

Windrush Children and Broken Attachments

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Central to this paper is a range of testimonies given by people who came to Britain in the post-Windrush years. It is essentially an exploratory paper informed by historical, biographical and literary accounts which I consider to be complimentary. I draw mainly on my research in *Longest Journey: A Black History of Lewisham* (1995).

In relation to the experience of African-Caribbean people in Britain, there was, until recently, very little historical material written. Furthermore, much of the research on African-Caribbean people has been written by people from outside of the group being studied. There are historical reasons for this which space does not permit me to explore. *Longest Journey* is, on one level, about recognising and studying change within the community and allowing the 'space' to understand that change. And change is not unusually the subject of history. The closer one looks, however, the more obvious it becomes that this is a very complex history.

Among communities with a more recent oral tradition, oral communication is a familiar source of history. The modern historian, however, is more familiar with documentary sources. Written knowledge has come to substitute the community's memory. In the case of black history and particularly because of the chronic shortage of documented evidence, the primacy of the oral history has had to be largely re-asserted. By this means, memory is recognised as knowledge which, of course, used to be much more the case before the widespread use of print for recording memory. These two strands: documented evidence and Oral History make up the substance of the black history of Lewisham which is only the start of that community's written history.

Empire Windrush

The 22 June is celebrated now as the anniversary of the Windrush event which was to transform Britain into a visibly multicultural society. What happened? 492 West Indians (figures vary) landed at Tilbury in June 1948 sending shock waves across Britain. For the group, mostly Jamaicans, mostly men, the fact that it was summer was the least interesting feature of their arrival. Many were returning to England having served in the war which had ended three years earlier. For others this was a journey comprising elements of pilgrimage, adventure and potentially enhanced career prospects. The boat train taking the newcomers from Southampton to Victoria travelled through sites and place names made familiar through their school textbooks as well as through the popular media, radio and cinema.

Many passengers on the first ships bearing post-war Caribbean immigrants to Britain had been children of the West Indies of the thirties and had the benefit of increased education opportunities. At the same time, their knowledge of the world had been greatly extended through information, sometimes at first hand, about World War II and the benefits that they had been told would be derived from victory by the 'mother country' whose war efforts they had supported. West Indians, like the British 'home' population, had had their expectations of a better future heightened by war time promises. In addition, large numbers had travelled beyond their home islands to such places as Central America, USA, Europe and other war postings in the Pacific or Africa. But that is my version and I have promised testimonies.

W. George Brown

Windrush to Lewisham: Memoirs of Uncle George (1999), which I edited recently, offers particular insight from someone with the foresight to keep records at the time. W. George Brown came from St. Thomas in Jamaica and settled in Lewisham, finally, after a memorable journey on the Empire Windrush in 1948. This is a section from his memoirs:

"On the afternoon of May 26th, 1948 the Windrush raised her anchor and was ready for sailing. We were all on board and on deck waving goodbye to our loved ones. This departure was not the first as the Almonzur had sailed for England in November 1947 but there was something significant about the voyage of the Windrush."

Unlike George Brown, several of the passengers of the Empire Windrush gave their destination addresses within the Lewisham area. Five gave Wickham Road addresses and two gave Tanner's Hill, Deptford, addresses. Since the larger number of passengers had no accommodation arranged, crisis accommodation was offered to 236 men in the wartime Deep Shelter on Clapham Common until 12th July. George Brown was one of these. When the shelter was closed, 20 men were sent to Government reception centres in Camberwell and Deptford. Many more were to arrive in the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich in their search for jobs and homes in London. The men and women of the Empire Windrush had sailed to the motherland. They had, as British citizens, been exhorted to play their part in the

rebuilding of post-war Britain. Newspapers, radio and the church continued to process the patriotic rhetoric that made the purchase of a passage to Britain seem a natural and glorious next step. As a group, the men and women offered a variety of skills. These were the first of the post-war wave of Caribbean immigrants to the south east and many more ships followed. Some migrants travelled on cruise ships. Others booked passages on liners that came to be known as 'banana boats'. Opportunistically, these ships combined the established business of the transportation of bananas with a passenger service to Britain.

