

Gentrification, race and difference: ~~Cultural dialogue and the politics of the 'contact zone'~~. The case of Brixton and Brick Lane.

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Abstract

This thesis examines one of the biggest property booms of the capital that led the way to processes of gentrification to penetrate into some postcolonial spaces of the metropolis. More specifically, the areas of Brixton and Brick Lane transform into the spatial laboratories for an interrogation into the politics of cultural dialogue within contemporary instances of 'ethnic' gentrification. To put it differently, this thesis attempts to shed some light on processes of inner-transformation, as a result to an exposure to different differences, to either disorient or reify the cultural bearings of the metropolitan subject; it reflects on multiple negotiations and constructions of cultural or 'ethnic' differences in relation to these spaces of diversity. In this sense, culture is transformed into the main discursive arena of the multicultural city, where different people from different backgrounds and incomes try to make sense of their lives, experiences and futures within contemporary postmodern-postcolonial London. At the same time, this thesis contributes to a genre of cultural narratives that try to perplex urban political economy's stories. It aims to render the city visible beyond the sphere of economics and manifest the complexities of contemporary processes of urban transformation and multicultural life at large.

I declare that the research presented in this thesis is my own work.

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‘How can the human world live its difference; how can a human being live otherwise?’

Bhabha 1994:64

‘We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border, which separates our knowledge from ignorance and transforms the one into the other. Only in this manner are we resolved to write. To satisfy ignorance is to put off writing until tomorrow.’

Gilles Deleuze, ‘Difference and Repetition’ (2001: xxi).

Cultural dialogue within a fast transforming metropolis.

1.1 Introduction.

This thesis describes one of the biggest property booms of the capital and the particular ways that this penetrative metropolitan expansion brought different people together, from different backgrounds and incomes, into communal forms of multicultural urban living. At the same time, it is also about the ways that these particular modes of diverse urban living either hold the powers, or not, to change established cultural ways of being and 'fixed' notions of 'selfhood'. Following these lines, this thesis reflects on contemporary processes of urban transformation, which have been unfolding in London during the last years, but also, exposes the potential and possibilities of urban differences to proceed in an inner transformation of the 'self'.

To put it differently, this thesis investigates forms of cultural dialogue taking place within spatial processes of gentrification in Brixton and Brick Lane. At the same time, these processes of gentrification or urban postmodernization that appear to penetrate into some of the postcolonial spaces of the metropolis clearly manifest instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism or 'ethnic' gentrification. The particular ways that this research makes sense of contemporary configurations of cultural dialogue within processes of urban transformation are mainly through the forms of the multicultural 'sayable' expressed within the context of local interviews. As Bhabha has argued 'the multicultural has itself become a 'floating signifier' whose enigma lies less in itself than in the discursive uses of it' (Bhabha cited in Hesse 2000:1). In a similar fashion to this, I investigate the multiplicity of meanings that become attached to notions of the local multicultural within instances of 'ethnic' gentrification in Brixton and Brick Lane. In other words, I expose the variety of narratives that go on to produce local multicultural significations and meanings.

Although my thesis refers and relates to the specific spatialities of Brixton and Brick Lane, it appears to shed some light too on issues of multicultural life at large within any fast transforming ethnically diverse city. It reveals what a multicultural city might look and feel like. From such an angle, it comprises an investigation into contemporary forms of urban multicultural living or ethnically diverse urban conditions under the aegis of acute metropolitan expansion.

In the rest of this chapter, I attempt to do the following two things: firstly, I review the literature of gentrification or urban transformation as it has been developed within the last decades. As I will argue, considerations of 'race', difference and multiculturalism have not received any appropriate focus at all; they have been almost ignored from the gentrification studies picture. Secondly, I shall locate my own work within this analytical framework and expose my main theoretical influences. By doing that, I hope to unleash some possibilities for the inclusion of multicultural considerations within contemporary theories of urban transformation and city change.

1.2 Reviewing the gentrification debate.

In this chapter, I review the gentrification debate as it has gradually evolved within the discipline of urban geography. Following these lines, I expose each subsequent step within the analysis of processes of gentrification that have changed, to an unprecedented extent, the urban landscape of cities all around the advanced capitalist world. As I shall argue, early gentrification studies were based upon a clear distinction between culture and economy. Following these lines, within these initial stages of the debate, gentrification was habitually 'seen' as either an economic or cultural process. Nevertheless, none of these approaches paid any significant attention to issues of multiculturalism, 'race' and difference. At the same time, when gentrification analysis appeared to adopt a combined culturo-economic approach, again, issues of 'race', difference and multiculturalism did not receive any appropriate focus at all. As a result, gentrification studies in general have not attempted to

analyse the important role of differences or diversity within the gentrified/gentrifying urban; considerations of 'race', difference and multicultural have almost been left out of the field of analytical scrutiny.

In what follows, I attempt to expose a serious obliteration, within academic literatures of gentrification. As I shall argue, there is a hole in the ways that traditional gentrification studies have been theorised. As mentioned above, gentrification within the academy has been persistently perceived as either a purely economic or cultural phenomenon. In effect, through this constructed binarism, there was limited space left for discourses of 'race', ethnicity and difference to enter the gentrification studies picture. However, even when mainstream gentrification analysis eventually embraced a synthetic cultural-economic approach this inherited binarism partly remained. In effect, through the influence of a Neo-Marxist analytical framework, culture became significant as long as it referred to an economics of culture. To put it differently, Neo-Marxist influenced culturo-economic gentrification analysis was mainly interested in processes of commodification of culture; its cultural sensitivities and considerations appeared to end there. Following these lines, issues of 'race', difference and multicultural did not find the significance that they deserved within the canon of Neo-Marxist urban analysis.

Nevertheless, this thesis strives to adopt a different perspective upon culture and economy. It tries to get rid of this inherited culturo-economic binarism. From such an angle, it attempts to theorise culture and economy as constitutive parts of a 'whole material social process' (Williams 1977:94). To put it differently, culture and economy appear to come together through a 'dialectics of complementarity' (Lees 1994:140), which can only become manifested through people's lives.

Following these lines, I attempt to relate and connect processes of gentrification and discourses of race, difference and cultural dialogue. In effect, the main theoretical preoccupation that arises is to interrogate the traditional place and role of difference within the literature of gentrification. In other words, how this inherited culturo-economic binarism appears to have prevented discourses of difference from emerging within the genre of mainstream gentrification studies?

In short, my objective in this chapter is threefold. Firstly, to review the ways through which processes of gentrification have been traditionally narrated within the academy. Secondly, to critique contemporary Neomarxist cultural-economic urban narratives, whilst at the same time, attempt to trace an 'other' way of synthesizing culture and economy together. Thirdly, to explain the specific analytic framework that this thesis will adopt in order to analyse contemporary postmodern-postcolonial formations between gentrification, 'race' and difference.

1.2.1 Confusion around the subject matter?

For almost three decades, academic writing about contemporary urban transformations has spent a lot of ink trying to describe processes of gentrification that simultaneously transformed the urban landscape of cities of the advanced capitalist world (see for example London 1980, Laska & Spain 1980, Guterbock 1980, Weston 1982, Beauregard 1983, London & Palen 1984, Rose 1984). Generally speaking, the very concept of gentrification is conventionally attributed to the British sociologist, Ruth Glass. Several decades ago, Glass argued that:

'One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes...Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed' (Glass cited in Hamnett & Williams 1980:51).

Since then, a large number of urban commentators have eagerly attempted to analyse these newly emergent spatial processes (again see Logan 1982, Smith 1982, Hamnett 1984, Hartman 1984, Gale 1984, Williams 1984, Jackson 1985, Berry 1985, London, Lee & Lipton 1986, Smith & Williams 1986, Smith 1987, Zukin 1987, Mills 1988, Bowler & MvBurney 1991, Hamnett 1991, Cameron 1992, Wagner 1995). In effect, a whole literature of gentrification resulted, which through the passage of time, came to emphasize and draw attention to different aspects of

the process. In what follows, I construct a condensed form of archaeology of theories of gentrification.

From the early 1980s, some academic theories of urban change advocated that gentrification was primarily linked to an attraction to old architectural styles (Jackson 1983, 1985, Jager 1986). From such a perspective, gentrification was mainly about Victorian houses in London and Melbourne, brownstone buildings in New York and loft or warehouse conversions in any other postindustrial city. Following these lines, Sharon Zukin (1987) argued that gentrification in its early stages, was primarily associated with 'a symbolic new attachment to old buildings and a heightened sensibility to space and time' (Zukin 1987:131). Under these lights, early gentrification processes in many Western cities allegedly evolved around an appreciation of history and the qualities of space. From such an angle, gentrification was allegedly changing the urban environment of the historic urban centre or centrally located, delapidated postindustrial spaces. Neighbourhoods with history or postindustrial places of architectural charm transformed overnight into preservationist, well sought after enclaves. Accordingly, within these early stages, gentrification was presented as an aesthetic, whilst profitable, struggle for preservation; traces of history within the city had to be aesthetically appreciated, restored and consumed.

Nonetheless, some other critics were more inclined to indicate the 'chaotic' nature of the process (Beauregard 1986). From such a perspective, gentrification became narrated as a complex and differentiated process capable of altering the face of any postindustrial city. More particularly, this allegedly 'chaotic' nature of gentrification appeared to refer to a number of different spatial processes, which altered the morphology of the urban landscape. In a similar fashion to this, D. Rose (1984) stated that:

'the terms 'gentrification' and 'gentrifiers', as commonly used in the literature, are 'chaotic' concepts which obscure the fact that a multiplicity of processes, rather than a single causal process, produce changes in the occupation of inner-city neighbourhoods from lower to higher income residents'(Rose 1984:62).

Following these lines, a number of other commentators went even further and began

categorizing what they conceived as different elements within the process of gentrification. For instance, Warde (1991) suggested that processes of gentrification should be conceptually understood as twofold: firstly, a 'piecemeal' form of gentrification, which is predominantly led by individuals and is fundamentally based around a principle of 'aesthetic unity'. Secondly, a 'wholesale' form of gentrification, led by large construction companies, which invest heavily in an urban landscape demarcated for rejuvenation (Warde 1991:230). In a similar fashion, Buttler & Robson (1999) have voiced similar concerns, by arguing for a 'social action' versus a 'new built' gentrification distinction (Butler & Robson 1999:17).

Increasingly, an 'academic consensus' on the very definition of processes of gentrification (Sassen 1991:255) emerged. Following these lines, it was suggested that if gentrification was to maintain its analytical powers and conceptual accuracy, it should accommodate both new construction and the generic redevelopment of the city (Zukin 1991:192, Smith 1996:39). Accordingly within academic discourses of the 1990s, gentrification came to stand as a whole embracing concept capable of containing a variety of processes, which were transforming the majority of late-capitalist cities. From such a perspective, gentrification in a broad sense became equated to the spatial translation of the late capitalist economic restructuring (Smith 1996:87).

As gentrification theories have run for more than two decades, the organisation of western capitalism has altered apparently, within this period, as well. In effect, stories of city change had to take account and analyse these modifications of the western capitalist structure. Following these lines, the gentrification literature had a dual task: on one side, to narrate processes of urban transformation, whilst on the other, to describe broader capitalist transmutations that remodeled the face of capitalist cities too. In short, contemporary forms of late capitalist resonance had to be included within the analysis of urban change.

In what follows, I shall investigate this alleged relationship between gentrification and late capitalist economic reorganization. However, such a spatial translation of an economic restructuring into the urban environment can only occur through the

reconfiguration of labour force. In short, forces of economic remodeling reorganise labour, which in effect, results in a subsequent reorganisation of space. Following these lines, economy, space and labour appear as interdependent and linked.

1.2.2 Gentrification and late capitalist economic restructuring.

According to Sharon Zukin (1991) 'gentrification refers to a profound spatial restructuring' (Zukin 1991:187). As I argued before, processes of gentrification can only be analytically exposed, by situating them within the context of late capitalist economic reconfiguration. In this sense, the economic appears to influence the spatial. Following these lines, contemporary processes of urban transformations appear to depend on overall transmutations of the world economy. In short, the global appears to condition the local (Sassen 1991:323). Within the current state of a highly globalised economy, different places become inextricably linked through the web of an integrated financial system.

The very concept of a late-capitalist remodeling refers to a profound transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regime of accumulation. In what follows, I define what Fordism and post-Fordism appear to stand for, whilst secondly, I reflect on this alleged causal rupture. As I shall argue, this transition from a Fordist to a Post-Fordist regime of accumulation corresponds with fundamental changes within the economy, city and state.

Broadly speaking, Fordism appeared to go along with economies of scale and mass production within the economy, a clear separation between industrial zones and residential suburbs within the city and the dominance of a powerful sovereign nation-state. Following these lines, some writers argued that Fordism, should not only be understood as a mere economic system, but rather, it should be better conceptualised as a revolutionary, new 'way of life' (Harvey 1989:135). Accordingly, Fordism, which for the first time dissolved the threat of material scarcity for modern postwar societies, appeared to bring along a new 'social system for the reproduction of the labour power' (Harvey 1989:126). Firstly, under the

aegis of an economic system dominated by 'economies of scale', mass production through a stable agreement, between capital and organized labour, became translated into sufficient demand, hence mass consumption. Secondly, through the existence of a powerful nation-state, the continuation of a strictly regulated economy was guaranteed. Thirdly, as the direct result of an internationally unchallenged Pax-Americana era of global geopolitics, an established sense of international economic 'law and order' was secured (Castells 1989:21-22).

As it has been widely recognized, capitalism is a highly contradictory system in itself. Following these lines, it has been further suggested that an inflationary over-accumulation crisis¹ is 'intrinsic' to any capitalist mode of production (Harvey 1989:181). By all accounts, this kind of approach suggests that as capital becomes invested within the sphere of production it generate surpluses of capital. More importantly, these surpluses of capital in conjunction to other labour surpluses, which emanate from labour saving techniques, appear to lead irrevocably to an inescapable 'overaccumulation crisis' (Harvey 1985:191). As a short-term response to these threats, labour and capital surpluses, can become invested in the built environment (Harvey 1985:222). Nevertheless, these kinds of short-term stabilising techniques cannot really bring back the system into balance and accordingly capital has to reorganise itself in a wholly new way. Concurrently, capital should be conceptualised as the 'crude and restless auteur' (Soja 1989:157) that 'builds a physical landscape appropriate to its own condition at a particular moment in time, only to have it destroyed, usually in the course of a crisis, at a subsequent point in time' (Harvey 1978:124).

To sum up, for the cases of Europe and the U.S.A, postwar Fordism should be understood as an economic system, which through its productive capacities generated the possibilities for the creation of a social welfare model. By all accounts, this welfare statism became fundamentally ensured through an accompanying regime of economic regulations; the State had the powers to regulate and intervene within the domain of the national economy. Most importantly, it was

¹ At this particular point, it should be noted that contemporary deflationary pressures in Japan and the threat of a future deflation in Europe and the USA appear to prove as 'naïve' earlier Neo-Marxist economic analysis of previous decades.

capable of abstracting a big part of capital's gains for the reproduction of society as a whole.

Nonetheless, from the mid 1960s, this situation changed; postwar Fordist regimes of regulation came to an end. The prime reason for this was that under the heavy pressure of shrinking levels of capital's profits (Soja 1989:170), the established postwar economic system had to re-adjust itself, to re-shape its component parts, to proceed into a new arrangement (Harvey 1989:173, Castells & Henderson 1987:5, Castells 1989:21).

This new manifestation of the capitalist economic system, which came out of this readjustment, became known as Post-Fordism. In general terms, it was suggested that this new economic order was primarily organised around a new 'flexible regime of accumulation' (Harvey 1989:125). Most importantly, this 'flexibility' referred to production and more specifically in relation to the labour force (Soja 1989:221). In a similar fashion, it was further suggested that this new manifestation of the capitalist order had a much more 'disorganised' nature than the previous one; it did not seem to carry the same amount of economic regulations as postwar Fordism (Lash & Urry 1987:2). In effect, this 'disorganised' form of post-Fordism mainly included the withdrawal of State from the economy, or alternatively, the deregulation of economic spheres (Law & Wolch 1993:175).

Following these lines, this new capitalist configuration brought along a new balance, a new kind of relationship between labour and capital, in favor of the latter (Castells & Handerson 1987:1, Soja 1989:170). At the same time, the very constitution of labour force appeared to change gradually, through increased levels of female participation within the economy or processes of feminization of labour (Gordon & Sassen 1992:113, Massey 1987:293). Most fundamentally, Post-Fordism became accompanied by a further intensification of processes of internationalisation of the global economy (Castells 1989:25). In what follows, I shall shed some light on processes of globalisation that appeared to accelerate rapidly within the era of Post-Fordism.

As I argued, the key to understand the plethora of contemporary urban transformations lies within the sphere of processes of internationalisation of the

world economy. The very initial formations of an international or globalised world originate, as early as the 'long sixteenth century', through the spreading of European colonialism. Following these lines, European colonial expansion created the very foundations of a world economy. These were the very first roots of globalisation, primarily taking place through the integration and exploitation of 'race' within this newly emergent inhuman capitalist international order.

As I argued before, Fordist regimes of accumulation coincided with the dominance of a sovereign national state with a strong influence on the national economy. To put it differently, within the Fordist era a strong national government had the powers to regulate and tame its internal economy. Nevertheless, the demise of these Fordist regimes of economic regulation appeared to bring along a whole new era of an integrated globalised economy.

Increasingly, international capital appears to have been capable of defying national boundaries in order to be invested in 'super-profits' areas; the coming to power of a Post-Fordist capitalism brought along enhanced levels of capital mobility. As a result of this intensified capital roaming, a relocation of the manufacturing base from the 'developed' to the 'less developed' world took place (Friedman & Wolf 1982:322). By all accounts, this 'geographical dispersal' of production became plausible through processes of deregulation of national economies (Massey 1987:293). Under these lights, a number of reasons have been cited for the relocation of the manufacturing base from the 'First' to the 'Third' world. Firstly, it has been assigned to the lower cost of labour in the developing world (Michalet 1982:40). Secondly, it has been linked to a tactical act from the part of capital to combat labour's militancy in the 'First World' (Glikman 1987:76), or alternatively, it has been presented as the mere outcome of forces of international competition (Cohen 1981:291).

Nevertheless, as the manufacturing base was moving towards the 'Third World', core cities within the sphere of Western advanced capitalism, took over the task of controlling and managing this globally dispersed production (Hall 1966:234, Sassen 1991:34). Within this newly emerging 'New International Division Of Labour (NIDL)', the 'First World' was delegated with the task of coordinating 'Third

World' production. As Cohen (1981) argued this NIDL should be understood as: 'a complex hierarchical system which integrates different types of useful forms of labour of individual producers carried on under the aegis of large highly-integrated international companies [TNCs]' (Cohen 1981:89). Under these lights, these highly internationalised companies located their headquarters within the core-cities of advanced western capitalism. As these core-capitalist cities began to function as 'command centres' for a globally dispersed production, they alternatively became known as 'global cities' (Cohen 1981:300, Sassen 1991).

As the 'First World' or more particularly its 'global cities', increasingly became deprived of their manufacturing base, an expanding service sector flourished in their place (Friedman & Wolf 1982:322). In sharp contrast to previous Fordist employment patterns, characterised by the tendency to produce middle-income jobs, this new metropolitan service economy had the tendency to either create high or alternatively low-income jobs (Sassen-Koob 1985:255, Sassen 1991:244). In effect, through the mediation of a restructured labour force, late capitalist economic restructuring became translated into more intense forms of 'class polarization' (Sassen 1991). Accordingly, this newly emergent 'class polarisation' eventually led to a residential and commercial urban restructuring of western advanced cities of capitalism (Soja, Morales & Wolf 1983:195). Following these lines, Saskia Sassen (1985) has claimed that because of this income bipolarity that the metropolitan service economy produces, individuals at the high-end of the earning spectrum appeared to proceed into consumerist lifestyles, which further take the form of residential and commercial gentrification. As these urban lifestyles of gentrification are fundamentally labour-intensive, more low-paid jobs are produced within the urban economy (Sassen-Koob 1985:255). As a direct result of these processes of economic polarisation, in conjunction with conditions of continuous migration (Sassen-Koob 1985:234, Sassen 1993), a multiplicity of new urban 'geographies of centrality and marginality' (Sassen 1994:8), which spell a narrative of the global city as a 'frontier' between a powerful 'economic centre' and 'alien' others, are constantly produced (Sassen 1996a, 1996b:197, Castells 1989:344, Soja 1989:217, Soja 1996:442). From such a perspective, gentrification in a broad sense can be

theorised as the embodiment or spatial arrangement of these multiple new urban inequalities within the matrixes and spaces of the generic capitalist city.

1.2.3 The early stages of the debate.

As early as the early 1980s, a 'heated' debate around processes of gentrification erupted within the discipline of human, or more specifically, urban geography. On one hand, lay a number of critics standing for the 'demand' or culturalistic explanation of the process (Ley 1980, 1981, 1986, Gregory 1981, Mullins 1982, Moore 1982, Beauregard 1986), whilst on the other, Neil Smith (1979), with his 'rent gap'² theory, was forcefully defending capital's hegemonic role within processes of production and reproduction of the built environment. Although both sides of the argument took the late capitalist economic restructuring as their pivotal cause, they came up with two diametrically different explanatory motifs. A large part of this intellectual confrontation resulted mainly from the fact that gentrification was just an excuse and a mere 'battleground' for a much broader 'theoretical' and 'ideological' debate within the discipline of geography. Broadly speaking, these polemics took place between 'the liberal humanists who stress[ed] the key role of choice, culture, consumption and consumer demand, and the structural Marxists who stress [ed] the role of capital, class, production and supply' (Hamnett 1991:174). In what follows, I shall revise the early formulations of this academic dispute.

As mentioned above, demand-side explanations of gentrification are inextricably linked to contemporary societal transformations deriving from the restructuring of the urban labour force. Accordingly, as D.Ley (1980), the main proponent of the culturalistic approach argued: 'an understanding of the emerging urban landscape

² Neil Smith's (1979:546) 'rent gap' theory argues that a minimum investment in a derelict urban environment can guarantee significant levels of profit that can trigger a 'back to the city' flow of capital. In this sense, the neglected inner-city appears as profitable as new construction in the suburbs. Accordingly, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that investments of capital within the urban environment subsequently experience cycles of valorization, devalorization and revalorization.

requires a prior grasp of wide-ranging processes in society itself' (Ley 1980:240). Following these lines, he conceptualises current societal sea-changes as emanating from a transition from a 'goods-producing to a service producing society' (Ley 1980:240). As a direct result of this transposition, a professional, managerial class allegedly has emerged, coined as the 'new middle class' (Ley 1996), whose individual consumerist lifestyles reshaped, and are still reshaping, the fabric of contemporary capitalist metropolises. Accordingly, one could argue that demand-side explanations of gentrification tend to focus on the production of gentrifiers, their cultural habits, and preferences (Beauregard 1986:43, Bailey & Robertson 1997:563). In short, demand-side explanations of gentrification draw emphasis on the importance of human agency and urban culture as dominating factors that reproduce and transform the city. Nevertheless, as Chris Hamnett (1991) has acknowledged: 'What Smith would label the 'choice, consumption and culture' side of the debate has, in fact, always had one foot firmly planted in the realities of changes in the material base of the production and its cultural manifestations' (Hamnett 1991:187).

On the other hand, Neil Smith (1979) has persistently stressed the importance of capital and other institutional agents within processes of gentrification³. His view of gentrification is fundamentally related to the production of dwellings. Following these lines, within Smith's theorisation, the emphasis appears to shift from the production of gentrifiers to the production of dwellings. Accordingly, he argues:

'Gentrification is a structural product of the land and housing markets. Capital flows where the rate of return is higher, and the movement of capital to the suburb, along with the continual devalorization of inner city capital, eventually produces the rent gap. When this rent gap grows sufficiently large, rehabilitation... come to challenge the rates of return available elsewhere, and capital flows back in. Gentrification is a back-to-the city movement all right, but a back-to-the city movement of capital rather than people' (Smith 1979:546).

However, Neil Smith (1979) does not obliterate totally the role and importance of

³ It should be argued that N.Smith was influenced by the 1970s writings of D.Harvey (see for example Harvey 1974, 1975, 1978).

consumption within unfolding processes of gentrification. As he says, the production of dwellings and the production of gentrifiers appear to co-exist, but 'this symbiosis' is one 'in which production dominates.' (Smith 1979:540) Always in tune with an underlying economic reductionism, he concludes that: 'The so-called urban renaissance has been stimulated more by economic than cultural forces' (Smith 1979:540). From this angle, the link between gentrification and late capitalist economic restructuring lies on the assumption that contemporary forms of 'urban renaissance' were primarily funded by capital, which because of the falling rates of profit within the industrial sector during the 1970s, became alternatively invested within the built environment (Smith & Lefavre 1984:53). In short, capital appears to mainly condition urban space.

1.2.4 Gentrification, reproduction, and the fragmentation of the 'middle-class'.

More often than not, academic theories of gentrification take for granted the notion that the invading 'gentry' is an undifferentiated entity in itself. Mainly through the deployment of a concept of a managerial or professional 'new middle class', the possibility that gentrification might include different societal categories becomes obscured under the aegis of a notion of the 'undifferentiated gentrifier' (Rose 1984:66). Following these lines, what is particularly interesting is the fact that both the consumption (culturalistic) and production sides of the explanation of gentrification share such a view.

On one level, the majority of culturalistic approaches of gentrification argue for the emergence of an almost undifferentiated 'new middle class' that through its residential and lifestyles choices changes the face of the central city (Mullins 1982, Moore 1982). On the other hand, Neil Smith (1979) with his supply-side resonance of gentrification appears to argue the same: gentrification is all about the transformation of central city neighbourhoods from working-class to middle-class status. Accordingly, there is overwhelming evidence to support the view that within both the supply and demand sides of academic theories of gentrification, the

invading 'gentry' becomes fundamentally perceived as sharing similar class positions. In this sense, gentrification, middle-classness and urban change become presented as one.

In sharp contrast to such generalizing tendencies, D. Rose introduced the concept of the 'marginal gentrifer' to highlight the fact that:

'Much of what are often referred to as 'alternative lifestyles'...in fact symptomise attempts by educated young people, who maybe employed, unemployed, underemployed, or temporarily employed...to find creative ways of responding to new conditions of paid and unpaid work and worsening economic conditions...people in such situations may tend to congregate in certain inner-city neighbourhoods' (Rose 1984:63).

Under these lights, Rose (1984) brings into question the widespread assumption that all of the 'gentry', more or less, shares a similar class position. Alternatively, she draws attention to the possibility that living near the city-centre might result mainly from 'need' instead of 'lifestyle preference' (Rose 1984:64). However, this concept of the 'marginal gentrifier' became the subject of criticism, by Neil Smith (1996), who argued that gentrification should be defined 'at its core rather than its margins' (Smith 1996:104).

Following the same analytical path that D. Rose initiated, recent years have witnessed the proliferation of an academic literature that gives prominence to this scenario of fragmentation of the middle-classes, involved, within processes of gentrification (Lyons 1996:353). For instance, Robson & Buttler (1999) stressed the multiplicity of 'different patterned processes of gentrification currently unfolding in London' (Robson & Buttler 1999:5), primarily carried out by a plethora of differentiated 'middle-class' groupings. By all accounts, what this particular kind of approach rejects is any simplistic reading of gentrification as carried out by an uniform middle-class. Alternatively, it draws emphasis on the complexity and disparity of social groups engaged within the process. From such an angle, processes of gentrification are carried out by a number of 'fragmented' social segments. Following these lines, earlier myths of gentrification as an undifferentiated process related to an almost homogenous 'middle-class' give away

to more complicated readings.

1.2.5 Gentrification and gender.

In writing about contemporary urban transformations, recent decades have witnessed the proliferation of a literature that highlights the role of women's participation and involvement within processes of gentrification (Roistacher & Young 1981, Holcomb 1981, Rose 1983, 1988). Most specifically, such an alleged interconnection between gentrification and gender appears to result from the latest capitalist economic restructuring and the deconstruction or restructuring of the traditional urban household.

Following these lines, an alleged transition from a manufacturing to a service producing economy brought along a massive 'feminization of the labour force' within western advanced urban capitalist economies (Gordon & Sassen 1992:113, Massey 1987:293). As women started to participate more within the labour markets, they seemed financially capable of forming new independent households. At the same time, recent decades have witnessed the restructuring of the urban 'patriarchal' family. For instance, as early as the early 1980s, Marcusen (1981) defined gentrification as primarily resulting from 'the breakdown of the patriarchal household.' (Marcusen 1981:32)

In short, women within the advanced capitalist world, as a result of this prolonged period of feminization of labour have been more capable, than ever before, of forming their own independent female households. At the same time, other factors appear to have contributed as well. For instance, the high rates of divorce within contemporary western societies appear to produce a significant number of male and female post-divorce households. In a similar fashion, contemporary formations of lesbian households further enhance these processes of feminization of the city. Under these lights, one is led to consider if this ongoing production of female-led independent households is partly responsible for contemporary processes of gentrification.

Following these lines, a number of critics were keen to suggest alleged interconnections between gentrification and gender (Rose 1984:62, Smith 1996:98). Most importantly, Liz Bondi (1989, 1991) committed herself to a personal project of investigating any existing interactions between women and processes of gentrification. In effect, she concluded that within any explanatory scheme of gentrification, 'class and gender' should be both understood as complementary factors leading the process (Bondi 1991).

In a similar fashion, Warde (1991) suggested that 'aspects of change in the nature of women's labour-market participation account for the incidence of gentrification' (Warde 1991:229). More emphatically, he argued that processes of gentrification should be best approached 'by [a] way of understanding gender divisions, rather than class divisions' (Warde 1991:223).

1.2.6 Gentrification, 'race' and difference.

Generally speaking, processes of gentrification within academic writing have been almost exclusively narrated in class-terms. Following these lines, as gentrification appears to stand for the scrubbing of the inner city 'of its working-class geography and history' (Smith 1991:89), little attention, if any, has been paid to any existing interconnections between gentrification, 'race' and difference. In effect, processes of gentrification have been habitually depicted as almost 'colour-free'; by focusing so much on class aspects, other dimensions of the processes were left out from the spectrum of analytical scrutiny. In a sense, they have been almost analytically obliterated from the process.

Nevertheless, within the few cases that 'race' and 'ethnicity' have been referred to in relation to processes of gentrification, they have been almost perceived as physical barriers to the expansion of the process (Le Gates & Hartman 1986). Following these lines, Sharon Zukin (1987) argued that 'race and class may still be a barrier to gentrification. Whites and most middle-class blacks have not gentrified lower-class black areas, such as Harlem, and Newark, despite a building stock and a

cost structure similar to other areas' (Zukin 1987:136). In a similar fashion, Neil Smith (1996), in relation to Harlem, argued that: 'Perceived by the middle-class (especially white-middle class) as highly threatening, having a universally depressed housing market, and possessing a cohesive social and political identity, Harlem represents a challenging obstacle for gentrification in New York City.' (Smith 1996:143) Nevertheless, this earlier conceptualization of 'race' as a barrier to gentrification might come to an end. Processes of commercial gentrification are currently taking place in Harlem; Bill Clinton decided to locate his post-presidential office in the central part of the area.

To continue, this fundamental neglect of 'race', 'ethnicity' and difference within literatures of gentrification comes into sharp contrast to a whole genealogy of thinking about difference, as the very essence of modern urbanism. Inaugurating this tradition, Georg Simmel (1995) argued: 'The psychological foundation, upon which metropolitan individuality is erected, is the emotional life due to the shift and continuous shift of external stimuli. Man is a creature whose existence is dependent on differences, i.e., his mind is stimulated by the difference between present impressions and those which have preceded' (Simmel 1995:31).

In some cases, where critics paid some attention to aspects related to 'race' and difference within their accounts of gentrification studies, they seemed to be only superficially involved with these issues. David Ley (1981) in his study of Kitsilano, Vancouver, lists 'community ambience, including diversity and vitality' (Ley 1981:142), as one of the area's main attractions. Following similar lines, Williams (1988) in relation to a diverse area, named as 'Elm Valley' in Washington D.C., draws attention to forms of correlation between local processes of gentrification and specific network television series that he calls 'gentrified t.v.' (Williams 1988:5) As he argues, the poorer segments of the population in the 'Elm Valley' area, primarily long-term older 'black' residents, were mainly attracted to soap operas, which featured the lifestyles of wealthy and powerful American families (i.e. *Dynasty*). On the other hand, the main body of 'white' middle-class 'newcomers' were keen to watch forms of gentrified television ('*Hill Street Blues*', '*L.A. Law*'), which subsequently gave an insightful view of inner-city life as 'chaotic-filled with drugs

addicts, gang violence...crazed homeless' (ibid 1988:111). Accordingly, he concludes that local cross-racial 'sympathies might have been more elastic and lasting had television provided less damning and frightening frames for viewing city life' (ibid 1988:113).

The only writer, at least to my knowledge, who got engaged seriously with correlations between gentrification, 'race' and difference is Jane Jacobs (1996). In her book 'Edge of Empire' she examined in detail discourses of local gentrification and multiculturalism unfolding within the area of Spitalfields, London. She concluded that:

'the desire for Otherness became part of the politics of place. Gentrifiers and developers regularly celebrated the distinctive 'multicultural' history of the area...Here a multiculturalism of convenience emerged based on a properly (spatially segregated) Bengali community. Ordered and domesticated the Bengali residents of Spitalfields could become a safe, present-day supplement to the narrative construction of Spitalfield as the emblematic place of an embracing, tolerant Englishness' (Jacobs 1996:160).

In a similar fashion to Jane Jacobs (1996) work, this thesis attempts to break with such an established tradition within traditional gentrification studies to ignore issues of 'race' and difference, by choosing urban transformation and multiculturalism as its prime analytical concerns.

1.2.7 Economy and culture.

As mentioned above, early academic debates on gentrification appeared to focus exclusively either on production or consumption explanatory narratives. On one hand, the production-side advocates drew emphasis on the role of capital and the production of dwellings, whilst on the other, their 'culturalistic' opponents were keen on highlighting the significance of human agency and urban lifestyles within contemporary processes of urban transformation. Most importantly, each interpretation dismissed the analytical powers and interpretative status of the other.

As a direct response to such dichotomies, Sharon Zukin (1982) with her groundbreaking work 'Loft Living' initiated a synthetic approach to view the process. More specifically, her conceptualisation took into account both versions of the argument. In effect, Sharon Zukin (1982) succeeded in integrating together demand and supply disputes, by introducing the concept of 'artistic mode of production'. Following these lines, she defined as artistic mode of production ' a modest redevelopment strategy based on the arts and historic preservation' (Zukin 1982:176). To put it differently, what Zukin (1982) seemed particularly eager to emphasize, was that the current deployment of arts and other cultural forms within a variety of urban redevelopment projects enhanced the value of the surrounding landscapes (Zukin 1982:177). In this way, her analysis succeeded in assimilating both economic and cultural dimensions.

After Zukin's (1982) seminal intervention, one by one, the majority of gentrification commentators came to recognise the extreme significance of a combined approach. Under these new lights, if processes of gentrification were to be fully understood, a synthetic way of combining both economic and cultural explanations should be put at the top of the agenda (Hamnett 1984:293). In a similar fashion, Neil Smith (1996) publicly acknowledged the fact that: 'explanations which remained confined to consumption or production practices, narrowly conceived were of decreasing relevance' whilst 'the integration of cultural and capital-centered explanations is vital, in precisely the manner pioneered by Sharon Zukin' (Smith 1996:42).

In the light of these analytical considerations, during the early 1990s, Chris Hamnett (1991) summarised the history of the gentrification dispute. In broad terms, he denounced both analytical approaches as managing to view half of the 'elephant of gentrification'. Nevertheless, he acknowledged that it was exactly this dichotomous way of thinking, which opened up the path, for other critics, to bring the puzzle of gentrification together and to comprehend fully the process (Hamnett 1991: 188). In what follows, I examine the ways that economy and culture have come together for processes of gentrification to be theorised.

In some sense, my first task is an interrogation into varying levels of significance,

between economy and culture, within separate versions of this combined approach. Following these lines, Sharon Zukin (1982, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996) in all of her gentrification studies appears to focus exclusively on the 'cultural workings of capital' (Lees 1994:141). As she explicitly argues in 'Loft Living': 'this approach to the loft market...directs attention to investors rather than consumers as the source of change' (Zukin 1982:191). In a similar manner, in 'The Cultures of Cities', she confesses that her analysis predominantly remains 'an inclusive structural materialist' one (Zukin 1995:11). Accordingly, as Lees (1994) has argued: 'Zukin retains a strong Marxist structuralist base. Culture is superimposed; as such culture is made subservient to capital and only seen to be significant within accumulation activities' (Lees 1994:142).

On the other hand, although Neil Smith's 'conversion' to a combined cultural-economic approach, he nevertheless suggests that gentrification, within an American context, has become mainly articulated and legitimised through the 'vocabulary' and 'myth' of the frontier (Smith 1991:69). In a similar fashion to the 19th century expansion of the American frontier, which was primarily carried out by railways, banks and big capital et cetera and then followed by individual pioneers, he suggests that similar processes apply to gentrification. In this sense, gentrification becomes predominantly narrated as mostly led by capital than human agency (Smith 1986). In effect, his analysis, although it contains cultural elements, primarily stresses the role of capital and other structural agents within contemporary processes of urban transformation.

In the next stages of this analysis, I shall attempt the following: firstly, I will broaden up my analytical horizon and expose the hidden spirit of 'economic determinism' that underlines contemporary, Neomarxist influenced, culturo-economic urban analysis⁴. Secondly, I will trace a different theoretical pathway of analysing culture and economy together; this specific enterprise will take place by bringing to the fore a specific genealogy of writers who have taken culture

⁴ I would like to make clear that by Neomarxist culturo-economic urban analysis I refer to the work of theorists like S. Zukin or N. Smith that although appear to retain a strong materialist focus they seem also concerned with cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, as I shall try to argue, their cultural considerations appear to be strictly related to processes of commodification of culture. To put it

seriously. Last but not least, I shall expose the specific cultural-economic perspective that this doctoral thesis, from the very outset, strives to adopt.

There might not be a better point of departure for this detour than Sharon Zukin's (1988) statement in regard to 'the use of postmodernism in the debate over urban form'. As she argues, it fundamentally 'solidifies a commitment among urban political economists and geographers to bring culture out of the superstructure and study it, along with politics and economics, as a basic determinant of material forms' (Zukin 1988:433).

However, it is scarcely necessary to point out, that within this kind of statement the 'old' base-superstructure metaphor clearly retains its analytical powers. Under these lights, as it has been mainly developed through later Marxist traditions, social life or 'social totality' becomes divided between a 'solid' economic base and an ideological or cultural superstructure. At the same time, this 'base'-'superstructure' relationship has been traditionally defined as a highly deterministic one; through the development of orthodox Marxism, a very specific interpretation of Marx's and Engels' writings emerged, which perceived this notion of superstructure as a mere 'reflection' of a 'solid' economic base.

Nevertheless, particularly through the invention of 'cultural studies', a different reading of culture and economy slowly broke into the fore. In what follows, I shall briefly expose Raymond Williams' contribution to the debate. In some sense, what Williams predominantly attempted to do, firstly, in 'Culture and Society' (1958) then successively in 'Marxism and Literature' (1977) and 'Problems in Materialism and Culture' (1980), was to deconstruct this 'base-superstructure' metaphor in favour of creating a much more inclusive cultural-economic approach to the study of social life. As Stuart Hall (1980) says: 'His [Williams'] argument is constructed against a vulgar materialism and an economic determinism. He offers a radical interactionism: in effect, the interaction of all practices in and with one another...The distinctions between the praxis is overcome by seeing them all as variant forms of a praxis- of a general human activity and energy' (Hall 1980:60).

differently, culture appears to matter as long as it can enhance the value of economics.

Accordingly, what Williams particularly attempted to do, was to supersede any crude distinctions between economy and culture by viewing them both as components of a total human activity. As he says, he cries for an understanding of the 'whole material social process' (ibid 1977:94) that is not divided 'between the necessary and the contingent, the 'social' and the 'cultural', the 'base' and 'superstructure'' (ibid 1977:105).

To continue, this 'whole material social process' appears to stand for the accumulative total of the 'economic' and 'cultural'. In other words, it equates with 'social life' as such. Nevertheless, this concept of a holistic 'social life' does not become divided into any essential components. The only restriction might be that the economic retains the powers to demarcate the space upon which the cultural can be enacted. In this sense, such a holistic approach to 'social life' denies any forms of economic determinism. Subsequently, the reciprocal or even dialectical nature between culture and economy breaks into the fore. Following these lines, such a specific take on 'social being' and 'consciousness' reminds us of Karl Marx's position that 'men [women] make history...on conditions which are not of their making' (Karl Marx in Hall 1980:63-64).

At this particular point, I should take a step backwards and expose the particular ways that culture and economy have been habitually analysed within contemporary Neomarxist culturo-economic urban analysis; I should try to reflect on the ways that culture and economy have come together in Neomarxist influenced urban thought to explain contemporary postmodern conditions. As I shall argue, this specific analytical framework takes culture seriously as long as it enhances the value of economics.

Multiple traces of this 'crude' economic determinism, however refined through the analytical frameworks of Frankfurt School, can be frequently found within the work of seminal Neo-Marxist urban geographers. For instance, David Harvey (1989) in 'The Condition of Postmodernity' suggests that postmodernism is nothing else than the extension of the market into the realms of cultural production (Harvey 1989:62). In a similar fashion, he states that: 'The emphasis upon ephemerality, collage, fragmentation and dispersal in philosophical and social thought mimics the

condition of flexible accumulation.’ (Harvey 1989:242) Following similar lines, Sharon Zukin (1995) in her analysis of contemporary postmodern urban economics proceeds into perceiving culture as the city’s new economic base (Zukin 1995:12). Accordingly, forms of culture become allegedly deployed within a number of regenerating efforts in order to enhance the city’s economy. In effect, a reversal of this process has occurred. Although, throughout urban history, the metropolitan economy has been funding arts (culture), within contemporary postmodern urban conditions culture appears to finance the new urban economy.

What I am trying to suggest then, is that within this genre of contemporary Neomarxist culturo-economic urban analysis, bits and traces of an economic reductionism become evident. In other words, this constant highlighting of contemporary processes of commodification of culture, although it may conceal itself under the auspices of a cultural-economic analysis nevertheless appears to fundamentally remain ‘economistic’. Following this line of thinking one could seriously start to problematise the notion that within current cultural-economic Neomarxist explanations of postmodern urbanism, culture and economy appear to weigh the same; the chances are that they do not.

To continue, one could easily argue that ‘culture’ becomes deployed in almost every form of urban rejuvenation. For instance, from multiple warehouse conversions that reuse elements of a former ‘industrial’ archaeology to allure their buyers to contemporary transformations of ‘ethnic’ enclaves that deploy the ‘ethnic’ as an asset, different versions of culture appear mainly at work. Following these lines, contemporary Neomarxist culturo-economic urban analysis appears to highlight these tendencies of commodification of ‘culture’. Nevertheless, we should be careful not to perceive this specific kind of urban cultural-economic thinking as genuinely attributing the same amount of importance to culture and economy. As it becomes apparent, within this line of thinking, culture is deemed important as long as it becomes deployed by capital for accumulation’s sake. In effect, one is led to consider that such a perspective remains economistic by retaining the division of social totality between a hypothetical ‘solid’ economic base and a determined ‘superstructure’. Nevertheless, in this case, the superstructure remains important as

far as it becomes deployed for the advancement of the economic base. From such an angle, the significance of culture becomes inextricably linked to an economics of culture. Nevertheless, a crucial question arises: Is there a possibility of an alternative way of theorising the urban, which would accommodate both economy and culture, without reducing or subjugating the latter to the former or vice versa? Following these lines, Lees (1994), wrote an article with the title 'Rethinking gentrification: beyond the opposition of culture or capital.' As she argued her main aim was to find a way to 'transcend the oppositional thinking produced by marxist economic analysis and postmodern cultural analysis' (Lees 1984:137). As a result, she ended up with a notion of 'complementarity', where culture and economy can be dialectically linked as 'dialectics separate but also unite' (Lees 1994:140). Most importantly, within her quest for a 'pure' cultural-economic dialectic within the literature of gentrification, she draws emphasis on the work of Jager (1986). As she says, Jager (1986) by focusing on the aesthetics of gentrification and his view of the inner-city as an 'aesthetic arena', becomes one of the few exceptions 'who demonstrates that culture and capital are mutually constitutive...He [Jager] argues that the neoarchaism inherent in gentrification 'the taste for the by-gone', transcends economics by attaining social position through symbolic sign. The economic is transcendent, but the economic is not made subservient' (Lees 1994:142).

Amid the practitioners of such a cultural-economic dialectic, one could add the names of Jonathan Raban (1974) and Patrick Wright (1985, 1993). For instance, Raban (1974), in the 'Soft City', proceeds into combining the economic to the cultural, or vice versa, without compromising either of them. He describes London's early 1970s transforming urban economy, where 'typewriter and the telephone are the most common urban tools; paper's the city's most necessarily raw material' (ibid 1974:95), without really losing sight of the cultural. Most fundamentally, he succeeds in not reducing the cultural to its pure economic function. Accordingly, his description of processes of gentrification, appear to realise a genuine cultural-economic 'complementarity' (Lees 1994:140). Following these lines, gentrification becomes narrated 'like the frontier, it produces edgy and

painful encounters with the indigenous population...who are...harassed with eviction notices and raised rents, and, romanticised ... as the real people' (ibid 1974:86). At the same time, he describes gentrification as the ultimate urban style, where it 'most eloquent practitioners have been drawn from the young hereditary middle class;...Their professions are vaguely, entrepreneurial cultural; academics, journalists of a literary turn, television directors and producers, actors, copywriters, publishers, agents, with a few lawyers and accounts and business executives. For them the purchase of a house has become an act of conscience; and they have left the strongholds of their class behind...and searched out 'unspoiled' areas of the city, where they can live conspicuously cheek-by-bowl with the polyglot poor' (ibid 1974:85). The style goes on. Their cars, their furniture, even their clothes clearly manifest (ibid:87-88) their distinct urban style. As he concludes: 'Here people try to live as Orwell writes; bluntly, earnestly, truthfully' (ibid 1974:88). Accordingly, in a similar style to Jager (1986), Raban (1974) is capable of presenting the cultural in its own right. Broadly speaking, the economic realities become evident without reducing the 'sign' value of the process to pure economics. In a sense, both culture and economy become masterfully described without the first suffocating the second or vice versa. In short, the 'social totality' of gentrification becomes fully exposed. This is a kind of writing that takes place in-between political economy's urban narratives and pure culturalistic analysis.

To conclude, this thesis is primarily concerned with describing contemporary postmodern-postcolonial formations between gentrification, 'race' and difference. In more detail, it seeks to investigate current conditions of accumulation and identity displacement within the postmodern-postcolonial spaces of differences of Brixton and Brick Lane. Following these lines, one can argue that this thesis is simultaneously interested in 'culture' and 'economy'. On one level, it attempts to describe one of the biggest property booms in the capital, which directly influenced the lives of millions of Londoners. Yet at another, it is also concerned with processes of inner-transformation, as a result of an exposure to different differences, to either disorient or reify the cultural bearings of the metropolitan subject. To put it differently, this thesis is mainly concerned about the ways that specific inner-city,

ethnically diverse areas of London have transformed in response to this almost unprecedented metropolitan expansion, but at the same time, it is also about the ways that metropolitan, spatially accumulated difference appears to hold powers to change us too.

Accordingly, a specific genre of cultural-economic writing was needed; a kind of writing that exists between the gap of urban political economy and cultural studies; a form of a sociological writing that neither attempts to suffocate the cultural under the auspices of an all-powerful urban economy or alternatively proceeds into a purely culturalistic reading of urban conditions. Nevertheless, one should be careful not to succumb to the simplistic allures of NeoMarxist culturo-economic urban analysis. Forms and manifestations of culture, which only become important as long as they are deployed by capital, do not appear, at least to my imagination, as potent enough tools to exhaust the cultural realities of the city. It would have probably been a very simple sociological narrative if I had tried to expose contemporary cultural workings of capital, in relation to 'race' and difference in the cases of Brixton and Brick Lane. Nonetheless, I decided not to. Instead, I chose a kind of a cultural narrative that could perplex urban political economy's stories; a kind of a narrative, which would subsequently complicate the efforts to render the city visible, strictly through economics. On the other hand, I was not willing either to assign to this cultural narrative the status of a floating signifier without having it first grounded on economic realities. I hope that for the biggest part I remained faithful to the principle of cultural-economic 'complementarity' (Lees 1994:144).

At the same time, I had to establish clearly, the points of interactions, where this particular cultural-economic 'complementarity' came together. In a sense, I had to decide upon the specific surfaces of appearance where culture and economy became one. This answer, although simple, was hard to find. Eventually, I opened my eyes to the possibility of culture and economy coming together in people's lives⁵. Accordingly, it became obvious that only by gaining access to peoples' lives could I get the necessary material for the writing of this specific cultural-economic narrative that I had in mind (see chapter 2.7.1).

⁵ At this point, I would like to thank Les Back for opening my eyes to such a possibility.

1.3 'Ethnic' gentrification as the emergence of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism.

'Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself?' Fanon (1986:231)

In this part of the chapter, I shall introduce the concepts of the urban postmodern and the postcolonial. Additionally, I shall argue the case of 'ethnic' gentrification as the penetration of processes of urban postmodernization (urban postmodern) within the postcolonial spaces of the city. Following these lines, Fanon's (1986) recommendation to 'touch the other', 'feel the other' appears to become realised within instances of London's 'ethnic' gentrification. As a result, contemporary forms of a postmodern-postcolonial metropolitan urbanism are born within the capital.

Generally speaking, recent years have witnessed the alteration of the built environment in cities of advanced capitalism around the world. From Melbourne to Vancouver and Los Angeles to Tokyo, capitalist cities have seen their urban landscape change to an unprecedented extent. Nevertheless, these major modifications of the city's appearances and structures have been commonly referred to as processes of 'postmodernization' of the urban environment (Zukin 1992:227). However, what has been cited as a qualitatively distinct characteristic of these processes of urban development, revitalisation, rejuvenation etc., which can significantly vary from residential enclaves to commercial places that dramatise consumption, is that they intermarry culture and economy together (Zukin 1988:433, Harvey 1989:66, Wynne & O'Connor 1998:843).

Nevertheless, within this literature of urban 'postmodernization', gentrification appears to hold a pre-eminent position and status (Zukin 1992:223). Following these lines, a form of academic consensus has emerged that conceptualises gentrification as responsible for the holistic transformation of the contemporary,

postindustrial city. Accordingly, gentrification from the 1990s onwards, stands as an all embracing concept capable of taking on board the multiplicity of processes that alter the urban landscape of advanced capitalist cities (Smith 1996:87). In a similar fashion, Sassen (1991) has argued that:

‘Gentrification was initially understood as the rehabilitation of decaying and low-income housing by middle-class outsiders in central cities. In the late 1970s a broader conceptualization of the process began to emerge, and by the early 1980s, new scholarship had developed a far broader meaning of gentrification, linking it with processes of spatial, economic and social restructuring. Gentrification emerged as a visible spatial component of this transformation. It was evident in the redevelopment of waterfronts, the rise of hotel and convention complexes in central cities, large-scale luxury office and residential developments, and fashionable, high priced shopping districts’ (Sassen 1991:255).

To sum up, gentrification within the academic literature is perceived as the most emblematic feature of the contemporary postmodern, postindustrial city. It is conceived as standing for the multiplicity of processes that alter the urban landscape. Accordingly, I would like to argue that gentrification, within the context of this thesis, equates with the abstract urban postmodern or processes of urban postmodernization. In this sense, processes of ‘ethnic’ gentrification stand for contemporary forms of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism.

After providing a short prologue for the urban postmodern I should introduce the notion of the ‘postcolonial’ too. Nevertheless, the duality of its meaning should be emphasised and brought into the fore; it should be made clear that the postcolonial simultaneously implies two different things⁶. Firstly, it refers to the present demographic realities and everyday lives of ex-colonial subjects, within the ‘hearts’ of the previous Empires, as a result of post-war migration from the periphery to the urban motherlands. Following these lines, it is related to a notion of subjectivity that further perplexes any attempts at class positioning. Secondly, it refers also to an emergent body of theory within social criticism. Accordingly, on one hand there is

⁶ I would like to state clearly that this duality of meaning of the postcolonial is based on S. Hall’s (2000:212-213) distinction between multicultural substantialities and physical existences and multicultural questions.

the postcolonial body of numbers, ethnicities, demographics, discriminations, subjectivities, deprived conditions of life etc. inscribed into the urban structures of the former empire, whilst on the other, stands postcolonial criticism as an intellectual attempt to 'deconstruct' the remnants and traces of former colonial legacy.

1.3.1 Postcolonial realities.

During the booming years of the post-war period, under the aegis of a Fordist regime of accumulation, western European countries were found in need of supplementary industrial labour (Sassen-Koob 1985:234). In relation to Britain, from the 1950s onwards, this shortage of industrial labour was mainly covered through inviting labourers from the ex-colonies. These ex-colonial subjects were mainly attracted by advertising campaigns that depicted Britain as a nation of prosperity and opportunity. As Salman Rusdie recalls:

'They were extraordinary advertisements, full of hope and optimism, which made Britain out to be a land of plenty, a golden opportunity not to be missed. And they worked. People travelled here in good faith, believing themselves wanted. This is how the new Empire was imported.'<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/rusdie.html> date10/4/2002)

Another important aspect that should be emphasised is the enormous diversity of countries of origin and class backgrounds that these ex-colonial subjects were fleeing in search of a better future in the former 'motherland'. Accordingly, postwar migration to the U.K should be understood as a highly differentiated one, particularly in terms of class positioning. As John Rex (1988) argues:

'They came from a variety of different positions in the class and ethnic system of the empire. They included the rural and urban poor of the West Indian Islands; they included some West Indians that migrated because they were actually from higher class and status groups than the majority; there were Jat Sikh farmers amongst them asking to earn money to expand their landholding; there were poor peasants from Minpur and Bangladesh; there were richer urban merchants from Bombay and

Karachi; and there were the 'twice migrant' families who came to England after having gained middle class status, either in business or in the lower grades of government service... in East Africa' (Rex 1988:29).

Eventually, these vast numbers of migrants, who settled within the cities of the former British Empire, created a 'New Empire' within Britain. They formed the latest 'colonies' (Hall 1978b:31) within the urbanised hearts of UK. A 'new empire' came to replace the loss of the former one. In general terms, these successive waves of postwar migration brought into creation a 'postcolonial' body within a re-invented United Kingdom that had given up its imperial status abroad, but not necessarily, its colonial legacy at home.

However, as a direct result of these post-war migration waves from the periphery to western capitalist metropolises (Sassen-Koob 1985:234) a reversal of a long established demographic colonial pattern took place. For the first time, the places of concentrated diversity shifted from the 'colonial cities' to western 'metropolises', which were about to function as the new 'contact zones' between (ex-) colonial rulers and neo/post-colonial subjects. Through this geographical inversion of former colonial legacies, the postcolonial encountered the colonial or the 'Third World' came into the 'First'. Since then, postcolonial spaces are not only limited within the national boundaries of ex-colonies, but they are also inscribed within the urban fabric of advanced capitalism.

Before I move any further, I would like to reflect on the way that this postcolonial insertion in Britain appears to have perplexed further any established 'class' positionings. To put it differently, I would like to meditate on the configuration of 'race', ethnicity and 'class' that results from more complicated readings of subjectivity and societal categorizations. As I shall argue, the postwar insertion of 'race' or the postcolonial within the UK has problematised any notions of a solely, strictly defined 'class' society⁷.

⁷ At the same time, I would like to argue that this problematisation applies also for the case of 'class' positionings within processes of gentrification. Accordingly, traditional 'colour' blind approaches to gentrification tend to separate between working-class 'natives' and higher-class or more affluent 'movers in'. Nevertheless, in the case that the 'natives' happen to be of a different 'colour' or 'ethnicity' these categorisations might experience some complications. However, this is an issue that I will address later on in this chapter.

