

ENTERTEXT

Crossing Over: Postmemory and the Postcolonial Imaginary in Andrea Levy's *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*

Author: Claudia Marquis

Source: *EnterText*, "Special Issue on Andrea Levy," 9 (2012): 31-52.

Abstract

The term "crossing over" refers to the Caribbean relocation of peoples through forced and voluntary migration, whether in the context of the Middle Passage and slavery or in the later journeys that took subjects from the colonies to the imperial metropolis. For Andrea Levy, narratives of crossings and acts of memory, such as re-memoration and postmemory, complicate and re-form our understanding of history. This is especially evident in her recent novel, *The Long Song* (2010), which explores the history of slavery and Black Atlantic routes of travel and trade, but her earlier works also attest to her keen interest in historical reclamation, especially for (post)colonial subjects in motion. Notably, *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and *Small Island* (2004) depict the diasporic condition of the Caribbean subject, highlighting the dynamics of colonial oppression and their legacies through stories about institutionalized and casual forms of racism in everyday life. I argue that Levy's *Small Island* recovers the colonial past, parceling out history in narrative fragments, in ways that are comparable to George Lamming's re-memoration in *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), a novel by the Windrush migrant author about the pre-independence, island history of Barbados. Just as Lamming's narrative is told from various narrative perspectives, Levy's *Small Island* introduces multiple narrators who challenge imperial history, disclosing 'hidden' perspectives. Where Lamming focuses primarily on life in the colony, Levy tracks the Caribbean migrant's "differential incorporation" (Stuart Hall) into British society. In *Fruit of the Lemon*, historical trauma is conveyed through postmemory or as a "retrospective witnessing by adoption" (Marianne Hirsch). Like Lamming, Levy asks the reader to cross over, moving between the centre of empire and its (former) colonies to reclaim a wider sense of history, identity, and community. In so doing, she participates in the wider postcolonial process of working through the trauma of British imperialism.

Crossing Over: Postmemory and the Postcolonial Imaginary in Andrea Levy's *Small Island* and *Fruit of the Lemon*

Claudia Marquis

We live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted—knowingly or unknowingly—in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives.

—Ben Okri¹

Drawing on the work of Andrea Levy and George Lamming, this essay explores what colonial inheritance means for an Anglophone, postcolonial generation of subjects whose history and identity are complicated by the colonised subject's passage 'home' to 'Mother England.' The "crossing over" of my title refers to the migratory subjectivity formed in crossing and recrossing the Atlantic through real and imagined travels. In particular, I situate Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and *Small Island* (2004) as responses to writing by the Windrush generation of migrants, which includes such notable authors as Sam Selvon and Lamming whose texts depict the experience of arrival and settling into Britain. I argue that we need to consider the importance of imagined returns performed by these Windrush authors, particularly Lamming, in order to grasp the wider re-envisioning of black British and Caribbean identity formation. As a means to interrogate the notion of Caribbean (diasporic) textual returns and crossings, I refer specifically to Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), which purposefully revisits pre-independence Barbados, in particular the riots of 1937 and their consequences, to reclaim a history from below. Like Lamming, whose narrative brings together various subjective perspectives, Andrea Levy, a generation later, brings several modes of narrative into play and offers a number of takes on history. Levy's writing, as I will demonstrate, suggests a radical un-making of history or subversive representation of the past that, according to Linda Hutcheon, is characteristic of postmodern historiographic metafiction.²

While I do not want to ignore the influence of modernism on Lamming or postmodern fiction on Levy, I suggest that we might perhaps more fruitfully consider the shared aesthetics of Windrush writing with its criss-crossing manoeuvres through Black Atlantic space and time. In particular, turning to works by both authors, I analyse the ways in which they make use of memory-work, "living" history (as Pierre Nora puts it),³ in order to reclaim history as an embodied experience rather than as a disciplinary body of knowledge. While Lamming tends to focus on the role of communal memory and cultural formation in a transatlantic context, Levy—like many Caribbean women authors—places

emphasis on the family chronicle in a late twentieth-century context of migration and exile. Both authors bring together multiple perspectives, foregrounding the problematic role of memory and colonial discourses as they come to shape the narrative of self and community. In her novels, Levy presents an intimate criss-crossing of desires and hostilities, needs, and provisions, in the daily life of the household, where, after fifty years of assimilation, the landlord is still the Empire.⁴ I shall demonstrate that Andrea Levy offers a counter-imperial inscription of black British history and identity formation, grounded firmly in the domestic, familial sphere as a vehicle for acts of memory and a wider reclamation of the past, reaching back to the Caribbean's traumatic foundation.

Memory-work and Reclamation

An important line of modern historiography acknowledges a close, if problematic, relationship between novel and history: both, in fact, properly call on the imagination in engaging with the past. R.G. Collingwood's view of the grounding force of the historical imagination remains cogent: "Historical thinking is that activity of the imagination by which we endeavour to provide this innate idea [the past] with detailed content."⁵ An emphasis on detailed content may entail bringing new historical actors into view, imagining an historical space beyond that of the established record, or turning to different narrative forms in order to express history as a lived, culturally specific experience. In my view, Lamming and Levy recognised the writer's duty to both fiction and the archive as complementary sources of information and inspiration. In doing so, both writers bring the past into memory. In this context, it is helpful to consider Pierre Nora's "fundamental" distinction between the work of memory and history:

Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past.⁶

The challenge faced by history largely issues from the expansion of the field of legitimate historiographic practice and production to include informal histories and, indeed, informal historians. More to my point, however, the contest between history and memory seems especially to be a mark of the intensity of modern—and postmodern—interest in the function and status of memory itself.

Lamming and Levy, in fact, are not so much concerned with memory as with remembrance. Homi Bhabha refers to time-lag, a gap that joins, as central to the postcolonial commitment to social and cultural reclamation:

Where these temporalities touch contingently, their spatial boundaries metonymically overlapping, at that moment their margins are lagged, sutured, by the indeterminate articulation of the 'disjunctive' present. *Time-lag keeps alive the making of the past.*⁷

There is an undoubted cross-over between postcolonial fictive works of remembrance and historiographic metafiction, allowing for a shared interest in alternative, even dissenting histories.⁸ However, the postcolonial text of remembrance also seeks to reclaim the past and thus returns to the question of history. The historically-oriented fiction produced by Lamming and Levy seems more properly regarded as memory-work, performed for a British and Caribbean society. Further, I argue that this fiction, as memory-work, is very close to what Marianne Hirsch calls postmemory, connected to cultural trauma: “Postmemory characterizes the experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation, shaped by traumatic events that can neither be understood nor recreated.”⁹ Such stories seem to me to demonstrate vividly the force of Ben Okri’s insight into the power and function of narrative or “stories planted in us early or along the way.”

For Hirsch, postmemory elicits a sense of “living connection” with the past, particularly through responses to photographs.¹⁰ For Levy, in *Fruit of the Lemon*, an album of photographs also plays a central role in giving new life to past-present relations. When Faith Jackson discovers photographs in her aunt’s house in Jamaica, she observes:

Underneath this photo were two fat photograph albums. I looked around me. To pull them out I had to take all the photographs off the shelf and carefully lift out the books. I felt like a burglar.

