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Women Writers and the Windrush Generation: A Contextual Reading of Beryl Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*

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## Abstract

In a contextual analysis of *Small Island* (2004) and *In Praise of Love and Children* (written in 1959 but lost until 1994), this article reads both novels through a history of Caribbean and black British literature to explore the achievements of Levy's historical novel alongside that of the lesser-known pioneering fiction of Beryl Gilroy. Andrea Levy is celebrated for her award-winning novel about post-war migration to Britain, *Small Island*, but few readers will be familiar with Beryl Gilroy's fictive representation of the same period. Gilroy was writing her migration story forty years before Levy. Having arrived in Britain from Guyana in 1951, she is one of the women of the so-called Windrush generation and she wrote a novel, *In Praise of Love and Children*, depicting that arrival. In the 1950s the dominant narrative of exile was male. As a Caribbean woman writing both in and about Britain in the 1950s, Gilroy was an anomaly and without precedent; consequently her contemporaneous 'novel of migration' failed to find a publisher until 1996. Both authors write from the point of view of a female protagonist of the Windrush generation. Levy is British born and second-generation Caribbean-British and tells the story of her parents and their part in West Indian post-war emigration from a generational distance, second-hand and in retrospect. This essay considers how Levy's novel might be read alongside a piece a fiction written much nearer to the historical moment of Levy's textual return. Whilst both novels share similar themes, including the deconstruction of Englishness through metropolitan encounters with white female characters, they are products of very different historical moments and colonial/postcolonial sensibilities.

# Women Writers and the Windrush Generation: A Contextual Reading of Beryl Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*

Sandra Courtman

The MV *Empire Windrush's* arrival in 1948 is repeatedly memorialised as the inaugural moment in West Indian immigration to England. In literature depicting the Windrush pioneers, West Indian men are fully represented either as saga boys hustling for a living, or as middle-class males in the midst of an identity crisis.<sup>1</sup> The work of Andrea Levy and Beryl Gilroy addresses the invisibility of women of the Windrush generation in the memorial timeline. Much of Gilroy's writing, including her autobiography *Black Teacher* (1976), is inspired by the following sentiment: "I decided to set the record straight. There had been Ted Braithwaite's *To Sir with Love* [1959] and Don Hinds' *Journey to an Illusion* [1966] but the woman's experiences had never been stated."<sup>2</sup> With vastly differing levels of commercial, academic, and literary-critical success, the fictions of Beryl Gilroy and Andrea Levy disrupt the homogenisation of experience and allow us to imagine individual characters, male and female, British born and West Indian and understand their connectedness in that arrival story. Whilst both authors focus on the experience of the Windrush generation's women, this article explores and compares the different contexts in which the novels were written and received. Levy and Gilroy are separated by a generation and this is crucial to our understanding of their achievements. Within the celebratory processes of a Windrush memorial, I explore why one of the novels is a success whilst the other remains in obscurity.

Andrea Levy's award-winning novel, *Small Island*, was published in 2004. For Levy the path to success was paved by the efforts of many women predecessors. She could be inspired by award-winning contemporaries and role models who begin to be published from the 1980s onwards including: Erna Brodber, *Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home* (1981) and *Myal* (1989); Amryl Johnson's *Long Road to Nowhere* (1985) and *Sequins for a Ragged Hen* (1988); Barbara Burford's *The Threshing Floor* (1986); Grace Nichol's *The Whole of a Morning Sky* (1986); Beryl Gilroy's *Frangipani House* (1986) and *Boy Sandwich* (1989); Joan Riley, *The Unbelonging* (1987), *Waiting in the Twilight* (1987), and *Romance* (1988); Meera Syal, *Anita and Me* (1996) and *Life Isn't All Ha Ha Hee Hee* (1999); Bernadine Evaristo, *Lara* (1997) and *The Emporer's Babe* (2001); Jackie Kay, *Trumpet* (1999); Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2001); and Monica Ali, *Brick Lane* (2003).

Beryl Gilroy's writes that her migration novel *In Praise of Love and Children* was "written in 1959" but lost until 1994.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to *Small Island*, few people have read *In Praise*. As such, a brief plot summary is helpful in suggesting the ways in which these two novels might be seen to share the same fictional terrain. *In Praise* takes the form of an identity quest narrative, focalised through Melda Hayley whose travels in the Black

Atlantic take her to Europe, New York, and Guyana. Melda's birth is the result of an extramarital liaison between her father and her aunt; growing up, she suffers emotional and physical abuse at the hands of her mentally-ill step mother. She has to be rescued by her much loved teacher, Mrs Penn, and leaves her family in rural Guyana to follow her brother Arnie to London. In Britain, she is able to identify with the abandoned West Indian children she comes across whilst teaching and starts to foster and care for them. Arnie has meanwhile met, impregnated, and subsequently married a blonde, blue-eyed East German refugee, named Trudi. Through Trudi, Arnie and Melda, Gilroy explores the growing number of mixed race relationships in the 1950s Britain and the roots of the prejudice these couples faced. With great honesty, she depicts Melda's shock at Arnie's choice of a white partner especially when faced with the physical signs of Trudi's pregnancy. Growing up in the 1940s, Melda is unprepared for the idea of love between mixed races and this provokes anger: "Trudi, her belly now visibly swelling, bought me tea.[...] Trudi was not of the world I knew. She was different to us in every way—made of flesh over stone."<sup>4</sup> The two women struggle to come to terms with a relationship built on jealousy and misunderstanding. The novel explores the triangular relationship of Melda, Arnie, and Trudi. Melda and Trudi both suffer in different ways, having lost their homes and families. Eventually they help each other to heal past wounds.

The setting, broad themes, and conclusions of *In Praise* and *Small Island* lead to a similar point of understanding. Thematically, the novels focus on children, girls in particular, whose families gave them away in order to improve their prospects in life. The circumstances surrounding Melda's illegitimacy mean that she is treated so cruelly by her step-mother that she is sent away to Miss Penn. It is precisely because of her own experience of abandonment that Melda can help the children she meets. Hortense is sent away because she is light-skinned and her mother wishes to give her better opportunities. Queenie is sent away to live with Aunt Dorothy because she refuses to accept a life of drudgery on her parents' pig farm. Queenie gives her own mixed race baby to Hortense, believing that this is the best prospect for her child. Thus, in both novels, set in the post-war period, the future of a multicultural Britain is signalled by the birth of a mixed-race child. Moreover, both novels call attention to the prospects, potential, and limits of feminist agency and solidarity in an era of migration and social change. In *Small Island*, Gilbert, Hortense, and Queenie have a difficult relationship built on prejudice, including a misunderstanding that it is Gilbert who has fathered Queenie's child. In the final section, Levy unites Hortense and Queenie in an act of cross-racial sisterhood, when Hortense delivers and finally takes charge of Queenie's baby. Finally, all the characters—male and female, black and white—in *Small Island* and *In Praise* are displaced and have to construct new metropolitan identities that force them to reappraise their prejudices.