Broadly speaking, before the arrival of postwar, postcolonial migrant populations in this country, mainstream sociological narratives and popular common sense used to divide British society strictly in 'class' terms. Britain's notorious 'class' structure was mainly responsible for different 'ways of life' corresponding to the lower, middle and higher end of the social ladder (Cottrell 1953). Nevertheless, with the arrival of different 'races' within the UK these earlier societal distinctions appeared to experience a form of crisis. Class was not able anymore to explain the ways that British society and its 'others' were stratified. 'Race' came to complicate any forms of 'class' stratifications. However, as these migrant populations were of a lower income than the mainstream of their newly adopted host society, Marxist influenced sociological imaginations tended to reduce them to the 'working class' poor (see Gilroy 1982: 279-89). Accordingly, 'class' appeared to subdue 'race'; cultural differences persistently gave away to commonalities of material conditions of existence. Following these lines, 'race' became primarily viewed through 'class'⁸. In a similar fashion to this, Stuart Hall argued that: 'Race is the modality in which class relations are experienced' (ibid 1978b:354). Nevertheless some voices emphasised the 'cultural' significance of 'race' and ethnicity; they advocated a reading of 'race' through cultural politics (Gilroy 1982). However, through the passage of time and more particularly through the instances of social mobility of individuals of migrant or 'ethnic' descent the internal contradictions of a strictly 'class' related reading of 'race' came to the surface. Accordingly, it started to become apparent that both 'race' and class should be taken into account within any attempts of analysis of contemporary societies. In effect, 'race' could not be subdued to 'class' anymore. Accordingly, while working 'classes' allegedly contained different 'races', 'race' also seemed to include different 'classes'. In short, the postwar insertion of postcolonial populations within the UK has clearly perplexed any established, straightforward societal readings; it has complicated the readings of subjectivity. As I shall argue, this problematization of subjectivity has direct consequences on 'class' readings of gentrification too.

⁸ I would like to argue that this specific position has been strongly advocated by the influential journal 'Race and Class' (A.Sivanandan [ed].).

1.3.2 Postcolonial questions.

After schematically drawing upon the creation of the 'postcolonial' city, I should refer to the emergence of 'postcolonial criticism' within social theory. According to Homi Bhabha (1994), who along with Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak together constitute the most pre-eminent theorists of postcolonial theory, postcolonial criticism interrogates the 'normalising' discourses of modernity that legitimated, and partly still do, the uneven development of the world and its hierarchical categorisation by assigning it to numbers (First World, Third World). Nevertheless his intellectual project does not stop there. In a similar manner, he argues for a more open reading of 'cultures' as symbolic systems that can not be reduced to any notion of universality or be embraced and squeezed under contemporary Western notions of cultural plurality (Bhabha 1994:171, 173).

In broad terms, colonialism was the historical fact of Western domination and subjugation of the rest of the world under the aegis of a 'civilised' Europe. Nevertheless, this political and economical project was mainly accompanied and facilitated by the creation of an analogous colonial 'discourse' that legitimated and naturalised these processes of colonisation (Bhabha 1994:70). Within this constructed and further elaborated colonial discourse that became articulated through the stereotypical bi-polarities of civilised/uncivilised, white/black, centre/periphery etc. there was always some place of 'ambivalence' left (Bhabha 1994:67, Said 1978:206) in regard to the 'identity' or 'nature' of Europe's 'other'. Most importantly, within the complex structures and mechanisms of the colonial discourse, the other, the primitive, the savage, was left to oscillate between the extremes of 'desire' and 'disgust'.

In effect, colonial subjects were not only imprisoned, within the lines and images of a subjugating discourse, which originally viewed them from a Darwinist social evolutionary perspective as Europe's primitive past (Duncan 1993: 43-44), but were further subjected to an 'ambivalent' either/or signification upon 'difference' (Bhabha 1994:75). After all, colonial discourse had always left enough space for

western desire and fantasy. Following these lines, it can be argued that colonies within 'white' imperial imagination have persistently functioned as the 'far-away' places of intense pleasures or painful encounters (Bhabha 1994:81).

To continue, postcolonialism should not be understood as something achieved and over with through political processes of decolonisation (Hall 2000:213). Instead, it should be perceived as a day to day ongoing struggle within the intellectual arenas and everyday lives of the West for a deconstruction and reconstruction of perceptions, conceptions and attitudes. It is a highly complex condition that it should be best conceived "as a set of diverse formations that work against colonial structures of power. They may be starkly oppositional (nationalisms, resistances of various kinds), but they also refer to a range of formations (such as hybridity or mimesis) that work in subtle ways to subvert and unsettle colonial authority" (Jacobs 1998:276). Furthermore, it should be understood as a 'strategic' artifice (Spivak 1996) that yearns to scratch the long established colonial surface within the institutions, mentalities and 'hearts' of the West.

As I argued above, contemporary postmodern-postcolonial urban developments, where processes of urban postmodernization appear to 'touch' on selected metropolitan postcolonial spaces, create a landscape of 'ethnic' gentrification within the city; they result in processes of gentrification of 'ethnic' sites. Following these lines, earlier academic narratives of 'race' and difference as obstacles to gentrification (Le Gates & Hartman 1986, Zukin 1987:136, Smith 1996:143) appear to become obsolete for a number of cases, under the emergence of contemporary postmodern-postcolonial forms of urbanism. In what follows, I shall expose the particular interest and analytical focus of this thesis upon these newly emergent forms of urbanism; a kind of urbanism that brings together processes of urban postmodernization or gentrification and selected spaces of the postcolonial city.

1.4 The spatial politics of cultural dialogue: Investigating the cases of contemporary Brixton and Brick Lane.

‘Whatever and however we may try to think, we think within the sphere of tradition. Tradition prevails, when it frees us from thinking back to a thinking forward, which is no longer a planning’ Heidegger (1969:41).

As I argued, this thesis attempts to make a transition from a thinking of gentrification as a pure economic phenomenon to a thinking of gentrification as a ‘whole material social process’ (Williams 1977:94); it tries to make a leap from a thinking of ‘race’ and difference as obstacles to processes of urban transformation to a thinking of contemporary instances of ‘ethnic’ gentrification as the emergence of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism. More explicitly, this thesis is particularly interested to investigate the spatial politics of cultural dialogue within two of London’s fast transforming postmodern-postcolonial spaces. Following these lines, Brixton and Brick Lane are the spatial laboratories, for such explorations into contemporary urban multiculturalism.

Nevertheless, in order to make such a leap forward I should first make a leap backwards into traditional and more contemporary theories of urban studies. As Heidegger (1969:41) says, one always thinks within the sphere of tradition. Following these lines, I shall examine particular ways of ‘seeing’ the urban that have shaped fundamentally the analytical interest of this research. Firstly, I shall interrogate traditional gentrification’s vocabulary that speaks about the displacement of ‘natives’. Following on from this, I explore the concept of liminality in relation to space (Zukin 1992) and identity (Back 1996). Secondly, I take a look at the very dawn of urban studies and the significant work of Park and Burgess (Park et al 1923, 1950) in relation to ‘inner city zones of transition’ and the concept of ‘marginal men’ and women. Thirdly, I look at the work of Richard Sennett (1970, 1990) by focusing on his concepts of ‘survival communities’ and

'narrative space'. However, by having taken this step back in my 'tradition' of thinking I can subsequently step forward into re-addressing these issues under a new light. I shall try to manifest the ways that the analytical focus of this research appears to reconfigure these considerations. But let us explore in detail these theoretical influences.

Traditional gentrification theories make sense of processes of urban transformation by using an established line of thinking, which argues that processes of gentrification result to the displacement of 'native' populations. As new populations move in, higher demand translates to higher levels of rent and property prices that eventually evict 'indigenous' populations (Deutsche 1996). In this sense, displacement appears to refer strictly to the geographical eviction of 'natives'. As 'natives' are mainly considered as of a lower 'class', they are inevitably branded as victims of gentrification. As mentioned above, I tried to argue that contemporary theories of a synergetic relationship between 'race' and 'class' proclaim that there are different classes within 'race' and different 'races' within any 'class'. Following these lines, this established vocabulary of gentrification becomes further problematised; gentrifications' 'class' positionings become perplexed by the insertion of class within 'race' and ethnicity. At the same time, within the context of this thesis, this concept of nativity appears to have experienced a reversal of its meaning. As I shall argue, nativity refers to two different debates. On one hand, gentrification's 'natives' basically stand for less-affluent local populations. On the other hand, nativity appears to refer and relate to processes of migration too. Accordingly, the 'natives' become separated from the 'migrants'. However, for the aims and objectives of this research, non-native migrants that have settled historically within these areas appear to transform into gentrifications' 'natives'. Keeping in mind, that some of these non-native 'natives' might be of the same 'class' position as local gentrifiers or 'movers in' the whole complexity of contemporary processes of 'ethnic' gentrification breaks into the fore. In short, instances of 'ethnic' gentrification might complicate established readings of the process that speak about 'natives' in an unproblematised manner.

To continue, within traditional gentrification studies, there is not any mention at all of processes of displacement that might occur within 'native' or 'gentrifying' identities as a result of mutual co-existence and processes of negotiation between different differences. Nevertheless, this thesis continues to use the same vocabulary, but in a way, it turns it upside-down. Is there a possibility for 'natives' and 'gentrifiers' to experience a displacement of their established identities by living side by side with differences? Following these lines, the emphasis appears to shift from processes of geographical displacement to a notion of a 'displaced identity' as a result of negotiation and mutual influence between different differences.

To put it differently, Sharon Zukin (1992) has argued that processes of urban postmodernization, which transform the urban vernaculars into 'landscapes of power', should be theorised as processes of 'liminality' of urban space. Nevertheless, this concept of 'liminality' originates from psychology where it stands for an inner-process of transition from one personal state of being to another. Following these lines, Les Back (1996) in 'Urban Cultures, New Ethnicities', concluded that 'liminal' identities are produced in relation to young South East Londoners as a result of an exposure to different 'races' and ethnicities. Accordingly, could one argue that 'liminal' identities can become produced within the 'liminal' spaces of Brixton and Brick Lane? Can a displacement of either, 'native' or 'gentrifying' identity, take place within contemporary instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism?

Robert Park, in his writings, reflected on the Chicago of the 1920s. According to Park's geographical imagination and cultural understanding, Chicago's sheer diversity was its most amazing aspect. At the same time, Park was interested in processes of continuous migration that took place in his 'native' city. However, he did not see the phenomenon of migration in terms of numbers or statistics. For him, migration was bringing along a breakdown of the established 'social order'. As he argues in 'Human Migration and the marginal man':

'in migration the breakdown of social order is initiated by the impact of an invading population, and completed by the contact and fusion of native with alien people' (Park 1950:348).

Most importantly, Park believed that processes of migration had the powers to change and culturally re-orient the subjects of migration. They had powers to transform individual characters and personalities:

‘Migration as a social phenomenon must be studied ...in its subjective aspects as manifested in the changed type of personality, which it produces. When the traditional organization of society breaks down, as a result of contact and collision with a new invading culture, the effect is, so to speak, to emancipate the individual man’(Park 1950:350).

Nevertheless, they were not only the migrants who experienced these personality changes, but also, the masses of ‘native’ people who came into contact with the newcomers. Accordingly, processes of migration did not only seem to produce the migrant as the ‘marginal’ man or woman, but with the breakdown of the social order that they were allegedly bringing along, they were able to create new societies and new cultures:

‘The marginal man is a personality type that arises at a time and a place where, out of the conflict of races and cultures, new societies, new people and cultures are coming into existence’(Park 1950:375).

Accordingly, Park advocated that people’s identities and cultures are in constant motion (Park 1950:39,4). Most importantly, he argued that these ‘transmissions’ and ‘diffusions’ of cultures appeared to unfold in specific spaces; they appeared to correspond spatially with the infamous ‘inner-city zones of transition’⁹. Additionally, these metropolitan spaces of ‘transition’ did not only refer to population movements or changes of the urban environment, but most importantly, to transitions of cultural identity and instances of ‘cultural’ fusion. In this sense, Robert Park envisioned metropolitan spaces, capable of bringing along alterations to the very core of one’s cultural ‘self’. In short, Chicago’s ‘inner-city zones of transition’ appear to imply more profound changes than just those of the urban landscape. They made reference to the corrosive effects of co-existing differences

⁹ At this particular point, I would like to argue that Rex & Moore (1967) in their study of Birmingham’s ‘Twilight Zones’ appear to use a similar ‘zone of transition’ approach too.

that had the ability to form an urban 'multiculture' and change oneself (Back 1996:101).

In a similar fashion, Richard Sennett's extraordinary work (1970, 1974, 1990, 1994), which expands to more than thirty years of writing, is mainly preoccupied with issues of the metropolitan negotiation of difference and the constructive qualities of 'alterity' for oneself. For Sennett, urban design and urban civilizations through the centuries mainly sought to:

'wall off the differences between people, assuming that these differences are more likely to be mutually threatening than stimulating' (Sennett 1990:xii).

Nevertheless, Sennett, by perceiving difference, in a constructive fashion, connects himself with a whole genealogy of urban commentators, who viewed difference(s) in an affirmative way.

For Sennett: 'The power of the city to re-orient people in this way lies in its diversity; in the presence of difference, people have at least the possibility to step outside themselves' (Sennett 1990:123).

Following these lines, Richard Sennett goes even further to argue that in order for one to deal with difference, to come close to the 'other', she/he has to accept herself/himself as incomplete (ibid 1990:148). Subsequently, he advocates the displacement of any strictly defined 'identities' and a view of urban life as an ever-ending openness to difference. Most interestingly, he mentions the existence of 'narrative spaces' as the true spaces of identity 'displacement'. As he says:

'Kids in an urban playground cut themselves off in play from the ties to their homes and family; they shun the nice places adults made for them. In these places a conscious fiction is also at work. Kids at the 'hot' playground behave as if they were parentless, totally free agents...city kids find places where they behave without challenge as through fiction were fact, as though there were no reality before right here, right now'(Sennett 1990:195).

Apart of this concept of 'narrative space', as the place for the displacement of fixed identities, Sennett is also deeply interested in processes of community construction. For him, community should be an 'act of will', a spontaneous act of different people, without necessarily sharing anything in common, to identify as 'we'

(Sennett 1970). Nevertheless, Sennett's critical imagination takes place in specific urban spaces. To start with, he denounces the present urban condition of his time, as cultivating a specific version of urban civilization where 'contact points' for multiple and complicated urban experiences are gradually 'dying out' (ibid 1970:57). However, he goes on to envision a new form of urban space, which he later names as 'survival communities', where differences could proliferate. Within these 'survival communities' nothing should be taken for granted. Instead, within these spaces of differences, each community and each individual should be able to negotiate for their 'social space' by acknowledging the existence of other differences. In a similar vein, 'survival communities' would have to take place in areas of cheap rent, where:

'The outstanding characteristic of this area, for the young people that move in, would be the high level of tension and unease between the people living there. It would be a vital place, to be sure...but a part of this vitality would be a great deal of conflict between dissimilar groups of people' (Sennett 1970:143).

To continue, through this social experiment of 'survival communities', a new form of social cohesion should emerge¹⁰, where different sorts of people would have to accept different differences without having preconceived and closed ideas about themselves and others. Eventually, always according to Sennett's social imagination, a new form of 'we' could emerge out of these spaces that would be able to embrace all differences¹¹ and bring them into processes of negotiation between them.

As I argued, the prime objective of this research is to investigate the politics of cultural dialogue unfolding within the fast transforming spaces of Brixton and Brick Lane. In other words, I attempt to shed some light on contemporary forms of metropolitan multicultural living within instances of postmodern-postcolonial

¹⁰ At this particular point it should be stated that Sennett was writing before the economic crisis of the 1970s and seems to imply that the economic prosperity of his time would indefinitely continue. Accordingly, he seems to envision an 'affluence' that would eventually eliminate scarcity. Moreover, he goes on presupposing that the young people of the survival communities would be above the 'level of poverty'. To conclude, he appears to argue that conditions of intense urban diversity could only work within spaces of non-scarcity.

¹¹ At this particular point, I would like to stress the similarities between Sennett's critical imagination of the 1970s and current post-socialist ecumenical narratives of inclusiveness in relation to

urbanism.

Following these lines, Brixton and Brick Lane, from the mid 1990s onwards, were areas closely resembling Richard Sennet's 'survival communities'. In the beginning at least, they were places of cheap rent where mainly young people moved in. At the same time, they were spaces of 'ethnic' diversity. Different differences were visible on the streets that according to Sennett had to be negotiated. However, Sennett's 'survival communities' were communities of people living above the level of poverty. Nevertheless, for Brixton and Brick Lane that was not the case at all. These two areas, increasingly through the passage of time, became areas of sharp contradictions. On one hand, you had poor 'ethnic' minority populations living in social housing, whilst on the other you had a wide spectrum of incomes expanding from low-middle range (students) to the very top (successful 'creative' professionals). Accordingly, the diversity of these areas today does not only refer to different 'races', 'ethnic' backgrounds or 'cultures' but also to incomes and lifestyles as well¹².

Consequently, one of the prime objectives of this research is to investigate the specific ways that these contemporary London 'survival communities' deal with difference. How do the people of these areas negotiate between their different differences? Do they acknowledge them or do they choose to overlook them? Is there a tendency for a new sense of 'we' to emerge out of these spaces of differences? Do these contemporary instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism appear to result in spontaneous, inclusive notions of local multicultural community or not?

Another way to theorise contemporary Brixton and Brick Lane could be as the new 'inner-city zones of transition' within the capital. Following these lines, both areas have experienced and continue to do so intense processes of urban transformation

globalisation.

¹² Although I do not intend to base my thesis on a concept of 'class struggle' that takes place within the metropolitan housing market, at the same time, it should be acknowledged the work of Rex, Moore and Tomlinson towards this direction (Rex & Moore 1967, Rex & Tomlinson 1979). Following these lines, these writers articulated these concerns by inventing the term of 'housing-classes' to refer to the fact that 'in any city there [is]...a stock of housing of varying degrees of desirability to which different groups of people having different characteristics have different degrees of access' (Rex & Moore 1967:127).

and population movement. Nevertheless, what this thesis is particularly interested to investigate is if these areas can also function as spaces of identity displacement; if they can function as contemporary 'narrative spaces' that through multicultural fictions can displace any fixed notions of the 'self'. Additionally, out of these contemporary 'inner-city' zones of transition does a break down of the established 'social order' occur? By the same token, do these 'zones of transition' result in the creation of 'new societies', 'new people' and 'new cultures'? Do these people that live within these areas go on to conceive themselves as 'incomplete'? Can 'liminal' identities (Back 1996) be created out of these 'liminal' spaces (Zukin 1992)?

In short, these are the main questions that this thesis will attempt to reflect on. By doing so, I believe that I can shed some light on contemporary conditions of urban multicultural living; I can partly contribute to the examination of contemporary living with differences and formations of urban multiculturalism.

1.5 Chapter Plan.

In what follows, I shall summarise the chapters through which this investigation of the spatial politics of cultural dialogue will take place. I shall go on to expose the subsequent analytical steps taken towards this narrative study of contemporary urban multiculturalism in relation to the spaces of difference in Brixton and Brick Lane. Chapter two exposes the methodological and epistemological issues at work. At the same time, I reflect briefly on my personal biography. Additionally, I shed some light on issues of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' and the current stage of 'race' ontology within the academy and other political or mainstream debates.

In chapter three, I deconstruct representations of Brixton and Brick Lane in successive governmental imaginings through the years. To put it differently, I attempt to expose the particular ways that both areas have been constructed through different political imaginations. Nevertheless, this form of 'archaeology' takes place through three different 'moments' of British multiculturalism that stand for successive eras of 'race' and difference in this country. Following these lines, this



form of 'archaeology' carries a particular historical resonance; it reflects on the political dealings with 'race' and difference over a period of more than thirty years. Chapter four investigates processes of residential gentrification in Brixton. Under these lights, the following four narrative themes are explored: firstly, narratives of local gentrification, belonging and life stages. Secondly, a narrative repertoire in relation to local processes of aestheticisation of differences. Thirdly, narrative constructions in relation to local multiculturalism, whilst last but not least, narrative processes of 'racing' or culturally defining the 'self'.

In a similar fashion, chapter five sheds light on the 'native' economy of Brixton. Following these lines, theoretical issues related to multiculturalism, market and place are exposed. At the same time, I proceed into a narrative study of the following tropes: stories of 'racial safety', 'native' attitudes towards processes of local transformation, constructions of local multiculturalism and narratives of the 'self'.

Chapter six attempts to shed some light on processes of local gentrification in Brick Lane related to currently unfolding forms of 'creative' capitalism. Under these lights, I explore the following narrative themes: firstly, narratives related to spatial definitions of the area. Secondly, narrative constructions in relation to local processes of urban transformation. Thirdly, narratives that reflect on local multiculturalism. Fourthly, narrative definitions of the 'ethnic' or 'cultural' self.

Consequently, in chapter seven, I investigate local forms of 'ethnic' multicultural capitalism that emerged through the workings of the 'native' economy of Brick Lane. More particularly, I am specifically interested in the 'native' 'Indian' restaurant business. Accordingly, I proceed into a narrative study of the following themes: stories of local migrations, 'native' attitudes towards local redevelopment approached through the notion of an imagined 'ethnoscape' (Appadurai 1996:33), constructions of local multiculturalism and definitions of the 'self'.

Last but not least, in chapter eight, I conclude upon the findings of this investigation on the spatial politics of cultural dialogue within these spaces of difference. At the same time, I attempt to reflect on the workings of cultural dialogue within a fast transforming multicultural city.

On fieldwork and methods.

2.1 A portrait of the researcher¹³.

To a large extent, the core idea of this doctoral thesis started to appear somewhere in 1997 when I moved to London for my postgraduate studies. Coming from Athens, which I tended then to perceive as a monocultural reality¹⁴, the first thing that really struck me in London, was its sheer diversity. Originating from a Balkan city with a clear and obvious, national identity and 'culture' what was really fascinating for me was to observe a city of multiplicities and fragmentation. Accustomed of possessing an urban vision of 'sameness', while inexperienced in urban diverse living in my first year in New Cross, South East London, I developed an addiction to these images of difference, which through the years evolved into an interest in multiculturalism, whatever this word might mean by now¹⁵.

As part of my MA degree in sociology, I decided to write an essay on 'race' and its place of residence, the multiracial inner-city. Without possessing any previous knowledge or experience of the histories and multiplicities of 'racisms' in this country, I began to read seminal academic texts related to the 'racial' realities of Britain during the 1970s, 80s, 90s etc. Through the work of Stuart Hall (1978a, 1978b), Paul Gilroy (1987), John Solomos (1993) and others I started to get a glimpse of the former 'racist' structures of feeling in Britain. Nevertheless, it 'felt'

¹³ At this particular point, I would like to argue that in a similar fashion to contemporary theories of the 'self', which tend to advocate the fragmented nature of 'identity', this condensed form of biography appears to constitute one, among many, plausible portraits of the researcher. In this sense, the writing or academic 'self' does not appear to holistically exhaust personal issues of 'identity', but instead, appears to complement, among others, a notion of the 'self'.

¹⁴ However, I have to confess that each time I go back to Athens, I tend to see a very differentiated reality as a result of extensive migration, which primarily took place through the 1990s and particularly intensified within the last few years. For instance, I can remember myself this summer strolling around a square of a small sea-side resort near Athens, where I used to spend most of my summers as a child, in a way it stood for the sheer homogeneity of Greek society. Nevertheless, lately, I am catching myself listening to Phillipino, Albanian and other eastern European languages that I am not able to identify. Processes of globalisation seem to have changed the world and any images of sameness are immediately crossed over by difference.

¹⁵ According to Stuart Hall (2000), 'The term multiculturalism is now universally deployed. However this proliferation has neither stabilised nor clarified its meaning.' (Hall 2000:209)

like I had arrived in a post-conservative Britain, where images of Tony Blair and his cabinet were spreading out of my television set, chanting the mantras of 'cool Britannia'.

At the same time with these academic interests, I was also eager to explore the capital. As far as I remember, I began my London 'journeys' emanating from New Cross and ending in the likes of Brixton, Central London or the East End. My favourite bus journey was taking the 36, and after crossing through Peckham, Camberwell and Brixton, I would eventually arrive at Victoria Station through Edgware Road. This specific journey, for me then, seemed like an around the world trip in 45 minutes. I could easily satisfy my early naive urban voyeurism through watching the 'black' cultures of South-West London, before reaching the 'wonders' of Arabic civilization in Edgware Road.

Nevertheless, through these metropolitan journeys I came to realise that particular places of 'ethnic' London did not really correspond to the ways that they had been described within earlier sociological narratives. For instance, Brixton in 1997 was totally different from the bulk of analytical narratives of the 1980s. Following these lines, the kind of Brixton, which I had in front of my eyes, was a 'buzzing' place full of bars and restaurants, populated by diverse ethnicities instead of a 'black' solid Afro-Caribbean community. On the other hand, Brick Lane at very end of the millennium mostly resembled a designer's economy instead of an urban 'ethnic' enclave. It seemed to be occupied by 'trendy' or 'creative' individuals, working or entertaining themselves amid a visually readable critical mass of Bangladeshi bodies. Following these lines, it did not seem to bear any close relevance to Salman Rusdie's (1988: 283) 'Brickhall' of 'The Satanic Verses'.

More than anything else, the accumulated 'histories' of resistance to 'racisms' of Brixton and Brick Lane informed my decision to choose them as the spatial 'laboratories' for an investigation into contemporary forms of British urban multicultural living. Nevertheless, the nail-bombing attacks of 1999 made obvious, in a very sinister way, that I was not the only one to perceive these spaces as the 'true' hot spots of multicultural London. Tragically, through these unfortunate incidents, my research gained a more powerful resonance.

Month by month, and year by year I started to organise my research agenda in finer detail. Simultaneously, I gradually managed to improve my academic skills in a language that I could not really master. Eventually, after much effort, some results appeared and I began to express myself and write in a much more sophisticated fashion. By deploying a much more complicated academic vocabulary, I decided that my doctoral thesis would be primarily concerned with the emergence of contemporary postmodern –postcolonial urban formations of Brixton and Brick lane. As it has been argued in chapter one, the main reason for naming these two sites as postmodern-postcolonial, laid on the fact that these two inner city areas of London appeared to epitomize spatial processes of gentrification or ‘urban postmodernization’ (Zukin 1992:227), which gradually came into touch and penetrated into the postcolonial demographics, bodies and ‘cultures’ of these areas. In effect, a new form of inner-city London’s multiculturalism had emerged, a much-celebrated one within the media and press, a new form of multicultural urban living. Under these lights, the prime objective of this research would be to investigate this new form of urban multiculturalism that does not only bring different ‘races’ or ‘cultures’ together but also different lifestyles, incomes and classes etc.

2.2 On ‘Blackness’ and ‘Whiteness’.

In order to proceed with a theoretical analysis of ‘race’, I would like to introduce Franz Fanon’s (1986) intersubjective phenomenology as it is extraordinarily presented in ‘Black Skin, White Masks’. From any point of view, Fanon’s succeeds extremely well in casting some light upon processes of constitution of the ‘black subject’ through the visionary framing regimes of racism. As he says: ‘The Negro is comparison. There is the first truth’(ibid 1986:211). Furthermore, David Goldberg (1997) in his book ‘Racial Subjects’, by reproducing Hegels’ intersubjective phenomenology between the Lord and the Bondsman exposes in detail the binary logic of racist ‘visibility-invisibility’ regimes (Goldberg 1997:79,80). As he argues, through this ‘comparison’, or in Hegel’s words ‘unequal recognition’ (Hegel

1977:236) racism marks its subjects and un-marks its users. Accordingly, racist phenomenological apparatuses¹⁶ appear to bring the 'black body' into existence whilst the racially unmarked 'white' body remains invisible. In a similar fashion, Dyer (1997) argues that 'As long as race is something only applied to non-white people, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people' (Dyer 1997:1).

To continue, I shall attempt to shed some light on the diversity of this racially marked 'blackness' and racially unmarked 'whiteness'. Following these lines, one is led to consider that the cultural politics of 'race' in Britain have changed significantly through the passage of time. As Stuart Hall (1995) has argued, they are two separate moments within the history of 'black' cultural politics in this country. The first 'moment', is the construction of the political category 'black'. As he says, 'In this moment, politically speaking 'The black Experience', as a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic and cultural differences...became 'hegemonic' over other ethnic and 'racial' identities' (Hall 1995:252).

This is the moment that the 'black skin' internalised the 'white mask' (blackness), the moment that Fanon describes as epidermalisation, while Hegel sees it as unequal recognition, where 'the other consciousness cancels itself as self-existent, and, ipso facto, does what the first [Lord or white master] does to it' (Hegel 1977:236) for the sake of political struggle. To put it differently, during this moment, blackness becomes almost accepted as an ontological category in order to be turned into a political one.

The second moment of black cultural politics appears to signify the 'end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject' (Hall 1995:254). This is the moment where blackness becomes redefined as diverse in relation to subjectivity, ethnicity, gender and class. Following these lines, a previously uniformed category of 'blackness' gives way to many different kinds of 'blackness'; 'race' can not

¹⁶ At the same time, any contemporary attempts to substitute the 'old' concept of 'race' with a new concept of culture appear to fail; culture remains a heavily racialised idea that separates humanity (Michaels 1998).

embrace and contain anymore the diversity of subjects positions that supposedly orders.

On the other hand, recent years have witnessed the emergence of an intellectual project to deconstruct 'whiteness'. Under these lights, 'whiteness' should not be viewed anymore as a broad, racially or culturally unmarked unified category, which brings together all the 'whites' of this world as a non-racial community, but alternatively, it should be examined in all its different manifestations. Accordingly, 'whiteness' can not go 'unexamined' (Chambers 1997), but the whole array of its diversity should be brought to the fore. As Frankenberg (1997) argues: 'The result is whiteness unfrozen, whiteness viewed as ensembles of local phenomena complexly embedded in socioeconomic, socio-cultural and psychic interrelations. Whiteness emerges as a process, not a thing, as plural rather than singular in nature' (Frankenberg 1997:1). Following these lines, some writers ask us to get 'out of' our 'whiteness' (Ware & Back 2002), to 'white out' (Wilkins 1997) or to abolish it (Roediger 1994, Ignatiev & Carvey 1996, Hale 1998).

2.3 The current state of 'race' ontology.

At the same time, this exploration takes place within an era in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to talk about 'race' and 'difference' within the academic communities across the Atlantic. It appears that the whole theoretical background of a 'sociology of 'race'¹⁷ is starting slowly to loose its relevance within the episteme of theorizing difference. A new paradigm appears to emerge, where the very sign of 'race' might possibly, for analytical reasons, become obliterated (Zack 1995:301, Gilroy 1998: 839, 2000:12). Simultaneously, the very vocabulary that used to describe the ethnically diverse conditions in this country, through the established notions of 'ethnic majorities' versus 'minorities', is under heavy criticism (Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion of the invention and subsequent development of a 'sociology of race' see Solomos (1993) Race and racism in Britain (p.13-37).

www.runnymedetrust.org/meb/TheReport.htm p.5-6). More importantly, these terms do not appear anymore, as capable of describing, the current multicultural nature of advanced capitalist western democracies. At the same time with all these fundamental changes within the episteme of 'race', a new political and economic situation emerges where 'diversity' becomes assigned to a very special role.

For instance, Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London, recently stated that:

'Two things make London one of the most international cities in the world – the fast moving global nature of our economy and the diversity of the many different ethnic communities that have made their home here. Between them, they make London a destination for investment, and a wide source of skills and creativity' (Time Out, Oct. 2001:10).

Within this specific genre of current political narratives that try to make sense of contemporary postmodern-postcolonial conditions, differences are viewed in an affirmative fashion. To be different does not appear anymore as a disadvantage, but instead, as a competitive edge in this world of ever increasing competition (Tompensaars 1993:168, Sneider & Barsoux 1997:156, Thomas 1998:41, Parhizgar 1999:12). However, within this plethora of diversity mantras, a process of relativisation of the very concept of difference appears to emerge. Accordingly, difference does not seem to refer any more to collectivities but individuals¹⁸ (Thomas 1998:xii, Essed 2000:4). Everybody is different, seems to be the new statement for our times. However, what might be the impact of all these new discourses in relation to the 'old' categories of 'race', class, gender etc? And more precisely, what seems to be happening with 'race' today? What could be the most suitable analytical approach to it? Should we obliterate the sign or just reify it? Accordingly, each individual within the academy and the broader world is challenged to take sides.

The kind of answer to these epistemological confusions, which this thesis tries to promote, is twofold: Firstly, to emphasise the fact that 'race' is inextricably linked

¹⁸ On a philosophical level, Gilles Deleuze (2001) in 'Repetition and Difference' preached a world, solely constituted, by indefinite differences. As he says: 'no two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive points, no two typewriters have the same manner' (Deleuze 2001:26).

to the periodicity of the urban political economy. Secondly, by bringing to the fore Levi-Strauss's method of 'bricolage', to invigorate an analytical approach to 'race', as a methodological tool instead of an ontological 'category'. But let us examine these issues.

As mentioned above, 'race', more than anything else appears to constitute a sign (Hall 1996a). At the same time, an abstract sign of 'race' does not really mean anything. In this sense, these specific limitations appear to manifest the futility of any general theories of 'racial' ontology. In effect, if one wanted to analyse 'race' and its development through time, she/he would have to contextualise the sign. Following these lines, this contextualisation could only take place in space. More specifically, inner-city space. On the simplest level, 'race' in postwar Britain appeared to comprise this critical mass of coloured bodies that came over to this country seeking employment and eventually found for themselves a space of residence within the inner city. In this sense 'race' and urban political economy appear as connected. On a first level, the recent period of economic prosperity, which seriously inflated property prices, might have led the way for first-time buyers to seek 'homes' in former dilapidated, ethnically diverse inner-city areas. At the same time, it may also be the case that this same period of economic prosperity might have given strength for multiple forms of 'ethnic' metropolitan capitalism to emerge and to specific individuals from 'ethnic' minority backgrounds to break into the 'mainstream' of the labour market. In this sense, Sharon Zukin's (1995) proposition to see 'ethnicity and urban space as responding to larger political economic factors' (Zukin 1995:194) appears as valid. 'Race', space and urban political economy appear as irrevocably linked.

To continue, I shall expose the ontological position of 'race' that this thesis strives to adopt from the very outset. Jacques Derrida (1978) in 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', goes on to cite Claude Levi-Strauss method of 'bricolage' as a means 'to preserve as an instrument something whose value he criticises' (Derrida 1978:284). This kind of argument suggests that the methodological value of a social science 'tool' or category appears to remain unaffected by its 'ontological nonvalue' (ibid 1978:285). In this sense, 'The

bricoleur...is someone who uses 'the means at hand', that is the instruments he finds at his disposition around him, those which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them...while here and there denouncing their limits, treating them as tools which can still be used. No longer is any truth value attributed to them; there is a readiness to abandon them, if necessary, should other instruments appear more useful. In the meantime, their relative efficacy is exploited...' (ibid 1978:284-85).

Following these lines of thinking this doctoral thesis adopts a similar theoretical stance to 'race'¹⁹. Accordingly, 'race', within the spaces of this doctoral thesis, does not become conceived as an all-powerful category able to delineate ontologically and define its subjects and non-subjects. In effect, the very categories of 'black', 'white', 'black'-British, 'Asian'-British et cetera that this thesis appears to 'exploit' are not attributed to any particular, racially defined, ontological status. Instead, they should be viewed as empty 'boxes' or categories, which still succeed in retaining some methodological value. In effect, this doctoral thesis is keen to take advantage of these sociological 'instruments', without aiming at their existential reification. They are used as ephemeral social science 'tools' ready to be made redundant on the first occasion. Their descriptive powers and wide spread use become harnessed for the aims and objectives of this research, without this necessarily connoting a belief in their value. From this particular perspective, this thesis appears to proceed with a dual reading on the sign of 'race'. On a methodological level, the sign of 'race' remains potent in order for this thesis to proceed with its research findings. Yet on an ontological level, this thesis denounces its very status. It clearly proceeds into obliterating the sign. Accordingly, in-between these two levels the sign of 'race' becomes visible on one occasion, non-visible at the next.

¹⁹ Such a specific analysis of 'race' can also take the place of its contemporary substitute, 'ethnicity' too. For a general discussion on ethnicity see for example Yancey, Ericksen & Juliani (1976), Benson (1981), Roosens (1989), Nagel (1994), De Vos & Roamanucci-Ross (1995) Banks (1996).

2.3 Methods at work.

In what follows, I shall expose the variety of methods and the particular epistemological background that this doctoral thesis utilised in order to validate its research findings and conclusions. In other words, I attempt to cast some light on the deployed methodological and epistemological armoury, which enabled this research to produce these particular sociological knowledges. Nevertheless, the specific way that the rest of this chapter is structured appears to reflect Walter Benjamin's position about the existence of different modes of knowing the city (Keith 2002:411). Following these lines, this particular sociological narrative that became my thesis was produced by deploying the following methods of knowing the city: discourse analysis, ethnography, interviews and processes of collection of any relevant material. In effect, each of these ways constitutes a different mode of knowing the particular urban under investigation; each of them separately contributes to the production of these specific sociological knowledges.

2.4 The Discourse Analyst.

The analytical powers of discourse analysis become mainly deployed, for the aims and objectives, in chapter three. Within this chapter, I attempt to conduct a form of 'archaeology' into governmental shifting discourses or languages²⁰ of representation of 'race' and difference in relation to Brixton and Brick Lane. To put it differently, the particular task of this chapter is to deconstruct representations of Brixton and Brick Lane in successive governmental imaginations through the years; it attempts to expose the ways that Brixton and Brick Lane have been discursively constructed through different, subsequent political imaginings.

²⁰ As Tonkiss (1998) has argued within discourse analysis 'language is viewed as the topic of research' (ibid 1998:247). In this sense, discourses and 'languages' are almost interchangeable concepts. Accordingly, within the pages of this thesis, we use the notions of discourses or languages as identical concepts. For instance, discourses of 'race' can easily become substituted by the concept of languages of representation of 'race'.

In a broad sense, the concept of discourse 'refer[s] to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events' (Burn 1995:48). In this sense, as discourses are 'productive' (Kendall & Wisham 1999:34), I investigate the specific production of 'race'/inner-city 'discursive traffic'²¹ for specific eras of this country. In other words, I examine the case of a 'race'/inner-city related discourse and the particular ways it has been 'organised' (Potter & Wetherell 1994:59) in order to render its 'object'²² meaningful.

According to Michel Foucault (1991) any form of 'archaeology' necessarily involves 'the description of the archive. By this word...I mean the set of rules which at a given period and for a given society define the limits and form of the sayable' (Foucault 1991:59). More specifically, Foucault tends to look at discourses in terms of statements, 'in terms of what can be said and what can be thought' (McHowl & Grace 1993:34). In effect, in order to look at a 'race' and difference productive discourse related to Brixton and Brick Lane, I had to construct an archive for the investigation of 'statements'. I had to collect as many different representations of difference as possible in relation to these spaces; I had to investigate the discursive limits of the 'sayable'. Nevertheless, it became obvious that a process of selection was inevitable. Any attempt at constructing such an archive could only be selective in nature. Accordingly, my constructed archive became comprised by documents, where statements in relation to 'race' and difference appeared to contradict each other. To put it differently, I went on to construct my archive by selecting documents, where forms of representation of differences were strikingly different; each of them appeared to extend or renew the forms of the sayable in relation to spatially contained 'race' and difference. Through this process of selection, the following documents comprised my 'basic' archive: the 1976-77 Home Affairs Select Committee Report on 'The West Indian Community', 'The Lambeth Inner Area Study' (DoE 1977), The Public Hearings of

²¹ As Stallybrass & White (1986) argued: 'a valuable way of thinking about ideology is to conceive it as the way discursive traffic and exchange between different domains are structured and controlled' (Stallybrass & White 1986:195).

²² According to Parker (1992), discourse is 'a system of statements that constructs an object' (ibid

Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders of 10-12 April 1981, the 1980-81 Home Affairs Committee report on 'Bangladeshis in Britain'.

Nevertheless, through this process of construction and selection of such an archive, I came to realise that local regeneration policies provided a significant context where many different representations of differences originated from. Within these various local regeneration documents different forms of the 'sayable' became expressed and communicated. Following these lines, documents related to the Bethnal Green, Brixton City Challenge and Cityside regenerative programmes were included within this constructed archive. As each of these local regeneration programmes lasted for five years, I had to read through the lines of fifteen annual reports and a significant number of other related documents, from initial bids for funding to evaluation studies. As a result, I spent considerable time reading and analyzing these various documents (for the size of this part of the archive see Appendix C).

As discourses appear to change through time (McHowl & Grace 1993:31), I did not simply try to explore only the 'criteria of formation' of this 'race' and difference, spatially related 'inner-city' discourse, but also, its continuous process of transformation through time (Foucault 1991: 54-8). Accordingly, it became evident that a number of different discourses comprised this specific discursive construction through its stages of development. In a sense, these different discourses appeared to correspond to different forms of the 'sayable'. More specifically, this appeared take place through inter-discursive correlations between the under investigation discourse and other powerful discourses (diversity), which circulated around, at the time.

2.5 The Ethnographer.

The prime objective of this research was to explore the ways that people made sense of their lives in Brixton and Brick Lane. More particularly, I was eager to investigate individual and collective stories about these fast transforming spaces of difference. To put it differently, I was keen to investigate the specific ways that the 'social worlds' of Brixton and Brick Lane became constructed through individual and collective narratives; I was eager to examine the kind of contact that appeared to take place within these contemporary 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992). Following these lines, I had to find a way to enter people's lives: I had to become an ethnographer.

According to Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) ethnography, 'in its most characteristic form involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions- in fact collecting whatever data available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995:1).

After some initial period of thinking, about the use or not, of 'participant observation' as the main methodological tool of this research, I concluded that I was not willing to turn myself into the 'primary research instrument' (Walsh 1998:217). I did not wish to assert a questionable 'ethnographic authority' (Clifford 1988:21) over the reader. Although 'participant observation' was out of the question, I was still keen on forms of intensive engagement with my subject matter. Eventually, I made my mind up that qualitative interviewing (see for example: Seale 1998:202) and more specifically dialogue would constitute the prime tool of my ethnography. Through dialogue meaning is created linguistically between the subjects of language. To put it differently, meaning in social life is created and articulated through the exchange of speech. Following these lines, what I was specifically eager to find out were the specific moments of local dialogue, where meaning was crystallized; particular moments of exemplification that articulated, at

least to my eyes, specific mental constructions. More importantly, the prime aim of this thesis was to bring these moments of exemplification to the fore; to try to exemplify the meaning created within these crystallised moments of dialogue.

At the same time, data and other relevant material collection would come to complement my prime ethnographic research. Following these lines, my ethnography would consist of an interviewing technique, where I would ask questions and subsequently hear what people had to say to me, whilst secondly, a process of collection of any relevant visual, textual, statistical et cetera material in relation to my research. As a result, for long periods of time, I turned myself into an Interviewer and a Collector.

Before I move any further, it should be made clear the kind of value and importance that I give to these moments of dialogue; the kind of significance that I attribute to these linguistic accounts. Firstly, it should be stated clearly that these seventy-nine local interviews, which were conducted as part of my interview based research, do not constitute in any respect a representational sample; they are not intended to represent in any great extent the populations of these areas. Accordingly, any forms of generalisation cannot and should not be deducted out of this interview material. To put it differently, these interviews do not constitute evidence of general or generic tendencies within these areas. They just comprise in themselves local moments of dialogue without any powers of generalisation.

Secondly, I have to acknowledge the contextual and intersubjective nature of these interviews. By that I mean, that these interviews occurred within a specific context of interaction between myself, as the interviewer, and various informants. Accordingly, what my interviewees told me, their specific accounts and stories, were influenced by my presence. In this sense, I was partly responsible for the production of these moments of dialogue. In short, my gender, whiteness, habitus appeared to have shaped significantly this interview based research (for a more detailed disussion see chapter 2:2.7.1, 2.7.2).

2.6 The Collector.

This process of collection of visual, textual, statistical and other material started at the very outset of the research. This process of gathering was mostly facilitated by the fact that within the early stages of research the main focus was different. As the research changed from a gentrification study of 'race' as a commodity, or urban processes of commodification of 'race', to a study of cultural dialogue within processes of urban transformation the relevance of gathering statistical material diminished. As I became more interested in the cultural politics of space or spatial politics of culture than the mappings of local gentrification frontiers, this gathering of material decreased in importance. Nevertheless, as a result of the initial focus of research a lot of data were collected, which subsequently were not exactly used. Although the collector religiously gathered related material, this material became less important as this thesis experienced a transition in its focus.

Within the early stages of this research, it became apparent that if I wanted to investigate urban processes of postmodern-postcolonial formation within the areas of Brixton and Brick Lane, my first intention should be, to try to expose quantitatively the local occurrence of these processes. In effect, I had to provide the reader with enough quantitative information in order to verify spatially local processes of gentrification or urban postmodernization (Zukin 1992:227). As a result, I started to frequent the Town Planning Offices of the London Boroughs of Lambeth and Tower Hamlets, in order to investigate and expose the volumes of application for new construction, renovation, revitalisation, commercial use etc. within the period of the last few years.

At the same time, a demographic profiling of these areas was almost quintessential. Accordingly, I started collecting any form of economic and social data that could describe the demographic past and present of these areas. Following these lines, local employment figures, 'racial' profiling, current and past levels of housing-occupancy etc. appeared as useful. These volumes of applications, demographic

profiles, and such eventually found their place within the Appendices of this thesis (see Appendix A and B).

Apart from this collection of quantitative data, a simultaneous process of gathering of any of research-related information was also at work. By all accounts, I started collecting various pieces of historiography about these places. As it is widely known, both areas have manifested strong resistance to forms of racism, endemic within the past of this city. As a matter of fact, these volumes of local historiography further informed the Appendices A and B of this thesis.

Simultaneously, I followed closely contemporary media discourses in relation to 'race', difference and migration. Through the national press, I've repeatedly come to notice the cyclical nature of these discourses. For instance, I can easily bring to my mind, during the heydays of this period of economic prosperity, the official governmental approach to migration as a contributing force to the cultural and economic advancement of this country. More recently, under conditions of economic stagnation and the rise of the Far Right within the Continent, I followed the transformation of this discourse under the aegis of the Home Department, David Blunket. Concurrently with these broader discourses, I kept an eye out for specific media representations of Brixton and Brick Lane. As a result of this specific preoccupation, I've seen these places being habitually depicted under different representational lights. Nevertheless, the biggest part of this media related research did not find its place within the main body of this thesis, but only, within the micro-spaces of footnoting.

Apart from this textual related material, I became also interested in past and present visual representations of the areas. Accordingly, I began gathering photographs, illustrations, maps etc. that in one way or another gave away a different perspective upon these localities. In effect, I ended up with a whole archive of visual information, which a small part of it, found its place within the pages of this doctoral thesis. At the same time, as part of being a Collector, I turned into a photographer too. There was a period of time that I would take my camera and go to photograph aspects of life or even just details of the local built environment. Through this photographing process, I wanted to capture local quintessential details

of urban life at the very time of the research. In a sense, I felt that these spaces of difference might change too quickly. However, I wanted to seize visually the moment of this research. Under conditions of intense metropolitan expansion, in cities like London, yesterday's realities may not really correspond to urban futures.

2.7 The Interviewer: epistemological/methodological concerns.

According to Berg (1998), an 'interview is defined simply as conversation with a purpose. Specifically this purpose is to gather information'(Berg 1998:57). Nevertheless, for the case of this research, it did not seem that a simple gathering of information would do. Instead, it became obvious that I had to get hold of people's stories and narratives; it became apparent that I had to immerse myself in a long process of 'talking' to individuals, with a direct relation to these spaces, in order to get hold of their opinions, attitudes, narratives etc. Following these lines, I had to construct a relevant methodology to conduct my interviews and elicit some findings.

After an initial period of methodological confusion, I came to realise that what I was desperately seeking, was a sort of interview methodology able to deal and reflect on people's personal experiences and life stances. In short, I wanted to do justice and take account of, not only of the ways that people 'saw' and constructed their social worlds, but also, their accumulated experiences too. In effect, I indulged myself in the gradually proliferating literature of narrative studies and people's personal stories, which are inextricably linked to their experiences and lives (Rosenthal 1993, Widdershoven 1993, Chase 1995, Josselson 1995, Hollway & Jefferson 1997). Following these lines, it became apparent that I should go along with a 'hermeneutic' epistemological standpoint that tends to focus on interpretation and subsequently assumes that life and experience can only become meaningful through narration and storytelling (Widdershoven 1993:1-2). To put it differently, it became clear that I had to find ways to elicit personal narratives out of

my interview material. Nevertheless, in some sense, these narratives appeared to inform and be informed by, in a reciprocal way, lived experience.

Susan Chase (1995) has argued that within the realm of the social sciences: 'Despite the significance of narrative, qualitative researchers rarely focus specifically on eliciting narratives in the interview context and pay little attention to the narrative character of talk produced during interviews' (Chase 1995:1).

Nevertheless, if somebody adopts such a methodological direction, in what sort of epistemological grounds could she/he base herself/himself upon? In more detail, it started to become apparent that this specific methodological approach might require a particular epistemological base. As Windershoven (1993) argues, suitable epistemological foundations can be found within hermeneutics, where:

'the movement of philosophical hermeneutics, starts from the idea that life and story are internally related. They underline that the meaning of life cannot be determined outside of the stories told about it... Thus a story is never a pure ideal, detached from real life. Life and story are not two separate phenomena. They are part of the same fabric, in that life informs and is formed by stories... from a hermeneutic point of view, stories are based on life, and life is expressed, articulated, manifested and modified in stories. Stories make explicit the meaning that is implicit in life as it is lived. In stories we aim to make clear and intelligible what life is about. Thus stories are interpretations of life in which the meaning of life is spelled out... In telling stories we try to make sense of life... From a hermeneutic point of view, the relation between life and story can be characterized as interpretive. A story interprets experiences; it makes their meaning explicit... This implies that life is both more and less than a story. It is more in that it is a basis of a variety of stories, and it is less in that it is unfinished and unclear as long as there are no stories told about it' (Windershoven 1993:2).

After epistemologically grounding myself on such a hermeneutic, interpretative context, things started to become a little bit clearer. As mentioned above, I was predominantly interested to explore individual and collective stories and narratives about these places of difference. I was eager to investigate the constructed

'knowledges'²³ in relation to these fast transforming metropolitan spaces of difference. In other words, I was keen to elicit the multiplicity of 'Brixtons' and 'Brick lanes' that existed out of the experiences and within the minds of my informants. Following these lines, in one of my interviews in Brixton, Mel, a 'white' female in her early thirties, argued the following:

Mel: 'the thing about it, is that you can construct all sorts of different Brixtons and lay them on space, lots of different people can come up with completely different Brixtons, I mean even for us we really notice the time of day, it changes through the day, it's a very different place at five in the morning, from one direction, as, you know, there is a difference between five in the morning and ten in the morning, as much as it is going to be a different street, and lots of people exist in their time zones, so people who only see it at certain points will have a very different view from people who see it at other times, Coldharbour changes so much, it really makes such a big difference that you only see it when you work and live here in a way.'

Within the above statement, Mel verifies Louis Mumford's (1995) position that 'By the diversity of its time-structures, the city in part escapes the tyranny of a single present' (Mumford 1995:22). Nevertheless, these multiple 'Brixtons' and 'Brick Lanes' do not simply come out of the minds of informants. Accordingly, they should not be strictly conceptualised as purely mental constructions. Instead, they seem to be much more than that. In a sense, these multiple personal stories, comedies or dramas, which take place and refer to these spaces of difference, appear in a way to manifest the specific ways that these individuals make sense of their lives and narrate their accumulated experiences (Josselson 1995:33, Chase 1995:2). Following these lines, 'the pre-narrative structure of experience [becomes]...articulated and changed into a narrative pattern.' (Widdershoven 1993:7) However, through these multiple 'narrative patterns' emerging out of individual experiences, I could subsequently observe and get invaluable insights into the ways that people lived and made sense of their lives within these spaces of difference.

²³ For a treatment of narrative as 'knowledge' have a look at Rosaldo (1989:130-131).

Nevertheless, this particular interviewing methodological context was destined to bring along further difficulties. More importantly, it did not allow any concrete or specific research hypothesis; it did not provide me with the comfort of structuring the interviews, establishing a 'solid' research hypothesis and then waiting for the results to deny or verify its case. In sharp contrast to this, it appeared that I might have to conduct a very open-ended interview based research. Following these lines, I had to go out and extract multiple personal and collective 'narrative patterns' (Widdershoven 1993:7) without having any preconceived assumptions about the research's direction. Following these lines, an 'empathic stance' (Josselson 1995:30) to research, where data are approached in a way 'that allows for discovery rather than seeks confirmation of hypotheses and that fosters more exhaustive quests for explanation rather than the illusion for finding a preexisting truth' (Josselson 1995:30) appeared suitable.

2.7.1 The 'inside-story' of research.

In what follows, I shall expose the 'self-reflexive fieldwork account' (Clifford 1986:14) of this interview-based research. In a sense, it provides the inside-story of how this research was carried out. As Pratt (1986) has argued, 'the personal narrative...inserts into the ethnographic text the authority of the personal experience out of which the ethnography is made.' (Pratt 1986:33) At the same time, a 'confessional mode of writing' (Hamersley 1990:21) appears mostly at work. In the following pages, the inside-story of this research becomes revealed.

I can still easily bring back to my mind, the whole agonizing process of this interview-based research. By having to be so open-ended, any sense of certainty became immediately evaporated. Most of the times, I had the feeling of not exactly knowing where I was heading and that lack of direction brought along a sense of confusion. At the same time, I have to confess it partly felt liberating. In a way, by not having any well-structured research questions and hypotheses, I was more flexible to immerse myself into my informants' personal lives and stories. First and foremost, it seemed like a struggle to create an in-between us level of 'trust' (Walsh

1998:225), which could guarantee a glimpse into their lives. Following these lines, I had to approach my informants on a personal level; in a way I had to be personal if I wanted them to be personal in response. A very common question that kept occurring was why I was interested in such a research. Probably, their curiosity sprung out of the fact that as I was not a British subject, they did not easily comprehend the reasons and motives behind such an interest in British 'multicultural' debates. Each time I had to come up with my own personal London narrative that would satisfy their curiosity or interest in me. At points, it felt like that I had to go over and over again how I came to London in 1997, how lucky I was to get a scholarship from a small Greek Funding Institute, how amazed I was at the beginning by London's diversity etc.etc. More often than not, it felt like an exchange of personal narratives. Generally, I had to provide them with my personal story, a 'narrative pattern' of my London life, in order to establish a level of 'trust' in order to get theirs. However, it also felt exhausting. I still remember that after a couple of hours of interviewing and being so 'personal' and 'frank' in the company of absolute strangers, I felt drained. More specifically, this 'exhaustion' resulted from the fact of having to hear my personal story in this city, over and over again that at some points reached the levels of repetition.

To continue with this inside-story of my interview-based research, I managed to conduct seventy-nine qualitative or 'in-depth' interviews (see for example Seale 1998, 1999, Silverman 1997). As a result of this 'empathic stance' (Josselson 1995:30) to research, these in-depth interviews were conducted in an open-ended way. The most common way to initiate an interview would be to use a small number of core questions as 'topic guides' (Seale 1998:206) to kick-off the dialogic nature of these discussions, whilst secondly, to navigate me through any uncomfortable moments of silence. More specifically, I would offer to my informants as much space as possible to speak their minds. At points, this 'topic' and conversational freedom would almost reach levels of 'free association' (Hollway-Jefferson 1997). It was not my intention at all to be in control of the interviewing process. Alternatively, I sought to be open enough to let my interviewees lead the discussion and choose the direction that our 'conversation'

would take. In this way, I tended to believe, that I could get more valuable insights into their lives and into the 'narrative patterns' that seemed to structure and render meaningful their own experiences.

As mentioned above, what I was particularly keen to investigate, were people's stories and narratives about themselves and 'others' in relation to these spaces of difference. Most of the times, I would kick-off an interview-based conversation by asking a personal question like: 'When did you move into the area?' Or 'Have you lived here all of your life?' etc. Increasingly, I tended to find that such a 'breaking the ice' technique would shift the emphasis from the general to the individual level and even go as far as to guarantee a 'personal touch'. Starting the interviews by focusing so much on a personal level produced instantly a narrator, telling you, her/his experiences and narratives in relation to these fast transforming spaces of difference. Increasingly, I became more and more conscious about this alleged reinforcing relationship between experience, narrative construction and everyday life that 'narrative studies'²⁴ strongly advocate (Widdershoven 1993:7, Josselson 1995:33, Chase 1995:2). In a way, through the course of these interviews, I came to realise and 'see' more clearly the specific ways that my informants used their personal experience, to construct their personal 'narrative patterns' by which they lived their lives.