[...]

My family took up nearly half the album. The rest of the pages were full of people I didn’t recognise. Young, old, middle-aged and everything in between. Black and white photographs, brown photographs, coloured snaps with thumbs in the corner. People standing stiff and formal or on a beach or larking around somewhere lush.

[...]

I slowly turned all the pages of the albums and stared into their faces.
(201-3)

When Faith examines the album, she feels as if she is doing something illicit by ‘stealing’ a look at the past. She fumbles with the photographs, struggling to get them back into order, when she is discovered looking through them. This episode speaks of a disturbing, almost ungovernable interest in this past that will not be denied.¹¹ As the narrative unfolds, Faith discovers the histories concerning several of the family members, whose faces she sees, many for the first time, in these photos. Ultimately, these images, and the stories to which they allude, do indeed connect her to her traumatic inheritance.

Hirsch’s discussion of trauma texts as examples of postmemory focuses largely on the Holocaust, but she also considers other contexts, such as colonialism, particularly the fate of indigenous peoples who have all too often been displaced, decimated, and, for generations, denied collective identity.¹² Likewise, Sam Durrant observes that “the impact of both events [Holocaust and colonialism] exceeds the moment of their historical

occurrence, acquiring the disturbed, belated chronology of trauma.”¹³ To offer an example, Maori activist, Tariana Turia claims that Maori culture still suffers from “post-traumatic stress disorder” because, for the Maori, colonialism took the form of a holocaust.¹⁴ We need also consider the erasures of memory brought about through the Middle Passage and the violence of slavery itself.¹⁵ Drawing on the work of Orlando Patterson, Françoise Vergès refers to slavery as a secret “social death,” which has resulted in a fragmented knowledge of the past: “Memory is a wounded memory, and the wound seems impossible to heal, to be integrated into history.”¹⁶ She also quotes Toni Morrison who describes the need to confront the trauma of slavery as follows: “until you confront it, until you live through it, keeps coming back in other forms. The shapes redesign themselves into other constellations, until you get a chance to play it over again.”¹⁷ Trauma may entail forms of repression, silencing, and other symptoms of distress, but it also returns, often in disturbing forms until it is confronted and worked through.

Hirsch’s work sketches out the possibility of a less disabling relation to the past. Postmemory may relay trauma to later generations. For Hirsch, the action of postmemory produces an “intersubjective transgenerational space of remembrance, linked specifically to cultural or collective trauma.”¹⁸ Furthermore, stories and images contribute to the articulation of this “space of remembrance,” amplifying the act of “imaginative investment, projection and creation.”¹⁹ She describes this “retrospective witnessing by adoption” as follows:

It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one’s own life story. It is a question, more specifically, of an ethical relation to the oppressed or persecuted other for which postmemory can serve as a model: as I can “remember” my parents’ memories, I can also “remember” the suffering of others.²⁰

The particular history we encounter in Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* works in the very way Hirsch describes, beginning in anxieties, apprehensions, and hostilities, related to a prior history, one troubled by European colonisation and slavery. Lamming, in his typically oblique style, describes the incredulity of the school boys who laugh at the suggestion that anyone could possibly own a Barbadian:

Slave. The little boy had heard the word for the first time and when the teacher explained the meaning, he had a strange feeling. The feeling you get when someone relates a murder. Thank God, he wasn’t ever a slave. He or his father or his father’s father. Thank God nobody in Barbados was ever a slave. It didn’t sound cruel. It was simply unreal. The idea of ownership. One man owned another. They laughed quietly. Imagine any man in any part of the world owning a man or woman from Barbados. (57-8)

In that laughter, we register a certain kind of generational distance and, at the same time—in the act of denial—something of the force of an original, traumatic event, in line with Hirsch’s analysis of memory as familial inheritance. Nevertheless, the boys’ quiet laughter is also part of a textual event, and, like the Holocaust photograph, it works upon us with

the sharply affective force of what Hirsch (following Barthes) terms a *punctum*, prompting an ethical relation. Through flashes of narration and perception, postmemory posits a vital relation to the slave experience in the Americas, as recalled and remade in later cultures. Such texts call attention to new ways of reading the Black Atlantic experience, illuminating connections among places and events and introducing new lines of sight. Lamming, in Barbados, preparing for migration to Trinidad, is in that line; Levy, in London, taking stock of late twentieth-century Caribbean migrant subjectivity, stands there too.²¹

Traumatic Histories: Colonialism in Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*

Lamming's work revives a traumatic past that seems to undo personal and cultural identity, not just in its own moment, but through successive generations, marked most incisively by the trauma of slavery for Black Atlantic subjects. In this context, trauma defies aestheticisation, even as it inevitably turns towards particular moments and casts the experience of the individual in terms of a larger, common narrative. Édouard Glissant's remarkable essay, "The Open Boat," highlights the potency of this persistent narrativising of an event as the telling sign of a collective traumatic condition. If trauma is experienced in a belated manner, at some later moment when events force an ancient suffering into communicable form, it potentially lays claim to a new kind of historicity through the delayed emergence of the narrative.²²

Imaginative recovery of the past, in the case of slavery, surfaces in peculiarly interesting fashion in the historical fiction of Andrea Levy, not only in *The Long Song* (2010), a neo-slave narrative that deals explicitly with the topic of remembrance, but also in the more oblique, diasporic recollections of her earlier novels, which deal with West Indian migration from the Caribbean to England. These novels draw aspects of their structure and something of their power to disturb not only from a mass of oral histories but also from earlier migration novels, especially Lamming's *The Emigrants* (1954) and Sam Selvon's ferocious narrative of arrival, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956). Both these novels, however, are formed in the suffering moment. Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, written in exile, might be read as an expression of belated memory because it deals with events in the West Indies a decade prior to his arrival in the United Kingdom. In a recent interview with David Scott, Lamming has discussed the origins of this novel, particularly the political events of 1937 and 1938, touching on the "silent subconscious accumulated experience" of growing up in what he describes as a 'bad' village: "all of these things are in some way secreted and at some moment comes out."²³ This description sounds very much like the return of repressed memory. For this reason, I suggest *In the Castle of My Skin* may properly serve as an exemplary text for an understanding of postcolonial trauma narratives, including Levy's postmemorial stories.

In the Castle of My Skin projects the sense of undone identity allusively, as a more or less comic quest to take possession of this place, Barbados. Central to this quest is the person of its first narrator, G, whose life overlaps with the life of the author to some extent, which in turn suggests we might profitably approach the novel as strictly autobiographical fiction: the route taken by G can be understood as the route taken by

Lamming himself. The coming of age of G, marked by his double passage from village language to well educated Caribbean English and from Barbados to the larger world of Trinidad, shadows Lamming's own history, extending as that did to migration first to Trinidad, 1946, then, in 1950, to England.²⁴ Aimé Césaire argues that writing the self is an attempt to recapture a place from which one originates, a return home. It enables an imaginative grasp on a world; you have to go out in order to look back. The "backward glance" to use Lamming's own expression,²⁵ then, is not retrogressive, but, paradoxically, a self-determining effort to press forwards—perhaps an exemplary, modernist project.