Immigrants of the Post-Windrush Decade

The new Caribbean migrants to south east London in the 50s had taken a bold step into a hopeful future in Britain. They were mostly men and some women, all with hard earned skills. They were prepared to work, develop their skills and qualifications and generally to improve their lot. Though they had been schooled about England, the mother country, to the exclusion of much else, they were largely unprepared for what they would encounter. Ronnie arrived in London in May, 1950. A seventeen year old, only six months out of the one of the most prestigious grammar schools his island offered. He had come to study and he had travelled with his brother. The two young men knew no-one else in London. Together they had only the vaguest idea of student accommodation or how they would defray the expenses of a student existence in London.

"We just didn't know where we were going ... I had heard of the Balmoral Hotel ... At that time, the Balmoral Hotel was a place run by and for colonial students.... So that's where I ended up. That's what I'd set out to do... The people who came up from Grenada were people who had scholarships, Island Scholarships ... and the Island Scholarship was a big thing. Those were the only people who were coming up at that time.... Their funds were provided for and they went to the Balmoral Hotel because that was the place that was available."

The propaganda of Imperialism had also been deeply impressed upon black colonial subjects through a number of outmoded rituals which became the focus of specific holidays. These necessarily involved almost the entire community since all school children were compulsorily required to attend. Military style parades were the order of the day. Uniformed groups of pupils, scouts, girl guides, cubs, cadets and so on paraded at length in the sweltering heat. The Red Cross was very much in evidence on such occasions since numbers of school children fainted in the heat as they waited for the marching to be over. The Governor of the island or, occasionally, the Governor-General, would be a special focus of the parades. The 24th May, Empire Day, saw just such ritual.

The 24th May, 1950 was the day after Ronnie's arrival. Despite having had two or so hours of sleep, he was dressed in his best suit ready for the May Day or Empire day celebrations. He expected the celebrations to be all the more spectacular for being in the 'mother country'. As he hurried out, he encountered a colonial official who found his enthusiasm a source of some mirth.

"Mayday celebrations? What sort of celebrations are you asking for?" I said, 'Well, it's Queen Victoria's birthday.' He said, 'Queen Victoria is dead.' Of course I knew she was dead but in Grenada we all paraded in the market square... and there we were in the sun ... my fellow beings, sun pouring down, fainting ... policemen, kids."

This was the first dent in the perceptions Ronnie held of England, its values and customs and the realities of its existence. He had been thoroughly schooled into believing that the practices highlighted in his own colonial education were those of all British citizens. Ronnie hoped to train as a chartered accountant. The short version of the story is that Ronnie never visited the Caribbean until many decades later. The reason? He never realised his aspirations and never felt able to face his family with that uncomfortable truth. Cut off from his family and caught in the spiral of subsistence existence, he accommodated to lower professional aspirations, married locally and lost touch with his homeland. But what happened when Ronnie began to adjust to the loss of Empire Day? I wish to suggest that some important adjusting of identity is key to the process. Empire Day is a banal example of 'broken attachments' but it represents a quite profound break with this specific young person's perception of himself and his place in the world. It was one of the first stories Ronnie, now an elder, told in interview. 'I shall never forget it', he said.

Parents' Experience

It was more usual for men to land in Britain, secure in their knowledge of a trade. George R. arrived in November, 1953. He was a carpenter. Born in rural Jamaica, he had gained carpentry skills through sheer determination and, initially, against the wishes of his father. His father, a subsistence farmer, wanted George's assistance with the livestock he kept. But George, having seen a carpenter at work in the village, longed to do just that job when he grew up. He persuaded his mother to plead his cause to his father. This she did successfully. It was to be a 5 year apprenticeship but the young George was only too pleased to be learning, not only a trade, but the trade of his choice.