I do not intend to debate the relative literary and aesthetic merits of Levy and Gilroy's fiction. Instead, I aim to compare how the different contexts for their writing affect their success—as measured in terms of readership, public recognition, and scholarly attention—in foregrounding the experience of women of the *Windrush* generation. *Small Island* is now fully inscribed onto the *Windrush* memorial and *In Praise* is not. Yet, both women's work is part of an ongoing process of memorialisation and canonisation of black

British writing about West Indian arrival. It is important for literary scholars to attend to this socio-historical perspective with its 'winners,' such as Levy, and its 'losers,' such as Gilroy. In this context, Gail Low's case study of published Anglophone Caribbean Writing 1950-1965 is especially noteworthy because she suggests the importance of understanding "... the network of connections between reviewers, publishers, readers, broadcasters and scholars [...] to the promotion of the fledgling writers from the new Commonwealth."<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, although Low examines the phenomenon of West Indian male writers' success in Britain in the 1950s and early 60s, she overlooks the histories of women writers of the same generation, failing to take into account why women writers failed to enjoy the same kind of success as their male counterparts. These occluded feminist literary histories of women writers continue to be reclaimed by scholars such as Evelyn O'Callaghan, Susheila Nasta, Carole Boyce Davies, Alison Donnell, and Sandra Courtman.<sup>6</sup>

To grasp fully the ways in which both Gilroy and Levy challenge our understanding of Windrush migration and its wider symbolic significance, we need to remember that this arrival story has largely been memorialised as masculine. The reasons for this are historical and political. Matthew Mead observes that the cultural memory of the *Windrush* often fails to represent accurately the far from homogenous group of migrants who came to Britain.<sup>7</sup> Historically, post-Second World War migration from the West Indies was part of a wider crisis in British national identity.<sup>8</sup> With an empire it could no longer afford and devastated by the losses of the Second World War, Britain was in the process of transition to a neo-colonialist economy, on the brink of social collapse, and in need of cheap labour. The people who landed in Tilbury were part of a wave of economic migration to Britain from Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world. However, at the time of its arrival, the *Windrush* provided the media with a focus for anxieties surrounding black, and initially male, immigration from Britain's colonies. *Windrush* has now shifted in the national imagination to symbolise a generation's achievements and their contribution to the making of a multicultural Britain. But whose achievements will be remembered? When and how do women writers respond to the double humiliation of racial exclusion and patriarchal hegemony? We can begin with the historicisation of the docking of the *Empire Windrush* as the defining moment of post war immigration when, it is reiterated, 492 Jamaican males disembarked at Tilbury. Here "The repetition of the '492' achieves in writing what the memorialist makes in stone; an immovable and sedimented object...."<sup>9</sup> Mead suggests why the preservation of this number is significant in contemporary and historical accounts of West Indian migration:

There were more than 492 West Indian migrants on board the *Windrush*, but this is of little importance [...] In the case of the former, the cultural memory is sedimented not by establishing a correct count but by repeating the same count over and over again. In the case of the latter, a careful archival approach reveals that no correct count is possible; rather we are presented with multiple possibilities, increasingly complexity and the occasional dead end. To be sure, the ubiquitous "492" is not a chance figure, or one chosen, but a figure produced by arbitrary

procedure, provoked by a nervousness about black immigration, and then appropriated by the Caribbean community and sympathetic others.<sup>10</sup>

A considered account of the facts we know about *Windrush's* arrival can only suggest the multifarious nature of its passengers and crew, totalling 1027 people, who largely disappear without trace into traumatised post-war Britain. As Mead suggests, knowledge of these factual slippages serves to illustrate that the mythologisation of *Windrush's* arrival was not only symptomatic of wider socio-cultural anxieties at the time but has also contributed to a reductive chronicle of the actual events. In fact, the pioneers who came, in Louise Bennett's famous words, to reverse the process of colonisation were not all West Indian males.<sup>11</sup> It is not just the "492" number that is reiterated. It must have taken more than a day to process the arrival of *Windrush's* passengers and although June 22<sup>nd</sup> is usually given as the historic date of arrival, it would appear that the ship must have docked a day before as June 21<sup>st</sup> is stamped on some passenger lists.<sup>12</sup> The *Windrush's* "Summary of British and Alien Passengers" enumerates the number of men, women, and children who are British citizens from the West Indies, alien refugees displaced during the War, stowaways, and members of the forces and crew.<sup>13</sup> Of the 941 adult passengers, 257 were women with 69 of them accompanied by their husbands and 188 travelling alone. Yet this female presence is often reduced to that of the tale of a courageous female stowaway, dressmaker—Evelyn Wauchape—whose relationship to the only other stowaway, Samuel Johnson, remains unknown. It is highly likely that both individuals would have concealed their identity from the port authorities, and Sam King, a passenger on the *Windrush*, contends that Evelyn's real name was Eva Buckley.<sup>14</sup> In terms of the other women passengers, we know nothing of what happened to the 66 displaced Polish women and children who boarded at Tampico, Mexico to be dispersed in camps and hostels across the UK. Of the 108 first class passengers, there are several women including the famous writer Nancy Cunard. The *Windrush's* multiple narratives of class, race and gender are occluded within the "492" male Jamaicans.

Although Andrea Levy was born in England, she has a strong personal connection to the history of *Windrush* through her father's migrant journey. Winston Levy travelled to England on the ship with his twin.<sup>15</sup> He numbered among the men who engendered the kinds of social anxieties that (as we have already seen) were exploited by the media. Yet, by the year of Levy's birth in 1956, media concerns had shifted to reflect the gender demographics of migration. A *Picture Post* article, entitled "Thirty Thousand Colour Problems," depicts young women arriving in Southampton on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1956 and disembarking from the SS *Irpinia*.<sup>16</sup> Images of respectable-looking women, sitting with their suitcases, are at odds with the headline that reads "Trouble and Distress Are Brewing." These young women (photographed by Haywood Magee) seem unlikely victims of a prostitution racket, but this is what Hilde Marchant's report suggests:

[...] with only a vague idea of what job they want to do, and their qualifications are even vaguer, except *perhaps for their good looks* [author's italics]. It is not unknown that the economics that drove her off the shores of her home have driven her on to the streets of London. A walk round the West End of London or some provincial city like Birmingham, readily confirms it.<sup>17</sup>

With this depiction of young West Indian women as morally slack and opportunistic, Marchant is peddling familiar racial and sexual stereotypes. Underlying a seeming concern for their moral welfare is a discourse of miscegenation-fear, comparable to the sort that percolates through Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*. Also published in 1956, Selvon's novel is a stream-of-consciousness narrative, either directly or as reportage, about the experience of a group of West Indian 'boys' who immigrate to London. The narrator's views of the prostitutes who trade in Hyde Park is uncomfortably close to the fears expressed by Marchant:

[...] also lately in view of the big set of West Indians that storming Brit'n it have a lot of dark women who in the racket too they have to make a living [...] it have some white fellas who feel is a big thrill to hit a black number and the girls does make they pay big money but as far as spades hitting spades in ain't have nothing like that for a spade wouldn't hit a spade when it have so much other talent on parade.<sup>18</sup>

Aside from the narrator's affair with the city, there are no love stories in *The Lonely Londoners*. Selvon's depiction of the fetishisation of the racial 'other' and how this shapes the Hyde Park sex trade represents the perspective of a fictional male West Indian. Marchant's point-of-view, albeit of the female, is representative of a white host nation in the midst of an identity crisis arising from West Indian immigration at the "rate of 3,000 a month."<sup>19</sup> If the mythical "492" black males focused the nation's nervousness about black immigration, then these young women in the *Picture Post* article and *The Lonely Londoners* serve the continued obsession with miscegenation fears. In *The Lonely Londoners*, Moses issues a grim warning about the desire for whiteness as expressed in a quest for a white partner.<sup>20</sup> Moses describes what happens to students who go home with an English wife:

They go back with an English wife and what happen? As soon as they get there, the places where their white wife could go, they can't go. Next thing you hear, the wife horning them and the marriage gone puff. Look what happen to that Indian fellar what married a German girl and went back after he study. He kill the girl, cut she up and put she in a sack and throw she in sea.<sup>21</sup>

The literal dismemberment of the white woman also fulfils a symbolic function: calling attention to the need to critique and deconstruct the false consciousness that produces a desire for whiteness. In a reversal of Black Atlantic history, it is the white girl who is ripped apart and tossed into a sea ghosted by slaves drowned during the Middle Passage. Absent, however, are the perspective and voice of the women subjects. Gilroy and Levy's counter-narrative strategies address the need to give voice to women's experiences. In Levy's *Small Island*, Hortense emigrates from Jamaica to join her husband in England, expecting to continue her career as a teacher. Levy's mother, Amy Levy, did the same, and Beryl Gilroy was a teacher in Guiana before she came to London University. Whether in history or in literature, these women's narratives bear no resemblance to the women described by either Marchant or Selvon. Moreover, as far as my research has discovered, there are very few publications by West Indian women about their migration and arrival experience during the post-Windrush era from the late 1940s to the end of the 1960s.