Lamming's novel does not submit to the first generic rule of autobiography, however, by which the truth of the narrative of events is effectively underwritten by the constant presence of the author as first-person narrator. Rather, the autobiographical voice is multiple: the novel's history of a singular subject is complicated by the seductions of other acts of narration and perspectives. We see this partly in its active measuring of story-kind against story-kind: the oral and the literary, the regional and the metropolitan, novel and fable. Arguably, this narrative multiplicity, with its consequential fragmentariness, does not suggest modernism so much as it anticipates the postmodern development of historiographic metafiction. Events turn into textual facts as they are caught up by the novel's range of narrators in a polyvocalised set of narratives, which denies the authority of any single, or official history. Perhaps, in the struggle against a single history, Lamming achieves what Édouard Glissant calls "the cross-fertilisation of histories [...] repossessing both a true sense of one's time and identity."²⁶ *In the Castle of My Skin* places emphasis on a local world that official society barely notices—the village—and transfers narratorial authority to a crowd of speakers. Through its scrupulous concern with an insular moment, the novel generates an affective understanding of this particular Caribbean society's historical condition.

In the polyvocalised world of Lamming's novel, the traumatic legacy of slavery is evident almost everywhere, in everything. G recalls moments in his childhood in which this inheritance surfaces in village life, especially in historically patterned socio-economic and political relations. Ma and Pa give a vivid account of the days of slavery, providing an alternative to official, colonial histories. Moreover, their immediate experience, as subjects who fear losing possession of their own home, says as much (perhaps more) about the persistent ramifications of slavery as an event that impinges on the present moment of the novel. Not until decades after Barbadian independence, in fact, was any serious effort made to reform the patterns of tenure and possession of land introduced with emancipation: ownership restricted, for most, to portable 'chattel' houses, with land leased from plantation owners, often from generation to generation. The consequence of this kind of tenure was a somewhat paradoxical attachment to the land itself. Lamming's Miss Foster says: "This land ain't the sort of land that can be for buy or sell [...] 'Twas always an' 'twill always be land for we people to live on" (239). Lamming calls attention to the symbolic, affective, and socio-political consequences of the loss of land claims for the individual and the community. When Pa loses his family holding, his social standing is diminished. This homeless man is consigned to the Alms House; this turn of events erodes his sense of agency and heralds his death (247-57). For Pa, Ma, and the wider

community, the loss of home can be seen as a repetition of colonial dispossession and exile. Elsewhere, in “Journey to an Expectation” (1960), Lamming reflects on the characteristic conditions of loss and exile that underpin the colonial condition:

Papa was a colonial; so am I; so is our once absolute Prospero. For it is that mutual experience of separation from their original ground which makes both master and slave colonial. To be colonial is to be in a state of exile.²⁷

In both of these texts, we see the Caribbean diasporic writer’s imagination at work, reflecting on repeated histories of exile and dispossession, linking slave culture from the distant past to the more immediate history of colonial rule. Lamming, a migrant living in England as he writes of plantation society, attests to a traumatic chain of exilic moments.

With no memory of family, G tries to come to terms with the problematic nature of his historical situation. He pursues his mother’s memories of the past and attempts to reclaim a story of origins, but cannot find a cohesive, complete narrative. G observes: “for memory I had substituted inquiry” and “[m]emory was again pursuing the line of discovery which inquiry had left off.”²⁸ The novel repeatedly teases out what memory means and how it functions, especially in G’s relationship with Ma and Pa. As I have noted, Pierre Nora speaks of memory as being “borne by living societies.” History, on the other hand, is “the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer.”²⁹ This is where analysis that stays with the postmodern and metafictional elements in Lamming’s novel must fail for all its instructive illumination of the novel’s textual play. The desire for historical reclamation is met, in my view, by an approach such as Marianne Hirsch’s, which focuses on sympathetic post-generations as witnesses to the past. Her emphasis on the important work of postmemory, through inquiry, reflection, and imaginative engagement, seems closer to the central practices of a post-slavery, post-Windrush novel like Lamming’s with its persistent interest in picking up the gossip, anecdotes, arguments, and tales of Barbadian culture, recalled by a writer living in exile.

Migration Stories and Rememoration in Levy’s *Small Island*

A similar jostle between competing perspectives occurs in Andrea Levy’s *Small Island*, and again this characteristic structure seems to focus attention on the novel’s insistent problematisation of history. Levy’s and Lamming’s stories are linked by a shared focus on the transition to decolonisation, albeit in different eras and places. Like Lamming, Levy mediates between storytelling traditions. She does so by deviating from the linear narrative of the domestic novel: she parcels out the novel’s action as well as its narration. In Lamming’s novel, the voices we hear are all Caribbean, indeed all Barbadian, and, in a sense, represent the historically determined problems of his small village through sharply opposed perspectives. This clash sees G in conflict with his schoolmaster, just as the village is ferociously at odds with the island’s landlords and government officials. It also sees G separated from his mother as well as Pa and Ma by his desire to leave the island, turning exile into something other than economic need. Later in the novel, we see another clash of perspective as G listens with sympathy to lessons about blackness from

Trumper, his older friend, who talks about his experiences in America. In these instances, different perspectives are expressed through distinctive voices. At the same time, particularly through G's shifting uses of language, we see changes occurring at the linguistic level, reflecting different points of connection and relation to places and communities.

In *Small Island*, recollecting the major period of West Indian migration to Great Britain, Levy clearly writes out of an immediate experience of a West Indian British extension of the postcolonial, but, even more than with Lamming, we encounter here different modes of expression, different cultural registers that mark the impact of ideology on the personal. By mixing together the voices of the newly arrived West Indian immigrants and British peoples living in England, Levy highlights the contest between socio-cultural orders, which both bind and separate the lives and minds of the four characters central to the novel. Each of Levy's four major characters takes responsibility for a part of the story as it develops, so that the reader comes to know them all, intimately. A sense of the past is pieced together from their separate testimonies, rather than articulated by an all-seeing narrator with a single, unifying voice and viewpoint. Different visions, various subjectivities, come together in *Small Island*. Multiple narrators are by no means exceptional in the English history of the novel, but they do seem highly characteristic of border-crossing postcolonial fictions, where timelines become maps, directing us into different lives, and spatial relations lead us in and out of history. Through the introduction of various voices and shifts through time and space, Levy calls attention to points of connection among peoples as well as moments of collision and difference in the making and unmaking of history.