"My daddy had lots of horses and mules, and we had to help him out and then I use to like to do carpenter work. I always see this man working, like them plain wood, they cut the wood and I said to my mum, could you let me learn that trade?... And one day now, this man was building up this house, and I go down there and beg him and say, could I come? Will you take me to learn me what to do. They chalk the line and line the board ...with that, I went down to my mum and she asked the man. The man say yes. But then, when I started out I start to do cabinet making, my dad give this man £5 to buy some tools."

Amongst the skilled men regularly arriving from the West Indies were those who had either volunteered during the war or in some cases, their relatives had volunteered and they were joining them. Beckett arrived in London from Jamaica in August 1955, a month before hurricane Janet devastated much of the West Indies. He

was 37 years old when he flew into Heathrow. Beckett planned to continue his studies and to qualify as a dentist. He intended to support himself financially through employment while he studied.

"It was a bit strange coming from little Jamaica, Kingston to big London and the mother country, which I had always looked forward to...I was amazed at the buildings and the helter skelter of the place, the traffic going hither and thither. It really was very busy."

Men constituted the larger majority of those early immigrants. Women soon followed. Mostly, the women had friends or relatives whose journey had stimulated an interest in travelling. Not infrequently, relatives attempted to dissuade interested family members. At the same time, luxury goods regularly sent over to the Caribbean by those working in England seemed to indicate a very profitable existence. In short, these goods proved to be very persuasive.

"In those days my cousin use to send us down barrels of pleated skirt, stockings and all, tights that we have never known about, tights and bundles of curtains and all the rest of it. He didn't tell me he use to go down Petticoat Lane and buy them cheap. We thought that he was really doing so well for himself.... So I write back to him and said to him you've been in England for the last 5 years and you going to America, why don't you want me to come?"

The exotic packages and barrels arriving from London contradicted the very letters which warned of difficulties to be found in employment and in social conditions. Many, therefore, undeterred, booked their passages and set off for London. Those arriving in London for the first time from 1948 onwards held high expectations. Many such expectations were based on misinformation. Black people in the colonies had also consistently been presented with sanitised images of English life. A great number of 'shocking' experiences, therefore, awaited them and they were rapidly to form more realistic impressions of twentieth century inner city life which most were to experience.

"I had my first shock horror when I drove into Victoria station and saw this white woman painted.... What my minister at home use to call 'painted devils' ... those days they were wearing the beehive and her hair was up in this beehive and she had the green eyes and all of that and I see her sweeping the platform! ... I don't know what I was expecting but I certainly wasn't expecting to see her sweeping the platform!"

White people, having always been the masters and in positions of authority in the Caribbean, had come to be associated in the minds of black people with higher forms of behaviour. In the Caribbean this was reinforced by the fact that servants and menials were always black, never white, whilst correspondingly those in the highest positions of authority, church leaders, government officials and so on were invariably white and never black. So much was different in Britain: the lack of space, housing, social conditions, the necessary expenditure on seasonal needs such as heating and winter clothing. One of the first hurdles was finding employment. Within the pay

packet lay the means to ameliorate the difficulties faced in the new lifestyle. Ever present, too, was the awareness that others back home, families or partners, depended in part upon the income received.

Sending for a spouse or partner presented other difficulties as W. George Brown's account indicates.

"That weekend also brought difficulties of another nature. I was in search of furnished accommodation as my wife was to arrive in England on Monday November 11th and this was Saturday. I could not take her where I was living so the problem of accommodation was urgent."

In the light of cumulative difficulties, many skilled workers adjusted their sight. So did the less skilled and indeed, those with qualifications and professional aspirations. They accepted jobs for which they were over qualified. The pressure to earn was real as there was rent of one kind or another to be paid and numerous other financial responsibilities. The housing experience of the early West Indian migrants was a barometer of their reception in the U.K. Only those fortunate enough to be in tied accommodation such as student hostels or nurses' homes were spared. A whole range of undesirable situations represented the choices available in the early years of post war immigration. There was bed and breakfast style in desirable accommodation for those with sufficient income and who looked sufficiently respectable. The disadvantages were that on no account were 'guests' welcome during the day.