Broadly speaking, I began my interview-based research in spring 2000 and I had completed it by autumn 2001. Within this period of time I managed to conduct seventy-nine 'in-depth' interviews in total; forty-four of them were related to Brixton, whilst, thirty-three referred to Brick Lane. Before I move any further, it should be noted that all the names of my informants have been changed to protect their anonymity.

From the very beginning, it became apparent that I had to come into contact and interview a number of individuals that were directly or indirectly related to these spaces of difference. At the same time, I had to invent some 'categories' to separate and distinguish between my interviewing subjects, presuming that in this way I

²⁴ One of the most important sources of information and inspiration about the uses of narratives within social studies is the journal 'The Narrative Study of Lives', Sage Publications, London, New Delhi.

could retain more control of my research. Increasingly, I started to realise that what I was particularly keen to investigate, were these newly emergent forms of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism, which seemed to take place locally. Following these lines, two distinct interview subject positions were created. On one hand, lie the people that had moved into these areas, whilst on the other, were the ones that had more established or longer-term relationships with these places. Accordingly, in the first category were termed 'gentrifiers', whilst in the second, 'natives'. Nevertheless, through the actual doing of this research, I came to realise that this group of 'gentrifiers' was very differentiated in itself. It appeared to be comprised by a variety of individuals coming from different backgrounds. Under these lights, they did not appear to constitute a uniform category of people that goes along with the traditional image of a middle-class, professional, semi-affluent gentrifier. Instead, a significant part of this group, resembled, Rose's (1984:64) description of the 'marginal gentrifier', a young person who decides to live in the inner-city mainly out of 'need', instead of lifestyle choices. Under the fear of misrepresentation, I re-named this group as 'movers in'. In effect, any implications of the group's uniformity became instantly rejected.

At the same time, another kind of implication was mainly at work. At the very initial stages of this interview-based research, I presumed that both the 'movers in' and 'natives' appeared to correspond closely to different 'racial' or 'ethnic' categories. In this sense, I tended to believe that the former were predominantly 'white', whilst the latter 'black', 'Asian' or 'other'. It seemed like a kind of separation between British 'natives' and 'others'. By all accounts, my specific aim was not to reify ontologically these 'categories', but instead, to exploit their methodological powers in order to structure my research. However, the actual doing of this research denounced many of these early assumptions. For instance, the 'movers in' group was as 'ethnically' diversified as they were economically or socially. In effect, many of the 'movers in' were of an 'other' descent. Even in the case that they were 'white', a significant part of them appeared to be 'non-natives' of European or American descent. Nevertheless, for the case of 'natives' the majority of cases appeared to verify my earlier 'ethnic' hypothesis.

Another issue that became increasingly obvious was that processes of local gentrification did not only take residential forms, but commercial forms of gentrification, were also at work. For instance, in the case of Brick Lane, the 'movers in' category appeared to refer to 'creative' professionals, who were employed or self-employed within newly regenerated local sites. At the same time, in both cases of Brixton and Brick Lane, some 'natives' had turned into small-scale 'ethnic' entrepreneurs taking advantage and capitalising upon local processes of urban transformation. In this sense, the 'Indian' restaurant business of Brick Lane provides the most suitable example. Increasingly, in Brixton, within a period of a few years, a small-scale 'commercial' local 'ethnic' industry²⁵ emerged to cater for the needs of this expanding local community.

Through the passage of time, I came to realise that more choices had to be made. Accordingly, it became apparent that if local processes of gentrification and local conditions of multiculturalism comprised the focus of the research, then the groups of people selected might better have some connection between them, than not. In a sense, it felt like I should 'go out' and interview people, that their lives were meeting somewhere or were slightly crossed-over. However, through my long promenades in these areas, I sensed that local streets might not be exactly the places for a significant inter-cultural communication to be enacted. In my eyes, different people from different backgrounds were going by too quickly or were too socially isolated to be preoccupied with any 'negotiation of difference' (Sennett 1970:143-144). Nevertheless, I remained determined to explore the local multicultural spirit and multiple negotiations of differences, which at least to my sociological imagination, they had to have found their spaces of occurrence locally.

More specifically, what I was particularly looking for, were the new contemporary 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992:4) or significant 'contact points' (Sennett 1970:57) within these localities. As Mary-Louis Pratt (1992) has argued, 'contact zones' were the spaces of the former colonial world where different 'races', ethnicities, cultures

²⁵ What comes to my mind, as one of the clearest manifestations of this thriving local 'ethnic' industry, are the multiple mini-cab services that have sprung up recently. Following these lines, the 'ethnic' nature of this economy becomes manifested through the low-levels of investment that such a business requires (a car and a license, or even not) which permits many 'native' Black-British males

met and had the chance to influence each other. Following these lines, 'transculturation' was deemed as a phenomenon of the 'contact zone' (ibid 1992:6). In this sense, the 'contact zone' provided a space, not only for the co-existence of differences, but also, a place where a negotiation or interaction between different differences could be enacted. In a similar way to this, Richard Sennett (1970:57) has advocated the importance of 'contact points' within the metropolis. For Sennett, the very 'essence of urban life' is 'its diversity and possibilities of complex experiences' (Sennett 1970:82) that can only become realised within these metropolitan 'contact points'; these are the places, where a contamination of different differences can take place; these are the spaces for the accumulation of 'rich' experiences.

If one could take a bird's-eye view of contemporary Brixton and Brick Lane, whilst previously having a basic demographic knowledge of these areas, she/he would probably see them as places, where different people, from different 'ethnic' backgrounds with different incomes, leading different lifestyles reside together and interact within the locality (Certeau 1984:91). Nevertheless, a 'walking' (ibid 1984:91) down the local streets might reveal a different story of interaction or intercultural communication. At least, this is what happened in my case. Through my subjective eyes, I started to sense that many lives within these localities presented strong tendencies of mutual self-exclusion. Through these walks, it became apparent that there might not be so many spaces of interaction for let us say poor, ethnic minority families, who live in social housing and 'affluent' creative professionals that reside at the top end of local private accommodation. Having that in mind, it became more evident that I had to narrow down the focus of my research. In a way, if I wanted to investigate local conditions of multiculturalism, I had to interview people where their lives met and crossed-over somewhere, at some point, sometimes within these areas. After an initial period of hesitation, I concluded that the new 'contact zones' of Brixton and Brick Lane were predominantly the spaces where the 'new', or not so 'new', people of these areas were meeting and coming into contact with 'natives'. Following these lines, I came

to find employment.

to realise that these places were mostly mini-cab offices or 'back to the roots' second hand record shops in Brixton, 'curry' restaurants and 'leather' outlets in Brick Lane etc. These were the forms of local multiculturalism that I wanted to investigate; a multiculturalism that seemed to bring different people together, into a negotiation of their differences, under the aegis of urban capitalism and commerce; a kind of local multiculturalism, where 'natives' and 'newcomers' could come together through the development of local forms of 'ethnic' entrepreneurialism. To put it differently, I was eager to investigate what kind of contact was taking place within these new, contemporary 'contact zones'. I was keen to expose, the ways that different people, from different backgrounds, with different incomes and ethnicities appeared to come together and interact within these local spaces of 'ethnic' capitalism.

In what follows, I shall expose the four interviewing subject positions that were constructed by this research. Firstly, in the case of Brixton, I interviewed individuals who had moved into the area and since then had continued to live there. Following these lines, the first interviewing group involved people that were part of residential forms of gentrification in Brixton. Accordingly, this first group of informants was named 'movers in'. Nevertheless, this local constructed category involved individuals that were either living locally for a number of years, or alternatively, they had recently moved into the area. Following these lines, this first local category was further divided between 'newcomers' and 'longer established residents'. As I did not possess at the time any established connections in the area, it seemed difficult at first to proceed with my interviewing process. However, by asking friends and friends of friends, the first contacts were established. Through these initial contacts and by a 'snow-balling' technique, where I would ask from my interviewees the telephone numbers or e-mail addresses of friends, who had moved into Brixton and did not have a problem to narrate their Brixton experiences over a beer, almost twenty interviews were conducted. As mentioned above, this local group of 'movers in' was highly diversified in itself; it included all kinds of people from different backgrounds and professions. Nevertheless, what seemed to bring all these people together was that at some point in their lives all of them had moved

into the area.

On the other hand, the second group of 'Brixtonians' included people who worked or owned small businesses or shops within the local 'native' economy. Following these lines, this group of people was involved within local forms of 'ethnic' capitalism. The majority of cases appeared to be comprised of 'natives' of a Caribbean or African descent; these people by working or owning small-scale local businesses were able to capitalise or just make a living from local contemporary urban developments. By the same token, they seemed to have established points of contact or interaction with the 'new people' of the area. Following these lines, their lives appeared to be crossed-over with the lives of 'new', or not so 'new', Brixtonians through the workings of capitalism and commerce.

In a similar way to the previous group of informants, I had to establish my local connections. However, my technique of approaching any future interviewing subjects was very straightforward. For instance, I would enter into a second-hand record shop or mini-cab office etc, and after briefly explaining the reasons and topic of my research, I would ask if they could spare some time to talk to me about their Brixton experiences. In some cases, they would tell me to come later and we would usually book an appointment for another time. In other cases, they would talk to me on the spot by taking a break from their work. Nevertheless, many people would say that they were too busy for talking or simply that they were not interested at all. However, the actual doing of this part of research was not exactly as easy as it may sound. At the beginning, I felt that it was too difficult to approach any future informants in such a straightforward fashion. As there were not any telephone calls involved, any exchanged e-mails or prearranged meetings I had to go on the spot, explain myself and 'pray' for positive responses. Nevertheless, I have to confess that this directness, at least at the beginning, made me feel very uncomfortable.

At the same time, different aspects and elements of doing research appeared to enter the picture. Following these lines, it became evident that the researcher inevitably influences any form of ethnographic research. As Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) have argued 'there is no way in which we can escape the social world in order to study it' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995:17). Under these lights, I came to realise

the very inter-subjective nature (Walsh 1998:218) of my own research. In short, it became clear that I was inevitably influencing my own ethnography. To be more specific, my own 'whiteness' appeared to affect my research. The fact that I grew up and lived for the biggest part of my life in Greece, where there is no 'black' to compare to, never really made me to conceive myself as 'white'. In short, where I grew up these kinds of 'racial' taxonomies and forms of personal identification did not really exert any powers on me. Nevertheless, through my research in Brixton I came to acknowledge the fact that my own 'whiteness' in this country might be a readable sign.

For instance, I remember once that I got into a Rastafarian shop in Coldharbour Lane and after explaining my research interests, I immediately became the subject of a straightforward attack. The owner of the shop, a middle-aged Black-British male of Caribbean descent, started accusing me of being part of this current transformation, which was allegedly devastating the local 'black' community. For a moment, my 'whiteness' turned me into the 'enemy'. I was captured within a phenomenological intersubjective 'racial' regime that tended to read 'whiteness' as oppressive and 'bad'. Additionally, my intersubjective encounter went on to make some general remarks about academic researchers, who come and spend a week in places of poverty and social injustice and then retreat to their comfortable desks to write up their own social imaginations. In short, I had to sit and listen to him for almost half an hour accusing me of all the evils of British colonialism. However, this particular incident made me acknowledge the possibility that although my personal biography might not be related to any colonial histories or 'racial' injustices, my own 'whiteness' in this country, on certain occasions, retained powers of delineation on me.

In a similar fashion, through this research in Brixton, I came to realise that there might be moments and spaces where one can feel excluded only because of the colour of her/his skin. For instance, in the beginning of this fieldwork I felt that I could not easily enter into a 'black' barber's shop in Coldharbour Lane and introduce myself and my research interests. In effect, my initial response to this was to walk constantly around Brixton lacking the confidence to approach people

and initiate interviews. In a way, the only thing that I did for the first two weeks was just walking. Probably, I did so many miles that I learnt by heart every single name of the streets around central Brixton. As Benjamin said 'only he who walks the road on foot learns of the power it commands' (Benjamin 1979:50). At the same time, I tend to believe that this extensive walking was in a way liberating. In a sense, it made me realise that although my 'whiteness' might be a readable sign in Brixton, I could immediately demolish this sign that I did not believe in anyway. In effect, through the coming weeks, I became more confident and began approaching local people. As a result, the majority of them responded positively and within the period of a few months I had completed my 'native' Brixton research.

For the case of Brick Lane, I made different choices. As my Brixton study had focused on aspects of residential gentrification, I decided that my research in Brick Lane should alternatively investigate 'commercial' or 'business' forms and manifestations of similar processes. Nevertheless, this specific choice was informed by the contemporary state of local regeneration. For instance, a local Brewery had recently been transformed into one of London's most important 'creative hubs'. Following these lines, a number of internet design companies, web providers, digital business and all 'other' forms of 'creative' capitalism had located within this local redeveloped site. In effect, a new digital 'Brick Lane' had emerged that in a way was a microcosm in itself. This new Brick Lane was mostly comprised by 'creative' professionals, digital entrepreneurs, web designers, artists etc. who inhabited the area partly attracted by the 'spectacle' of metropolitan, locally accumulated difference. In a similar fashion, through concepts like the 'Bangla-Town' or the annual 'Mela', Brick Lane had also been transformed into a well-staged exotica able to accommodate and entertain this new 'clientele'.

Following these lines, I decided that my third group of informants should be comprised of local 'creative' professionals. These were the people that inhabited the redeveloped spaces of the 'new' Brick Lane. The majority of them were young professionals who were involved with digitized forms of 'creative' capitalism. Their professions ranged from web designers, to digital artists and entrepreneurs, image-makers, advertisers, music producers among others and all other forms of digitized

capitalism that put East London on the 'creative' map of the capital.

In order to proceed with my fieldwork, I had to find a way to approach these local 'creative' professionals. Within the yard of the local redeveloped brewery, a well-known bar had just put out some tables and benches for its customers. Most of the people, who used to work at the Brewery, would come out to the yard, to have lunch, take a break or just have a quick cigarette. In effect, it appeared to me that there might not be a more suitable place than this to conduct my interviews. Accordingly, this small well-protected, gated yard became my 'home' for the next few months. As far as I remember, I would go there daily, usually around lunch time and I would leave only after I had completed a few interviews. In a way, what seemed amazing about this place, was the fact that although through the iron-fence you could 'see' and observe all the multiple differences or 'cultures' of Brick lane, at the same time, it made you feel totally protected within your small 'creative' bubble. As a result, it occurred to me that a strange theatre of difference might be taking place locally.

Last but not least, I decided that the local 'ethnic' business community would comprise the fourth group of my informants. In some sense, contemporary Brick Lane has transformed into a thriving 'curry' lane, which caters for the 'Indian' gastronomic tastes of the capital. However, at the very top of Brick Lane, along Bethnal Green Road, one can still see a contracting, but still significant, wholesale and retail leather industry. In short, these two local industries appeared to dominate the lane. Accordingly, I made my mind up that individuals involved within these local forms of 'ethnic' capitalism would comprise my last group of interviewees. These were the people that through the workings of capitalism and commerce came into touch with the 'new', 'creative' people of Brick Lane.

The particular way that I went on to conduct this research was very similar to my previous patterns. Following these lines, I would enter into these 'ethnic' restaurants and shops and after explaining my research interests I would ask for an interview. Through the actual doing of this fieldwork, it became clear that the local leather industry was a diversified one, with most of the owners and employees coming from an Indian, Pakistani and to a lesser extent Bangladeshi background.

On the contrary, the 'Indian' restaurant business and its workforce was almost exclusively Bangladeshi. At the same time, I started to get an impression that a mainly Bangladeshi, related to the 'Indian' restaurants, entrepreneurial 'ethnic' new middle-class had emerged, which could render simplistic any notion of solid, classless British 'ethnic' communities. In this sense, British-Bangladeshis started to appear to me as differentiated within their 'community', along 'class' or 'income' lines, as much as the rest of society.

Before I move any further, I would like to reflect on the possibility that my male 'gender', in a similar fashion to my 'whiteness', might have influenced this particular piece of research. Generally speaking, it has been argued that the ethnographer's 'gender' is an affecting factor within research (Back 1996: 24). In what follows, I expose the ways that being 'male' might have contributed to the production of this specific local ethnography. To start with, through my multiple encounters with the 'ethnic' local business community, I came to realise that Brick Lane's 'ethnic' industries were almost exclusively, male-dominated. Under these lights, there is the possibility that if I had not being a 'male' researcher this research might have not been carried out. In effect, I tend to believe, that my own gender, especially in ways of forming a general sense of 'male' bonding with my informants, might have persuaded the 'gatekeepers' (Walsh 1998:224) of these 'ethnic' industries to provide me access to their 'private' settings.

Through this local ethnography, I only managed to include one female informant. This local instance occurred within a local travel agency while interviewing her employer. At some point within the interview, I asked her opinion on the matter. However, this young British-Bangladeshi woman looked uncomfortable with that. Nevertheless, she hesitantly expressed her opinion. At the end of the interview, I offered her my hand for a handshake and she looked embarrassed. I could not help but leave the place with a feeling of disappointment about my own unawareness in relation to the workings of my gender, within different cultural settings.

2.7.2 Ethnographic sensibilities.

Last but not least, I would like to reflect on the very 'partial' nature of my own ethnographic 'truths' (Clifford 1986:7). As mentioned above, within every single interviewing process there is always an element of interaction. In short, interviews appear to take place within an inter-subjective arena. Accordingly, what my informants told me, their specific accounts and personal stories, were partly influenced by the inter-subjective workings of my own existence. As Hollway & Jefferson (1997), in relation to eliciting narratives out of in-depth interviews, have argued:

'an interviewee's associations [personal stories] are always a contingent product of both the setting- a notion including the expectations generated in setting up the interview and the introduction of topics- and the power dynamics this constitutes. At the most obvious level, there is the perennial issue of the sex, age, race, and class of both parties, and how these are read by the interviewee, both consciously and unconsciously' (Hollway & Jefferson 1997:68).

Concurrently, I have to acknowledge the significant influence of my own 'whiteness', gender, corporeal habitus etc. that have inevitably affected the stories and narratives of my informants. In short, to interview is to enter into another person's world. Nevertheless by doing this, by entering her/his world, you inevitably influence their narrated accounts.

The aims and objectives of this research were, in a way, much broader than just eliciting personal narratives. Accordingly, my ultimate priority was to move from a strictly personal to a collective level. In short, to try and retrieve, from the plethora of multiple individual narratives, any collective ones, which could be capable of describing these metropolitan spaces of difference. To put it differently, the ultimate objective of this doctoral thesis could be described as to reflect on the 'social', by firstly focusing, on the personal. As Chase (1995), says:

'If we take seriously the idea that people make sense of experience and communicate through narration, then in-depth interviews should become occasions

in which we ask for life stories...Furthermore, taking narrative seriously has consequences for how we use those life stories to pursue our sociological interests...understanding general social processes requires a focus on their embodiment in actual practices, that is, in actual narratives...The significant point here is that the general is not fully evident to us in advance; we know the general fully only through its embodiments [personal narratives]'(Chase 1995:2-20).

Nevertheless, I would like to highlight the very limitations of any form of constructed 'social' meta-narrative; the very limitations of ethnography to describe accurately the 'social'. Consequently, in order for this thesis to acquire a shape, to become a story in itself, a concrete sociological meta-narrative had to be constructed. A process of 'editing' of all these multiple personal accounts into an all embracing, meta-narrative was required. Nevertheless, this 'edited', constructed, sociological meta-narrative that eventually became the thesis itself, appears to have, its fair share, of its own constraints and drawbacks.

Firstly, there was not enough space within my own sociological meta-narrative to accommodate all this plethora of extracted 'narrative patterns', all this multiplicity of individual accounts. As a result, a number of 'voices' did not eventually find their way into this narrative study. A number of 'voices' were not really heard. Following these lines, this process of selecting 'voices' felt very similar to processes of film or video editing. Out of the various personal narratives and accounts at my disposal, I had to select and edit the ones that would convey a story line. At a very simple level of analysis, this story line became my doctoral thesis. In a way, I presumed that by following these 'editing' lines, I would explore a significant part of contemporary London's 'multicultural' spirit. I would be able to reveal different discourses in relation to these contemporary 'contact zones'.

Nevertheless, through the passage of time, I realised that it was not exactly my intention to construct a 'solid', analytical meta-narrative. As Les Back (1996) says: 'Although I offer my reflections on those events by way of guiding the reader through an analysis, it is equally my aim to provide enough material- albeit in an edited and managed form-to open up possibilities for other interpretations'(Back 1996:26).

Following these lines of thinking, I decided that apart from these locally shared collective 'discourses' or 'narrative patterns', I would also attempt to give voice, to other individual narratives simply because of their human and inspiring way of living a meaningful urban life. Accordingly, I commonly tend to bring to the fore individual narratives that can function as a critique of shared local narratives, mental constructions and attitudes. In this way, I believe that any research findings become more balanced and more open-ended. For instance, where shared 'narrative patterns' may not really seem encouraging, local individual narratives of living and constructing a meaningful urban life can come to the fore and substitute for this loss of inspiration. In short, where local collective discourses on 'multiculturalism' might fail, individual multicultural visions can emerge to provide us with stimulation and guidance. For instance, in cases where the reader might not feel satisfied with my own constructed meta-narrative, she/he can alternatively turn her/his attention to individual personal narratives and escape the writer's structuralist mode.

At the same time, it should be said that as the writer of this doctoral thesis, I am not sure any more about the levels of 'openness' involved within my own analysis. In a way, this is partly due to the fact of a process of extreme familiarization through the writing of this thesis, which does not permit me anymore to judge or even evaluate it. In a sense, what I am trying to say then, is that I am too close to my own writing to be able to 'see' it clearly. In effect any levels of structuralism or post-structuralism involved within the writing of this thesis can not be properly diagnosed. Nevertheless, I invite the reader to read through the lines of my analysis and subsequently make her/his constructive points. As Josselson (1995), again says: 'Meaning is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of her or his life as lived and by the explicit linkages the researcher makes between his understanding and interpretation, which is meaning constructed at another level of analysis. The empathic stance, orients us as researchers to other people's experience and meaning-making, which is communicated to us through narrative. To understand another within the empathic stance means being able to understand their stories' (Josselson 1995:12).

Last but not least, I hope that I have been receptive enough and have done my best to understand my informants' stories. However, this is my own interpretation, which is meaning construction at another level. Therefore, my analysis should not be perceived or taken as manifesting an objective 'truth' or reality. This is my own narrative, and as such, clearly carries its own limitations. Nevertheless, I invite the reader to create meaning at a third level, to be critical, but at the same time, open enough to understand my own sociological story.

Excavating the officially deployed languages²⁶ of representation of Brixton and Brick Lane.

‘But how they do it?’ Chamcha wanted to know.

‘They describe us’ the other whispered solemnly ‘That’s all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct.’

Salman Rusdie, ‘The Satanic Verses’ (1988:168).

3.1 Representation and the city.

‘The City then, is above all a representation’ James Donald (1992:427).

In writing about contemporary cities the recent years have witnessed the proliferation of a literature that focuses on issues of representation (Bianchini & Schwengel 1991:212, Paddison 1992:341, Duncan 1993:39, Duncan J. & Duncan N. (1998), King 1996:2-5). According to this literature, cities, or their constitutive parts, at different points in time, become the objects of shifting representations. In this sense, representation and contemporary urban conditions appear as inextricably linked. Following these lines, as Sharon Zukin (1992:224) has brilliantly suggested, by drawing an analogy between landscape painting and the urban environment, what particularly seems to matter, is the specific viewpoint from which one chooses to ‘see’ her/his surroundings. Most importantly, this particular angle of ‘seeing’ becomes embedded within the representation (visual or other); it transforms into the very representation itself. Following these lines of thinking, urban landscapes become constantly constructed and reconstructed through multiple shifting ‘discourses’. Under these lights, one is led to consider that cities are essentially

²⁶ As mentioned earlier, according to Tonkiss (1998) within discourse analysis ‘language is viewed as the topic of research’ (Tonkiss 1998:247). Following these lines, one could go as far as to argue that specific constructions of language appear to constitute discourses. In this sense, discourse and language become presented as inter-exchangeable concepts. Accordingly, languages of

'discursive' in nature. In a similar fashion to this, Sharon Zukin (1995) has suggested that 'ideologies structure and continue to structure, the ongoing production of space' (Zukin 1995:293). In short, the way we 'see' and talk about cities might be more important, in some ways, than the actual 'bricks and mortar'.

In what follows, I investigate the discursive construction of space. I examine a multiplicity of past and present discursive constructions in relation to the spaces of Brixton and Brick Lane. To put it differently, I shed some light on the ways that these spaces become discursively constructed for intervention. Nevertheless, this particular excavation is more than just a simple discursive interrogation of inner-city space. From as early as the late 1970s, Stuart Hall (1978a) suggested that specific inner-city areas, with high levels of 'black' concentration appeared to breed a specific discursive correlation between 'crime', inner-city space and 'race'. As he argued, 'black crime becomes the signifier of the crisis in the urban colonies' (Hall 1978a:339). Following these lines, a number of writers suggested a similar 'discursive traffic' (Stallybrass & White 1986:195) unfolding between 'race, crime and the ghetto' (Solomos 1993:132). As John Solomos (1993) proclaimed 'the definition of criminal areas in everyday police practices...gained a clear racial dimension' (ibid 1993:132).

In a sense, these were the first intellectual attempts to expose any existing discursive correlations between 'inner-city' space and 'race' within the domain of political and media discourses of the era; these were one of the first analytical efforts that manifested that the way we 'talk' about 'race' becomes the way that we 'talk' about the spaces of 'race' as well. Nevertheless, as Back & Solomos (1996) have argued 'race' does not appear to constitute 'a fixed transhistorical category whose meaning is the same.' (Back & Solomos 1996:27) Alternatively, they propose a contextualised reading of 'race' within particular discursive constructions and specific sets of social conditions 'found within that context' (ibid 1996:28). In a similar fashion, Stuart Hall (2000) again, appears to have altered his earlier position that 'black' crime comprised the most potent signifier of the 1970s crisis within areas of 'black' settlement to a new theoretical stand that argues that

representation of Brixton and Brick Lane appear to stand for relevant discourses about these places.

British contemporary multicultural communities appear to constitute 'the most advanced signifiers of urban postmodern metropolitan experience' (Hall 2000:221). However, through such theoretical transpositions, the contingent discursive nature of inner-city space and 'race' becomes fully exposed. To put it differently, 'discursive traffics' between 'race' and space appear to change significantly through time.

Following these lines, Brixton and Brick Lane have been habitually associated with meanings related to 'race' and crime. At the same time, the nail-bombing attacks of 1999 clearly manifested that both areas comprised the true 'hot spots' of British multiculturalism within a sickly 'racist' imagination. In effect, if 'urban space' is said to constitute a 'sign'²⁷ in itself, and 'race' and 'difference' another²⁸, then one can loosely argue that the 'spatialities' of Brixton and Brick Lane, might comprise one of the most explicit instances where the two 'signs' come together. In this sense, Brixton and Brick Lane could stand for a new metropolitan 'sign' of 'space and race'. Accordingly, the discursive meaning of the first becomes substituted by meanings attached to the latter. To put it differently, 'space' becomes subdued to 'race' and 'difference'.

As mentioned above, the particular task of this chapter is to examine the discursive construction of space. To put it differently, this chapter attempts to expose the ways that Brixton and Brick Lane have been successively constructed through different, subsequent political imaginings. Under these lights, this particular discursive excavation appears to constitute a form of 'archaeology'. According to Foucault (1991), any form of archaeology comprises fundamentally the description of an 'archive' (see McHowl & Grace 1993, Burn 1995, Gill (1996), Kendall & Wisam 1999). It investigates 'the limits and forms of the sayable' (Foucault 1991:59). Accordingly, the main question that arises is where do I put my emphasis within this 'archive'; why specific reports and documents come into the fore and not others? To put it differently, how do I justify this inevitable process of selection within this 'race' and difference archive?

²⁷ For a conceptualisation of 'space' as sign see M.Keith (1991b:187-191).

²⁸ Again for an analytical approach to 'race' as a 'sign' have a look at Hall (1996a) and Gilroy (2000:48).

As I shall argue, this selected archive is constructed with a historical sensibility in mind; it corresponds and relates to particular 'moments' of British multiculturalism. More importantly, these particular 'moments' stand for successive eras of the history of 'race' and difference in this country. Under these lights, these eras, crystallized through particular 'moments' can provide valuable insights or even recreate successive 'structures of feeling' in conjunction with difference in an ever-changing Britain. In effect, as the author of this chapter tends to believe, the selection of this archive carries a historical resonance; it reflects on the histories of political dealings with 'race' and difference over a period of more than thirty years. Before I move any further, I should try to justify this threefold periodization of time that structures this chapter. I have to explain why I selected these three particular moments and subsequently tried to exemplify them. As I shall argue, these particular moments are important because they stretch the limits and forms of the 'sayable' in relation to 'race' and difference in Britain. Accordingly, within these particular moments different and often contradictory speech acts gain authority and break into the fore. The limits and forms of the sayable become clearly transgressed. Following these lines, within each of these three different multicultural moments, 'race' and difference become verbalised and expressed in almost contradictory lights. Each new form of the sayable comes to substitute the previous one, while each time extending, the limits of 'racial' talk. Following these lines, my three selected multicultural moments are the following: a moment of 'racial' pathology, where 'race' is viewed as a special problem of space or in space. Secondly, a transitory moment of reflection, where 'race' starts to be seen through the angle of cultural differences. Thirdly, a celebratory moment where cultural differences become viewed as assets and celebratory forms of multiculturalism enter the picture. At the same time, these moments correspond to different historical periods. The first multicultural moment appears to unfold during the 1970s and early 1980s, the second one, takes place during the 1980s, whilst the last one, emerges within the mid 1990s and continues until our days. In what follows, I move constantly from a past to a present, in order to discover new discourses that successively have attempted to describe and 'frame' these

metropolitan spaces of difference. In short, this particular discursive journey appears to pass through the most important 'moments' of local urban representation; it attempts to deconstruct and analyse these 'moments' that stand for successive spatialised-'racialised' discourses.

3.2 The 'multiracial' as a problem in space and the deployment of a language of 'race'.

'My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recoloured, clad in mourning on that white day' Fanon (1986:113).

The first 'moment' of British multiculturalism that I attempted to exemplify and subsequently deconstruct extends from the early 1970s to the early 1980s. This was the period where the metropolitan spaces of 'race' and difference became pathologised to an unprecedented extent; this was the era of 'racialisation' (Smith 1993:133) or epidermalization of the spaces of 'race' (Keith 1995:367); the era where 'race' connoted 'crime' and 'chaos' within former political imaginations.

From the early 1970s onwards, a political debate got greater prominence in Britain, which emphasised alleged relationships between 'race' and the declining status of inner-cities. This mainstream political debate of the era suggested that high-levels of 'racial' or 'ethnic' concentration in specific 'decaying' parts of British cities²⁹, these unfolding processes of segregation of the 'racial' (Smith 1993:129), or in other words, this initial formation of the urban postcolonial body in metropolitan space, appeared to lead to highly problematic socio-spatial situations. Following these lines, spatially accumulated 'race' did not appear to be seen as the 'victim' of an already declining, prior to the migrant populations arrival, inner-city space, but instead, was alternatively conceived as the main source and reason for inner-city deterioration (Runnymede & RGS 1980:86). In effect, within the sphere of British

²⁹ For a discussion on ethnic or racial segregation see Western (1981), Peach, Vaughan & Smith (1981), Rex (1981), Lee (1997).

politics, 'race' was solely blamed for the ills and evils of the 'inner-city' (Smith 1993:133). Through this 'discursive traffic' (Stallybrass & White 1996: 195), 'inner-city' and 'race' became and remained mutually implicated within the sphere of media and politics.

From as early as the early 1970s, media and press reports in this country became almost obsessed with narratives related to alleged high-levels of 'black' criminality (Benson 1981:35, Gutzmore 1983:18, Brigdes & Fakete 1985:46, Gilroy 1987:109). Broadly speaking, this was the very beginning of a specific era of this country, where sections of 'black youth' became overtly represented as criminal elements, leading lawless lives. Following these lines, these unfolding processes of criminalization of 'black' masculinity eventually led to a structuralist reading of 'black youth' as 'the enemy within' the midst of the British State (Solomos, Findlay, Jones & Gilroy 1982:21). From this angle, inner-city areas with high-levels of West Indian 'ethnic' concentration became habitually constructed as lawless urban lands; they became presented as parts of an 'urban jungle' (Bridges & Fakete 1985:58) that demanded a qualitatively different kind of policing (Bridges 1983:32, Jefferson 1991:186-87, Keith 1991a, 1991b:202). As Stuart Hall (1978b) has argued:

'The colony areas [areas of 'black' settlement] are the incipient basis for an increasingly restless and alienated population. This is where the crisis bites. Practically, these areas have to be policed with increasing strictness. But, also the crisis has to be explained. Ideologically it has to be dealt with, constrained and managed. Blacks become the bearers, the signifiers, of the crisis in British society in the 70s'(Hall 1987b:31).

My aim here is not to embark into a general examination of these specific historical correlations between 'race', and its place of residence, the inner-city; I do not intend to proceed into a detailed investigation of this particular historic multicultural 'moment'. Other writers appear to have done this for me. Alternatively, what I attempt to do here, is the following. Firstly, by mainly focusing on John Solomos (1988, 1993) work, I attempt to draw the broader picture of an intense 'discursive traffic' between 'race', inner-city and crime, whilst secondly, for the case of

Brixton, I seek to exemplify the local uses of this particular discursive correlation. In this sense, Solomos' (1993) 'racial' periodization becomes accepted as a guide, whilst, my task simply comprises of locally exemplifying these points.

John Solomos (1993) has overtly acknowledged that 'no account of the politics of race in contemporary Britain can ignore the role that policing has played about racial issues since the early 1970s' (ibid 1993:120). Following on from this, he suggests that these unfolding processes of the 'racialization of policing' (ibid 1993:120) were firstly related to alleged high-levels of 'black' crime, whilst latter on, issues of 'law and order' appeared to enter the picture. In this sense, 'The imagery of black involvement in criminal activities and in public order offences helped to fuel and to give a new direction to the increasingly volatile public debate about 'race relations' (Solomos 1988:92). Nevertheless, through these intense processes of criminalization of 'race' a 'convergence of concerns about race, crime and the ghetto areas' (ibid 1993:132) increasingly took place from the 1970s onwards. Following these lines, specific types of crime became inextricably linked to specific sections of the 'black' population and specific parts of the city (Hall 1978a: 329, Solomos 1993:132). In short, inner-city areas with high-levels of 'black' concentration became habitually presented as 'problems' in space. These were the spaces to be avoided at any cost. Most importantly, these processes of criminalization of 'race' eventually led to a specific construction and articulation of a language of difference that equated 'race' with crime (Keith 1993:193). In this sense, 'race' became the prime metaphor for one to 'read' the city (Keith & Cross 1993:9).

After schematically drawing the broader picture of a 'race', inner-city related criminalising discourse, I shall trace down the uses of this specific discursive construction for the case of Brixton. To start with, in 1977 the Department of the Environment published the final draft of 'Lambeth Inner Area study',³⁰ (DoE 1977). In more detail, the 'Inner Area Studies' project was an action research series, which examined particular inner-city areas of Birmingham, Lambeth and Liverpool. More

³⁰ This particular study formed part of the 'Six Town Studies' that the DoE launched in 1972. The first three studies were coined as 'Urban Guidelines Studies', whilst the rest that followed were named after as 'Inner Area Studies'.

specifically, the 'Lambeth Inner Area Study' took place between December 1972 and the summer of 1976. What was particularly interesting about Lambeth and more specifically the Stockwell area (broader Brixton area), was that it was chosen as a 'test bed' for inner city London deprivation (DoE 1976:2, DoE 1977:5). The area seemed to possess all the 'classic symptoms of inner-city decline' (DoE 1976:3). Most fundamentally, the DoE went as far as to acknowledge 'race' as one of the main issues and 'key questions' of the inner-city³¹ (DoE 1976:25).

Generally speaking, the 'Lambeth Inner Area Study' suggested the deployment of voluntarily 'policies of dispersal' and 'ethnic balance' as a way out of local 'hazardous' situations (DoE 1977:203). Following these lines of thinking, the research team stated that: 'we would expect that increasingly members of the West Indians and other ethnic minorities will seek to move to the suburbs and beyond, and we see our policy of balanced dispersal as enlarging the opportunities for them to do so along with other inner-city residents. If this happens, the general effect will be to bring about greater balance, this time in ethnic terms, throughout the metropolitan region as a whole' (DoE 1977:206, 215).

In relation to the above statement, one could argue that the 'Lambeth Inner Area Study' (1977) represented West Indian or other 'ethnic' minorities' patterns of concentration as highly 'problematic' in nature. Following these lines, the local multicultural community becomes presented as a problem in space. Most explicitly, through a voluntary implementation of dispersal policies, a cherished 'ethnic' balance could supposedly emerge within the metropolis. In this sense, the 'ethnic' becomes conceived as a problem so that its further dilution in space becomes an imperative.

After exposing this generic depiction of 'ethnic' Brixton as a problem in space, I shall move further into investigating the existence of any local 'discursive traffics' between 'race' and crime. More particularly, I examine local 'multiracial'

³¹ At this particular point, it should be noted that governmental policies of urban regeneration and similar debates of the era habitually suppressed the importance of 'race' within their proposals. For instance, the 1976-77 Home Affairs report with the title 'The West Indian Community' was keen to suggest that the Urban Programme was 'lacking any attempt to evaluate the special racial dimension of urban deprivation, its causes and effects, and the remedial effort required to mitigate it'(Home Affairs Committee 1976-77:xxvi).

narratives, which emerged during the Public Hearings of Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders³². In a broad sense, the most 'dominant'³³ narratives of this Inquiry were local criminalising narratives from part of Lambeth and Metropolitan Police Force. These were the ones that closely corresponded with popular media representations and dominant political discourses of the era.

To begin with, Chief Superintendent Jeremy John Plowman, the man responsible for the implementation of the 'Operation Swamp 81', argued the following:

'On my arrival back to Brixton ten years later [he served there

³² Generally speaking, from the mid to late 1970s on, Brixton became the subject of intensive, paramilitary style policing. In 1978, Commander Adams of the L district ordered the deployment of the Special Patrol Group in order to deal with what was then considered as accelerating levels of criminal activities. In response, one hundred and twenty police officers were brought into Lambeth that stayed for over a month making 'stop and searches' operations in the streets of Brixton. The Special Patrol Group was again brought into Lambeth during November 1979 and July 1980. As it is widely acknowledged by now, these special, paramilitary-style, police operations had the discriminatory tendency to mostly 'stop and search' 'black' individuals (Phillips 1978:65). Apart from these methods, the local police force had also in its disposal the implementation of the 'Sus' law. According to the legal powers of this particular law, the police could arrest 'any suspected person loitering with the intent to commit an arrestable offense' (Home Affairs Committee 1979-80:v). The All-Lambeth Anti-Racist Movement, went so far as to openly accuse the Metropolitan Police Force for enforcing 'Sus' locally in a 'blatantly racist fashion' (Alarm 1979:7). Broadly speaking, it can be argued with certainty that local sentiments of resentment against the police started to accumulate and build-up from the mid to late 1970s onwards (for causes of urban unrest see Benyon & Solomos (1986)). In April 1981, whilst in the midst of another special police exercise, operation 'Swamp 81', an inciting incident involving a 'black' mini-cab driver and two 'white' police officers along Coldharbour Lane, was enough to spark local tension and develop into broad-scale disorders. As Lord Scarman acknowledged at the end of the inquiry, these disturbances, 'were not a race-riot...the riots were essentially an outburst of anger and resentment by young people against the police' (Lord Scarman 1981:45).

³³ On the other hand, in sharp contrast to these 'hegemonic' narratives of alleged Brixton criminality, there seemed to be other 'voices' that represented Brixton in a peaceful 'harmonious' multiracial light. For instance, Mr. Knight, the then leader of the local Council, represented Brixton in the following words: 'Race relations in Brixton are very good indeed; in other words, we have a multiracial society and I think that the majority of people in Brixton and Lambeth are working towards making that an accepted method of life in Britain; in other words a multiracial society.' (Public Record Office HO 266/8:57). In a similar fashion, Mr. Hill, the Melting Pot, Brixton Neighbourhood Community Association and Domino Club representative, argued: Mr. Hill 'Brixton, I have never lived there but it is a place that I love and sometimes it gives me great pleasure- and I apologise for being personal- to go to Brixton and stand on the sidewalk and watch people walk up and down the streets, black and white passing one another and doing their shopping. We see a great group of Rastas standing up on Railton Road having their discussion and enjoying themselves, and I white lady- who would have attracted the attention of even me in my decadent days- will walk through them without a ripple, without the passing of one remark by one person referring to the most petite little; and as one lady who gave evidence before this inquiry said ' I enjoy living in the area, living with people of other origins, learning to live' (Public Record Office HO 266/27:55).

before] I was extremely concerned to find that the level of crime, particularly in regards to crimes of violence in the streets and burglaries...had increased enormously. The aspect that concerned me most of all was what I termed 'footpad' robberies, which is really an all embracing term to include the street muggings, dippings etc. What concerned me most of all was that this type of crime had increased tremendously...The other aspect that concerned me was the increase in violence of these crimes' (Public Hearings HO 266/4:53).

By all accounts, the Metropolitan Police Force appeared to share this particular reading of Brixton's criminality. In his written submission to the inquiry, the then Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Force described Brixton under the following lights:

'Brixton is unique in terms of its violent street crime and the fear it generates. It also has the same problem of crime as elsewhere but to greater degree'(Public Hearings HO 266/44:2).

Later on, within his cross-examination, Chief Superintendent Plowman identifies the proprietors of local 'footpad' crime:

'there is a vast majority of people that commit footpad robberies who are black youths, so therefore, we somehow have to try and find out which ones of those are the ones committing crimes and which are not' (Public Hearings, HO 266/4:96).

Generally, this police criminalising repertoire reaches full-circle by associating local alleged high-levels of 'black' crime with the possibility of triggering a backlash from part of the 'white' community. In this sense, local alleged 'black' criminality could be considered as critical for the future of 'racial' harmony. In

what follows, Commander Adams of the L District gives his personal account on the matter:

'I am sorry if I have to emphasise that particular aspect, but the incidence of robbery and violent theft- street crime, footpad crime- in Lambeth was the highest in any district in London. It is quite clear to me that the involvement of black youths in that crime was very high and disproportionate to the black community. There are inherent dangers in that situation if continued and continuing. There are inherent dangers for the possibility of strife between the white and the black community' (Public Hearings HO 266/11:2).

To sum up, for the case of Brixton, all through the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the official 'language' of describing and representing locally accumulated postcolonial difference, was the language of criminalised 'race'. Most specifically, local conditions of urban diversity were primarily defined by the deployment of the term 'multiracial'. By all accounts, 'multiracial' communities of the time were primarily conceived as unnecessary urban developments that were quickly transforming the cultural-landscape of British cities. Nevertheless, for the case of Brixton, these high-levels of 'ethnic', or more precisely West Indian concentration appeared to result in generating 'special problems'. The most important of all, an alleged correlation between local 'black youth' and street crime.

Following these lines, Brixton and other urban 'multiracial' communities of the time became the subjects of on-going processes of criminalisation. In effect, many of them became stigmatised. They seemed to acquire a racial 'epiderme' that was able to proceed into specific closures of meaning (Solomos 1988:118, 1993:128, Goldberg 1993, Keith 1995:367). By this I mean the specific historical construction of the multiracial inner-city as a place where crime, chaos and anarchy reign. The specific construction of an 'epiderme' for parts of the contemporary metropolis where patterns of ethnic and racial segregation became translated and led to very

specific urban perceptions, narratives and accounts. In broad terms, by the term 'epidermalisation' I refer to the cognitive separation of the contemporary metropolis between colour-lines, where 'black' and 'white' signify differently and produce the well saturated racial urban phenomenology that all of us have experienced and some of us, consciously or unconsciously, reproduce.

In short, this era constitutes the dawn of a period where Brixton becomes 're-coloured' through a powerful correlation between 'race' and crime; this is the period that becomes 'seen' as a problem in space.

3.3 The multiculturalism of the 1980s: from 'race' to cultural differences.

As it has been widely acknowledged by a number of writers (Hesse 2000:16, Hall 2000:209) British 'multicultural' debates and policies should not be perceived as a straightforward journey. Instead, they should be better understood as 'a series' of discontinuous moments or 'transruptions' (Hesse 2000:17). In what follows, I attempt to shed some light on the second multicultural 'moment' of this discursive journey; this was the 'moment', where after the eruption of 'race' disorders of 1981, political imaginings of 'race' became more reflective and contemplative. Under these new lights, the emphasis appeared to shift from processes of criminalization of 'race' to a transitory reflective moment about the state of being, future and potentials of cultural differences within Britain. In this sense, cultural differences instead of 'race' become the objects of political imaginings of the 1980s. Following these lines, I examine, firstly, the 1980-1, Home Affairs Committee Report with the title 'Racial Disadvantage'. Secondly, I shift my focus into another Home Affairs Committee Report (1986-87) with the title 'Bangladeshis in Britain'. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this particular report puts significant emphasis on the Tower Hamlets area. More specifically, it focuses on the western part of the Borough, which overlaps with the broader Brick Lane area. But let us examine in detail these new political imaginings of race and difference.

In broad terms, the 1980-81 Home Affairs Committee report on 'Racial

Disadvantage' conceptually breaks with a long tradition in British politics to interrelate 'ethnic minority' populations with inner-city decline. Instead, this report argues that 'ethnic minority' populations might not be necessarily responsible for the decaying status of British inner-cities, but alternatively, their very concentration and settlement in these dilapidated urban spaces might form a significant part of their 'racial disadvantage'. Accordingly, the emphasis shifts, from the previously thought as 'problematic', high-levels of 'ethnic concentration', to poor conditions of living and lack of opportunity for 'ethnic minorities' within decaying inner-city spaces.

Following these lines, the Committee goes so far as to acknowledge that:

'The concentration of ethnic minorities has been thought by some to be a problem, but it is not the mere fact that they are concentrated in some areas, which is important in the context of racial disadvantage, but also the fact that many of the disadvantages that they experience also tend to concentrate in areas where they live' (Home Affairs Committee 1980-81:298).

In effect, for the first time in British politics, the 'ills' and 'evils' of inner-cities, can not be directly attributed anymore to postwar Commonwealth migration, but alternatively, ways and solutions have to be found to elevate these inner-city based migrant populations from their partly, spatially resulting, drawbacks and strains.

At the same time with this acknowledgement, the report aspires to contribute to debates on migration, cultural differences and identity. In short, the Committee explicitly argues that:

'Both Asian and West Indian children may be in trouble by having a double identity...Associated with this shifting and insecure personal identity is a conflict between the outlooks, habits and behaviour expected by the family, by authority at school and by white and minority peer groups'(ibid 1980-81:xiii).

Under these lights, cultural differences appear to substitute for 'race'. They become constructed as one of the main sources of racial disadvantage. From this perspective, the Committee depicts Asian and 'black' children, born in this country, as trapped 'in-between'³⁴ cultures; they become presented as dysfunctional by not

³⁴ I would like to argue that this particular 'in-betweenness' of the British multicultural discourse of

being capable of reconciling or culturally negotiating their distinct cultures within themselves. They become depicted as being torn apart between opposing cultural affiliations. Following these lines, the fundamental pre-assumption of the Committee appears to argue that each person can strictly correspond only to one culture. In this sense, as Britain appears as having its own culture³⁵, differences should be willingly unloaded or better disembodied at the point of entrance to the host society.

After a few years of the publication of the 'Racial Disadvantage' (1980-81) report, another Home Affairs Committee was assigned with the task to explore the specific dimensions and problems of 'Bangladeshis in Britain' (1986-87).

Before I move any further into a detailed analysis of this report, it should be said that 'Bangladeshis in Britain', was written by educated British-Bangladeshis living in this country. In this sense, the report breaks with a long tradition of Home Affairs Committees, although exclusively comprised by 'native' British subjects, to habitually reflect upon the grievances, disadvantages, problems etc. of UK based 'ethnic' others. Following these lines, the authors of this report come from the same 'ethnic' group as their investigating subjects. In effect, it could be considered as an attempt of narration upon the existence and material conditions of a collective 'ethnic' self from members of the same 'ethnicity'.

From the very first pages of this report, Bangladeshi communities across Britain become presented as the most disadvantaged 'ethnic minority' groups in the country (Home Affairs Committee vol.1 1986-87:iv). Additionally, the Committee goes on to represent the Bangladeshi settlement in Tower Hamlets, as the 'heart' of Bangladeshi communities across Britain. By all accounts, Tower Hamlets is viewed as a 'unique' case:

'As for the distribution of Bangladeshis within Britain, the main features are the heavy concentration in Tower Hamlets...Bangladeshi settlement tends to be

the era is diametrically opposed to Homi Bhabhas'(1994:212) synergetic notion of being 'in-between' cultures. In short, the first position appears to advocate separation and division, while the second one, is all about synergy and interconnection.

³⁵ I would like to argue that in many 'racist' discursive constructions of the 1980s, where culture appears to play a pre-eminent role, British society becomes presented as sharing one 'culture'. In this sense, a British 'way of life' can be clearly juxtaposed to other 'alien' ways of being.

localised within local authority areas, as for example in the western part of Tower Hamlets...no other authority has anything like so high a proportion of Bangladeshis among its total population' (ibid 1986-87 v.I, xi).

At the same time, the Committee narrates a different multicultural tale in relation to cultural differences. Accordingly, instead of perceiving cultural differences as an unnecessary cultural luggage that should be left at the very entrance to the British society, it goes on to preach cultural tolerance. Following these lines, for the context of local education, it is suggested that:

'Cultural differences pose several complications for schools and LEAs. They occur in respect to halal food, sex education, religious education, uniforms, single-sex schools and the observance of purdah...These are matters for individual schools and LEAs to resolve, but we emphasise the need for sensitivity and tolerance towards the different culture and cultural requirements of a minority community' (Home Affairs Committee Vol.1 1986-87:xvi).

Nevertheless, the report's cultural recommendations do not seem to stop there. Broadly speaking, it goes as far as to advocate an affirmative reading on nationally accumulated cultural differences³⁶. In very simple terms, the argument seems to suggest that British national culture appears to be comprised by a 'native'³⁷, but also, other 'ethnic' cultures that historically have settled within the UK. In this sense, it is assumed that the more 'ethnic' cultures that are added to the British national culture, the richer the latter becomes. In this sense, British national culture becomes perceived as the accumulative total of a 'native' and a diversity of 'other'

³⁶ For a critique of the ways that multicultural policies go on to reinvent the nation 'over the bodies of strangers' see S.Ahmed (2000:95-101).

³⁷ At this particular point, it should be noted that the Committee suggested that: 'in our Report on the Chinese Community in Britain we stressed the value of community centres to an isolated community. This applies also to the Bangladeshis: it is not simply that a community centre provides a suitable location for cultural, educational and social activities, but that it acts as a bridge between an ethnic minority and the wider community' (ibid vol.1 1986-87:xxiv). Accordingly, Bangladeshi ethnic concentrations across the UK become primarily presented as 'isolated islands', with their unique culture, across a sea of a British homogenous community, with its own 'native' culture. In effect, we can see the Committee's failure to acknowledge the existing diversity of people and cultures that comprise this British 'native' element. Accordingly, through this particular discursive angle, life in Britain during the late 1980s became presented as one where a native 'majority' lives side-by-side with a whole spectrum of culturally 'ethnic' others.

cultures³⁸.

Following these lines, the Committee goes on to represent young Bangladeshi children, born in this country, as the cultural bearers of two distinct cultures: a 'native' and an 'ethnic'. However, in sharp contrast to the 'Racial Disadvantage' report that tends to present British 'ethnic' subjects as divided between cultures, these 'dual' cultural subjects are not presented as being tormented between opposing cultural affiliations; as agonizingly existing 'in-between' cultures; as being torn apart within, as the result of having more than one cultural 'self'. Instead, an alternative image of existential tranquility of being 'in-between' cultures breaks into the fore. Accordingly, the 'two' cultures scenario, the multicultural existence of being in-between a 'native' and an 'ethnic' culture, is not perceived anymore as antagonising and opposing, but instead, as reconcilable and federate. But let us hear the Committee arguing its cultural case:

'As for the curriculum and the place of different cultures within it, we share the former secretary of State's view that it should be a minimum objective of education 'to educate all children and young people so that they are better prepared for adult life in an ethnically mixed Britain, in a way that it will do justice to the accumulated richness of this country's national culture, and develop respect for the cultures and beliefs of the different groups that make up our societies.' Young Bangladeshis are heirs both to the cultures of their parents and to the culture of the country they now live in; reflection of their own culture as well as the majority culture in the curriculum...can help to prevent any feeling of alienation' (ibid vol.I 1986-87:xvii).

To sum up, what I examined within this part of the chapter was the second multicultural 'moment' of this discursive journey; I reflected on political imaginings of 'race' within the 1980s. As I argued, this particular genre of political imaginings appeared to shift emphasis from 'race' pathologies to cultural differences. More specifically, I tried to connect this exploration as closely as possible with the Brick Lane area. Accordingly, I concluded that early multicultural

³⁸ However, it should be noted that such a preassumption implies that different cultures can add up and comprise a newly formed national culture (Ahmed 2000:110). Nevertheless, the problematic nature of such an argument can easily become manifested by bringing to the fore, Homi Bhabha's (1994:173) position about the 'incommensurability' of cultures.

formulations of the 1980s tended to view cultural differences and their embodied subjects as problematic in nature. However, by the end of the decade, a new multicultural tale broke into the fore. A multicultural tale, which advocated cultural tolerance and the ability of British national culture to accommodate other 'ethnic' cultures. In this sense, cultural differences appeared capable of finding their place within Britain; a new multicultural Britain, able to accommodate different differences gained discursive powers and slowly came to the fore.

3.4 Celebrating and commodifying cultural differences: The City Challenge Programme³⁹, its descendants and the rise to dominance of 'ethnic diversity' discourse.

'Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration'
Jane Jacobs (1961:462) 'The death and life of great American Cities'.

In this part of the chapter, I shall exemplify the third multicultural 'moment' of this discursive journey, which is inextricably linked, with contemporary processes of commodification of cultural or 'ethnic' differences. As I shall argue, from the late 1990s onwards, political imaginings of 'race' and difference started to 'see' the

³⁹ City Challenge was launched in 1991 by the then Secretary of the Environment, Michael Heseltine. In brief, the City Challenge Programme welcomed local authorities from devastated and deprived areas of urban England to apply and contest for funding for their social, economic and physical regeneration (see DETR (1994), DETR (1995)). In more detail, during May 1991 the then Secretary of the Environment, introduced a 'pilot competition' where seventeen local authorities, all of them coming from different parts of deprived urban England, were asked to 'take the lead' and form partnerships with other local private and voluntary organisations to bid for City Challenge resources. More specifically, these financial resources included the amount of £ 37.5m for each City Challenge programme spread over a period of five years. The invited local authorities were selected from an index of 57 urban priority areas. The results that came out of the first competition pointed out eleven from the invited local authorities gaining the City Challenge funding. As this competition was the inaugural one that opened the path to the implementation of the City Challenge Programme, these first eleven local authorities were called 'pacemakers'. In a similar manner, a second competition followed in February 1992 where all of the urban priority areas were invited to compete again for funding. Eventually twenty urban local areas were selected and consequently received the financial aid to proceed with their economic, social and physical regeneration.

potential market value of differences within a capitalist/consumerist urban multicultural context.

Following these lines, contemporary political imagination of differences moved away from earlier multicultural narratives of cultural differentiation to more recent debates that emphasise affirmatively issues of 'ethnic' diversity. In a similar fashion to this, recent years have witnessed the proliferation of urban discourses that speak about the merits and excitement of living and visiting culturally diverse cities (Zukin 1998:836). Under these new lights, cultural or 'ethnic' heterogeneity is viewed in an affirmative light. For instance, Richard M. Daley, mayor of Chicago, recently argued:

'The best cities will be as diverse as possible. The narrow ones resisting immigrants and minorities will fail. The key to a good city is diversity. People of every religious, ethnic and sexual orientation proudly call our city home. Diversity is strength' (World in 2001- Dec.2000, Economist Publications).

Before I move any further, it should be made clear that 'ethnic' diversity is not a newly found urban condition. Alternatively, one can argue that American, European and British cities have always been diverse. They seem to have attracted historically populations from all over the globe. Following these lines, one is led to consider that Western capitalist metropolises have always been places for the accumulation of differences; they have always been spaces of diversity. Accordingly, any contemporary urban diversity mantras appear to create a new representation upon long-existing urban realities. Subsequently, 'we can see clearly that what we are dealing with is a particular [new] representation of the city, an image of a culturally diverse rather than a culturally homogenous city' (Kahn 1995:108). In other words, the wars of urban representation are constantly unfolding.