Jamaican Joyce Gladwell's 1969 autobiography, *Brown Face, Big Master*, which depicts, amongst other things, the racism attending her inter-racial marriage is a rare exception.<sup>22</sup>

Pioneering women authors like Gladwell and Gilroy are Levy's forerunners. Separated by a generation, Gilroy and Levy wrote during periods of very different production and reception for black British women's fiction. My study of pioneering women writers of the 1960s, such as the Afro-Jamaicans Joyce Gladwell and Sylvia Wynter, the Guyanese Beryl Gilroy, and the Jamaican Creole Lucille Iremonger, explore the ways in which factors such as educational opportunities, access to publishers, potential audiences, and critical reception might have impacted on the woman writer's sense of achievement and ambition.<sup>23</sup> A similar case might be made when we consider carefully the comparative 'success' and 'failure' of *Small Island* and *In Praise*. As arrival stories, the notion of encounter is central to their work and their understanding of how they are seen is as important as what they see in the 'other.' Sarah Brophy writes that *Small Island's* account of the post-war period is premised "on a concept of encounter gleaned from conversations with her mother."<sup>24</sup> The work of pioneering women writers like Gladwell and Gilroy is very much concerned with exploring interracial sexual encounters and in representing the emotional and psychological impact of mixed-race relationships. These love stories are a defining part of the experience of a generation of single women who came to Britain from the Caribbean in the 1950s and who, like Gilroy and Gladwell, met and married white British men. In their lives and their work they confronted the taboo of interracial desire.

Whilst Levy's *Small Island* also represents the trials of "entangled genealogies" arising from interracial sexual desire, she writes about this experience after attitudes to mixed race couples had become socially acceptable.<sup>25</sup> Gladwell's 1969 autobiography sold 21,000 copies; it was "serialised in the [Jamaican] Gleaner and [had excerpts read] on the BBC."<sup>26</sup> However, under an apartheid regime her presentation of a mixed race marriage led to a ban by South African booksellers. The book was refused in Northern Ireland because her "sexual encounter with the [white] ship's doctor was considered pornographic."<sup>27</sup> By the time Levy was writing explicitly about Queenie and Michael's affair, the censorship of Gladwell's genteel encounter would seem incomprehensible. Born in Britain and growing up in a Jamaican family, Levy witnessed her elders' courage and heard their stories. She might concur with a view expressed in 1975 in *Race Today Women* that "[i]n one way or another the existence and vibrancy of the black community today is traceable to the social activities of these black women who arrived first."<sup>28</sup>

As an example, Gilroy's autobiography, *Black Teacher*, attests to the author's battles to reform a racist education system.<sup>29</sup> Gilroy is typical of writers of the *Windrush* generation who have direct experience of familial and societal conflicts arising from a colonial encounter where the desire for whiteness meets a disavowal of blackness. The myth of miscegenation dominates the ground-breaking socio-diagnostic analysis of race in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon devotes two chapters to the subject of interracial love, entitled "The Woman of Color and the White Man" and "The Man of Color and the White Woman." He explores how the "man of color" expresses a strong desire to love a white woman and illuminates the twisted logic underpinning the

quest for a white partner: "I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilisation and dignity and make them mine."<sup>30</sup> Selvon also confronts a fear of miscegenation which is at the root of white racism. His characters' liaisons are not without consequences as they face angry fathers or fear police intervention.

In many instances, male writers do not deal with some of the important personal themes that women authors focus on, such as unwanted pregnancies or successful love stories. *The Lonely Londoners* rarely attends in detail to the actual consequences of interracial sex (there is a brief reference to Galahad's child, but no real attention is given to the life of the child or mother) but uses these encounters for ironic effect. Selvon invents the term 'tests' for his male characters: "long before test like Galahad hit London."<sup>31</sup> This is Selvon being ironic about the sexual experience of his testosterone-fuelled protagonists: "To talk of all the episodes that Moses has with woman in London would take bags of ballad Moses move though all the nationalities in the world and then start the circle again."<sup>32</sup> The narrator claims it would take too long to account for all of Moses' conquests and this evasion typifies the ellipses and contradictions surrounding 'the boys' and their relations with the white women they pick up (or are picked up by). In spite of Moses boasting of his sexual experience, he fails to recognise the signs of female orgasm; he assumes that his partner is suffering a fatal paroxysm and that the police will be called:

afterwards Moses nearly dead with fright because the woman start to moan and gasp and wriggle and twist up she body like a piece of wire when Moses ask she what happen she only moaning Moses start to get cold sweat because he know if anything happen to the woman and the police find her in his yard he wouldn't stand a chance the way how things against the boys so he begin to rub the woman down and pat she and try to make she drink some water [...] frighten like hell that the woman might conk off on his hands.<sup>33</sup>

When the unnamed woman quickly appears "calm and cool as if nothing happen" he bundles her on to the nearest bus and "Moses hop off again and leave she going to Marble Arch."<sup>34</sup> Later in this episode, the narrator reveals that Cap also gives a woman the slip: "Cap get to a corner he tell her to wait [...] he left the girl standing up there and never went back."<sup>35</sup> In *The Lonely Londoners* women's stories are left untold, abandoned like their characters on buses and street corners. As has been frequently noted, the dominant narrative is masculinist in orientation, but this is perhaps not surprising as Selvon was writing what he knew to be true in the 1950s. Moreover, this masculinist emphasis goes beyond race and class division. For instance, Diana Athill's memoir of her relationships during the Second World War explains that even Oxford educated and highly intelligent women like her understood that their stories would remain untold. She writes that when she spent time with her Hungarian partner André Deutsch (their attraction was briefly sexual but they became publishing associates) "... he did not find it easy to believe that I (or anyone) would be as interested in a discussion of my own life as I would be in his."<sup>36</sup>



However, the importance of women's stories had been foregrounded by the time Levy was writing about Queenie and Hortense. Her contemporary Caryl Phillips often narrates from his women characters' perspective. Dorothy's point of view is fully represented in his 2003 novel *A Distant Shore*. Phillips explains that her affair with the Indian Mahmood is unhealthy precisely because she is behaving like one of Selvon's women characters. Dorothy is also complicit in her own silence and passive in managing their mutual desire. He writes that "Dorothy says very little about her own life, being concerned to make sure that the dominant narrative is male."<sup>37</sup> Separated by a generation who shifted the dominant narrative from male to female, Levy and Gilroy both explore the complexities and consequences of interracial love from a female perspective.

### **Different Contexts: Gilroy and Levy**

A closer look at the different contexts for Gilroy's and Levy's works helps to shed light on the varying reception of their work. In the late 1950s, there was a growing taste for Anglophone writing from the Commonwealth. Publisher André Deutsch particularly nurtured new Commonwealth writers who were edited by Diana Athill. Athill explains this upsurge of interest as partly an expression of "liberal guilt and curiosity about soon-to-be independent nations."<sup>38</sup> West Indian fiction appealed to certain British publishers with metropolitan literary standards but they had few direct connections to Caribbean tradition and culture. Gilroy contends that publishers did not know how to read her work in the early 1960s. Consequently, both her final passage novel, *In Praise*, and her Guyanese reminiscences, *Sunlight on Sweet Water*, were rejected.<sup>39</sup> The situation was much changed for Levy by this earlier generation of women writers and Gilroy's experience may help us to understand how pioneering women's invisibility is bound up as much with gender politics and timing as with market tastes or academic agendas.

