do something</i>

				<i>about that</i>
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Destabilizing Melanie's narrative

The first hermeneutic of suspicion that is relevant to apply to Melanie's narrative is Marx's perspective on power relations rooted in economic social class division. Melanie appears to conceive her social class position in classic Marxist terms '*I work for a living, so I am working-class*' (1950) this position endures regardless of life experiences and social mobility. In contrast to this Marxist view of class and power, Foucault focuses on the power relations at play within an individual's interactions with others. Melanie uses the power of her intellect in her relationship with university classmates and her colleagues in the workplace. We also see power relations between Melanie and the black people who serve the tea in her workplace. Melanie sees these people as her own people because she positions them and herself as black working-class. However, she doesn't acknowledge the powerful position that she holds in relation to them. They serve *her* tea.

Another hermeneutic of suspicion that can be applied to how Melanie sees the role of class in her identity is Sartre's existential concept of bad faith. Melanie appears to conceive her childhood working-class identity as being the essence of who she is and therefore, despite her subjective experiences, unalterable. There is also a sense that for Melanie to admit to being middle-class would somehow mean that she wasn't as 'black' as she was when she was younger.

Critical synthesis of Melanie's narrative

Melanie's narrative contains a number of stories about rejection, separation and abandonment but also tremendous achievement against the odds. There is a strong theme of difference that runs through her narrative and this is characterised by the difference in her 'blackness' as a result of her mixed Indian heritage and social class difference. It is the latter that Melanie has held onto in particular way, throughout her life, a sense that she has been and always will be a very working-class black girl from London.

Melanie presents working hard and achievement in an understated way. On the face of it, it appears that Melanie does not feel the need to work twice as hard to prove her value to white society. However, she works at or at least is invested in demonstrating her superpower, namely her intellectual skills for example, at university.

I interrogated Melanie's narrative with a post Marxist hermeneutic of suspicion and Foucault's concept of power relations. While Melanie acknowledges her intellect as her superpower, she attempts to position herself in a somewhat disadvantaged position in relation to middle-class people by stating that they reject her because of her working-class status. However, at the same time she demonstrates agency and power in these relationships through her use of her intellectual abilities. She appears to be particularly conflicted about her powerful position in her relationship with her family and others from the black community. She appears to both acknowledge and deny that there is any difference between her and them by holding on to a working-class identity from the past.

It appears as if Melanie feels that being black working-class is the most authentic description of her identity. However, as her narrative reveals, this description doesn't capture her experiences from childhood to the present day, or how Melanie's experiences have changed how others perceive her and the complexity around how she perceives herself.

4.3.4 Lorraine's story

Lorraine is a 62-year-old professional who has worked in both the private and public sectors. Currently working primarily in the public sector, she is also a volunteer mentor to young black people.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

Lorraine begins her narrative in response to a question about what identity means to her:

9	<i>L: I have had different types of identity queries about myself</i>
10	<i>L: So, the examples are: English - British - Jamaican - black - white</i>
11	<i>L: working-class - not working-class – or, or not working-class but - you know but</i>
12	<i>L: but what class am I in - if my parents are something and they change and mix</i>
13	<i>L: with a group who identify as something else - all those kind of things</i>
14	<i>L: So umm - I have always had a very strong sense of my own identity</i>

It is notable that in line 9, Lorraine uses the phrase, '*identity queries*' which suggests that the question of identity has been a vexed one. Although Lorraine is dark skinned and doesn't reveal any white ethnicity in her background, she queries whether being white is part of her identity. Her final comment in line

17, suggests that Lorraine is keen that no one else should determine who *she* thinks she is.

Lorraine moves on to tell the story of her parents' arrival in the UK and their early years as a family:

32	<i>L: [...] They came here in the '53 and '51 - I think</i>
33	<i>L: with the intention of joining each other here - I think they met in Jamaica</i>
34	<i>L: came over here - got married - had me - my mum had a child in Jamaica - not</i>
35	<i>L: unusual (a nervous laugh) and my sister born just around the time my parents separated</i>

As Lorraine tells this story, there is almost a sense of embarrassment as she reveals that her mother had a child out of wedlock. She appears to justify this by stating that this was not unusual (ll35). Lorraine's tone of voice drops as she mentions for the first time that her parents divorced when she was young.

At this point, Lorraine doesn't elaborate on her parents' separation, instead she describes her early life, when the three of them were together, before her younger sister was born, and her older half sibling joined them from Jamaica.

41	<i>L: Because we bought - my parents bought their own house - it was three stories</i>
42	<i>L: six bedroom - and so it was always full of - we had tenants - we lived downstairs</i>
43	<i>L: had tenants in the rooms - with families sometimes - and there were others</i>
44	<i>L: in the road a bit like that - so I remember - very active - umm we used</i>
45	<i>L: to swing on the gate - and everybody was my friend - chatting to people</i>
46	<i>L: and it was very, very happy</i>

The rich description appears to be designed to convey a picture of a very happy childhood. In 1146, Lorraine uses repetition to further make this point.

The next story concerns her parents' life. Lorraine starts by mentioning that her father died in Jamaica having returned there, although she doesn't say at this point when her father returned to Jamaica:

60	<i>L: My dad - he died over 30 years ago in Jamaica</i>
61	<i>J: Umm</i>
62	<i>L: We've got photos - I think it was quite difficult for him - because I've got</i>
63	<i>L: photographs of him - probably - he's a tailor - qualifi... well I think they</i>
64	<i>L: call it master tailor and everything and so that's how he earned his income</i>
65	<i>J: So, was that in Jamaica or over here?</i>
66	<i>L: Both</i>
67	<i>J: So, when he came here, he worked as a</i>
68	<i>L: tailor</i>
69	<i>L: And my mum was a dressmaker - she worked in design rooms - so she made</i>
70	<i>L: couture dresses - and she also worked with the designer and made the first</i>
71	<i>L: I can't remember what they call it now - the model or something</i>
72	<i>L: And so - he - umm - I think he worked near Notting Hill - I'm not sure</i>
73	<i>L: I don't know where I got that impression - but it seems to ring a bell</i>
74	<i>L: I have got a photograph of him - that my mum's mum had - and he</i>
75	<i>L: kind of looks as though - you know - he's just not yet done as well as he</i>
76	<i>L: could have done - as he did go on to do</i>

As Lorraine describes this story it appears that she is keen to convey that her parents were not ordinary, stating for example, that her father was a 'master' craftsman. What is notable is that Lorraine then recalls a photograph of her father in Jamaica before he came to the UK in which there is a sense that he looked very poor.

The recollection of her father's photograph triggers another memory, of what her father told her of his experiences of racism in Britain:

79	<i>L: [but] then he told me sometimes that he faced</i>
80	<i>L: a lot of racism</i>
81	<i>J: Actually in the workplace?</i>
82	<i>L: I think in the workplace - I wouldn't even say a lot - I think he told me about</i>
83	<i>L: one incident - cos I really never heard a lot of what they faced</i>
84	<i>L: That's what I know of his experience - and I think - people of - I always</i>
85	<i>L: remember talk of the labour exchange - I heard that the other day - so that</i>
86	<i>L: might not have been him - it might have been friends</i>

This story appears to go through several changes. Both Lorraine's tone and narrative at this point suggest discomfort with acknowledging that her father may have experienced racism and by the end of the story she distances this experience from him completely. Lorraine then appears to end the story of her father and starts to tell the story of her mother. However, no sooner had she started talking about her mother, the story of her father and whether he did or did not experience racism suddenly becomes revived.

As her narrative continues, there is a dramatic turn when Lorraine now reveals that she has concrete proof that her father endured racism:

96	<i>L: My mum's experience (pause) Funnily enough - the other thing about my dad's</i>
97	<i>L: experience - is that he came over when he was facing the signs of 'no blacks</i>
98	<i>L: no dog, no Irish' and when he died there was a sign in some of the stuff that</i>
99	<i>L: he had kept</i>

100	<i>J: He'd actually kept it?</i>
101	<i>L: He kept it with some farthings in a tin - he had some of these things in</i>
102	<i>J: Did he talk much about that? What this was like for him to come here and to face that?</i>
103	<i>L: No - I didn't really have that much opportunity - because they split up when I was</i>
104	<i>L: young - I went to Jamaica for a while afterwards - but the conversation - it's only</i>
105	<i>L: after he's died that - I thought - I wish that I'd had those conversations</i>

This story about her father's experience in the UK, appears to contradict Lorraine's earlier impression of her father working successfully and happily. It appears that her father was never able to forget the racism he endured, literally holding on to the memory. While recalling the story, Lorraine's tone is downbeat.

In response to a question about her earliest memory of what she wanted to do when she grew up, Lorraine describes who and what influenced her dreams:

206	<i>L: [...] mine was - I want to be a barrister</i>
207	<i>L: because my uncle's a barrister</i>
208	<i>J: So, there wasn't any sense of because of your relationship with him - it was</i>
209	<i>J: something about just seeing him [in a photo that her mother had]?</i>
210	<i>L: I thought my mum must have been saying stuff to me (laughs) - or telling</i>
211	<i>L: me - she was always very good at telling me where I came from</i>
212	<i>L: and I think that helped a lot</i>
213	<i>J: What was that then? What would she say?</i>
214	<i>L: In the sense of identity - because - her father's side of the family</i>
215	<i>L: did quite well in Jamaica - her dad was a magistrate - she was known as</i>
216	<i>L: a magistrate's daughter</i>

Although Lorraine had never met her uncle, her mother had a photograph of him, in his gown on their mantelpiece. It appears that Lorraine wants to strongly

convey that her mother's family were all successful. However, when asked about her and her family's social class, Lorraine's story becomes less clear:

220	<i>J: So how would you describe them - their background then in terms of</i>
221	<i>J: social class sense - how would you describe this?</i>
222	<i>L: I think because my grandmother and grandparents weren't married - that</i>
223	<i>L: wasn't unusual - but generally speaking and their identity - they were</i>
224	<i>L: kind of middle-class - I would say</i>
225	<i>J: Whilst they were in Jamaica?</i>
226	<i>L: A bit - because mum said they were very poor</i>
227	<i>L: but her mother was a teacher - had taught at school - I think writing plus</i>
228	<i>L: dressmaking and stuff - she had taught at school - so perhaps in the scheme</i>
229	<i>L: of things - they might have not had much money - but they had something else</i>

In this story we see Lorraine firstly describing her family as middle-class and then in line 226, describing them as very poor. Lorraine appears to resolve this apparent contradiction when in line 229, she states with a tone of pride that although they didn't have money, they had *something else*. As Lorraine recalls another story about a conversation with a friend who knew her mother, it becomes clear, what this 'something else' is and what being middle-class means to Lorraine:

231	<i>L: A friend of mine said the thing about Miss Elizabeth is that - I said to her - he speaks</i>
232	<i>L: to me in patois sometimes - he's never heard her speak in patois. Some people never</i>
233	<i>L: heard my grandmother speak patois - they weren't 'speaky spokey' or [a pejorative Jamaican saying for speaking with airs and graces]</i>
234	<i>L: they weren't snobbish - always known as loving and kind and everything else</i>
235	<i>L: and everything like that - but there was something - I would say different in general</i>
236	<i>L: that people still now say that about my grandmother and now say about my mum</i>

In this story it appears that for Lorraine, what marks her grandmother and mother out as middle-class is the way they spoke. This was the ‘something else’ that made them different.

The narrative moves on and a new story begins, one that describes a very difficult time in Lorraine’s life when her parents split up and she, her mother and siblings move in with relatives. However, what is noticeable is that Lorraine’s narrative becomes very difficult to follow, the tone is downbeat and as she begins to recall some stories, she suddenly loses her train of thought, ‘*And I’ve lost my train of thought*’ (ll292). In response to a question about her earliest memories of school, Lorraine re-focuses and a new story begins:

296	<i>L: (laughs) I enjoyed school - I started about four - because I was born in April</i>
297	<i>L: So, I started probably after Easter - before my fifth birthday - and I enjoyed</i>
298	<i>L: school a lot - enjoyed it very much - made good friends - loved my teacher</i>
299	<i>L: they chose me to give her a retirement present (laughs) so there must have been</i>
300	<i>L: something there. I cried - I remember crying</i>

At the start of this story, Lorraine’s tone is upbeat as she recalls fond memories of making friends and bonding with her teacher. Her tone changes however, as she recalls the pain she experienced when her teacher left. What is also notable is Lorraine’s recollection that she was chosen to give the teacher a present. This theme of wanting to be treated as special, with the reference ‘*so there must have been something there*’ (ll299-300) and her experience of loss are recurring themes throughout her narrative. The story shifts and in a downbeat tone,

Lorraine describes how she went to several junior schools after her parents split up and had to live with different relatives.

In response to a question about what it meant to her to be black at this stage of her life Lorraine recalls significant events that happened to her as a child. The first two as a pre-schooler while being looked after by a childminder:

339	<i>L: we always used to call our minders - nanny in those days - so I went to a nanny</i>
340	<i>L: everyday - she really treated me well and (slight laugh) err - next door there was</i>
341	<i>L: a shop - because I think she lived above a shop - next door there was a shop</i>
342	<i>L: and I and the other children always - I think - I was the only black child - I always used</i>
343	<i>L: to play with umm with the daughter of the person next door - whose name was B</i>
344	<i>L: but her dad put up a chicken wire fence because he didn't want her</i>
345	<i>L: to play with a black child so that</i>
346	<i>J: And you knew how? How did you know that?</i>
347	<i>L: I can't remember - but I knew it very clearly because I remember the time</i>
348	<i>L: when we were standing either side of the fence talking to each other</i>
349	<i>L: after that had happened - and perhaps he might have been saying things - I don't know</i>
350	<i>L: but I know the fence went up for that reason - and then also - my nanny bought</i>
351	<i>L: me my own cutlery set - which made me feel very special and she'd always - I think</i>
352	<i>L: she really liked me - obviously because she was looking after me -</i>
353	<i>J: Was she white or black?</i>
354	<i>L: She was white - but in retrospect - and only a few years ago - I was thinking - umm</i>
355	<i>L: I am wondering whether she got me my own cutlery set - because some</i>
356	<i>L: parents didn't want their children to use the same cutlery that I did</i>
357	<i>J: But you at the time - you took it to mean that somehow, she saw you as special</i>
358	<i>L: Yes, that's how she presented - and also, she would let me choose things that she</i>
359	<i>L: didn't let others choose - so she would say - what do you want us to have</i>
360	<i>L: today for dessert</i>

When Lorraine recalls the first incident with the fence, she appears more certain that this is an act of racism and her tone is downbeat. With the second incident

she appears more conflicted. Lorraine wants to believe that the childminder is treating her as special although part of her appears to recognise that this may not be the case. By the end, however, in an upbeat tone, in line 359-360, she appears to revert to her earlier belief, that she was treated differently because she was special. Before moving to the next story, Lorraine reflects that being singled out can be advantageous:

364	<i>L: Because sometimes - it's easy for others to see you as part of a group and you</i>
365	<i>L: lose your identity and take on a group identity in their</i>
366	<i>L: mind and the group identity might be based on stereotypes</i>
367	<i>L: and therefore inaccurate</i>
368	<i>L: So, if you're not part of a group and you stand out alone - it's easier for me</i>
369	<i>L: I find it easier for me to be myself - cos I am not carrying that expectation rightly</i>
370	<i>L: or wrongly in my head</i>

In response to a question about why it is important for her to feel as if she is not part of a group, Lorraine decides to tell me another story, which like the previous story, on the face of it, is an example of her being ill-treated because she is black. This is the third incident, and it takes place at her first primary school:

382	<i>L: They called me blackie and kicked the [toilet] door - there was a particular girl - her family</i>
383	<i>L: the door - the toilets in the school - most schools those days were outside toilets</i>
384	<i>L: covered - but outside with locks on - so this particular girl would always</i>
385	<i>L: be kicking the toilet door when I was using the toilet - and throwing racial slurs at me</i>
386	<i>L: always - blackie - it was never nigger - I never heard that - it was always - blackie</i>
387	<i>L: and I would complain, and my mum would say - you're not black - your shoes are</i>
388	<i>L: black</i>

Lorraine recalls this story in an even tone. What is notable is that this experience appears to contradict Lorraine’s earlier statement of having a happy time at her first primary school (ll297-300). Also, Lorraine’s mother appears to reconstruct Lorraine’s experience for her. Lorraine *experiences* being hurt and is frightened because she knows the insults are aimed at *her*. However, it appears that her mother explains that the insults are not aimed at her because she isn’t what others see her to be. In the follow up interview, Lorraine refers to this incident as well as other incidents and states, ‘*sometimes I think there is something about me that people just don’t like and I’m not sure that it’s always colour*’(FU157-158).