In what follows, my main objective is twofold. Firstly, I explore the 'rise' to dominance of the generic 'ethnic diversity' discourse. As I shall argue, affirmative readings of diversity have started from the 'workplace'. Accordingly, I examine the 'birth' of 'managing diversity' discourse within the fields of Human Resources Management.

Secondly, a number of writers have been quick to suggest that different discourses

breed conditions of interrelations between them (Kendall & Wisham 1999:40). In this sense, 'interdiscursive dependencies' (Foucault 1991:58) between one particular discourse and other discursive constructions are common place. Following these lines, I try to exemplify any existing 'dependencies' between contemporary proliferating mantras of 'ethnic' diversity and current political imaginings of 'race' and difference in relation to Brixton and Brick Lane.

More particularly, local contemporary regeneration policies and programmes appear to 'copy' this language of diversity. Subsequently, I seek to trace and exemplify the uses of 'ethnic' diversity discourse within the domain of local urban regeneration policies⁴⁰. To put it differently, I examine the recently elevated 'status of difference' (Gilroy 1995) within Bethnal Green (Brick Lane), Brixton City Challenge and Cityside regeneration policies. As I shall argue, the City Challenge Programme and its immediate descendants have provided the most significant platforms for the proliferation of such affirmative 'ethnic diversity' discourses. More importantly, within this celebratory 'moment' of British multiculturalism cultural differences become the objects of commodification under the aegis of a political imagination that 'sees' differences through their market value and future economic potentials.

3.4.1 'Diversity' talk comes to town.

'The last half of the 20th century saw London become less old-fashioned and more cosmopolitan...The diversity and skills of these groups have helped make London the vibrant and world city it is today'

Museum of London 2000.

Under the lights of popular contemporary discourses that view differences in an affirmative way, former multicultural narratives disguise themselves and are

⁴⁰ For a discussion on British urban regeneration policy see Keith & Rogers (1991), Bailey & Robertson (1997).

transformed into a story, which strongly advocates the advantages and merits of 'ethnic diversity'. While earlier multicultural narratives went so far as to acknowledge the existence of differences and mainly preached cultural or 'ethnic' tolerance', contemporary diversity discourses go much further and promote an affirmative representation of differences. The main reason behind such a current proliferation of the language of 'ethnic' diversity around the globe, but more specifically within the discursive domains of Western advanced capitalist liberal democracies, is related to the current intensification of processes of economic globalisation. According to many writers, globalisation is the new 'mantra of our times' (Rangan & Lawrence 1991:1).

Earlier theoretical formulations of phenomena of economic globalisation tended to view the processes, as leading to a global condition of uniformity. Following these lines, it was argued that the world, under the aegis of the U.S.A, was becoming, very rapidly, 'westernised'. Most fundamentally, it was suggested that processes of economic globalisation would eliminate any existing variety of differences, specificities and particularities that historically had developed all around the globe. In short, always according to this 'Western Homogenization theory' (Perlmutter 1991:907) the whole world was transformed into one big, undifferentiated place.

Alternatively, through the passage of time, phenomena of economic globalisation started to become perceived as essentially 'working through' regional differences and cultural particularities (Cope & Kalantzis 1997:23). Broadly speaking, this new conceptualisation of processes of economic globalization strongly emphasised and promoted issues of human diversity. If this world was not really meant to become one single-undifferentiated place, but instead, it continued thriving in its diversity, then it seemed that we all had to learn how to appreciate, respect, and take advantage of different-differences. At the same time, if the whole world is different, as the diversity discourse loudly announces and declares, then there is an urgent need for narratives to bring us together; narratives of human connectivity. Emanating from these two almost contradictory positions, contemporary diversity narratives appear to create a new dualism. On one hand, it is argued that the whole world thrives in its diversity and difference, while on the other, an essential need for

a core, of shared values, is highlighted in any occasion. For instance, Unesco (1995), a few years ago, suggested that what was really needed globally was a 'positive attitude to other people and rejoicing at their different ways of life, at their creative diversity' (Unesco 1995:5). However, it additionally argued that 'there is an underlying unity in the diversity of cultures, which is defined in global ethics' (ibid 1995:16). In brief, contemporary narratives of diversity strive to create a new binarism of universality and particularity, humanity and specificity. However, for some writers, this newly emergent dualism constitutes a sign of the emergence of the 'first global civilisation' (Permutter 1991:902).

In what follows, I shall investigate this new contemporary affirmative reading upon difference/differences. More particularly, the specific laboratory where this exploration takes place is the discipline of 'Business Studies', and 'Human Resources Management' in particular. The main reason behind such a selection lies on the fact that this particular context, seems to provide one of the most sophisticated intellectual arenas for the emergence of multiple affirmative readings of difference.

In order to embark on such a journey that eventually led into a 'new business climate' and contemporary economic resonance that strives to capitalise on differences (Tompenaars 1993:168, Sneider & Barsoux 1997:156), I should first take a look at the very foundations of the former paradigm within business and management philosophy. By all accounts, the former 'hegemonic' business philosophy was based upon a very 'structuralistic' reading of processes of wealth creation. Within this paradigm, it was assumed that the company's structure inevitably forms a 'culture' that the multiplicity of employees has to acknowledge, and most importantly, conform with. This specific pre-assumption was based upon a strong belief in a concept of 'universalism' in business philosophy (Tompenaars 1993:20). This was the era of 'cultural assimilation' within the workplace, which both, Fordist and Post-Fordist economic regimes closely followed (Cope & Kalantzis 1997:11). It was an era, which promoted a concept of 'cultural sameness' for economic institutions and industries. Within such a business framework, cultural differences were ignored under the mantra of 'business is business' (Sneider&

Barsoux 1997:211). Through this particular angle, different differences had to be assimilated (Herriot & Pemberton 1995:8) and dissolved into the 'melting pot' culture of various economic institutions. According to this particular business perspective, different differences within the workplace were given the Hegelian status of difference as 'contradiction' (Hegel 1969:431). Following these lines, former business mentality habitually perceived differences as a dialectic antithesis to its dominant work culture, which had to be resolved for the continuation of wealth production.

Nevertheless, through the passage of time, a totally opposing business mentality to differences appeared to prevail. The main reason behind such a discursive metamorphosis was again related to the current intensification of processes of economic globalisation. Under the lights of a rapidly globalising economy, where a diverse workforce, within the foreseeable future, could easily be transformed from the exception to the norm (Parhizgar 1999:3, Johnston 1998:5), along with a hugely diversified customer base within the borders of any multicultural nation-state, companies had to invent new ways to stay viable within the current hyper-competitive economic climate. What else was there at their disposal, but to denounce their former business concept of 'universality', their long established economic 'monocultures of mind' (Shiva 1993:5) for the sake of multiplicities and segmented marketing. Accordingly, it was assumed that if companies desired to stay afloat within a world of diversified markets, they had to go 'global', meaning catering for the whole of humanity, while taking advantage and capitalising on its diversity (Parhizgar 1999:12, Sneider and Barsoux 1997:156, Thomas 1998:41).

This newly elevated 'status of difference' (Gilroy 1995), within the new business paradigm of diversity, started to sound like the new mantra of business schools all around the advanced capitalist world. Gary Hamels' (2000) 'Leading the Revolution', an essential reference book among multiple MBA courses across the Atlantic, announced the end of the economic 'age of progress', 'linear innovation', business sameness and 'continuous change' and the rise to dominance of an age of economic 'revolution' characterised, by 'discontinuous innovation', difference and 'non-linear evolution' (Hamel 2000:5,10, 13). According to this narrative, all we

had to do was to think differently and profits would certainly multiply. At the same time, a number of writers were eager to discover any secret correlations between 'difference' and wealth creation. Humpden-Turner and Tompenaars (2000) after years of researching their subject they concluded that: 'Immigrants, refugees, outsiders, and diverse religious groups within cultures so often have been spectacularly successful at wealth creation that it cannot be a coincidence' (Humpden-Turner and Tompenaars 2000:6). Consequently, they altered Classic Political Economy's axiom that value is added at each stage of production. Instead, they argued that values, since they are 'differences', cannot be 'added'. Alternatively, they suggested that what happens between society's cultural outsiders and wealth creation, is that at some point, some of them, are able to master the art of 'reconciling' their differences with the difference of their environment and supposedly open up new ways to prosperity (ibid 2000:9). In short, within this newly emerged business paradigm of diversity, difference is everything.

The specific intellectual arena where most of these struggles of difference became enacted was not the general context of business philosophy, but the more specialised field of Human Resources Management. Within the context of 'Human Resources Management', the labour force is treated as a resource of production. Accordingly, if a company could provide the 'climate' for its labour force to realise its potentials, it would simultaneously maximise its profits.

By all accounts, the business case for diversity, or 'managing diversity' discourse, as it became later known, started in the United States (Essed 2000:1). Although, 'corporate responsibility' was another business related discourse of the 1970s, which crudely intermarried elements of moral philosophy and trivial micro-economic pursuits (Stark 1993:40), 'managing diversity' did not develop out of this socially-sensitive debate. Instead, it was born and grew along theories of maximization of competitive advantage. In what follows, I attempt to trace down the roots of 'managing diversity' discourse.

In 1961, as a direct result of the Civil Rights Movement, President J.F.Kennedy published an executive order that established the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Its prime objective was to cease 'racial' and 'ethnic' discrimination

within the federal government and its contractors. Each contractor was subsequently obliged to take 'affirmative action' to secure that discrimination on racial, ethnic or national origin grounds, would disappear from the workplace. As a result, 'affirmative action' as a governmental policy was born. Nevertheless, after some years, 'affirmative action' expanded from the public to private domain too. In 1990, R.R. Thomas, the guru of diversity within HRM, denounced the natural unavoidable death of affirmative action and the birth of the managing diversity discourse (Thomas 1990:107). Almost ten years later, the Society of HRM, argued in its website:

'Its ironic. At the time when many critics are [still] calling for the 'end of affirmative action', diversity is flourishing. In fact, corporate America is alive with the talk of diversity-diversity initiatives, diversity roundtables, diversity seminars, diversity marketing. And those who fall under this umbrella- women, minorities, those with disabilities and others-are becoming more visible and more sought after than ever before' (www.shrm.org/diversity/fortune/htm).

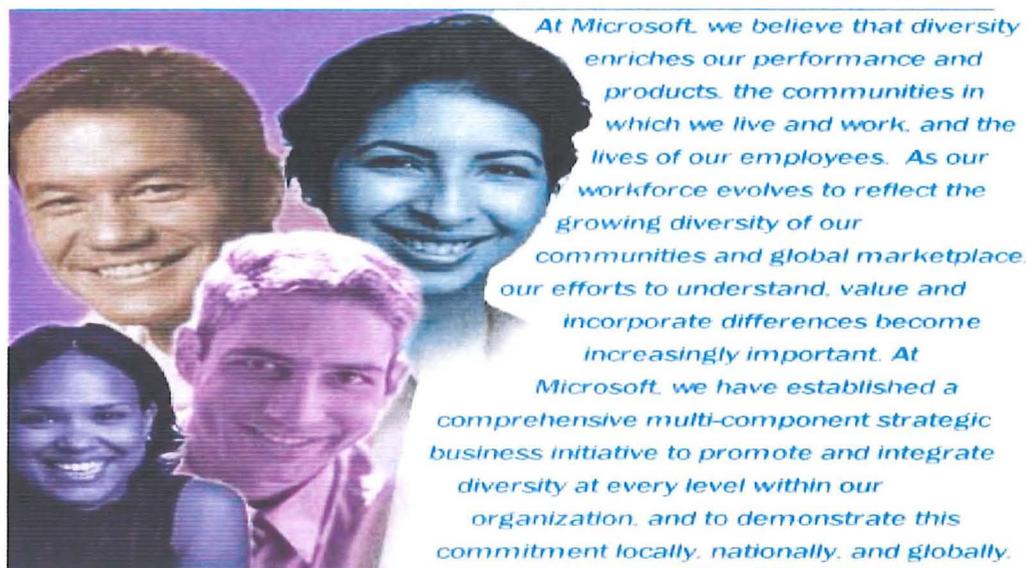


Image 1: Diversity talk at Microsoft www.microsoft.com/diversity/ February 2003.

Following these lines, a number of writers were eager to suggest that 'managing diversity' discourse 'is not about controlling those deemed different, but about controlling organisational environments to become inclusive of the unique social and individual needs and assets of the workforce'(Essed 2000:5). In other words, managing diversity, 'does not mean controlling or containing diversity, it means enabling every member of your workforce to perform to his or her potential' (Thomas 1990:114).

Increasingly, from the mid 1990s onwards, a number of studies came out that suggested that diverse groups seemed to outperform 'culturally homogenous' working teams (Watson, Kumar, Michaelsen 1993:598). It seemed like the business case for diversity was scientifically 'proven'.

To sum up, the HRM 'managing diversity' discourse, did its best to elevate the 'status of difference' (Gilroy 1995) within the workplace. From now on, differences had to be seen as competitive advantages, which companies had to capitalise upon, if they were planning to stay in business (Thomas 1990:114, Graham 1991:172). In short, diversity within the workforce was no longer viewed as a 'threat' but as an economic 'opportunity' (Sneider & Barsoux 1997:155). Following these lines, the future 'global' company was envisaged as a living organism that proceeds into 'higher levels of order and complexity by being more differentiated and more integrated' (Tompensaars 1993:167). In brief, diversity as difference could not be seen anymore as a Hegelian 'contradiction' that had to be resolved and sorted out, but instead differences were now theorised as 'paradoxes', where 'Paradoxes...unlike contradictions, somehow the opposites in paradoxes fit in. Somehow they work. Paradox is the surprise that apparent opposites can work together. It is the discovery that what appears to be a contradiction is in fact a synergetic relationship'(Cope&Calantzis 1997:3). In other words, differences, as paradoxes, could maximize profits.

Nevertheless, a number of writers remain highly critical of this newly emergent diversity discourse. Following these lines, Kenan Malik (1996, 1998) is one of its fiercest critics. For him, contemporary affirmative discourses on cultural differences, project a 'human zoo' imagery upon humanity (1996:150), reify a

concept of ‘culture’ as strong as ‘race’ (ibid 1996:160), whilst lastly appearing to originate and continue former colonial mentalities (ibid 1996:171).

In what follows, I investigate the rise to dominance of ‘ethnic’ diversity discourse within local governmental regeneration policies⁴¹. More specifically, I explore the ways that ‘differences’ become deployed in order to ‘regenerate’ the broader areas of Brixton and Brick Lane. To put it differently, I try to exemplify the uses of contemporary political imaginings of ‘race’ and difference that tend to commodify cultural differences. As I shall argue, the ‘Banglatown’ redevelopment story, ‘The United colours of Brixton’ campaign and the ‘RiCH MiX’ project within Cityside Regeneration have provided the most important engines of local redevelopment by commodifying locally accumulated differences.

3.4.2 Bethnal Green City Challenge: The ‘Banglatown’ redevelopment story.

Bethnal Green City Challenge was a local regeneration scheme, running from 1992 to 1997, which took place within the broader ‘City Challenge’ context. As it was mentioned in one of the many BGCC documents:

‘The City Challenge area covers a total 13.7 hectares east of the City of London and to the West of the Borough of Tower Hamlet as a whole. It lies within the former Bethnal Green Neighbourhood and comprises the whole of Spitalfields ward and parts of Weavers and St.Peter Wards’ (BGCC3 1996-97:23).

⁴¹ Before I move any further, it should be mentioned that the following forms of discourse analysis have required much more time and intellectual effort than their present size might reveals. Within the initial plan of organisation of this doctoral thesis, each single local regeneration programme was assigned to an individual chapter. For instance, when the writer of this thesis handed in the material for upgrading to a PhD degree, a chapter solely based on Bethnal Green City Challenge was included. Nevertheless, when it became apparent that it was not relevant to the scope of this thesis to analyse in such a great detail, a different kind of approach to this material became necessary. Accordingly, in what follows, I simply exemplify the uses of ‘ethnic’ diversity narratives within specific local regeneration policies. Nevertheless, in order for such an interrogation to take place an extensive archive was constructed (for the size of this archive see Appendix C).

According to this specific geographical demarcation, the Bethnal Green City Challenge area overlaps with the Brick Lane area at large. In what follows, I shall exemplify the specific ways and particular occasions that the BGCC regeneration discourse goes on to 'talk' the diversity 'talk'; I expose the workings of this particular political imagination in relation to locally accumulated 'race' and difference. As I shall argue, cultural differences within such a context appear to become objects of commodification.

Before I move any further, it should be noted that the BGCC regeneration discourse did not deploy affirmative 'ethnic' diversity narratives, as their main tools of local redevelopment, from the very outset. Accordingly, one could argue that 'ethnic' diversity mantras transformed into the main local regeneration narratives towards the end of the project (1996-1997). Following these lines, the BGCC regeneration discourse significantly changes within the course of its life. Nevertheless, these specific discursive transformations took place as a result of 'extra-discursive'⁴² and 'inter-discursive' dependencies (Foucault 1991:58). Most particularly, the former appeared to refer to significant changes that occurred within the local property market from the mid to late 1990s, whilst the later, to the rise to dominance of a local 'ethnic' diversity discourse based around the promotion of 'Banglatown'. But let us reflect upon these particular discursive changes.

From the very beginning, local cultural history and local 'ethnic' diversity appear as significant narrative tropes, through which, the area can be rendered meaningful. In short, the area becomes fundamentally described as 'far from homogenous, with a diverse range of people' (BGCC1 1996-97:5). Following these lines, it is further stated, that: 'The area has many strengths: the resilience and enterprise of its people combine positively with a rich history and cultural diversity' (BGCC1 1996-97:68). Nevertheless, as a result of important economic and political changes⁴³ an alteration

⁴² For Foucault (1991:58), 'extra-discursive dependencies' occur between a specific discourse and the whole play of economical, social, or political changes.

⁴³ In short, as a direct consequence of the early-nineties property bust the company had to face a different local 'market' reality. At the same time, the 1994 local elections brought a local Labour Council into power. This newly elected Labour Council appeared to break any established 'structures' of affiliation between the former, Liberal Democrat controlled, council and the BGCC company. As a result, a new partnership had to be renegotiated again between the two strong players for local redevelopment.

into the very core of the BGCC's 'strategic objectives' takes place. As the following statement acknowledges:

'The company has carefully reassessed its original vision in the light of economic and market changes...The strategic objectives have been thoroughly reviewed to ensure appropriateness and are being rigorously applied in all programme areas, in project development and implementation' (BGCC1 1995-96:18).

Under these new lights, the Company goes on to include a new 'strategic objective' in order to articulate its newly found local regeneration 'vision':

'To create a clean and attractive environment, and release opportunities for new developments, by improving the safety and attractiveness, image and identity of the local environment for the benefit of local people and visitors and by building on the unique cultural history of the area to attract new business and visitors.' (BGCC3 1996-97:85)

Additionally, the BGCC company goes on to acknowledge that the area suffers from a very poor image: 'The area traditionally had a poor image which has previously limited inward investment and development' (BGCC1 (1996-97:49). Following these lines, it proposes the promotion and diffusion of a more positive local imagery: 'The poor state of the physical environment...together with bad press resulting from deprivation and racial tension give rise to negative images of the area...Image, identity and local pride are therefore key issues to be addressed in any regeneration programme' (BGCC1 1995-96:43). Subsequently, it is suggested that this positive local imagery, should predominantly 'celebrate...[local] history and cultural diversity' (BGCC3 1996-97:104).

Increasingly, the 'Banglatown' concept started to dominate the imagination of the local entrepreneurial 'ethnic' business community. Most specifically, the local 'Indian' restaurant sector was very keen on the idea. Nevertheless, through their influence, both the BGCC Company and Tower Hamlets council became familiarized with it. However, the 'Banglatown' concept was not new at all. As early as the late 1980s, the 'Banglatown' redevelopment story, by putting emphasis upon the local 'ethnic' character, was already considered and discussed within the council. The main pressure group behind such an initiative was the Spitalfields

Community Development Group (CDG). Broadly speaking, the CDG was a Bengali think-tank established by the local 'business' industries in order to promote and influence the redevelopment of Spitalfields area. The main idea behind the project was to directly capitalise upon the area's 'ethnic' character in order to attract business and visitors within the vicinity. By the same token, Jane Jacobs (1996) describes the 'Banglatown' concept as 'an activation of an essentialised identity category by one sector of the Bengali community within the terms of the enterprise linked development opportunities available.' (Jacobs 1996:100) However, the project did not take off during this time.

By 1996, the BGCC Company became increasingly seduced by local entrepreneurial narratives of a 'Banglatown'. Following these lines, it started to view 'Banglatown'⁴⁴ as 'an exciting development...similar in concept to Soho's Chinatown' (BGCC 2 1996:6). Only six months later, the BGCC decided to proceed with the development 'of the Banglatown concept in partnership with LBTH, which will deliver physical and environmental improvements in Brick Lane...will help build a cultural identity for the area, the aims of which is to promote the intrinsic qualities of Brick lane as an asset of local economic development' (BGCC5 (1996-97:15).

Following on from this, one is led to consider that the BGCC Company becomes attracted to a different reading of local conditions of 'ethnic' diversity. Accordingly, it argues that the areas' 'ethnic' character should primarily comprise and become presented as its main asset. In this sense, it advocates that 'Spitalfields boasts...a vibrant Bangladeshi community with colourful shops and restaurants' (BGCC2 (1996:4).

Nevertheless, this building of a 'cultural identity for the area', this process of culturalization of Bangladeshi ethnicity, constitutes one of the first examples in urban politics, which opens up enormously any closed definition of what an urban 'cultural policy' agenda might include. Broadly speaking, within this drive of improving the local image, within this race for 'place marketing' (Holcomb (1994),

⁴⁴According to Sandercock (1998), 'Banglatown' was the result of a long struggle from specific parts and interests of the local Bengali community to cleverly mobilise 'notions of history and culture to achieve a redevelopment plan, to work for its own interests' (Sandercock 1998:173).

Ward & Gold 1994, Ashworth & Voogd 1994:41), 'race' and ethnicity are transformed into the most important redevelopment assets. Following these lines, Bengali ethnicity as 'culture' can either attract visitors, drawn by the pleasures of an 'aesthetic cosmopolitanism' (Urry 1995:167), or alternatively businesses and employers. In a similar fashion, it is further argued that the local economy can be regenerated twofold. Firstly, by releasing a visitors economy where 'visitors can play a vital role in bringing prosperity to Bethnal Green' (BGCC2 1996), whilst secondly, by attracting inward investment⁴⁵ that 'can release opportunities for new development' (BGCC1 1996-97:58).

To sum up, the BGCC late regeneration discourse suggests that long-existing, local negative images should be obliterated and forgotten. Following these lines, it argues that this specific task can be accomplished by concentrating emphasis and promoting the unique 'ethnic' character of the area. Accordingly, this newly improved local 'ethnic' image and identity, as realised in space through the concept of 'Banglatown', can allegedly boost the local economy by attracting visitors and businesses. In short, 'race' and 'ethnicity' as culture might bring along the seeds of a future inner-city renaissance. From such a perspective, processes of commodification of cultural differences become presented as prime agents of local regeneration.

3.4.3 'The United Colours of Brixton'.

'Brixton is the centre of a vibrant and dynamic community, offering residents and visitors an exciting variety of food, entertainment, leisure and shopping woven into a rich cultural tapestry. Use this guide to explore the delights that Brixton has to offer'

Brixton Challenge (1998): 'In your pocket guide of Brixton'.

⁴⁵ For a discussion on public-private partnerships in urban regeneration politics see Deaking & Edwards (1993), Bailey (1994), Bailey, Barker & MacDonald (1995).

In this part of the chapter I focus my attention on Brixton's City-Challenge regeneration narrative. More specifically, I shall exemplify the ways, which Brixton-Challenge discourse goes on to systematically deploy the 'diversity' talk. As I shall argue, issues of 'ethnic' and 'cultural' diversity appeared to be transformed into the main redevelopment narratives of the area. Following on from this, one is led to consider that 'ethnic diversity' talk might have experienced a proliferation of its uses within the contemporary context of British regeneration politics.

Brixton City-Challenge was a local regeneration scheme running from 1993 to 1998. In 1992, the London Borough of Lambeth made a competing bid for City Challenge funding. By January 1993, the DoE gave its blessings and approval⁴⁶. Accordingly, the programme started to run from April 1993 with the objective that 'if you live, or work in Brixton, City Challenge will make a real difference to your life'(BCC 1993:1).

What was specifically interesting about Brixton City-Challenge, was that from the very outset, it put special emphasis on issues of preservation of local assets. Most importantly, the 'multicultural' or 'ethnic' local character was deemed as one most important assets of the area. Following these lines, Brixton was presented as a 'vibrant, multicultural and exciting place' (BCC 10/95). Accordingly, local forces of redevelopment had to preserve at all costs these local assets. By the same token, the company argued that 'By 1998, you'll see a regenerated more attractive Brixton, which still preserves everything that makes it London's most distinctive multicultural centre' (BCC 1993:2). At the same time, the company was allegedly 'committed to preserving and cherishing all that's good about present day Brixton-its multicultural character, vibrant sense of community, lively markets' (BCC 1993:3).

This emphasised local 'multicultural' talk became clearly embedded within the company's regeneration 'vision': 'Brixton Challenge will make Brixton The centre

⁴⁶ It should be noted that the 'Brixton Impact Study' (Lepu 1996) suggested that: 'A successful bid by Lambeth was unexpected. Conventional wisdom held that the demands of the new Challenge regime would test the management capability of the most effective authorities. In 1992 Lambeth was still widely viewed as the archetypal and incompetent 'loony left' London local authority'(Lepu

of multicultural entertainment and shopping in South London, expressing the energy, enterprise, achievement and proud spirit of its people. A great place to live, work, visit, shop and have fun' (BCC Dec. 1992:I, 'Our Vision').

One of the main reasons behind such an emphasis on the 'multicultural' or 'multi-ethnic' character of Brixton, had probably to do with the company's aspirations to develop a strong local 'visitors' and 'night' economy. As a matter of fact, Brixton City-Challenge had clearly understood the future potentials of a local 'multicultural' urban market. It probably had proceeded into evaluating the 'economics' behind such contemporary urban trends of 'celebrating differences'. Following these lines, the figure of the 'visitor' appears as the most potent symbol of reference within the company's future vision. In an exercise of imagination, the company foresees how Brixton would look at the end of the life of the programme:

'The visitor will probably arrive by tube. They will find themselves in a new shopping centre...Nearby will be new refurbished offices and the homes of people who live in the area...Brixton will become a destination for visitors. They will go shopping and visit the Lambeth Archives as well as clubs, restaurants and the enlarged Ritzy cinema...the visitor will feel more comfortable because there is more work, better housing and leisure facilities, there is less fear of crime' (BCC Dec.1992:III).

If all this emphasis on the 'multicultural'/'multi-ethnic' character of Brixton was not enough by July 1995 the company reveals its new slogan: 'The United Colours of Brixton'. Heavily borrowing from a controversial Benetton advertising campaign, it announces that the new slogan will be used in all its correspondence and posters (South London Press 15/7/1995).

To continue, a number of writers have argued about the existence of processes of commodification of cultural differences taking place within the world of advertising and the media (Back & Quaade 1993:65, Gilroy 1995:7, Solomos & Back 1996:185, Root 1996:xiii). Nevertheless, such a specific deployment of an earlier Benetton 'celebratory' multicultural slogan, particularly tailored to the needs of Brixton, signifies similar tendencies within the world of urban regeneration politics.

(1999):6).

In effect, one could argue that mid-eighties Benetton advertising gimmicks⁴⁷ appear to break into the context of local regeneration policies. According to Solomos and Back (1996:186), the 'United Colours of Benetton' advertising campaign gives away messages of a transcultural, underlying unity. Nevertheless, these themes of unity become transmitted by juxtaposing images of absolute cultural, 'racial' or 'ethnic' differences. In this sense, although the message can be considered as positive or constructive, a number of former colonial or 'racial' stereotypes become deployed in order for this theme of transcultural humanity to be effectively communicated⁴⁸.

However, Brixton City-Challenge did not really proceed to construct local images of absolute 'racial' or 'cultural' differences to accompany the uses of this 'celebratory' multicultural slogan. In this sense, one cannot argue that the BCC Company conducted an advertising campaign based upon pure processes of commodification of differences. Nevertheless, by creating these 'inter-discursive dependencies' between its own local regeneration discourse and former Benetton's multicultural campaign, an in-between 'traffic' of multicultural images appears mainly at work. In this sense, the Company appears to promote readings of Brixton through Benetton's celebratory 'multicultural' imageries. Following on from this, a 'celebratory' local urbanism, which succeeds in enjoying its differences, is born. In short, 'diversity' talk seems to have reached Brixton.

To sum up, BCC regeneration discourse clearly 'talks' the 'diversity' talk. In the beginning of the life of the programme, the emphasis was predominantly put on the 'multicultural' character of the area. Accordingly, local conditions of 'multiculturality' were viewed as competitive advantages that the company had to capitalise upon in order to release the development of a 'visitors' or 'night' economy. Nevertheless, during the summer of 1995, the company unveiled its 'The

⁴⁷ For a critique of Benetton's multicultural advertising have a look at Back & Quaade (1993:65-80) 'Dreams Utopia, Nightmare Realities'.

⁴⁸ A kind of a critique of any attempts of deciphering 'racially' related advertising campaigns, could be based upon a post-structuralist reading of the world. In this sense, and if 'race' is a sign, then different audiences can come up with different readings upon these commodified 'racial' signifiers. In short, what I am trying to say is that within this contemporary globalised world of multiple commodified differences, any meanings attached to 'race' might be primarily created at the point of reception.

United Colours of Brixton' slogan. By all accounts, this instance constitutes an explicit attempt of commodification of local cultural differences. Accordingly, through the specific deployment of this 'multicultural' slogan, the 'ethnic' diverse nature of local urban living becomes communicated as a cause of 'celebration'. In brief, local 'ethnic diversity' appears to have found a way to enter the game of inner-city 'redevelopment'.

3.4.4 The 'RiCH MiX', Cityside Regeneration and the case of diversity in the dawn of the new millennium.

During September 1996, Tower Hamlets Council and its partners, anticipating the end of the Bethnal Green Challenge programme, applied for Single Regeneration Budget funding (SRB). The proposal attempted to secure extra funding for the continuation of local regeneration efforts. By 1997, Cityside Regeneration Ltd, was born in order to manage and deliver the successful SRB local regeneration programme. Accordingly, the Company would concentrate its efforts for the regeneration of the Western part of the Borough (Spitalfields area) running from 1997 to 2002.

As it becomes obvious, from the initial SRB proposal, great emphasis was put on the development of a local 'visitor' economy. Accordingly, the proposal argues that the Company would try to capitalise on the following four themes:

'the recent accelerated development of local key sites, the expansion of the visitor and cultural economy, the long established small business sector and its proximity to the City of London' (CitySide 1997-1998:1).

As Michael Featherstone (1991) has argued 'postmodern cities have become centres of consumption, play and entertainment, saturated with signs and images to the extent that anything can become represented, thematized and an object of interest for the 'tourist gaze'' (Featherstone 1991:101). Following these lines, the CitySide Company suggests that ' the programme seeks to develop the existing cultural base to produce a thriving visitor economy as an important driver to the economic

regeneration of the area' (Cityside 1999-2000:1). Broadly speaking, this concept of a local 'cultural economy' or 'existing cultural base' might be used, for the very first time, in the vocabulary of local regeneration's policy. This kind of term suggests that the embodied or performed 'cultures' of local people might bear an economic potential within a proliferating urban multicultural market. Accordingly, this kind of a redevelopment narrative appears to break conceptually with a tradition in British regeneration policies to focus on highbrow manifestations of 'culture', as significant motifs of urban redevelopment (Whitt 1987, Bianchini 1993a, 1993b). To put it differently, 'art-led' regeneration efforts become complemented with anthropological notions of 'culture', 'as ways of life'. In this sense, it might be the case that culture as anthropology⁴⁹ might finally have found a role to play within contemporary urban regenerating policies.

In a similar fashion, the Company acknowledges that:

'Another key feature of the Visitor Economy programme was a number of initiatives to raise the profile of the area. Chief amongst these were two events, the Baishakhi Mela Bengali New Year and the Brick Lane Festival each attracted over 20,000 people to the area. These, and other events, have been an important element of bringing more visitors to the area as consumers' (Cityside 1999-2000:4).

Following these lines, the Cityside Regeneration programme appears to talk the 'diversity' talk. This specific deployment of the language of 'ethnic' or 'cultural' diversity becomes even more noticeable in the case of the 'RiCH MiX' project. As the name of the project clearly suggests, the local regenerating area becomes presented as a 'rich mix' of people. It becomes depicted as an asset or a competitive advantage that has to be respected, appreciated, whilst fundamentally, capitalised upon. This idea for the creation of a locally based 'RiCH MiX' centre comprised the Company's flagship project. As the Company argues: 'This national centre aims to foster an increasing understanding and contribute to breaking down barriers between communities, races, religions, and geographical areas, by celebrating

⁴⁹ In a similar vein, it should be noted that the City Fringe Partnership suggested that 'Tourist boards are adopting an increasingly sophisticated approach to market fragmentation to deal with this complexity and make the best use of resources. In the London context, this had led to stereotypical images being replaced by more modern alternatives as urban cultural tourism gains ground' (City

London's cosmopolitan richness and the contributions which its communities have made to developing the capital's position as a leading world city' (Cityside 1997-98:10).

To conclude, the current realisation of the 'RiCH MiX' centre, along Bethnal Green Road, signifies the concrete institutionalisation of the 'diversity' talk within the capital. In this sense, urban 'diversity' talk did not only reach the town, but seems to have found its own temple of worship. In this sense, 'diversity' talk, which initially started to circulate from the workplace, appears to have found its own institutionalised place of accommodation in actual 'bricks and mortars'. It has been transformed into another feature of the metropolitan urban landscape. Another visual 'sign', erected, so to remind us of the merits of urban differences, doing its small part within the continuous struggles of signification on difference within the metropolis.

3.5 Conclusions.

In this chapter, I tried to exemplify and deconstruct successive political imaginations of 'race' and difference through a period of over thirty years. More particularly, I focused on three different multicultural 'moments' that corresponded to separate eras within the multicultural history of this country. The first multicultural 'moment' that I reflected on was the period from the early 1970s to the 1980s. As I argued, political imaginings on 'race' and difference of this era appeared to pathologise the metropolitan spaces of 'race'.

The second multicultural 'moment' that I exemplified was the period from the early 1980s until the end of the decade. As I argued, within this period, political 'race' fictions appeared to put emphasis and tried to analyse the workings of cultural differences within oneself and the national culture of Britain. Last but not least, I expose the contemporary state of cultural or 'ethnic' differences for the period from the late 1990s to present day. As I argued, contemporary political imaginations of 'race' and differences celebrate differences while promoting and facilitating

Fringe Partnership 1997:47).

processes of commodification of 'ethnic' diversity. They seem to talk the 'diversity talk'.

Following these lines, one is led to consider that political discourses of differences in this country appeared to have experienced significant processes of transmutation. In more detail, former political imaginings of a pathologised 'race' have given way to contemporary celebrations of 'ethnic' diversity. Under these lights, 'race', culture and difference in Britain has been discursively transformed from a cause of concern to a cause of celebration. Nevertheless, the realities of being different in this country might not have necessarily changed to such a significant extent.

Stories from Brixton: 'The movers in'.

' The process of segregation of the urban population tends to facilitate the mobility of the individual man. The processes of segregation establish moral distances, which make the city a mosaic of little worlds that touch but do not interpenetrate. This makes it possible for individuals to pass quickly and easily from one moral milieu to another, and encourages the fascinating but dangerous experiment of living at the same time in several different, contiguous, but otherwise widely separated worlds. All this tends to give city life a superficial and adventitious character; it tends to complicate social relations and to produce new and divergent individual types. It introduces at the same time, an element of chance and adventure, which adds to the stimulus of city life and gives it, for young and fresh nerves, a peculiar attractiveness. The lure of great cities is perhaps a consequence of stimulations, which are directly upon the reflexes. As type of human behaviour it may be explained, like the attraction of the flame to the moth as a sort of tropism.'

Robert Park, 'Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behaviour in the Urban Environment.' (1967:41)

4.1 Introducing research.

In this chapter, I draw attention to processes of residential gentrification of Brixton. However, Brixton's gentrification did not appear to occur overnight. Alternatively, local processes of residential gentrification have been taking place as early as the late 1970s, early 1980s. Most importantly, during the last few years, as a direct result of a prolonged period of economic prosperity that led to a significant inflation of local housing prices⁵⁰, Brixton, in a similar fashion to the rest of the capital, became the subject of aggravated processes of gentrification. These contemporary local urban developments appear to have stemmed from the following: firstly,

⁵⁰ For Brixton's housing prices inflation see Appendix A, 2.

'moderate' levels of housing prices compared to other parts of the capital, secondly, an abundance of attractive housing stock, whilst thirdly, local 'affordable' levels of rents. At the same time, these unfolding processes of residential gentrification appear to have provided a significant customer base, which facilitated the creation of a 'native' economy. To put it differently, Brixton's gentrification has been accompanied by the creation of a local 'native' economy that caters primarily for local gentrification's needs. At the same time, this development of the local 'native' economy further facilitates processes of gentrification.

For the aims and objectives of this thesis, twenty-two in-depth interviews with individuals, who had moved into the area through the years, were conducted. These local informants are divided between the following two categories: 'newcomers' and 'longer established movers in'. Thirteen out of the total of twenty-two cases had moved into the area quite recently. Accordingly, this particular group of gentrifiers appears to have settled locally from the mid to late 1990s onwards. More importantly, this particular era of local gentrification corresponds closely with the latest period of significant economic growth and intense metropolitan expansion⁵¹. Following these lines, this group of 'movers in' are termed as 'newcomers'. On the other hand, the nine remaining informants moved into the area through out the 1980s and early 1990s⁵². Alternatively, they became coined as 'longer established movers in'.

In terms of gender, thirteen out of the twenty-two informants were male, whilst the remaining nine were female. Nineteen of them were British, while the rest three cases could be defined as international (two Americans and one German). More specifically, within the British category, sixteen of them could be identified as 'white' British, two as British-Asian and one as British-other (British-Colombian). This local series of interviews, which was conducted through a 'snow-balling'

⁵¹ For a detailed explanation on how economic developments translate into the urban environment see chapter one: 1.2.2.

⁵² For instance, Stephen Frears 1987 film 'Sammy and Rose get laid' follows a couple of middle-class gentrifiers dealing with their marital dramas in Brixton. By 1991, the 'Voice' newspaper was proclaiming that the 'The Brixton man, unlike the Docklands yuppie, is prepared to rub shoulders with the natives but still needs his own wine bars and cafes. He always get ripped off when he buys ganja, but feels safe in his plush apartment.' (Voice 8/1/1991 p.7).

technique⁵³, did not manage to include not even one individual gentrifier that could be identified as 'Black'-British.

In terms of employment, a local diversity of 'movers in' became manifested through the following employment patterns: six of them were employed in media or IT industries, two of them were academic researchers, another two were working in finance, five were employed in 'low-paid' jobs within the service economy, whilst the last two were postgraduate students.

Before I move any further, I would like to introduce Sharon Zukin's (1992) conceptualization of gentrification as successive waves of 'movers in'. According to Zukin, when a first, not so affluent 'wave' of gentrification settles in an area, through the passage of time, a second more affluent 'wave' follows (Zukin 1992:230). Under these lights, this specific categorization of local gentrifiers as 'newcomers' and 'longer established movers in' can be 'seen' through this particular perspective. In short, 'newcomers' in the area tend to concentrate in well-paid, specialised professions. On the other hand, 'longer establish movers in' find themselves within the whole spectrum of professions.

In a similar fashion, this diversity of gentrifiers becomes manifested through different ways of settling into the area. Accordingly, while some of my informants moved in locally by acquiring a property, others appear to have used squatting as an 'alternative' housing survival technique. In effect, my local informants were a diverse group of individuals, than a single, uniform category that could be identified as 'middle', 'new middle' or creative 'new middle-class'⁵⁴. In this sense, Rose's (1984:63) concept of the 'marginal gentrifier', as an individual driven from 'need' rather than 'lifestyle choices' might be partly accurate for the case of Brixton.

To sum up, gentrification studies in general breed a tendency to present gentrifying populations as undifferentiated and uniform⁵⁵ (Smith 1979, Mullins 1982, Moore

⁵³ For a detailed discussion, on interviewing methodology see chapter 2: The Interviewer.

⁵⁴ Early gentrification studies appear to have the tendency to identify groups of gentrifiers as belonging to a 'new middle class' (Ley 1996). By this, they broadly mean young urban professionals employed within the corporate world. Nevertheless, contemporary gentrification processes in London appear to involve also a new group of people employed within the 'creative' industries (media, web-designing, graphic design etc.) that should not go unnoticed. In this sense, these individuals appear to constitute a new 'creative' 'middle-class'.

⁵⁵ For a more detail discussion on the topic see chapter one: 1.2.4

1982). From this perspective, processes of gentrification become narrated as involving a single group of 'movers in' sharing a common socio-economic position and status. This particular legacy of homogenous gentrifying populations emanates clearly from the massive restructuring of the urban labour force, all during the 1970s and 1980s, and the emergence of the young urban professional phenomenon. Following these lines, the bulk of gentrification studies tend to present gentrification as being carried out by a uniform professional category of well paid yuppies, who displace and evict local populations (Ley 1996, Deutsche 1996). From such a perspective, the 'chaotic' nature of gentrification becomes almost concealed. Nevertheless, within the context of this research, processes of gentrification in Brixton appear to involve a socio-economic diversity of 'movers in', stretching from cases of economic marginality to those of economic affluence. In short, Brixton's residential gentrification appears as chaotic in nature.

Last but not least, I shall try to expose the unique character of Brixton's gentrification. Generally speaking, Brixton's and Brick Lane's gentrification defies the norms of urban redevelopment, where forms and manifestations of local character become displaced by the insertion of a new aesthetics of gentrification. Nevertheless, for the case of Brixton, these new aesthetics of gentrification appear to develop around the existing character of the area. Following these lines, Brixton's gentrification accommodates local differences and alternatively creates a new culture of gentrification, which aesthetically appreciates the unique character of the local milieu. As an on-line real estate agency, findaproperty.com, argues:

'Brixton unlike more gentrified areas it's still within reach of first time buyers and has managed something others have not: the difficult trick of becoming more up-market and desirable without becoming completely made-over into a well-managed bourgeois enclave' (www.findaproperty.com/area0109.html).



Image 2,3,4,5: Juxtaposed images of 'old' and 'new' Brixton
www.urban75.com November 2002.

Accordingly, one of the unique features of Brixton's gentrification, is its ability not to displace the existing local character. In effect, processes of local gentrification in Brixton 'work their way' through locally accumulated differences. To put it differently, local differences become accommodated within the new aesthetics of gentrification. Nevertheless, displacements of local populations inevitably take place too. Accordingly, through this simultaneous process of accommodation and displacement, eviction and preservation, a new more affluent Brixton has been created to co-exist, side by side, with the 'old' Brixton of reggae, high unemployment and 'vibrant' street culture. If one strolls around central Brixton at the moment, she/he can still witness the existence of the local food market, the Portuguese delicatessens, the 'black' barber shops, the descendents of the 'old' reggae second-hand record shops, now selling all the spectrum from R&B to dub music, inhabiting the same spaces with more mainstream symbols of our urban capitalist civilization: a new Argos, Sainsburys and WHSmith stores.

4.2 Gentrification, belonging and life-stages.

In this part of the chapter, I shall examine narrative correlations between personal acts of gentrification, particular life stages and senses of belonging. The main reason that such a theme is important is because it opens up a window of investigation into local processes of gentrification and ideas of belonging. In short, it reveals narrative connections or disconnections between notions of gentrifying identity and place. Gentrification, place, identity and belonging comprise a significant web, from where, many local gentrification narratives appear to emanate and unfold.

Another way to view gentrification is as one's conscious decision to situate her/his body within the inner-city. Under these lights, gentrification stands for a particular form of 'body politics'. Following these lines, the 'generic' gentrifier either out of economic considerations, need, preference, or even just fashion goes and resides within a particular part of the city. Nevertheless, what seems to cry for investigation

are the particular relations of affiliation and belonging building up, or not, out of these acts and experiences of gentrification. To put it differently, does the gentrifier feel to belong to the gentrifying area? Can she/he tend to consider it as a long term 'home'? Is identity and place irrevocably linked within acts of gentrification? Or alternatively, gentrification, in most cases, mainly comprises a non-belonging ephemeral act?

In what follows, I shall exemplify the following dominant narrative in relation to gentrifying identity, place and belonging. According to this narrative, gentrification relates to specific life-stages. In a similar fashion to this, some writers have argued that processes of gentrification appear to correspond with specific life-stages or phases within stories of personal trajectory (Fincher 1998:49). Under these lights, gentrification becomes constructed as ephemeral. Personal acts of gentrification appear to correlate with specific needs or eras within the gentrifier's life. The gentrifying identity uses or even 'exploits' place to satisfy ephemeral needs. Nevertheless, once these needs have been met, it willingly moves out and resides in other areas. Accordingly, the gentrifying identity does not permanently connect or belong to the residing place. It does not consider it as a long-term residence or 'home'. In effect, within these personal acts of gentrification, identity and place do not become inextricably linked, but alternatively, the gentrifying identity denies any sort of belonging. In short, gentrification appears as a tactical act in one's life, without having the power to connect identity with place and create any meaningful 'sense' of belonging.

This dominant narrative of Brixton's gentrification as correlating to specific life stages becomes mainly articulated through the deployment of a criminalised language of 'race'⁵⁶. Following these lines, gentrification, life-stages, 'race', place and crime become discursively linked. Nevertheless, as fear of 'crime' can be tolerated within a young gentrifying age, maturity brings along intolerability to feelings of personal insecurity. Following these lines, a maturing gentrifying 'self',

⁵⁶ At this particular point, I would like to argue that it is the same language that have dominated local and Metropolitan Police narratives within the Public Hearings of Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders (see chapter three: 3:2).

by attempting to disassociate herself from such a personally constructed 'criminalised'/ racialised environment, proceeds into envisioning future scenarios of moving out.

The implications of our findings suggest that the majority of 'movers in' were in specific stages of their lives or their professional careers, when they originally moved into the area. Since then, some of them have moved on in their professions, and by the time of the interview, they might have found themselves at different stages in their lives. Accordingly, individual stories of social mobility, tales of life transition and reflections about the 'self' break into the fore and manifest the complexities of local processes of gentrification.

Marian and Gavin have been together for a number of years and are planning to get married soon. They originally met through flat-sharing in Brixton, only a few years ago. Both of them were students at the time of 'moving in', and were employed in specialised sectors of the 'service' industries by the time of the interview. Marian, is a 'white' late-twenties female, from Moss-Side, Manchester. In what follows, she narrates her personal story of settlement in Brixton:

G.M.: When did you move in to Brixton?

Marian: Well, I moved to Brixton, three years ago, the first house I lived in, well the reason that I moved to Brixton, was, I suppose, there was more going on in Brixton than in New Cross, and a friend of mine had a big house in Brixton [the same house that she met Gavin] and she just got fed up of trying to find people and make ends meet, pay the bills, and she offered me minimal rent, in fact, if I would get the house full and make sure that everybody was paying rent, and bills were paid, so it was a way for me of getting very cheap rent while I was studying for me masters, because obviously you don't get any grants or things like that.

[Later on in the interview]

G.M.: Can you imagine yourself living in Brixton in the long-

term?

Marian: Not really, I think for what you pay, you know, you can pay a little bit more and be somewhere a lot of nicer, in terms you know, of bin bags full of rubbish just been out on the street, sometimes the smell, you know, because there are quite a lot of alcoholics and there are people pissing at walls and some times you just get to the point that you just want to be somewhere just a little bit more pleasant... you also go out on a Saturday and you don't know into what you gonna bump into or what's gonna happen next, its got that edge about it, well I think also it can be quite dangerous as well, there is hell of a lot of tension in Brixton as well.

[my emphasis]

Within Marian's above quotation, an important point exemplifies a correspondence between her local act of gentrification, particular life-stage and needs when she talks about the local 'edge'. For her, this local 'edge' was the main attraction to the area. As she explicitly says 'well the reason that I moved to Brixton, was, I suppose, there was more going on in Brixton than in New Cross'. Nevertheless, through the passage of time, this local 'edge' has been transformed into the most important reason for moving out. Following these lines, Marian at a certain point in her life found Brixton suitable to her needs. Nevertheless, through life-changes, life or 'lifestyle' journeys, she has realised that her initial selection of neighbourhood might not satisfy anymore her current demands. Subsequently, she proceeds into future scenarios of 'moving out' or abandoning the area. In this sense, Marian's act of gentrification appears to correspond closely to a specific stage in her life.

A few days later, I arranged to meet Gavin. We met at the same local café where I interviewed Marian. Gavin, is a late-twenties, 'white' male who comes from Leicester. At the time of the interview, he was working as a financial analyst for a company based in Euston, central London. I initiated the interview, by asking him, what were the main reasons for 'moving in' in Brixton.

G.M.: Why did you move to Brixton at the first place?

Gavin: Just plenty of places to go out, its quite lively, is on the tube, so its quite an attractive sort of place to be, and, you know, there is a part of me, I am from Leicester, used to live in cities, fairly busy sort of places, and that was at the time attractive about Brixton, that its bustling and its busy and its lively and its, from an outside perspective you think its fun.

[Later on in the interview]

Gavin: There was a kind of realization as I've got older, has led to, just be more cautious and feel more threatened, if you are wearing a suit, carrying a laptop, you coming home in the evening, its dark, you had a few pints, very, very sort of worrying people around there...if I was going to stay in London, I would be glad to move to a much more queter place, a more relaxed place, where you felt comfortable all the time, instead of feeling threatened, I would certainly never bring up children in Brixton, never, categorically, no. I just think that the quality of the environment, the influences, the availability of drugs, the attitude, I see it a kind of sort of a macho culture around...I mean in a sense the sort of Caribbean youth, or Afro-Caribbean youth defines the area, and they sort of set the standards if you like and sort of everyone else needs to be seen as tough⁵⁷, sort of, to get by.

In some ways, Gavin's spatial trajectory reveals one of the main geographical patterns of using or situating your body within the city and beyond. According to this pattern, young people at university age leave cities to go and study in less urbanised environments. By the time of employment they concentrate back in cities where the majority of jobs are on offer. Nevertheless, as first wages cannot really

⁵⁷ For a discussion on 'street wisdom' see for example Anderson (1995).

guarantee a comfortable urban living, they tend to find residence within affordable inner-cities. At the same time, this inner-city environment provides an exciting urban arena for the performance and celebration of youth. Through the passage of time, as ideas of having a family or buying a house mature, many of them are leaving the inner-city space. The popular choices are inner or outer suburbia always according to personal levels of earnings. To put it differently, one of the main established geographical patterns of a dialectic between urban, suburban and rural British 'native' living starts from the urban outer, briefly passes through the inner-city and then back to suburbia and beyond.

Gavin studied at Cambridge. Accordingly, his student years were mainly comprised by the allures of a sleepy semi-urban, semi-rural milieu. At the time of getting his first job, he moved in Brixton. The area appeared to provide him with all the missing urban excitement that his former student life had denied him. Brixton comprised the place where he could go out drinking, meeting people and have fun. Nevertheless, as time went by, his personal transformation into a professional, wearing a suit and carrying a laptop, have altered fundamentally his ways of 'seeing' Brixton. Accordingly, Brixton for him appears to have transformed from a 'fun' to a threatening or sinister place. More importantly, Gavin deploys a language of criminalization of 'race'. This racialised vocabulary of Brixton refers and reproduces common stereotypical descriptions of the area as a place of crime, drugs and urban chaos. In this sense, his narrative reaffirms and reifies the area's 'racial' stigma.

Following these lines, his local personal narrative, by which he lives his life and makes sense of himself and the world around him⁵⁸ is based upon a very straight forward, localised racial semiology. In short, his language manifests and revives 'old' 'racial' phenomenological regimes, where 'black' as a visual signifier relates to criminality, drug-dealing, muggings etc. (Hall 1978b:339, Solomos 1988:118, Solomos 1993:132, Keith 1991:193, Keith 1995:367). Through his personal narration, Brixton becomes constructed as a totally inappropriate place to raise children. Under these lights, Gavin explicitly announces his determination to leave

⁵⁸ For a detailed discussion, see chapter two: 2.7.1

the area within the foreseeable future. What he is particularly seeking is a more comfortable and relaxing place to raise his future family, far away from his personally constructed racialised 'dangers', ills and 'bad influences' of South-West London's inner-city. Brixton for him, although a 'fun' place at the beginning has turned sinister and the time has come, for him and Marian, to move to the alleged comforts and safety of inner or outer suburbia.

In sharp contrast to this dominant narrative of Brixton as a place that correlates to specific life-stages, I would like to juxtapose an individual story that constructs the area as a 'life-long' choice. Accordingly, within this alternative narrative, gentrifying identity appears to relate and connect to the area through a sense of belonging. Under these lights, gentrification, place and belonging become intertwined and linked. Personal acts of gentrification, through the passage of time, appear to evolve and mature into forms of affiliation and attachment. In this sense, the common spatial trajectory from the countryside or suburbia to the inner-city and back becomes denied. Alternatively, the gentrifying identity becomes attached to the residing inner-city space, which provides it with a firm sense of belonging. As I shall try to expose, such a narrative construction correlates to a specific theorisation of the gentifying identity; a view of the gentrifying 'self' as incomplete evolving through difference.

Alice is a 'white' British female in her late forties, early fifties, who has been living in the area since the early 1980s. Her personal narrative and accordingly or urban life-story, does not become articulated through the deployment of a language of criminalization of particular sections of 'race', but instead, through the uses of an affirmative language of 'ethnic diversity'. From this perspective, the 'constructive' nature of differences breaks into the fore. But let us hear, Alice narrating her own local urban story:

G.M.: What do you think of Brixton as a place to raise a child?

Alice: I think it is a really good place to raise a kid, because its very multiracial, he [her son] always says, we go away on holiday to a nice place in the countryside and so on, and we

would come back and he would be 'oh great we are back home again, great dirty London', we always use to come out of Brixton tube and there always used to be this guy 'incenses, incenses' and he would be 'oh, here we go back in Brixton', he appreciated this kind of richness, unpredictability.

G.M. : How do you think one can make the most out of living in the area?

Alice: Hmmm [pause], because you find out lots of different things about people I suppose, about different ways that people live, different foods that people eat, different languages and basically different things that people do, different ways of approaching life and a bit of that rubs on you I suppose so that that you are able perhaps to join in with those things if the opportunity presents itself, you might go on doing some of these things yourself, you can see what's positive in it rather than feeling that its strange and unknown and you avoid, so you don't get stuck in your own world with very rigid definitions and limits, you are really sort of open ended to all sorts of ways of doing things.

For Alice, Brixton is a very suitable or even 'productive' place to raise children. It provides a 'richness of unpredictability' to youngsters who grow up locally. By arguing that, she replicates Richard Sennett's (1970) position about the extreme significance of diversity, as the essence of urban life, mainly because of the 'possibilities' it provides 'for complex experiences' (Sennett 1970:82). Nevertheless, for such negotiations between differences to take place, one has to consider herself/himself as incomplete (Sennett 1990:148). She has to be capable of 'stepping out' (Sennett 1990:123) of herself to see things differently. Nevertheless, by doing so, any hermetic closed definition of the gentrifying 'self' becomes redundant. Accordingly, one is led to consider that differences can be constructive as long as they go along with 'incomplete' notions of the 'self'; this constitutes the

prerequisite for having 'a bit of that [differences] rubs on you.'

To sum up, this alternative story of gentrifying identity, place and belonging become articulated through the constructive nature of differences. If gentrifying identity becomes perceived and experienced as incomplete, then neighbouring differences can find the space to come and influence the 'self'. Through such a constructive reading on differences, the gentrifying identity becomes attached to place and acquires a sense of local belonging. Accordingly, gentrified inner-city space transforms into 'home'.

4.3 The theatre of Brixton: Gentrification, aestheticization and visual consumption of differences.

'one way of dealing with the material inequalities of city life has been to aestheticise diversity' (Zukin 1995:2).