Beryl Gilroy was born in British Guiana in 1924. In 1951, five years before Levy was born, she travelled to London to continue her work as a teacher. Indeed, her actual story of arrival mirrors that of Levy's mother Amy who provided Levy's inspiration for *Small Island*. Like *Small Island's* Hortense, Gilroy was devastated when her exceptional teaching skills and qualifications were dismissed. She was first and foremost committed to teaching and, unlike many of her male contemporaries in the 1950s, she arrived with no aspirations towards becoming a professional writer. However, she was writing in some form from the moment of her arrival and she published *Black Teacher* in 1976, an account of her determination to find work as a teacher.<sup>40</sup> Whilst Gilroy was struggling to find a voice and an outlet for her creative work, Levy was growing up in London. Levy is of Afro-Jamaican descent with a Jewish paternal grandfather and a Scottish maternal great grandfather. Although her father was an educated light-skinned accountant who worked for Tate and Lyle in Jamaica, in Britain he could only find work as a post office clerk. When Amy Levy joined her husband in December 1948 to live in one room in London, she could not find work as a qualified teacher (like Gilroy and Hortense) and was forced to take in sewing. In the novel, Gilbert marks the importance of Hortense's newly forming, and significantly downgraded metropolitan identity. After she learns that she will not be accepted as a teacher in England, he attempts to quell her outrage with the

observation: “And a teacher you will be even you are sewing.”<sup>41</sup> The fact that West Indians’ qualifications and achievements were dismissed in the metropole is well documented. *The Heart of the Race* (1985), edited by Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe contains many unattributed testimonials to the institutional racism that pervaded the professions. An unnamed black woman who aspired to a career as nurse asserts that:

For many black women who joined the NHS with the intention of becoming nurses, this was to remain an elusive goal. Relegated to the hospitals’ kitchens and laundries, or trudging the wards as tea-ladies, cleaners or orderlies, we were to have first-hand experience of the damning assumptions which define our role here. The patients saw it as fitting that we should be doing Britain’s dirty work and often treated us with contempt.<sup>42</sup>

Furthermore, women writers of the *Windrush* generation have argued that racist contempt for their skills and qualifications was compounded by patriarchal gate-keeping practices.

An example of how West Indian men and women writers were treated differently is suggested by the case of “Caribbean Voices” and the different opportunities it accorded to its male and female contributors. From 1943-1958, the BBC broadcast an influential weekly programme of stories, poems, and critical pieces back to the Caribbean. The idea had developed out of war time with West Indian service men separated from loved ones. The original programme, “Calling the Caribbean,” was fronted by Jamaican poet Una Marson. In 1946, Henry Swanzy became the editor of “Caribbean Voices” and looked for original unpublished work from the region. Material was sent to Swanzy in London from his Trinidadian based agent Gladys Lindo and broadcast back to the Caribbean. The programme was later edited by V.S. Naipaul. In 2009, two radio programmes celebrated the literary legacy of the series in “Caribbean Voices: Fifty Years On.” These retrospective programmes highlighted the importance of “Caribbean Voices,” which played a vital role in the successful development of many Caribbean authors’ literary careers, including such eminent figures as V. S. Naipaul, George Lamming, and Derek Walcott. Looking back to the 1950s, publisher Margaret Busby has suggested that “...there were more opportunities then than now.”<sup>43</sup> Athill concurs that “for a time during the fifties and early sixties it was probably easier for a black writer to get *his* [author’s italics] book accepted by a London publisher, and kindly reviewed thereafter, than it was for a young white person.”<sup>44</sup> The path to publication was eased for male West Indian authors who seemed able to satisfy the growing curiosity about other cultures which was just one of “[a] number of contradictory forces [that] made it particularly conducive for new writers from the Commonwealth to emerge in print in Britain.”<sup>45</sup>

At the same time, the absence of accounts of West Indian women’s writing in this growth area suggests that that the situation was quite the opposite for writers like Gilroy. Alison Donnell’s work on women’s short stories which were broadcast on “Caribbean Voices” finds that women contributed only twenty percent of the programme’s material. She corroborates the idea that women contributors’ careers did not flourish in the same way as their male peers and addresses their continuing obscurity:

Talented writers such as Eula Redhead, Inez Sibley, Marjorie Brown and Edwina Melville remain unremarked upon. Louise Bennett and Sylvia Wynter are the exceptions to this rule, although neither was particularly facilitated in their writing careers by the programme.<sup>46</sup>

Women writers were adversely affected by prevailing literary tastes that combined with strong patriarchal networks. Gilroy describes the period as one in which “I wrote novels as well, [as children’s readers] but they could not get past the readers who were opinionated West Indian males playing the Gender Game.”<sup>47</sup> The trivialisation of women writers’ contributions is suggested by a reference to the material that Henry Swanzy rejected as commissioning editor of “Caribbean Voices” programmes. Low writes:

Swanzy’s role as gatekeeper was also to keep out certain kinds of writing and it is noticeable that of the 372 contributors a little less than twenty percent were women. Whilst it is too early in my research to pronounce definitively on why fewer women were selected for the programme than men, some of the domestic and romantic biases of the material seem to have irked Swanzy. In one of his earliest letters to [Gladys] Lindo, Swanzy includes among the rejected manuscripts what he calls, “sweetly pretty poems by... spinster ladies, probably teachers...”<sup>48</sup>

Gilroy might have been described as a spinster teacher, but she had ambitions to write a novel about her experience of arrival and settlement in the racist Britain of the 1950s. In style, form, and content, *In Praise* did not fit with the stories of West Indian local colour that Swanzy seemed to favour for his broadcasts. The suppression of writing by women or other marginalised groups is often linked to a choice of subject matter. Many of the small independent presses of the 1980s, such as Virago and New Beacon Press, were founded, in part, to tackle themes that were being silenced or overlooked by mainstream publishers. For instance, The Women’s Press first published Riley’s controversial novel, *The Unbelonging* in 1985. It is the story of Hyacinth, a young black girl who comes to Britain at the age of eleven; following an abusive relationship with her father, she finds herself having to endure the racism and loneliness of a care home.<sup>49</sup> Gilroy’s fictional concerns are much closer to Riley’s than many of her male contemporaries. According to Laura Niesen de Abruna, Riley’s subject matter encompasses “...the entire female life span and treats issues of family violence, child abuse, incest, rape, gender relations, marital relations, sexism at work, economic oppression of black women, attitudes toward children, and the erosion of respect for older women.”<sup>50</sup> This is hardly the type of saccharine poetry Swanzy abhorred but to be writing about these taboo subjects in the late 1950s, much earlier than Riley, would ensure that Gilroy was an anomaly.