When asked how her parents described themselves at this time, there is a long pause:

392	<i>L: Well (pause) I don't remember them saying - it was very much always to do about me</i>
393	<i>L: you know - my mum would say set your goals - stick to them - all this kind of stuff</i>
394	<i>L: it wasn't - I don't remember - they might have said some things, but I don't think</i>
395	<i>L: they wanted me to carry that burden - when I say burden - I mean thinking</i>
396	<i>L: some people might have been told - but I can't remember being told - if you're</i>
397	<i>L: black you need to try twice as hard - it was always - just do your best</i>
398	<i>L: Do your best (inaudible) all these kind of things - you know if I failed exams</i>
399	<i>L: which I did subsequently - it wasn't about - because you're black you have to</i>
400	<i>L: try harder - it was - just try again - just try again.</i>

Lorraine recalls receiving a message from her mother that she should just try and do her best (ll397), yet when she fails (ll399), she feels the need to try and try again. It is not clear at what point she accepts that she has done her best. A new story begins, about her experiences at secondary school. Lorraine recalls

being at a party recently and there were a group of black girls from her secondary school. Lorraine recalls her relationship with these girls as they struggle to remember her:

465	<i>L: [One of the girls at the party said] "I remember her - she used to go</i>
466	<i>L: around with the white girls" (pause) and I thought - ah - that's what they</i>
467	<i>L: remember about me. And then at school - I think most of what I got</i>
468	<i>L: from racism at my secondary school was from the black girls who felt I wasn't</i>
469	<i>L: black enough because of the, the friends I kept</i>

What is notable is that Lorraine describes the black girls as racist. However, when she described the discrimination and racist bullying, she experienced from white people earlier on in her narrative, she either didn't see this as racism or she reconstructed it as her being treated differently because she was special.

Lorraine's narrative continues, as she reflects on how she viewed the other black girls in her school:

489	<i>L: [...] it was a streamed comprehensive - and towards</i>
490	<i>L: the lower end - which reflected low academic achievement/potential - many of</i>
491	<i>L: them were black. At a certain age - umm - it was common for black girls to</i>
492	<i>L: become pregnant out of marriage than white girls around about a certain age</i>

It appears that Lorraine sees most of the black girls at her school in a negative way. She appears to see the white girls as more academic and less promiscuous. What is interesting is that from her own admission, Lorraine herself didn't do well academically at school (l399-401). Also, both her mother and grandmother became pregnant out of wedlock. Lorraine then mentions the Brixton riots and

regular National Front marches in the 1970s and 1980s and states that her reaction to such events was to, 'turn a deaf ear and a blind eye' (11501). With specific reference to the Brixton riots in the 1980s, Lorraine describes being concerned that white people might see her in the same light as the rioters, '[white] people are thinking, looking at me and thinking, you know, I am like everybody else' (11507-508).

Lorraine's narrative moves on to her experiences as a young adult, in her early career. When specifically asked if she has encountered discrimination in the workplace, Lorraine pauses. However, when she does offer some examples, she appears to adopt a stance of not challenging or acknowledging the experience:

590	<i>L: And I think it's either a psychological stroke - or something - because I will not</i>
591	<i>L: it's very rare that I will challenge somebody about something like that</i>
592	<i>L: If somebody treats me badly - or in a way that I don't like - I'm more likely</i>
593	<i>L: to say to them - I don't like the way you did that - as I have done once</i>
594	<i>L: and I don't think it's because of racism - they're just being rude</i>

As Lorraine's narrative continues and she speaks about her experience in the workplace, she appears to suggest that her strategy of turning a blind eye or deaf ear or not challenging racism works for her because she gets along with the white people. In doing this, she believes she has marked herself out as different from other black people:

616	<i>L: [white] people tend to like me - generally speaking - if anything they will be saying but</i>
617	<i>L: you're different - that kind of conversation</i>
618	<i>J: That you're different from what?</i>

619	<i>L: Umm - you know - if they're sort of (pause) - if they might be saying (she draws</i>
620	<i>L: out the word 'saying') something like - I know I've read the term - it's apparently</i>
621	<i>L: quite often said - you know "I have got black friends or black people are x, y and z</i>
622	<i>L: you're not like typical black people". I've had that said to me</i>

Lorraine then starts a new story about how, despite not achieving well academically at school, she worked her way up in her career and later completed her degree as a mature student.

Lorraine moves on to describe, in a downbeat tone, her career path to her current position. She gives several examples of when she has found herself in roles, unable to get the opportunity she desires or the support she needs to get further qualifications and progress:

767	<i>L: [...] I had a few</i>
768	<i>L: jobs in between then - and I think some of it could have been race</i>
769	<i>L: some of it, is people don't like me - I don't know why - I would say with one</i>
770	<i>L: firm it wasn't race because the person who was favoured was another black</i>
771	<i>L: woman - so it was something about me the individual just didn't like</i>
772	<i>L: that's the only thing I can put it down to - it definitely wasn't race</i>

Lorraine reveals a dilemma, trying to understand the difference between whether people do not like her because it is something about her as Lorraine, or because she is black.

In an upbeat tone, Lorraine recalls her subsequent pride at achieving a master's degree (11902). Although she worked with people who did not have a Master's, for Lorraine it was important, *'it would say something about me'* (11926). Lorraine

describes her joy at obtaining her Master's as she had convinced herself she would have to redo it and she remembers that if that had been the case, *'my mum would say, well you have done your best and I thought, well I have done my best before and it's not been good enough'* (11932-933).

In Lorraine's story about the early part of her career she mentions how she and other women had to overcome sexism and 'classism'. She mentions nothing about racism. However, towards the end of her narrative and just before she reflects on her current career, Lorraine, in a very downbeat tone, appears to have acknowledged that she has been discriminated against because of her blackness and she speculates that this may have led to her absorbing negative messages about blackness:

802	<i>L: if you are discriminated against you can absorb - I wish I could remember it</i>
803	<i>L: but there is a specific term for it - almost take on the things that others attribute</i>
804	<i>L: to you - wrongly</i>
805	<i>L: And - err - umm - I'll think of that term - it will come back to me</i>
806	<i>L: But - I think it's those kind of things - or if I wear a suit - probably</i>
807	<i>L: I wanted to fit in too much with my friends - and and - not many of them</i>
808	<i>L: openly that way - or those that were - were kind of - they were all into the</i>
809	<i>L: academia kind of thing - or they think - or they might think that I am trying</i>
810	<i>L: to be something that I am not.</i>

What is notable is how Lorraine struggles to name the term 'self-hatred' or 'internalised racism'. This is perhaps illustrative of her inner turmoil over who she thinks she is, how she wishes to be seen, and how she wonders how others see her.

Towards the end of her narrative, Lorraine speaks of her pride at becoming the head of her professional body and how this position has opened doors to her in a way she could not have previously imagined. In this role, Lorraine works on issues of diversity and is seen as someone who represents the views of black people. Lorraine acknowledges that she is the first black person to lead this organisation:

972	<i>L: Well [being black is] more significant - for others - than for me - for this reason. Because</i>
973	<i>L: I said to them - I don't want you to make a big thing of it - because I've</i>
974	<i>L: done it not because of my colour - I've done it because of who I am</i>
975	<i>L: and the colour is incidental - it means more to other people who see me</i>
976	<i>L: because it's a visible difference - and it says a lot and</i>
977	<i>L: it's opened a lot of doors for me. So, I sit on the X appointments</i>
978	<i>L: commission diversity forum - representing - I spoke to the X</i>
979	<i>L: about diversity in the X - I think being a person of colour - umm adds</i>
980	<i>L: more weight to what I say</i>

What is notable is that Lorraine acknowledges that others see her as a representative of black people, yet she rails against this. However, she works in a role in which she is representing diversity issues. Lorraine goes on to explain what is important to her in her work:

FU221	<i>L: very conscious that I want to be seen to, that people are looking at me</i>
FU222	<i>L: and hopefully when they look at me, they see something that is good about black</i>
FU223	<i>L: people because in a way, we are role models for some, for good or ill</i>

Lorraine's narrative ends with a reflection on what she has learned and what she would like to pass on, 'for people to recognise that gender and colour only makes a difference if you allow it to'(ll1057-1058). What is notable is that in this final part

of her narrative Lorraine appears to switch back and forth between not wanting to be seen as a 'black' person, to wanting white people to see her as a good role model for black people.

Identities and Identity work

Lorraine begins her narrative by stating that she has a sense of her own identity, (ll14) and she appears to resist associating with any specific identity rooted in or influenced by context. However, the most significant resistance, running throughout the narrative, is against any concept of a black identity.

Lorraine closely identifies with her mother. Throughout her narrative she makes references to her mother's sayings and messages passed on to her by her mother. Therefore, despite her drive for uniqueness, Lorraine appears to continue to embody her mother's beliefs of how to be in the world.

Lorraine appears to identify with white people and white British culture. She regards it as important how she is seen by white people, and that they see her as different from 'typical black people' (ll623).

Thematic priorities and relationships

Theme 1 - *Being black*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Lorraine'	<i>[my mother said] you're not black, your shoes are black</i>	<i>I wasn't influenced by what was going on in the 1960s [and] 1970s</i>		<i>I just happen to be in this black body</i>

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Theme 2 Sameness/Difference

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Lorraine'	<i>I have had different types of identity queries about myself</i>	<i>[the black girls said to me] I remember her, she [Lorraine] used to go around with the white girls</i>	<i>I didn't face any discrimination at all I was the only [black person] aspiring to a certain level</i>	<i>You're [Lorraine] not like typical black people</i>

Theme 3 – Rejection/Belonging

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Lorraine'	<i>[around the time I was in primary school] my parents split up [my father kept the sign] no blacks, no dogs, no Irish</i>	<i>[The black girls said] I thought I was white</i>	<i>I didn't go to the very large firms because I think I would have encountered discrimination on a number of levels. I would have been blocked for a start because I am a woman</i>	<i>[I thought] if I do the Master's [...] it would say something about me and I would have something to offer</i>

Theme 4 - Being special

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Lorraine'	<i>They [my parents] indulged me But they [my mother and grandmother] had 'something else' about them</i>	<i>I didn't do very well academically but I did kind of well in terms of leadership in terms of being appointed as a prefect</i>		<i>[Achieving the Master's] said something about me</i>

Theme 5 – Trying again and again

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Lorraine'	<i>I can't remember being told if you're black try twice as hard, it was always, just do your best</i>	<i>Try harder, it was just try again, just try again</i>	<i>Mum would say, well you have done your best.... I've done my best before and it's not been good enough</i>	<i>And hopefully when they look at me they see something that is good about black people.... We are role models</i>

Destabilizing Lorraine's narrative

The hermeneutics of suspicion relevant to Lorraine's narrative involve existential themes of 'givens', bad faith, authenticity and postcolonial theory related to internalised racism.

In some ways it appears that Lorraine is trying to be seen in a way that Fanon (1986 [1952]) implored that black people should be able to be seen, as individuals. However, in her attempt at doing this she appears to deny her embodied 'blackness'. Lorraine appears to reconstruct certain events that she encounters and deny that they relate to her because she is black even when someone has aimed a racial insult at her because of her appearance. Her blackness as an existential given, throws up a dilemma. She wants to be seen as one thing, but the world judges her by what they see, a *black* woman. Lorraine's response to this dilemma, in an act of bad faith, is to deny her blackness.

Throughout her narrative there appears a commitment on the part of Lorraine to become 'something', her authentic self, free from the limitations of others, her experiences and the experiences of those who share a similar heritage and background to her. This can also be bad faith as Lorraine appears to construct her existence as in some way separate from her context. Lorraine strives to achieve after many setbacks, and it appears that the purpose is to become 'something'. Again, using the concept of bad faith, the attempt to become 'something' can be to reduce the anxiety arising out of a feeling of nothingness or

failure. This is apparent in her quest for academic success which meant that she could now be freed from the *'box of low academic achievement'* (11939).

The existential theme of responsibility is illustrated in Lorraine's narrative. In response to negative experiences such as racism, Lorraine appears to remove all responsibility from the perpetrator and takes on the responsibility of proving that she is not who they think she is. She appears to try to construct herself in a way that she feels would be more acceptable to them. This has consequences for her and for her expectations of other black people. *'[black people should] turn a deaf ear to things that are not going to help you, turn a blind eye to things [such as racism], you don't have to fight every battle'* (11077-1078)

The concept of internalised racism, manifesting as psychological disturbance is evident in Lorraine's narrative, *'I became aware of the psychological pressures of what do they call it, you absorb, there is a certain term for absorbing'* (11801-802). Lorraine struggles to name the phenomenon of internalised racism although she appears to have internalised blackness in negative terms.

Critical synthesis of Lorraine's narrative

The story of Lorraine is about a woman who has a strong commitment to being seen as an individual. To this end she eschews being seen as a member of a group, instead she wishes to stand out as an individual and tries her best to meet goals that she sets for herself. Specifically, she does not accept identity labels. In particular, she desires to be seen as different from what she regards as 'stereotypical' black people.

Lorraine appears to be influenced by messages she received from her mother with whom she strongly identifies. Lorraine recognises that her father endured racism in the UK, and he appeared to hold on to these memories when he returned to Jamaica. In contrast, Lorraine reconstructs negative experiences with white people. When she encounters negative experiences from white people related to her ethnicity, she typically ignores the behaviour and or reframes it as *'I don't think it's racism, they're just being rude'* (11595). However, when she encounters negative experiences from black people, she constructs this as racism and as hostility towards her because she is so different from them.

Lorraine appears to see herself as having an essence of self that not only as Sartre proclaims, precedes her experience, but also appears unchanged by her experiences, particularly her experience of racism which she turns a blind eye and deaf ear to. Lorraine has a strong belief that other black people should do the same as her and ignore racism and discrimination. However, although she recognises that this can cause psychological conflict regarding the relationship that she has with her blackness, she appears to feel that this is a price worth paying.

4.3.5 Cynthia's story

Cynthia is aged 51. Cynthia has spent most of her career working as a professional in the education sector. She is now in a leadership position and also works with black youngsters at risk of exclusion from school.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

The narrative begins with Cynthia responding to a question about where her family were from in Jamaica. At this point, she also reveals that her family have a strong Christian faith.

In response to a question about what identity means to her, Cynthia affirms:

53	<i>C: Well it means who I am [stressed the 'am'] in relation to my environment</i>
54	<i>C: but also - I suppose in a way - what I project - because I think people have - my sister</i>
55	<i>C: always says - whenever you meet people you always meet their representative and</i>
56	<i>C: then after a while you meet them. I would like to think that my representative and I</i>
57	<i>C: are the same person but I am aware that how I might come across might not be</i>
58	<i>C: who I consider myself to be</i>

Cynthia tone starts out even. However, there appears to be some slight irritation in her voice when she delivers lines 57-58. This slight irritation appears more like frustration, verging on the disdain when Cynthia explains that she feels that others don't see the real her, rather they see her 'representative'. She continues and provides an explanation:

62	<i>C: I think, I think I am quite a private person in some ways and misunderstood because</i>
63	<i>C: of that - because up to last week I went to X for a reunion. Because</i>
64	<i>C: the church that my parents got married in was celebrating 100 years and so I went</i>
65	<i>C: for the celebration. And people that I have known all my life were saying:</i>
66	<i>C: 'why didn't I race to greet them' and 'you've always been a snob and you've always</i>
67	<i>C: been this'. And I was thinking: 'oh well you are still sitting on the same side of the</i>
68	<i>C: church as when I used to come here' And I haven't been living in X for</i>
69	<i>C: 23 years and time seems to have stopped. Whereas I would like to think that</i>
70	<i>C: that I have moved on. So, I think people have a fixed mode for me</i>

Not only does Cynthia's narrative suggest that she feels misunderstood She uses the word 'fixed' as a metaphorical function to illustrate how she feels these people judge her. However, she appears to pass judgement on them too, effectively fixing them, noticing that literally and in some way figuratively, they haven't moved and remain unchanged (ll67-69).