Such moments of contact and collision are also evident in Levy's intertextual references, which tend to subvert the ideological priorities of empire through parodic moments. For example, Hortense's grandmother takes a textual symbol of imperial conquest—Wordsworth's poem on daffodils—and recites it in Jamaican dialect or nation language. For Hortense, the poem represents cultural legitimation of an Englishness that (for most of the novel) she aspires to possess. As such, she has committed it to memory:

I wander'd lonely as a cloud,
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils.³⁰

Miss Jewell has it otherwise: "Ah walk under a cloud and den me float over de ill. And me see Miss Hortense a look pon de daffodil dem."³¹ Levy often gifts us brilliant, funny moments like this, but it is worth noting that the larger movement of the narrative is equally parodic, crafted by means of reworking genres. What we have, in effect, is a novel that reverses the direction of imperial romance: the adventure of colonialism's new hero now brings the Caribbean black subject back across the Atlantic to the very centre of Empire, London itself. The stabilising attribution of position, ethos, values, language, and literary decorum to those who possessed power within the imperial establishment is replaced by a transnational flow of culture, language, and tradition, calling into question the legitimacy of orthodox history.

Small Island in fact tells the story of the beginning of the diasporic shift that saw thousands of black West Indians migrate from the Caribbean to Britain. Levy's novel, that is to say, published in 2004, recaptures a singular historical moment—1948—and the arrival of 492 West Indians (including Jamaicans) on the S.S. *Empire Windrush*. Windrush has often been read as an event symbolic of the rise of multicultural, multiracial Britain, but it also belongs to a longer and complicated history of Black Atlantic migrations, which carry the force of cultural rupture and irrupt into culture, such as the traumatic migration of the Middle Passage, which carried African peoples into slavery. As Victor Ramraj has pointed out, the diaspora created by colonialism came eventually to include the counter-posed passage of Empire's peripheral, subject peoples to the metropolis itself.³² In the case of the immigrant from the West Indies, Jamaica especially, diaspora cannot be identified exactly with the large movement Ramraj discusses, let alone the kind of globalised movement from one territory to another that characterises modern/postmodern society, producing an exilic or diaspora subject and its consequent, migratory subjectivity. The Caribbean diaspora is haunted by prior passages. Furthermore, if migration to the metropolis changed the world scene for the Caribbean, as it clearly did, it has also come to function as a metonym for modern, multi-racial Britain. As Levy observes, Windrush inaugurates British multiculturalisms,³³ including especially an emerging sense of black Britishness.

Levy's novels, then, bear witness to the post-Windrush formation of multicultural, multiracial Britain, although it is also true that the record of this process includes an unnerving sense of history's wheels grinding, rather than turning. Late in *Small Island*, Gilbert, Hortense's husband, defends himself against her disdain when he is too quick to acknowledge some men "from home," but he adds for the reader's benefit, sotto voce, "I did not tell her that some days I was so pleased to see a black face I felt to run and hug the familiar stranger" (463). England, whose welcome was assumed by the West Indian immigrant, not least because of its willingness to spend West Indian lives in its own defence during World War II, quickly discovered all over again the threat of invasion when Caribbean peoples began to sail home to mother. By 1962, indeed, legislation had cancelled the general right of entry enjoyed by passport holders who were imperial subjects—as in the British Caribbean—limiting this right to those who met qualifications requiring a direct family connection. Nonetheless, even without continuing immigration, black migrants from Caribbean islands did settle in modern Britain, becoming generic West Indians (even to themselves), and giving a new turn to Daniel Defoe's description of the English as a "Mongrel Half-bred Race," as Ashley Dawson has reminded us.³⁴ If the history of this development leads towards Levy and her novels, it is also a history of persistent hostilities, all too often erupting in violence, but mostly stitched quietly into everyday social practices and attitudes. Decades after the action of *Small World*, in the 'England' half of *Fruit of the Lemon*, Faith Jackson wins a job in television, in the costuming department, apparently on the strength of her performance in the show for her fashion degree, where her tutor had appreciated her work, but with sentiments that irritate her, and us:

‘Your work has an ethnicity which shines through [...] A sort of African or South American feel which is obviously part of you. Don’t you find that exciting, Faith?’ As I was born and bred in Haringey I could only suppose that I had some sort of collective unconscious that was coming through from my slave ancestry. Or perhaps it was that I was just better than everybody else.³⁵

This account offers a double-voiced perspective. On the one hand, Levy presents the prevailing white English perspective of the black British subject as an exotic other. On the other hand, through the representation of internal discourse, Levy offers a view that both challenges and resists this act of othering, albeit in an ambivalent way.

Although *Small Island* is not the biography of a family, in speaking of the culture to which Levy’s parents belong, it presents something like a biographical representation of a generation. In this sense, it is a work of remembrance, actively bringing the past back to mind. While Levy herself is not one of the colonised, by virtue of her own family’s history, she is intimately acquainted with the experience of marginalisation in postcolonial Britain. Writing in 2004, as she explores the trauma of her Caribbean parents’ migrant experience in post-war England, she takes stock of the imperial metropolis from a point-of-view sharpened by their passage from the periphery to the centre. Paul Gilroy has spoken of the gathering experience of the British Black as “ambiguous assimilation,” “partial belonging.”³⁶ Levy and her generation surely display the signs of cultural division, even hybridity, as if the modern diasporic condition of moving between social identities, as well as between places, still demands a sense of self that is built around difference and transformation, speaking and acting in part as Caribbean, in part as Black, in part as British.³⁷ Stuart Hall offers a cogent account of this condition:

Caribbean culture is essentially driven by a diasporic aesthetic [...] Cultures of course have their ‘locations’. But it is no longer easy to say where they originate. What we can chart is more akin to a process of repetition-with-difference, or reciprocity-without-beginning. In this perspective, black British identities are not just a pale reflection of a ‘true’ Caribbeanness of origin, which is destined to be progressively weakened. They are the outcome of their own relatively autonomous formation. However, the logic that governs them involves the same processes of transplantation, syncretisation and diaspora-ization that once produced Caribbean identities, only operating in a different space and time frame, a different chronotope—in the name of difference.³⁸

Levy’s writing conforms to a “diasporic aesthetic” through its emphasis on difference, especially as evidenced through her use of embedded narratives. At the same time, her articulation of the diasporic experience, particularly in terms of temporal and spatial dislocation, calls attention to claims of the past on the present. Belated arrivals, detours through history, and journeys of return become part of a process for navigating a course through the world.

By moving to England, the two central West Indian characters in *Small Island*, Gilbert and Hortense, hope to shed one history and enter another. Hortense, in England, hopes to gain the unattainable power and privilege that could never be hers, even as a

light-skinned woman, in Jamaica. The mastery she wishes for herself is the mastery she had seen in her British teachers: “those white women whose superiority encircled them like an aureole” (69). Gilbert is less ambitious, more pragmatic. After the war he moves to England, expecting that, as an ex-serviceman, he would find a good job and a decent place to live, but the treatment he receives is very different:

“So how many gates I swing open? How many houses I knock on? Let me count the doors that opened slow and shut quick without even me breath managing to get inside [...] Man, there was a list of people who would not like it if I came to live—husband, wife, women in the house, neighbours, and hear this, they tell me even little children would be outraged if a coloured man came among them. Maybe I should start an expedition—let me trace it back and find the source of this colour bar [...] Eventually the originator of this colour prejudice would have to stand there before me. And I could say to their face, ‘So, it is you that hates all niggers, I presume.’” (215)

In Gilbert’s account of his personal experience of late colonial diaspora, raging despair illuminates the extremity of British hostility: colonial superiority, in the ‘Mother Country,’ proves to be racism.³⁹ Levy’s novel highlights the effacement of subjectivity in Britain as a continuation of the dehumanising dynamics of the colonial era. The West Indian remains outside English community: to be outside is to be made to feel outside humanity itself. Levy’s construction of this moment, binding it to another recent history—Caribbean wartime service—requires that we know the sense of alienation this entailed. For instance, when a child hears Gilbert, a Jamaican, speak, he says to his mother, “It speaks, Mummy, it speaks” (165). Children speak frankly, reflecting their elders’ often unspoken views as is evident in another case when Gilbert’s fellow immigrant and friend, James, becomes a target of racial abuse: “the white urchin [...] yelled up at James, “Oi, darkie, show us yer tail” (140). Colonial discourses, in this regard, persist into the postcolonial era of increasing contact in England itself.