"They use to take in ladies that go out to work 6.30 in the morning and come back 6.30 in the evening to 8 o'clock in the evening. The places that were nice didn't give you a front door key, so you knocked. You ring the bell and they let you in. And the house was nice and you had a nice bedroom, but you had to often go to the bathroom to get water. But, they had a bathroom in the house! ... I got ill in the winter and I was doing my millinery then, and this woman ring up and ask for me to come home. She said, 'no'. She said maybe if it was a day when she wasn't having friends in, but she's got some friends in this afternoon. So, I couldn't come in. She said maybe about half past six, that's the earliest. Somebody went across the road, buy a blanket for me and I lie down in the cutting room, shivering with fever and everything else."

Sometimes 'flats' were on offer. These, however, did not conform to the usual ideas of flats. They were a variation of one room accommodation. More usually, the only accommodation available or indeed affordable to black people, were rooms that were shared. Cooking and washing facilities were also shared with a number of occupants. The rooms offered were often in overcrowded houses.

"They'd converted the downstairs bathroom. He put board over the bathtub and covered it and he put 3 cookers - this is the bathroom I'm telling you about. He put 3 cookers in the bathroom and it had 2 sinks. It had a big sink and it had a bathroom sink. He'd left that in with the bath. And so that was used as a table that you could put things on, or sit on it, and when everybody finished cooking

and the night is done, that's the time you had baths, or first thing in the morning, or late at night."

Children

Having children presented families with more complex housing difficulties. The Alexanders moved from Brixton to Battersea in search of accommodation to meet the needs of their growing family.

"If you had children, ...and you're in one bedroom, especially if you're on one of the floors above, that child couldn't walk on the floor cause people would complain that the child is making noise."

Mrs A. found in the papers what looked a favourable housing deal in New Cross. With £200 deposit, a part vacant house could be secured. The couple saved and applied. It was an all inclusive deal; solicitors' fees, surveying and so on were all included. They were not required to pay any extras. The mortgage was around £15 per month. They found on moving in that a mother and 2 children held tenant rights to the flat upstairs and they paid a rent of £1 per week. Despite the difficulties, the family was relieved to be in a much better environment for their children. There was no bathroom and the only washing facilities were in the kitchen where there was a boiler for hot water. They were thankful for all of this though aware that they had wanted something better.

Key factors which played a part in the settlement of West Indians in the post-Windrush period was proximity to place of employment, relative or friend resident in the vicinity or availability of accommodation. This was further complicated when children were 'sent for' or had to be catered for within a family. I shall 'dip into' four cases. Each of these children subsequently became teachers. I alert you to this to indicate that there is no pretence here of statistical probability or random sampling. Rather, these allow illustrations which in turn connect with some related issues of maternity, respectability and change related to Caribbean experience.

Basil

Basil's family came to Britain in 1954 when he was 2 years old. They lived initially in Brixton moving to Forest Hill 3 years later. They lived off Brockley rise at a time when there were precious few other black families resident in that neighbourhood. There were then a few Jamaican families, a small community of Grenadian families. The 4 or 5 Jamaican families around Forest Hill got to know each other very quickly. As seasoned members of the local Jamaican community, the family was frequently consulted by recent arrivals with young children to be placed in schools. Basil's father was a carpenter and his mother, like a great many Caribbean women, was a dressmaker.

An issue for Basil was his upbringing as a 'Model Child'. 'We would never have been allowed to speak patois. Never. I learnt patois when I was about 17. I learnt it!' says Basil. He notes that whilst his parents are working class, the values they held were Victorian middle class. One result was that:

"In our community, in Forest Hill, growing up we were in a way looked up to. One of the things I dragged through my teenhood was being a model child from a model family. We were always polite, well spoken, didn't cause any trouble."