Cynthia's narrative moves on to describe her family. She starts by talking about her relationship with her father:

83	<i>C: And my earliest recollection of him was actually reading</i>
84	<i>C: Because my dad left school - or rather he finished school when he was 12</i>
85	<i>C: Because his mother couldn't afford to send him at that time</i>

Cynthia's narrative proceeds, with the story of her parents' early lives in Jamaica, told in rich detail, unfolding like a drama. Her father, the illegitimate son of a white man, was, because of his light complexion, afforded a good life until Cynthia's paternal grandmother asked him for more child support. This led to Cynthia's father being rejected by his father. Regarding Cynthia's mother, her early life was also a tale of rejection:

129	<i>C: And my dad went from being the favoured</i>
130	<i>C: child - basically running the whole house - based on the amount his father</i>
131	<i>C: used to give to my grandmother - to being a burden. Because with the exception of 2</i>
132	<i>C: he is a lot, lot paler. Because my grandmother was about my complexion and my dad</i>
133	<i>C: having a white father - was really pale. And his siblings are darker. My grandmother's</i>
134	<i>C: husband said - he's not supporting this white man's child and that's why he had to</i>
135	<i>C: leave school and everything because he wasn't prepared to do anything to support him</i>
136	<i>C: So, there was always this disconnect growing up. First of all, the envied child</i>
137	<i>C: and then not envied child. And my dad as I've said has always worked really, really hard</i>
138	<i>C: Because you shouldn't have to be supporting yourself from when you are 12 or 13</i>
139	<i>C: but he had to. And then on my mum's side it's a lot similar in the sense that</i>
140	<i>C: my grandparents were married but not to each other again. And my gran - my mum</i>
141	<i>C: lived with her mother until she was three and when my maternal grandmother got</i>
142	<i>C: married she didn't want my mum. So, she went to live with her dad and his wife</i>

The story of her parents' early life ends with Cynthia reflecting on what she has learnt from their experiences, namely, not to depend on anyone. Immediately as she ends this story of rejection, Cynthia's narrative moves to describing how her mother in turn rejected her:

146	<i>C: And that from my earliest age, I can remember my mum - my mum said a lot of</i>
147	<i>C: negative things but I know she didn't mean</i>
148	<i>J: Negative things about?</i>
149	<i>C: Well she used to tell me - because I look a little bit like my dad, and I am paler</i>
150	<i>C: than my siblings - she always used to say 'this isn't going to get you anywhere -</i>
151	<i>C: look what happened to your father'</i>
152	<i>J: What's not going to get you anywhere?</i>
153	<i>C: This isn't going to get you anywhere (pointing to her skin)</i>
154	<i>J: Your shade of colour?</i>
155	<i>C: My shade. She said it would have accounted for something in Jamaica - but it doesn't</i>
156	<i>C: account for anything here</i>

As Cynthia recalls this in a downbeat tone, it appears to her that this message from her mother was delivered from a place of bitterness. Her reaction to this message was that she couldn't rely on anyone and so would need to always work hard:

169	<i>C: I've always worked. I have - it's a negative and a positive</i>
170	<i>C: I haven't even - because I've been quite ill on occasions - failing crawling - I always</i>
171	<i>C: go to work - I have that in my head all the time. I haven't had a day off sick in 25 years</i>

In response to a question about her early childhood, Cynthia starts to talk about her experience at secondary school, rather than starting with primary school:

183	<i>C: Umm back then, I knew I was different because in my school - I was the only one. In</i>
184	<i>C: set one through my entire secondary school</i>
185	<i>J: Sorry - the only black child or black girl?</i>
186	<i>C: Black girl. And I had a 'sense of self' then</i>
187	<i>C: My church was near enough 100% black - it was a different sort of dynamic there</i>
188	<i>C: And I think - when I went to university - again - modern languages isn't - it is different now</i>
189	<i>C: because of the Caribbean diaspora in terms of umm Martinique, Guadeloupe - that sort of</i>
190	<i>C: but studying French and German that wasn't a black person's thing either</i>
191	<i>C: So, I had to develop a stronger sense of who I was then. Umm</i>

It appears that for Cynthia being a black child and taking on the message from her mother, meant that she had to see herself as different from other black people. She appears to notice that she is the only black child in the top set, and the only black person to do modern languages because 'other' black people didn't do this sort of thing. Also, with reference again to her experience at church, she sees herself in this context as the only black person who had made anything of their life. In line 232, Cynthia reflects on how she has always felt

different to those around her. She explains that she was always academic rather than play as a child, in contrast to the young (mainly black) children she works with today:

241	<i>C: [I didn't] go out and play. I got on with my work. Always. When I tell the children now</i>
242	<i>C: that I work with - that my parents never came to the school except for Parents' Evening</i>
243	<i>C: they tell me I am a liar - I say 'no'. I respected my parents too much to want them to</i>
244	<i>C: come and be told that your child can't behave. But I respected myself as well</i>
245	<i>C: I didn't want to be having people putting demerit points on all other things that my...</i>
246	<i>C: the kids now have - and actually take as a badge of honour. Because I think that</i>
247	<i>C: they don't value or respect themselves which is why they do some of the things they do</i>

There appears to be quite a punitive attitude towards herself. Cynthia does not allow herself to play, she needs to work all the time and it is through this way of working that she appears to feel that she will demonstrate her value and self-respect.

Cynthia's narrative moves on to describe her experience of the wider social context of the 1970s and 1980s. Cynthia recalls that during the early 1980s, many of the young people left the church at a time that coincided with the rising interest in Rastafarianism and reggae music:

378	<i>C: [There] was this exodus from the church in the early to mid-80s and because my brother</i>
379	<i>C: was a musician, there was the music that he was asked to do sessions and my dad</i>
380	<i>C: would - I was almost like his booking manager. Because he used to do weddings</i>
381	<i>C: for XX church and Sunday churches and various other concerts</i>
382	<i>C: and so on. And I used to organise all the bookings. And my dad initially didn't say</i>
383	<i>C: anything - but then he wanted to know - where's he going?</i>
384	<i>C: Because he doesn't want him to be going to those places - where the wicked congregate</i>

Cynthia reveals that her father took a clear position on what he felt about black culture that wasn't 'black church culture'. However, Cynthia reveals that she did explore Jamaican philosophy and listen to reggae music, though not at home:

399	<i>C: I used to read a fair bit from Marcus Garvey</i>
400	<i>C: and I used to listen to a lot of the reggae music - but again that could not be heard</i>
401	<i>C: in the house</i>

Cynthia appears torn between wanting, to explore the emergent black consciousness ideas of the day and trying to please her father. She appears to find a way to do both. However, what is interesting is that Cynthia's next story is of how her parents instilled in her and her siblings that they should not mix with the other black people on their estate. As if to convey fully to me what her parents meant, Cynthia uses some Jamaican axioms:

429	<i>J: So, given what you've said there - I'm trying to get a sense of</i>
430	<i>J: is how - the messages that you've got from your parents about what it was to a be</i>
431	<i>J: young black woman and what being black meant to you at that time?</i>
432	<i>C: I can tell you the phrases - what was it - if you want good your nose have to run - and all</i>
433	<i>C: manner of different things about struggle and that - you see your father here - to quote</i>
434	<i>C: my mum - he's knocking old iron - and if you want to come up and do that - then</i>
435	<i>C: you spend your time sitting down talking with people when you should be upstairs studying</i>
436	<i>C: because you won't get any future from just sitting around talking - so you need to</i>
437	<i>C: study - you don't want to be living on an estate - you don't want to be having</i>
438	<i>C: a whole trailer load of children for different men. And all these things</i>
439	<i>C: And my mum always used to say that's what the identity of the neighbourhood was</i>
440	<i>C: And even though it wasn't everyone</i>
441	<i>J: So, to be black was to be those things - to be that?</i>
442	<i>C: Those things - and that's what she - no to be black in X on the X estate</i>

In recalling this straight after the story in which she, tries to both manage her individual desires and her father's expectations of her, it appears that Cynthia feels a certain level of attachment to her parents' view of the world, illustrated by the detail in which she recalls their sayings. What is also notable is that while her parents do appear to draw a distinction between them and other black people, there is a sense that they don't wish to be like a *particular type* of black person that they see represented on their estate.

At this point in her narrative, Cynthia appears to recognise the struggles that her parents were experiencing with their lives in the UK. This struggle is compounded when her father has an accident at work and could not continue with his job (11461). Believing that they would receive compensation, however, her parents received what they considered a derisory sum of money. Cynthia recalls that her parents felt that this was racism and that they were treated this way because they were black and uneducated. It appears that her parents who had tried so hard to distance themselves from other black people on their estate by living industrious, moral lives and focusing on educating their children, are now faced with the sense that white people see all black people as the same.

Cynthia's narrative moves on to describe her experiences at secondary school and university. At secondary school, Cynthia describes herself as being a favourite of the teachers because she was not the norm, '*I just got on with everything*' (11504). Cynthia worked hard to please her father. However, she recalls with a tone of sadness, that when she achieved a high mark that was

nonetheless short of one hundred percent, her father would ask why she had not achieved perfection.

This story about secondary school ends when Cynthia describes how her drive to achieve high marks in school led to her receiving an 'A' in a key subject. Cynthia notes that her receiving this mark led to her being shunned by other black girls in her class because they hadn't achieved the same high mark.

Cynthia describes her life at university which appears to revolve around her studies and church. When asked whether she joined any clubs or socialised with other black people at university, Cynthia again describes an experience of not belonging:

629	<i>C: I did join the African-Caribbean society (pause) but that was the Nigerian society</i>
630	<i>C: under another name. So, I didn't (laughs) - it was okay - but they were</i>
631	<i>C: concerned with things in Nigeria</i>
632	<i>J: So, it didn't relate to your experience</i>
633	<i>C: Not at all, not at all. And a lot of them were overseas students and wealthier</i>
634	<i>C: And when I tried to get them as black guys to show an interest [in what was happening in the UK]</i>
635	<i>C: that didn't mean anything to them.</i>

After leaving university, Cynthia describes how she trained as a teacher. She describes how her experience in her first school led her to the work she does today. She explained that this school, although predominately white, had a disproportionate number of exclusions among the few black children that attended. Cynthia now feels a passion to help black youngsters and their families. However, she expresses frustration that they appear to lack the skills and

understanding about what she feels are the challenges they face as black people in Britain:

782	<i>C: And I think our kids are running head long</i>
783	<i>C: towards a precipice and they can't see it and their parents - either because they've got</i>
784	<i>C: their own issues or - they can't see it either. And I almost feel in the way as the bible</i>
785	<i>C: calls it, a watchman - or watchperson.</i>

It is notable, her use of the word 'precipice', and it appears that the function of such a word in her narrative is to convey, in the starkest of terms, the potential self-destruction of some young black children, a fate neither they or their parents, but only Cynthia is aware of. Cynthia appears to feel a powerful responsibility towards these families and uses a biblical reference of a 'watchman' to convey, what she feels is the purpose of her work. Cynthia ends this story and her narrative by reflecting on how she feels that the work she is doing is meaningful because it makes a difference and that if her father were still alive, he might now be proud of what she has achieved. The least she can expect from her mother is that she is not disappointed:

813	<i>C: [...] But I would like to think that even though my dad passed away</i>
814	<i>C: that if he were to see me that he would be proud eventually. I don't know</i>
815	<i>C: if my mum will ever be proud but at least she's not disappointed (Laughs)</i>

Identities and Identity work

In Cynthia's narrative there is a clear identification with her father who features strongly throughout and appears to have significantly influenced how she sees herself and others in the world. She focuses hard on trying to please both her parents especially her father by being 'good' and yet it appears she is never good enough. Cynthia appears to relive some of her father's experience of rejection and exclusion (the church, school, university) and identifies with being seen as different. She appears to embody a strict paternal figure, in the mode of her father, to the young people she works with (more so than maternal) by giving clear moral instruction tinged with the threat of destruction should these instructions not be followed to the letter.

Regarding identities, it is less clear. Cynthia speaks about being a black person in a way that seems to see her position herself as different from other black people (at church, school and university). However, this does not mean that she has no sense of blackness as being important to her, but more that she sees herself and her father as being a particular type of black person, industrious, hardworking, achieving, and that this is the type of black person that other black people should aspire to be.

On the face of it the church plays an important part in Cynthia's identity.

However, she appears to have a complicated relationship with her experience of being a church member. Instead, it appears that having specific morals and

values, rooted in Christianity, are more important to her 'sense of self' and inform the way she relates to others.

Cynthia mentions being poor but not working-class and there is no sense of the role of feminism in her 'sense of self'. Her drive to succeed appears to come from her need to fulfil her parents' especially her father's dreams and alleviate the pain and bitterness of their life and disappointments.

Thematic priorities and relationships

Theme 1 - *Being black*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Cynthia'	<i>[my mother said] my [light] skin tone was not going to get me anywhere</i>	<i>I used to read a fair bit from Marcus Garvey [but not in the house]</i>	<i>[I said] I am not the cleaner</i>	

Theme 2 – *Sameness/Difference*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Cynthia'	<i>I knew I was different because in school, I was the only one [black child] in set one</i> <i>[My father would say] they [the other black families on the estate] haven't got anything to offer his children</i>	<i>And my youngest sister now is more resilient [than me]</i>	<i>My first placement it was another world.... I felt that the black girls [like me] were silent there and I didn't like it.</i>	<i>[When I went back to the church] they were still sitting on the same side of the church</i>

Theme 3 – *Working hard and achievement*

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Cynthia'	<i>She [my mother] told me that I was always going to have to work hard</i>	<i>You're [not going] to get any future sitting around talking so you need to study</i>	<i>[...] I have had to champion black boys and now mothers</i>	<i>So, I need to do something.... It's good to give them nice words but you need to do more than that</i>

Theme 4 – Rejection/belonging

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Cynthia'	<i>We had an element of separation because my parents didn't believe in us playing out</i>	<i>I was the only one to get an A for English and they [my friends at school] excluded me from going to Pizza Hut</i> <i>The African-Caribbean Society was the Nigerian Society... and so I ended up not going</i>		<i>[When I went back to a church reunion] some of the congregation remarked, 'you've always been a snob'</i>

Theme 5 – Never being good enough

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Cynthia'	<i>She [my mother] told me that I was ugly and that I needed to concentrate on my character</i>	<i>I remember I got 79% on a history exam [...] What did my dad say? So, what happen to the other 21?</i>		<i>I would like to think that even though my dad passed away that if he were here to see me that he would be proud eventually. I don't know</i>

Destabilizing Cynthia's narrative

The hermeneutics of suspicion relevant to Cynthia's narrative involve existential, postcolonial and black existential theories.

Using an existential hermeneutic of suspicion, it is possible to see how existential concerns such as anxiety, responsibility, freedom, and choice feature strongly in Cynthia's narrative. In her narrative, Cynthia describes how she has worked hard to achieve all her life. This relentless hard work appears to serve the purpose of reducing her anxiety of not being good enough, a message she received initially from her mother and reinforced frequently by her father. Furthermore, Cynthia appears to work in a way that she feels would please her

parents and perhaps reduce *their* pain and anxiety over their lost opportunities in life. However, even when she reflects at the end of her narrative that she thinks she has achieved 'something' it appears that the anxiety remains that this achievement may still not be enough to gain the approval of her parents.