Nonetheless, it would be unfair to suggest that Gilroy was entirely discouraged by her male peers. There were exceptions such as Andrew Salkey who, as writer in residence at the BBC in the 1950s, was especially supportive of women writers, and Gilroy always found her teaching materials in demand. Ann Walmsley was appointed as Longman’s first Caribbean editor in 1966. She was Gilroy’s first educational publisher, and the author valued her encouragement very highly. However, Walmsley felt she had unwittingly complied with gender stereotypes in her first job in publishing. During an

interview, I asked about her own role in developing Caribbean women's fiction and Walmsley remembered the following:

Was I particularly interested in women writers? I ought to have been. I ought to have said—I'm a woman publisher, I ought to encourage these women to get on and write. But I did for text books—I did a lot of that. Oh dear, talk about falling into stereotypes—I encouraged Jean D'Costa to write for children—but I don't remember very much encouraging women to write fiction—I can't remember anyone who seemed interested in doing that really.<sup>51</sup>

This is, of course, a retrospective view and Walmsley is not the only female publisher to offer an important insight into the male dominated publishing industry of the 1960s. Athill's memoirs of the period, *Stet*, suggest that she was often treated more like a subordinate than a business partner.<sup>52</sup> In hindsight Walmsley is bound to regret any complicity in maintaining gender boundaries, which may have resulted in lost opportunities to develop fiction writers such as D'Costa and Gilroy. We can only speculate on how Gilroy's earliest manuscripts (*In Praise of Love and Children* and *Sunlight on Sweet Water*) might have been received in terms of the dominant literary and publishing apparatus. Gilroy has maintained that the main barrier to her development was not on account of a lack of sympathetic editors, like Walmsley and Athill, but as a result of the role played by "[m]ale readers for publishers."<sup>53</sup> Few British publishers would have been able to place Gilroy's work, even experimentally, on account of what Pierre Bourdieu refers to as the operational critical standard arising from knowledge of prevailing "modes of expression characteristic of a period, a civilisation or a school."<sup>54</sup>

The complex, hierarchical interplay of gender, race, class, and cultural difference played an especially important role in shaping black women's literary production during the 1950s and 1960s. At this time, the tradition of Caribbean literature was only just being recuperated and established through a body of new work. Gilroy describes how much of an outsider she felt when she tried to introduce her work to British publishing houses in the 1950s: "Talking with some about my writing brought the discussion to a dark and barren place. Their class-education had not prepared them for encounters with colonial minds."<sup>55</sup> It may not surprise us too much that the British publishing houses of the 1960s were resistant to black women's writing, especially as these organisations tended to be dominated by white males of a certain class background. However, Gilroy also met with opposition from West Indian male writers who were employed to read niche manuscripts that might be considered foreign to the British tradition. She observes:

By the middle fifties [...] I wrote some stories. When my work was sent to the male writers from the West Indies to be read, these men, in order to be as erudite as they were expected to be, turned to the idiosyncratic and the fastidious. My work, they said, was too psychological, strange, way-out, difficult to categorise. "Fine", I replied. I didn't have to clothe or feed my manuscripts or write for a slice of bread, so I kept them. They are being published now.<sup>56</sup>

Such remarks indicate that Gilroy needed the sort of sustained, critical and insightful patronage that Athill gave to the young V. S. Naipaul (a male Caribbean author) and Jean Rhys (a white Creole woman writer).

As an example of how important this could be to the completion of a novel, Athill cites a letter from Jean Rhys to Francis Wyndham in which Rhys explains that certain clues helped her overcome writer's block. Rhys was stuck on the second part of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and needed to find a way of explaining the reason for Rochester and Antoinette's marriage of convenience and its immediate failure:

‘The second clue was when Miss Athill suggested a few weeks’ happiness for the unfortunate couple—before he [Mr Rochester] gets disturbing letters.’ Starting to follow this suggestion, she saw at once that ‘he must have fallen for her [Antoinette], and violently too’, and at once the marriage came alive and was launched on its complex and agonizing course.<sup>57</sup>

Gilroy was largely isolated from writers, such as Naipaul, and the camaraderie of the male group who mentored each other at the BBC during the years of “Caribbean Voices.” Given encouragement, she might even have had a similar level of success to that of her Guyanese contemporary, E. R. Braithwaite, whose novel *To Sir With Love* (1959), was made into a popular film.<sup>58</sup> Gilroy was writing in a patriarchal space, in a comparatively barren literary landscape, and her work arrived with no explanations of its historical context. This may be among the reasons why her fiction suffers from didactic interjections about the colonial histories underpinning her characters’ conflicts. At the time when she wrote the novel, colonial history was not taught as part of the British school curriculum. In Britain, the struggle to find a voice depended on the encouragement of West Indian authors who were ambitious and yet far from secure. Nobel Prize-winning V. S. Naipaul has stated that “it is so hard to write where there has been no writing” and describes how he overcame this setback through his BBC connections. Whilst editing “Caribbean Voices,” Naipaul remembered that that “talent was very limited. It was very tedious going through those scripts.”<sup>59</sup> Rhonda Cobham finds value in this tedium as it enabled Naipaul to learn from other writers’ mistakes.<sup>60</sup> Arguably, if Gilroy had been able to benefit from seeing the early work of West Indian authors and enjoyed the constructive patronage of those same BBC networks, *In Praise* might have been a different novel. Or perhaps Gilroy was simply ahead of her time. Had her novel been written at the same time as *Small Island*, it would have been subject to very different aesthetic, critical, and historical influences. Of course, we can only speculate on how other conditions and contexts for writing may have shaped Gilroy’s literary production as well as the reception of her work, but these are important issues to consider when reflecting on the wider horizons for black British and Caribbean women’s writing during the post-Windrush and contemporary periods.

Many non-academic readers who took part in a research project, which analysed several hundred reader responses to *Small Island*, appeared to recognise “the novel’s use of perspective as a structural feature with some considering the device’s significance in relation to the immigrant experience.”<sup>61</sup> In comparison, many readers might find the

structure of *In Praise* less successful. In answer to a question about barriers to her general development as a novelist, Gilroy replied that a major factor was a “lack of guidance”: “Someone to take your novel and say, look try to structure it in this way.”<sup>62</sup> The two novels and their relative technical accomplishments are connected to the author’s respective relations to a particular literary historical moment and aesthetic tradition. Their success is, in part, dependent on very different responses from publishers, awarding bodies, and readers to the structure of the two novels. Whereas *In Praise* is largely narrated through a limited first-person perspective, Levy uses her characters and their multiple perspectives as a structuring device for the novel as a whole. This fragmentation foregrounds the subjectivity of each character, leaving the reader to negotiate meaning based in his or her interpretation of each of these voices and their relations to one another in the fabric of the narrative as a whole. Whilst the stories may have some elements in common it is the narrative structure of the two novels which mark each as of its own time. According to David Lodge in *The Art of Fiction*,

[t]he structure of a narrative is like the framework of girders that holds up a modern high-rise building: you can’t see it, but it determines the edifice’s shape and character. The effects of a novel’s structure, however, are experienced over time—often quite a long time.<sup>63</sup>

The use of narrative structure and the arrangement of time highlight the distinctive ambitions of each writer. Levy explores a personal history that encompasses the experience of her parents’ generation, but observes that this has grown into “a slightly bigger canvas in that for me now it’s about placing the African-Caribbean experience within British history and how we got here.”<sup>64</sup> This is why the white racist Bernard’s story is given an equally compelling voice to that of her favourite character, the Jamaican, Gilbert.<sup>65</sup>

The reception of any literary work will inevitably be influenced by the availability of “paratextual framings of texts by elements such as reviews, media representations or events.”<sup>66</sup> Importantly, the ground for the publication and reading of *Small Island* had already been laid in 1998 when Britain commemorated fifty years of the *Windrush* generation through a series of articles, books, and television and radio broadcasts. Levy’s *Small Island* became emblematic of the struggles of the *Windrush* generation. Although there is no direct reference to slavery, the novel also became the literary ambassador for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passing of the Slave Trade Abolition Bill in 2007. Chosen as the text for the “Small Island Read” research project, Levy’s novel was situated “within a frame of commemorative events surrounding the anniversary of the abolition of slavery.”<sup>67</sup> Anouk Lang explains how *Small Island* came to be associated with the end of slavery through its links to commemorative events:

[...] the biggest mass-reading initiative that has ever taken place in Britain was organised in the cities of Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow and Hull, as part of the commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Slave Trade Abolition Bill. Fifty thousand copies of Andrea Levy’s *Small Island* were distributed across the UK, along with eighty thousand readers’ guides which provided information about Levy and the topics of slavery and migration. Over a hundred events—talks, discussions,

exhibitions, competitions and workshops—took place in association with Small Island Read, and at least a hundred stories about the project appeared in the local, regional and national press.<sup>68</sup>

These paratextual contexts help to explain the important place of *Small Island* in contemporary British fiction, a reputation that was further enhanced by the BBC adaptation of the novel for television in 2009.