For the Windrush generation, incorporation into British society was challenging. Stuart Hall has described this social development as “differential” because it fell short of migrant expectations: the migrant was forced to accept inadequate accommodation and employment, which matched neither talent nor training. Historically, many Afro-Caribbean subjects exchanged the diminishing opportunities available to them in their island societies for the tribulations of English working-class life and “informal segregation”⁴⁰ in Britain. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the experience of the Caribbean immigrant was not all of a piece as Levy shows us by bringing together the voices and various perspectives of Jamaicans, represented by Gilbert and Hortense, and white, English society, in Queenie and her husband Bernard Bligh. The relationships between these four characters are posited in dyadic terms: male and female, black and white, British and West Indian. The novel poses a question that it cannot fully answer: how do Gilbert and Hortense get to be at home in England? Their experience replays at a generational remove the patterns of differentiation and exploitation that were familiar under colonialism. Just as recollection of plantation society has a certain traumatic force when it makes its belated appearance in Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*, so the

“colony society” of the Windrush generation, represented in Levy’s novel, marks a late entry for writer living in contemporary, multicultural Britain. Here the birth of the mixed-race child, whom Hortense agrees to mother, comes to embody the past that speaks to the present. In this context, Levy’s novel performs a remarkable piece of remembrance, presenting a “haunting memorial of [who and] what has been excluded”⁴¹ Insofar as the modern novel recalls a hidden history of events that themselves catch up earlier histories, the text of remembrance has the depth and the immediacy of a postcolonial palimpsest.

The Familial Gaze, Postmemory and Traumatic Inheritance in *Fruit of the Lemon*

Testimonies to the traumatic moment, for Hirsch, whether stories or photographs, are regularly orientated towards the family and, in consequence, repeatedly fix on loss of emotional plenitude. *Small Island* is obsessed with the (im)possibility of finding for the Caribbean family an English place, a new home. In Levy’s earlier novel, *Fruit of the Lemon*, Faith, the British-born, black narrator, knows the Caribbean only through family stories told by parents who, like Gilbert and Hortense, migrated to England as part of the Windrush generation. For Faith, like Levy, England is home. At the level of familial experience, then, this opens up a complex that is comparable to the generational structure that sustains the play of memories for holocaust survivor families, where memory passes on belatedly to the next generation in the form of photos and stories. For Levy’s generation, growing up in Britain, the Caribbean figures as a postmemorial space.

Faith inherits her parents’ memories, but her own images of home are very different from the warmth and brilliance of their Caribbean island: “The village green with perfect lush grass sitting in dappled light, little thatched houses with windows and doors that looked too small, the pub, the post office, and the steeped church surrounded by yew trees and teetering grey gravestone” (116).⁴² This description may suggest that her generation is more fully socialised as British, but greater exposure to contemporary multicultural practice and freer incorporation into the institutions and customs of British society are not without tensions and contradictions. On the one hand, inter-generational tensions emerge. When Faith’s father visits the flat she shares with university friends, he asks, “Faith—your friends, any of them your own kind?” (28). On the other hand, the working class family of Faith’s closest university friend, Marion, treats her as one of their own: “Don’t be a stranger, Faith—it’s always lovely to see you.” (86). Yet, at the same time, racism exists alongside seemingly post-racial perspectives. For example, when Fred (the father of Marion, one of Faith’s friends) rants against the school that had disciplined his daughter, Trina, for rough behaviour:

‘She went and clocked some darkie. And this coon’s mum and dad come up to the school wanting to see Trina. They said she’d been bullying their daughter. Now their daughter is a great big, six-foot gorilla and Trina, as you know, is only small.’ (84)

Like a generation before her, such as seen in *Small Island*, Faith confronts race thinking and forms of exclusion in British society, even when that racism is not necessarily directed at her.

Stuart Hall has described British Black society of the late 1990s, as marked by a “new ethnicity, a new Black British identity,” formed not just in opposition to society at large, but also out of complicated internal differences: confident in black communal identity despite relative socio-economic disadvantages and enduring political hostilities. As an adult, Faith belongs to that “minority of Black people [who] have been able to occupy the interstices of the enterprise culture,” especially women, relative to young black men.⁴³ Yet, she still confronts xenophobia. When Faith is invited by Simon, her white flat-mate, to his country home, she is made to answer a series of questions about her identity:

‘And whereabouts are you from Faith?’

‘London,’ I said.

The man laughed a little. I meant more what country are you from? I didn’t bother to say I was born in England, that I was English, because I knew that was not what he wanted to hear.

‘My parents are Jamaican.’

‘Well, you see, I thought that,’ he began. ‘As soon as you walked in I thought I bet she’s from Jamaica.’

‘Just my parents are.’ I added, but he went on. (130)

This exchange catches contemporary English racism into the novel quite as clearly as the ranting diatribe from Marion’s father. The fact that she was born and raised in Britain makes little difference. Symbolically, she is positioned as an outsider and migrant.

Andreas Huyssen has noted the powerful impetus social and intellectual modernity has given to cultural memory:

The form in which we think of the past is increasingly memory without borders rather than history within borders. Modernity has brought with it a very real compression of time and space. But in the register of imaginaries, it has also expanded our horizons of time and space beyond the local, the national, and even the international.⁴⁴

This memory without borders translates into acts of “sympathetic memory,” when Levy forges associations between the present, the recent past, and remote times. Indeed, she stages the psychic effects of postmemory—memory crossing and re-crossing borders—most cannily when she tells the story of Faith’s psychic collapse (Part I) and her journey towards recovery (Part II). At the outset, ‘Part II: Jamaica’ proposes a rudimentary reconstruction of subjectivity: “Child, everyone should know where they come from” (86). At one level, however, this judgement seems to be supported by the work of the novel’s second half, which clearly retreats from the witty social romance of ‘Part I: England’, with its sharp critique of British multicultural, but racist society. In its place, Levy delivers a narrative of personal, familial, even domestic experience that has a very different depth of history to it, calling for a very different order of understanding.