While it appears that as a young child, Cynthia was fearful of upsetting her parents, she noticed that her siblings exercised their freedom to make different choices for themselves. Regarding responsibility, it appears from her narrative that Cynthia feels responsible not only for her parents' happiness but to rescue and save other young children and their parents who live their lives in a different way to her.

Applying a postcolonial and a black existential hermeneutic of suspicion to Cynthia's narrative reveals elements of colourism associated with internalised racism. Cynthia appears to have internalised her mother's complex relationship with blackness. The message that Cynthia receives and internalises is that she now must work hard, achieve, and have 'good' morals to ensure that she survives.

Critical synthesis of Cynthia's narrative

The story of Cynthia is about a woman who has dedicated much of her working life to the service of others particularly young black people and their families living in socially challenging environments. Cynthia appears driven to make a difference in the lives of the people she works with. This drive is rooted in

strong faith-based values and a desire that these black people should live their lives in a way consistent with these specific values. The hope is that in doing this, they would break the cycle of deprivation, low achievement and poverty, reminiscent of the estate on which Cynthia grew up.

Cynthia appears to be influenced by messages from her parents that working hard and aspiring to be the best is what should continually be her focus. However, no matter what she achieves, it appears to not be good enough for her parents. Cynthia particularly identifies with her father's experiences, expectations and dreams. She seems to embody her father's pain and disappointment about missed opportunities, as she relentlessly drives herself to achieve.

I interrogated Cynthia's narrative using the hermeneutics of suspicion grounded in existential themes around anxiety, responsibility, freedom and choice. Cynthia appears to take on responsibility for the happiness of her parents and the very survival of the black youngsters with whom she comes into contact. This way of being, appears to be an attempt to reduce her anxiety of not being good enough.

I also interrogated Cynthia's narrative using the specific concept of 'colourism' within postcolonial theory. What is notable is that although Cynthia never directly mentions her position towards a black identity, she introduces the issue of colourism. Cynthia's narrative demonstrates the complexities around skin tone within the wider experience of the Jamaican (and indeed wider black) diaspora with lighter skin tone and straighter hair often seen as more desirable

among black people (see Gabriel,2007). It appears that from her personal experience she is conflicted because while her skin tone shows a connection to her father, it becomes a complex issue in the relationship she has with her mother.

As she has become older Cynthia appears to be more able to acknowledge some of her achievements. Although she hopes this finally will make her parents proud, she appears to be beginning to focus on what she wants from life and what is important to her.

4.3.6 Georgina’s story

Georgina is a 50-year-old professional who has worked primarily in the private sector. She currently works in a senior position for one of the largest private companies in the UK.

Identifying narratives, narrative tone and rhetorical function

Georgina’s narrative begins with information about her family, her parents and siblings. Georgina describes in an upbeat tone, what she knows of her parents’ early experiences in the UK:

49	<i>G: My mum and dad had various jobs. So, when my mum first came here, she worked for this family as well</i>
50	<i>G: they were quite entrepreneurial, and they had a kind of Caribbean - Jamaican grocery store</i>
51	<i>G: so, as well as shops they owned businesses and my mum worked in that shop for a while</i>
52	<i>G: again, my older sister would remember her working in that shop and tell stories about going to the</i>
53	<i>G: shop and constantly being around umm Jamaican culture and umm but by the time I came along</i>
54	<i>G: we were in this house [the one her parents bought]</i>

It appears that even though, Georgina was not born yet when her family lived with this older couple, the stories from her sister and the continued presence of this family in her life appeared to have an impact on Georgina. This is indicated by the way the story is told with warmth and admiration for this couple. The emphasis on Jamaican culture becomes a theme throughout her narrative.

The next story is a rich description of her early childhood beginning with her memories about the work her father did. Georgina explains that when her father left the army, he did various factory jobs. Georgina appears confused about how her father came to be in the army, but she recalls him telling her stories about his service:

69	<i>G: He said he served over in Germany - umm so I think he came at the tail end of national conscription</i>
70	<i>G: I think it's called - umm and that's how he ended up being in the army. I don't think he was in the</i>
71	<i>G: army for that long - but I think it was the tail end of all of that - where all people of a certain age</i>
72	<i>G: had to do time in the army. And because they were British when they came</i>

This mention of her parents being British, leads to a question about how she felt her parents' saw themselves. At this point in the narrative, Georgina pauses, and appears to be contemplating the question. Her initial response to how she felt her parents saw themselves was to state that she felt it was complicated:

74	<i>G: I think it's complicated - I grew up in a very, very - as a lot of us did - very Jamaican household</i>
75	<i>G: I was always aware of my Jamaicanness</i>
76	<i>J: How did that manifest itself?</i>
77	<i>G: In everything we did [STRESSED 'EVERYTHING'] In how we socialised - where we socialised - what we ate</i>
78	<i>G: what we listened to on the radio - the music in our home. Umm I always remember relatives coming</i>

79	<i>G: I was always aware of my Jamaicanness</i>
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What is notable is that Georgina doesn't explain what she means by complicated but then immediately goes on to stress her 'Jamaicanness'. It is possible that Georgina finds it difficult to accept that her parents may have had, at any level, seen themselves as British. It is notable that Georgina uses the rhetorical function of repetition '*very, very*' (l174) to stress how Jamaican her household was. To further underline her point about *her* relationship with her Jamaican identity, she uses the word '*always*' (l173) apparently as a device to convey her strong and committed position as '*a Jamaican*'.

Georgina continues with the story of her early family life in a similar tone using words such as '*everything*' and '*very*' to underline the 'Jamaicanness' of her family. Georgina notes that she felt there was no attempt to raise her as a British child. In lines 86-87, she states, '*so it was very [Jamaican] so that's why I probably describe myself as Jamaican first because of my upbringing*'. However, immediately, she says this, her narrative shifts, as she recalls that there was one part of Jamaican culture that she and her siblings were discouraged from expressing and that was speaking the Jamaican language:

94	<i>G: only we were discouraged from speaking Jamaican - actively discouraged from talking Jamaican</i>
95	<i>G: and it was - stop talking 'bad'. So, speaking with a Jamaican accent was likened with talking bad</i>
96	<i>G: and speaking with a proper English accent was seen as 'proper'</i>
97	<i>J: And your parents did they speak patois?</i>
98	<i>G: Yes - which is what we didn't understand - because that's where we got it from</i>

99	<i>G: But you know – “you won’t be able to get on life if you talk like that”</i>
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As her story continues Georgina wonders if this discouragement from speaking patois was because her parents feared their children wouldn’t fit in. She then goes on to speculate if there was another reason, and she wonders if they felt a sense of shame about the way they spoke:

116	<i>G: I don't know - just reflecting back - maybe a fear that we wouldn't fit in</i>
117	<i>G: You know when we went out into the world - umm and this idea that they associated speaking with a</i>
118	<i>G: Jamaican accent with something bad and maybe something that you needed to be ashamed of</i>
119	<i>G: So, I noticed my parents changing the way they spoke when they spoke to English people for example</i>

This story ends with Georgina, returning to describing her early life with both her immediate and extended family as very close and very Jamaican. What is notable is how Georgina starts this part of her narrative with positioning herself and her family as having a strong Jamaican identity, yet the conflict around the language remains unresolved.

A new story begins in which Georgina describes the work that both her parents did when she was young. Georgina speaks about how her father started out in factory work then went to college to obtain qualifications that enabled him to become a skilled employee. She also mentions that her mother did a variety of cleaning jobs.

In response to a question about whether Georgina had any sense of what her parents’ hopes and dreams were when they came to the UK, her tone becomes

downbeat, as she remembers that her mother felt that she could have done better:

158	<i>J: Was this their hopes their dreams come true?</i>
159	<i>G: No - absolutely not. I think my mum always felt that she could have done better. And I think coming</i>
160	<i>G: to this country was aspirational for her. Do you see what I mean? I certainly don't think that</i>
161	<i>G: that she thought she would end up doing cleaning jobs. You know. So, coming to this country</i>
162	<i>G: was very much aspirational for her. I never quite got down to "okay - why did you not do something</i>
163	<i>G: like nursing or something like that". But my mum was very fiery - I don't think she could have</i>
164	<i>G: done a nursing job to be honest</i>

While recalling that her mother was aspirational but remained working in low skilled jobs, Georgina explains that although her mother could have become a nurse for example, her personality was such, that she would have found the environment difficult to tolerate. This leads to a story about the difference in her parents' personalities:

170	<i>G: She was the sort of person who would like when we used</i>
171	<i>G: to go to church - she would not stand for the national anthem - she would be the only person</i>
172	<i>G: in the congregation not standing. So, she was very - she had very strong views - very strong feelings</i>
173	<i>G: I don't know where the views or feelings came from - but I definitely know that she wouldn't have done</i>
174	<i>G: anything like nursing</i>
175	<i>J: And your dad - was he the same?</i>
176	<i>G: No, no my dad was very - he was more passive - but still had really strong feelings and opinions about</i>
177	<i>G: race and that kind of thing and how black people were treated in this country.</i>

At this stage in the narrative, Georgina also recalls how her father told her how he was cautious around his white colleagues and rarely shared anything about his personal life, even hiding the fact that he had a car and a mortgage. Georgina

explains that this was because he feared they might be envious of him and curious to know how he managed to get material things. In telling this story, Georgina sees parallels with how she conducts herself at work:

189	<i>G: [...] I won't share with my work colleagues - umm particularly</i>
190	<i>G: around material things. Umm because I've had comments about material things - you know from</i>
191	<i>G: white colleagues - I don't like sharing with them</i>
192	<i>J: In what way? What sort of comments?</i>
193	<i>G: So - just comments - just comments about a bag - maybe a designer bag that I might be carrying or</i>
194	<i>G: I might be wearing - or a really silly example, I said to a colleague. Okay it was a colleague that worked</i>
195	<i>G: in Facilities and we were getting a new dishwasher in the building and I said - "oh maybe you should</i>
196	<i>G: try Siemens - Siemens are really good - I have got a Siemens dishwasher and they're really good"</i>
197	<i>G: "Oh what do they pay you that you can afford a Siemens dishwasher?" So, it's comments</i>
198	<i>G: like that - that I am very guarded about what I share with colleagues - with white colleagues</i>

In telling this story it appears that Georgina wonders if others question how she, as black person, can either afford or want to aspire to such things. There is also a sense that Georgina is hypervigilant when around her white work colleagues (ll198).

Georgina's narrative shifts, and she recalls, in a downbeat tone, her experience at primary school. Coming from a Jamaican home, into a predominately white environment, this is where she first notices she is different:

204	<i>G: Yeah. Gosh black girl at school. I suppose at a certain point I wasn't aware I was a black girl - obviously at</i>
205	<i>G: school but when you go through certain experiences - you become aware of your blackness - because</i>
206	<i>G: you're different - your hair's different - I went to a school which was majority white - there were some</i>
207	<i>G: black children there at primary school - it switched when I went to secondary school - it was majority</i>
208	<i>G: Caribbean - majority Jamaican parents. Umm but in primary school I felt different - you know - I was</i>

209	<i>G: bigger than the other girls - and you know my hair was different and - you know - the black boys</i>
210	<i>G: liked the white girls you know all of that type of thing</i>

What is notable is that Georgina twice mentions one of the key differences between her and the white girls, her hair (ll206 and ll209). With the second mention of her hair, she then recalls that the black boys preferred the white girls and there is a sense that she feels that her difference made her less attractive.

As Georgina continues her recollection of primary school, it appears that it is not just her blackness that is different, culturally she felt different from her white friends:

225	<i>G: I do remember being asked at school - but we were asked</i>
226	<i>G: what we had for dinner last night - and that's probably why it's so relevant to me - being asked</i>
227	<i>G: what we had for dinner the night before - and I said 'meat and two veg'</i>
228	<i>G: And I hadn't - I probably had had yam and banana - but I was so ashamed - not being able to say that I hadn't had an</i>
229	<i>G: English meal and of not wanting to be different to the rest of my classmates - I just lied - you know</i>
230	<i>G: rather than admit that I had had a Jamaican meal</i>
231	<i>J: What did it feel like to be ashamed?</i>
232	<i>G: Umm - probably ashamed is a strong word - probably just embarrassed - just embarrassed - I just wanted</i>
233	<i>G: to fit in. I didn't want to be different - umm and I remember again in primary school - so this is why</i>
234	<i>G: I can't understand about the teaching about slavery - because we were taught about slavery</i>
235	<i>G: in primary school - I think it was because 'Roots' had come out when I was at primary school</i>
236	<i>G: and I was just remember thinking and feeling - that was not my history - I came via a completely</i>
237	<i>G: different route - that's not my history. My family - my heritage is not through slavery and again</i>
238	<i>G: feeling really ashamed</i>

This tale of feeling culturally different and ashamed not only about the food she ate but about the realisation that as someone of Jamaican heritage she was

descended from slavery, is told with a tone of sadness. What is also notable is how Georgina shifts between describing feeling ashamed, to what she considers a lesser feeling, one of embarrassment, to settling finally on the feeling of shame.

Georgina starts a new story that describes the impact on her of watching the drama 'Roots':

261	<i>G: Embarrassed - just realising what a complete denial it was. You know absolute denial. You know</i>
262	<i>G: obviously it didn't last long - I started to learn more about my history - I just remember at the time</i>
263	<i>G: Just complete shame</i>
264	<i>J: How did that come about - you learning about your history?</i>
265	<i>G: It was - because my siblings were older, so they were listening to a lot of music - you know reggae music</i>
266	<i>G: was coming out of Jamaica - which I think - reggae music coming out of Jamaica was amazing - because</i>
267	<i>G: it's not - it tells a story - storytelling for me - it's not just music so a lot of classic music that was</i>
268	<i>G: coming out of Jamaica at that time about - you know slavery, black history and Marcus Garvey</i>

This is a rich tale, told with an air of disbelief at the level of ignorance she had about her heritage. Georgina uses the word 'embarrassed' again. However, it appears that in this context the embarrassment is about her ignorance. By the end of this story it feels that her sense of pride is restored as she learns more about her history.

Georgina then recalls how, now at secondary school (which had a significant number of black Caribbean girls), through her cousin, she discovered even more about black history:

281	<i>G: My cousin is like an older sister. I started to go to piano lessons with her and she told me - rather</i>
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282	<i>G: than teach me how to play the piano - I cannot play the piano - because she talked to me endlessly</i>
283	<i>G: about black history. I think I learnt more about black history from her</i>
284	<i>J: How old was she?</i>
285	<i>G: She would - I was probably about 11 or 12 - so early secondary school so - same age as my eldest sister</i>
286	<i>J: And so - she was one of the significant people?</i>
287	<i>G: Yeah - absolutely significant. A significant person in my life - she taught me a lot about black history</i>

Georgina (who exudes passion, as she describes this acquisition of knowledge) uses the rhetorical function of repetition (repeats the word ‘significant’) apparently to convey that this was a transformational moment in her life. At this point, her narrative takes a dramatic turn, as Georgina describes in a downbeat tone, how, now armed with this new knowledge, she experiences conflict with the other black girls at school:

309	<i>G: [...] you know I used to try to talk to my friends about Marcus Garvey and</i>
310	<i>G: Jamaican heroes - slavery - how racism affects us now - if a teacher was racist - I would try to talk</i>
311	<i>G: to my friends about that - and they just didn't want to know</i>
312	<i>J: Are we talking about now - give me the dates</i>
313	<i>G: We're talking '80 - '81, 82</i>
314	<i>J: So, in that context - thinking about what was going on in the wider context and what was</i>
315	<i>J: going on socially around that time</i>
316	<i>G: Absolutely - yeah there was the riots - I used to come into school with my 'Voice' newspaper</i>

Georgina appears shocked that her black school friends didn't want to discuss cultural, social or political issues affecting black people. Her mention in line 316, that she came to school with the black British newspaper ‘*The Voice*’ appears to underline the fact that *she* was interested in black issues. This made her different to her friends. There is a tone of sadness as Georgina continues to describe her confusion about why the other black girls didn't want to know

about black history and the impact of racism on them. She notes that the only thing that united her with these school friends was reggae music:

318	<i>G: [...] apart from the music - that's what bound us together</i>
319	<i>G: So, the music in our school was very strong - we had DJs in our school - we had people - outside</i>
320	<i>G: who used to DJ. But even at a young age 12 or 13</i>
321	<i>G: that was their side line - side hustle as they call it today. So, music was very strong - so at playtimes</i>
322	<i>G: whatever - after school we'd get together around the tape recorder and listen to - again the music</i>
323	<i>G: that was coming out of Jamaica and dance and sing - that type of thing</i>

Even though the music bound them together, there is a sense from an earlier comment that Georgina made in lines 266-268, that she was listening to it in a different way to her peers. For her, it appears that the music had a different meaning; it was more than just something to dance to.