*In Praise* lacked the type of paratextual framings that would help readers understand its context. Gilroy tends to fill these gaps in knowledge with authorial interjections that ultimately compromise an imaginative engagement with the fictional character. For example, Gilroy's account of Melda, a teacher in London, switches from a first-person narrative perspective to a third-person authorial voice in order to offer a wider account of the failure of multiculturalism:

Some teachers could cope with the white working classes and their concerns, but not with the problems of immigrants. These newly arrived children were co-operative and trusting—until they realised that nothing they did could truly please their teachers. It was as if they were expected to change their culture on the way to school each day, so the teachers could approve of them. Most teachers served only an English meal and if the children could not enjoy it, it was their fault. There were, though, a few teachers who understood that many of these children were culture-shocked. Where there was sympathetic support, it was surprising how quickly the children picked up English and peculiarities of the culture.<sup>69</sup>

This explanation guides its reader, suggesting how to interpret Melda's difficulties in a way that *Small Island* does not. As Lang asserts when writing about reader responses to *Small Island*, a reader's experience of the text will include: "the way in which reading is articulated to others in a dialogic process in which meaning is negotiated rather than fixed."<sup>70</sup> However, Reader Response and Reader Reception theory are relatively modern branches of literary enquiry. Gilroy, writing much earlier, may well have seen it as part of her job as a writer to fix the meaning and fill in the gaps in knowledge, even though this carries a risk of alienating her readers. She hints at this undertaking in the following commentary: "when I am satisfied that I have said what I want to say, that the reader and I would hear the same echoes and share the same emotions, I am content to think that I have drawn a good enough picture of contemporary reality."<sup>71</sup> Thus, Gilroy indicates that she aims to foster a common ground between author and reader, a strategy that seems rather different from Levy's emphasis on discrepant, sometimes incommensurate, worldviews.

Time, subjectivity, point of view, and character identification are treated very differently in both stories in ways that are suggestive of the theoretical, literary, and aesthetic traditions available to their authors. Gilroy's literary education would have been largely European and realist. Unlike Levy, she had no black female role models to look to and had read only one West Indian novel in British Guiana, namely Edgar Mittelholzer's *Corentyne Thunder* (1941).<sup>72</sup> She writes: "Whichever part of the British Empire had spawned us, we knew our Shakespeare, our Wordsworth, our Dickens, our war poets."<sup>73</sup> Gilroy begins her story of arrival in a conventional linear time frame and her choice of the

first-person narrator inevitably restricts her perspective to that of a single character. However, Melda's story strains at the leash of its simple structure through the introduction of flashbacks to Guiana, digressions concerning family members in New York, and authorial interjections, which seem to have little to do with advancing the plot. In many ways, we can see Gilroy experimenting with techniques that have subsequently become staples of postmodern fiction, such as temporal fragmentation and metafiction. Levy's *Small Island* circles back to earlier times (constantly cycling through the periods of "1948" and "Before") and deviates from linear plot progression. From the 'Small Island Read' research project, it seems that contemporary readers largely accepted the temporal fragmentation in Levy's novel. The project observed that Levy's skills in narrative technique had mostly helped "readers to overcome destabilizing effects such as chronological shifts and use of dialect."<sup>74</sup>

Postmodern Caribbean narratives have established a fictive continuum between past and present by moving much more freely in space and time. For instance, in Curdella Forbes' collection of short stories, *Songs of Silence* (2002), the narrator explains that these digressions and diversions are integral to her use of a Jamaican cultural form:

My head don't work straight like other people head. Sometimes my head weave stories inside itself, spinning a whole Anancy web of things that don't really go so but always feel realer than the things that go so. [...] Anything you want to think, you think, but in truth and in fact that is how we tell story where I come from. It don't haffi come straight for else it not sweet, and is just so it go.<sup>75</sup>

The idea of relating 'one true story,' which offers a definitive version of the past in a linear structured narrative, has been challenged by postmodern literature and theory. We now understand why the quest to represent a narrative truth or stabilise meaning is problematic for an author like Gilroy. She was writing in a pre-postmodern literary fictional and theoretical mode. Unlike Forbes and Levy, she had few examples of any other structural model that might help her resolve these issues of cultural representation. The postmodern novel problematises what we know about the subject of its representation. In her work on postmodern fiction and history, Linda Hutcheon explains the ways in which the aesthetics of postmodern fiction serve to represent the world (anew) to readers:

In challenging the seamless quality of the history/fiction (or world/art) join implied by realist narrative, postmodern fiction does not, however, disconnect itself from history or the world. ...[it] asks its readers to question the process by which we represent ourselves and our world to ourselves and to become aware of the means by which we *make* sense of and *construct* order out of experience in our particular culture. We cannot avoid representation. We *can* try to avoid fixing our notion of it and assuming it to be transhistorical and transcultural.<sup>76</sup>

By the time Levy writes *Small Island*—with its multiple narratives which fracture both time and perspective—post modern fiction has already been engaged for several decades in questioning the authority of the truthful subject and the idea of an objective narration of historical events. As mentioned, Levy structures her work by dividing chapters by character name as well as by shifting temporal perspectives, which move between "1948"



and “Before.” These devices destabilise the single trajectory of any of the narratives. The use of polyphony to structure the novel increases dramatic tension by interrupting the flow of events as each chapter moves to a different character and time. Although a sense of continuity may be frustrated by these interruptions and shifts, each chapter is narrated in a realist style, and it is relatively clear where we are in the story and whose point of view is being presented.

Levy’s apprenticeship as a writer was not without its difficulties. She only began writing in her thirties and struggled to find literary examples that would help her give voice to a distinctive black British perspective. In interviews, she has spoken about growing up black in what was still a very white England and how at that time there was little written about the black British experience. In terms of a black British canon, she claims that, like Gilroy, she began writing in a fictional void where it was difficult to interest publishers in new black British writing. However, between 1994 and 1999, Levy honed her craft in three novels, *Every Light in the House Burnin’* (1994), *Never Far from Nowhere* (1996), and *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). By the time *Small Island* was published a decade later, it was riding on the crest of a new wave of fiction by black British and Caribbean women writers (including figures listed in the introduction to this article). In “Caribbean Voices: 50 Years On,” Busby suggested that it was now male writers who were negatively affected by publishers “looking for the next Monica Ali.”<sup>77</sup> Where Gilroy was writing in an era that was not supportive of black women’s writing, by the twenty-first century, the publishing situation had changed dramatically for postcolonial women writers such as Levy.