Faith’s point of view and characteristic wit remain intact in the second part of the novel, but the narratorial perspective shifts from the focalising first-person narration of

Part I (almost entirely Faith's perspective) to the mixed narration of Part II. Faith herself becomes a listener and 'reader' as she gives her attention to testimonies or testamentary fictions. The accretion of these memories results in a remarkable portrait of the family across borders. The fragmentary family portrait challenges a sense of formal coherence; since each testimony switches from Faith's perspective to one or more Caribbean family sources. Each family member brings into 'public' memory distinct but genealogically linked histories from past generations. The second part of the narrative consists almost entirely on family voices, family 'snapshots', and memories. Levy's multi-vocal approach to history is comparable to Lamming's practice in *The Emigrants* and *In the Castle of My Skin*. Both authors are governed by a migratory logic (despite the differences in their diasporic conditions) because they choose to locate their writing in different places and times. Even if Lamming's novels seem more aggressively experimental, more formally demanding, Levy seems equally driven to find a form that catches the diasporic character of the colonial and postcolonial West Indian experience, investing much in the individuating power of acts of memory.

In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall describes the arrival of an "emergent new subject," arguing forcefully for a newly complicated sense of identity:

Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact [...] which the cultural practices then represent, we should think instead of identity as 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation.⁴⁵

Faith recovers what Hall refers to as "hidden histories" through her dialogues with her family in the Caribbean, particularly with her aunt who serves in effect as a family archivist. We might even argue that Faith's recovery from nervous collapse presents the shift away from what Stuart Hall describes as "the great aporia, which lies at the centre of our cultural identity"—with a return of "imaginary fullness or plenitude"—achieved when "these forgotten connections are once more set in place." In Faith's case, this move occurs with the startling sequence of historiographic fragments: the family stories.

For Faith, identity proves to be a striated production that depends on the process of representation: the continued narration and reclamation of fragmentary testimonies. The result, for her, but also for us as readers, is a kind of family album, where the place of the photograph is taken by snapshot family narrative.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, Levy creates one extraordinary moment in which the recovered past, which emerges in-and-between the fragments, is grasped with something close to ecstasy, imaginary fullness, a passion that almost collapses the sense of archive in upon itself.

Coral stopped by a small mound of earth; a tiny hillock on the flat of the garden. I put my foot on the mound ready to climb but Coral held me back.

'Have some respect, Faith,' she said. 'This is where your grandmother and grandfather are buried.'

I thought we were at the house of Violet Chance.

'No this is where your mummy and me grew up. This used to be our land.'

I had been to Blenheim Palace and stared transfixed at the romper suit Winston Churchill wore when he was planning his strategies for war. I had been to Hampton Court and listened for the screams in the long gallery. I had sat where Shakespeare courted Anne Hathaway. And drunk in the pub where Dick Turpin was captured. But...

'Here?!' I shouted at Coral. 'This is where you grew up? This is where Mum grew up...?'

'Hush Faith—don't shout.'

[...]

'Can we see the grave again?' I asked. I had not looked properly. All I had seen was the disturbed rounded earth. I had not knelt and pressed my ear to the ground. I had not laid flowers. I had not told them that I was their granddaughter from England. I had not left my respect. (255-56)

The passion with which Faith seizes the Caribbean past, represented in her family's history, suggests her need for an identity that might well be defined as cultural; in truth, however, the individuality of her voice and the specificity of her family relations give this moment of apparent plenitude a singular aspect. Faith links British public memory to her own private history; she registers the past in her black diasporic present, but she does not assimilate this recognition into a coherent diasporic cultural unity.

Consequently, moments of recognition emerge in Levy's narrative account, particularly through discontinuities, which enable the formation of identity as a matter of "becoming" rather than "being," much after the fashion outlined by Hall:

Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure a sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.⁴⁷

Levy's narrative calls our attention to points of positioning and repositioning. Faith quilts together recollections in such a way that her engagement with the past serves to authenticate the present moment and herald the birth of the latest arrival. Through her encounter with and recognition of shared family memories across borders, Faith herself is now symbolically born into a larger Caribbean family: "They wrapped me in a family history and swaddled me in its stories" (326).⁴⁸ She finds an alternative sense of historical belonging that rivals the national history of Britain. Nevertheless, as familial memory gets assembled, from generation to generation, so memory lays down lines of identity that depend on a history that variously incorporates rupture, crossing lines. This typical, eccentric, West Indian postmemory brings about a belated recovery of a past for this most recent generation returning to the Caribbean, where cultural memory has its roots. On the other hand, however obliquely, this memory is carried in narratives that, by the force of West Indian, diasporic settlement in Britain itself, must now include late twentieth-century layers of Black Atlantic experience.

In *Fruit of the Lemon*, black British postmemory teeters on the edge of what Eva Hoffman terms “spectral autobiography.”⁴⁹ This kind of text arises in and out of migrant experience where the writer’s memorial work takes the form of imagining a past life in the homeland with such intensity that it is as if that world actually exists in the here and now. Faith’s parents believe her nervous collapse can only be healed by going ‘home,’ a reality that takes the shape of the world they left in the period of the Windrush migrations; this imagining of the distant/present moment looks decidedly spectral, decidedly backwards-looking. Marianne Hirsch, for all her sympathy with Hoffman’s passionate yearning for the past, maintains that there is an important distinction between postmemory and spectral autobiography. She sees the latter as indeed a form of nostalgia, reconstructing the past as paradise; it is symptomatic of Hoffman’s “desperate desire to displace the relativity, the fracturing, the double-consciousness of immigrant experience.”⁵⁰ Double-consciousness, however, runs very deep in Levy, even if it is presented not so much in the moment, or in a single person, but serially across the text, in the embedding of those ancient family narratives within the larger narrative. Even as Faith listens to tales of her family’s ‘home’ in Jamaica and various Caribbean diasporic locations, she continues to identify with England as her home.

Faith’s feelings for Jamaica may be akin to the nostalgia that characterises the spectral autobiography, representing this past as a kind of “paradise.” However, ‘home’ remains a site of ambivalence. The very last section of the novel reclaims the imperial space with which Faith’s history began: “I was coming home. I was coming home to tell everyone. My mum and dad came to England in a banana boat” (339). As a child, Faith experienced shame when mocked by children who ridiculed her family’s history of Atlantic crossings through Windrush and slavery: “Your mum and dad came on a slave ship [...] They are slaves” (4). Through her visit with her Jamaican family, which helps her to understand Caribbean and Black Atlantic crossings from a postcolonial perspective, Faith learns to value her family’s past. Thus, mockery gives way to memory in Levy’s discourse. Before her return journey to England, Faith accompanies her cousin, Vincent, to house high on the mountain, overlooking Kingston, “pretty pink and white,” with a roof that sloped like a country church and tall windows that were “elegantly glazed with squares of glass like fine Georgian houses in England” (324). The true object of this visit, however, is not the grand house, but a shed out back, with “an opening for the door and two windows that had no glass”—“an unprotected place” (325): slave quarters. Inside this shed, Faith finds “wooden bunks like three large shelves up a wall,” catching back into memory the opening frames of her story, when to be teased about those banana boats was to think of illustrations of a slave ship: “There was the shape of a boat with the black pattern of tiny people laid in rows as convenient and space saving as possible [...] slaves in a slave ship” (4).⁵¹ That shed, calling narrative into image, sparks the flash of memorial *punctum*, establishing a relation to the oppressed or persecuted other. This connection can be seen as ethical because it brings together new ways of understanding and ‘remembering’ the suffering of self and others. When she reclaims the jibes and insults about her migrant history, she acknowledges the ways in which slavery, exile, diasporic formation, and migration have shaped both the Caribbean and black British experience.