Georgina then acknowledges that by the time she was 13, she decided to only talk about history and race at home. In the follow up, Georgina reflects again on this period and recognises that one of her own children now takes a different position to her regarding blackness and race, something that she struggles with:

FU52	<i>G: [...] And it's interesting, because I have a [child]. [They]</i>
FU53	<i>G: remind me of my peers at secondary school. So, [my child] is very much ' why does</i>
FU54	<i>G: everything have to be about race?' that's what he says to me and his dad</i>
FU55	<i>G: my husband. Umm and that's what I felt at school, you know when I talked</i>
FU56	<i>G: about racial issues, that was the message that I got back from my peers</i>
FU57	<i>G: why does everything have to be about race? Why does everything have</i>
FU58	<i>G: to come back to race. Umm so actually interacting with my [child] on this, kind</i>
FU59	<i>G: of brings back memories of that time when I felt quite umm ostracised</i>

The memory of feeling ‘ostracised’ at school (FU59) and the apparent stark split between home and school regarding matters of race, suddenly fades when Georgina remembers with delight that there was one teacher at her school, a black teacher, who each time Georgina saw her, ‘the sun rose’ (ll368).

Georgina recalls how this teacher was an inspiration and was the person who encouraged her to focus academically. However, she also recalls that the other black children didn’t like this teacher:

371	<i>G: So, she was very well educated - very well spoken - and the other children used to accuse her of</i>
372	<i>G: thinking she was white. And I'd say just because she's well spoken - and this is why I used to always</i>
373	<i>G: get myself in trouble with my friends at school because I would have a bit of a different view</i>
374	<i>G: so, I would say - just because she is well spoken does that mean that she's not - that she can't be black</i>

It is interesting that Georgina should use the term ‘well spoken’. There appears to be a contradiction. Also, it is not clear what Georgina means by ‘well spoken’. It feels as if she and her peers have identified a specific way that black people speak and that this is not ordinarily considered to be ‘well spoken’.

The narrative shifts to Georgina describing her parents’ attitude to education. Georgina recalls that her father was very keen for her to work hard and do better even though, she says, he didn’t really have the knowledge about the education system to help her.

A new story begins about life at university. Georgina recalls in an upbeat tone, having a close circle of friends, being active in the African-Caribbean society,

engaging with black politics and issues and partying a lot. She mentions that this is the first time that she mixed with black people who were not Jamaican as there were several students of West African heritage at her university. Georgina paints a picture of harmony and closeness among the black students:

467	<i>G: So again - I guess when I went to university - I sought out black people - and being in black</i>
468	<i>G: spaces</i>
469	<i>J: That was important to you?</i>
470	<i>G: Yeah - because it felt safe. I did make some white friends but - again it felt different to me</i>
471	<i>G: you know they were all - middle-class and I wasn't - you know I was brought up in a very working</i>
472	<i>G: class environment - background - so they just felt different to me and I probably didn't quite feel as</i>
473	<i>G: though - I didn't feel comfortable with them. As soon as I found the African-Caribbean society</i>
474	<i>G: I felt comfortable with the people. Because even though we were all on a similar journey</i>
475	<i>G: to maybe social mobility - we had come from the same backgrounds and come from the same</i>
476	<i>G: places - and that was whether we were Caribbean or West African - we'd come from the same</i>
477	<i>G: spaces - and experienced the same thing and offered each other that element of safety</i>

It appears that for Georgina the perceived similarity between her and the other black students is what made their friendship significant and her feel safe. It is also possible that for Georgina, safety could mean that the position she takes up in the world remains unchallenged if she avoids interacting with individuals who she perceives as being different to her.

The narrative moves on to Georgina's experiences with work. Georgina begins by speaking about her journey from graduate trainee to her current senior position and along this journey how she set up a business with her husband employing all black staff.

When asked about her experiences of being a black woman, Georgina appears to suggest that it is foremost; through her blackness she experiences the world:

568	<i>J: I am just thinking in terms of your experiences then - can you give me some sense of some good</i>
569	<i>J: and not so good experiences that have you had - stand out experiences?</i>
570	<i>G: Around race?</i>
571	<i>J: [..] specifically thinking of you as a black woman - one of the things</i>
572	<i>J: that you haven't really mentioned is gender?</i>
573	<i>G: And that's really interesting - because just touching on that point - I am black before I am a woman</i>

As if to illustrate her experiences, she focuses specifically on her experiences at work:

580	<i>G: [...] You know - when I walk into a room - I feel that people see black - rather than a woman</i>
581	<i>G: I feel that's what they see - so I actually quite controversially say that I am not a feminist - because</i>
582	<i>G: I have experienced racism from white women - so for me - that barrier is around race not</i>
583	<i>G: around gender. And most racism that I have experienced at work has been from white women</i>
584	<i>G: So umm - comments about my hair - I normally have my hair in braids - long braids</i>
585	<i>G: and I sometimes take my hair out of braids. When I took my hair out of braids my chief exec said</i>
586	<i>G: "much nicer" - cos when I take my hair out of braids - I usually hot comb it - "much nicer, you</i>
587	<i>G: look so much less intimidating when your hair's like that"</i>

Georgina describes this incident with her chief executive with a tone of sadness and disbelief. As Georgina talks more about this incident, there is a sense that she feels frustrated that, she is being judged by how she wears her hair rather than on her abilities and character. This story ends with Georgina recalling with glee and a tone of defiance that when she goes for job interviews, she wears her hair straightened '*[however,] when I get the job and pass the probation, I put my hair back in braids'* (ll612).

The story about her hair leads Georgina to reflect more on how having reached a senior position, she still feels that she must prove herself or even get herself noticed as the senior person in the room:

663	<i>G: I'm always the only black person in the room - always.</i>
664	<i>G: And if I make a comment or have a suggestion or an idea - it just won't be picked up</i>
665	<i>G: Even though I do a lot of reading - a lot of my stuff comes from academic sources and all of that kind</i>
666	<i>G: of thing - even still - It's - oh - okay - let's move on with the conversation - and that's happened all</i>
667	<i>G: throughout my career. And so, I feel that I have to be really resilient - I feel I have had to have</i>
668	<i>G: a lot more resilience than other colleagues around being listened to - being heard - having</i>
669	<i>G: that confidence to keep speaking up - when people aren't listening to me. Umm but I feel</i>
670	<i>G: I have had to be so resilient - and it does get exhausting</i>

What is notable is how Georgina feels the need to ensure that she's well prepared for meetings, doing a lot of reading and acquiring evidence to support her views, yet she feels this is not enough.

Georgina finishes her narrative with a tone of sadness as she reveals that she also must tread a fine line between trying to be assertive and being perceived as intimidating. She states with bemusement that she is always noted for her calmness, yet she feels the constant struggle between trying to assert herself and not coming across as 'intimidating'. When asked what it feels like having to tread this line, Georgina replies:

702	<i>G: As a black woman speaking your mind is very different to how somebody else might come</i>
703	<i>G: across speaking their mind</i>
704	<i>J: Somebody else being?</i>
705	<i>G: A white person - a white woman - white man</i>

706	J: <i>I just wondered what price you feel you have paid avoiding all this conflict?</i>
707	G: <i>Yeah - I think - umm as I said it does feel exhausting - being constantly aware and conscious</i>
708	G: <i>about how you're coming across - the image you're putting across - if you mess up - will that</i>
709	G: <i>spoil it for another black person coming down the line - if you make a mistake - will that mistake</i>
710	G: <i>be seen in the context of your race as opposed to - you just made a mistake - umm</i>
711	J: <i>As being you?</i>
712	G: <i>Yeah - I just made a mistake - will I be seen as incompetent as a black woman.</i>

Georgina's struggle with her desire to assert herself and perceiving that she will be judged differently than white people is complicated by the belief that she doesn't feel the judgement is reserved for her alone. She ends this story reflecting on how she feels she is judged as a representative of black people, '*if you mess up, will that spoil it for another black person coming down the line?*' (ll709).

Georgina's narrative ends with her reflecting on what it means to her to be British, '*I am British because I was born in Britain.... but I don't feel particularly British*' (ll736-737).

Identities and Identity work

From the very start of her narrative, Georgina describes being Jamaican as the first part of her identity. When Georgina talks about her early life, there are constant references to interactions with her Jamaican family and her parents' friends and how these interactions gave her a strong sense of a Jamaican identity. However, the one cultural symbol that her parents did not want Georgina to adopt was the Jamaican language (ll94-95).

Georgina describes having an uneasy relationship with her blackness when she notices her difference from white girls at school. The difference manifests itself mainly with regard to her hair texture. The recognition that she was descended from slaves was at first met with shame and denial which then transformed into pride as she learnt more about her history. There is very little mention of a gender identity and indeed, Georgina regards being black as a more significant part of her identity.

Regarding class, Georgina describes herself as working-class. She regards the white girls at school and university as middle-class. Georgina doesn't mention any black middle-class students at university. She appears to see herself and other black students as all coming from the same background and on a similar journey of social mobility, although notably she doesn't say on a journey to becoming middle-class.

There is a strong identification with family, in particular with her father, who she mentions several times when talking about her early life. When she mentions her mother, she states that she has strong feelings and would always stand up for herself. Georgina describes her father as more passive and at the end of the narrative she states that she tries to avoid conflict, particularly at work. There is a sense that her parents, siblings and extended family played a significant role in her early life. There is also a sense that she has largely held on to a lot of her cultural influences (her Jamaicanness) values and beliefs (working hard) that she learnt growing up and is keen to pass these on to her own family.

Thematic priorities and relationships

Theme 1 - Being black

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Georgina'	<i>I wasn't aware I was black</i> <i>My family, my heritage is not through slavery...feeling embarrassed</i>	<i>I started learning about my [black] history through reggae music coming out of Jamaica at that time [1970s/80s]</i>		<i>I am black before I am a woman</i>

Theme 2 – Being Jamaican

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Georgina'	<i>I grew up in a very Jamaican household</i> <i>I was always aware of my 'Jamaicanness'</i>	<i>So, we would listen to the music coming out of Jamaica</i>		<i>When I think of my identity it is Jamaican first</i>

Theme 3 – Sameness/Difference

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Georgina'	<i>My hair was different</i> <i>They [the girls at primary school] were wealthier than me</i>	<i>I was brought up in a very working-class environment...so they [white students] just felt different to me</i>	<i>Everybody [we employed] was black</i>	<i>I am always the only black person in the room</i>

Theme 4 – Rejection/belonging

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Georgina'	<i>I just wanted to fit in</i>	<i>I tried to talk to my friends [at secondary school] about Marcus Garvey and Jamaican heroes [...] they just didn't want to know</i> <i>The only place that it felt safe to talk about race was in my home</i>		<i>I don't feel connected to Britain</i> <i>[I want black women] to be confident about the spaces we occupy [...] not to allow anybody to intimidate them out of those spaces</i>

Theme 5 – Working hard and achievement

Participant	Formative Years	Adolescence/ University	Early Career	Present
'Georgina'	<i>I remember [my father] doing other jobs... I remember him doing cleaning jobs in the evening [in addition to working during the day]</i>	<i>I remember being inspired to progress by a black teacher</i> <i>I remember him [my father] pushing me to do better and better</i>		<i>I am constantly aware and conscious of how I come across... [I can't make a mistake because] will I be seen as an incompetent black woman?</i>

Destabilizing Georgina's narrative

The hermeneutics of suspicion relevant to Georgina's narrative involve existential, postcolonial and black existential theories.

Regarding postcolonial theories, Hall's (1994) thesis about cultural identity and the Jamaican diaspora is relevant. Georgina appears to construct her black identity as inextricably linked with a Jamaican cultural identity. However, Georgina is not aware of being either Jamaican or black until she goes to primary school and discovers that she is different from her white friends. The turning point for her is the period in the 1970s and 1980s (see Hall, 1994). In discovering a way to see her blackness in a positive light, by discovering her African roots, slavery and Jamaican heroes, Georgina appears to see this as a discovery of an *essentialist* black identity. In doing this Georgina appears to find it difficult to see other black people as 'being black' in a different way to her or her family.

Regarding her family, there is a sense that Georgina constructs her family as embodying a unified strong, positive and singular black Jamaican identity. She

holds on to this identity despite her own experiences being born and raised in Britain. Georgina appears to want to convey a seamless continuation of her cultural identity from her parents, through her and possibly onto future generations (see Foner,1998, and Narayan,2009). However, as Hall maintains, culture evolves through experience and historical space and time as does cultural identity. With Georgina it appears that she tries to hold on to an identity constructed at a particular time, during her formative years and she downplays her British experience, in an attempt to construct herself as completely Jamaican.

In existential terms, the themes of bad faith, choice and freedom are evident in her narrative. Regarding bad faith, Georgina appears to view her black cultural identity as an objective reality to be grasped by other black people in a way that she feels *she* has grasped it, when she began to construct a positive identity as a young woman. This black identity and Jamaican identity then become fixed as if they are an unchanging essence of herself. What is also notable about Georgina's relationship to experiences is that she appears to be challenged by the notion that each person has a different way of *experiencing* the same experience (see Husserl (1970 [1900])). This can be seen in the way she struggles to understand how her secondary school friends experience 'the 1970's and 1980s' in a different way than she does. This causes her anxiety and to reduce this anxiety, she takes solace in being with those such as her family or later, members of the African-Caribbean Society, who she believes share her view of the world.

Georgina appears conflicted about her freedom to react to discrimination or microaggressions in the workplace. Her choice in situations that she sees may

give rise to conflict is to either avoid the situation or say nothing. Georgina recognises she has a choice as she notes that her mother was more likely to stand up for herself. However, even though Georgina is aware of her choice, she remains conflicted over how she should react to negative treatment because of her fear of being seen as just another angry black woman.

Critical synthesis of Georgina's narrative

The story of Georgina is about a woman who comes from a loving and close Jamaican family. In Georgina's narrative there is a sense that it is from this base, that she takes up her position in the world as a black woman with a strong Jamaican identity. Her formative years appear to provide Georgina with a strong sense of identity and security, and this is further enhanced when in the 1970's and 1980s she 'becomes black'.

I interrogated Georgina's narrative using the hermeneutics of suspicion grounded in existential themes around bad faith, anxiety, freedom and choice, and postcolonial theory with specific regard to the cultural identity of the Jamaican diaspora. Georgina appears to have constructed a black Jamaican identity during a specific historical period in the 1970s and 1980s where social events and phenomena enabled black people to feel that they had a choice to view themselves in a positive way. This identity connected to her subjective experience of love and security within her family. I also interrogated Georgina's narrative with specific reference to the work of Hall (1994).

In response to her subjective experiences as a black woman Georgina feels she has a responsibility to other black women, to ensure that she always does well at work. However, she is beginning to recognise that her way of working, always trying to be the best and not messing up may be taking a toll on her. Her hope is that future generations of black women will recognise that they have a rightful place in organisations such as hers and in the world in general.