*In Praise* is one of the first works to depict the estrangements of a Caribbean transnational family moving across three continents. In an interview with Roxanne Bradshaw, Gilroy argues that “[i]t is a very important book if you understand its construction.”<sup>78</sup> Although the comment goes unchallenged by the interviewer, Gilroy could have explained how her early fiction addresses conditions which were later theorised by postcolonial scholars. Notably, her son, Paul Gilroy, applied his considerable intellect to the historical conditions underpinning diasporic modernity in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993).<sup>79</sup> Beryl Gilroy suggests that *In Praise* “is the most misunderstood book of mine.”<sup>80</sup> Misunderstood and under-nourished by fresh critical insights, Gilroy’s entry in the *Bloomsbury Guide to Women’s Literature* states: “There has been little criticism of her writing to date.”<sup>81</sup> This critical silence has meant that Gilroy has been *the* major critic and theoriser of her own work. Many of her thoughts were collected together and published as *Leaves in the Wind: Collected Writings* in 1998, and she continued her habit of analysing her own work right up until her sudden death in 2001. In the aforementioned interview with Bradshaw, Gilroy explains how her readings of *In Praise of Love and Children* affect her audiences. The author speaks of being “overcome by the way they [members of the audience] cry.” She attributes this emotional reaction the novel being “a very profound book, very profound.”<sup>82</sup> Such a positive self-evaluation is risky, but by this stage in her life and career, she probably cared little what critics thought of her. Towards the end of the interview, Bradshaw questions the author’s self-regard: “It seems to me from all you have said about your upbringing that you were raised with very high self-esteem.”<sup>83</sup> Sexism and racial abuse are damaging to self

esteem, and we might recognise Hortense's affectations as a defence mechanism. Levy uses Hortense's self-regard to provide much needed humour at moments of high drama. Gilroy's use of humour may be less successful; she admits that "[a] lot of people miss the humour in my writing. I think it is excruciatingly funny. All the things I write."<sup>84</sup>

The effective use of humour is just one of *Small Island's* literary accomplishments in a story made relevant because of its timeliness. Levy observes: "I think this country is kind of ready to listen to that story now. It's been 60 years since the *Empire Windrush* came."<sup>85</sup> When Levy won the "Whitbread Book of the Year" in 2005, the judges' chairman was Sir Trevor McDonald. Growing up in Trinidad during the *Windrush* era, he was part of its history.<sup>86</sup> Whilst McDonald denied backing Levy's entry, he told a *Guardian* interviewer that it "emerged as a clear winner" because "it is a beautifully observed novel of a period of English history which many people seem not to know very much about."<sup>87</sup> Maria Helena Lima suggests that Levy's fictional terrain is personal: "It seems as if a return to the past is required for her protagonists to move on."<sup>88</sup> Whilst Gilroy writes in the heat of the moment, Levy's texts seem to address an audience made ready by their historical distance.<sup>89</sup> *Small Island's* place is inscribed in the *Windrush* memorial as a multiple prize-winning novel, a radio production, and a BAFTA-nominated television adaptation. It seems that *In Praise* has slipped between the cracks—metaphorically speaking—the victim of a shifting literary timeline which saw the promotion of writing by West Indian males in the 1950s. In the 1980s, a decade that saw the reclamation of suppressed and marginalised women's writing, Gilroy's work remained largely overlooked. Re-reading Beryl Gilroy in dialogue with Andrea Levy, we can reclaim overlooked feminist literary genealogies as well as shed light on the ways in which shifting political and ideological contexts have shaped both the production and literary historical account of black British and Caribbean writing.

## Endnotes

- 1 *The Oxford Dictionaries Online* gives the definition of “saga boy” as “playboy.” This term refers to a well-dressed, West Indian male who is a known chaser of women.  
oxforddictionaries.com/definition/saga+boy [accessed 26 August 2011].
- 2 Beryl Gilroy, *Leaves in the Wind*. Joan Anim-Addo, ed., London: Mango Publishing, 1998, 9.
- 3 Beryl Gilroy, “In Praise of Love and Children,” (unpublished paper, n.d.), 1.
- 4 Beryl Gilroy, *In Praise of Love and Children*. London: Peepal Tree, 1996, 55.
- 5 Gail Low, “‘Finding the Centre?’ Publishing Commonwealth Writing in London: The Case of Anglophone Caribbean Writing, 1950-1965,” *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 37 (2002): 21-38, 25.
- 6 For example: Evelyn O’Callaghan, *Woman Version*. London: Macmillan, 1993; Sushelia Nasta, ed., *Motherlands*. London: The Women’s Press, 1991; Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity*. London: Routledge, 1994; Alison Donnell, “Heard but not Seen: Women’s Short Stories and the BBC’s Caribbean Voices Programme,” *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, Lucy Evans, Mark McWatt, and Emma Smith, eds., Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2011, 29-43; Sandra Courtman, “‘Lost Years’: The Occlusion of West Indian Women’s Writers in the Early Canon of Black British Writing,” *Diasporic Literature and Theory- Where Now?* Mark Shackleton, ed., Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008, 57-86.
- 7 Matthew Mead, “Empire Windrush: The Cultural Memory of an Imaginary Arrival,” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 45.2 (2009): 137-149, 137.
- 8 Mead, 137.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 140.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 146.
- 11 Louise Bennett, “Colonization in Reverse,” *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse*. Paula Burnett, ed., London: Penguin, 1986, 32.
- 12 Names and descriptions of passengers arriving on M.V. Empire Windrush, Tilbury Docks, June 21/22, 1948. PRO/BT/1237/9411. “Moving Here: 200 years of Migration to England”: [http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/hitlist.asp?keywords=passenger+list+of+WINDRUSH&person=no&community=3&theme=0&date\\_from=&date\\_to=&source=0&section=C&submit2=Search](http://www.movinghere.org.uk/search/hitlist.asp?keywords=passenger+list+of+WINDRUSH&person=no&community=3&theme=0&date_from=&date_to=&source=0&section=C&submit2=Search) [accessed 4 March 2011].
- 13 “Summary of British and Alien Passengers”: [http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=MV\\_Empire\\_Windrush#Passenger\\_list\\_BT\\_26.2F1237](http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=MV_Empire_Windrush#Passenger_list_BT_26.2F1237) [accessed 9 March 2011].
- 14 Cited from interview with Sam King in Mead, 142.
- 15 <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk/biography/index.php> [accessed 3 March 2010].
- 16 Hilde Marchant, “Thirty Thousand Colour Problems,” *Picture Post* 9 June 1956, 38.
- 17 Marchant, 38.
- 18 Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*. Harlow: Longman Caribbean Writers, 1985 (first published Alan Wingate, 1956), 107.
- 19 Marchant, 28.
- 20 See chapters “The Woman of Color and the White Man” and “The Man of Color and the White Woman,” Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. trans. Charles Lamm Markman London: Pluto Press, 1986 (first published Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1952).
- 21 Selvon, 133.

- 22 Joyce Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 2nd edn., Sandra Courtman, ed., Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean Classic Series, 2003. See Courtman's introduction for a discussion of the conditions which facilitated the publication of Gladwell's rare autobiography in 1969.
- 23 Elsewhere I have written more fully about the conditions which affected these women writers' careers. Gladwell's case is discussed in the introduction to a reprinted edition of Joyce Gladwell, *Brown Face Big Master*. Oxford: Macmillan Caribbean Classic Series, 2003. See also Sandra Courtman, "Not Good Enough or Not Man Enough? Beryl Gilroy as the Anomaly in the Evolving Black British Canon," *A Black British Canon?* Gail Low and Marion Wynne-Davies, eds., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 50-74.
- 24 Sarah Brophy, "Entangled Genealogies: White Femininity on the Threshold of Change in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*," *Contemporary Women's Writing* 4.2 (2010): 101.
- 25 From Brophy's title.
- 26 Joyce Gladwell, letter to the author, November 7, 1996.
- 27 Joyce Gladwell, letter to the author, November 7, 1996.
- 28 This quotation originally appeared in "Race Today Women," 1975, 110. It is cited in Elyse Dodgeson, *Motherland: West Indian Women to Britain in the 1950*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984, 62.
- 29 Beryl Gilroy, *Black Teacher*. London: Cassell, 1976; 2nd edn. London: Bogle L'Ouverture Press, 1994.
- 30 Fanon, 63,
- 31 Selvon, 48.
- 32 Ibid., 102.
- 33 Ibid., 103.
- 34 Ibid., 104.
- 35 Ibid., 106.
- 36 Diana Athill, *Life Class: The Selected Memoirs of Diana Athill*. London: Granta, 2009, 290.
- 37 Caryl Phillips, *A Distant Shore*. London: Secker and Warburg, 2003, 203.
- 38 Diana Athill, *Stet*. London: Granta Books, 2000, 103, cited in Low, 25.
- 39 Beryl Gilroy, *In Praise of Love and Children*. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 1996; Beryl Gilroy, *Sunlight on Sweet Water*. Leeds: Peepal Tree, 1994.
- 40 See also Courtman, "Not Good Enough or Not Man Enough? Beryl Gilroy as the Anomaly in the Evolving Black British Canon," 50-74.
- 41 Andrea Levy, *Small Island*. London: Headline Book Publishing, 2004, 464.
- 42 Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*. London: Virago, 1985, 43.
- 43 Margaret Busby, BBC World Service broadcast, "Caribbean Voices: Fifty Years On," ed. Colin Grant 7 July 2010: see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/i/p008grqf/> [accessed 4 March 2011].
- 44 Athill cited in Low, 25.
- 45 Low, 35.
- 46 Alison Donnell, "Heard but not Seen: Women's Short Stories and the BBC's Caribbean Voices Programme," *The Caribbean Short Story: Critical Perspectives*, 31.
- 47 Beryl Gilroy, "Reflections," *Caribbean Women Writers: Fiction in English*. Mary Condé and Thorunn Lonsdale, eds., London: Longman, 1999, 15.
- 48 Low, 31.
- 49 Joan Riley, *The Unbelonging*. London: Womens Press, 1985.