As mentioned above, cultures of gentrification of Brixton thrive on a new aesthetics of local diversity. Following these lines, locally accumulated differences become accommodated within local cultures of gentrification. Under these lights, these new aesthetics of local gentrification, instead of degrading and displacing differences, alternatively they accommodate them by viewing them through an aestheticizing filter. From this perspective, the local streets and its 'native' inhabitants appear to be transformed into an aestheticised urban spectacle. In short, cultures of local gentrification appear to breed a new aesthetics of diversity that positively evaluate and consume differences as 'worthy' objects of seeing (Featherstone 1991:106). Nevertheless, the reason that such an alleged aestheticization of the local urban environment is important is because of its close connection to constructions of the local urban multicultural world. To put it differently, what kind of local multicultural do these new aesthetics of gentrification go on to create? Are we witnessing a constant production of the local multicultural world based upon a visual consumption of differences? And if that is the case, what is the current state

of differences within these local aestheticised cultures of gentrification?

In what follows, I shall attempt to exemplify, within particular 'moments' of dialogue, instances of processes of aestheticization of the local urban environment. As I shall argue, processes of aestheticization and consumption of locally accumulated diversity take place through a theatricalization of 'native' urban life. At the same time, these instances of exemplification will be informed with contemporary theories of gentrification, cultural consumption and aestheticization of everyday life.

A few decades ago, Guy Debord (1983), in 'Society of the spectacle', argued that: 'In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles' (Debord 1983 # 1). Since then, a number of critics have highlighted continuous processes of commodification/aestheticization of culture and everyday life (Zukin 1982:176, Harvey 1989:75, Jameson 1991:4, Wynne & O' Connor 1998:843). Following these lines, contemporary cultural-economic analysis in relation to postmodern space and urbanism appears to draw heavily on issues of visual consumption and spectatorship (Harvey 1989:21, Zukin 1992:221, Sorking 1992:xiv, Boyer 1996:47).

To continue, I shall exemplify a local dominant narrative that presents Brixton as an urban theatre of differences. In more detail, through this theatricalization of the local 'native' world, local 'vernacular landscapes' (Zukin 1996:56) transform into aestheticised objects that form part of the new aesthetics of local gentrification. To put it differently, visual regimes of an aestheticised/theatricalised local diversity inform and feed local processes of gentrification. In short, within this local theatre of differences, the 'movers in' are transformed into 'flaneurs' or 'voyeurs' (Wilson 1991:136, Robbins 1993:327) of an aestheticised locally accumulated diversity either in terms of 'race', difference, ethnicity, inequality, 'culture' etc. In a similar fashion to this, many authors have argued about the 'intrinsic theatricality of city life' (Raban 1974:27), while others, prefer to describe it in cinematic terms (Clarke 1997:1, Baudrillard 1988:18, Baudrillard 1992:154).

Alexander, one of my 'white' British informants, goes on to describe Brixton in terms of theatricality or performance. Alexander comments:

G.M.: How would you describe the urban life of Brixton?

Alexander: I would look at it more in terms of performance, I mean definitely I have enjoyed it, I don't know if that is the right word for it but, especially the preachers outside the Brixton tube, I mean I've always looked out for them because I find them fascinating, you've got usually black born Christians, it used to be one guy he had the same speech that would occur over and over again and he had this one phrase 'For the redemption of your sins' and always handshaking in the air and he'd always be there, and right next to that you've got all these vending tables outside Iceland where you have all this sort of Muslim vendors...all this kind of sheer diversity within the context of the street that I find interesting.

[Later on in the interview]

Alexander: There are certain individuals especially in the tube station, they become sort of figures in your daily life, like the guy who used to sell the 'Big Issue' who was always there, he went 'bigy, bigy, bigy', 'get your bigy, bigy, bigy', 'don't worry be happy' and sort of this kind of things and in a sense that was interaction.







Images 6,7,8,9,10: The theatre of differences outside the Brixton tube station
www.urban75.com November 2002

For Alexander, the area around the Brixton Tube station transforms itself into a 'stage' for varied local performances to be enacted. Under these lights, Brixton becomes perceived in terms of performativity. As he confesses ' I mean I definitely have enjoyed it'. Accordingly, local vernacular street 'cultures' of Brixton become viewed through an aestheticising filter that 'sees' urban life through forms of theatricality. Additionally, he acknowledges these local vernacular street performances as forms of urban interaction. On one hand, you have the local faithful audience, whilst on the other various performers. Although words are not exchanged a certain level of communication seems at work. Theatre and urban life create a sort of interaction and indirect communication through visual forms of spectatoship.

In a similar manner, Natalie, a 'white' American woman who has been a Londoner for the last ten years, expresses her own ideas about Brixton's theatricality. Her narrative describes an urban theatre of Brixton as coming out of the plays of Ionesco; intensity goes hand in hand with irrationality. Natalie comments:

Natalie: So in terms of the urban feeling in Brixton...I think you know the pollution, the amount of buses, the amount of traffic it just feels like everybody is in a rush...its like either African ladies pushing you out of the way in the market, or kind of like you know young single mothers pushing their kids in prams, like running you over, you know, its intense, it's an intense experience...I mean hung out just the tube station, you know on a Saturday afternoon, it's weird, it's really weird, you get this sort of like group of Korean people that set up an electric organ every week and sing Christian songs, they are like some weird Christian sect, just in front of Pizza Hut you get the Socialist Worker party and like trying to sell you their newspapers and this group of black guys, they are called like the 'Lost Tribe of Israel' or something like that and they dress up in those cool and the gang outfits, I don't know what they are doing I mean they are preaching something, and then there is this white guy with the megaphone shouting things like you know, 'The end is near. [Later on in the interview]

Natalie: There is a community of people of sort of people like an extra strong lager that hung around the tube station, the small addicts, the prostitutes, the crazy old black lady that plays the harmonica and sells her paintings outside the tube station, you know, it is like a circus sometimes but you know you can't stop, that's the thing, you gonna be pushed into the wall, its very much theatrical, like the twin brothers that run the flowers outside the tube station, the guy that sells the big issue, they're all characters, real characters, and I mean I never spoken to them or anything but you know they are there and it is kind of reassuring in a way.

Here again, the local Tube station transforms into a theatrical stage where many local characters, 'like extra strong lager' perform their everyday 'selves'. Nevertheless, this local theatrical diversity appears to include a broad spectrum. It extends from small-time drug-addicts, to winos, weirdos and members of religious cults. In this sense, local aestheticised/theatricalised diversity includes 'race', 'ethnicity', 'gender', 'class', 'income' etc. In a similar fashion to Alexander, Natalie seems re-assured to have it around. It provides her with some entertainment and can compensate for the boredom or 'flatness' of everyday life. In short, these local theatrical performances become perceived as one way forms of communication that go on to create an intense space of urban dramaturgy.

Last but not least, I shall relate and connect these aesthetics of local gentrification to contemporary theories of urban change and cultural consumption. More importantly, I seek to expose a particular theoretical position that explains the ways that local cultures of gentrification commodify local 'vernacular' spectacles.

Generally speaking, it has been argued that western advanced capitalist cities have been transformed from 'places of production' to spaces of consumption (Zukin 1992:225, Zukin 1998:825). Following these lines, gentrification, which stands as the archetypal practice of postmodern urbanism (Zukin 1992:227), relates to processes of cultural consumption (Zukin 1996:48). In this sense, processes of gentrification, which take the form of preservation, appear to relate to the consumption of bygone architectural styles (Zukin 1987:131). In a similar vein, 'loft-living' is related to a 'poetic appreciation of industrial design' (Zukin 1982:174). Accordingly, processes of gentrification are inextricably linked with practices of cultural consumption. As this part of the chapter has sought to exemplify, cultures of gentrification in Brixton create a new aesthetics of local gentrification based upon forms of cultural consumption of an aestheticised/theatricalised diversity. More importantly, the metropolitan 'status of difference' (Gilroy 1995) within these cultures of gentrification appears to have been transformed as a result of these consuming practices.

Ulf Hannerz (1996) has argued that within the plethora of contemporary multicultural metropolises, 'cultural flows' become disseminated through the

following channels: the 'market' where people openly buy and sell 'cultural flows', and 'forms of life', 'where cultural flows occur simply between fellow human beings in their mingling with one another in a free reciprocal flow' (Hannerz 1996:132). Nevertheless, he suggests that in some cases, these different channels of cultural production and dissemination melt into one. This is the case when 'forms of life' are transformed into 'cultural commodities' to be sold in the market. Accordingly, vernacular street cultures of Brixton (forms of life), through the aestheticising workings of local cultures of gentrification, might have transformed into 'cultural commodities' to be indirectly sold within the metropolitan market. In this sense, local gentrification appears indirectly to commodify the local street vernacular.

4.4 Constructing the local multicultural community.

'The multicultural has itself become the 'floating signifier' whose enigma lies less in itself than in the discursive uses of it'
Bhabha 2000 (cited in Hesse 2000:1).

4.4.1 Communities, imagination and symbolic construction.

In this part of the chapter, I exemplify the ways that the local multicultural community becomes constructed, narrated and lived. In more detail, I try to expose particular dialogic moments, where various constructions of the local multicultural community become crystallized in language or instances of local talk.

The main reason that such a narrative theme becomes selected for a detailed interrogation results from its close relation to core questions of this research. As mentioned in chapter one, this thesis investigates levels of multicultural interaction within the contemporary postmodern-postcolonial formations of Brixton and Brick-Lane. To put it differently, it examines particular kinds of intercultural contact that

take place within these contemporary 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992:4); it interrogates particular forms of multiculturalism that unfold within these contemporary 'zones of transition'. From such a perspective, the particular ways that these individual 'movers in' go on to construct their versions of the local multicultural world appear as quintessential for the aims and objectives of this thesis.

As it has been widely acknowledged within a number of academic theories (Anderson 1983, Back 1996:29), communities become firstly 'imagined', whilst later on, outlined and lived across the human environment. Following these lines, it becomes apparent that the imaginary ways that people go on to perceive themselves, their links with one another, their relations of inclusion or exclusion, association or disassociation are, more than anything else, mental constructions. As Cohen (1989) has argued any concept of community is based upon a relationship of similarity and difference; members of a community share something in-between them, which separates them from members of other communities. By the same token, this relationship of similarity and difference is founded upon the construction of a 'symbolic boundary'. In more detail, this symbolic construction of communitarian boundaries is what brings members of a community together dividing them from the rest.

In what follows, I exemplify the emergence of a dominant narrative of acute multicultural separation and disassociation. However, this narrative takes different disguises. Firstly, class, income, educational and lifestyle differences are deemed responsible for contemporary conditions of local multicultural disassociation. From such a perspective, 'race' and 'culture' give way to income and class as defining factors of division. Under these lights, the local multicultural world of Brixton becomes presented as one of division and separation, mainly because, of socio-economic rather than cultural reasons. Secondly, there is another version of this narrative of local multicultural division where 'class' and income differentiations become complemented by a strong 'cultural' resonance that reifies 'race'. Following these lines, a racialised concept of culture in conjunction with low levels of income or 'class' appear to produce 'bad' unchangeable ethnicities (Cohen 1999:7). In this sense, the multicultural world of Brixton becomes divided between

flexible and fixed or racialised ethnicities.

4.4.2 Living within your 'bubble' in Brixton: 'race', ethnicity, income and class.

A first version of this local multicultural narrative of disassociation presents Brixton as inhabited by a young 'white middle-class' and local 'indigenous' 'black' populations. Carla, a 'white' young female 'newcomer' from Germany, comments:

G.M: What do you think about the mix of the area?

Carla: I think, better, I would say that they are the indigenous population, and then you get a mixture of white people, I mean the white population is very middle-class that probably I belong to myself, which is not that I say that's what I need to feel comfortable, but I quite like the mix.

To start reflecting on the above quotation, 'white' gentrifiers in Brixton appear to become narrated as not sharing any close communitarian ties. Accordingly, they do not become depicted as a community in itself. As Carla characteristically says 'you get a mixture of white people'. Under these lights, local 'movers in' come together mainly in terms of difference to 'indigenous' populations, instead of bonds of commonality between them. From such a perspective the symbolic construction of a community boundary appears to produce two different categories of people: 'white' middle class gentrifiers vs 'native' people. Nevertheless, what brings the former together, whilst separates and distinguishes them from the latter, is income and class. Accordingly, the 'white' 'movers in' of Brixton become uniformly depicted as 'middle-class'. Alternatively, local indigenous populations become narrated as 'less' affluent. In this sense, 'class' and income clearly divide the multicultural world of Brixton. Nevertheless, this is a kind of narrative that breeds tendencies of social un-differentiation within local residing colours.

Later on in the interview, I asked Carla her opinion about the extent of local multicultural interactions. Carla, argued the following:

G.M.: What do you think about present multicultural interaction in Brixton?

Carla: I don't think, it's not quite integrated as they would like it to be...it is really strange living in the area, because the circles I move in, because the places I go to, ...it's sometimes really living side by side as we were inhabiting, you know, different bubbles and as we were not able to hear each other, sense each other, we kind of sort of move along side by side.

Carla's multicultural narrative deploys the primordial metaphor of 'cultures' as isolated spheres or islands that although they 'touch' they do not seem to 'interpenetrate each other' (Park 1967:41). Nevertheless, her explanation is not culturalistic to any extent. Instead, local socio-economic divisions that correspond to different 'races' or 'colours' of Brixton become depicted as responsible for these separate 'bubbles'. Following these lines, the contemporary world of Brixton becomes presented as constituted by different socio-economic 'bubbles', which are totally disconnected and disassociated. By all accounts, this is a narrative construction that renders meaningful through a language of multiculturalism, as unconnected socio-economic realities. Differences or ways of life become allocated to specific socio-economic groups, without any possibility, for local transgressions. In short, 'movers in' and 'natives' allegedly inhabit different social worlds (bubbles), totally uninterested or unaware of each other. From this perspective, cultures of gentrification in Brixton become separated from 'native' cultures strictly in terms of rigid socio-economic division.

In a similar fashion, Marian again, deploys the same metaphor of spatially co-existing 'bubbles' to depict present local conditions of multiculturalism. By the same token, Marian's narrative does not draw on any 'ethnic' or 'cultural' resonance. Alternatively, her local narrative of a multicultural co-existence of acute

disassociation acknowledges class or income in conjunction with lifestyle, education and habitus as the most important determinants of Brixton's social division. Marian comments:

G.M.: What do you think about the local multicultural interaction?

Marian: They are these pockets of different sorts of lifestyles that go on in Brixton that don't really touch each other, you know, and when these people do come in Brixton [movers in], they think they live in Brixton but they don't, they are just living in their bubble in Brixton.

[Later on in the interview]

I think, I would also say its not just about multiculturalism, I mean you know, multiculturalism, I wouldn't even say that, its about the people that have always been in Brixton and they haven't got anything in Brixton, and its not just about whether you are black or white or whatever, its about have and have nots... its not just about what colour you are, its about education, its about social background, its about interests, its about what people talk about, what papers people read, its not as simple as that.

To sum up, within this first local multicultural narrative of acute separation and disassociation, Brixton is constructed as a place where two different local communities ('black' & 'white', 'affluent'-'non-affluent', 'indigenous' working-classes and gentrifying 'middle-classes') reside. Although they 'share' the area, they appear unable to proceed into any acts of inter-cultural or inter-class communication and interplay. As Marian characteristically says, these different local multicultural worlds 'don't even touch each other'. Accordingly, contemporary local conditions of multiculturalism become presented as unfit or impotent for any 'cultural, social or economic cross-overs.

Another version of this dominant narrative of acute multicultural disassociation and minimum interaction combines a clearly socio-economic perspective with a racialised culturalistic resonance. Following these lines, a language of multiculturalism as unconnected realities (Welsh 1999:197) appears also at work. Kalbir, a British-Pakistani young woman that recently moved into the area and works for the BBC, comments:

G.M.: What are your thoughts about local interaction?

Kalbir: What I think about Brixton, is that I think you very much could see different communities live, side by side harmoniously, but again there isn't much interaction...I don't mean that there is tension between them but there isn't much going on between them, its just like obviously I go to the market, I go to the shops, and I see the Jamaican whoever, but because I am part of the sort of young media type that live in Brixton, I am more likely to meet people through that, than I am to go to talk to the Jamaican family next door.

[Later on in the interview]

G.M.: Which do you think are the main reasons for this minimum interaction?

Kalbir: I mean if you look around, I see many black girls of my age, who live here and maybe born and brought up in the West, if you like in Britain, and yeah, they've all got like two to three children and they are like pushing them whatever, and they are on my age or even younger than me, and is such that kind of difference in perception of what is expected in their lives and what is expected in my life...I definitely feel that there is a big gulf there, I sort of look at them and I think they look at me and there are a bit like, you know they think probably I am sort of like this person that flicks around and goes to poncey cinemas like Ritzy and they are like all there in their kind of matching

jeans and sort of like babies in designers gear...is such a difference in lifestyles and yet we all live in the same place, it's very strange, I don't know what point I try to make, but I guess it's a kind of, class isn't always the right word, you know, because sometimes class divisions are just still there, but also is just very deep, deep underlying cultural, racial themes probably that infect us all as a racial group, what is expected from you, as an eighteen year old black girl from certain households in Brixton, and if you were black living in Primrose Hill it would be very different, you know.

Kalbir makes sense of the supposedly little local inter-cultural communication, as the combined outcome of class, lifestyle choices, income differentiation etc. in conjunction with a deep seated 'cultural', 'ethnic' or 'racial' resonance. As she says, through reflecting on intersubjective local acts of phenomenology with 'black' girls of her own age carrying babies around Brixton, she is amazed by the acute difference of what is expected from her life and their lives respectively. Concurrently, these two local lives become constructed as diametrically opposed; They almost become juxtaposed. Nevertheless, they are not depicted as different simply because of 'cultural' or 'racial' reasons. Alternatively, they are constructed as opposing because of a combination of 'class' with 'cultural' identity. However, such a strong definition of cultural identity appears to emanate and build upon a 'racial' resonance. This goes hand in hand, with Walter Ben Michaels suggestion that 'accounts of cultural identity that do any cultural work require a racial component' (Michaels 1998:59). Subsequently, within Kalbir's multicultural narrative, culture can easily come and substitute for 'race'. As she characteristically says, there are these 'deep, deep, underlying, cultural, racial themes' capable of dividing us along 'racial' or 'cultural' lines. Under these lights, issues of 'cultural identity' become a new euphemism for 'race'. What we are witnessing is a process of racialisation of cultural identity or ethnicity. In other words, 'racial' resonance disguised as 'culture' succeeds in reifying its ontological relevance and status. For

exactly these reasons, Kenan Malik (1996:150) has prompted us to be suspicious towards contemporary theories of pluralism and cultural diversity that hide 'race' behind a mask of 'culture'.

Nevertheless, these racialised forms of 'cultural identities' are not sufficient enough to explain minimum levels of local multicultural interaction. Alternatively, it is class, income, lifestyle choices etc. closely intertwined with these supposedly strong, deep underlying 'cultural-racial' influences that produce this local multiculturalism of disassociation. However, the argument does not seem to stop there. Kalbir, acknowledges that a 'class' or income related elevation of social status can transform formerly racialised 'cultural' identities. As she characteristically says, a 'black girl' from Primrose Hill is totally different from her everyday intersubjective encounters in Brixton. Accordingly, a diametrical image of the local multicultural world breaks into the fore, where an almost 'white', 'racially' or 'culturally' flexible 'middle-class' co-exists with 'natives', trapped within their own racialised identities and low economic status. Although the former, are able to leave their 'cultural' identities behind, the latter, become constructed as 'doomed' to live and perform always the same racialised 'cultural' selves.

In relation to the emergence of Stuart Hall's 'new ethnicity' paradigm, Phil Cohen (1999:7) argued that cultural identities or ethnicities become divided between 'good' and 'bad' ones. On one hand, you have flexible, changeable 'good' ethnicities that correspond with a certain extent of affluence or middle-classness, whilst on the other, you have unchangeable, 'bad' ones that stand for 'race' and low economic status. By the same token, Friedman has suggested that 'The urban poor, ethnically mixed urban ghetto is an arena that does not immediately cater to the construction of explicitly hybrid identities' (cited in Ifekwunigwe 1999:181). From such a perspective, Kalbir's narrative seems to suggest that low economic status in conjunction with 'deep, deep underlying racial, cultural themes' tend to produce 'bad' ethnicities. They tend to create unchangeable cultural identities, as in the case of her intersubjective encounters with black girls in Brixton. On the contrary, a black girl from Primrose Hill can be different; her elevated social status can rescue her from deep seated, racialised forms of cultural influences. In short, the 'black'

girl from Primrose Hill stands as an example of a 'good' changeable ethnicity.

To continue, Kalbir mentions a particular local micro-space that defies all these alleged social, economic, cultural and racial divisions. Within this space, the local multiculturalism of separation ceases at last. This place is the local sauna in Brixton Recreation Centre. Accordingly, this particular space stands for a symbolic multicultural micro-heaven where 'new' and 'old' people of Brixton can come together, talk to each other and act as connected social beings. By the same token, within the sauna, constructions of local communitarian boundaries appear to break down.

In a similar fashion to this, Michel Foucault (1986) has suggested that within any society there are spaces, which succeed in remaining and functioning outside the norms and logic of any social order. Accordingly, he names these spaces as 'heterotopias'; places that are and remain different from all the rest (hetero=different, topos=space). Following these lines, the local sauna appears to comprise a micro 'heterotopia', where degrees of local separation are left behind and multicultural communication thrives. To put it differently, it constitutes a local micro-space that defies the logic of this fast transforming area. For someone, to be in the sauna is almost a cathartic experience. At the same time, in Kalbir's case, a gender comradeship seems at work. The sauna is exclusively for women. In this sense, even for a brief time, gender similarities and female forms of bonding appear more powerful than cultural, racial or economic divisions to delineate their subjects. Similarities become more important than differences. Within this steaming environment different differences lose their authority. Kalbir comments:

Kalbir: That's a good point really, sometimes I go to Brixton Recreation Centre, which is the leisure centre near the tube station and I go swimming there, exercising there, and I go to the sauna with my friends, who are white ok, in the sauna its predominantly black women, you know, everything is steaming and its full of black women, there are like old black women, ten year olds, twenty year olds, everything, and we end up chatting

cause obviously its like we are all in there and its really, really bizarre, cause I always say things like 'it was really nice' and their always replying like, you know, 'we're always here on Thursday, maybe see you on Thursday', and I am like 'yeah, maybe see you on Thursday' and when I come out I think, 'God, I never talk to these people and they never talk to me.'

4.4.3 Multiculturalism, the street and local trading culture.

In sharp contrast to the above narrative of minimum intercultural communication, I shall exemplify the existence of another narrative that represents Brixton as the spatial domain of multiplicities and a vibrant, street-based multicultural interaction.

Marcus, is a 'white' creative professional, originally coming from Glasgow, and a 'newcomer' in the area. He goes on to reflect on the present multicultural condition of Brixton:

G.M.: What do you believe about local multiculturalism? First of all, how would you define multiculturalism?

Marcus: I suppose the key thing is that you can never, it's very difficult to point a majority, that seems to me the key thing if multiculturalism or other words of that kind mean anything at all, it's just that there is no majority and that's a really massive thing in Brixton.

Later on in the interview, I asked his opinion about local levels of inter-cultural or inter-ethnic communication. The following exchange took place:

G.M.: What do you think about the local interaction between all these minorities in the area?

Marcus: I think it's really amazing.

G.M.: Where are the spaces where you can feel this interaction?

Marcus: On the street.

G.M.: What kind of interaction is it? Is it verbal, visual, or I don't know, a different kind of interaction?

Marcus: Verbal, I suppose the important thing apart from this lack of majority is kind of the trading culture that Brixton has, and market culture that has to do with people occupying the streets more than they do in other areas, the whole continuum from one level, drug dealing, right through the market, right through the local businesses, very, very, vibrant trading culture, it's very rare in this country, I mean you need people on the streets to have that.

In the above quotation, Brixton becomes presented as possessing a very vibrant 'trading' or 'market' culture that manifests itself on the streets. As Marcus argues, in Brixton 'people are occupying the streets'⁵⁹. Allegedly, you have people on the streets performing and enacting a vibrant 'trading' culture. Following these lines, different ethnic and cultural groups come to the market to buy or sell and successively connect with each other in a positive way. Different differences are left aside for the sake of profitable exchange and commerce. In effect, local conditions of multiculturalism appear to unfold on a street level strictly through the workings of 'market' and commerce. Under these lights, one is led to consider that without the 'market', local multicultural interaction would evaporate into thin air. In short, it is suggested that local multiculturalism cannot survive without the market and vice versa.

⁵⁹ This kind of argument appears to replicate Lord Scarman's earlier statement about the people of Brixton as people of the 'street' (Lord Scarman 1981).

4.4.4 Evaluating local multiculturalism and change.

I've come across once or twice people who have been here longer than me, they talk about a genuine Brixton that now it's gone, things like it were famous for being the centre of an alternative lifestyle, sort of saying, those sort of longer standing inhabitants of the area, not buying the idea of multicultural Brixton, they think it was not a good thing.

Alexander, a 'newcomer' in the area.

After exposing present constructions of local multiculturalism, I shall examine other narratives that recreate the area's past. At the same time, within these narratives there is an element of temporality intrinsically built within them. In effect, the research is not strictly limited to a continuous present but attempts to revive a local, 'bygone' past. That said, it seems plausible that this recreated past can be deployed as a measurement of comparison to local presents.

In what follows, I exemplify particular moments of local talk, which manifest the existence of a narrative that criticises contemporary conditions of multiculturalism or the 'logic' of present multicultural living. Following these lines, contemporary multicultural Brixton becomes presented as a space of unauthentic forms of multiculturalism in comparison to a 'truer', earlier local multicultural past.

Before I move any further, I should refer to two spatial symbols that relate and correspond to a distinction between 'earlier' and 'later' cultures of gentrification in Brixton. In broad terms, contemporary academic geographical thinking appears to advocate that the 'production of space' (Lefebvre 1991) depends on the production of symbols (Zukin 1995:288). Accordingly, urban symbolism creates meanings, which become diffused and attached within the urban environment. In this sense, 'framings' of space (Zukin 1992:227, 1995:179), inscriptions of power or meaning within the landscape find their ways to become manifested. Following these lines, I shall identify local tangible symbols that correlate with different eras of local

gentrification. By all accounts, these two symbols are the 'CoolTans Art' and the 'Dogstar'. In some sense, they seem to comprise local symbolic micro-spaces of extreme significance and attachment.

The CoolTan Arts collective was initially formed in June 1991. It was named after the 'squatted' CoolTan Suntan Lotion factory in Efra Road. In 1992, the CoolTan's collective moved, for a short period, to some other abandoned offices in Coldharbour Lane before squatting in the old Unemployment Benefit Office located along the same street. As Shave Collins, one of the main organisers of CoolTan's co-operative says:

'We have trod a new path. We have exposed new art in new circumstances; we have been part of the social changes and the cultural rumblings of the last few years. We have provided music, pictures, parties, politics, poetry, food and shelter for many people who might not otherwise come across it, or been able to afford it. Maybe, and not just in our wildest dreams, we have offered a new perspective for some people on life and other ways of living it' (<http://www.urban75org/brixton/features/colltan.html>).



Image 11: The CoolTan Arts collective www.urban75.com December 2002

Apart from all these artistic and social activities, CoolTan's became widely known for its 'rave' parties. During the early 1990s, something more than fifteen hundred people visited its premises, during the weekend, for a good night out. Unfortunately for its visitors and local admirers, the CoolTan co-operative was eventually evicted out of its premises in 1995. The locally based 'Voice' newspaper bought up the premises, in an act of real estate speculation.

On the other hand, the 'Dogstar', located on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and Railton Road, comprises the second local micro-space of symbolic importance. For instance, Mel, a 'white' woman in her early thirties, who has been living in the area for more than a decade, argues the following:

Mel: The Dogstar, the Dogstar was very symbolic, it was in 97, 96-97 yeah, it was about the time that new people started to come into Brixton, kind of not believing that Brixton was a dangerous place, but instead, discovering that it was fun, and a good place to hang out.

In terms of money, the 'Dogstar' was partly funded by Brixton City Challenge sums. It opened at the same premises where the 'Atlantic Pub' used to be. Broadly speaking, the 'Atlantic Pub' was one of the most potent symbols of 'black' Brixton from the early years of West Indian settlement. It was one of the most established local 'black' spaces. As a result, the 'Dogstar' became an issue of local controversy with many residents openly showing dissatisfaction with these developments. During the late 1990s, in one of the latest local mini-scale 'riots', the 'Dogstar' was attacked and a fire broke out. The premises survived the arson with significant damage. Brixton City Challenge again, provided part of the restoration money. During the course of my fieldwork, some informants ('natives') disapprovingly referred to it as the 'Dogs'.

Michael, is a 'white' academic researcher in one of South London's local universities. He has been living in the area since the early 1990s. In what follows, he goes on to recreate and reconstruct past multicultural conditions within the area:

Michael: Brixton had always had this, for a long time it had this sort of racial divide, a loose racial divide, between the sort of, the more sort of based, fixed black community, which has been there for a long time and the sort of counter-culture community and the gay community which have been there I guess for about fifteen years or something...and it was quite racially divided, but I don't think, this is maybe naïve to think so, but I don't think racially, in a sense it was divided because of the different spaces that people lived, you know, the white community would not go and hang out in the sort of drinking places of Railton Road, these were the black spaces, they have been, would be and continue to be...but they ['white' counter culture] were organising squatting events and parties and alternative political events, different sort of territorially organised spaces or territorially organised practices, linked to different socio-cultural histories of Brixton .

In the above quotation, Michael acknowledges that a 'racial' divide used to inform past local configurations of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, he quickly suggests that this 'racial divide' was of a loose nature. Following these lines, this local 'past' separation along 'racial' or 'cultural' lines becomes attributed to the fact that different groups inhabited different spaces. Accordingly, he is eager to downplay former 'alternative' Brixton's 'racial' or 'cultural' divisions. He attempts to do so by shifting emphasis from 'race' and 'culture' to urban space. Through this metonymic trajectory, from 'race' to space, his narrative transforms into a story of a successful 'past' multiculturalism, which simply inhabited different spaces. Under these lights, past 'alternative' Brixton becomes presented as a local community that happened to be organised in terms of different culturally inhabited spaces.

Later on in the interview, Michael goes on to depict two historically, almost qualitatively different, 'white' Brixtons, closely corresponding to different eras or

cultures of local gentrification. The first one, is the 'alternative' Brixton of his youth that he proudly feels part of, whilst the second, a much more contemporary commodified version of 'corporate' Brixton. Under these lights, past 'alternative' Brixton appears to stand for authentic forms of local multiculturalism. From such an angle, the notion of spatial authenticity enters the picture. Following these lines, an authentic past 'alternative' Brixton becomes constructed based upon a closed definition of its meaning. As Massey (1994) has argued such positions rest 'on a particular view of place. It is a view of place as bounded, as in various ways a site of an authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity. It is a conceptualization of place which rests in part on the view of place as stasis' (Massey 1994:5). Moreover, through this view of place as stasis, through this enclosure of its meaning and corresponding spatial identities, a kind of nostalgia for a past, 'alternative' Brixton becomes communicated. Additionally, these earlier forms of authentic multiculturalism, relating to 'alternative' cultures of gentrification in Brixton, were allegedly based upon a certain level of intercultural politics of solidarity. Nevertheless, these past political or 'alternative' cultures of Brixton have withered away. What seem to be left are contemporary versions of 'surface' or, even, 'Benetton' multiculturalism. Accordingly, a downhill transition from authentic to in-authentic forms of multiculturalism has taken place within the years of intense commercialisation of the area (the era of the newcomers). In a similar manner, this transition becomes further inscribed and manifested within the local urban environment, through the disappearance of 'CoolTan's' and the emergence of 'Dogstar' as the most powerful local symbol. Michael comments:

Michael: But then all that closed, there was a sense it quickly became much more corporate I suppose, and ask anyone who went to CoolTan's and paid on a Saturday night, for an all night rave, pay four quid maximum, all of a sudden you had to pay, how much it was, I think it was a fiver to get into the Dogstar just to have a drink, and those kind of differences...somewhere like the Dogstar, wasn't just white but it was white and sort of,

not exactly money but corporate and although you've got two essentially white places, one of them is a sort of white, I don't want to say that the white counter culture as such is any better than the white sort of youth culture or something, but they do have different attitudes towards the community, one of them is especially trying to, I don't know, live in a different fashion, have different things going on, create alternative spaces, as part of it it's a very strong sense of being Brixtonian, and the other is just like, you know, party, pubs, coming from the West End, they don't have any sense at all of the local environment and politics of Brixton, so the two sides, both white, I think there are quite serious differences between them.

G.M.: So how would you describe the 'alternative' culture of Brixton in relation to the present multicultural tendencies in the area?

Michael: The sort of culture that emerges in many ways from a certain amount of poverty and alternative living, where this more mainstream multiculturalism feels much more surface, you know, it's a culture of Benetton.

Many writers have reflected on the kind of multiculturalism that Benetton's advertising campaigns recreate and diffuse (Back & Quaade 1993:65, Back & Solomos 1996:185). By all accounts, Benetton's advertising gimmicks are based upon a straightforward process of commodification of differences⁶⁰. Through its consequent campaigns, ethnic or cultural differences become commodified in order to increase the 'sign' and exchange value of its products. Having that in mind, Michael's above quotation exemplifies a similar process of commodification of differences in the case of contemporary multicultural Brixton. From such a perspective, locally accumulated differences appear to be transformed into

⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion on Benetton's multicultural advertising gimmicks see chapter three: 3.4.3.

commodities that feed the appetite of local contemporary cultures of gentrification for otherness. Accordingly, surface or shallow forms of local multiculturalism appear to characterise the recent period of intense gentrification in Brixton. Nevertheless, what allegedly has been lost, are earlier 'authentic' forms of multiculturalism based on a 'strong sense of being Brixtonian'.

4.5 'Racing' the 'self'.

'But what is self-hood once it has lost the support of sameness?'

Paul Ricoeur (1992:150).

In any discussion about the present and future of multiculturalism, the issue of cultural identity breaks into the fore. Following these lights, the ways we 'see' ourselves, how we frame ourselves and our cultural identities plays an essential role in any debate on multiculturalism. First and foremost, the notion of multiculturalism implies the existence of a number of cultural 'selves' that their alleged compatibility or incompatibility, openness or closeness to each other influences and feeds this associative total. Accordingly, any concept of a multicultural condition is closely related to theories of the cultural 'self'. By the same token, any idea of a multicultural community cannot be considered without addressing the issues of constructing and articulating a notion of a cultural 'self'.

In what follows, I exemplify the existence of various identity-related narratives, crystallized within specific moments of local talk. Most importantly, I identify the particular languages of difference that these individual 'movers in' deploy in order to make sense of themselves and others. In short, how do they go on to present themselves within these most personal acts of storytelling? Do they proceed into 'monocultural' or 'multicultural' significations of themselves? How do they go on to narrate difference? Has difference become depicted as something 'external' or 'internal' to oneself? How can one 'thrive' on locally accumulated difference? By consuming it or internalising it? And if Brixton has become represented as a local

arena of multiple differences, what is the particular effect that these differences might have on one-self? Corrosive or galvanizing? But let us explore these positions.

In writing about contemporary postmodern-postcolonial conditions recent years have witnessed a proliferation of a literature that desperately seeks to make sense of the 'self' (Rutherford 1990:9, Hall 1990:222, Min-Ha 1991:107, Bhavnani & Phoenix 1994:6, Hall 1996b:2, Rew & Campbell 1999:13). According to this literature, two distinct theoretical pathways of analysing identity emerge. On one hand, lays a genre of conceptualisations that tends to treat identity as 'sameness' (Ricoeur 1992:2, Hall 1990:223). From this perspective, an essentialised view on identity breaks into the fore, which argues for the existence of a 'true', closely corresponding to one's 'ethnic culture' or 'way of life', self. On the other hand, an alternative set of identity formulations exists, which advocates that identity should be seen through the lenses of 'difference' (Ricoeur 1992:3, Hall 1990:225, Touraine 2000:3). Following these lines, the self might not necessarily the product of one's 'culture', but alternatively it might be comprised by a series of multiple identities, either in the state of competition or of merging in-between them. Accordingly, the self emerges as an ever-evolving 'process', always transforming itself through time and context (Hall 1990:222).

The dominant identity narrative, argues about the existence of 'fixed' cultural identities constantly proceeding into consumerist acts of local 'selective' multiculturalism. This narrative suggests that local gentrifying 'selves' approach differences by selecting and consuming cultural objects, products or even local conditions of personal affiliation. Accordingly, local differences are 'seen' as always remaining external to the gentrifying 'self'. From such a perspective, differences become narrated as un-transmittable qualities that can only be approached by being consumed within 'exotic' products or objects of desire. In short, local differences and consumerism come together and form one of the many contemporary manifestations of 'exotic' urban capitalism (Rutherford 1990:11).

Following these lines, locally accumulated differences become presented as having non-corrosive influences for the 'self'. The 'self' remains 'fixed' in her/his cultural

positioning, enhanced or better entertained by consumerist acts of local 'exotica'. From this perspective, a very rigid monocultural definition of a local gentrifying identity breaks into the fore, which negates and denounces any possibilities for 'multicultural' workings of differences within the intimate sphere of the 'self'.

Nick, is a 'white' British-Colombian creative professional that moved into the area quite recently. Nick comments:

G.M.: How do you approach differences in Brixton?

Nick: If its' gonna be another culture there, it's there, you learn to respect, you want to partake whatever the nice bits of that culture, like jerk-chicken, you know, whatever, they have to offer what you're interested in, you can, I mean, I am very self-serving with cultures, hey I like that Greek food, I take it, I don't like that Indian food, I am not gonna eat that, of that culture or offering...experiencing other cultures for me is quite easy, getting into it, I mean, what supposedly culture is made of.

Nick suggests that in order one to approach another culture, she/he should learn to respect it. Consequently, he acknowledges the philosophical ethos of 'recognition' to differences (Taylor 1994). Nevertheless, his statement reveals a sense of personal externality from the encountered cultures. For him, the self is not a multicultural entity. Oneself is not a multicultural existence. Instead, it is firmly located in one learned culture or like in his case, maybe two (Nick originally comes from Colombia but he spent most of his life in Britain) As he characteristically says, 'I am not a racist I have two cultures within me.' However, his internal multiculturalism appears to stop there. Everything exterior to his dual internally encoded culture becomes immediately external to himself.

Following these lines, this sort of a local selective multiculturalism or self-serving attitude towards differences closely resembles Ulf Hannerz's (1996) concept of a 'cosmopolitanism of competence' (ibid 1996:103). For Hannerz (1996), a 'cosmopolitanism of competence' becomes defined as ' the personal ability to make

one's way into other cultures' where 'competence with regard to alien cultures, itself entails a sense of mastery...it may be one kind of cosmopolitanism where the individual picks from other cultures only those pieces that suit himself'(ibid 1996:103).

In a similar fashion to this, Nick's self-serving attitude towards 'other' cultures demonstrates his own multicultural competence. Concurrently, Natalie, a 'white' American woman, who has been living in Brixton for more than a decade, defines a similar version of a local 'cosmopolitanism of competence'. She argues about her own personal technique of 'cultural dipping':

G.M.: What are the good things about Brixton?

Nataly: Where else, could you be, you know, where you can, from street to street, get like fifteen different types of food, you know, from Eritrean to Ghanaian, to Jamaican, to Japanese, to other South East Asian food, to Indian, to Italian, I mean its just, you know, to me that's really exciting to be able to kind like dip into little cultures, to cultures, you know what I mean?

Later on, within the course of the interview, Nick again suggested the following:

Nick: like Latins, we [Nick is British-Colombian] go to Latin bars, we gone go to 'Barcelona' or 'Bar Madrid' out of habit because that's what we like doing, Englanders won't because they are not into that, they are very into pubs or these sort of trendy kind of pubs, if everybody went to these things all the time you wouldn't be able to define yourself, then, you wouldn't have a multicultural society, you 'd have one culture that's defined by many different traits that means all the traits of all the different cultures that would be your society, it wouldn't be multicultural, it would just be a culture with different traits, so Brixton is a multicultural society, its not multicultural, its just

got different cultures living there.

Within the above quote, Nick goes on to reflect on what a multicultural society might be like. As he argues, a multicultural society simply signifies the etymological meaning of the word; a society with many cultures within it. However, these cultures do not necessarily have to intermingle or interact. If they did, then you wouldn't have a multicultural society, but one culture with many different traits. Subsequently, what you would have, would be an 'intermezzo' culture or multiculture (Back 1996:226). Nevertheless, for Nick this is not what multiculturalism is about. For him, multiculturalism can be defined as the co-existence at a societal level, of many different cultures having the powers to define and delineate their subjects. From this particular angle, each of us cannot really be a multicultural being. Instead, each of us comes from a specific culture, which defines and dictates our preferences, tastes or in a broader sense our patterns of existence.

In short, Nick speaks a language of structuralist differences that goes hand in hand with a solipstic view of the self. The self becomes perceived as solid, static or homogenic. In short, the self is essentially conceived as an unchangeable one-self. Within such a theorization there is not any space left for other differences to come and corrode the one and only essential cultural or 'ethnic' self. There is not any space left for other selves to break into the fore and challenge its dominance. Self as one-self is mono-culturally specific.

In summary, this dominant identity narrative is closely related to consumption. Following these lines, locally accumulated differences can only be consumed by being embedded in products. Accordingly, these local examples of a local consumerist 'cosmopolitanism of competence', a cosmopolitanism that finds its way through differences by consuming them, suggests a state of externality to the encountered differences. In this sense, a gentrifying 'monocultural' self selects and consumes the particles of 'other' cultures that she/he finds desirable. Broadly speaking, the 'monocultural' self, although entertained and amused by differences, does not appear to transform or become influenced by them. Accordingly, internal [within one-self] multiculture becomes rendered impossible, while external [outside

one-self] local multiculturalism can become manifested through the consumption of locally accumulated exoticas.

In sharp contrast to this narrative, I came across a different reading of identity. This narrative advocates that the 'self' might be alternatively constituted by a number of 'selves'. In other words, monocultural identifications become abandoned in favour of a multiplicity of identities (Weeks 1990:88, Hall 1990:222). In this sense, 'oneself' can be alternatively considered 'as another' (Ricour 1992:3). 'Otherness' becomes perceived as constitutional to oneself. In short, 'selfhood' does not really stand for 'sameness' but instead for changeability, fluidity and difference depending on context.

Mel is a young 'white' woman, who moved into the area as early as the early 1980s. Mel goes on to comment:

G.M.: What do you think about the level of interaction between different groups of individuals in Brixton?

Mel: It's really a different thing, in a way there are so many different communities, like you said it's not only black and white, and the way that people can be members of different communities.

G.M.: That's sounds interesting;

Mel: Well you can be part of several different groups... many people inhabit so many different boxes, nobody is just, you know I am not just white, I am co-existing in different boxes as well, I am a white person in Brixton, that I am so and so, I do this, I go there, I am defined than by more than one thing, and I think whatever colour you are the same holds truth.

What is specifically interesting about this approach is that by recognizing difference as internal to the self, it proceeds to acknowledging the possibility for a 'multicultural' existence. Accordingly, different cultures do not only co-exist in space, as with previous narratives of local multiculturalisms of exotic consumption,

but also, within oneself as well. Accordingly, differences become internal instead of external, and most importantly, the local [Brixtonian] is able to participate in multiple local differences. Subsequently, this identity narrative appears to advocate diverse cultural participation and cross-cultural sharings.

4.6 Conclusions.

What I attempted to do in this chapter was to cast some light on local 'cultures' of gentrification in Brixton. More specifically, I tried to exemplify the existence of particular 'moments' in language that conveyed specific narrative constructed meanings. As I argued, local processes of gentrification have been unfolding through a number of years, or even decades. Following these lines, I divided the local group of gentrifiers between 'longer established movers in' and 'newcomers'. The first local dominant narrative that emerged exemplified a tendency to relate local processes of gentrification to specific life stages. From such a perspective, gentrification becomes presented as a non-belonging ephemeral act. To put it differently, the gentrifying identity appears to use place to satisfy ephemeral needs. In this sense, personal acts and experiences of gentrification do not translate or result in a local sense of belonging. At the same time, within this local story of gentrification as non-belonging, a specific narrative correlation between 'race' and 'crime' appears mostly at work: 'black' masculine 'cultures' of Brixton become fundamentally seen through a pathologizing perspective. In short, these are the narrative uses of a language of criminalization of 'race'.

Secondly, there was another significant narrative, which exemplified, that local cultures of gentrification are fed by local regimes of visual consumption of differences. From such a perspective, the local vernacular world of Brixton appears to be 'seen' through an aestheticising filter; the 'streets' of Brixton seem to transform into performative arenas. Following these lines, Brixton becomes presented as an exciting theatre of differences. It becomes depicted as an essentially theatrical space. By all accounts, these narrative instances exemplify the existence

of processes of commodification of differences within local cultures of gentrification in Brixton.

In terms of constructions of local multicultural, a significant narrative goes on to describe a local multicultural condition of acute disassociation. Under these lights, the multicultural world of Brixton becomes presented through the metaphor of locally co-existing 'bubbles' that 'touch but do not interpenetrate'. Nevertheless, the alleged reasons for such a local condition of segregation to prevail are mainly social and economic. On the other hand, another version of this narrative appears to exemplify that 'race', disguised as 'culture', is partly responsible for local conditions of separation; these are the workings of a culturalistic resonance that reifies the 'old' concept of 'race'. Under these lights, in both cases, a language of multiculturalism as unconnected realities seems mainly at work. This is a language of difference that only sees walls and fences.

In sharp contrast to this dominant story of local multicultural disassociation, another strong narrative appears to exemplify the existence of a local thriving multiculturalism taking place through the workings of market and commerce. Under these lights, multiculturalism, street and market become irrevocably linked. The one cannot exist without the other and vice versa.

On another level, a narrative of a 'past' local multiculturalism of solidarity appears to break into the fore. This narrative goes on to revive images of a 'past', 'alternative' Brixton. Allegedly, strong 'past' political cultures of the area appeared to breed local conditions of intercultural solidarity. Nevertheless, 'alternative' Brixton mainly resulted from transcultural politics than any intermingling of 'cultures'. As this narrative goes, once these local political cultures faded away, what was allegedly left behind were just 'surface' forms of multiculturalism.

Last but not least, in terms of identity formation, a strong local dominant narrative appears to exemplify the existence of a monocultural gentrifying 'self' totally external to the encountered differences. Following these lines, these are the narrative workings of a solipstic view of the 'self'. The 'self' becomes presented as monocultural. Following these lines, any multicultural workings of the 'self' are denied in favour of a local consumerist 'cosmopolitanism of competence'. In this

sense, differences remain external, and as such, highly attractive, waiting to be consumed, but not influence, the core of oneself. On the other hand, another marginal identity narrative appears to advocate that the 'self' might be comprised by a number of different 'selves'. In this sense, external multiculturalism appears to give way to an internal co-existence of differences within oneself. Following these lines, the 'self' appears as able to participate and share in different cultural contexts; it becomes presented as a multicultural 'self'.

To conclude, these two contradictory identity narratives appear to epitomize what a multicultural city might be like. On one hand, lays the multicultural city of the solipstic 'self' that stands for an external consumption of differences based upon forms of a 'cosmopolitanism of competence'. From such an angle, cultural or 'ethnic' differences are viewed as attractive and subsequently become consumed. In this case, there is a need for local micro-'heterotopias', like the sauna, for differences to be put in brackets and similarities to come to the fore. On the other hand, lays the multicultural city of a fragmented, multicultural 'self' that alternatively presents the urban as an intercultural arena where different differences come together and influence each other. As each 'self' is allegedly comprised by a number of different cultural 'selves' multicultural communication and cultural sharing appear to thrive. Nevertheless, I shall return to these issues and reflect on them in detail within the conclusion part of this thesis (chapter eight).

More stories from Brixton: The 'native' economy.

'Emigration is the key to the metropolis'

Walter Benjamin (1985:42).

' I mean I was brought up in a multiracial society, so to me, I am used to it, it's not a sort of novelty to me, I am used to it, so I can't see why people get excited, all of my life I have been around people from different cultures, different colours'

Mirieli, a mid-twenties Black-British female shop assistant that works in Coldharbour Lane.

5.1 Introduction: Multiculturalism, 'market' and 'place'.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate and explore narrative constructions in relation to Brixton's 'native' economy⁶¹. As I shall argue, Brixton's 'native' economy comprises the 'space' where locally accumulated 'races', classes, ethnicities etc. come together to buy and sell, interact or ignore each other. To put it differently, the main objective of this chapter is to examine levels of local interaction through the workings of the 'native' economy. A 'market' led approach to local cultures of interaction, association or disassociation.

Before I move any further, I would like to refer to Sharon Zukin's (1992:223) binary conceptualization of 'market' and 'place' as diametrically opposing spaces. According to her post-marxist critique, the 'market' becomes perceived as a space, for the strict circulation of commodities, where no form of significant social interaction can be performed. On the other hand, the abstract category of 'place' becomes alternatively constructed as a 'shelter' for meaningful and intimate social

⁶¹ As it is widely known, processes of residential gentrification are usually accompanied and followed by a subsequent development of a local 'market' to cater for the 'newcomers' needs.

relations. In short, the 'market' cannot be a 'place' and vice versa; the spaces for the circulation of services and commodities are clearly designated from the 'places' of social being.

In sharp contrast to such oppositions between 'market forces' and social being, a number of contemporary economic theories suggest that 'markets' should be re-conceptualised as significant social spaces as well. According to such narratives, individuals go to the 'market' not only to buy or sell, but also, to practice, perform their social selves (Cope and Kalantzis 1997). From such an angle, the circulation of commodities appears to intertwine with forms of social being. The former cannot take place without the mediation of the latter. In this sense, the economic 'self' appears to be part of a broader social 'self'.

At the same time, this refusal to separate between 'market' and 'place' implies that processes of urban postmodernization, which result in the transformation of an urban 'vernacular' into a 'landscape of power' (Zukin 1992:227), do not necessarily herald the end of meaningful human relationships. The gentrified area does not transform overnight into a space for the strict circulation of commodities. Alternatively, forms of social being are born out of these acts of economism. In this sense, the economic cannot be divided from the social. To put it simply, there is the possibility that 'market' and 'place' might co-exist within the same spaces.

In what follows, I seek to identify forms and manifestations of local conditions of multiculturalism, 'as a meeting of cultures' (Touraine 2000:172), unfolding through the workings of a combined 'market'/'place'. Following these lines, the 'market' is not perceived anymore as a 'sterile' space, strictly designated for the workings of urban economy, but instead, as a simultaneously inter-subjective arena for exposure to different differences.

In order to explain myself better, I would like to introduce Marie Louise Pratt's (1992) concept of the 'contact zones'. For Pratt (1992) 'contact zones' are the 'social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination- like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived across the globe today'(Pratt 1992:4).

Following these lines, emerging 'market' spaces of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism, which go along with the development of an urban 'multicultural capitalism' (Cohen 1998:29), can be alternatively theorised as the new 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992:4) between 'ethnic' working cultures and cohabiting cultures of gentrification. These are the spaces where a multiplicity of gentrifiers and 'native' populations come together to interact or ignore each other; these are the places where different differences can influence one 'self'. Accordingly, they should be perceived as significant local intersubjective arenas for 'natives' and 'movers in' alike; they should be viewed as the specific micro-spaces that bring them together to negotiate their differences. In short, such a combined approach to 'market' and 'place' provides the necessary platform for the interaction between these two main groups involved within instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism.

5.2 Defining the 'natives': 'Race', ethnicity, gender and class.

At this particular point, I would like to draw emphasis on the duality of meaning of 'nativity'. To start with, gentrification studies habitually have proceeded into deploying a clear distinction between groups of gentrifiers and 'native' populations within unfolding processes of gentrification. From such an angle, the 'moving in' populations become clearly separated from the 'indigenous' people of the area. Following these lines, the former appear as more well-off 'intruders', who by acquiring or renting a property, come to live cheek by bowl with the 'natives'; although they share the same public spaces, nevertheless, a number of social distinctions appear to draw them apart. At the same time, gentrification leads to the displacement of 'native' populations (Raban 1974:86). By facing higher rents, eviction notes and a differentiated, more upmarket, local environment, a significant part of the 'natives' will eventually become evicted.

On the other hand, within any immigration debate, the very concept of the 'native' stands for indigenous populations, who become theorised as the 'host' society that 'accommodates' and receives successive migration waves. Following these lines,

national 'natives' become fellow citizens, or not, as in the case of illegal migration, with a number of 'others' that move into the country; both 'natives' and migrants come to share the same national space. At the same time, this geographical co-existence of 'natives' and 'ethnic' others has accelerated recently as a result of processes of intensification of economic globalisation (Sassen-Koob 1985:234, Sassen 1993, Appadurai 1996:33). In this sense, contemporary postmodern conditions are increasingly characterised by regimes of spatial co-existence, between 'natives' and 'others', mainly unfolding mainly within the metropolitan spaces of western advanced capitalism.

For the aims and objectives of this research, this notion of spatial 'nativity' is very central. More importantly, as I shall argue, a reversal of its meaning in conjunction with contemporary postmodern-postcolonial urban formations has occurred. Accordingly, in relation to Brixton and Brick Lane, this notion of 'nativity' stands for 'non-native' 'natives', who historically have settled within these spaces of contemporary urban transformation. To put it differently, 'non-native' migrant populations have created historically a 'home' for themselves within the areas of Brixton and Brick Lane. However, through the passage of time, these areas became increasingly the subjects of on-going processes of gentrification. Following these lines, 'non-native' migrant populations transformed into 'indigenous' populations that had to share these areas with a multiplicity of 'newcomers'. In this sense, national and local 'nativities' appear to contradict each other. At the same time, the very established vocabulary of gentrification that speaks about 'natives' and 'newcomers' is turned upside down within these instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism. From now on, 'non-native' migrants or settlers appear to transform into gentrifications' 'natives'; on the other hand, national 'natives' appear to mainly comprise any group of newcomers.

There is a common sense acknowledgment that processes of gentrification mainly produce two categories of 'natives': the ones that economically gain out of the processes and others who lose. Following these lines, the 'natives' are divided between 'winners' and 'losers'; the former, those who use capital to profit from these urban developments, most probably, will experience some economical gains,

whilst the latter, might probably lose their 'homes'.

In relation to the logistics of this research, the majority of my 'native' informants were probably amid the 'winners' of local gentrification. They seemed to experience a slight 'opening up' in their lives. However, very few of them had strong financial stakes in the area. Most of them were employees within the local 'native' economy. Nevertheless, they were holding a job and a certain level of optimism was evident in the air. As I shall argue, their personal stories and narratives appear to partly reflect this optimism.

In terms of employment, I conducted twenty-three interviews, with individuals, who were employed or self-employed, within the 'native' economy. The time zone for this research was predominantly the day economy of Brixton. Accordingly, the majority of these interviews were conducted with individuals, whose working patterns, unfolded during the day. Eleven of them were employed or self-employed in professions related to retail, another three were owners of second hand record shops, whilst the last four were divided between local entrepreneurs and art-related professionals. At the same time with these daily activities, Brixton has also developed a 'thriving' night-economy too. I attempted to include this part of the 'native' economy, by interviewing four min-cab drivers. Accordingly, this part of the research was conducted during the night-time.

In terms of class or social status, the majority of my informants were 'working-class' people. They were either holding a low or average paid job (sales assistants, minicab drivers etc.) or alternatively owned a small business (a grocery shop, liquor shop etc.). Most of them did not possess any academic qualifications and neither had the means to support themselves without working. In this sense, they can be loosely defined as working-class 'natives'.

In terms of gender, thirteen out of the total of twenty-three interviewees were male and ten were female. This gender discrepancy was partly due to the fact that minicab driving was an exclusively male dominated profession.

In terms of 'race', nineteen out of the twenty-three informants were Black-Britons, three of them could be loosely identified as 'white' while one of them as 'other' (Indonesian). In terms of ethnicity, nine out of the nineteen Black-Britons were

Nigerian-British, two were Ghanaian-British, seven were Jamaican-British whilst one was from Barbados. In a similar fashion, two out of the three, 'white'-Britons, were English, whilst the last remaining one was of Polish descent. This ethnicised sample appears to reflect contemporary processes of Africanization of South London. Following these lines, recent migration waves to South London have increasingly originated from African Commonwealth countries. In effect, while Brixton used to be mostly a strong Afro-Caribbean enclave (see Appendix A: Brixton), late African migration waves to the vicinity appear to have diluted this 'hegemonic', 'ethnic' presence. According to data from the 1991 census, 12.3% of Lambeths' population were identified as Black Caribbean, 5.3% as Black-African, while 1.4% as Black Other (London Research Centre 1995). In this sense, 'race' in Brixton has become increasingly diversified; local 'blackness' becomes redefined, among others, in relation to ethnicity or country of origin. From such a perspective, a homogenic category of 'blackness' or a notion 'of an essential black subject' (Hall 1995:254) gives ways to many different kinds of 'blackness'. There is not one 'black' as there is not one 'white' single category either. Both of them appear to include a diversity of 'ethnic' positions, genders, classes and subjectivities etc (see chapter two: 2.2).

Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting aspects that came out of this research was the 'ethnic division of labour' existing within the local economy (Cross & Waldinger 1992:151). Following these lines, most of these Black-British, African or Afro-Caribbean individuals were either self-employed (owning a small business) or alternatively occupied within the lower sectors of the local service economy. In a similar fashion to this, Phil Cohen (1998) in his own definition of 'multicultural capitalism' suggests that 'the [multicultural] accumulation process requires not only an internationalised flow of information and ideas from a diversity of sources around the world, but, the presence of diasporic networks of labour drawn from non-European cultures'(Cohen 1998:33).

Following on from this, an image of contemporary Brixton emerges where the majority of 'movers in' can be loosely defined as 'white' while the local small-scale economy is primarily owned or employs Black-British or Afro-Caribbean British

individuals⁶². In effect, for the case of contemporary postmodern-postcolonial Brixton, a specific ethnic division of labour exists, which not only organises production along rigid 'ethnic' lines, but also influences the sphere of consumption too. In effect, an image of a new more affluent Brixton emerges, which can provide adequate demand for the development of 'multicultural' or 'ethnic' forms of capitalism, based along clearly separated ethnic lines. In this particular fashion, the local spheres of production and consumption become clearly distinguished by an 'ethnic' divide.

In what follows, I shall investigate the following four narrative themes. Firstly, I will exemplify the existence of narratives of 'racial' safety in relation to Brixton. According to such narratives, Brixton becomes constructed as a 'safe' haven for the diverse 'black' populations of the capital. Secondly, I shall explore narrative attitudes in conjunction with local processes of urban redevelopment. More importantly, this particular investigation, will allow me to explore narrative constructions in relation to space and time. Following these lines, local versions of a past, present and future Brixton become juxtaposed into an exploration of a localised temporality. As I shall argue, narratives of local content become supplemented by stories of local concern. Thirdly, I will exemplify the ways that local multiculturalism becomes narrated and presented within instances of local 'talk'. To put it differently, I shall exemplify the uses of different languages of differences that go on to describe local conditions of multiculturalism. Accordingly, does local multiculturalism become presented as the spatial co-existence of monocultural realities or alternatively does it become depicted as a coming together of different differences? Last but not least, I will attempt to exemplify the uses of 'native' narrative constructions in relation to self-belonging and identity. More particularly, I shall examine narratives in relation to notions of individual and collective selfhood. Following these lines, does the 'self' appear to work through differences

⁶² At this particular point, I would like to mention that I share the criticisms of geographical studies based upon positivistic or social constructivist approaches to 'race' (Anderson 1998:205). In short, within this thesis 'race' and ethnicity is treated as a discursive category in which its meaning becomes malleable through time; they are not considered as all powerful categories that strictly form their subjects but instead as collective layers of a multiple self that can only become fully exposed on the grounds of pure subjectivity. Nevertheless, such simplifying categorisations along 'ethnic

as a 'diasporic' way of being, or alternatively, does it tend to reject everything that does not originate from oneself? Is there a new Black-Britain coming out of these 'native' narratives of Brixton? And more particularly, is it a kind of Britain capable of synthesising and bringing together different influences? But let us explore, in detail, these narrative themes.

5.3 Narratives of 'racial' safety.

In this part of the chapter, I shall exemplify the existence of narratives of 'racial' safety in relation to the area of Brixton. Following these lines, I shall expose narrative constructs of public safety or 'racial' danger featured within the narrative plots of 'native' Brixtonians. In other words, I attempt to elicit 'symbolic landscapes of danger or safety' (Cohen, Keith, Back 1996:7) out of the narratives of my 'native' informants.

At the same time, this preoccupation with landscapes of 'racial' danger or safety has become particularly topical within the last decade. Following these lines, a number of writers have argued about the emergence of 'racist' structures of feeling or xenophobia within mainland Europe (Sivanandan 1989, Wrench & Solomos 1993). Nevertheless, the contemporary rise of a 'Far-right' or 'anti-immigration' sentiment, from Austria and Netherlands to Denmark, has currently reconfirmed such claims. On the other hand, on British soil, the thugist, racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence clearly complements this sinister 'racist' picture.

Collins, a 'black' mini-cab driver of Nigerian descent in his thirties, goes on to narrate his metropolitan 'racial' geography of safety and danger. According to his account, Brixton is one of the safest places in London for 'black' people. As he characteristically says, the way he 'trusts' the 'white man' in Brixton is unparalleled to other areas in London. According to Collins' personal geography of racist threat, on one the hand you have non-racist places like Brixton, whilst on the other, you have racist epicentres of violence like Eltham⁶³ and Bermondsey. By all accounts,

lines' can illuminate contemporary forms of political economy of multicultural urban capitalism.

⁶³ At this particular point it should be noted that Eltham after the murder of the 'black' teenager Stephen Lawrence by a gang of racist 'white' thugs, seems to have gained a dreadful reputation of

these are places that should be avoided at any cost. As Collins says, he never drives his car further than Old Kent Road. This is the closest he gets to South-East London.

Following these lines, Brixton becomes constructed as a 'safe haven' to be compared to other sinister places of acute metropolitan racial hatred and violence. Within this personal imaginary geography of 'safety' and 'danger' Brixton appears to constitute a place where safety can be guaranteed; a place to feel safe and at 'home'; a space where 'races' can trust each other. Accordingly, a racially related risk mapping of London takes place with Eltham and Bermondsey at the top and Brixton at the bottom. Collins comments:

G.M.: Do you think Brixton is better than other areas in London, or do you think it's the same all across London?

Collins: No, no, no, it's better than other places in London, oh yeah, I mean the way I trust the white man in Brixton here, or maybe the white man I know, I don't trust anybody like that from Bermondsey or Eltham, you know these bad racist places, I don't trust them, I mean I would never take my car to go there, if somebody wanted a cab to go to Eltham, the most faraway place, I mean I have driven to Kent, is Old Kent Road, which is Bermondsey and I have to look up a little before I take whoever I am taking...I mean as a 'black' man I feel secure, safe here, than any other place, you understand, I mean I like this place, I love Brixton.

For Collins, Brixton appears to signify a place of racial 'trust'; a metropolitan area, where he, as a 'black' man, can be at ease with himself and his surroundings. As he says, the way he trusts the 'white' man in Brixton is totally different to others parts of the capital. Following these lines, he goes on to construct a different kind of local 'whiteness' for Brixton; a kind of 'whiteness' that he is able to trust and feel secure

racial hatred within any mental geography of racial safety or danger within the metropolis.

in its presence. In this sense, metropolitan areas of London appear to correspond and relate to different kinds of 'whiteness'; at one level they are the ones you can trust. Yet at another, lie the ones that you should be careful about and avoid. Accordingly, metropolitan 'whiteness' becomes narrated as either 'racist' or 'non-racist', 'safe' or 'sinister', 'trustworthy' or 'not-trustworthy' etc.

To sum up, through the above narratives, Brixton becomes constructed as a 'symbolic landscape' of 'racial' safety within the capital; a place where a 'black' man or woman can feel safely at 'home'.

5.4 On local transformation.

In what follows, I exemplify various 'native' attitudes towards contemporary processes of local urban development and gentrification. More particularly, the specific way that I attempt to do that is by exploring local versions of temporality. Following these lines, past, present and future narrative plots of Brixton become exposed and compared in order for local attitudes towards processes of redevelopment to be exemplified, judged and evaluated.

It is certainly the case that one of the most interesting aspects of 'native' stories and narrative constructions, is their ability to bring to the fore a sense of a comparative historical perspective. As a matter of fact, most of my 'native' informants have been brought up locally and have spent most of their lives in Brixton. In effect, they have experienced Brixton in the 'past', but also continue experiencing it in the 'present'. Accordingly, they are able to construct 'past' and 'present' comparative narratives based on their individual experiences⁶⁴.

To begin with, I shall identify dominant versions of 'past', 'present' and 'future' Brixtons. As I shall argue, a strong narrative of a local past is based on a reconstruction of the area as crime-ridden. Within these narratives Brixton becomes

⁶⁴ Nevertheless, one should always keep in mind that the way that we make sense of ourselves and the world around us is based upon our own acts of narration. Reality and experience seem to provide us with the 'raw' material to create our own life-stories. However, the specific ways that we deploy this material to make sense of our lives is clearly dependent on us (see chapter 2: 2.7.1).

presented as an area where anarchy and crime reigned. A second popular representation of a 'past' Brixton revolves around notions and images of strong local communities. Accordingly, a certain representation of the local 'past' emerges that recreates strong local communitarian ties and bonds.

In relation to the area's present, another strong narrative speaks of continuous local improvement and increasing optimism for the future. In brief, I coin this narrative as the local narrative of content. Accordingly, the 'present' state of Brixton is preferred to any past reconstructions of the area. Following these lines, local 'present' conditions become fundamentally narrated through the lines of mutual understanding and increasing prosperity. At the same time, this local narrative of content becomes antagonised from narratives of local concern. According to these narratives, significant numbers of 'native' Brixtonians have been evicted. In short, this particular genre of narratives unfolds around stories of local displacement. Sometimes, these antagonising stories of local content and concern can feature simultaneously within the same 'native' narrative plots. Following these lines, local processes of urban development and gentrification can be viewed both positively and negatively.

In relation to the 'future', a local dominant narrative envisions bright and successful local prospects. In a similar fashion to this, another way to view gentrification is as a futuristic urban discourse (Mills 1993:168). From this perspective, individuals who are directly or indirectly involved in unfolding processes of gentrification, go on to imagine, the area, in a different light. Accordingly, one is led to consider that processes of gentrification do not only materialise upon the urban environment, but simultaneously take place within a mental landscape as well. Following these lines, future discursive constructions about the landscape and personal futuristic visions of redevelopment appear to comprise an essential part of any gentrification process. From this angle, gentrification stands for the reversal and substitution of one spatial narrative by another (Zukin 1995:231). Accordingly, 'native' people with economic stakes within the gentrifying area can proceed into a wishful thinking or an optimistic local discourse about the area's prospects. Last but not least, I examine

Brixton's gentrification as a local wishful futuristic discourse.

A common narrative trope, which emerged during the course of the interviews, tends to present the area in highly criminalised lights. According to these narratives, the biggest problem of the previous decades was the unacceptable levels of petty crime and other violent crime activities. Accordingly, this 'past' criminalising repertoire creates an image crescendo of local criminality, which supposedly reached its peak point in the 1980s. Always according to this crescendo reconstruction of the 1980s as 'the' crime-ridden decade, the 1970s become depicted in an almost nostalgic fashion. Michael, a local 'black' dj in his early thirties coming from Nigeria, reminisces:

Michael: If you go back to Brixton in the seventies, from what I can remember, it was beautiful, funky, peaceful, from what I remember we used to have afros, you know, and you could leave your door open, children playing on the streets and everything like that, it was pretty good, good nice community, in those days back in the seventies, and then I left it in mid-seventies, came back in the late eighties, I stayed in an estate called Angel Town Estate and at this stage coming back, it was rough, well it was a lot of drugs, a lot of fights, a lot of gangs, a lot of shit like that, so during the time from leaving to coming back it just completely went down hill, it was at this stage that it went downhill, completely downhill.

In a similar fashion to this, Dominic, a Black-British male in his twenty originally coming from Barbados, comments:

G.M.: What do you remember from the eighties?

Dominic: Basically the eighties were really bad.

G.M.: What do you mean bad?

Dominic: Bad, crime and drugs, gangs, really, really bad, in the

eighties, that was around that time, a lot of problems around here then, a lot of problems.

Angela, a Black-British female of West Indian descent, goes on to narrate her own version of the early 1990s:

G.M.: What comes first to your mind when you think of the early 1990s in relation to Brixton?

Angela: Crime is a lot better now, because you don't hear much about crime, is not a lot happening like before, because there is not a basic, a stationery hang out where everybody could hang, where as before you could hardly walk down here [Coldharbour Lane], and you can walk now, its free to walk, and basically there were things done, everybody would know about them, and people, you would see, certain people that you know, from with see them is trouble and you don't see these people any more, a lot of people have either died by drugs, emmigrated, a lot of them doing big sentences in prison, that's made the area a lot quieter.

Angela, in the above quotation, declares the end of the 'Front line' era as 'the' local criminal hang-out and the arrival of a less threatening, 'safer' local present. In this sense, the late 1990s becomes depicted as less sinister and much 'safer' than earlier parts of the decade.

Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that within this plethora of past criminilalising narratives there is not any specific mention of 'race' or 'ethnicity'. In this sense, although past Brixton becomes heavily criminalised, there is not any attempt of racially or ethnically identifying the proprietors of crime. Accordingly, 'race', ethnicity and crime are not explicitly discursively linked. Alternatively, 'race' appears to exist somewhere in the discursive background, without really breaking into the narrative fore.

To continue, another story refers to 'past' local communitarian ties, which supposedly used to characterise the area. Following these narrative lines, 'past' Brixton becomes mainly recreated as an era of collectivities, whilst 'present' conditions of the area become alternatively constructed as an epoch of individuals. More importantly, this alleged local 'present' erection of individuality is directly related to contemporary commercial developments within the area and individual efforts for economic gains. Ronny, a Black-British male of Nigerian descent in his mid-thirties, goes on to comment:

G.M.: How would you describe Brixton in the 1970s and in the 1980s?

Ronny: In the seventies everything was more closed.

G.M.: What do you mean?

Ronny: Everybody knew each other, now there is a big difference because nobody knows each other, nobody wants to know, not any more.

G.M.: Why is that?

Ronny: Brixton now became so commercial, everybody wants to get what they can, and move on, where in the seventies, everybody kept really on groups, there were little units, you know, everybody worked in a unit, and now today everybody is single-minded now, completely, now today everybody is under a lot of pressure, but now today its I for myself, you know, he for himself and that is what is becoming.

G.M.: And when you say that in the seventies there was a sense of community around, do you mean a black community?

Ronny: Black or white, whoever was in Brixton, you know, to be honest everybody stands as an individual today, at least before you tend to see people in groups.

G.M.: Which period do you think you prefer?

Ronny: To be honest, because you see you've gone up now and

you expect to move on, this is what we become, so we all moving on, trying to grab what we can, so everybody is becoming that period now, which is try to get what you can get to move on.

As mentioned above, processes of gentrification result in the displacement of 'native' populations. As 'new' people move into the area, an increased demand for housing translates into inflated property prices and rents, which eventually transform into a narrative of eviction for the most vulnerable of 'natives'. As Jonathan Raban (1974) has argued, gentrification is 'Like the frontier, it produces edgy and painful encounters with the indigenous population...who are alternatively harassed with evictions notes and raised rents, and romanticised...as the 'real people'' (Raban 1974:80).

In a similar fashion to this, another strong 'native' narrative suggests that processes of displacement have taken place for a significant bulk of local people. More specifically, this displacement of local populations has allegedly occurred within the interim period from a local 'past' to a local 'present'. To put it differently, the passage from a local 'past' to a 'present' situation appears to signify and go along with spatial 'evictions' of 'native' populations (Deutsche 1996).

Following these lines, Andrian, a Black-British mini-cab driver of Nigerian descent, argues the following:

G.M.: What kinds of changes do you think might have happened in Brixton during the last two decades?

Andrian: What has happened is that, if you look carefully in the last ten years, to give you an example if you got to Saturn Road, this is like the centre of the residential part of Brixton, these places all used to belong to, not council flats, but they used to be controlled by council tenancies, but eventually the people got pushed out, private developers bought the premises, turned them to flats, obviously the people at the bottom of the ladder can't

buy such flats, so the people that bought them made this difference, because obviously in the morning they go to work and come back in the evening, you know, and it changed the outlook.

According to the above statement, private developers are mainly responsible for the redevelopment, gentrification and displacement of local 'native' populations in central Brixton. Nevertheless, other informants narrate a different story of 'native' displacement, where the local council allegedly played an active part within this narrative of eviction. Following these lines, a hidden 'conspiracy' appears at work. As Billig (1988) argues: 'In essence the ideology of conspiracy seeks to explain all major political events in the world in terms of an evil conspiracy, or series of conspiracies. The conspiracy theorist tells a story of hidden machinations by small groups who are plotting to subvert the natural order of the world...no matter what happens, the conspiracy theorist represents an extreme form of personal explanation, in that nothing happens by chance, since all is to be explained in terms of deliberate plotting' (Billig 1988:201-2).

In a similar fashion to this, Globis, a Black-British mini-cab driver of Guyanese origin in his mid-forties, reveals his own conspiracy theory:

G.M.: What do you think of all these changes that took place locally within the last two decades?

Globis: What has been happening in Brixton over the past ten to twenty years, is like authority, local authority has been moving the black community out of Lambeth and into surrounding areas, to accommodate the trendy neighbourhood which we got in Brixton at the moment...it's a design between the local authority and the business, to change the old chemistry of the Brixton set up.

To proceed, I should leave behind the local 'past' and continue with contemporary

narratives that reflect on a local 'present'. As mentioned above, Brixton's 'present' becomes narrated through a local narrative of content; a kind of a narrative that views positively most of the changes that occurred locally. Most importantly, this local story of content tends to 'see' most of local urban developments as progression. By doing that, it naturalises unfolding processes of gentrification under the lights of local improvement and well-being. But let us explore in detail this local narrative of content.

This specific narrative of local content mainly depicts a local 'present' that is qualitatively better than any local 'past'. This positive comparative evaluation is primarily based on the fact that the area has recently attracted 'new people' from across the capital. Allegedly, as Brixton used to be a predominantly 'black' area, this local arrival of 'new people' can bring different 'races' or ethnicities together and facilitate a better inter-racial or inter-cultural understanding. Chris, a Black-British male of African descent, who owns a liquor store along Coldharbour Lane, reflects on the current changes:

G.M.: What do you think of the changes that took place in the area?

Chris: I think, it's a good thing, this road, Coldharbour Lane itself, has attracted quite a lot of people from all kinds of backgrounds, all over London, that's good in a sense that it helps the community understand each other very well, in my opinion, it brings about the business, and of course nobody can deny that it attracted quite a lot of people, people come from all over to live in Brixton.

In a similar fashion to this, Todd, a local Black-British dj of Jamaican origin, who is also the owner of a second-hand record shop in Coldharbour Lane, comments:

G.M.: What do you think of the changes that have happened in the area recently?

Todd: I don't know, I suppose the people out of London, I mean as a black person you always think of Brixton as a black area, you know, so wherever I would go, if I went abroad, people that know about London would always associate Brixton with black people, you know, and I don't know, I think that sort of changing now...I've noticed a lot more younger people coming into the area, all sorts of people, it just seems we thrive more, I think they spend a lot of money in Brixton, so you see lots of bars spreading out, obviously bringing a lot more people in the area.

G.M.: Do you see that as a good thing or as a bad thing?

Todd: I think its a good thing, the whole thing is kind of changing, the whole demographics are changing, you know, you just have a lot of different races coming in here now, you know, it's not just solid predominantly black.

From the above statements it becomes obvious that the arrival of 'new people' in the area is positively heralded. As a direct result of this local arrival of 'new people', the area has allegedly been transformed from a mainly 'black' area to an integrated, mixed one that represents in a more balanced way the capital or the broader community. Accordingly, within these narratives of 'present' local content one can identify, firstly, a process of 'framing' or defining 'past' Brixton as 'black', but also, a desire of integration with the rest of the capital through the insertion of 'new people' within the area. For instance, Linda, a Black-British female from Barbados, who works as a shop-assistant in a stylish second-hand furniture shop in Coldharbour Lane, goes as far as to welcome the 'new people' in the area. Linda comments:

G.M.: What do you think of the recent changes in Brixton?

Linda: I can see the positive side of change, you know, it enabled us to open a shop like this, you know, so we can

welcome people who are new in the area.

In a similar fashion, Angela again, argues that while in the 'past' people were involved with negative things, mostly related to crime, at 'present' everybody seems preoccupied with more positive things in their lives; everybody seems to make something out of her/his life. Accordingly, the local 'past' becomes represented as negative and dark, whilst the present is seen as 'positive' and constructive. But let us hear Angela commenting on the topic:

G.M: What do you think of the changes that took place recently?

Angela: Everybody is basically going on with something more positive rather than negative, while before there was more of a negative vibe, where everybody would know everybody because basically to put everybody down, putting each other down, it wasn't as good as now.

Another version of this local narrative of content employs the primordial metaphor of race between developed or 'upmarket' metropolitan spaces and other less developed urban areas. Following these lines, less developed or 'vernacular' (Zukin 1992) areas attempt constantly to catch up with the leaders of this race. Nevertheless, through this urban metaphor two different subject positions become constructed; on one hand, you have the affluent, mainstream urban economy, whilst on the other, you have the 'followers', less economically developed urban parts. Generally speaking, the latter are constantly trying to catch up with the former. More importantly, within a contemporary neo-liberal globalised economy the only means available for such a 'catch up' are fundamentally restricted to the attraction of capital, investment or more affluent people within these less developed urban economies (vernacular economies). But let us hear, Dominic, a Black-British male of Jamaican origin in his mid-twenties, who works in a mobile phone shop along Acre-Lane, explaining his point:

G.M.: What do you think of the changes that took place in Brixton recently?

Dominic: Brixton has done all right, has done all right, because you know the area is getting a lot better, lot of people work in the city, live around this area, university students like yourself, I mean they live around here too, so it's not so bad as it was, literally it's a lot of better than it used to be, more businesses are coming in, bigger companies are opened down here, the high-street got now big stores there, it's getting much bigger and better, even Madonna was here the other day, you know, Madonna, she was here on Tuesday, in the Academy, we were publicised, it's definitely a good area, to match to, sort of, to match, I don't know how to put it, typical kind of London town kind of thing, typical London town sort of thing, that's what it turns out to be.

Following these lines, Dominic goes on to construct two metropolitan subject positions: one for the 'typical London town kind of thing' that stands for the mainstream affluent urban economy, whilst another for Brixton and other similar less affluent urban economies (inner-cities). Nevertheless, during the last few years as the direct result of the arrival of new business, capital and more affluent people within the area, Brixton allegedly has caught up with the mainstream urban economy. As he emphatically says, even Madonna came to Brixton to perform her only concert in London. Subsequently, always according to this narrative, the 'urban race' has almost finished with Brixton literally catching up with the leaders of this urban race.

On the other hand, another narrative suggests the loss of local feeling within the area. Examples of this local narrative of nostalgia, can be traced, in Globis', following statements:

G.M.: Do you consider yourself as a Brixtonian?

Globis: I am a Brixtonian, well I've been in Brixton for forty years ...I see myself as part of the structure of the community, there was a café in Durhall place and it was called the Brixtonian, two guys, a black guy and a white guy opened it, and it was just called the Brixtonian, it was an ordinary working man's café, and it was empty for a numbers of years till they opened it, they went bankrupt and it is now open with another name, SW9 bar, so at the end of the day, from the age of ten I used to go there, they had lots of teas and coffees, you used to go on a Tuesday afternoon, have your evening meal, and I just grew up in this environment...I feel like a stranger in Brixton now, I feel like a stranger, because when I leave Brixton station, I go left at the traffic light and it's a different community.

To sum up, these antagonizing narratives of present local content and concern are based upon different readings of space. As Massey (1994) has argued there are two ways of seeing and perceiving space and place. On one hand, lies a conceptualization of space that attempts to 'fix the meaning of particular spaces, to enclose them, endow them with fixed identities and to claim them for one's own' (ibid 1994:4). These are the spaces of nostalgia that one desperately seeks to preserve and maintain. The loss of their meaning or corresponding identities become inevitably perceived as deprivation. Following these lines, this local narrative of concern develops around a notion of a closed meaning of space and is accompanied by feelings of nostalgia, loss and deprivation. On the other hand, another theorisation of space argues that 'the identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place, is in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'. Places viewed this way are open and porous...Just as personal identities are argued to be multiple, shifting, possibly unbounded, so also...are the identities of space'(ibid

1994:5-7). Following on from this, this local narrative of content appears to advocate an open definition of place. From such a perspective, Brixton becomes presented as a place of future possibilities and prospects. Any close definition of its meaning becomes exchanged for future potentials. Most importantly, through this local narrative of content the present comes partly to reflect on the future. Through a phenomenological notion of time, where the past is ingrained within the present, whilst the present already forms part of the future, this narrative of content can translate into a positive story of a local multicultural future for the diverse 'native' inhabitants of Brixton. At the same time, as the very concept of regeneration stands for the re-invention or future representation of space, this narrative of content signifies a positive belief of participation in this re-invented space. Accordingly, through this local narrative of content articulated through specific speech acts of 'native' Brixtonians an open-ended meaning of Brixton is created. Nevertheless, through these forms of the 'sayable' 'native' Brixtonians appear as confident about their role in a regenerated local multicultural future; in a way, they feel part of it.

Last but not least, in a similar fashion to this present local narrative of content 'future' narratives of the area envision Brixton in a positive light. As mentioned above, processes of gentrification can be considered as future urban discourses. People that move into the area or individuals related to the local economy proceed into constructing local futuristic urban visions. By doing so, they mainly project their wishful thinking upon the local landscape. Peter is one of the most successful local night-club owners. He was born in Brixton during the early sixties in a family of Polish immigrants. He started his own night-club during the late 1970s, which through the years became a night-life legend and a significant spot within the capital. In what follows, Peter embarks on a local discourse about the future of the local night-economy:

G.M.: Do you think that the future of Brixton lays in its 24 hour economy?

Peter: I hope within the next five years, there is room for a jazz bar in Brixton, a jazz and blues bar, like you know the Jazz

Café, that's what Brixton needs, and once you've got that together, you've got something like ten venues, suddenly its no longer the question of what bar you come to, it's a question of, when you go to Soho, that's how we refer to it, we refer to Soho, we don't say we go to so and so, we go to Soho, the area, where we might end it doesn't really matter because there are hundreds of places where you can go, and the same happens now in Brixton and it will happen more in the next few years, when you say, where are you going tonight, I am going to Brixton...you're going down there to party, have a drink, have a dance, meet someone, have a dinner, that's the reason to go to Brixton now and more in the future, it's a destination, it's a happening area, 'where are you going', 'I am going to Brixton', 'yeah, I might see you there'.

5.5 Narrating the multicultural.

'It's almost like Britain discovered fun, you know, and that fun is in Brixton, and the people come to see the culture and you think what's the culture that people are looking for, even myself actually coming back to Brixton to get a studio, what is it that you are looking for that is supposed to be here, I don't know.'

Keta, a Black-British female of Jamaican descent, who works as a curator/artist in central Brixton.

'How far back does culture have to go before it becomes culture?

G.M.: What do you mean?

'Where does culture start, let's us say African culture where does it start, or how far back does it have to go before it

becomes culture, is it like yesterday was culture, or two thousands years ago was culture, and I think everyday culture changes, so yesterday it was my culture.'

Mark, a local Black-British Dj of Nigerian origin.

In this part of the chapter, I will exemplify 'native' narrative constructions of local multiculturalism. To put it differently, I shall identify and expose various scenarios of local multiculturalisms of Brixton. In other words, I try to exemplify the ways that 'native' multicultural narratives go on to depict everyday polycultural life in this 'site of difference' (Anderson 1998:203).

In every debate or discourse, directly or indirectly related to multiculturalism, the very concept of 'culture' immediately breaks into the fore. According to Raymond Williams, "'culture' is said to be one of the two or three most complex words in the English language" (quoted in Eagleton 2000:1). Accordingly, how then is it possible, to make sense of the already complex concept of culture, when the prefix multi- becomes attached to the concept itself (Brah 1996:227)? How do we conceptualise what lies at the heart of multiculturalism; difference.

On one hand, political economy writers on multiculturalism tend to emphasise contemporary romances of global capitalism with post-colonial difference. From a global political economy's perspective, which supposedly after its postmodern - postcolonial twist started to openly flirt with differences (Rutherford 1990:11), the majority of commentators are more than eager to denounce the emergence of 'corporate' (Beck-Matustic 1998:102) or 'consumerist' (Martin 1998:121) forms of multiculturalism. Nevertheless, they advocate the need for more 'critical' (Chicago Cultural Studies Group 1994) or 'transformative' (Martin 1998) versions of multiculturalism.

On the other hand, most of these political-economy theories of multiculturalism naturally tend to emphasise the economic aspects of the phenomenon. In effect, 'cultural' questions of multiculturalism remain mostly unanswered or even unspoken. But how do you construct a 'culturalistic' approach to multiculturalism? What kind of questions do you try to answer?

To start with, differences lie in the heart of any discussions on multiculturalism. Accordingly, a 'culturalistic' approach to contemporary phenomena of multiculturalism should not be constrained to current workings of capital with difference, but instead, it should alternatively focus on the very definition and qualities of difference itself. Accordingly, what is difference? Or alternatively, how do we go on to define difference? By the same token, do we perceive only external, collective or historical differences; or do we select a much more sophisticated pathway or 'scopic regime'⁶⁵ (Jay 1988) that is able to see differences within any difference? In short, are we all multicultural selves (Minh-Ha 1991:107) with many cultures and differences within us? Or are we still remaining monocultural beings that differences are able to touch upon us but cannot interpenetrate and go deeper than the skin ⁶⁶? In other words, is this highly contested present multicultural discourse, one that becomes circulated through a language of mutually, almost democratically, sharing differences ('multiculture' Les Back 1996); or is it mostly one where differences once designated remain forever external? Do we see the world around us as a 'difference multiculturalism' that reifies or even fetishizes cultural boundaries (Bauman 1999:88)? Or do we alternatively 'see' through the eyes of a 'critical multiculturalism' that goes beyond cultural, religious, ethnic etc. reifications (Bauman 1999:89)? In brief, are differences like viruses highly transmittable and sinister for the one true self? Or alternatively our monocultural selves are strictly immune to different differences?

Any multicultural position becomes discursively constructed and articulated through the deployment of two diametrically different languages of difference: the

⁶⁵ Martin Jay, deploys the concept of a 'scopic regime' to explain the history of western visual arts. In this specific context, a 'scopic regime' stands for the ways that art movements or traditions used to represent the world, in specific ways and conventions, around them. Accordingly, the concept can be decontextualised from the history of the visual arts and be inserted into social life to connote the restricted ways that we, as social beings, construct, narrate and represent our world and social relations. In effect, a 'scopic regime' can connote a specific discursive construction. One way, amid many, to see the world.

⁶⁶ It should be noted that in sharp contrast to T.T. Minh-Ha (1991) statements about the existence of a 'multicultural' self, David Blunket, as the Home Secretary, made the following statement: ' I think the word multiculturalism is now so degraded, it is now open to misinterpretation- we are all supposed to perform as through we ourselves are multicultural, where we are not. We have different backgrounds and different interests. What we need to do is accept them' (The Independent on Sunday 9/12/2001 p.4).

language of a multicultural self, or transmittable difference versus the language of a monocultural self, or strictly designated difference. Accordingly, any discussion or debate on present forms of multiculturalism necessarily oscillates, borrows or speaks through these two dominant languages of difference (Bauman 1999:94).

In what follows, I shall explore 'past' and 'present' 'native' multicultural narratives. As it shall become evident, 'past' local multicultural narratives appear to recreate a harmonious multicultural local existence. Following these lines, strong images of a 'past' successful multicultural living break into the fore, which depict different local 'cultures', 'races', ethnicities et cetera living harmoniously side by side with minimum conflict and mutual understanding. On the other hand, 'present' narratives of local multiculturalism tend to be more differentiated and diversified. Accordingly, a number of languages of difference become deployed in order for local conditions of multiculturalism to become depicted. Nevertheless, through this fusion and confusion of different languages of difference the local multicultural question renders meaningful.

To begin with, 'past' local multicultural narratives go on to construct a harmonious image of different 'races' and 'cultures' living successfully and happily within the area⁶⁷. Accordingly, this 'past' harmonious multicultural living scenario almost obliterates any forms of inter-racial or inter-cultural conflict. Alternatively, it tends to project an image of a local multicultural urban utopia. Jojo, a local Black-British musician of Jamaican descent, comments:

⁶⁷ In close relevance to this scenario of a local 'past' harmonious multicultural living, Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders (1981) brought to the fore similar kinds of narratives. For instance, the following exchange took place within Lambeth's Town Hall on Friday 3rd of July 1981. The witness, is Mr. Lloyd Augustus Leon, manager of the Atlantic Pub, at the time.

Mr L.A. Leon: There are times when you would come in, in there [Atlantic Pub] and there are more whites than blacks, and there are times when you come in and there are more blacks than white and vice versa.

Question: In your experiences Mr. Leon, have there been any ill feelings or problems among the customers that frequent your pub?

Mr. Leon: None. As far as I am concerned, it's more, I would say, a community centre than a pub.

Question: Is that your impression of the whole Brixton area?

Mr. Leon: Brixton, as I know it, is one of the most harmonious communities between black and white.

(Public Hearings: Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders, Friday 3rd of July 1981, HO 266/17).

G.M.: What was the relationship in the past between 'white' and 'black' people in the area?

Jojo: I tell you loud and clear, we never had problem, no, no, no, no, don't go down that road, we never had a black and white war in Brixton, never, we don't have this sort of problem, we don't have this sort of problem man, don't confuse yourself with this story, you know what I mean man, that's not an issue...as I said to you before, in this area, Brixton, black and white people live in good harmony, we never had fights with each other, no, no, no, ask anybody, in Brixton, people live in harmony, black, white, Indian, Jews, everybody, we don't fight each other, nothing, we are cosmopolitan.

What is interesting about these 'past' multicultural narratives is that they extend their powers into the 'present' too. In effect, a persistent harmonious multicultural narrative emerges that brings together, local 'past' and 'present', into a local multicultural story of success. In other words, 'past' and 'present' Brixton becomes constructed as an area of inclusion, solidarity and mutual caring. Under these lights, Brixton's sense of community becomes presented as open enough to accommodate every local resident irrespective of colour, culture, ethnicity etc. Accordingly, a sense of 'we' breaks into the narrative fore that denies any 'racial' divisions or separations. Such an inclusive narrative goes along with Richard Sennett's (1970) notion of community as an act of will; a group of people ready to identify as 'we'.
Jojo comments:

Jojo: If its' a black man or whatsoever, if it's a white man instead, he would come to Brixton and say 'I've got no money you know', I tell you what, Brixton is an area as poor as it is, where willingly you will put your hand in your pocket and either a black or a white man will say 'Come on man, buy a cup of tea or a packet of cigarettes', you know, that feeling about it, no

matter if you are black or white, 'don't worry man, check me tomorrow man', 'yeah, sure', that sort of area for everybody.

Another version of this local 'present' multicultural narrative goes on to speak of a local condition, where different communities or individuals, come together under the aegis of a common interest. More specifically, this story of common interest appears to reflect on contemporary local conditions of 'multicultural capitalism' (Cohen 1998:29). Allegedly, locally accumulated differences can be bridged through the workings of capitalism and commerce. Nevertheless, this kind of narrative speaks the language of strictly designated 'racial', 'ethnic' or 'cultural' differences. Although local differences retain their delineating powers, a sense of 'we' can be created through the workings of capital and commerce. In short, local urban multicultural capitalism can 'see' beyond or better beneath differences through a notion of mutually profitable prospects that can render the powers of racial, ethnic or cultural classifications as obsolete. But let us hear, Andrian, a Black-British mini-cab driver of Nigerian origin, explaining his points:

G.M.; what do you say about this multiculturalism of Brixton? I mean Brixton, is promoted very much as a multicultural place.

Andrian: It is, it is.

G.M.: How would you define a multicultural place?

Andrian: Yes, you see this common interest would make them live as neighbours, living, with you [me as 'white'], am I looking at your colour, no, understand?

G.M.: I think I do.

Andrian: Understand, what is behind [what is behind colour], because of the commercial development of the area...and the past bad image needs to be buried completely, yes, because everybody can see the benefits of, let's say, the present.

Another language of difference that becomes deployed is the language of

individuality. Through this language, 'racial', 'cultural' or 'ethnic' differences disappear for the sake of an all-powerful individual. Following these lines, 'racial' or 'cultural' identity does not have the power or authority to delegate its subjects, but instead, each person as a free individual becomes defined only in terms of herself/himself. In a similar fashion to this, some American commentators on 'race' have argued about the ills of the very notion of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. They argue that to accept multiculturalism and diversity 'means to think in racial terms rather than in terms of individual character or merit' (Locke 1998, <http://multiculturtalism.ayanrand.org/individualism.html>). According to this way of thinking, the multiculturalists, 'are the true racists in the basic meaning of that term: they see the world in colour lenses... To the multiculturalist, race is what counts-for values, for thinking, for human identity in general' (Berliner, Hull 1998, <http://multiculturalism.aynrand.org/diversity.html>). Following these lines, they declare that multiculturalism, or the position that one's identity and personal worth are strictly determined by 'ethnic' or 'racial' terms, is the 'new racism'.

Collins, a Black-British, mini cab driver again, originally coming from Nigeria, declares the abolition of 'races':

G.M.: What do you think about colour?

Collins: For me it makes no difference, my men are from different places, you know, you see I say hi to everybody right now, some of them are Africans, some of them are English, some of them West Indians, some of them white people, I mean that just me [me as an individual], so I get along with other people as well, but me personally I don't care where you are coming from, as far as you can get along with me, that's fair enough, if you don't like to get along with me, take a walk.

At the same time, one of the most interesting multicultural narratives came from Michael, a local Black-British Dj of Nigerian origin. Michael makes his arguments through the deployment of a language of a multicultural self or post-structuralist

difference⁶⁸. Under these lights, Brixton becomes constructed as an accommodating and tolerant place, where a sense of an inclusive community was always one of its main characteristics; a sense of 'we' open enough to accommodate all the communities and individuals living within the area (Sennett 1970). Michael comments:

Michael: I find that its a lot more tolerant, hell there are so many white Rastas in Brixton anyway, you know, there are a lot of white people, been into black culture, been born into black culture...one of the good things about Brixton, and this is funny, it's very unusual, as people think that Brixton is or better was very in-tolerant, you know, it didn't tolerate much stuff, we've always had a gay scene in Brixton, since the eighties, the Fridge has been gay for a very long time, we have a very big gay community in Brixton too, you know, to my knowledge there has been no hassle against it, because it's a community that melts as a community and lives as a community, if this community was anywhere else you would see troubles.

To proceed, Michael argues that 'black' does not refer to colour anymore, but instead, it refers to a culture. In effect, 'black' does not constitute anymore the racial signifier of a particular 'race' or people apart, whose worth, qualities and existence has been externally constructed, through the centuries, as a result of colonialism, slavery and imperfect postcolonial Western democracies. Nevertheless, he does not attempt to ethnicise 'race' either. He does not try to substitute 'race' with an all-powerful, concept of ethnicity, which predominantly does exactly the same cultural work that 'race' used to do beforehand (Michaels 1992). To put it differently, he does not attempt to racialize ethnicity (Cohen 1999:2) Instead, he

⁶⁸ It should be mentioned that the language of post-structuralist difference originates from the writings of Jacques Derrida (1982). More specifically, it emanates from his philosophical formulation and definition of difference as *differance* where the verb *differ* comes to simultaneously mean 'not be identical' and 'delay' (ibid 1982:8). In short, 'it is immediately and irreducibly

chooses to obliterate any 'racial', 'ethnic' or racialised 'cultural' constructions essentially built upon the pre-assumptions of former Western racial phenomenologies. For him, 'black' stands for a culture; a culture open enough to include whoever is interested or keen to participate in it. In this sense, a multicultural, instead of a monocultural, notion of 'self' breaks into the fore capable of participating and sharing in difference (s). Michael reflects:

Michael: Black can be seen as not a colour thing, black can be seen as a culture, it's culture to be black, you know, I think to say black, to say black person is wrong in the year 2001, I think black can be seen as a culture in a sense that, anyone who is into black music, black history, black culture, black whatever, can be seen as black, because its' a culture thing now, being black it's a cultural thing.

Michael constructs a concept of culture that can be 'processual' and ever-evolving (Bauman 1999:94). Instead of a fixed mono-cultural definition of one's culture, his narrative presupposes the right of the individual to construct her/his own version of a personalised culture. In brief, one's culture becomes a personal matter of selection that draws cultural elements from either her/his own cultural heritage, but also, from other cultural influences around. As a result, a monocultural construction of the self, gives way, to a multicultural, multi-influenced, multifarious sense of being that thrives on translating external into internal difference; a notion of self capable of proceeding into a personal 'poetics of translation' (Bhabha 1994:212). In effect, differences are not considered and viewed as essentially external to the self, but instead, as internally transmittable to the core of one's personality. Nevertheless, through this personal intermarriage of identical similarity and internalised external difference, new cultural growth emerges. In this respect, cultures are here to be shared, to be understood, to be communicated whilst most importantly being

polysemic' (ibid 1982:8).

personally translated⁶⁹ against any sense of a solipstic 'true' cultural self. Michael again, comments:

Michael: You adapt to a certain culture, you take what you want from the certain cultures to form your own culture, you take what you want from your own culture to identify with yourself today, you understand what I mean, you are born, you are grown, you move to England [he refers to my experience], you are finding yourself again...and that's how culture get shared and it's diluted into become new growth within a culture, that is what culture is about, cultures change every decade, every season, every day, culture is changing, every single minute, every time a new record is released, and that's the danger, of people getting hold of culture the wrong way, culture is a fascinating thing you know, we have things called cultural studies, you know, in universities, that's how interesting it could be, it's there to be learned, it's there to be shared, it's there to be appreciated.

In sharp contrast to the above narratives, there were a few instances where a different kind of language of difference was deployed. In these cases, the local condition of multiculturalism was presented as a problem in itself. However, it should be noted that these cases were mere exceptions to the narrative norms of this

⁶⁹ Before we move any further I would like to reflect on the concept of 'translation'. In short, it originates from Homi Bhabha's (1994) theories of 'cultural translation' as a means of explaining 'how newness enters the world' (ibid 1994:227). According to this formulation, the 'foreignness of language' (ibid 1994:227) that occasionally does not permit the exact translation of one sentence from one language to another, becomes deployed as the prime metaphor for the exchange and interaction between cultural differences. More importantly, this 'untranslatable' (ibid 1994:227) element between languages lead us towards a dialectic of cultural 'negotiation' (ibid 1994:228) that creates the new hybridity, the 'newness' of this world. In a similar fashion, the act of personal cultural translation appears to correspond to negotiations between the self and cultural differences, which permits the latter to be translated into the former. In this way, cultural differences can be transmittable through a dialectic of personal negotiation; they can go skin deep. As a result a multicultural self appears to come to the fore, who thrives on personally translating and internalizing (negotiating) external (to the self) cultural differences.

piece of research.

For instance, Globis again, constructs a local situation where locally accumulated cultural differences become presented as a problem in themselves. Allegedly, all the different cultures of Brixton are in constant conflict between them. This scenario of local 'cultural wars', presupposes that each member of an ethnic or cultural community is essentially defined by her/his cultural or ethnic heritage and history. Accordingly, instead of a multicultural, multi-influenced and multifarious self, a monocultural sense of 'being' breaks into the fore strictly delegated by culture (either ethnicised or racialised). Within this formulation, ethnic culture becomes viewed as fixed and unchangeable whilst powerful enough to fully exhaust the spaces of one's identity. By all accounts, these are the workings of an 'essentialist' view on culture (Bauman 1999:94). In short, one's ethnic or cultural identity, becomes her/his own essentially solipstic self, with no space left for any acts of personal translation. Globis argues:

G.M.: What do you think of all these different communities and people living in Brixton?

Globis: When I leave Brixton station, I go left at the traffic light to the academy, yeah, and it's a different community, it's a Portuguese community, it's a Somalian community, not that I have anything against it, but what is developing now is a cultural mix, your culture, my culture are constantly in conflict with each other, yeah, so at the end of the day we have extra conflict between, you from Portugal, the next man from Somalia, the next man from Ethiopia, the next man from Australia.

Apart from this scenario of local 'cultural wars', another incident occurred during this fieldwork. Once I entered into a local rastafarian shop, on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and Railton Road. After I thoroughly explained myself and my research interests I became the subject of a whole fronted attack; the colour of my

skin [white] was powerful enough to incite a new round of 'race wars'. I was accused of being part of Brixton's 'white' gentrification that was responsible for the eviction of local 'black' communities. My broken English and the fact that I am a Greek citizen instead of a British subject were not enough to protect me from all the crimes and ills that my 'race' had inflicted on 'his' people. The language that he deployed was confrontational and separatist. Humanity, was divided into 'black' and 'white' and as a result of my birth I was held personally responsible for past colonial exploitation (see chapter two: 2.2). Of course, I was not permitted to use my tape recorder. As it seems, although a minor, isolated incident, 'race wars' continue to happen within modern multicultural Britain.

5.6 On identification.

'Is there a form of permanence in time that is a reply to the question 'who am I'?'
Ricoeur (1992:118).

Last but not least, I exemplify 'native' narrative constructions in conjunction with 'ethnic' or 'cultural' identity and belonging; I try to expose the particular ways that narratives of the 'native' 'self' appear to articulate, or not, a notion of self-evolution and change through influence and time. Additionally to these individual narratives about the self, I will examine collective stories of belonging that argue about the emergence of a hybridised Black-Britain. In short, within this last part of the chapter, I shall introduce the notion of 'diaspora', as an individual or collective way of being, which manages to work through difference (Hall 1990:235).

Theoretically speaking, 'identity' as a concept or research tool in the social sciences has risen into a status of prominence. One of the ways of defining 'identity' is as a narrative or story of belonging that a person says to herself/himself (Hall 1996b:4). To put it differently, identity is a representation of the self to the self for the self and others (ibid 1996b:5), or alternatively, the way that we construct our identities closely resembles the construction of a 'plot' (Ricoeur 1992:141).

Additionally, as Bhavnani and Phoenix (1994) have suggested, 'Identity is a word which is much used in both academic and political contexts. Its strength is that it captures succinctly the possibilities of unravelling the complexities of the relationship between 'structure' and 'agency'; perhaps one could say that 'its' the site where structure and agency collide' (Bhavnani & Phoenix 1994:6).

Following these lines, I attempt to identify the 'structure' and 'agency' positions within the academic debate of 'identity'. On one hand, there is the tradition (structure) that says that all of us who come from the same culture, community or any other form of strong affiliating collectivity etc., we share the same 'true' self (Hall 1990:223). Through the words of Paul Ricoeur (1992), this is identity as 'sameness' or 'idem' (ibid 1992:116). On the other hand, there is a tradition (agency) that argues that although our common cultural or communitarian similarities and ties, which bring us together, at the same time, there are significant differences to draw us apart. In this sense, although we share a certain kind of 'being', our 'becoming' is more important (Hall 1990:225). This is identity as 'selfhood' or 'ipse', where 'selfhood' does not stand for stagnated sameness but constant transformation (Ricoeur 1992:116). In short, the former position creates a representation of identity as 'essentialised', 'fixed' and 'stable', whilst the latter presents an image of identity as in 'flux', motion and constant transformation (McGuigan 1996:135).

Nevertheless, in relation to cultural identity, these two opposing theoretical positions of 'structure' and 'agency', 'idem' and 'ipse', 'similarity' and 'difference' speak through the two different languages of difference: the language of a monocultural self versus the language of a multicultural self. The language of non-transmittable differences versus the language of a personal 'dialectic of negotiation' of 'untranslatable'⁷⁰ (Bhabha 1994:227) cultural differences that can go skin deep.

In what follows, I will investigate 'native' stories and narratives of personal belonging and transformation that came out from this particular part of the research; I shall explore the collective narratives that these 'diasporic' individuals say to

⁷⁰ If one would like to get to grip with this complicated theory of cultural translation, one should read Homi Bhabha's essay 'How newness enters the world'(1994:212, especially pages 227-228.).

themselves for themselves. More specifically, I focus on the narrative of a 'Black-British' or 'Black-European' experience that becomes articulated through a notion of a 'diasporic identity', which finds its way through difference (Hall 1990:235). In a similar fashion, I shall shed some light on notions of diaspora and the cultural workings of 'translation' that they seem to imply. Lastly, I refer to contemporary problematizations about a hyphenated-Britain that brings to the fore, Franz Fanon (1986), and a phenomenology of national belonging.

To begin with, Mark again, in a synthetic way that brings together identity and culture, goes on to reflect upon the Black experience in this country. Mark argues:

G.M.: What do you think about your own personal culture? I mean what are your own cultural-negotiations?

Mark: I tend to find the British within a very conservative way tend not to understand that things move and things change and you cannot keep on thinking, oh I am a veteran and I fought the war, ok we all know that, as much as the black person can not keep on thinking, oh I've been oppressed, I've been a slave, it's all about progression, it's all about moving on, it's about culture, culture evolves, it changes, I mean where we would be if we all had the same cultural background, I mean my parents were born in Africa, I was born in Britain, and already there is a change in my culture's pattern, it doesn't mean that I am white, it doesn't mean that I am black, it just means that I am a westernised African, which means that the culture that I am gonna give to my kids would be further diluted, when I give birth to them, it would be further diluted, because things has changed, technology has changed, the way you think have changed and stuff like that.

In the above quotation Mark embarks on constructing a notion of a 'diasporic' identity. In a similar fashion, Stuart Hall (1990) has brilliantly defined 'diaspora' as

follows: 'I use this term (diaspora) here metaphorically not literally: diaspora does not refer to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must return at all costs...This is the old, the imperializing, the hegemonizing, form of ethnicity...The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity', which lives with and through difference, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those who are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew' (Hall 1990:235).

By the same token, Mark's narrative on cultural identity shares the same rationale as Stuart Halls' position on 'diaspora'. For Mark, culture changes, it evolves, it becomes 'diluted' as he characteristically says. He can't define himself as 'black' or 'white' either. He refuses the binaries of any cultural absolutism. Instead, his way of seeing things, his cultural vision, is one that is based on a concept of transculturality (Welsch 1999:198). In effect, he deploys a language that speaks about the existence of a multicultural self or poststructuralist difference. A multicultural self that has the ability to become further and further 'diluted'. More importantly, through this process of cultural 'dilution', 'new ethnicities', new identities, new kind of people can evolve (Rutherford 1990:22, Bhabha 1994:1, McGuigan 1996:141). Mark again comments:

Mark: Being a black person born in this country there is a culture called the western Black culture, its' not Jamaican, and it's not African, identifies itself with Europe and Britain itself, from influences from America, West Indian influences, and influence from Africa, and so all these street kids you see now that people presume they are Jamaican, they are not, there is this new culture of black people, Western European Black people, we identify ourselves, I mean hell, I like to say that I am African, but I know that I am not because I am not hundred percent culturally African, so all this noise you know, I am

African, I am West Indian, is bullshit, you know, you are British-African, you are British-West Indian, whatever you want to call yourself call it but you wouldn't be able to survive in your own original country any more and that's way I say there is a new breed of person which has been around for years but we never recognised it, that's henceforth the name-calling and all the stereotypes that created problems.

When Stuart Hall, in the late 1980s, presented a paper in the ICA with the title 'New Ethnicities' he almost changed the way that ethnicities had been traditionally viewed until this point. That was a very critical moment within a long period of intellectual struggles to define difference and proceed into constructing contemporary forms of a cultural politics of post-coloniality. As he said, 'the grounding of ethnicity in difference...does not mean that we can permit the term to be permanently colonised' (ibid 1992:257). Alternatively, he proposed that ethnicity should be re-appropriated and recaptured. Following these lines, he exposed the ways that English nationalism, all through the 1980s, succeeded in marginalizing and suffocating other ethnicities by mainly defining them as essential, unchangeable cultural differences, whilst constantly perceiving itself as something beyond ethnicity and 'culture' (ibid 1992:258). Nevertheless, Hall believed that the time had come for a different reading on ethnicity; a positive, affirmative redefinition of what ethnicity stands for. An explicit recognition that everybody speaks from somewhere, comes from somewhere, shares a common history etc. However, this time, ethnicity as difference had to be perceived as changeable instead of static; malleable instead of rigid. That was a reading of difference derived through the Derridian notion of difference, where the verb to differer 'has two meanings which seem quite distinct...one of the two motifs...[is] to wit the action, of putting off until later, of taking into account of time and of forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation...The other sense of differer is the more common and identifiable one; to be not identical, to be other...Now the word difference (with an e) can never

refer either to differer as temporalization or to differends as a polemos. This word differance (with an a) is to compensate –economically- for this loss of meaning...It is immediately and irreducibly polysemic’ (Derrida 1982:8).

Accordingly, a concept of ethnicity as simultaneously difference (not-identical) and delay opens up the path for a ‘play of differences’ which ‘supposes, in effect, syntheses and referrals which forbid at any moment, or in any sense, that a simple element be present in and for itself, referring only to itself’ (Derrida 1972:26).

From this perspective, ethnicity cannot refer anymore to rigid cultural differences, ‘ethnic’ culture or community, but instead, a ‘play of differences’ becomes acknowledged within one ‘ethnic’ or cultural self. Accordingly, a multicultural instead of a monocultural conception of ‘ethnic’ identity breaks into the fore; differences become presented as contaminating and corroding; ethnicity becomes a malleable category through time, context and influences; In short, the ‘new ethnicities’ identity paradigm was born.

Following these theoretical lines, Mark declares the creation of a Black-European or Black-British experience. As he argues, this new cultural configuration, this diasporic experience draws influences from many different places and continents. In effect, he talks about a ‘transatlantic’ Black culture (Gilroy 1998) that is capable of synthetically bringing together many different elements and create nouveau cultural arrangements. As a result, a ‘new breed of person’ that ‘has been around for a while’ although she/he went widely unrecognised, a ‘new ethnicity’, a new synthetic cultural belonging, has emerged that stands for Black-British experiences⁷¹.

In terms of trying to define this ‘new’ Black-British experience two different kind of narratives emerged, each of them articulates a different sort of story. On one hand, there is a narrative that argues that ethnicity, as the country or place of origin, does not matter so much compared to the collective experiences in Britain. In this sense, to be ‘Black’-British provides a strong sense of identity; former regional or

⁷¹ One should always keep in mind the dangers of essentializing community (Hall 2000:232). In this sense, the Black-British experience should not be conceptualised as a homogenic or homogenizing entity with no space left for internal differentiation. Instead, it should be perceived as a collective experience that thrives on its internal diversity.

national affiliations allegedly fade away in favour of an almost undifferentiated Black-British experience. For Stuart Hall (1992) again, such identity narratives go along with the first moment in 'black' cultural politics, where 'The Black experience, as a singular and unifying framework based on the building up of identity across ethnic or cultural differences between the different communities, became hegemonic over ethnic/racial identities' (ibid 1992:252).

Following these lines, Andrian again, goes on to reflect upon being a 'Black'-Briton:

G.M.: Could I ask you a more personal question? How do you see yourself? I mean, you know, as a Black-Briton, as a Nigerian Briton, as a Black-Brixtonian, I mean how do you think of yourself?

Andrian: I rather see myself as a black man rather than a Nigerian, because I've been in this country now since 1978, and that's quite a long time, to be away from home, so you know, it's home.

G.M.: So do you believe that everybody in Brixton is loosing his or her nationalities?

Andrian: Oh yes, I give you an example, if you go on Sundays, if you go to a church on Brixton Hill, in church you'll find any nationality there, you see every nationality comes to the church, you understand?

However, there is another narrative that argues that any notion of a Black-British experience, in a similar fashion to other collective differences found in this country, is highly diversified and divergent in itself. But let us hear Angela, again, articulating her point:

G.M.: I just want to ask you one more thing, in the past Brixton used to be very Afro-Caribbean while now it seems that you

have 'black' people from all over the world, do you agree with that?

Angela: You might see someone that looks like you and you might think you can relate to them, but, when they open their mouths you realise they are not one of you, they might look like you but they are not, because they speak a totally different language from you, that goes for black, white, Indian, Chinese that's what I see now with England, it's gone so multi, although you had all these different cultures in Brixton but there was no light on them, you couldn't see them, they were there but you couldn't see them, but now you can see them, the smallest of nations you can see them as clear as day, you can see everybody a lot more clearer now.