4.4 Summary of Findings

In the previous section, there was an analysis of each participant's individual experiences across their life span which is summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Reported experiences across life stages

Experience	Formative	Adolescence/ University*	Early Career	Present
Self-hatred	All except Rachel	Cynthia Lorraine Melanie Natasha	Cynthia Lorraine	Cynthia Lorraine
Being seen as different	Melanie Natasha Georgina	All	All	All
An experience of racism**	Lorraine Melanie	Melanie Natasha Rachel	Lorraine	Georgina
Rejection/belonging	All	All	Not reported	All
Working hard/achieving	Rachel Cynthia	All	All	All
Being the only black person in the 'room'	Natasha Georgina	Natasha	All	All
The importance of a black identity	Not reported	All except Lorraine & Cynthia	All except Lorraine & Cynthia	All except Lorraine & Cynthia

*This includes young adulthood. It should be noted, that Lorraine achieved her degree as a mature student in later life

** A number of participants didn't describe being a victim of racism. There appear to be different reasons for this

What became clear, when analyzing the findings, was the existence of common themes across all the participants' narratives. However, what may have been as a common experience, had a specific meaning to each of them. In this section, I will explore the common themes that emerged and then discuss theories that seek to account for individual differences in behaviour, or experience of a

phenomenon. I will then discuss how the findings reveal the way in which this group of women related to themselves and others.

4.4.1 Common themes

In the participants' narratives there were three common themes (see Table 4 below) which occurred across all their key life stages. The common theme *responsible to and for all black people* emerged in response to the question about what work meant to them now at the 'Present' life stage.

The common themes and their associated sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the participants' experiences is shown below:

Table 4 Three Common themes

Common Themes	Sub-themes	Number of participants reporting a sub-theme
Identify and identification	Being black Sameness and difference Rejection and belonging Being Jamaican Being special Being adored	All All All All (dominant Georgina) 1 (Lorraine) 1 (Natasha)
Working hard and achievement	Being smart Trying hard/achievement Limiting and being limited Never good enough Working hard/achievement	1 (Melanie) 1 (Lorraine) 1 (Rachel) All (dominant Cynthia) All (except Lorraine)
Responsible to and for all black people	Working hard/achievement Trying hard/achievement	All (except Lorraine) 1 (Lorraine)

4.4.1.1 Identity and Identification

This theme relates to how individuals see themselves. Regarding identity and what it meant to be black, the responses indicated the different positions that the participants took towards their blackness. Even if they eschewed it as an identity, they each had a relationship with it across their life span. This theme also relates to who they identified with, and what groups they felt they belonged to or were rejected by. This supports SIT as discussed in chapter 2 (see Tajfel &

Turner 1986). However, there was evidence that identification with one group and not another, was not as straightforward as SIT suggests; there was an individual meaning behind the identification.

For example, Lorraine spoke of identifying more with white people not because she phenotypically looked like them; rather they accepted her into the group because they saw her as *different* from other black people. Conversely, she felt rejected by black people who felt that she 'acted white'. While for Georgina, there was a sense that she identified only with black people who shared her idea of what it meant to be black. All participants (except for Lorraine, Cynthia, and Melanie), spoke in vivid terms about how they felt a sense of belonging to their family and wider Jamaican community which continues today. In existential terms, this common theme relates to the individual's search for identity, to be something; the experience of alienation from others; a sense of isolation and a yearning to belong.

4.4.1.2 Working hard and achievement

This theme appears to relate specifically to messages that the women received from their parents. Except for Lorraine and Melanie, the participants spoke about their parents' insistence that they work hard and achieve. However, the participants who spoke about this didn't give the impression their parents felt that they *had* to work 'twice as hard' because there was something wrong with them. It appears that their parents passed on their own experiences; that in the face of antiblack racism as a black person, you had to do more than white people to be at the same level. All the participants spoke about their pride in what they

have achieved. In existential terms, this illustrates the need to create meaning and value to their existence and for this to be made known through the tangible expression of achievement.

4.4.1.3 Responsible to and for all black people

All the participants described being in some way responsible to and for all black people. They believed that their individual actions would be construed as illustrative of the competency and character of all black people. This meant that they had to continually aim high, not fail and be role models. For example, Rachel spoke about not being able to mess up because people might say it was *because* she was black and therefore proof that *all* black people were not good enough. In existential terms, this illustrates the relationship the participants have towards freedom, choice, agency and responsibility. The desire to be free however, and to be an individual is limited by the negative stereotyping of black people.

4.4.2 Individual differences

It is when a clinician sees a client in psychotherapy, or as in the case of this research, captures personal life stories, that the complex issue of individual differences cannot be ignored. There are broadly two main psychological explanations for individual differences: biological factors such as heritable genetic characteristics (see Eysenck,1916-1967). The other main explanation is environmental or social factors such as early childhood experiences (see Freud,1856-1939 and Rogers,1902-1987). These explanations fit broadly within

the debate about the role of nature versus nurture in personality development (Cooper,1998).

In terms of the current research, there are potentially combinations of heritable and social factors that contribute to the differences in personality between individuals. In the stories of these women it is possible to see how these factors have shaped the development of their personalities. However, adopting this dualistic approach to understanding the source of personality differences ignores the complex interaction of environment and what can be described (according to the biological perspective) the internal disposition of the individual.

From an existential phenomenological perspective, there is not a denial of individual differences, indeed there is a recognition of 'existential givens' which relate to heritable and environmental factors (van Deurzen,2010). What is of concern, is how, through our experiences, we *construct* our subjectivity.

Regarding experiences, it was Husserl (1913) with his concept of *noesis* and *noema*, who recognised the distinction between what is experienced, (noema) and *how* it is experienced (noesis) (Langdrige,2007). What is of concern to existential phenomenologists is what it *means* to an individual to *experience* an experience in a *particular* way. Certainly Gadamer (1975), whose ideas were explored in chapter 3, described how our understanding of the world is situated within a specific historical and cultural context. This is pertinent when we consider the participants in this research.

These women lived most of their formative and adolescent years in a Britain with overt antiblack racism and at a time when black consciousness was in its ascendancy. Situated as they were in this context, in particular families, they made sense of their experiences as a result of the relationships they had and the messages they received from these relationships about their value and place in the world. However, there still remains the complex issue as to the extent to which their ‘blackness’ played a role in the debate about individual differences. While each of these women described different stories and experiences there was one overriding experience, that of antiblack racism. Their experience of blackness not being valued framed their actions in the world. Despite their different responses to racism, there seemed to be a common purpose to this response. I will now discuss this with regard to how these women related to themselves and others.

4.4.3 Relationship to self and others

In chapter 3, I discussed Sartre’s concept of the nature of existence. Sartre’s two modes of existence: *being-in-itself* and *being-for-itself* characterise our relationship with our self and who we believe ourselves to be. The third mode: *being-for-others* describes how we relate to others.

Table 5 Relationship to self and others

Relationship to ‘Self’	Relationship to ‘Others’
Being-in-itself, being-for-itself	Being-for-others
<i>The participants strive to become a being-in-itself to restore value to their blackness.</i>	<i>The participants objectify others and become objects for the other (the perfect role model), to restore value to all black people</i>

<p>The participants strive through work and achievement to become <u>something</u>. To hide from their nothingness. However, this nothingness relates to the negation of their blackness. As they reflect on their situation (being-for-itself) they opt to try and become a perfect role model, a being-in-itself, to restore value to their blackness and to be recognised as an equal human being.</p>	<p>The gaze of the other is experienced as a judgement on them as a <u>black person</u> and not an individual.</p> <p>The purpose of the white other is to validate their value as an equal human being and a representative of all black people.</p> <p>The purpose of the black other is to see them as a role model and strive to be like them in order to restore value to all black people</p>
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When the participants described encountering negative experiences which questioned their value as black women, their response was to attempt to create an identity which shielded them from what they were experiencing. Work and achievement became their identity as a way for them to see themselves as having value. Their relationship to others was also to construct them as 'objects'.

White people are seen to be in judgement of the value of the black person; they are positioned as an object whose purpose is to *recognise* that the black subject is of equal value to white people. Other black people are objects who need to fashion themselves to be like the participant, hardworking and high achieving. If all black people become like the participant in this way, then white people will value *all* black people. It is the participants' experience that their individual value is inextricably linked to the value given to all black people and this value is demonstrated by hard work and achievement.

Having now analysed the findings, I will proceed to the final chapter, to discuss the findings in detail with reference to the existing literature and the research question at the heart of this study.

5. Discussion

5.1 Chapter scope and objectives

In the previous chapter, I critically analysed each participant's experience across their lifespan to understand how, as an individual, each had constructed their identity. In this chapter, I will focus on how in general, the experiences of these women and the meaning they attached to these experiences, contributed to how they related to themselves and others in different contexts.

I will firstly, revisit the rationale for this current research, in light of the literature reviewed in chapter 2. I will then discuss the findings with reference to the research question and existing literature, before moving on to explore the implications for clinical practice and for future research. Finally, there will be a personal reflection on the process of undertaking this research.

5.2 Revisiting the rationale for this current research

A guiding principle of counselling psychology from an existential phenomenological perspective is the belief that we gain a sense of ourselves as we relate to others in context. Also, as mentioned in chapter 1 and 3, there is a lack of research within counselling psychology into black British existence. This

research aimed to fill that gap and was a study of the lived experiences of some black women who were part of the first significant black British population.

The stories that these women told were sometimes funny, sad, tragic, disturbing, inspiring or uplifting and covered the spectrum of human experience through their existence as second-generation black British women of Jamaican heritage.

The most emotional experiences for these women appeared to be when they reflected on their parents' experiences. They all noticed how their parents struggled within the hostile environment of Britain as Windrush migrants.

However, some experienced how their parents' legacy left them with vivid and happy memories about their culture and heritage, as well as a belief in themselves as valuable human beings.

In chapter 3, I explored the existential principle of embodied existence (Merleau-Ponty, 2013[1945]), experience in context (Husserl, 1913) and key existential concerns about human existence, such as freedom, agency, choice, and meaning (Sartre, 2003[1943]). These principles and concerns, it was argued, are universal. However, black existential philosophers critiqued what they described as this dominant European existential philosophy arguing that the negation of blackness and antiblack racism frames these principles and concerns in a different way for black people (Fanon, 1986[1952], and Gordon, 1999). What then is the reality of black existence? Is this existence different from white existence because of antiblack racism? If so how? My research question was:

What is the lived experience of second-generation professional black British women

of Jamaican heritage, what did this experience mean to them and how did it shape their relationship with work and achievement?

Although the knowledge sought from this question was primarily the individual meaning that each participant attached to their experiences and their identity, in order to discuss fully the implications for practice, the discussion will explore general experiences and meaning; while illustrating at a high level, the diversity of these women's individual experiences and the meaning they attached to them.

5.3 The relevance of early experiences

Our early experiences such as our relationship with our families give us a sense of our value as an individual (Erikson,1980); in existential terms this is the start of a lifelong relationship between our experience and our perception of ourselves and others (Merleau-Ponty,2013[1945]). Furthermore, as was discussed in chapter 2, Merleau-Ponty describes how these experiences take place in a context; one which changes as do we, so what we experience and how we are experienced, will never be the same (Merleau-Ponty,2013[1945]). With the exception of Melanie and Cynthia, the participants recalled fond memories of their early experiences with their families. Such experiences gave them a sense of their individual value.

Three of the participants specifically mentioned how their fathers had encouraged them to work hard and to aim for excellence in terms of their achievement. There is no evidence that this focus on achievement was aimed solely at daughters, it appears that this was what was expected of all the

children. It is possible that their fathers' experience of disappointment and humiliation in Britain was emasculating. One way to restore *their* sense of value perhaps, would for them to be seen in their children's eyes as a 'teacher' and 'mentor'; passing on the wisdom of their experience in the hope that their children would respect them in a way that society didn't. Through their children's achievement's, *their* value could then be restored.

For the participants, their first significant experience within a white environment was at a nursery or school. This was their earliest experience of themselves as objects of either curiosity, derision or both when they interacted with white people. For most (Natasha, Georgina, Melanie, and Lorraine) this altered how they now related to themselves. The meaning that they derived from this experience was that they had less value than white people and their response was self-hatred. A notable exception was Cynthia whose self-hatred began in the home when she experienced, what Cross (1997) and Gordon (1999) describe, as black antiblack racism mainly from her mother. For Cynthia and Lorraine, self-hatred became a life-long feature of their existence. Cynthia separated herself from black people yet at the same time wanted to save them from themselves. Lorraine on the other hand, identified more positively with white values and culture.

What compounded the self-hatred or low self-esteem which continued for the participants from primary into secondary school was the wider context of a Britain during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The education system in particular regarded black children as social problems, lacking ambition and not

capable of learning (Mullard,1973). For example, we see Melanie passing the Eleven Plus with the highest mark in the education authority, yet still on the lower ability table. Melanie's subsequent confusion over her treatment led her to conclude that something was wrong with *her*.

What appeared to be a protective factor for some of the participants was religion. Rachel and Cynthia in particular described the importance of Christianity in their lives. However, for Rachel the experience appeared to be both protective and stifling; whereas for Cynthia, it provided both safety and control. Melanie and Georgina spoke about how Rastafarianism influenced them during their adolescence and played a critical part in shaping a new relationship with their blackness.

Another protective factor for some of these women was the stability of their home life and the extent to which they were exposed to Jamaican culture. Rachel, Natasha and Georgina, spoke about growing up in very Jamaican homes in which both Jamaican and wider black politics were discussed. Indeed, Rachel described being in a black home, black church and black school. What she noticed about her predominately black school, however, was the low expectations that the white teachers had of black girls. This was an experience shared by Melanie. For the participants, whether they were in a predominately 'black' or 'white' school, it was often their encounter with white teachers which was significant and was evidence that their teachers saw them and all the other black children as different from the white children.

5.4 Black existence and antiblack racism

It was the work of Fanon (1986[1952]) discussed in chapter 2, which highlighted how the negation of blackness, slavery and antiblack racism positioned the black subject as an inferior being. Therefore, the 'essence' of black people as they are thrown into the world, is that they have less value than white people. However, notwithstanding how difficult these early experiences were for these women, with reference to Merleau-Ponty's ideas (2013[1945]), these experiences did not have to define who they were to become in other contexts across their lives. The findings to some extent support Merleau-Ponty's thesis as each participant described a number of different experiences that changed their lives and identity. However, the fact that they were *black* women continued to frame significant experiences and influence how they related to themselves and others in the world. With the exception of Rachel, all the women described how most of their formative years were characterised by self-hatred, low self-esteem, self-destructive behaviours and or difficult relationships with other black people.

The 1970s and what Cross described as the period of 'negro to black' identity transformation was acknowledged by Natasha, Georgina and Melanie in particular as an historical moment when they changed their attitude towards their blackness. During this period for many black people like Natasha, Georgina and Melanie, the discourse around blackness was of 'becoming conscious' and as Hall (Windrush, 1998) and Sewell (1998) observed, for those black people in the British context, there was a sense that you were either conscious or you were not (Windrush, 1998). This led many to adopt what Gilroy (1993) described as an

essentialist type of black identity; while Hall (1994) observed that the route to this blackness for these young black Britons was through Jamaican Rastafarianism and roots reggae music.

In the findings, Georgina, described that for her becoming black also meant becoming Jamaican. She regarded the two as inextricably linked. Furthermore, she saw her blackness as authentic and she judged the authenticity of other black people against her black identity. In the case of Melanie, she describes how she eschewed her Indian heritage and described herself from then on as an African woman. Gilroy's argument is that these examples of an essentialist type of black identity are akin to the white nationalism it purports to challenge. Further, the creolization of Caribbean heritage (as exemplified by Melanie's mix Indian heritage) and the interconnectedness of European, African and Caribbean history, meant that such a purist 'African' black identity rooted in a 'unified' past black African identity is a myth (Gilroy,1993). However, what I feel is most important here are the *symbolism* and the meaning that such an identity held for these women. They could now see themselves as black women with value and pride. As previously described, for many of the participants their experience of antiblack racism led to a struggle with self-hatred. I would argue that for some it would seem that the only way they could survive psychologically was to create a 'sense of self' that acted as a buffer against the relentless negativity towards their blackness.

For those who had now adopted a new black identity whether essentialist in nature or more fluid, the question was would this now be sufficient for them to

at last recognise their equal value and for others to see this too? The findings reveal that even for these women who described a transformation in their relationship to their blackness, their experience of themselves and their way of being in the world was still focused on proving the value of their blackness particularly in a work context.