Basil's case raises the issue of respectability which I shall take up later. It reminds me too that it was exceedingly difficult to get women to agree to be interviewed. If they did not see themselves as achievers, this was even more problematic. These children's stories are successes and you'll need to bear this in mind.

Margaret

Margaret came to London in 1964. Having arrived in the summer, she had just enough breathing space to become acclimatised before entry into primary school and the English school system. Much later, at the end of her school career, Margaret found that the school was directing her towards nursing. As a student teacher, she had time to reflect on this:

"The lecturers pathologised everything to do with black people and that was the way in which they saw us. Everything about black people was problematic in some way. Our family structures were problematic; our diets were problematic; our children were problematic; our countries were problematic; our design and perceptions and how we see and form our cultures were, our language was problematic. It just went on and on and on so that whatever you learnt, whether it was something scientific, supposedly, or whether it was something intellectual around say literature, it was always a pathological look at black people and black families... It was tough, the process of being a student."

Margaret had resisted the idea of teaching initially because so many members of her family 'back home' had been teachers. And this 'case' begs the question of what constitutes 'broken attachments'? The impact of 'back home' attachments were so strong that Margaret was actually resisting becoming the professional she may well have been at home. This similarly held for Jacinthe.

Jacinthe

Jacinthe first came to Britain from St. Kitts in 1965. She was 14 years old and came to join the rest of her family already resident in London. Jacinthe recalls the period as one of keen loss for home in the West Indies. School was different. In her selective school in St. Kitts she was perceived as an achieving pupil of importance to the school community. In contrast she was placed, in London, in one of the lowest streams in her new Secondary school. Jacinthe's experience of boredom and disruption remains an integral memory of English education. The choices available at the end of schooling

appeared to her, a black pupil, severely limited. In her school she was one of those with most 'O' levels. Yet, she recalls in that in explorative discussions with her teacher, she was being directed to go and work in Woolworth's. What was happening here in terms of attachments? Caribbean pupils have mixed responses to schooling but overwhelmingly teachers were respected. These were figures to whom children were encouraged to look up. One devastating type of 'broken attachment' was loss of community figures such as teachers in that many were seen as not interested, hostile even. It was not lost on J. that white girls with similar qualifications were being at the same time encouraged to go on to try 'bigger and better things.' In the West Indies many members of her family had been teachers. It was those role models who were evoked in the summer following her final exams at school. She therefore applied for a teacher training place. As soon as she qualified, the first post she sought was in the West Indies. She taught in St. Kitts for a year, an experience which was to be significant to her professional practice.

Avril

Avril came to London as a baby with her mother in 1968. Though she has always lived in Lewisham, she expresses a duality about the notion of Lewisham as home.

"I have ambivalent feelings because I know that I was born in Grenada. Because of that birthright I don't really see England as my home and judging from the conversations with my family I seem to have more of an affinity with there even though I've not actually been there especially during my formative years."

At the end of secondary schooling, Avril's foremost concern was with contributing financially to her family. She took a job as a clerical assistant within the DHSS. Five years later, she took up studying and successfully utilised the Access route back into education.

Re-examining the interviews, it is necessary to highlight practice to some extent taken for granted by those interviewed. Firstly, certain notions of maternity held for the African-Caribbean community which was little understood by the host community. Respectability was central to this but so was a system of 'other mothering' which African-Caribbean women had come to rely upon during slavery. Whether or not the grandmother played a central role in this, support depended on an extended family system. I am interested here to engage with and historicise related notions of maternity and black women's reality for post-Windrush West Indian women. Secondly, it is instructive to touch upon memory, and its means of constructing the past, particularly in terms of the loss and broken attachments experienced by young people and parents alike. Why were women so reluctant to come forward and why were people overwhelmingly unwilling to articulate their memories for documentation? I would like to draw upon additional testimonial writing, this time framed as literature.