In the above quotation, Angela announces 'the end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject' (Hall 1992:254). Alternatively, she recognises the diversity of cultural or 'ethnic' identities, which comprise the 'black' category (ibid 1992:254). For her, England has gone so multi, not only in relation to 'black' but also 'white', Indian and all other homogenizing categories. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that this internal diversity was always there. Brixton had always had many different 'cultures' within it. However, they could not be seen; they were suffocated under the uniformed veil of a strong raciology of perception. In sharp contrast to this, contemporary times appear to go along with personal acts of abolition of 'racial' categories and the emergence of ethnicity as a 'strong' defining factor. Following these lines, a previously alleged Black-British experience becomes segmented into ethnicised parts; language and culture appear to subdue 'race' as the defining factor; regimes of raciology of perception give away to ethnicised forms of being. The uniform powers of 'race' fade way in favour of ethnicity as a 'strong' factor of differentiation. To put it differently, former phenomenological regimes of 'race' appear to loose their powers to more intricate processes of identification that substitute 'colour' for ethnicity, country, language

and culture. From such a perspective, the 'self' does not appear to conform to 'race', but alternatively, to cultural or linguistic forms of being; 'race' becomes exchanged for culture.

Last but not least, I shift our focus to issues of national identity and belonging. Angela again, comments:

G.M.: What do you think of all these debates about Britain and how multicultural it is, and the rest?

Angela: Yeah, that's a bit confusing to me, it's very confusing to me, very, very confusing, because me, myself I would see myself as Black-British but would British [white] people would see me as Black-British, as white would they see me as British, if they say to me ah where are you from, and I say I am from here, they say where are your parents from, so for me saying from here they are not accepting that, cause I've noticed with a lot of people, they ask you where are you from and I say from here, I was born here, they say where are your parents from, so you know it doesn't really matter to them.

In the above quotation Angela proceeds into expressing her own frustration in relation to her birth right to national belonging. At this point, Franz Fanon's (1986) intersubjective phenomenology clearly enters the picture. For Fanon (1986), racist phenomenological regimes mark their subjects and un-mark their users (Goldberg 1997:79,80). Following these lines, 'black' bodies come into existence while 'white' corporealities remain unnoticed. Nevertheless, Fanon's intersubjective phenomenology can be turned around to fit a story of national belonging. Under these lights, 'white' Britons either refuse to recognise 'black' subjects as British (Hegel's notion of 'unequal recognition', 1977:236), or alternatively, 'black' skin appears to still racially marks its subjects and subsequently negates entrance to any notion of British belonging.

Either way, this long established national intersubjective phenomenology of

belonging has to be surpassed. A politics of national recognition becomes important. The only way out, of this unjust and racialised prison of intersubjectivity, is mutual recognition. One question still remains, worded again, by Stuart Hall: 'that is why the hyphen, Black-British, Asian-British...[but] does this idea of Britishness, have room to accommodate these differences? (Observer 15/10/2000).

5.7 Conclusions.

In this chapter, I tried to elicit narratives in relation to 'native' Brixton. Firstly, I drew our emphasis on narratives of 'racial' safety in relation to the area. Following these lines, Brixton becomes constructed as a 'home' or a 'safe' haven for 'black people' within the capital. At the same time, a different kind of local 'whiteness' allegedly becomes enacted and performed in Brixton; a kind of 'whiteness' free of prejudice and racial hatred.

Secondly, I focused my attention on narratives in relation to 'native' attitudes towards processes of urban transformation. As I argued, 'past' Brixton becomes primarily constructed as a 'crime' ridden area. Nevertheless, any explicit discursive correlation between 'race' and crime does not become articulated, but alternatively, 'race' stays within the narrative background. Additionally to this 'past' criminalised image of Brixton, another version of the local past emerges, which narrates strong local communities and supportive communitarian ties.

In terms of the local present, a local narrative of content describes, sometimes, local contemporary urban conditions. Nevertheless, this local narrative of content finds competition by a narrative of concern that voices threats of local eviction. Last but not least, local futures appear to become envisioned as bright, viable and 'truly' multicultural.

To continue, I tried to expose the lexicon of difference within local instances of multicultural talk. In other words, I attempted to trace down the uses of different languages of differences that go on to describe local conditions of multiculturalism. As I found, apart from a narrative that described a local harmonious 'past' and 'present' multicultural living the following dialects of difference were deployed:

firstly, there was a narrative of multiculturalism of common interest. According to this narrative, differences appear to retain their culturally delineating powers. Nevertheless, a concept of a local community can be created through the workings of capital and commerce. In this sense, different monocultural selves come to buy and sell in the market, whilst being totally immune to other differences. By all accounts, this is the language of monocultural 'selves' and strictly delineated (structuralistic) differences. Following these lines, another narrative of alleged local 'cultural' wars appeared to talk the same language.

On another instance, a language of individuality appeared at work. From this perspective, a total negation of cultural, ethnic or racial categories occurred in favour of the unique individual. Following these lines, the individual is more powerful than any delineating forces upon her/him. Narratives of culture and history become subdued to give rise of the individual 'self'.

On the other hand, another significant narrative spoke the language of post-structuralist difference and multicultural 'selves'. Following these lines, Brixton becomes presented as an accommodating and tolerant place. Most importantly, 'black' does not refer to colour or 'race' anymore, but to culture. In this sense, 'black' transforms into a culture that anybody can participate in. As a result, a multicultural conception of the 'self' seems at work. Nevertheless, a multicultural definition of the 'self', as capable of translating external to internal differences goes along with a 'processual' (Bauman 1999:94) or evolutionary view on culture. Accordingly, each self is capable of constructing its own personal culture, irrespectively from any 'ethnic' or cultural anchoring and subsequently creates 'new cultural growth'.

In terms of identity and self-belonging, a diasporic narrative of the 'self' emerged that argued about the existence of a 'self' working through difference (Hall 1990:235). Nevertheless, this is an image of the multicultural 'self' as transcultural; a 'self' capable of changing through a personal 'poetics of translation' (Bhabha 1994:212). Following these lines, through these acts of transculturalization, a new ethnicity, a 'new kind of people', a New Britain appears to emerge: a Black-Britain. However, a contradictory dual narrative went on to describe this contemporary

Black-British experience. On one hand, it is suggested that this new Black Britain is almost homogenic or unified as a result of its common experience in this country, whilst on the other it becomes presented as diluted in relation to language, ethnicity, religion and culture. Nevertheless, an important question arises: Is there any chance for any notion of Britishness to be open enough to accommodate these differences? Can these differences find a place for themselves within Britain?

Brick Lane's tales: The 'creatives'.

6.1 Reflections on the research topic.

The 'social world' of Brick Lane has become the subject of representation for a number of academic monographs and books. Jane Jacobs (1996) in the 'Edge of Empire' described local cultures of gentrification unfolding between Neo-Georgian 'newcomers' and longer-established, 'native' ethnic populations (Bengali). Following these lines, Jacobs (1996) suggested that one of the most influential agents of local gentrification, the 'Spitafields Historic Building Trust', promoted, constructed and facilitated a 'local multiculturalism of convenience' based upon a 'spatial regulation of Bengalis' (Jacobs 1996:160). In a similar fashion, William Taylor's (2000) 'This Bright Field', narrates his own ethnography, as a trainee vicar, immersing himself into the worlds of Brick Lane. In a broad sense, Taylor, identifies a number of different Brick Lanes (or Spitafields): a 'Cockney', a 'Georgian' (gentrifiers), a 'professional' (local regeneration officers) and a 'migrant' (Bengali settlers). Nevertheless, the macro- world of Brick Lane, as the associative total of all these numerous local micro-worlds, becomes narrated as one of 'incompatible realities' (Taylor 2000:312). Under these lights, a spatially separating regime of local unconnected lives appears to provide the norm along the lane. Such a depiction appears to draw on or even replicate, Salman Rusdie's Brickhall, in 'Satanic Verses', where forms and manifestations of cultural, social and economic incompatibility define the area.

In the lights of this chapter, I shall reflect on contemporary processes of gentrification or 'urban transformation' unfolding in Brick Lane. As mentioned in detail in chapter one (see chapter one: 1.3), the specific definition of gentrification that this thesis strives to adopt, does not refer exclusively to residential forms. Accordingly, a more inclusive notion of gentrification, able to stretch the analytical and descriptive powers of the term in order to accommodate the whole spectrum of

processes of 'urban postmodernization' is adopted (Zukin 1991:192, Sassen 1991:255, Smith 1996:39).

In the case of Brixton, I identified a number of narrative themes related to cultures of residential gentrification of the area. Nevertheless, this time I shall expose a different manifestation of these urban processes. To put it simply, what I attempt to examine here, are processes of local gentrification depending on currently unfolding forms of creative⁷² capitalism. Following these lines, these forms and manifestations of creative capitalism are based upon a notion of 'cultural entrepreneurship'. Under these lights, a new term, creative or cultural industries, is created that includes any business, other than fine art, that deploys elements of creativity. More specifically, in 1998, the Government founded a 'Creative Industries Task Force', which announced, that these industries accounted for more than 5 per cent of Britain's GDP, whilst providing employment to one and half million people (The Observer 1-12-2002).

In more detail, new sectors of the metropolitan urban economy, as a direct result of a former alleged 'internet revolution' and a constant thirst of our contemporary civilization for 'visual cultures' of more elaborated images and symbols, have developed around the 'creative' deployment of new digitized technologies. These new 'creative industries', at least before the end of this prolonged period of economic prosperity, generated employment and substantial levels of profit. As a result, a new type of metropolitan 'white-collar' employee was created, supposedly able to personify within her/his own 'creative' labour, a very solid cultural-economic intermarriage. These particular types of 'creative' professions, which made their presence visible on the streets of inner-East London through a loitering army of web and graphic designers, IT-nerds, art directors, music producers and whatever kind of job-titles can be related to this 'new' digitized era, combined a relative wage-gained affluence⁷³ along with rights to un-compromising urban

⁷² As Raymond Williams (1961) has suggested 'No word in English carries a more consistently positive reference than 'creative' and obviously we should be glad of this, when we think of the values it seeks to express and the activities it offers to describe' (Williams 1961:19).

⁷³ Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that like any other metropolitan industry, these forms of 'creative' capitalism produce both high and low-paid jobs. Accordingly, along with the whole spectrum of highly-paid entrepreneurial positions there is still a significant number of secretarial and

lifestyles⁷⁴. In effect, this ‘creative’-lot was allowed to maintain its bohemian outlooks and ‘ways of life’. To put it differently, a uniformity of appearances or a ‘conservative’ looking ‘work culture’, like in the case of the neighbouring uniformly dressed City-boys and girls, was not included within the protocol of these locally spreading cultural-industries. From the late 1990s onwards, a whole spectrum of designer and other similar economies (see Lash & Urry 1994:111) appeared to have emerged locally, ready to cater for the needs of these new metropolitan professions. Initially based in the Hoxton-Shoreditch area, later on reaching as far as Brick Lane.

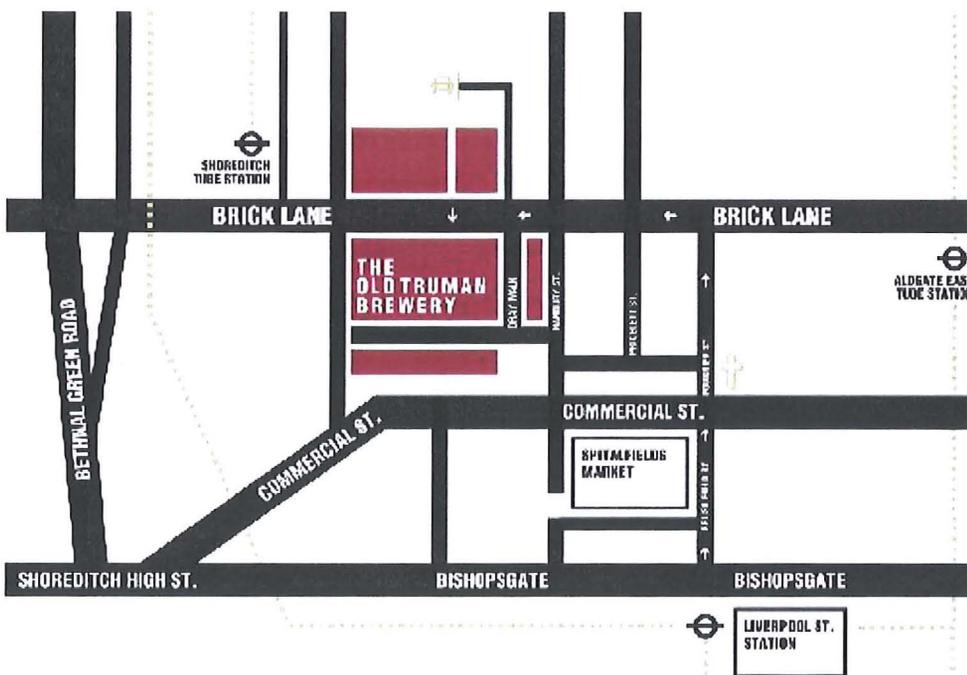


Image 12: A map of the local redeveloped brewery www.trumanbrewery.com March 2003

other supporting jobs that could be considered as not particularly well-paid.

⁷⁴ At this point, I would like to bring to the fore, Sharon Zukin's (1998:837) argument that the most significant product of metropolitan cities is the constant creation of urban 'lifestyles'.

Last but not least, a recently redeveloped local Brewery provided the necessary space for these new forms of 'creative industries' to blossom. Increasingly, through the passage of time, a local variety of cafés, chill out bars, exhibition spaces, holistic medicine centres etc. started to spread around the Brewery. In short, the new cultures of these 'creative industries' inscribed and institutionalised their lifestyle patterns and 'ways of life' within the surrounding urban 'vernacular'⁷⁵. Following these lines, Brick Lane's vernacular landscape changed considerably, through the insertion of a 'creative community' and its 'ways of life' residing side-by-side with 'native' 'ethnic' populations, bodies, languages, 'cultures' etc. In effect, a new kind of 'Brick Lane' was born.

In terms of the logistics of this research, as the notorious English summer was unexpectedly at its heights, on the very entrance to the Brewery, a local bar had put tables and benches for its loitering clientele. Many 'creative' local professionals were sitting outside, enjoying the sun, having lunch or just lighting a cigarette. As I did not possess at the time any substantial contacts in the area, I chose this spot as the prime site for conducting my fieldwork. I would go there on a daily basis, and attempt to get some interviews on the spot. In a similar manner, a couple of neighbouring cafés were chosen too. During the length of this short-lived English summer, I managed to interview fourteen individuals that, for the aims and objectives of this thesis, are grouped as the 'creatives'. Eight of them were males, whilst six were females. Twelve of them were British, whilst two of them could be identified as international (S.African and Norwegian). Nevertheless, within the British category, ten of them could be identified as 'white'-British, two of them as 'black'-British, whilst the last remaining two as Asian-British and 'British'-other respectively. In terms of employment, five of them were working in managerial positions of 'creative'/cultural companies within the Brewery. Alternatively, seven of them could be loosely defined as artists or art-related professionals. The last remaining three were employed within the local catering economy.

⁷⁵ Between March 1999 to March 2000 the number of bars, restaurants, coffee-shops and clubs along the lane appeared to have increased from three ('The Coffee shop', 'The Vibe Bar', 'The Bagel Shop') to 9 (previous ones plus 'Café 1001', '93 Feet East', 'Coffee @ Brick Lane', 'Lenies', 'Home', 'Le trois Garçons'). Source: 'The Shoreditch Map', Issue 8, 32.



Image 13: The entrance to the brewery www.trumanbrewery.com March 2003.

6.2 Spatial definitions of the area.

In what follows, I shall shed some light on contesting geographical definitions of the area. More specifically, I attempt to bring to the fore a variety of local existing cartographies. As I shall argue, different spatial definitions of the area appear to correspond with different cultural politics of space, or to put it differently, with different spatial politics of culture.

To start with, I shall seek to map out Brick Lane's borders as they become geographically represented, outlined and lived within inner-East London metropolitan space. In some sense, a certain geographical confusion exists within geographical definitions and mappings of the area. For instance, the fairly new local tube-station, although located along Brick Lane, is not named after the street, but alternatively, one reads 'Shoreditch'. Following similar lines, a widely distributed local leaflet, 'The Shoreditch map: sampling the soil of the Shoreditch area', consistently includes Brick Lane as part of the area. Accordingly, it becomes evident that spatial narratives of inclusion or exclusion of Brick Lane within the broader Hoxton-Shoreditch area dominate these contesting local cultural politics of

space. From such a perspective, the spatial 'cultures' of Brick Lane become constructed as either similar or dissimilar, to the spaces of 'culture' of Hoxton/Shoreditch. To put it differently, the cultural spaces of the former appear to either belong to or contradict the spatial cultures of the latter. In short, spatial inclusion or exclusion depends on different spatial conceptions of culture or cultural perceptions of space.

Any attempts at geographical delineation of space are more than anything else pure mental constructions. Following these lines, it might be the case that geographically delineated spaces might be initially drawn in the mind, whilst later on, outlined and experienced in space. In a similar fashion to this, Beggy, a young aspiring 'white'-British female filmmaker, who works and lives locally, argues:

G.M.: What do you think about the spatial limits of the area?

Beggy: Its' like, there are little imaginary lines, I think everybody makes their own maps of places, and you know, you have these kinds of lines where you think you cross into a very different space, you have this kind of mental maps.

According to Beggy, there are these sets of 'imaginary lines' that each of us constructs and once you pass them you find yourself into a very different space. In effect, these different sets of imaginary lines appear to relate to different constructions of space. Keeping that in mind, I shall attempt to exemplify a constructed local cartography of space that argues for the geographical accommodation of Brick Lane within the broader Shoreditch/Hoxton area. In effect, this local spatial narrative of inclusion goes on to construct the two areas as spatially or culturally similar. Nevertheless, what these areas appear to share is a resembling culture of space or space of culture. From such a perspective, Shara, a 'white' South African woman, who works as an event-manager at the local redeveloped Brewery comments:

G.M: What do you think might be the spatial borders of Brick Lane? I mean, do you see Brick Lane and Hoxton as separate or as one area?

Shara: As one, yeah, very much, it's a triangle, we are on the edge, and we are really Shoreditch here, but on the edge, so anywhere between Brick lane and you know, Old Street I see it as all the same, that's for me anyway for other people it might not be the case.

In sharp contrast to this, another set of local 'imaginary lines' exists, which suggests that Brick Lane comprises a separate area in itself, clearly demarcated from Hoxton/Shoreditch. More importantly, this spatial narrative of exclusion is based mostly on cultural-economic rather than spatial reasons.

According to this narrative, these two areas (Brick Lane and Hoxton/Shoreditch) allegedly attract distinct clienteles; a more mainstream and affluent for Hoxton, a more 'emerging' and less affluent for Brick Lane. Accordingly, the spaces of culture of the former appear to contradict the spatial cultures of the latter. Edward, a 'white'-British theater designer, comments:

G.M: Do you see Hoxton, Brick Lane and Old Street as part of the same area or do you view them as separate?

Edward: I view them as separate, I mean for the moment, I don't know, its probably a little bit more expensive there [Hoxton/Old Street], isn't it, it attracts a different class of people, at the same time a different art movement going on around there as well, it just seems to attract a different class, I don't know if its exactly class but something like that.



Image 14: A Mapping attempt to include Brick Lane within the broader Hoxton/Shoreditch area.

Source: The Shoreditch Map, June 2001, issue 35

In a similar fashion to this, Beggy again, suggests:

Beggy: I think there is a lot of attitude around Hoxton in the bars and the things like that, I think it's a different atmosphere just in terms of the people that go there as well, not the same people, well say that I go there sometimes as well, but it is a slightly different kind of people.

To sum up, Brick Lane appears to become the subject of different kinds of mappings and cartographic attempts. Accordingly, different sets of 'imaginary lines' and mental borders define and delineate the area. Nevertheless, within these multiple cartographic attempts a contradictory narrative of inclusion and exclusion breaks into the fore. At one level, Brick Lane becomes presented as accommodated within the broader Hoxton/Shoreditch area. Following these lines, the two areas become narrated as sharing the same spatial 'culture' or cultural space. Yet at another level, Brick Lane becomes alternatively constructed as an area apart. More specifically, within this narrative of exclusion, Brick Lane becomes depicted as a distinct spatio-cultural configuration.

6.3 Narrating the area.

The analysis of fourteen transcribed in-depth local interviews revealed the emergence of the following two narrative tropes. Under these lights, Brick Lane becomes depicted either in terms of artistic creativity or cultural diversity. From such a perspective, Brick Lane becomes presented as a long established hub of 'creativity', or alternatively, as a highly diverse 'ethnic' milieu. More importantly, this local narrative theme of 'ethnic' diversity constitutes an instance of 'ethnic'

diversity 'talk' in relation to the local urban landscape⁷⁶. Nevertheless, this language of 'ethnic' diversity in relation to the local vernacular appears to take mostly an aesthetic view on locally accumulated differences. Following these lines, an aesthetic appreciation of local conditions of 'ethnic' diversity appears mostly at work; the 'charm' and aesthetics of differences become broadly acknowledged⁷⁷.

Nevertheless, another kind of narrative emerges that criticises any purely voyeuristic regime of diversities' spectatorship. Instead, it proposes an act of deconstruction of local differences from aesthetic qualities and a subsequent reading of local diversity through the harsh economic realities that it finds itself in. But let us explore these narrative themes in detail.

One of the most dominant representations of Brick Lane portrays it in artistic lights. Following these lines, it is argued that as early as the early 1960s many artists started to settle in the area. Moreover, the internationally acclaimed artistic duo of Gilbert and George are cited as almost personifying the local art movement. Shara, again, comments:

G.M.: Do you consider Brick Lane as an artistic area?

Shara: The art scene, has always been there, a huge art scene, like right from the 1960s, I think, from when Gilbert and George first moved in the area, there's always been an art area, but it changed a lot.

From the above quotation, it becomes evident that Brick Lane is mainly portrayed as a long established hub of artistic creativity. Nevertheless, it is also argued that local creativity might have changed significantly during the period of the last few years. The main reasons cited, for such contemporary transformations of the local artistic scene, are mainly local processes of 'redevelopment' or gentrification unfolding within the vicinity. As a direct result of strong local property inflationary tendencies, a number of initially settled artists appear to have become the victims of

⁷⁶ For a discussion, in relation to 'ethnic' diversity 'talk' and the urban environment see chapter two: 2.4, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.4.4

⁷⁷ For similar processes of attraction to difference in Brixton see chapter four: 4.3.

displacement. By all accounts, such narratives of local artistic displacement closely corresponds with theories of gentrification as a two-wave process (Zukin 1992:230). According to such a view, gentrification in its early stages is carried out by a specific socio-economic group of people that alters the way that local vernacular has been traditionally 'seen'. Nevertheless, as gentrification matures, a different more 'affluent' socioeconomic group of people becomes subsequently attracted to the area. In effect, increased levels of local demand go on to create inflationary pressures on existing housing stock that translate to higher rents and spiraling property prices. Following on from this, the first group of gentrifiers or the first wave of local gentrification becomes evicted on grounds of economic affordability.

Nevertheless, for the case of Brick Lane, a different version of this two-wave story of gentrification allegedly has taken place. Accordingly, artists looking for cheap studio spaces comprised the first wave of local gentrification. However, since then, other contemporary forms of more profitable creativity appear to have taken their place and space. 'Creative industries', capitalizing upon an intermarriage of business mentality with creativity, have spread locally. Allegedly, these 'cultural industries', which include such diverse practices from music and architecture to design, media and even computer games, started displacing earlier settled young artists and their bohemian 'ways of life'. As a result, a more corporate 'creative' culture developed locally; a kind of culture able to produce significant levels of profits; a kind of sector of the metropolitan urban economy capable of affording medium to expensive levels of rent. In effect, entrepreneurial forms of creativity appear to have replaced local traditional forms of fine art. But let us hear, David, commenting on the topic:

G.M: Do you consider Brick Lane as an artistic area?

Dave: It's, well, it used to be very creative at one stage, this is where all the sort of up and coming artists lived, in the nineties, they are moving out now, but they are still sort of riding on that, but all the artists, the small artists, are leaving because of the

prices.

G.M.: So in a way you say that the creativity is leaving the area?

Dave: Well, it's being changed to something like, you know, the sort of, the people with the computer art and art companies and graphics, and you know all this combination, are sort of moving in and all the actual artists with the paintbrush or whatever are moving out, so although it is creative its been replaced by another type of creativity.

In a similar fashion to this, Shara, again, narrates recent occupancy changes within the local Brewery. Shara comments:

G.M.: What kind of business do you mainly accommodate at the Brewery?

Shara: It changed, in the beginning it used to be more like little artists, studios and fashion designers having one little space for themselves, but it all changed, especially with the whole internet, it changed things as well, so over the last maybe two or three years, it has become, it's still arty, it still has its artists and musicians, but we now have more, you know, companies, and dot.coms, and an internet service provider, the majority tends to be, even if they are big companies, they are young and have fresh ideas.

At the same time, with these narratives that depict Brick Lane as an important hub of a transforming metropolitan creativity, another set of representations tends to construct the area as a highly 'ethnically' diverse one. From this perspective, Brick Lane's 'ethnic' diversity becomes portrayed as its finest asset. By all accounts, these are the workings of diversity 'talk' in relation to the local urban landscape. Local urban heterogeneity becomes clearly preferred to any form of 'ethnic' homogeneity. Claudia, a 'white' British female, who works in one of the local cafes and lives further out in Hackney, argues:

G.M.: What do you think of Brick Lane?

Claudia: Yeah, it's an interesting place, it's an interesting mix of cultures, definitely, I don't know anywhere else that is quite like that, I don't know it's an interesting place, it's a weird place, you've got the trendy bars like the Vibe bar and the 93 Feet East and then you have the Bangladeshi community sitting next door.

For Claudia, this constant juxtaposition of local images of differences is the unique characteristic of the area. From such a perspective, Brick Lane becomes portrayed as a spatial container of diversity; it becomes depicted as the local milieu for the co-existence of different cultural practices. In another instance, Jean-Paul, a 'white' Anglo-French advertiser, who had moved recently into the area, comments:

G.M.: What do you think about Brick Lane?

Jean-Paul: I am gonna say, what my brother said when he came here, 'you get a real sense of community with the shops and all the rest of it, is just doesn't happen to be yours', I think that is a little harsh, you know, but I know what he means, you feel like a visitor to a foreign land, not in a xenophobic or racist kind of way, but just literally, you know.

In the above quotation, Jean-Paul, goes on to portray Brick Lane as a 'foreign' metropolitan 'land' within the midst of London. Nevertheless, he is quick to suggest, that this kind of statement should not be perceived, as implying and denouncing any 'cultural swamping' of Britain. As he says, it should not be considered as carrying any 'racist' or 'xenophobic' connotations and overtones. On the contrary, for Jean-Paul, Brick Lane's difference and foreignness to other parts of the city, clearly constitute its unique asset. In a similar manner, Hulo, a Norwegian male cinematographer that lives and works locally comments:

G.M: What do you think of Brick lane?

Hulo: It's the fact that you feel that it's a little world outside London, I mean you would be just five minutes walk from the City and you have people on the streets and you hardly hear English spoken on the street and that has its charm.

This narrative tendency of depicting 'ethnic' diverse areas as 'foreign lands' or 'worlds apart', were very commonplace representations of metropolitan spaces of migration during the 1950s and 1960s. That said, inner-city areas of intense Commonwealth migration and settlement during those years, were habitually 'seen' or perceived as 'Twilight Zones'; areas of multiple migrant occupancy and lodging houses. Nevertheless, this idea of the 'Twilight Zone' conveyed a dual meaning. On one hand, through the 'slum' clearance policies of the era, 'Twilight Zones' referred to the age and condition of housing within these areas. As Rex and Moore (1967) argued:

'Because of the age of these houses the areas are known to the planners as 'twilight zones' implying that they are approaching, but have not yet reached, the night of slumdom' (Rex and Moore 1967:29).

On the other hand, this specific description profoundly connoted the migrant character of these areas. Accordingly, 'Twilight Zones' were the areas, which although located within the hearts of post-colonial British cities, simulated the feeling of entering into another cultural zone. To put it differently, former 'Twilight Zones' were almost considered as metropolitan windows to 'otherness'; one by just entering, immediately seemed to experience feelings of national dislocation and cultural disorientation (hence Twilight Zones). In short, former 'Twilight Zones' were spaces where other 'cultures' and 'ways of life' resided. More importantly, this cultural otherness allegedly contradicted and opposed the established British 'way of life'. Nevertheless, such a cultural juxtaposition was not neutral. Instead, it was informed by a former colonial legacy that ranked 'cultures' according to a 'racial' hierarchy.

Through the racist 'structures of feeling' of the era⁷⁸, these windows to 'otherness', these places of cultural disorientation, were habitually perceived in a negative light. They were mainly 'seen' and articulated, through the uses, of a totally different language of difference than that of contemporary 'ethnic' diversity 'talk'. In effect, former inner-city 'Twilight Zones' were habitually portrayed through the language of 'new' or 'cultural racism' (Barker 1987). Following these lines, this language articulated clearly a feeling of 'native' cultural distaste and aversion towards these 'other' cultures. As a result, any possibilities for a successful multicultural urban living were denied; their 'ways of life' supposedly clashed and contested with traditional British culture. The only way forward could be through the development of monocultural forms of living. Accordingly, processes of spatialisation or segregation of other 'cultures' and 'races' appeared to inform earlier forms of British diverse urban living.

Furthermore, these tropes of cultural racism became spatially manifested through an urban dialectic of cultural repulsion that led to a 'native' or 'white' flight from inner-city areas to the outer suburbs and beyond. As a result, the urban postcolonial body was born to exist side by side with largely homogeneous 'native' areas. In a sense, the 'natives' that failed to relocate were those ones that could not afford to leave the diversifying inner-city behind. Under these lights, earlier forms of British urban multicultural living appeared to take place between cultural 'others' and poor 'natives'. In effect, the urban multicultural living of the era was not a matter of choice, but of necessity.

However, a different kind of multiculturalism appears to characterise contemporary forms of inner-city diverse urban living. This new kind of urban multiculturalism appears to go along with a new language of difference in relation to the contemporary 'twilight zone' of Brick Lane. In sharp contrast to the past, this new language of describing and perceiving urban differences perceives 'ethnic' diversity in a positive fashion. As Hulo says there is some 'charm' within the 'otherness' of Brick Lane. In a similar fashion, Raphael Samuel (1989:164) has also discussed this

⁷⁸ Barnor Hesse (2000:16) has theorised the histories of British multiculturalism as a series of ever-changing 'structures of feeling'.

local 'charm of vernacular'. Following these lines, this new language of 'ethnic diversity' in relation to the urban landscape clearly acknowledges the charms of local 'ethnic' vernacular. In short, as this research has striven to demonstrate, specific contemporary postmodern-postcolonial 'twilight zones' of Brixton and Brick Lane appear to map a new language of difference that aesthetically values 'ethnic' diversity.

In order to proceed with my analysis, I would like to introduce Paul Gilroy's (1995) account of multiculturalism as both possessing 'aesthetic' and 'ethical' dimensions. Gilroy (1995) argues:

'I want to approach it [multiculturalism] here speculatively, not a clearly delineated goal or a reified state to which one can be finally committed but as an aesthetic and even ethical principle routed through certain distinctive historical experiences of modernity and confirmed by the special promise and hetero-cultural dynamism of contemporary metropolitan life' (ibid 1995:3).

As I argued before, aesthetic approaches to local conditions of multiculturalism are mostly characterise local instances of 'ethnic' diversity talk. From such a perspective, the local spectacle of 'difference' is mainly narrated, as a guarantor for a visually fulfilling urban experience; as having its very own 'charm'. Following these lines, aesthetic dimensions of local multiculturalism break into the narrative fore. But what about an ethical approach to local conditions of multiculturalism? An ethical view on local conditions of 'ethnic' diversity? A kind of local multiculturalism viewed through 'ethics'⁷⁹?

In close relevance to the above, I shall expose an individual narrative that goes on to acknowledge both 'aesthetic' and 'ethical' dimensions of local conditions of diversity. Moreover, I shall draw the lines of similarity between the following: firstly, aesthetic approaches to local diversity and earlier Western European exoticisation tendencies. Secondly, an ethical approach to 'difference' that in a similar manner to the 'epic theatre' approach deconstructs the 'spectacle' and alternatively reveals the social-circumstances that diversity finds itself in.

⁷⁹ It should be noted that any notion of 'ethics' fundamentally requires putting the 'other' before the 'self'. Nevertheless, the specific conceptualisation of 'ethics' here stands for a socially engaging life. In this sense, the 'social' becomes constructed as highly 'ethical'.

To begin with, Raj, a British-Asian creative professional, made the following comments:

G.M.: What are the good things about Brick Lane:

Raj: To get a good samosa when I want one, and at the same time go and listen some really good tunes by some good djs, been able to get a bagel twentyfour hours a day, I like the sense of being an all night thing, I like the feeling of change, I like the feeling of diversity.

However, during the course of the interview, he became more critical about the ways of 'seeing' local diversity. Raj again comments:

Raj: I think there is a risk, is like that thing, you can walk down Brick Lane and you know, there are different people from different backgrounds and colours and races, different kinds of food, and different smells and noises, and this place is playing this kind of music and this place is playing thumping tunes, you can walk down and there is a complete kind, it's like a canvas of sounds and smells, a spectacle, and I think there is a risk of not actually seeing what underlines it, which is, huge amount of deprivation, a huge amount of people living in really difficult circumstances...I think its important not to loose sight of the fact that they are both there, its important to constantly draw back the spectacle and all that lovy-dovy things to the actual reality of it, its very hard, but it's important to do so.

To start reflecting on the above quotation, a number of writers have gone so far as to draw the lines of similarities between urban life, theatre and dramaturgy⁸⁰ (Raban 1974:17, Baudrillard 1992:154, 1998:18, Clark 1997:1). From this perspective,

⁸⁰ For a detailed discussion on urban life, theatre and dramaturgy see chapter four: 4.3.

metropolitan life transforms into a 'stage' for multiple urban dramas and comedies to be enacted. Nonetheless, contemporary forms of metropolitan postmodern-postcolonial urbanism, in relation to Brixton and Brick Lane, appear closely to correspond to visual regimes of spectatorship on 'otherness'. Nevertheless, there might be more than one way of 'seeing' these localised urban spectacles of 'difference'; there might be more than one standpoint from which one can spectate diversity.

A number of authors have argued about the existence of long established Western European tendencies of exoticising the 'other' (Gilroy 1995:11, Hall 1997:223). From this perspective, 'otherness' becomes the site of fascination, spectatorship and observance. Within such a tradition, the work of Victor Segalen appears as one of the most influential. For Segalen, an early twentieth-century French writer: 'Exoticism understood as...an aesthetic of diversity- is moreover the center, the essence, the justification of all the books Victor Segalen has written and no doubt of those he intends to write' (Segalen cited in Todorov 1994:323). Nevertheless, his way of defining 'otherness', 'exoticism' or 'difference' is a very broad one. For him, whatever is external to one's observing subjectivity inevitably appears to constitute 'otherness'. More specifically, 'differences' are deemed precious or even invaluable as they allegedly guarantee the intensification of human life. Accordingly, exoticism as 'an acquisition of pleasure in diversity' (ibid 1994:327) provides allegedly deeply exhilarating or fulfilling experiences. By the same token, the individual, who embarks on such pleasurable journeys through differences, is called an 'exote'. To put it simply, the art of exoticism requires us to transform into sophisticated exotes craving for differences.

In a similar vein, Segalen declared that the 'exote' should not attempt to assimilate diversity, or internalise external 'difference'. Instead, a distance, between the subject and object of exoticism, should always be maintained, valued and preserved. In other words, he proclaimed that only a constant externality to the encountered 'differences' could guarantee the continuation of 'exotic' pleasures. In this sense, what the art of exoticism desperately needs, is a 'fixed' and unchangeable identity; a very strong sense of 'self'. External 'differences' should

never be allowed, at any cost, to corrode the core of one self. They should remain external and thus pleasurable in their own 'otherness'.

On the other hand, Raj's critical comments on contemporary conditions of Brick Lanes' postmodern-postcolonial 'exoticism', can be taken as a critique of broader Western European exoticisation tendencies. His solutions to such 'spectacular' local conditions appear to pass through a constant retrieval of underlining social 'realities'. According to Raj, one should not just, immerse herself/himself in 'differences', but instead, she/he should constantly 'draw back the spectacle' for social realities to be revealed. Following these lines, Raj's recommendations resemble the main ideas of an 'epic' approach to theatre. This concept of an 'epic theatre', was formulated by Bertolt Brecht in clear opposition to Aristotelian forms of dramaturgy (Benjamin 1973:144-5). Within an 'epic theatre' approach, the emphasis shifts from suffering and empathizing with the characters until the point of catharsis, to the representation of social conditions that the characters find themselves in. Under these lights, the 'stage' leaves behind any sensationalist aspirations and instead focuses on social circumstances. Most importantly, the audience plays a vital, almost 'ethical', role. First and foremost, it should have a strong 'interest in the matter' (ibid 1973:144). Secondly, through such theatrical dialectics, between a non-sensationalist 'stage' and a socially-engaged hence ethical, audience, a clear image of social reality can emerge, which can trigger 'revolutionary' or 'progressive' actions.

According to Raj's narrative, hordes of contemporary Brick Lane's 'exotes', should focus less on the aesthetic sensations of local diversity, whilst alternatively open their eyes into the 'social' circumstances that local diversity finds itself in. From such a perspective, aesthetic connotations within the uses of a local 'ethnic' diversity talk find their fiercest critic.

6.4 Narrating local multicultural.

‘I was thinking about it, yesterday, I was sitting outside the Vibe bar, and I was thinking about the Indian culture and all the restaurants, there is a solid community here, then there is this new wave of people, art people, designers and stuff and I was wondering about how they meet, what they think of each other’
Jess, a young ‘white’-British aspiring, female artist.

In what follows, I shall cast some light on local multicultural constructions of the area. As I shall argue, a local ‘dominant’ multicultural story defines Brick Lane, as an area, where both, a loosely defined ‘Asian’ or ‘Bangladeshi’ and a newly arrived ‘creative’ community reside. Allegedly, these two constructed as different local communities come into a minimal contact between them. Accordingly, a local multicultural story of separation and acute disassociation breaks into the fore. After exemplifying this local dominant multicultural story, I shall draw attention to the specific ways that this local ‘creative’ community constructs itself. Under these lights, I examine ‘cosmopolitan’ narratives that this ‘creative’ community ‘imagines’ in relation to itself (Anderson 1983). As I shall argue, a local ‘creative’ ‘cosmopolitan’ ethos can almost substitute for any alleged minimal inter-communitarian interaction.

Brick Lane appears to provide ‘home’ to two different local communities. Under these lights, a local narrative of communitarian division breaks into the fore; a kind of narrative that defies any inclusive local community scenarios. Most importantly, this strong narrative of intercommunitarian division provides a platform for hidden issues of ‘race’, ‘religion’, ‘income’, ‘class’ etc. to become subtly articulated (Back 1996). In effect, one is led to consider that the specific deployment of a concept of spatially co-existing communities might comprise the vehicle for other societal categories of separation to become verbalised and expressed.

Following these lines, Clark, a ‘white’-British freelance designer who works

locally, argues:

G.M.: What do you think about Brick Lane's multiculturalism?

Clark: I think it's quite nice that you have the balance, like in the day time, you look around and, yeah, all the designers and the young agency people, and then around eight o'clock, nine o'clock at night, all the pubs fill up with these people and all the streets is just Asian people and its quite nice, because you have this thing in London, here it's the Asian and the arty people [laughing].

Within the above statement, Clark defines Brick Lane's multicultural realities as characteristic of London at large. Nevertheless, what is particularly interesting is the fact that Clark is not capable of correctly ethnically defining the constructed 'other', community. Instead of naming it as 'Bangladeshi', he broadly defines it as 'Asian'⁸¹.

This local 'dominant' multicultural story goes on to depict a local condition of multiculturalism characterized by a regime of spatial co-existence of minimal interaction. Following these lines, Brick Lane's multiculturalism becomes presented as a purely geographical form of co-existence. To put it differently, forms and manifestations of a local inter-communitarian 'coming together' are almost denied. Jean Paul again, comments:

G.M.: What do you think is the relationship between the newcomers and the longer established local Bangladeshi population?

Jean-Paul: To tell you the truth, I never experienced any kind of friction or integration, its just here.

⁸¹ I would like to mention that during the course of this fieldwork, a number of other informants proceeded into a similar abstract 'ethnic' semiosis. In effect, one is led to consider that a certain level of confusion might exist in relation to the 'ethnic' origin of the 'other' community.

In a similar fashion, Andrew, another 'white'-British graphic designer, who works at the Brewery, argues:

G.M.: What do you think about the multiculturalism of Brick Lane?

Andrew: There are lots of people with different colours on them [laughing].

G.M.: Any interaction?

Andrew: Yeah, I mean its quite interesting, I mean there is eye-contact, so I am kind of walking up Brick-Lane, I am gonna go 'hi', 'hi', hi', well there is not necessary a lot of mixture, just living in the same area, no opportunity to meet each other really.

Andrew by mocking my question, which in a way reveals his personal opinion about the banality of these kinds of questions, confirms a local multiculturalism of spatial co-existence, which can go as far as eye-contact and a habitual, almost mechanical greeting. Nevertheless, he argues that a lack of opportunities or 'micro' spaces, where the 'two' constructed as different local communities can meet, is evident in Brick Lane. Following these lines, a specific image of a local multicultural condition arises, where a spatial regime of segregation informs the metropolitan patterns of existence of these two local communities.

By the same token, Raj again, agrees with such depictions of a local segregated multiculturalism. In what follows, he narrates his walking experience along Brick Lane at the time of the Bangladeshi New Year (Mela). Raj reminisces:

Raj: I was walking down Brick Lane, and yeah, there were a few people from different backgrounds, but mainly, it was Bangladeshi people, by vast majority, and I walked past the Vibe bar, I don't know if you have noticed that but there is a huge gate separating the bar and the outside area from the

street⁸², and behind the gate was a hundred per cent exclusively kind of under thirty-five white people, and it was like, you know, suddenly these debates, these images like gated communities and, the vision was so stark, it was shocking.

All of the above local multicultural constructions go on to narrate unfolding forms of local urbanism strictly divided in terms of 'ethnicity'. Following these lines, one is led to consider if Jane Jacobs (1996) earlier description of the Neo-Georgian world of gentrification of Brick Lane, as a 'multiculturalism of convenience' and 'spatial segregation' (Jacobs 1996:160), has found its contemporary forerunner. But what are the main reasons cited, for this supposedly none or very little, local interaction? What are the prime obstacles to local inter-communitarian inter-exchanges? In broad terms, everyday 'culture' restricted by religion provides the 'dominant' resonance behind such alleged levels of nominal interaction. Hulo, again, comments:

G.M.: What do you think are the obstacles of communication between the two local communities?

Hulo: It depends on what life, you are leading, and as we know a lot of people that move here they are still quite young, you know mid-twenties to mid-thirties and they have their friends and they are not gonna go out and make an effort to be friends with their Bangladeshi neighbours, just as if they move into a Jewish area, or a Greek area they are not gonna go out and make an effort to be friends with the Greeks or Jewish, which happens in all big cities really and if you meet a nice Bangladeshi guy at the pub that's cool, but there are a lot of Muslims in this area so obviously that's slightly different, and the mosque around the

⁸² At this point, I would like to mention that this open area of the 'Vibe bar' behind the 'huge gate', is the specific 'micro-space' that I used in order to conduct my local series of interviews.

corner is very orthodox, which means they don't drink, which means that they don't go to the pub.

In the above quotation, Hulo goes on to construct metropolitan urbanism as one of few intimate relationships accompanied by a general feeling of anonymity or 'strangeness' to the rest of the urban populations. From this perspective, the act of either living or working in a highly diverse area, like Brick Lane, does not necessarily guarantee that the spatial proximity of 'strangers' can enter into one's life. Most importantly, when the power and influence of religion to guide one's lifestyle and everyday practices, enters the picture, any points of local inter-communitarian interaction allegedly diminish. Following these lines, the local Bangladeshi community's religious practices become narrated as the main barriers to any closer 'coming together' of the two, constructed as different, local communities.

At this particular point, in order to proceed with my analysis I would like to introduce Iris Marion Young's (1990) ideal of city-life, as 'being together with strangers' (ibid 1990:237). More importantly, I would like to investigate the limits of such a statement in relation to multicultural narratives elicited through this research. To put it differently, my intention here is to explore the ways that this genre of local multicultural narratives defies or verifies such a suggestion.

As I argued, both Brick Lane's and Brixton's dominant multicultural stories depict contemporary conditions of diversity as ones of spatial segregation and disassociation. Nevertheless, this thesis originates from a specific epistemological and methodological background. What I attempted to do so far was to elicit personal narratives within the stories and life-experiences of our informants. Under these lights, local conditions of multiculturalism become presented, evaluated and judged through a personal stance. They become depicted through the narrative workings of connection or disconnection of the 'self' to local neighbouring 'otherness'. Accordingly, local conditions of multiculturalism are 'seen' through terms of personal feeling. From such an angle, the multiculturalisms of these areas have profoundly failed.

Nevertheless, there might be another way to judge this coming together or not of local multicultural strangers. This particular way passes through 'public' rather than 'private' life. Accordingly, although 'private' forms of multiculturalism become presented as failures there is chance that 'public' manifestations of multiculturalism might be successful.

Richard Sennett (1977) in 'The Fall of the Public Man' argued that contemporary forms of American and Western societies experience the whole range of social phenomena purely 'in terms of personal feeling' (ibid 1977:5). As a result, a society of 'intimacy' is born; a kind of society where everything is judged and evaluated in terms of affinity or non-affinity of the 'self' to the broader world. As he says: 'The public problem of contemporary society is twofold: behaviour and issues which are important do not arouse much passion; the behaviour and the issues begin to arouse passion when people treat them, falsely, as though they were matters of personality' (Sennett 1977:6).

Following these lines, he exemplifies his case by drawing on contemporary transformations that have taken place in relation to physical love. As he argues, physical love has been redefined from terms of eroticism to terms of sexuality. Under these lights, while eroticism was depending on social actions and relations, sexuality appears to connect with issues of personal identity and the 'self'. In short, earlier forms of eroticism manifested through people's actions have given way to conceptions of sexuality as a 'state of being' (ibid 1977:7). Accordingly, physical love and many other societal manifestations have left the domain of actions to transform into considerations about the 'self'; they have become instances of revelation of individual identity. To put it differently, the acts, rituals and considerations of physical love have left the 'public' for the 'private' domain; they have been once and for all internalised or privatised.

Ironically, as this research is so preoccupied with the 'self', the argument I try to articulate is that forms and conditions of local multiculturalism, in both Brixton and Brick Lane, might not only be viewed through 'private' stances or angles of 'personal feeling', but alternatively, they might be also interrogated from a 'public' perspective. Under these lights, a transformation of a local multiculturalism of

'being' and identity, to forms of multiculturalism based upon the everyday practices of 'acting' in public, might take place. By doing so, a transposition from a multiculturalism of personal ontologies to a multiculturalism of actions and exchanged words occurs. To put it differently, by treating multiculturalism as a social everyday matter, instead of a matter of individual personalities, a relocation from the most personal levels of 'self' to a 'public' or 'street' level takes place. Accordingly a multiculturalism of the 'self' transforms into a multiculturalism of actions taking place within the context of local streets. From such a perspective, local conditions of multiculturalism might be different. A certain feeling of comfort in finding yourself among strangers, independently of personal reflections of the 'self' towards these strangers appears to provide the norm for Brick Lane. At the same time, everyday words, mechanical greetings, short-lived polite conversations become routinely exchanged among these strangers. In short, a local successful multiculturalism of becoming might replace the previously failed multiculturalism of being; a kind of multiculturalism that keeps unfolding and provides hope and optimism for the future. Nevertheless, through the cynical tendencies of our times, a multiculturalism of actions can be seen as embodied everyday forms of political correctness. Whatever is not personal nowadays can easily be dismissed as a 'trying hard' politically correct mentality. These are the easiest kinds of criticism that come to my mind.

To continue, I shall examine representations of the 'creative' community on itself. As I shall argue, the local 'creative' community tends to present itself as a thriving hub of 'cosmopolitanism', intercultural connectivity and interdependence. Accordingly, what does not flourish within local inter-communitarian multicultural conditions appears to blossom within the closed gates of the restructured Brewery. Shara again, the event manager at the Brewery argues:

Shara: The main thing, that I think its great, is that you have so many like minded people around [the Brewery] who can help each other, so you have a community of all these people who can help each other, you know, someone is maybe with a

graphic company and wants to do some sound recording, and just like next door can be a music studio, and there is a fact that there is a community and people feel for each other.

[Later on in the interview]

Shara: The Brewery in general, is a huge mix, you know you have Europeans, you know, all sorts of people, I think that's' always an asset, you know, different ideas, different ways of doing things.

In a similar fashion, Carl, a 'black'-British musician from Lewisham, expresses his opinion:

G.M.: What do you think about the Brewery?

Carl: it's very multicultural, very, very, multicultural, you see people from different backgrounds, different races, different classes and all of them treat you with respect, they treat you on face value, it's a learning experience.

By all accounts, both instances of local talk deploy the language of 'ethnic' diversity. As Shara characteristically says the brewery is a 'huge mix'. Nevertheless, these instances of 'ethnic' diversity talk take a significant turn and instead of referring to any aesthetic qualities of the local urban micro-space they draw emphasis on a cosmopolitan collaboration and ethos. For Sennett (1977), a cosmopolite 'is a man [or woman] who moves comfortably in diversity; he [she] is comfortable in situations which have no links or parallels to what is familiar to him [or her]' (Sennett 1977:17). Following these lines, the local 'creative' community becomes self-represented, as an army of cosmopolites feeling comfortable within differences. Most importantly, differences within the community become considered as assets, having the ability to trigger new creative ideas and visions. More specifically, Carl's statement about the treatment of the 'other' (a broad definition of otherness in terms of either 'race', 'class' or 'background'), within the

compounds of the Brewery, at 'face value' evokes Emmanuel Levinas' (1969, 1987) personal ethics of approaching 'alterity'. For Levinas (1969, 1987), as for Fanon (1986), an intersubjective phenomenological captivity appears to constitute the context where differences become encountered and subsequently dealt with. While Fanon emphasises the importance of skin to explain phenomenological regimes of racism, Levinas (1969:81,207 1987:79) focuses on the 'face' and the ethical obligations that it gives rise to for any receiving human consciousness. Moreover, Levinas (1987: 198) proposes that the 'face' of the other, should neither be reduced to 'knowledge' (a knowledge of the subject towards the object = racism) nor enjoyment (the subject being lost in the spectacle of the object). Instead, a 'welcoming of the face' (ibid 1987:214), which immediately puts into 'question the consciousness that welcomes it' (ibid 1987:207) should take place. Through that, an ethical approach to 'otherness' (whatever kind of otherness) can find the necessary space to become realized.

Last but not least, through Carl's narrative, the transformed spaces of the Brewery provide the place for such a 'welcoming' of alterity. From this perspective, the redeveloped spaces of the 'creative' community become presented as the places of a 'pure' ethical cosmopolitan encounter. Behind its closed gates, different encounters of differences appear to thrive. Where broader Brick Lane's multiculturalism allegedly falls short of connecting local communities, the 'creative' spaces of the Brewery appear to provide the platform for the breeding of a 'true' local 'cosmopolitan' ethos. In this sense, the latter can almost substitute for the failures of the former.

6.5 Identities in space.

'To practice space is thus to retreat to the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, to be other and move towards the other'

Michel de Certeau (1984:110).

In writing about contemporary societal transformations recent decades have witnessed the proliferation of a literature on 'identity' (see for instance: Raban 1974, Weeks 1990, Hall 1990, 1991, 1996, McGuigan 1996, Touraine 2000). In a number of cases, theoretical explorations of identity become simultaneously discussed in conjunction with 'space' (de Certeau 1984:110, Harvey 1989:66). Under these lights, a notion of a socio-spatial 'identity' prevails, which goes on to argue that identities become constructed, whilst subsequently enacted and performed, in and through 'space'⁸³ (Zukin 1992:222). By the same token, this intense preoccupation with issues of 'identity' and 'space' fundamentally acknowledges the influence of consumption in processes of constructing a 'self' (Raban 1974:1, Harvey 1989:289). Following these lines, it is argued that we become what we consume within the realms of the contemporary postmodern city (Zukin 1992:243). Moreover, as the 'postmodern city' is allegedly all about images (Sorkin 1992:xiv, Boyer 1996:47), urban visual consumption dominates the production of socio-spatial identities (Harvey 1989:289). In this sense, the 'self' becomes another in relation to external visual stimuli⁸⁴.

In what follows, I shall explore the validity and relevance of such an argument in relation to 'cultural' identity and the 'ethnic' self. In more detail, I shall examine local narrative constructions of cultural identity in conjunction to the contemporary postmodern-postcolonial urbanism of Brick Lane. As in the case of the postmodern city where forms of visual consumption allegedly influence spatial identity, could one argue the same for the case of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism and a hypothetical transformation of the 'ethnic' self? To put it differently, do local regimes of visual consumption of 'otherness' have the power to penetrate the skin and result into a transformed 'ethnic' self? Or alternatively, local narrative constructions of cultural identity instead of working 'through' difference (Hall 1990:235, Bhabha 1994:1, McGuigan 1996:141) fundamentally work 'against' it (Hall 1996:4)?

⁸³ For a relativization of such a theoretical position see Pratt (1998:27-45) 'Grids of Difference'.

⁸⁴ For a critique of such a structuralist approach on issues of spatial identity and visual consumption and a more post-structuralist reading on the topic see Jacobs 1998:275.

As Sharon Zukin (1992) has suggested 'liminal spaces' of postmodern urbanism 'complicate the effort to construct a spatial identity'(Zukin 1992:222). Following these lines, could one argue that Brick Lane's current condition of postmodern-postcolonial 'liminality' might complicate any simplistic, straightforward production of a solidly 'monocultural' self? Is there a possibility for 'liminal-spaces' (Brick Lane) to produce 'liminal' (Back 1996) 'cultural' identities or 'new ethnicities' (Hall 1992)? Or alternatively, postmodern-postcolonial metropolitan formations proceed, through acts of 'othering', into an instant reaffirmation of the 'ethnic' self?

To tackle these issues, I shall interrogate 'cultural' identity constructions unfolding within the narratives of these 'creative' informants. To put it differently, I attempt to shed some light on stories that these local 'creative' individuals say to themselves for themselves and 'others'; I embark on an investigation into the narrative 'plots' (Ricoeur 1992:141), which succeed in creating a sense of a cultural 'self'; an investigation into the 'cultural' 'enchainment' of the 'self' to 'itself' (Levinas 1987:55).

Nevertheless, the former 'dominant' story of a local multiculturalism of spatial segregation and minimum interaction leaves minimum space for the corrosion of the 'ethnic' 'self'. Instead, the 'self' appears to be constructed or even re-affirmed against a neighbouring Bangladeshi cultural 'otherness' (Hall 1996:4). Following these lines, Edward, again, comments:

Edward: I am an outgoing person so I make an effort to meet people, I don't really think that there is a part of their culture [Bangladeshi], it is a part of their culture, to meet people of their own kind, I don't think they want to meet English people, I don't know if they are initially going out of their way to meet you.

[My emphasis]

To begin with, it becomes apparent that 'culture' might comprise the vehicle for other societal distinctions to be implicitly discussed. In this sense, culture can almost substitute for 'race'. Following these lines, local Bangladeshi 'culture' almost stands for an ethnicised 'race' (Cohen 1999:2). Nevertheless, differential aspects of class and income appear to inform the picture as well. In effect, one is led to consider that the local Bangladeshi community becomes fundamentally depicted as different in terms of a 'racialised' culture, income and class. Their 'way of life' does not simply refer to 'culture', but in a way to material conditions of existence and hidden racialised mythologies too.

To continue, what is very clear, is that Edward articulates his sense of 'self' in stark opposition to this spatially co-existing Bangladeshi ethnicity. In other words, he produces a cultural 'self', which works against a neighbouring 'otherness'. In short, the macro-spaces of Brick Lane become fundamentally depicted as places where two different 'cultures' or 'ways of life' reside. From this perspective, each cultural subject, each cultural 'self' emerges as strictly correlating to an all-powerful defining 'ethnic' culture. This is of course, an example of the articulation of a language difference that speaks about the existence of local 'monocultural selves' and un-transmittable differences. These are workings of a cultural identity operating 'against', instead of 'through', differences. Following these lines, similar acts of othering comprised the dominant way of constructing a sense of cultural 'identity' in Brixton too. From such a perspective, differences become deployed in an attempt to re-affirm or reify the 'self'; they become narrative devices for a 'self's' fortification.