She links together the disparate, fragmented histories that have pre-scribed her own, coming to terms with her transnational formation. Memory then, so long after the traumatic event of slave migration, is worked out firstly through the generations, but then proves to take the form of a “retrospective witnessing by adoption.”⁵²

Memory’s Ethical Relations

In *Fruit of the Lemon* and *Small Island*, Levy calls attention to the ways in which the legacies of colonialism, particularly of slavery and racism, continue to resonate in the present, in both Britain and the Caribbean. Her stories track shifts of consciousness, positioning and repositioning our sense of time and place. By the end of *Fruit of the Lemon*, Faith knows she will keep her deep, family history alive, including the stories that frame her sense of what it means to inhabit a British ‘home’ that, for most, has been confined to enclaves or “partial belonging.” She knows the Blackness of Britain, that is to say. Jamaica Kincaid speaks of her Antigua relations as possessed of very different attitudes from those of American blacks: her relatives, like Levy’s representation of the Caribbean family, engage in back-chat.⁵³ However, in so far as back-chat is the response of those who would otherwise be put down, Levy’s response to post-imperial arrogance is to allow Faith to answer back. Where the “bully boys” of her childhood tease her—“You’re a darkie. Faith’s a darkie”—now she has family chronicles to back her refusal to be defined by the playground insult and to support her emphatic counter-attack: “I am the bastard child of Empire and I will have my day” (327).

According to Ben Okri, the stories we live by and tell ourselves have the power to change our lives. Levy’s black British novels open up the possibilities of narrating life anew in several distinct ways. There is, for a start, their sheer inventiveness, the sly, sharp stories they tell, stories of making do and getting by—not least those that bring these novels to their beguiling conclusions. Her acts of narration are often tactical, offering a mode of resistance or negotiation, something of the “surreptitious and guileful movement” that Michel de Certeau identifies as “the very activity of “making do” as a tactic for survival in consumer society⁵⁴—like multiracial, multicultural Britain—or, in a different form, in the colonial Caribbean. More importantly, however, is the way that both of Levy’s novels, by the belatedness that they incorporate into their structures, bind narration to the action of memory. The play of memory always works in her fiction, as in Caribbean culture more largely, to set traumatic history circulating across generations. In this case, however, history pulls a larger, *reading* public into a sympathetic relation to the Caribbean past. These novels trace out black Caribbean, diasporic memory as a palimpsest of repeated unsettlement. In opening up *memory*, fiction gives to this *history* an affective or, in Dominick LaCapra’s term, an “empathic” force.⁵⁵ Levy’s work prompts a complex identification with those for whom slavery and exile form the ground of history. Whereas the memory of survivors operates more or less directly through the recollection of personal experience, postmemory as transgenerational memory works indirectly through representation and creation, extending the survivor’s memory to later and other generations, establishing an ethical relation to a past across borders. For all their detailed pleasures of observation and phrasing, Levy’s representations of Caribbean peoples

crossing and re-crossing the Atlantic bear witness to collective trauma. In performing this kind of witnessing work, Levy's novels get under our skin, catching us into the community of those who remember.

Endnotes

- 1 Ben Okri, "The Joys of Storytelling," *A Way of Being Free*. London: Phoenix, 1998, 46.
- 2 Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988, 105-23: "Historiographic metafiction [...] privilege two modes of narration, both of which problematize the entire notion of subjectivity—multiple points of view and an overtly controlling narrator" (117-18).
- 3 See Pierre Nora's introduction to *Rethinking the French Past: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, vol 1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001; also "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, "Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory," 26 (1989): 7-25. See also Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*. London: Verso, 1994; Samuel charts the formation of "perceptions of the past which find expression in the discriminations of everyday life" (17).
- 4 Mike and Trevor Phillips, *The Irresistible Rise of Multiracial Britain*. London: HarperCollins, 1999, 11.
- 5 R. G. Collingwood, "The Historical Imagination," *The Idea of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946, 247.
- 6 Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.
- 7 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 364. For use of the concept to cover "diasporic recollections," see Vijay Mishra's "Postcolonial Differend: Diasporic Narratives of Salman Rushdie," *Ariel* 26 (1995), 24.
- 8 I take the term "dissenting history" from Simon Featherstone, *Postcolonial Cultures*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005.
- 9 Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997, 22. See also Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29 (2008): 104-28.
- 10 Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," 104.
- 11 Hirsch, *Family Frames*, "Past Lives," 241-68.
- 12 In "Generation of Postmemory," Hirsch considers the "collective catastrophes" of recent decades and comments on the scope of "intergenerational acts of transfer": "The bodily, psychic, and affective impact of trauma and its aftermath, the ways in which one trauma can recall, or reactivate, the effects of another, exceed the bounds of traditional historical archives and methodologies" (104).
- 13 Sam Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning: J. M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris and Toni Morrison*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004, 3-4.
- 14 See *The New Zealand Herald* 31 August 2000: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=149643 [accessed August 19, 2011].
- 15 Hirsch's instances include American slavery, which presumably extends to slavery in the Caribbean ("Generation of Postmemory," 104, n. 1). See also Durrant, *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning*, 4.
- 16 Francoise Vergès, *Monsters and Revolutions: Colonial Family Romance and Métissage*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999, 14. See also the interview with Nicholas Ganes, "Postcolonial Challenges," *The Future of Social Theory*. London: Continuum, 2004, 197. See also Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982.