- 50 Laura Niesen de Abruna, "The Sea Change of Our Sisters: West Indian Women Writers in England," *Institute of Commonwealth Literature Collected Seminar Papers*, 42.2 (1992): 40.
- 51 Author's personal interview with Ann Walmsley and Louis James, Bedford Square Gardens, London, 31 May 1995. Transcript in Sandra Courtman, "Lost Years: West Indian Women Writing and Publishing in Britain, c. 1960-1979", Vol. 2. (Unpublished thesis, University of Bristol, 1998), 305.
- 52 See Athill, *Life Class*, 357-364. Athill describes her 'partnership' with Deutsch in the following way: "Dictatorships work: that is why they are so readily accepted, and if they are demonstrably more or less just, as they can be to start with, they are accepted with a gratitude more personal than can be inspired by other kinds of regime" (363).
- 53 This is in response to the following question put to the author: "What were the main barriers to your development as a novelist/creative writer?" Author's Interview with Beryl Gilroy, 3 August 1995, Hampstead, London.
- 54 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge, 1986, 4.
- 55 Gilroy, *Leaves in the Wind*, 211.
- 56 Ibid., *Leaves in the Wind*, 213.
- 57 Athill, *Life Class*, 475.
- 58 E. R. Braithwaite, *To Sir, With Love*. London: Bodley Head, 1959. The back cover blurb of the fourth impression carries a photograph of the young author with the caption "The world needs all the Mr Braithwaites it can find," *Sunday Times*.
- 59 Podcast of V. S. Naipaul speaking on the BBC broadcast "Caribbean Voices: Fifty Years On."
- 60 Podcast of Ronda Cobham Sander speaking on the BBC broadcast "Caribbean Voices: Fifty Years On."
- 61 Anouk Lang, "Enthralling but at the same time disturbing': Challenging the Readers of *Small Island*," *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 44 (2009): 128.
- 62 Author's Interview with Beryl Gilroy, August 3, 1995, Hampstead, London.
- 63 David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*. London: Penguin, 1992, 216.
- 64 Teddy Jamieson, "The Author Andrea Levy on Racism, Rejection and Writing," *The Herald Magazine* 6 January 2007: 9-11, 9.
- 65 In answer to a question from one of the listeners, Levy remarked that Gilbert was her favourite character in *Small Island*, "World Book Club," (BBC World Service broadcast, February 6, 2010). Available as a BBC podcast, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/wbc> [accessed, March, 3, 2010].
- 66 Lang, 127.
- 67 Ibid., 127,
- 68 Ibid., 123-124.
- 69 Gilroy, *In Praise of Love and Children*, 58.
- 70 Lang, 127.
- 71 Gilroy, *Leaves in the Wind*, 11.
- 72 Beryl Gilroy, "Letter to the Author," July 20, 1996.
- 73 Gilroy, *Leaves in the Wind*, 201.
- 74 Lang, 123.
- 75 Curdella Forbes, *Songs of Silence*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 2002, 93, 95.

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- 79 Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London: Verso, 1993.
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- 85 "Andrea Levy's *Small Island* Looks at Post-war Immigrants," *The Jamaica Observer* 17 April 2005, 5.
- 86 John Ezard, "Small Island Claims Whitbread Prize," *The Guardian* 26 January 2005: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/jan/books.whitbreadbookawards2004/> [accessed June 10, 2010].
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- 88 Maria Helena Lima, "'Pivoting the Centre': The Fiction of Andrea Levy," *Write Black, Write British: From Post Colonial to Black British Literature*. Kadija Sesay, ed., Hertford: Hansib Publications, 2005: 57.
- 89 Gilroy, *Black Teacher*, front publisher's blurb: "This is a story of her triumph over injustice, hate, indifference...."

Women Writers and the Windrush Generation: A Contextual Reading of Beryl Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*. S Courtman. *The Complete MAUS*. As a child he was a great devourer of comic papers, and from his autobiography, *An Only Child* (published in 1961), it appears that many of the details in the story which follows were drawn from his own schooldays. Read more. Method. as Cultural Production in Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, Alicia E. Ellis; *Women Writers and the Windrush Generation: A Contextual Reading of Beryl Gilroy's In Praise of Love and Children* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*, Sandra Courtman; *Representations of Ageing and Black British Identity in Andrea Levy's Every Light in the House Burnin* and Joan Riley's *Waiting in the Twilight*, Charlotte Beyer; *Stranger in the Empire: Language and Identity in the Mother Country*, Ann Murphy; *A Written Song: Andrea Levy's Neo-Slave Narrative*, Maria Helena Lima; *Coloured*, Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar; and *Letter to Motherwell*, Rhona Hammond. Andrea Levy (1956) was born in London, England, to Jamaican parents. Despite living and working in the UK for decades, many Windrush children were told to leave. Why? It is unclear how many people belong to the Windrush generation, but they are thought to be in their thousands. They are among more than 500,000 UK residents who were born in a Commonwealth country and arrived before 1971, according to University of Oxford estimates. The influx ended with the 1971 Immigration Act, when Commonwealth citizens already living in the UK were given indefinite leave to remain. Events are held annually to commemorate the Windrush's arrival, and the subsequent wave of immigration from Caribbean countries. Windrush Day is commemorated on 22 June - the first being observed in 2018. *In Praise of Love and Children*, Peepal Tree Press, 1994. Inkle and Yarico, Peepal Tree Press, 1994. *Leaves in the Wind: Collected Writings*, Mango Publishing, 1998. Sandra Courtman, "Women Writers and the Windrush Generation: A Contextual Reading of Beryl Gilroy's *In Praise of Love and Children* and Andrea Levy's *Small Island*" Archived 3 March 2016 at the Wayback Machine. EnterText, Special Issue on Andrea Levy, 9 (2012): 84-104. Nisha Obano, "Beryl Gilroy" Archived 4 March 2016 at the Wayback Machine, *Encyclopedia of Afro-European Studies*. Lenny Henry and Josette Simon explore the experience of the Windrush generation through its poetry and prose, set against music from calypso to classical. Show more. Seven decades after the docking of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury, Lenny Henry and Josette Simon explore the experience and emotions of the Windrush generation through its poetry and prose, set against music from calypso to classical: Lord Kitchener to Ligeti, Beethoven to Bob Marley and gospel to Errollyn Wallen. Beryl Gilroy. *In Praise of Love and Children*, read by Josette Simon. 00:28. The London Gospel Community Choir.