5.5 The relevance of work experiences

For the participants, their way of being in a work context related to their early experiences at school and in many ways was a continuation. It was when the women described their experiences in a work context, it became apparent, that for them, their experience remained one in which they felt their individual endeavours or capabilities were not recognised. They were devalued, or they had to continually strive for perfection. Further, there is evidence that they believed that black people were still viewed through a lens that sees blackness in a negative way. Their response to this continued experience was to still work harder, achieve greater and at all costs not fail in order to challenge these stereotypes. To be clear this quest for achievement has a specific meaning for these women. This way of being towards work and achievement should not be taken to mean what may typically be regarded as a manifestation of an existential need to be 'something'. Work and achievement for these women transcended purely individual needs, for them it meant that they could demonstrate that *all* black people were *something* in that they had equal value to white people.

Achievement for these participants appears to have been something tangible; it is something that can be 'seen', measured and valued. For these women, hard work and 'ordinary' achievement was not enough. Extraordinary achievement is what they aimed for as this would give them power and influence. Both Natasha and Rachel describe this. It appears that they felt that with this extraordinary achievement, they could not fail to be noticed and valued as black people; and that they would then be in the best position to inspire other black people to achieve in a similar way.

5.6 The relevance of the relationship with the black 'other'

It is clear from the findings that the relationship with black people has a significant meaning in the construction of the identity of these women. I would argue that what the findings provide is evidence that when the black subject encounters the black 'other' there is a noticing, an acknowledgement that transforms the 'I' to 'we'. In other words, there is recognition that *'we' are all black people*. Therefore, what the individual black person achieves, who they become, impacts on all other black people for good or bad. This message of the symbiotic nature of the 'I' and 'we' in black identity was evidenced in the findings when some of the participants recalled, their parents joy and pride at seeing other black people achieve. When Melanie describes noticing the black people who deliver the tea, this noticing transforms this encounter into a meaningful connection as she states that they could be her aunts or parents. Also, she imagines that these people are smart, they are capable of so much more. There is a sense that in this encounter, she imagines they see her as a capable successful black woman who is a role model for them to aspire to. Such recognition and

relationship to the black 'other' adds a significant responsibility to the black individual. However, what is also significant, is that Melanie imagines that the white people in the room only see 'black' people which includes her. For this reason, she makes a conscious decision not to pour the tea. This relationship with the other is of a different nature and has a different meaning in black existence than the universal existential concept of *being-for-others* (Sartre,2003[1943]). As existential phenomenological philosophy maintains, we only come into being as we relate to others within a context. However, for the black subject their identity is also predicated *specifically* on the value of all *black* others.

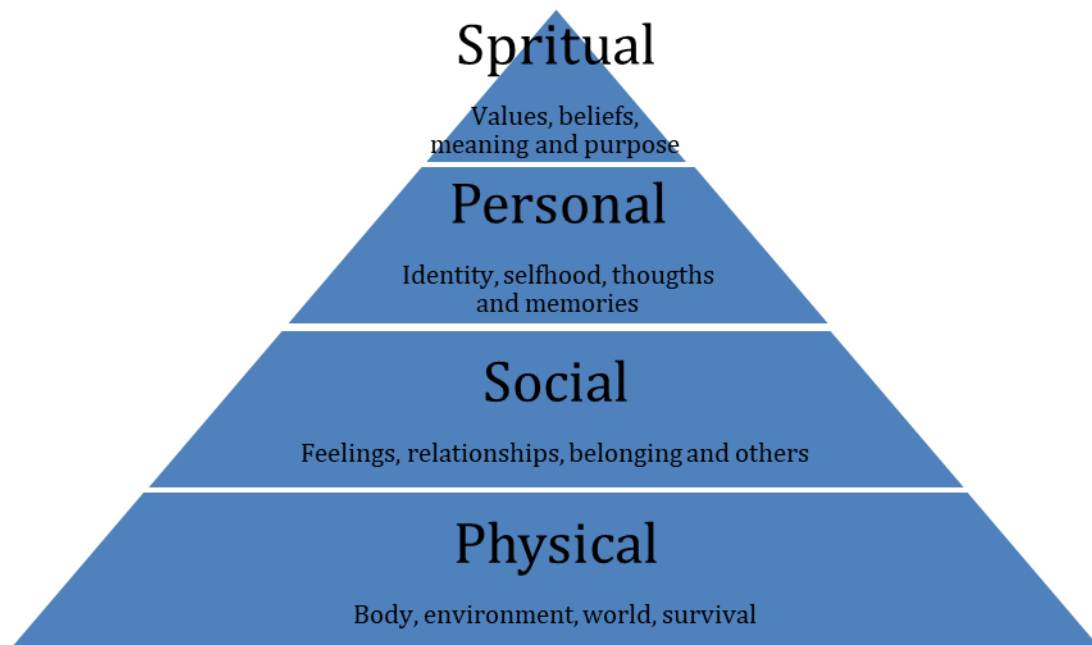
5.7 Implications for clinical practice

In light of the previous discussion, there is, I believe, a need for clinical practice to evolve to more adequately meet the needs of black clients such as these, who may present with burnout, depression, anxiety, or perfectionist ideation. The implications for practice extend to what approach is appropriate as well the role and expertise of the therapist. As a counselling psychologist from an existential perspective, I would be looking for a framework and a therapeutic approach which is informed by existential principles and concerns, yet has a focus on black existence.

5.7.1 The 'Four Worlds' of human existence

The Dimensions of Existence, known as the 'Four Worlds' is a theoretical framework based on the work of Binswanger (1946) and developed by van Deurzen (2010). This framework can be used in clinical practice to enquire into

a client's existence and to understand how this existence shapes their way of living in the world. It assumes that there are broadly four realms of human existence as depicted in the model below:



van Deurzen's Dimensions of Existence model (2010)

Underpinning this framework is the assumption that as humans our existence is experienced within and across each of these dimensions. However, as with any framework or approach, it is the role and skills of the therapist that I feel are most important in the therapeutic encounter. Given the findings, I believe that there are specific skills and knowledge required of a therapist working with black clients.

5.7.2 The role of the therapist

The findings in this research reveal that black British existence requires an understanding of how antiblack racism frames the existence of black people in a

way that is fundamentally different from white British existence. The therapist needs to be aware of the psychological burden that such women bear with regard to the responsibility they feel to and for other black people which is linked to their experience of the negation of blackness.

When thinking about the role of the therapist, it would be easy to suggest that black clients should only be seen by black therapists as they would have experienced this type of existence. However, that assumes that all black people hold the same position towards their blackness. As the findings show, this is not the case. For example, a black client may perceive a black therapist as not good enough because they are black, only valuing the expertise of a white clinician. Therefore, what is important is that the therapist, whatever their ethnicity has the training, knowledge and expertise to recognise the different positions towards blackness as they explore the client's existential concerns. What is also essential is that this expertise is underpinned by the critical therapeutic skills described by Rogers (1967). This has implications for the training of counselling psychologists which I address in the following section.

5.8 Implications for training

As mentioned in chapter 2 (section 2.7), to date, while some training institutions have included the topic of race and culture within their curriculum, this is not a mandatory requirement. Added to this, where the topic is taught, in my experience there does not appear to be a clear objective to the module or a requirement that the subject is taught by an expert in the field.

As discussed in chapter 2, there is a lack of existing knowledge within counselling psychology of black existence in the UK. For trainees from a black heritage, the impact is that there is lack of understanding of the impact of their experience on their existence while trainees from other cultures, are denied an understanding of black existence from different black cultural perspectives.

In the light of this current research, I recommend the following changes to training:

1. Critical race theory, post-colonial theory, and black existentialist ideas should be included within the core academic modules, offering a critique of existing existential phenomenological and psychological theories. An understanding of black existence would provide trainees with an insight into how this existence challenges some of the universal principles of European existential philosophy
2. The delivery of training specifically from the critical perspectives identified above should be undertaken by individuals with a sound academic and research track record in these perspectives. This is of fundamental importance to ensure that trainees receive training from experts in this field.

5. 9 Suggestions for further research

This current research focused specifically on professional second-generation British women of Jamaican heritage. The second-generation of black British people of Jamaican heritage was the first significant black population born in the

UK. Today, there is at least a third or fourth-generation. Also, since the Windrush Generation, a new wave of black people from the African continent have arrived in the UK and it is they that now form the majority of the black population (Gov.UK,2018). There is emerging evidence from literature from contemporary young black women such as Adegoke and Uviebinene (2018), Hirsch (2018) and Eddo-Lodge (2017) that race, racism, value, identity and belonging remain concerns that impact the daily lives of young black women today.

Future research could include:

1. The lived experience of second-generation professional black men of Jamaican heritage, this will provide knowledge of what ways their experience is similar or different to black women. Also, because Jamaican men in particular have been stereotyped as at best, only good at sport and worst as criminals, there is a need to enquire into the lives of those who have achieved senior positions in the workplace.
2. The lived experience of second-generation professional black men or women born in the UK from other Caribbean heritage. Although there are racial, cultural and historical similarities between all people of the Caribbean there are also differences. For example, some islands have a different ethnic composition to that of Jamaica. Also, there is knowledge to be gained about the experience of living in Britain with a Caribbean identity often unnoticed because of the dominance of Jamaican culture.

3. The lived experience of the third-generation of Jamaican men and women is another potential area of research. These are the children of my participants. What would be interesting to understand is the extent to which their experiences are the same or different to their parents and grandparents. Also, their parents and grandparents lived through a critical period of social history for the black diaspora in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. How is this third-generation affected by current social phenomena? For example, 'Black Lives Matter', the concept of 'intersectionality', and the '#metoo movement'?

4. There remains scope to understand if different work sectors have an impact. For example, a recent report into the career experiences of black female professors in academia (Rollock,2019) reveals some psychological challenges faced by women in this specific sector. The lived experience of professional Jamaican women in the NHS would seem to be a useful topic, given the long history of women from this heritage working in this area.

Finally, since the arrival of the Windrush Generation, the black population in the UK has become more diverse, and those of Jamaican or indeed any other Caribbean heritage are no longer in the majority. There is, therefore, opportunity to research into the lives of other black people, from different heritage, both middle-class professionals as in my research as well as those from other social backgrounds.

5.10 Implications of the research beyond counselling psychology

This research has implications within any social field where the experiences and outcomes of individuals from groups who have been traditionally 'othered', are of concern. For example (at the time of writing), during the current Covid-19 crisis, the apparent disproportionately high number of non-white NHS and social care healthcare workers who have died of the disease in the UK has triggered a national debate. As someone who works within the NHS, I am aware of speculation about the significance of the role of the cultural background of these workers. There appears to be an emerging narrative that among some non-white foreign-born groups, there is a 'culture' of demonstrating a high level of commitment to caring for others, striving for perfection, and hiding feelings of vulnerability. What may be considered general characteristics that could be attributed to any number of individuals, have become spoken of as cultural 'traits' and used to explain how individuals from some groups may be more inclined to gravitate to or remain in high risk roles.

This research has shown how the experience of being 'othered' frames the existence of individuals from traditionally oppressed groups. For example, their existence within a British context will all too often be a struggle with a sense of belonging and the experience that their knowledge, skills and expertise are not valued in the same way as that of their white colleagues. In terms of the concept of culture, this research reveals that for example, for black individuals, culture is regarded as an essence rather than a subjective social experience. Therefore, to enquire into the lived experience of individuals from oppressed groups, requires

an understanding of how, within a context that devalues their existence, they experience (among other factors), their culture, family, gender, race and class; and what meaning they attach to their experiences and how this shapes their particular way of being in the world as they attempt to restore value to their existence.

5.11 Reflection

The most challenging but rewarding aspect of the research was interviewing the participants and analyzing the findings. Talking to these incredible women about their lives made me reflect on my own experiences. When they spoke about the difficult experiences that their parents endured because of racism, it reminded me of the pain that I felt watching my parents try in different ways, to negotiate the hostile environment that they often found themselves in, while trying to maintain their dignity and pride. However, I was also reminded of the positive experiences during the 1970s and 1980s when there was an atmosphere of both hope and pride among many young black people like me who embraced the idea that we were all 'young, gifted and black'!

With regard to the specific analysis of the findings, it was Lorraine's narrative that I found most difficult. Her story about how her father endured racism and that he held on to a reminder of this hurt was vivid, also the cruelty towards Lorraine herself exemplified in her story about the cutlery was heartbreaking. I was however, challenged by Lorraine's narrative in another way. Of all the participants, I felt that she was least like me (or the rest of the participants). However, upon reflection, I realise that although she may have had a different

way of trying to be accepted as being of equal value, I and all the other participants wanted this too. The research has also revealed to me how rich my cultural heritage is and how important a recognition of this has been to my sense of value and pride in myself as a black woman.

6. Conclusion

This research study into the experiences of some of the daughters of the Windrush Generation revealed how the lived experience of these women within Britain helped shape this generations' relationship with their selves and others.

The research highlighted a need within the field of counselling psychology for a greater understanding of the lived existence of black people in the UK. This knowledge provides the field with a different perspective on existence.

Furthermore, it demonstrates the limitations of European existential philosophy in relation to the existence of black people and illustrates the importance of black existential philosophy's contribution to existential thought.

The research reveals how a particular group of people negotiated the construction of a 'sense of self', in relationship with others in a context. It showed how for this group of individuals the negation of their blackness, meant for them, that their attempts to construct their subjectivities, required that *they* restore value to their blackness. In chapter 2 we saw a discussion of what it meant to have a 'restored' black identity. This illustrated a general philosophical tension around how we gain knowledge of ourselves; whether it is objectively discovered or created through our individual lived experience. While existential

philosophy is rooted in the latter, as the research revealed, this still left these black women with a dilemma. How were they to construct a black identity through their lived experience within a context of antiblack racism?

Many of these women rose to the call of Du Bois (1994[1903]) and Garvey (1970), to work hard and achieve. However, in a work context, even those with a 'restored' black identity, continued to experience negative stereotyping of their blackness. There was a realisation that any effort to be seen as an individual relied on blackness itself being regarded with equal value to whiteness. What these women's stories reveal is that their experience of the existence of being black was framed within a context of the devaluation of blackness. As they interacted with others in their social world, they experienced that their individuality was judged through the lens of their blackness. They therefore worked hard to achieve to demonstrate the value of all black people, with the hope that with this in place, they could come into being as an individual. However, there was also a sense that their endeavours transcended purely individual needs. All these women displayed a genuine commitment through their work to improve the lives of future generations; to see young black people flourish and take their equal place in society.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Application for Ethical Approval and Risk Assessment

Middlesex University Department of Psychology Ethics Committee Application for Ethical Approval and Risk Assessment

No study may proceed until approval has been granted by an authorised person. For collaborative research with another institution, ethical approval must be obtained from all institutions involved. If you are involved in a project that has already received ethical approval from another committee or that will be seeking approval from another ethics committee please complete form 'Application for Approval of Proposals Previously Approved by another Ethics Committee or to be Approved by another Ethics Committee'

UG and MSc STUDENTS: Please email the completed form to your supervisor from your University email account (...@live.mdx.ac.uk). Your supervisor will then send your application to the Ethics Committee (Psy.Ethics@mdx.ac.uk). You should NOT email the ethics committee directly.

PhD Students and STAFF: Please email the completed form to Psy.Ethics@mdx.ac.uk from your University email account (...@mdx.ac.uk)

This form consists of 8 sections:

- 1) Summary of Application and Declaration
- 2) Ethical questions
- 3) Research proposal
- 4) Information sheet
- 5) Informed consent
- 6) Debriefing
- 7) Risk assessment (required if research is to be conducted away from Middlesex University property, otherwise leave this blank. Institutions/locations listed for data collection must match original letters of acceptance)
- 8) Reviewer's decision and feedback

Once your file including proposal, information sheet, consent form, debriefing and (if necessary) materials and Risk Assessment form is ready, please check the size. For files exceeding 3MB, please email your application to your supervisor using WeTransfer: <https://www.wetransfer.com/> this will place your application in cloud storage rather than sending it directly to a specific email account. If you/ your supervisor have confidentiality concerns, please submit a paper copy of your application to the Psychology Office instead of proceeding with the electronic submission.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Application No.:	Click here to enter text.	Decision:	Click here to enter text.	Date:	Click here to enter a date
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RISK ASSESSMENT (complete relevant boxes):

Required:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	Signed by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Programme Leader
Date:	Click here to enter a date.					