- 17 Ibid. Note also Sam Durrant's comments on Morrison's memorialisation of slave culture, and "the impossibility of ever coming to terms with the generation of the Middle Passage" (*Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning*, 85).
- 18 Marianne Hirsch, "Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory," *Visual Culture and the Holocaust*. Barbie Zelizer, ed., London: Athlone, 2001, 215-46. See also Hirsch, "Generation of Memory," 106.
- 19 Hirsch, "Generation of Memory," 106-7.
- 20 Hirsch, "Surviving Images," 10-11. See also Hirsch, "Projected Memory: Holocaust Photographs in Personal and Public Fantasy," *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present*. Mieke Bal, ed., Hanover and London: University of New England Press, 1999, 9.
- 21 Mike Phillips, reviewing his experience as novelist in the late twentieth century, cautions against ignoring the significance of historical conditions in a culture formed out of migrancy: "Franz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, the poets of Negritude, all wrote within a specific historical context and they are part of our history, but partly as a result of this history, the spokesmen and women of migration now tend to trace migrant identity to a pre-colonial and autonomous ethnicity, an autonomous nationhood, an ancient paradise, from which the migrants have been somehow exiled." See his introduction to *A Black British Canon?* Gail Low and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds. London: Palgrave, 2006, 18.
- 22 See Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD, and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 and Dominick LaCapra, *History in Transit: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- 23 David Scott, "The Sovereignty of the Imagination: An Interview with George Lamming," *Small Axe* 12 (2002): 107.
- 24 For a discussion of Lamming's language differentiations, see Claudia Marquis, "'Bombarded with words': Language and Region in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*," *What Country's This? And Whither Are We Gone?*, J Derrick McClure, Karoline Szatek-Tudor and Rasa E. Penna, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2010, 267-92.
- 25 Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*. London: Michael Joseph, 1960, 32.
- 26 Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. trans. J. Michael Dash, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989, 93. For more on the role of the Caribbean writer, see Silvio Torres-Saillant, *Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 275.
- 27 For this recollection in full, see *The Pleasures of Exile*. London: Michael Joseph, 1960, 226-29. Lamming puts things a little differently in the interview with David Scott, where he describes Barbados in 1938/39 as "semi-feudal": "It is a Barbados where there is no doubt at all about the location of power. It is a total plantation society and a garrison as well. One of the ironies of geography here is that this poor village is only five minutes walk from where the governor lives" (*Sovereignty of the Imagination*, 76). See also Mike and Trevor Phillips, cited above, fn.4.
- 28 George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, c.1991, 12. References henceforth to this novel are to this edition.
- 29 See Nora, "Between Memory and History," 3.
- 30 Andrea Levy, *Small Island*. London: Hodder Headline, 2004, 43. References henceforth are to this edition. For the original poem, see *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*. E. De Selincourt, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952, 216.
- 31 Levy, 43-44. Jamaica Kincaid also responds critically to Wordsworth's daffodils in *Lucy*. London: Macmillan, 1994, 29. Helen Tiffin observes: "The gap between the lived colonial or post-colonial experience and the imported/imposed world of the Anglo-written has often been

- referred to by Commonwealth post-colonial writers and critics as ‘the daffodil gap.’” See “Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues: Recitation and the Reclamation of the Female Body in the Works of Erna Brodber and Jamaica Kincaid,” *Callaloo* “On ‘Post-Colonial Discourse’: A Special Issue” 16.4 (1993), n.7 and Renu Juneja, *Caribbean Transactions, West Indian Culture in Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1996, 158.
- 32 See Victor Ramraj, “Diasporas and Multiculturalism,” *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures: An Introduction* Bruce King, ed., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, 214–29. See also Ashley Dawson, *Mongrel Nation: Diasporic Culture and the Making of Postcolonial Britain*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007 and Itala Vivan, “The Iconic Ship,” *Recharting the Black Atlantic: Modern Cultures, Local Communities, Global Connections*. New York: Routledge, 2008, 228.
- 33 Carol Burns with Andrea Levy, “Off the Page: Andrea Levy,” *Washington Post*. 24 June 24 2004: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A52272-2004Jun18.html> [accessed August 19, 2011]. See Stuart Hall on the arrival of the *Empire Windrush*: “This event signified the start of postwar Caribbean migration to Britain and stands symbolically as the birth date of the Afro-Caribbean partner black diaspora”; he adds that it has likewise been understood as symbolizing the emergence of multi-racial Britain. See Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora: Home-Thoughts from Abroad,” *Small Axe* 6 (1999): 1.
- 34 See Dawson, *Mongrel Nation*, 6.
- 35 Andrea Levy, *Fruit of the Lemon*. London: Headline, 1999, 31.
- 36 Gilroy, *Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*, 155; see also Gilroy’s comment on the effects of the 1971 Immigration Bill on black settlement (31).
- 37 Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Jonathan Rutherford, ed., London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, 223-237. Hall observes: “The diaspora experience [...] is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (235). Hall goes on to characterise these differences for the Caribbean in terms of mixes, blends, “the aesthetics of the ‘cross-overs’” (236). Hall argues that “third generation young Black men and women know they come from the Caribbean, know that they are Black, know that they are British. They want to speak from all three identities” (Hall, “Old and New Identities; Old and New Ethnicities,” *Culture, Globalization and the World System*. A. D. King, ed., [Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991], 59.) See also Mike Phillips on this factor in migrant experience more broadly: “the authentic identity of many migrant communities begins with the tension of operating several different selves at the same time” (*Black Canon?*, 28).
- 38 Hall, “Thinking the Diaspora: Home Thoughts from Abroad,” 8 and 10.
- 39 For a compelling account and analysis of modern racism, see Paul Gilroy’s *Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack*, 43-ff. Both Lamming in *The Emigrants* and Selvon (especially) in *The Lonely Londoners* put this kind of experience on the fictional record, at the very moment of migration. See also Mary Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005.
- 40 For a more detailed discussion of the Black community in the 1960s, see Hall, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, The State and Law and Order*. London: Macmillan, 1978, 350-53.
- 41 Bhabha, *Location of Cultures*, 198.
- 42 Mike and Trevor Phillips observe: “If you were born in the Caribbean and shared that moment of arrival [through Windrush migration], and lived through the dreams and the changes, it gives you a peculiar little shiver to think that when your children look past you they don’t see the colours of the Caribbean, bright green and vibrant red and the endless blue of sea and

- sky. What they see is England.” Nevertheless, they would say, if they are themselves from the Caribbean, “Our children’s origins are in us” (*Irresistible Rise*, 397).
- 43 Stuart Hall, “Frontline and Backyards: The Terms of Change,” *Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader*. Kwesi Owusu, ed., London: Routledge, 2006, 129. In this regard, when “hustling culture” turns into “enterprise culture,” it is also worth paying attention to Levy’s Carl, Faith’s large brother, and his “plans” (“Big ones, small ones, I never knew”), but also to the “higglers” who cost her some anxiety when she arrives back in Jamaica (*Fruit of the Lemon*, 172-73).
- 44 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 4.
- 45 Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” 222.
- 46 In addition to Hirsch, see also Mike and Trevor Phillips’s practice in *The Irresistible Rise of Multiracial Britain*.
- 47 Hall, “Cultural Ideology and Diaspora,” 225.
- 48 Black Atlantic crossings continue in various forms. If many migrants, like Faith’s own parents, never stop asking themselves whether they should return to their Caribbean island ‘home,’ West Indians also enjoy visits to the Caribbean that make them tourists under a different name. This emphasis on continued family relations and on consequential patterns of travel turns up in the narratives reported by Mary Chamberlain: “I like it when I go on holiday, get sort of like a bonding with Gran. We’d talk. She’d tell me about Mum and the other kids, and what it was like bringing them up” (*Narrative of Exile and Return*, 164).
- 49 Eva Hoffman, *Exit into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe*. (London: Vintage, 1999) 36.
- 50 Hirsch, “Pictures of a Displaced Girlhood,” *Family Frames*, 217, 240.
- 51 I am struck by the graphic representation of traumatic dehumanisation and impressed by the structural resonance between these representations of slave ship economies and those of the Holocaust, behind the wire. See especially the image from Spiegelman’s ‘The First Maus’ that Hirsch uses in illustration of her account of the family structures at work in postmemory (“Generation of Postmemory,” 113).
- 52 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 53 *Lucy*, 86.
- 54 Michel de Certeau, “‘Making Do’: Uses and Tactics,” *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 29-42.
- 55 Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 78.