Mothering

A particularly important part of the 'plural presence' to be identified in literary texts is that of the maternal presence, a survival imperative which focuses on the next generation and which comes to be written into the surviving texts. This involved 'other mothers', principal among whom was the grandmother figure.

Education has been at the heart of respectability for African-Caribbean people since Emancipation, in the third decade of the nineteenth century. A meaning of education was achievement and the possibility this allowed for social mobility. If I were to attempt to historicise this, I would need to point to the pattern of missionary education established in the Caribbean in the wake of the Reforms following the abolition of the Slave Trade. At the centre of the missionary values was respectability. Furthermore, the model for missionary education was English education. But what was the experience of the Windrush generation of children in Britain? One parent recalls:

"For a start we were very proud of our son but then I wanted to go to work and that was tough, because at the time I didn't realise I could have gone back to the hospital half time."

Early childcare difficulties arose as a result of the need to balance the demands made by employment and those imposed by the new family. In this situation many families sought to make the restrictions of shift work serve their family purposes. Where it was possible, one parent working night shift whilst the other worked day shift offered at least a temporary solution. Whilst this arrangement worked for many families, it was unacceptable for others. What emerged was a flexibility and a preparedness to utilise the opportunities which presented themselves.

"I left. I couldn't work and look after the child. Early in the morning 7.30 'til the early shift was sometime 1.30 p.m. One day you get 1.30, 4.30, 7 o'clock I think or 7.30 and then the late night was about 10 o'clock in the night. So those hours didn't suit, you know, to get a minder to look after the child because the husband working and he comes in late... At that time it was a bit tough so I found a laundry job and I was doing a few hours at this laundry so I'll be home in the evening to get the kid."

With a great many Caribbean people moving for the first time out of rural, non-industrialised communities into urban conurbations, they were largely unprepared for certain conditions awaiting them. The difficulties which arose concerning the education of their children, for example, was totally unexpected. Not surprisingly, the problems became evident several years later. African-Caribbean residents in Lewisham were to put in place measures to actively mediate against a racist education system. This system was not only failing African-Caribbean children but justifying that failure in pseudo-scientific racist terms.

Set against the social reality of very poor and frequently over-crowded homes, which was the norm of the early seventies for African-Caribbean families, this kind of intervention was very welcome. But the black family was under attack on a number of

fronts. It is difficult to single out which of these was the most damaging but perhaps in the longer term, the battle for education has proved the most insidious.

During the 1970s the site of that battle was ESN schools. The single most compelling problem within education for black families was the disproportionate representation of black children in ESN schools, that is, those schools designated for those children deemed to be 'educationally sub-normal'. In the Borough of Lewisham there were two such ESN schools. Like many other boroughs, Lewisham was placing a 'fairly high percentage' of West Indian children in these schools to the dismay of families and the black community. The 1971/72 report of CRC commented on the situation.

A rather depressing aspect of this situation is the basic fact of the social stigma, its psychological effect, and the personal inadequacy being suffered by these children. And this was being encouraged by the Authority concerned, in the sense that the rate of these children's return to normal school appears to have been slowed down. This process was causing the parents of these children a genuine anxiety with regard to their children's future.

With underachievement of West Indian children occupying a prominent position on the community agenda, it was a matter of time before the educational service was discredited in the eyes of many black parents. A key section of the service directly involved in educational diagnosis recommending the misplacement of black children was the educational psychologists. The conferring of ESN status upon individual children would have been sufficiently problematic but in practice, schools designated entire families ESN. One resident describes the impact of this upon her family. She and her husband had found themselves locked in an inexplicable fight with the education authority. Their 5 year old son had been deemed ESN. They were told to send him to a specific school.

"They actually sent him to that school. I mean we just got the notice that he'll be going to that school because the classes are smaller and they'll be able to pay him more personal attention, you know."

The parents believed the school to be pursuing the best interests of their child. They therefore did as instructed by the authorities. Their observation in the wake of their child's transfer to the 'special' school was that his behaviour was deteriorating.