LETTER/S OF ACCEPTANCE/PERMISSION MATCHING FRA1 (RISK ASSESSMENT) RECEIVED (SPECIFY):

	Date	From	Checked by
All	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Admin
Part	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Admin
Part	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics Admin

DBS Certificate(s) Required? (complete relevant boxes):

DBS certificate required?	Click here to choose an item.	Seen By:	Choose an item.
DBS Certificate Number:	110100120979752	Date DBS Issued:	11/10/13

Summary of application (researcher to complete)

Title of Proposal:	Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage
Name of Principal Investigator/Supervisor	Neil Lamont
Name of Student Researcher(s) and student number(s)	Jacqueline Sewell – M00501332

1 Summary of application (researcher to complete)

Title of Proposal:	Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage		
Name of Principal Investigator/Supervisor	Neil Lamont		
Name of Student Researcher(s) and student number(s)	Jacqueline Sewell – M00501332		
Please click one of the following:			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> PHD/MPHIL Student <input type="radio"/> MSc Student <input type="radio"/> Staff			
Proposed start date	01/04/17	Proposed end date	01/12/17
Details of any co-investigators (if applicable) N/A			
1. Name: Click here to enter text.	Organisation: Click here to enter text.	Email: Click here to enter text.	
2. Name: Click here to enter text.	Organisation: Click here to enter text.	Email: Click here to enter text.	
3. Name: Click here to enter text.	Organisation: Click here to enter text.	Email: Click here to enter text.	

Topic/Research Area (tick as many as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Psychosocial	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational	<input type="checkbox"/> Forensic	<input type="checkbox"/> Developmental	<input type="checkbox"/> Sport & Exercise
<input type="checkbox"/> Cognition & Emotion	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychoanalysis			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clinical	<input type="checkbox"/> Psychophysiological	<input type="checkbox"/> Health		

Methodology (tick as many as apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Qualitative	<input type="checkbox"/> Experimental	<input type="checkbox"/> Field Experiments
<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire		
<input type="checkbox"/> Observation (humans and non-humans)	<input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of Existing Data Source/Secondary Data Analysis	

1.1	Are there any sensitive elements to this study (delete as appropriate)? <i>If you are unclear about what this means in relation to your research please discuss with your Supervisor first</i>	YES
1.2	If the study involves any of the first three groups above, the researcher may need a DBS certificate (Criminal Records Check). PG students are expected to have DBS clearance. Does the current project require DBS clearance? <i>Discuss this matter with your supervisor if you unsure</i>	NO
1.3	Does the study involve ANY of the following? <i>Clinical populations; Children (under 16 years); Vulnerable adults such as individuals with mental or physical health problems, prisoners, vulnerable elderly, young offenders; Political, ethnic or religious groups/minorities; Sexually explicit material / issues relating to sexuality; Mood induction; Deception</i>	NO
1.4	Is this a resubmission / amended application? <i>If so, you must attach the original application with the review decision and comments (you do not need to re-attach materials etc if the resubmission does not concern alterations to these). Please note that in the case of complex and voluminous applications, it is the responsibility of the applicant to identify the amended parts of the resubmission.</i>	NO

By submitting this form you confirm that:

- you are aware that any modifications to the design or method of the proposal will require resubmission;
- students will keep all materials, documents and data relating to this proposal until completion of your studies at Middlesex, in compliance with confidentiality guidelines (i.e., only you and your supervisor will be able to access the data);
- staff will keep all materials, documents and data relating to this proposal until the appropriate time after completion of the project, in compliance with confidentiality guidelines (i.e., only you and other members of your team will be able to access the data);
- students will provide all original paper and electronic data to the supervisor named on this form on completion of the research / dissertation submission;
- you have read and understood the British Psychological Society's *Code of Ethics and Conduct*, and *Code of Human Research Ethics*.

2 Ethical questions – all questions must be answered

2.1	Will you inform participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time, without penalty?	YES
2.2	Will you provide a full debriefing at the end of the data collection phase?	YES
2.3	Will you be available to discuss the study with participants, if necessary, to monitor any negative effects or misconceptions?	YES
2.4	Under the Data Protection Act, participant information is confidential unless otherwise agreed in advance. Will participant anonymity be guaranteed?	YES
2.5	Is this research or part of it going to be conducted in a language other than English? <i>Note, full translations of all non-English materials must be provided and attached to this document</i>	NO
2.6	Is this research to be conducted only at Middlesex University? <i>If not, a completed Risk Assessment form - see Section 8 – must be completed, and permission from any hosting or collaborative institution must be obtained by letter or email, and appended to this document, before data collection can commence. If you are conducting an online survey or interviews via skype or telephone whilst you are at Middlesex University you do not need to fill in the risk assessment form.</i>	NO

If you have answered 'No' to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and / OR 6 above, please justify/discuss this below, outlining the measures you have taken to ensure participants are being dealt with in an ethical way.

Please note - the interviews will not be undertaken at Middlesex University because my participants will typically be London based. I have chosen to base the interviews at Bromley Counselling Service (BCCS) in Bromley. From Bromley, there is fast and easy access to and from central London and I am also familiar with working at BCCS offices. I have undertaken a risk assessment of the BCCS offices - please see Section 7 - 'Independent field/location work risk assessment form' for the details of my risk assessment.

Are there any ethical issues that concern you about this particular piece of research, not covered elsewhere on this form? If so please outline them below

I will adhere to the current BPS Code of Human Research Ethics.

The key principles as they relate to research with human subjects include:

- Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities
- Scientific Integrity
- Social Responsibility
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm

I will ensure that all aspects of my research adhere to these principles by ensuring that I have regular supervision and therapy to discuss my research. I will also ensure that I screen my participants (I will speak to all potential participants by telephone before deciding whether to use them in the study) to ensure that I do not include anyone who is currently in the throes of psychological distress.

I will adhere to the current BPS Code of Human Research Ethics.

The key principles as they relate to research with human subjects include:

- Respect for the autonomy, privacy and dignity of individuals and communities
- Scientific Integrity
- Social Responsibility
- Maximising benefit and minimising harm

I will ensure that all aspects of my research adhere to these principles by ensuring that I have regular supervision and therapy to discuss my research. I will also ensure that I screen my participants (I will speak to all potential participants by telephone before deciding whether to use them in the study) to ensure that I do not include anyone who is currently in the throes of psychological distress.

There are specific ethical issues that I have considered with regard to this particular research, these are described in my proposal under the sections 'Ethical Considerations' – page 29 and 'My role as a researcher – taking a reflexive approach' – page 27. They are summarised here as follows:

- The intended sample group will be sourced from a small population (professional Black British women of Jamaican heritage) and there is a risk that my participants could be easily identified. To mitigate this, I will need to be extra vigilant in anonymising the data - for example, making no specific reference to their actual job but rather stating that they have a 'senior management role' within the private sector.
- I am from a similar background to my proposed participants and this could potentially increase the risk of bias. To mitigate this, I will engage an independent reviewer of Black British Jamaican heritage to challenge and review key elements of my research including my interpretation of the data.

3 Research proposal – PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PROPOSAL FOR DETAILS

This section should contain sufficient information to enable the ethics committee reviewer to evaluate the ethical status of the research. A research proposal would normally be around 2 A4 pages in length (about 800 words) excluding references and additional materials. The headings below are indicative, and you may choose whether or not to use them.

Aims and Hypotheses/Research Questions

Supporting literature and rationale

This section should include a brief discussion of previous research in the area which justifies your choice of topic, aims, hypotheses and research questions

Method

The four sub-headings under method (design, participants, materials and procedures) should contain details about the design, participants, recruitment (including how and from whom will informed consent be obtained), provision of information and, where necessary, deception.

Design

Participants

Materials (if appropriate)

Procedures

Details of the procedures, and what the participant will experience as part of the research are critical.

Analysis

You should also include some discussion of how the data will be analysed.

References

Full references and any materials developed or adapted for this research should also be included (this includes but is not limited to questionnaires, rating scales, and images). If due to the addition of these materials your file exceeds 3 MB, or if materials cannot be scanned for copyright reasons, they should be clearly identified in the research proposal. You need to provide references for Questionnaires which have been previously published/validated.

Participant Information sheet



New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling
61-63 Fortune Green Rd
London NW6 1DR



Psychology Department
Middlesex University
The Burroughs
London NW4 4BT

Date:

THIS IS A RESEARCH PROJECT ENTITLED:

“Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage”

The research is being carried out by: Jacqueline Sewell for the **Doctorate in Counselling Psychology** from NSPC and Middlesex University

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take your time to read the following information carefully, and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take your time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

One of the concerns within the field of counselling psychology is how individuals develop a sense of their identity and how their identity is shaped by their experiences and relationships. Work plays a key part in the lives of most of us for a significant period of our life and forms a key part of our identity. Why we choose the work we do, our attitude to work, our relationship to work, and our experiences in a work context can be influenced by, and also influence, how we see ourselves.

It has been nearly seventy years since a significant group of migrants from Jamaica (and other Caribbean islands) arrived in the UK, yet the field of counselling psychology knows very little about the lived experiences of this group or of their offspring born in the UK – in particular those offspring who have excelled in the world of work.

My study is interested in how the identity of second generation, professional Black British born women of Jamaican heritage has been shaped by their experiences of growing up in the UK and how these experiences have influenced their relationship with work. The research aims to capture the stories of how these women have managed to excel in their chosen career and to understand how their thinking and behaviour has led them to where they are today professionally.

You have been asked to participate in this study, because you replied to my request and you meet the criteria (professional, second generation Black British woman, of Jamaican heritage).

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate, you will be involved in a study that is concerned with capturing stories of experiences across a large part of a life span as they are being lived within a social, cultural and historical context. The actual research process will involve you attending a single interview – which should last between 60 and 90 minutes. The interview will take place in a private room, at Bromley Community Counselling Service, 121 Masons Hill, Bromley BR2 9HT. The interview will be taped and transcribed verbatim. Your transcript and that of the other participants will be analysed to look for the main themes emerging from the interview questions.

All transcripts and data will be anonymised. Any potentially identifying data about you such as your name or occupation will be either changed or not included to ensure your identity is protected at all times. Although you will only be required to undertake one interview, there will be a follow up meeting where the transcript will be presented to you for verification. The whole study (e.g. analysis and write up) could take up to a year.

What will you do with the information that I provide?

I will be recording the interview on a digital recorder, and will transfer the files to an encrypted USB stick for storage, deleting the files from the recorder. Although I will be transcribing the interview, I will not include any names or other details that you give me in the interview that would identify you in anyway. All of the information that you provide me will be identified only with a project code and stored either on the encrypted USB stick, or in a locked filing cabinet that only I will have access to. I will keep the key that links your details with the project code in a locked filing cabinet. The information will be kept at least until 6 months after final submission, and will be treated as confidential. If my research is published, I will make sure that neither your name nor other identifying details are used. Data will be stored according to the UK Data Protection Act and the Freedom of Information Act.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

It is very unlikely that participating in this study will cause you harm. However, in the interview, I shall be asking you about your experiences over your lifetime. It is possible that talking about some personal experiences may be upsetting, even distressing. Were this to happen to you during our interview, please let me know, and if you wish, I will stop recording and we will end the interview in a manner that respects your wellbeing. Although this is very unlikely, should you tell me something that I am required by law to pass on to a third person, I will have to do so. I will explain this to you in full before we begin the interview.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Although there are no direct benefits to you taking part in this research, being interviewed about your experience as a professional Black woman may give you the opportunity to reflect on what you have achieved, the obstacles you and previous generations have overcome, and what is important to your identity as a Black woman. Your experiences may be helpful to future generations of Black women as they embark on their careers.

Consent

You will be given a copy of this information sheet for your personal records, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign the attached consent form before the study begins. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you decide to take part you may withdraw at any time without any obligation or need to give a reason.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The study is self-funded

Who has reviewed the study?

All proposals for research using human participants are reviewed by an Ethics Committee before they can proceed. The NSPC Research Ethics Board has approved this study.

Expenses

Travel expenses will be reimbursed

=====

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

If you have any further questions, you can contact me at:

Email: workidentity.research@gmail.com

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the study, you may contact my supervisor:

Dr Neil Lamont

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling

61-63 Fortune Green Road

London, NW6 1DR

Email: nspcneil@gmail.com

5 Informed consent



New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling
61-63 Fortune Green Rd
London NW6 1DR



Psychology Department
Middlesex University
Hendon
London NW4 4BT

Middlesex University and
New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling

Participant Written Informed Consent Form

Title of study and academic year: ***“Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage.”*** Academic year: **2017/2018**

Researcher’s name: **Jacqueline Sewell**

Supervisor’s name and email: **Dr Neil Lamont – nspcneil@gmail.com**

- I have understood the details of the research as explained to me by the researcher, and confirm that I have consented to act as a participant.
- I have been given contact details for the researcher in the information sheet.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary, the data collected during the research will not be identifiable, and I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time without any obligation to explain my reasons for doing so.
- I further understand that the data I provide may be used for analysis and subsequent publication, and I provide my consent that this may occur.

Print name

Sign Name

date: _____

To the participant: Data may be inspected by the Chair of the Psychology Ethics panel and the Chair of the School of Health and Education Ethics committee of Middlesex University, if required by institutional audits about the correctness of procedures. Although this would happen in strict confidentiality, please tick here if you do not wish your data to be included in audits: _____

6 Debriefing



New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling
61-63 Fortune Green Rd
London NW6 1DR



Psychology Department
Middlesex University
Hendon
London NW4 4BT

Date:

Middlesex University and
New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling
Participant De-Briefing Letter

Researcher's Contact Details Jacqueline Sewell. Email: workidentity.research@gmail.com

Supervisor Contact Details: Dr Neil Lamont. Email: nspcneil@gmail.com

Study title: *Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage*

Dear Participant,

I would like to thank you for your participation in the research study: ***Work and Identity: The Lived Experience of Professional Black British Women of Jamaican Heritage***. The information that you shared during the interviews will contribute to a better understanding of how individuals develop a sense of their identity, how their identity is shaped by their experiences, and how this influences (and is influenced by) the work that they do.

Please remember that any data pertaining to you, as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analysed for this project, I plan to share the general findings through presentations, workshops, journal articles and press releases. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study please feel free to contact me at workidentity.research@gmail.com

I understand that sometimes research such as this may trigger difficult feelings. If you require further support, then useful contacts include:

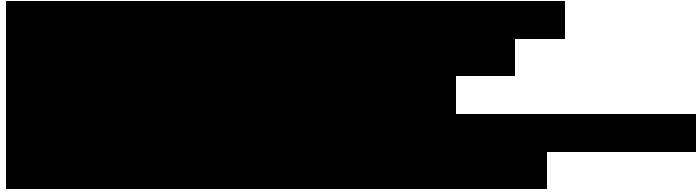
- BPS – Find a Psychologist - <http://www.bps.org.uk/psychology-public/find-psychologist/find-psychologist>
- UKCP – Find a therapist - <https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/find-a-therapist/>

I would like to remind you that as a researcher, I am bound by the code of ethics of the British Psychological Society. This code can be found at: http://www.bps.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/code_of_human_research_ethics.pdf. If you have any concerns regarding this research, then please contact me or my supervisor using the contact details at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline Sewell

Appendix B – Confirmation of ethical approval



Hi Jacqueline

Thank you for clarifying. I can now confirm that you have been granted ethical approval by Chair's action.

Kind regards,

Sasha Smith

Academic Registrar

Deputy Course Leader: MA in Existential Coaching and MA in Existential and Humanist Pastoral Care (subject to validation with Middlesex University)

New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling

Tel: 0203 515 0223