"The child was learning nothing. I mean a well-behaved child you send out to school and he is coming back disruptive and you know, the way he's carrying on I mean. It wasn't on, you know. And then you seem to have no control over the situation. You can't just take him and send him to a next school, you know, because the government send him to that school."

As if this was not enough, his brother, a year younger, on being accepted into school, was also placed in the same 'special' school. The reason given was, that this was so as to keep his brother 'company'. These decisions were not arrived at by discussion and mutual agreement. Later, parents were informed and decisions

formalised in writing. Black parents, then, unfamiliar with the system and, therefore, vulnerable, were at the mercy of teacher perceptions of their children. In this particular case, there followed a 5 year dispute with the authority. Finally, the two boys were withdrawn from their 'special' school.

"In the end my husband decided that's it. He's taking him out of that school and he did. And of course, we were threatened ...until they decide they'll give him a test once and for all."

The assessment which followed showed the child designated ESN to have a high IQ. His brother was 'normal'. The two were transferred to a mainstream Secondary school. By 1975, Bernard Coard's *How the West Indian Child Is Made Educationally Sub-Normal* had placed such practice on the agenda of the black community, local authorities and the Inner London Education Authority, then responsible for administering London's education system. Voluntarily staffed Supplementary schools were offering a mediatory service and black parents were on their guard. Where once teachers had been, for African-Caribbean people, reliable, trusted members of the community, parents were now beginning to be on their guard.

Memory

The impact of acute change upon memory, suggests Beryl Gilroy, is a minor part of the adjustment that is implied in the use of the term 'immigrant' or 'immigration' which came to be coded reference to Caribbean peoples. In Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children* (1996), what sustains children in problematic relations is often an elder figure, 'grandmother' figure within the extended family or through the wider community including the 'yards'. The metaphorical significance of the 'yards' is such that it is within this collective meeting place that the women gather and engage in 'woman-talk', thus reinforcing their bonds and offering practical help to each other. The yard, then, serves in the literature as a metaphor for the collective will and the older woman to some extent personifies the 'ancestral presence' whose memory of how things have been also serve the young members of the community. But where was the community for Windrush children? The 'yards' were absent and there was an absence of outside space which, in any case, was uncomfortable by tropical standards. Indoors was all too frequently overcrowded.

African-Caribbean notions of respectability do not allow easy access to certain issues. A recent body of fiction by authors such as Gilroy and Joan Riley does. For example, the pattern of 'broken attachments' as a consequence of separation is clear for Riley's Hyacinth in *The Unbelonging* in ways that are not articulated by interviewees for historical research. Hyacinth's (dis)embodiment is necessary to her survival. Why '(dis)embodiment'? Firstly, because of the extreme hostility which the post-Windrush environment represents. Secondly, because, for example, in Hyacinth's case, the silent response became so internalised that she resorts to daydreaming when the outer world, which cannot be trusted, demands silence. For Hyacinth, as for many immigrants, given the extreme conditions of displacement she encounters, memory becomes essential to survival. However, Riley is also interested in questioning mothering and step-mothering roles. The presence of Hyacinth, an 'outside' child,

brings its own tensions familiar to the culture. At least one of the children of Windrush indicated an 'outsider' status, that is, not the child of the existing parental union. Similarly, in the new English setting, 'outside' children made adjustments to families no longer 'extended' like the model they had known at home. Parents too could no longer rely on 'extended' parenting which the familiar network offered.

To sum up: broken attachments? We are only beginning to get a glimpse of the devastation in terms of difficulties encountered by the thirty pluses who made this crossing into English culture in the wake of the Windrush Empire. While any examination of the lifestyles of African-Caribbean immigrants of the fifties and sixties indicate ways in which racist responses to their presence was met by strength of purpose as well as individual and community flexibility, there is also the loss with which Caribbean heritage adults today are still struggling to come to term.

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