After exposing this local 'dominant' story of 'cultural identity', I shall articulate two 'other' minor stories of the 'self'. Firstly, Raj, argues about the existence of a 'fragmented', multi-layered 'self' depending on context, whilst secondly, Jess, suggests that 'oneself' can become 'another' (Ricoeur 1992) through the influences of Brick Lane. Raj, again, comments:

G.M: What are your own pleasures of Brick Lane?

Raj: I like the fact that there is actual life on the streets and changes from day to day basis and it also changes at different times of the day, very early in the morning or Bank Holiday Monday, Brick Lane is totally Bangladeshi, at other times, like during a really huge launch party with a really big Dj on, and you know, it's party time, you can just move through in and out of spaces all in one the same geographical block, its fascinating, I love that.

G.M: Do you think that you can participate in all these spaces?

Raj: Absolutely yes, I feel that I can do that.

Within the above quotation, Raj articulates a different conception of cultural identity. Subsequently, he argues that different contexts or spaces appear to produce different kinds of 'selves' (within oneself). In this sense, the 'self' does not appear as 'single', 'fixed' or stable, but instead as 'multiple' depending on context (Weeks 1990:88, Touraine 2000:3). Following these lines, the 'self' is performative (Bell 1999:1) and 'fragmented' (Hall 1996:4). Different 'selves', depending on context can break into the fore to become performed and enacted. From such a perspective, a language of a 'monocultural' self cannot be considered appropriate anymore to describe such a multi-layered cultural entity. Accordingly, any theorisation of the 'self' should take account of its 'multicultural' and 'fragmented' character. Following these lines, one is led to consider that many 'cultures' are inscribed within us, waiting for their chance or context to be enacted. Nevertheless, such a narrative construction of the 'self', as 'fragmented', does not shed light on any cultural configurations that might take place between these multiple 'selves'. Accordingly, it does not describe 'hybrid' formations that might arise through the interaction of different 'selves'. From this perspective, 'new cultural configurations', 'new ethnicities' and 'new cultures' remain hidden and unacknowledged under the aegis of 'self' fragmentation.

On the other hand, Jess narrates a different story about the 'self'. As it is widely known, processes of gentrification within the media have been habitually depicted,

at least in the States, as processes of 'conquering' the urban frontier (Smith 1991b:64). At the same time, a number of writers were eager to appropriate this metaphor for their own theoretical and political objectives. Accordingly, they argued that gentrification constitutes 'a frontier of profitability', a 'frontier' line of separation between areas of urban investment and dis-investment (Smith 1991a). Nevertheless, not much has been written in relation to the cultural 'frontiers' of gentrification. The specific ways, which voluntary forms of situating and locating your 'body'⁸⁵ within economic and cultural 'otherness', can alter the 'self'. Jess, again, argues:

G.M: what do you think of the area?

Jess: It's like a frontier.

G.M: A frontier of what?

Jess: Trying to make a new life, it's a little bit more exploratory here ...been in a space, where you have another culture around, challenges you, in a sense, you start to think, who am I, or what's me in a sense, because someone looks different or somebody is doing something differently, and maybe you don't think necessarily like that at the time but I think there is a sense that you are in a space where anything can happen.

My own reading of the above quotation tends to perceive it as a statement about the influences of 'diverse' urban space upon the 'self'. From this perspective, cultural 'identities' are not perceived as 'fixed' or 'stable', but instead, as in constant 'transition' (Hall 1990:225). The 'self' retains the possibility to be 'another' through difference. Following these lines, this is a narrative construction of identities as 'incomplete'. As Sennett says: 'In order to sense the other, one must do the work of accepting oneself as incomplete'(Sennett 1990:148). In the case of Jess, she communicates these concerns by questioning 'what's me in a sense?'. This is a

⁸⁵ Another theorisation of gentrification can take place around a notion of 'body politics'. The economic and voluntary decision to situate your 'body' amid less-affluent and/or 'culturally' other bodies.

narrative construction of identity where differences are allowed to penetrate the 'self', go skin deep and transform it.

To sum up, I began this exploration into local narrative constructions of cultural identity by citing Michel de Certeau's quotation that: 'To practice space is thus to retreat to the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, to be other and move towards the other'(de Certeau 1984:110). As I argued, the local dominant story of cultural identity uses the 'other' in a way of re-affirming the 'self'. Broadly speaking, these are the workings of cultural identity against difference. Through an assumed 'knowledge' of the 'other' (Levinas 1969:198), though acts of constant 'othering', we succeed into producing ourselves. On the other hand, Raj, suggests that as he passes 'in' and 'out' of spaces he becomes another depending on context. In this sense, many 'others' might exist within 'oneself'. Of course, these are the workings of a flexible 'self' through multiple differences. Lastly, Jess suggests that 'oneself' can become 'another' through the influences of heterogeneous space. In this sense, the 'old' and 'new' self can merge together for 'new societies, new people and new cultures [to] come into existence' (Park 1959:375). In short, to 'practice space' might be a very difficult enterprise.

6.6 Conclusions.

In this chapter I attempted to cast some light on stories and narratives relating, or better, emanating from the 'creative' community of Brick Lane. As I argued, a variety of local cartographies existed. As Beggy characteristically said, 'everybody makes their maps of places...you have these kind of mental maps'. Following these lines, a dual narrative of spatial delineation unfolded: at one level, Brick Lane becomes narrated as spatially accommodated within the broader Hoxton/Shoreditch area, yet on another, a different kind of cartography attempts constructs the area as a separate spatial entity. Nevertheless, both mappings appear to comprise manifestations of different forms of local cultural politics of space or spatial politics of culture.

To continue, Brick Lane becomes mainly narrated through the narrative tropes of artistic creativity or 'ethnic' diversity. As it became increasingly evident, the uses of local 'ethnic' diversity 'talk' appear to take mostly an aesthetic view on the local urban environment; an aesthetic appreciation of the local urban milieu. Nevertheless, another individual narrative suggested that at the same time with this visual appreciation of the local urban milieu, Brick Lane's contemporary voyeurs should deconstruct the spectacle in order to 'see' the material conditions of existence that local urban diversity, finds itself in. Following these lines, an 'epic theater' approach to local forms of urbanism is essential or even ethical.

In terms of narrating the local multicultural, a strong story of communitarian division appeared to exist. Under these lights, Brick Lane becomes portrayed as an area where a 'creative' and an 'Asian' or 'Bangladeshi' community reside. By all accounts, these two local communities become constructed as different; intercommunitarian levels of interaction become presented as minimal. Following these lines, a local multicultural story of intercommunitarian segregation and nominal intercultural exchange breaks into the narrative fore. Furthermore, I examined the themes, through which the local 'creative' community imagines itself. As I argued, a number of cosmopolitan narratives were deployed in order for the local 'creative' community to be depicted. In short, where broader local multiculturalism allegedly failed, the micro-spaces of the Brewery appeared to provide space for the breeding of a 'truly' cosmopolitan ethos. While Brick Lane became depicted as the place of co-existence of 'monocultural' selves, the micro-spaces of the Brewery became alternatively constructed as thriving hubs of cosmopolitanism. To put it differently, the 'self' allegedly remained culturally 'samey' within the broader macro-area, whilst it appeared to loose itself within the micro-spaces of the Brewery. Accordingly, a working 'through' and 'against' differences appeared to take place in and out of the gates of the Brewery respectively.

In terms of identity construction and practicing space, notions of the cultural 'self' became constructed in stark opposition to a spatially co-existing Bangladeshi ethnicity. By all accounts, these are the workings of identity defining itself against a

neighbouring 'other'; these are instances of the deployment of a language of monocultural 'selves' and strictly designated, 'fixed' differences. Following these lines, the 'other' provides a platform, from which, one can construct, a sense of 'self' in comparison.

At the same time, two other 'minor' stories of identity construction appear to break also into the fore too. On one hand, there is a narrative that advocated that different 'selves' break into the surface, depending in context. Under these lights, a fragmented and multifaceted notion of the 'self' appeared to provide the norm. Nevertheless, any acts of 'hybridization' between these different 'selves' were strictly denied. The multicultural 'self' became presented as comprised of a number of 'selves', in a state of non-communication between them.

Last but not least, another identity story suggested that the 'self' can become another through the workings of difference and heterogeneous space. In short, cultural identities became perceived in transition. A 'self' can become another through the influences of Brick Lane.

‘Other’ Brick Lane tales: walking down the lane.

‘It is because the transmission and diffusion of cultures involves some re-discovery and re-evolution of the ideas, customs, or institutions transmitted that one might say that culture exists in and through transmission and diffusion...[cultures] are not merely diffused, but in the process of diffusion they are transformed, recreated’

Robert Ezra Park (1950:4,7).

7.1 Introduction: Local forms of ‘ethnic’ multicultural capitalism.

The aim of this chapter is to explore ‘native’ narrative constructions in relation to Brick Lane. By that I mean an investigation into the particular ways, which Brick Lane becomes perceived and narrated, by a plethora of individuals whom their personal stories and lives, present and future economic gains or stakes, trajectories of self-identification and belonging are tightly intertwined with processes of redevelopment of the area. More particularly, I cast some light on narratives relating to local forms of ‘urban multicultural’ or ‘ethnic’ capitalism (Cohen 1998:29). By all accounts, such an approach does not imply a clear distinction between ‘market’ and ‘place’ (for a detailed discussion, see chapter five: 5.1).

In what follows, I investigate ‘native’ narrative constructions in relation to the following; firstly, I will elicit multiple stories of migration to the area. Through these constructions, Brick Lane becomes presented as a significant ‘port of arrival’ to the metropolis; a place of accommodation for historically ‘arriving’ different differences. Secondly, I investigate ‘native’ attitudes towards processes of ‘gentrification’ or redevelopment of the area. More specifically, the specific way that I attempt to do that is by exploring local versions of temporality. Following these lines, past, present and future Brick Lanes become exposed and compared in order for local attitudes towards processes of redevelopment to be exemplified and judged. Thirdly, I shift my focus into narrative investigation of local multicultural. To put it differently, I examine specific narrative tropes, through which, the local

conditions of multiculturalism become experienced, perceived and narrated. Last but not least, I draw emphasis on personal narratives of belonging and 'self-transformation'. In short, does the cultural or 'ethnic' 'self' become narrated as either 'fixed' or malleable? Do these 'natives' perceive themselves as 'diasporic', possessing an identity that mainly works through difference (Hall 1990:235), or alternatively do their narratives appear to unfold around a 'monocultural' conception of the 'self'? How do they locate themselves within narratives 'of history and culture' (Hall 1990:226)? At this point, in order to proceed with my analysis I shall introduce the concept of the 'subject' (Touraine 2000:169), as a significant theoretical construction, able to shed some light upon processes of 'self-evolution' through the workings of 'difference'.

Before I move any further into the actual logistics of this research, I should provide a condensed historiography of evolution of local forms of 'ethnic'/multicultural capitalism. As early as the late seventeenth century, French Huguenots (Protestants), fleeing religious prosecution at home, came and settled in the area. Among these were many silk weavers from Tours and Lyons that brought along the 'fine art' of weaving silk that would make Spitalfields famous in the years to come. These entrepreneurial migrants imported raw silk from Italy and China and specialized in silk brocades with ornamental floral designs for affluent customers. Most importantly, they succeeded in setting up a local 'silk industry', strictly employing along their own 'ethnic' lines, that went from strength to strength. Some of them acquired fortunes and riches, which permitted them to reside in grandiose houses, near the bottom end of Brick Lane (Butler 1984:19, Leech 1978:5).

After almost a century, came the Irish, the Polish and then the Jews⁸⁶ (Leach 1976:7-8). Some of the Jewish settlers proved very entrepreneurial and through intra-communitarian regimes of labour exploitation, they succeeded in establishing themselves through a local flourishing 'rag-trade' and garment industry (Fishman 1979:81-82). From the late 1950s onwards, although this time under stricter migration control and a climate of severe economic recession (Khan 1976:223), a

⁸⁶ Jewish migration to Spitalfields primarily took place within the course of the 19th century. Most of the Jewish settlers came from Central Europe fleeing religious persecution (for a detailed discussion on the topic see Fishman (1979).

significant influx of mainly male East (Bangladeshis) and West Pakistanis, took up residence in Spitalfields⁸⁷ too. Raphael Samuel (1989) describes their settlement as following:

‘No less fascinating for the historian, or to anyone concerned with the longevities of the district, was the way in which the Bengalis [former East Pakistanis], when they came to Spitalfields, seemed to re-enact the original patterns of Jewish settlement. They settled, most heavily in the self-same streets. They took up the same trades. They practised, it seems, the same kind of family economy, in which self-exploitation was a very condition of survival. Like the Jews they formed, within their own precinct, an ethnic majority, treating the streets and pavements as communal spaces, and the shops and restaurants as meeting places’ (Samuel 1989:148).

These newly arrived East (Bangladeshis) and West Pakistanis, mainly found employment in the local ‘garment’ and ‘restaurant’ business or alternatively in local breweries. Nevertheless, cheap migrant labour was much needed, within the local, Jewish dominated, ‘garment’ industry soon after the Second World War (Bermant 1975:250). Increasingly, intra-communitarian regimes of trade and commerce, specifically catering for the needs and tastes of migrant communities, started to flourish locally. They took multiple forms from halal-butchers and travel agencies to ‘ethnic’ music-shops and Islam-memorabilia etc. At the time of research, along Brick Lane, there were a significant number of businesses specifically catering for ‘native’/‘ethnic’ needs. There were half a dozen travel agencies specialising in cheap flights to Bangladesh (Dhaka), three to four retail outlets selling Muslim paraphernalia, a fast-food eatery serving halal-meat burgers and many others.

Through the passage of time, the ‘Indian restaurant’, Bangladeshi owned⁸⁸, business became the major local ‘ethnic’ employer. Local ‘Indian’ restaurants, from the mid 1990s to present day, multiplied from a dozen to several dozens within the area.

⁸⁷ For a detailed discussion of local Bengali settlement see Appendix B: Brick Lane.

⁸⁸ In 1995 Food Minister, Mrs Angela Browning, acknowledged that : ‘Bangladeshis restaurants have been an established feature of the UK for a very long time- though I am afraid that a certain geographical imprecision has crept into our common speech: we call them Indian restaurants. However, they are described, these restaurants are now very much a part of the fabric of our everyday lives. They are a familiar sight in most high streets today and play a major part in our food

Nevertheless, these local stories of 'Indian' restaurant successes appear to go along with a number of failures. Accordingly, a significant number of local 'Indian' restaurants have gone bust. The recent commercialisation of the area by raising local levels of rent has increased costs, translating into decreasing chances for any 'Indian' restaurant business to stay afloat. Accordingly, one is led to consider that fierce competition goes along with any 'ethnic' or 'multicultural' form of urban capitalism. At the time of research, there were more than forty 'Indian' restaurants operating along Brick Lane.

Nevertheless, these rapid commercial developments have been significantly enhanced by the recent re-branding of the area as 'Banglatown'⁸⁹. According to Fremeaux and Eade (1999):

'The labelling of the area as 'Banglatown' is undoubtedly a multi-layered enterprise, a marketing concept as once described by Cityside regeneration...Taking its inspiration from Chinatown its objectives are as cultural and political as they are economic. Banglatown involves the appropriation of space through a strategy, which entices potential customers to patronise its 'curry houses' and shops' (Fremeaux & Eade 1999:5).

From this perspective, contemporary local urban developments become presented as forms of a locally unfolding cultural-economic accommodation. In more detail, Bangladeshi entrepreneurs create an enhanced local 'ethnic' landscape of consumption to accommodate the new clientele of the area. On the other hand, these 'new people' of Brick Lane emerge as culturally flexible consumers, ready to indulge themselves within this enhanced landscape of Bengali 'ethnicity' (Banglatown). Saskia Sassen (1994), a few years ago suggested that globalisation, at its very core, the 'global' cities, involves a variety of work cultures and different ethnic populations (Sassen 1994:123). By the same token, she argued that processes of gentrification are fundamentally 'labour intensive' and require the abundance of a cheap 'ethnic' labour force⁹⁰ (Sassen-Koob 1985:262, Sassen 1994:114).

industry.'(4 November 1995, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and food -News Release).

⁸⁹ For a detailed discussion on Banglatown, see chapter three: 3.4.2

⁹⁰ For instance, contemporary gentrifying lifestyles of urban affluent professionals appear to require a whole army of nannies, cleaners, maids etc. Accordingly, gentrification in its broad sense requires

Accordingly, the 'global city' (Sassen 1991) becomes represented as a place where an acute ethnic division of labour exists, with many different 'ethnic' communities competing to create a 'niche' market for themselves.

Under these lines, the local development of urban 'multicultural' (Cohen 1998:29) forms of capitalism appears to enrich this diversity of 'work cultures' within the capital (London as a global city). Nevertheless, they correlate, not only with sharp 'ethnic' divisions of labour based on intracommunitarian exploitative capitalist regimes, but also, with a clear 'ethnic' distinction between the spheres of production and consumption too. Following on from this, some writers have argued that the specific products, which these newly emerged forms of metropolitan 'multicultural' capitalism produce, are highly differentiated ones through the inscription of 'exotica'. To put it simply, some forms of multicultural urban capitalism go on to create products enriched with 'ethnicity' (Cohen 1998:33).

From such a perspective, it becomes clear that the local Bangladeshi restaurant business proceeds to similar acts of 'production' of ethnicity. This selling of Bangladeshi ethnicity occurs through the local creation of an 'Indian' food industry and analogous restaurant settings, able to amplify the eating experience by providing a feeling of cultural disorientation. Nevertheless, a number of writers have been critical of similar forms of exoticisation for a number of cases. For instance, Paul Gilroy (1995:15) has discussed the ways that global sport companies go on to exoticise and re-package the 'black' male body as a best-selling advertising gimmick, or bell hooks (1992) in relation to contemporary American society's appetite for 'eating the other'. Nevertheless, this thesis conveys a message that not every form of 'exoticisation' should be immediately criticised. Following these lines, if one takes a closer look at the currently blossoming 'ethnicised' restaurant business of Brick Lane two things might surface. Firstly, that the local 'Curry' industry, which supposedly produces 'authenticised' or 'folkloric' versions of ethnicity, does not let itself reveal its hidden levels of 'transculturality' or 'tranculturation' (Welsch 1999:198, Pratt 1992:6). By that I mean, that contemporary 'Indian' or Bangladeshi 'ethnic' cuisine is highly hybridised in order

or demands cheap 'migrant' labour.

to appeal to the Western tastes. One of the best examples of these hidden forms of 'transculturation', is the Chicken tikka massala. As Robin Cook, the former Foreign Secretary, announced 'chicken tikka massala is now Britain's national dish, not only because it's the most popular, but because it's the perfect illustration of the ways that Britain absorbs and adapts external influences' (cited in Back et al The Times 14/06/2002).

Secondly, if contemporary forms of 'ethnic'/multicultural capitalism capitalise overtly upon ethnicity, that might not be so bad after all. The negative outcomes of 'petrified' and 'mummified' presentations of ethnicity might be balanced or even be overcome by economic gains to certain 'ethnic' individuals and through broader local employment opportunities to community⁹¹ at large. In this sense, the 'exotic' can be deployed in favour of the 'marginal'. Following these lines, one has to keep in mind, that 'mummified' versions of culture are not made for use within the range of its corresponding 'ethnicity', but alternatively, could function as 'competitive advantages' within the urban 'multicultural' market. As it appears, there might be many tricks for cunning contemporary 'multicultural' urban consumers⁹².

Last but not least, I would like to bring to the fore, the Chicago Ethnographers' concept, of the 'ethnicity paradox'. According to Park and Thomas, in relation to their native Chicago at the dawn of the twentieth century:

'participation in separate immigrant institutions and a commitment to a parochial minority group culture increased the effectiveness with which migrant groups were able to compete for resources in the wider American community and ultimately to achieve greater integration' (Park and Thomas cited in Ballis 1990:109).

Nevertheless, for the case of a contemporary British context, where cultural integrationist appeals, have partly been substituted by pledges of economic

⁹¹ At this particular point, I would like to make clear that wherever the word 'community' is encountered, does not imply a homogenous social entity. British contemporary 'ethnic' communities are highly stratified entities based along rigid class-lines. Nevertheless, the only kind of meaning that could be applied to any notion of 'community' should be a denotation of a common history.

⁹² In one of my latest visits to my 'native' Athens I visited again, after a number of years, the old historical centre (Plaka). The same cultural objects that used to represent 'Greekness' within the frenzied decades of massive European 'discovery' during the 1960s and 70s, were there again laying in front of me. Nevertheless, the kind of Greece that they seemed to refer to has long ago disappeared. However, they keep on selling.

empowerment⁹³, current manifestations of successful forms of 'ethnic' capitalism might verify aspects of this 'ethnicity paradox'. The concentration of 'ethnic' minority people in a small number of industries, under the aegis of a 'rigid' 'ethnic' division of labour, appears in some cases to bring along positive economic results. Nevertheless, as this research will strive to prove, any commitment to a 'parochial' 'ethnic' culture has been replaced by hybridised forms of 'culture', self-identification and belonging. In this sense, one is led to consider that the 'ethnic' might pose positive economic prospects for the 'marginal'⁹⁴. Nevertheless, cultural or 'ethnic' 'self' 'marginality'⁹⁵ appears at work at every instance.

In a similar fashion to this, Jane Jacobs (1996) has argued:

'The encounters that occur through new processes of commodification [of the 'ethnic' as 'exotic'] might well held colonised and diasporic groups to articulate a sense of self in producing new ways...opening up new economic opportunities...commodification is not simply a process by which the colonised, the 'native', tradition is corrupted.'(Jacobs 1996:161)

For the aims and objectives of the research, I conducted seventeen interviews with individuals that were employed or self-employed within local forms of urban 'multicultural' capitalism. Nevertheless, as part of an extreme gender division within the local economy all of them were male. Eight out of sixteen were employed within the 'restaurant' business, two were employed within the 'leather' industry, three were either travel agents or alternatively involved in the local fabric trade, another three were social workers or members of voluntary organisations, while the last remaining one was a student. However, even these individuals that were not directly involved with local multicultural forms of capitalism, they were indirectly influenced by them. Most of them had at least one member of their family employed within these local industries. In terms of ethnicity, the majority were

⁹³ By the time of writing this sentence, David Blunket, the Home Secretary had not publicly asked Asian families to strictly speak English at home.

⁹⁴ I would like to make clear that the term 'marginality' here refers to the continuous economic disadvantage of 'ethnic' communities and individuals within the U.K.

⁹⁵ Nevertheless, in this instance, 'marginality' draws from Robert Park's (1950) concept of the 'marginal man'[and woman]. According to Park: 'it is in the mind of the marginal man- where the changes and fusions of culture are going on'(Park 1950:356).

Bangladeshi (Sylheti): eleven out of seventeen. There were also four Pakistanis and two Indians.

7.2 Talking about migrations.

In this part of the chapter I shall reflect on personal stories and narratives related to local migration waves and multiple ‘minor-histories’. To start with, I examine narratives that portray Brick Lane as a historical ‘point of arrival’ (Bermant 1975) for different migrant communities within the capital. Secondly, I investigate stories and narratives in connection to alleged ‘relations’ between different local migrant communities. Thirdly, I move into examining narratives in connection to the effects of migration for host societies. As I shall argue, the very process of migration becomes conceptualised as the ‘driving force of society’. By all accounts, this is a kind of theorisation in sharp contrast to currently popular xenophobic discourses that depict migration as a draining of resources from the part of ‘host’ societies⁹⁶. Fourthly, I move into narratives that explain the reasons for post-colonial waves of migration to Britain. As it becomes obvious, British colonial history is cited as the main resonance for such occurrences. Following these lines, former colonial Commonwealth ties appear to have translated into migrations from the ex-colonies to the former ‘motherland’.

The first local narrative on migration constructs Brick Lane as a significant area of settlement for various migrant populations arriving in the capital. By the same token, Brick Lane’s significance as ‘a port of arrival’ is mainly attributed to the fact that the area is neighbouring the docks. Following these lines, other histories of ‘native’ migration from Brick Lane to outer London become narrated as part of the same story. Accordingly, ‘native’ migration from the East End to Essex (‘white’ flight) becomes connected to local histories of migrant settlement within the area. In this sense, ‘migrant’ and ‘native’ populations allegedly locate and relocate

⁹⁶ The contemporary rise of extreme right-wing sentiments in Europe, seem to be based upon similar arguments.

themselves, according to a former urban dialectics of cultural repulsion of the 'latter' to the 'former' (cultural racism). Haraf, a British-Bengali man, who works as a manager in one of the many local Bangladeshi 'Indian' restaurants, comments:

Haraf: Bangladeshi people, who have settled here, see my parents, my grandparents, used to tell me, because it used to be like a dock area, big fleets of boats used to come for whatever, the Thames used to be very active at that time, and what happened in the fifties, that a lot of immigration was taking place, I believe that there were quite a few French people living here, and then afterwards like in the sixties or seventies, excuse me, before that there was a big Jewish community living here, and there is evidence of that in that sense that the mosque that is now used to be a synagogue, so people have, its like a port, it changes, for the early stages it was a place for minority people to come and expand and so forth, but even the old traditional cockney people, English people, therefore, you see, the Essex has thrived on that sense that the Bangladeshi community has taken a slice of the East End and they, more or less, they [English or Cockney people] have taken a slice of the Essex area, migrated to Essex.

To continue, I move into examining specific narrative tropes, through which, 'relations' between different local migrant communities become depicted. As I shall argue, two different narratives exist: firstly, one that goes on to narrate feelings of empathy and compassion, resulting from the common experience of migration, whilst secondly, another story that speaks of local regimes of labour exploitation between one migrant community and another. Fergula, a British-Pakistani senior social worker, who has lived for most of his life in Brick Lane, argues:

Fergula: Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and prior to that Jews, all

went through this path, they have come to a new land, they wanted to create their own homes, so they work hard, the whole thing, now the Bangladeshi community went through it, the Pakistani community went through it, the Jewish went through it, and one migrant community always sympathizes with the new migrant community, cause they've gone through this earlier, so luckily perhaps, the Bangladeshi and Pakistani community when they came in, Jewish community was sympathetic to them, cause they've been an immigrant community earlier, and this is how they progressed [Bangladeshis and Pakistanis] they worked for the Jews because they were owning the factories, they were owning the shops and businesses.

In sharp contrast to this narrative of local inter-communitarian migrant compassion and solidarity, another narrative goes on to depict historic relations between different local migrant communities as based upon a regime of inter-migrant labour exploitation. Accordingly, newly arriving Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indian settlers have provided, for Jews, much needed, 'cheap' industrial labour. Kobi, a British-Pakistani leather wholesale trader, explains his own version of the story:

Kobi: All the immigrants started coming in the area in the sixties, because the whole of this area was controlled by the Jewish and they were running these industries and they needed labour, cheap labour, and all the migrants came and started to work for them, on the machines, on the cutting, from Bangladesh, from Pakistan, some from India, that's why this area is like this now, the East End.

Another narrative goes on to construct migration as the regenerating force of any 'host' society. The new influx of people, through their motivation, power and

determination can go the extra steps that seem to be lacking from 'natives'. In this sense, migration clearly contributes to the economic advancement of any recipient society. Following these lines, the 'migrant' as a 'new person', is willing to take 'extra' responsibility in order to establish herself/himself within her/his newly adopted country. In this sense, migration becomes depicted as a societal 'driving force'. Fergula, again, comments:

Fergula: I tell you something, and this is perhaps, it should be explained in a psychological way, any new person, any new person in any society, is less knowledgeable about this society, so he will go to places and learn about the place and he will take extra responsibility and extra burden...You see immigrants, always put that extra that otherwise is not available in that community, they have the power, they have the drive and responsibility, so immigrants are always the sort of driving force in any community, this is regeneration, immigrants always regenerate the society as such because they bring their power, their motivation.

Last but not least, another narrative goes on to explain the reasons for the particular settlement of postcolonial Commonwealth populations within the UK. As Kobi characteristically says 'they were there before we came here'. Accordingly, historical colonial ties become deployed in order for contemporary postcolonial realities in Britain to be explained. Nevertheless, as Kobi argues, many 'natives' tend to forget colonial history and habitually obliterate from 'reading' it as an essential part of the story. Most importantly, through this calculated oblivion, postcolonial realities of Britain can be deprived of their historical resonance. This was exactly the way that racist post-war, political discourses were constructed, in order for postcolonial migrations to Britain to be presented as unreasonable or 'alien'; a closure up of Britain after the loss of empire and a redefinition of nation as a 'small' island (little Englandism).

Kobi again, argues:

Kobi: We are from a Commonwealth country, you know, Britain ruled us, great Britain, they used to have a sun rising from one end, and never used to set to any other end, that's why they call Great Britain, so India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Australia, new Zealand, South Africa, Canada...eh...Trinidad, West Indies, all of them were British Colonies and all the people like here, were all colonial, the English people don't accept but English do not realise that they were already there before we came here, and they got all the juices from these countries, and this is how they made this country powerful, this all came from us, you can still go and see the big-diamond, in the Tower of London, it's from India, it's from the Taj-Majal, you know that or not?

7.3 Stories of local redevelopment: the powerful workings of imagination within the notion of 'ethnoscape'.

'Up there, under the railway bridge, the National Front used to do battles with the fearless radicals of the Socialist Workers Party, 'every Sunday from closing time to opening time', she sneered, 'leaving us lot to clear up the wreckage the rest of the sodding week.'-Down the alley was where the Brickhall Three were done over by the police and then fitted up, verbalised, framed; up that side-street he'd find the scene of the murder of the Jamaican, Ulysses E.Lee, and in that public house the stain in the carpet marking where Jatinder Singh Mehta breathed his last. 'Thatcerism has its effect' she declaimed, while Chamcha, who no longer had the will or the words to argue with her, to speak of justice and the rule of law, watched Anahita's mounting rage-'No pitched battles these days', Michal elucidated. 'The emphasis is on the small-scale enterprises and the cult of the individual, right? In other words, five or six white bastards murdering us, one individual at a time.'

These days the posses roamed the nocturnal Street, ready for aggravation. 'It's our turf' said Mishal Sufyan of that street without a blade of grass in sight. 'Let' em come and get it if they can.'

Salman Rushdie: 'The Satanic Verses' (1998:283-84).

It seems like a very long time, since Salman Rushdie, more than a dozen years ago, wrote 'The Satanic Verses'. Brick Lane as 'Brickhall' features, as one of the prime sites, of this unique urban multicultural novel. But what has happened to the 'Brickhall' of 'Paki-bashing' and the 'National Front'? What were the outcomes of local-small scale enterprising and the breakdown of traditional 'ethnic' communities under the burden of 'individualism'? What are the differences and similarities between 'old' 'Brickhall' and the brand new concept of 'Banglatown'? What is the relationship between 'old' and 'new' Brick Lane? In short, these are some of the questions that I shall attempt to reflect on in this part of the chapter.

Arjun Appadurai (1996) has argued that the global cultural flows of our 'disjunctive' era become disseminated through the following channels: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples and ideoscaples. As he further suggests: 'The suffix -scape allows to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of the landscapes...These terms with the common suffix -scape also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs' (ibid 1996:33).

More specifically, he goes on to define this notion of ethnoscape 'as a landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and individuals that constitute the essential feature of the world' (ibid 1996:33).

Nevertheless, he is quick to suggest that as any notion of an 'ethnoscape' is clearly dependent on perception and perspective, it clearly constitutes an 'imagined world' (ibid 1996:33). As he characteristically says 'these moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long' (ibid 1996:34). Under these lights, ethnoscaples become defined and constantly redefined through processes of imagining.

In a similar fashion, he proposes that within our contemporary times of intense global mobility and migration, imagination plays a preeminent role. Following these lines, more and more people in this planet tend to 'see' and subsequently lead their lives through the prism of future possibilities. For instance, there could not be a better example of this than the case of migration: the migrant originally leaves her/his country based upon a set of future expectations. Accordingly, imagination has left the domain of fantasy to become a prime determinant in people's social lives (ibid 1996:54). To put it differently, personal acts of imagining, taking the form of future expectations, structure and lead present social lives.

However, these personal futuristic imaginings should have a direct impact on the techniques and practices of ethnography too. As he argues 'ethnography must redefine itself as that practice of representation that illuminates the power of large-scale, imagined life possibilities over specific life-trajectories' (ibid 1996:55). From such a perspective, ethnographies of a transnational or deterritorialised world should not only focus on past and present constructions, but also, on future projections as well. In other words, any form of an imagined future, which tends to lead and guide a present social life, is as important as any historic or present-day imaginary construction.

Following these lines, I attempt to approach Brick Lane through the lenses of an imagined 'ethnoscape'; I try to reach it as the product of various 'native'⁹⁷ workings of imagination. More importantly, this particular investigation refers simultaneously to both past and present. Accordingly, past local imaginings provide a measurement of comparison to contemporary constructions of the area. At the same time, future local projections emanate from a local present. In effect, through this constant juxtaposition of a local past, present and future, Brick Lane's 'ethnoscape' becomes render meaningful. Narratives of space and time become linked to notions of ethnicity.

⁹⁷ At this particular point I would like to make clear that most of the 'natives' that I came in contact with, were either 'ethnic' entrepreneurs with high economical stakes within the area or employees who were holding a job and had a sense of security. Subsequently, this particular piece of research appears to include mostly 'winners' of locally unfolding processes of redevelopment (for 'winners' and 'losers' of gentrification see chapter five: 5.2).

As in the case of Brixton, local processes of redevelopment become sometimes articulated through the deployment of a narrative of content. Furthermore, this narrative of present content is based upon the recreation of a local 'past', as one, of poverty and 'racial' strife. From this angle, any sense of local 'present' is 'seen' as 'progress'. Through this juxtaposition of a constructed as problematic local 'past', the local 'present' becomes fundamentally portrayed as 'improvement' or a step forward. To put it differently, past imaginings of the area appear to justify present conditions of redevelopment.

At the same time, futuristic visions of the area are obsessively preoccupied with the commercial success of London's 'Chinatown'. Accordingly, 'Chinatown' becomes the prime spatial metaphor that narrates the 'future' of Brick Lane. Following these lines, a spatial narrative of one place becomes subsequently deployed in order to explain another. Brick Lane appears to be 'seen' through the lenses of Chinatown. As Appadurai (1996) argues: 'the new power of imagination in the fabrication of social lives is inescapably tied up with images, ideas and opportunities that come from elsewhere' (ibid 1996:54). In this particular case, one 'ethnoscape' provides the patterns for the future imagining of another. In this sense, the meaning between these two ethnoscares becomes almost inter-exchangeable (Benjamin 1979); through Chinatown one can see the future of Brick Lane.

In sharp contrast to this dominant narrative of content, another narrative of local concern exists side by side. This local narrative of concern is also preoccupied with the future, while voicing forthcoming 'eviction' threats for long-standing 'native' populations (Smith 1991b:89, Sassen 1994:3-7). Accordingly, it is argued that if redevelopment continues at this pace, without special measures being applied, the local 'multicultural' element will disappear. Under these lights, this local narrative of concern is based on future local imaginings. In this sense, local future projections appear to inform present 'native' constructions.

Last but not least, another version of this local narrative of concern questions the very concept of capitalist urban regeneration. Alternatively, it strives to bring to the fore a concept of 'social' regeneration. It is a kind of narrative that requests improvement in people's lives instead of just the built environment. But let us

examine in detail these local stories of redevelopment articulated through these imagined versions of local the 'ethnoscape'.

As mentioned above, this narrative of content appears to contrast 'past' with 'present' local imaginings. Following these lines, local 'past' narratives of the area, tend to recreate it in 'bleak' colours. Under these lights, 'past' or 'bygone' Brick Lane becomes narrated as a place devastated from poverty and 'racial' strife. Amir, a British-Bengali owner of an 'Indian' restaurant along Brick Lane commemorates:

Amir: Before I came here it was a Kray's territory, when I moved here, it was a very derelict area, nobody wanted to come here, it was dirty and shabby, when I moved here, it was very like old city and very poor too.

Apart from this trope of local poverty, 'past' Brick Lane becomes also portrayed in terms of 'racial' strife too. Accordingly, previous decades become depicted as inflicted with 'racial' hatred; past imaginings of the local ethnoscape recreate a condition of 'racial' tension. Ahmed, a British-Sri-Lankian retired industrial worker, reminisces:

G.M: How was Brick lane during the 1970s and early eighties?

Ahmed: Working class, entire working class.

G.M: And what was the relationship between the 'white' East Enders and the immigrant population then?

Ahmed: Hostility, real hostility, and in the sixties and fifties it was the same too.

To continue, the early 1980s appear to signify a premature dawn for a 'new era' of Brick Lane. However, change becomes portrayed as gradual. What is clear, is that from the early 1980s onwards 'racial tension' allegedly subsided. Muhammed, a British-Bengali owner of a sari-shop in Brick Lane, argues:

Muhammed: Since early eighties, people could see the change, it wasn't a substantial change, but there wasn't any major racial tension, things were changing little by little, one society was getting used to another society.

As I shall argue, always compared to this recreated local 'past' of 'racial' tension and extreme poverty, present realities of Brick Lane become subsequently outlined as 'progress' or substantial 'improvement'. Juxtaposed to an allegedly problematic local 'past', local 'present' is seen as one of positive change. Ahmed again comments:

G.M: Do you remember Brick lane in the past?

Ahmed: Oh very much so, oh yes.

G.M: What was it like?

Ahmed: It was very unkept, I think, but since, they do it up, the area has been done up, it has become more bohemian, I would say.

G.M.: Why bohemian?

Ahmed: You get a lot of artists and actors in Brick Lane.

G.M.: Do you prefer the present from the past?

Ahmed: Of course, its progress, its improvement, the past is history, isn't it?

In the above quotation, Ahmed declares a way of thinking about the past, present and future of the area as one of progress and improvement. Within this line of thinking, the present is always qualitatively better from any past forms. By all accounts, this is a view on local history that discards past forms and closures of meaning for the sake of new ones. Consequently, this line of thinking appears to advocate an 'open' definition of the local ethnoscape where space, identity and history keep constantly unfolding (Massey 1994:5). From such a perspective, earlier configurations of a 'fixed' local ethnoscape, closely corresponding to specific forms

of belonging, identity and community become forgotten and give away to future possibilities. Under these lights, narratives of the local past do not transform into a jail for the present; nostalgic 'past' local imaginings do not attempt to authenticate the yesteryears ethnoscape. In effect, the local present and future of Brick Lane are deemed more important than its history.

In a similar fashion, Amir again argues:

G.M: What do you think about the recent regeneration of the area?

Amir: Nobody can do anything, it's progress, you see you have the City-airport then the City, Brick Lane is in the middle of these two things...it's much better now, I mean is clean, everything looks better, it has improved and the area is becoming very central.

Somewhere in the late 1990s, through the individual efforts of some local restaurateurs, and part of Bethnal Green City Challenge, Brick Lane was re-branded as 'Banglatown'⁹⁸. Certainly, the objectives behind such a move were both cultural and political as economic (Fremaux & Eade 1999:5). In what follows, Shuheb, a young British-Bengali restaurant manager, reflects on the political and cultural aspects of the renaming:

G.M.: What is your opinion about 'Banglatown'?

Shuheb: Bengalis have made the most stand in this area, they started to have their own business and started giving the word Bangla, a stronger meaning, basically my father was the founder of this area, he pursued to make this area into Banglatown and for the last two years this area has been named Banglatown.

G.M: You told me before that you tried to give the word

⁹⁸ For a detailed discussion on Banglatown see chapter three: 3.4.2

Bangla a stronger meaning, what do you mean by that?

Shuheb: Basically, what it was like, a lot of people, the white and black people around London, they used to think like, they see an Asian, they used to think, they are all Asians, like Indians, Pakistanis, Bengalis, basically what it was, the Bengali people wanted to say, no, we are Bengalis, they are Indian restaurants in this area, but every single restaurant in this area, is owned by Bangladeshis, that's why my dad changed our sign to Bangladeshi restaurant...now days, a lot of people are starting to understand what is Bangladesh, where it is, basically it was about informing people.

This current re-branding of Brick-Lane as 'Banglatown' invokes the similar concept of the institutionalized Chinese 'ethnoscape' (Cohen 1998:37). Following these lines, London's 'Chinatown' transforms into the most potent spatial metaphor, which narrates the future realities of Brick Lane. In effect, future Brick Lane can be 'seen' through Chinatown. The future of one local ethnoscape resembles the present of another. Sanur, a British-Bengali travel agent, comments:

G.M.: What do you think of the 'present' Brick Lane?

Sanur: The City is expanding, population is expanding, people is expanding, also Brick Lane now is, if you go the night time, you can see loads of people, during the day time you can see loads of people too, because of the restaurant business, so it's getting like Chinatown, you know Chinatown?

To put it differently, London's 'Chinatown' becomes portrayed as the model that Brick Lane should follow in order to maximise benefits and enhanced its 'future' position within the urban multicultural market. In brief, 'Chinatown's' spatial remedies become envisioned along Brick Lane. Aatur, a young British-Bengali waiter, in one of the many local restaurants, argues:

Ataur: Sometimes I feel this road should be closed with barriers, like a Chinatown, so people would walk around and see what's going on, if there was more space like Chinatown, then people could more easily walk around and you could have more shopping around.

As I shall argue, the redevelopment story of 'Banglatown' appears to go along with a dual reading of the local 'ethnic' community. On one hand, the local 'ethnic' community appears to be seen as undifferentiated and unstructured that seems to profit from local urban developments. From such a perspective, a version of this narrative of content becomes communicated. On the other hand, local Bangladeshi 'ethnic' community is 'seen' as differentiated and structured along income and class line. From this angle, the 'Banglatown' redevelopment story enhances the future of possibilities of only a minority of this local community. Following these lines, a narrative of local concern becomes articulated from such a perspective.

In relation to our interview material, Sanur argues that positive economic 'Banglatown' effects can trickle down to the broader community through enhanced employment opportunities. In this sense, it is suggested that the re-branding of the area can benefit most of the local community. In this sense, the local ethnic community appears as classless; it appears as undifferentiated along income, education or occupational lines. In what follows, Sanur articulates his own narrative of local content:

G.M: So you see Banglatown becoming like Chinatown, do you think it's a good thing?

Sanur: I don't think it's a bad thing, you know, there is only one question who lives in the area, so I mean I live in the area, so if I get a job, in the restaurant business or any other kind of business, I am the one that will benefit, so local people who live in this area will benefit, cause this area is poor, so we need to

improve the area, because the poor people don't want to stay poor all the time, they want a better life, they want better food and everything, so it is changing actually.

At the same time, another local 'ethnic' community story exists, which argues that the current commercialisation of the area through its renaming as 'Banglatown' does not benefit the broader community. In this sense the trickle down effects of the 'Banglatown' redevelopment project are denied. Instead, as a direct aftermath of Brick Lane's recent up-marketing, significant parts of the local population might face 'displacement' or 'eviction' (Smith & Lefaivre 1984: 54, Zukin 1987:135). Accordingly, this narrative construction treats the local 'ethnic' community as internally 'stratified' along different groups of interest (Ballis 1990:111). From this perspective, the class-less story of 'Banglatown' redevelopment, which allegedly can mutually benefit the whole community, is being denounced. As a result an image of the local (Bangladeshi) community strictly divided, along currently drawn, class-lines breaks into the fore. On one side, lie the local winners of 'redevelopment', a plethora of 'ethnic' entrepreneurs and their army of employees, whilst on the other, are those that did not manage to capitalise on these developments and neither found employment or a sense of security. To put it differently, the local Bengali 'ethnic' community becomes divided between a newly emerged local 'ethnic' petit-bourgeoisie, with strong financial stakes within the 'Indian' restaurant business, and the rest of the local British-Bengali population that does not benefit from current developments. Accordingly, local 'ethnic' entrepreneurialism has allegedly divided the local 'ethnic' community along income and financial lines. Under these lights, this specific narrative of 'ethnic' communitarian division signifies the end of any essentialised or homogenic notion of local 'ethnic' community. Most importantly, such a narrative construction gives voice to a narrative of concern. Kazi, a British-Bengali manager in one of the many 'Indian' restaurants, argues his point:

G.M: Do you think that all these changes, like the 'Banglatown',

are good for Brick Lane?

Kazi: Personal opinion is good for Brick Lane, is good for the business, for the community, for the Bengali community it's not good.

G.M.: Why?

Kazi: Because they live in council flats they don't own anything, the prices are going up, and eventually they will have to move away from here, people who live in rented places they will have to leave these places, because they can't afford them.

G.M.: What about the restaurant business?

Kazi: Restaurant business is picking up, before they were about seven, eight restaurants in Brick Lane, I am talking about eight years ago, and now is about forty one, but in my opinion its bad for the community, because the rent is going up, if you think about it, there are forty one restaurants, in average one restaurant employs six-seven people, average, if you turn that to forty, how many people do they add up?

G.M.: Less than three hundred people.

Kazi: Thousands of people live in this area.

Another version of this local narrative of concern suggests that all the recent developments in the area, might, in the long run, evict the very multicultural character of Brick Lane. In this sense, it is suggested that future local diversity might be at stake. As the area is becoming more and more 'trendy' and starts to resemble other parts of central London, more affluent people will move in, evicting long standing 'ethnic' populations. In this sense, Brick Lane's 'natives' become depicted as vulnerable to displacement. Accordingly, there is a danger for the multicultural/multiracial nature of Brick Lane to evaporate into thin air. Again, future imaginings of the local ethnoscape inform present narrative constructions of the area. Muhammed again, comments:

G.M.: What do you think about the future of the area?

Muhammed: I believe in the future there gonna be some sort of lack of multiracial, multicultural, it might be trendy, it might become another central area of London, it might be an area for more expensive people, but I believe multiculturalism will disappear.

I would like to conclude this part of the chapter, by bringing into the fore a narrative that goes as far as to cast doubt upon the very concept of urban capitalist regeneration. In this sense, it is suggested that any regeneration of buildings might be less important than regenerating local lives. Accordingly, it appears to advocate direct investment in people's lives; it emphasizes a notion of social regeneration as able through education and other direct provisions to create 'healthy' communities and societies. Ferjula again, one of the most spiritual people that I encountered during the course of research, argues the following:

G.M: What do you thing about all the recent changes in Brick Lane?

Ferjula: Social regeneration is more important than the regeneration of buildings. It should be a programme for educating those people and their children, the social change should be a good in itself you see, because investment has its own limits, you can not bring wealth, and more wealth, and still further more wealth, at some stage you've got to say enough is enough, but then you have to change people's lives, and then a contentment sets in, a contentment with the resources as such, a contentment with life as such, you see, then you have started building a peaceful society, a peaceful community.

7.4 Constructions of local multicultural.

In the light of this analysis, I shall focus my attention on narrative constructions of local multicultural. In other words, I shall identify the ways that local conditions of multiculturalism become narrated, whilst subsequently lived and experienced, within this specific 'ethnic' diverse urban milieu.

In what follows, I expose the ways that differences become constructed within these multiple local multicultural narratives. As I shall argue, a number of different languages of differences⁹⁹ are used in order for the local condition of multiculturalism to be explained. However, through this fusion and mingling of different languages of difference, the local multicultural question appears to be rendered meaningful.

To start with, the local dominant multicultural narrative portrays a local present of 'harmonious' and peaceful multicultural living. By all accounts, this present local 'harmony' multicultural narrative becomes compared to a less harmonious multicultural 'past'. Through this juxtaposition, current conditions of multiculturalism become presented as improving rapidly. In short, through a recreation of a local 'past' of 'racial' tension and strife, contemporary local conditions of multiculturalism become presented as a 'multicultural' oasis. Shuheb again, comments:

G.M: Do you think that there is a lot of mixing going on in the area?

Shuhed: Yeah, there is, before it just used to be Asian boys in gangs hanging around not mixing with a lot of people, now days you see loads of young Asian boys and lots of white young boys, there is a lot of mixing at the moment.

⁹⁹ I would like to argue that there are more than the monocultural/multicultural and the multicultural/multicultural languages of difference. For instance there is the language of 'race' or the language of 'ethnic diversity' as a competitive advantage. Nevertheless, these first two languages appear to constitute the dominant languages to describe contemporary urban conditions of

G.M.: Did you use to have this mixing before?

Shuheb: Before there were more, there was a lot of racial tension going on, I remember, when I was at school, in the last year of school, there was a lot of racial tension here, because two boys of this area, were beaten up by white boys, so there was a lot of racial tension going on, then we had that riot in Whitechapel, but over the years it calmed down.

In a similar fashion, Kazi again, announces the recent abolition of the powers of 'race' and colour, along the lane:

G.M.: Do you think that the different people of Brick lane mix together?

Kazi: Obviously, the people of this area, mostly Bengali, right, it's a Bengali community, oh, compare lets say eight years ago, eight years before, let's say somebody walking down the street, cross the road, they used to think you know, it's a white person, you know, it seems is completely different, they mix together, people seem to mix together.

By the same token, Muhammed again, goes on to suggest a local development or 'rooting' of multicultural understanding. From this perspective, local multicultural society becomes portrayed as 'tolerant', full of understanding for diverse cultural practices. Under these lights, life has improved dramatically for the local majority of cultural 'others'. Muhammed comments:

G.M.: Do you think that local multiculturalism might have improved lately?

Muhammed: Luckily, I think society now, has changed a lot, in this stage people are used to or are aware, whereas before they

multiculturality.

weren't aware of this subject, now they are more aware what one's religion does, so a lot of people are fasting, we have Ramadan, so we have to close the shop at certain times because of our fast, and people are welcoming that, people understand that, whereas fifteen years ago, not many people would have understood that, so I think life, to certain extent has become easier to live.

Apart from this dominant narrative of a 'present' harmonious local multicultural living, another narrative suggests that any concept of a multicultural or mixed community might constitute a 'good' thing in itself. The resonance behind such an argument is that any micro or macro 'ethnic' diverse condition might constitute an advantage in itself. From such a perspective, 'ethnic' diversity is viewed as a 'competitive advantage' to be capitalized upon, from all around the world, diverse or multicultural communities, irrespective of size. Following these lines, American success and economic power are cited as the prime examples of multicultural potentiality. In effect, 'ethnic' or cultural differences are viewed as facilitators instead of detriments. This is a kind of narrative that speaks the language of 'ethnic' diversity. As it has been mentioned earlier (see chapter three: 3.4.1), the language of 'ethnic' diversity, although its original development within a business context (Thomas 1990: 114, Watson, Kumar, Michaelsen 1993:598, Trompenaars 1993:168, Johnston 1998:41) has found its place within a number of 'other' discourses. For instance, United Nations have strongly argued for the case of 'Our Creative Diversity' (Unesco 1995:15) whilst a number of current British regeneration policies appear to talk the 'diversity' talk (see chapter three: 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.4.4). But let us hear Kobi again, arguing the case of 'ethnic' diversity:

G.M: Do you think that a mixed community might be a good thing in itself?

Kobi: I think in a country like Britain, diversity is good, always a mixed community is good, because any society or country that

it's only one kind of community, there is no competition, look at America, why America is the greatest country in the world, and the most powerful and the richest?

G.M: Why?

Kobi: Because the whole of America is full of mixed societies, is full of diversity who are American, who are the original Americans, the Indian was the original American, America is everybody who goes there.

Another significant narrative seems to suggest that any forms and manifestations of mixed communities appear to constitute the present and future of contemporary multicultural Britain. Nevertheless, this notion of a mixed community corresponds to a concept of a 'mixed culture'. Accordingly, this narrative goes on to depict local conditions of multiculturalism as a 'meeting of cultures' (Touraine 2000:172). Following these lines, 'cultures' can be learned. They can be shared. In this sense, one's cultural or 'ethnic self' does not have to become a life-long 'cultural' jail. Generally speaking, this is a narrative that goes on to advocate a 'multicultural' conception of the 'self'. Differences become presented as able to penetrate the skin and corrode the core of one's cultural self. There is no immunity left to protect us from differences. Most importantly, and out of this continuous 'play of differences' (Derrida 1972:225) a new culture, a mixed culture, a multiculturalism (Back 1996) can emerge that everybody can share and be part of it. In other words, cultural change becomes depicted as plausible and desirable. It becomes portrayed as forming the most essential part of any 'true' multicultural Britain. Sanur, a local Bengali travel agent, goes on to argue:

G.M: What do you think about Brick Lane's multiculturalism?

Sanur: We can work together, we can improve our areas, there is Bengali travel, next door will be French restaurant, so its good, in my opinion if there is a mixed community its good for us, I don't know about them, I think is good for them too, they can

learn about me, about my culture, I can learn about him, about his culture, this is Britain, this is multicultural society, so I want to see it everywhere, everybody wants mixed culture, so we need to change, we need to change, everybody wants mixed culture.

On the other hand, I shall exemplify two other narratives that construct the multicultural world of Brick Lane as worlds apart. According to the first local narrative of multicultural division, Brick Lane is divided between two 'cultures'. At one level, there is the 'mainstream' culture of the new people of Brick Lane ('creatives'), whilst on the other, there is the 'culture' of the local Bangladeshi community. Although contemporary local conditions of multiculturalism become portrayed as 'positive' for local businesses, any form of intercultural interaction or communication is strictly denied. From such a perspective, local conditions of multiculturalism become depicted as beneficial forms of spatial co-existence.

By all accounts, this is a kind of narrative that seems to advocate a 'monocultural' conception of the 'self'. In this sense, the 'self' becomes constructed as strictly immune to differences; as strictly corresponding only to one specific 'ethnic' culture. From this perspective, external differences fail to influence the core of one's 'self'. That said, this is an instance of the deployment of the language of multiculturalism, as separated spatial realities, where 'cultures' do not succeed in meeting. This is the language of an unconnected, monocultural multiculturalism. But let us hear, Rofiquel, a senior member of a local Bangladeshi voluntary organisation, arguing his point:

G.M.: What do you think about the recent multicultural condition of Brick Lane?

Rofiquel: In a way that's good for business, like for the catering business that's very good, for any business its good, so, the people that are using the Vibe Bar or the Truman Brewery they have their own culture, which is, I mean, they have the

mainstream culture which is different from the people that are living here, but in a way it doesn't really affect the local community, it's like their doing their own thing.

In a similar way to the above, another narrative emerges that depicts local conditions of multiculturalism as in a state of un-connectivity and sharp disassociation. Nevertheless, this time, the reasons for such local dichotomies are not 'cultural', but mainly, 'class' related. Under these lights, local Bangladeshi or the Asian community becomes primarily portrayed as 'working-class', whilst, the 'new people' of Brick Lane ('creatives') become depicted, as a fragment of an educated 'middle-class'. Following these lines, these 'two' constructed as different local groups become portrayed as worlds apart. Ahmer again, threads his own local dividing narrative:

G.M: Is there any mixing going on between the 'new' and 'old' people of Brick lane?

Ahmer: Hardly, hardly, because there are two different ideologies, the local people are not educated, they are working class people, but the new people that came in, they are artists and whatever, they are educated, so there is no common ground, but although they live apart, there is not tension, or antipathy, they seem to get on quite well, is just a matter of interest, you see, I mean, I mean if you are not interested in what I've got to offer you, obviously, you wouldn't want to know me, as simple as that, live and let live.

7.5 Constructing a 'self'.

'It is in the mind of the marginal man [or woman]-where the changes and fusions of culture are going on' Robert Ezra Park (1950:356).

Generally speaking, recent years have witnessed the proliferation of 'identity' related research. Through this intense preoccupation with the 'self', a number of 'identity' positions have emerged. Many decades ago, Heidegger with a simplicity perhaps never again plausible for later 'identity' thinkers, had proclaimed that 'To every being as such there belongs identity, the unity with itself' (Heidegger 1969:24). However, recent 'identity' research suggests that any unity of the 'self' might be a very complicated business. Accordingly, a number of contemporary commentators were quick to acknowledge the 'fragmenting' character of 'identity' (Hall 1996b: 4). From this perspective, each 'self' might be comprised by a number of different 'selves' (Weeks 1990:88, Touraine 2000:3).

To continue, current research on the 'self' suggests that there are two main analytical pathways to theorise 'identity'. At one level, 'identity' becomes essentially presented as 'fixed' and 'stable' for the whole life-journey. This is a kind of a position that argues that we are what we are and we cannot change what we are. In other words, it denies any possibility for 'self' (either cultural, ethnic, social, personal etc.) change. In other words, this position formulates 'identity' as 'sameness' or 'idem'. Yet on another level, 'identity' becomes alternatively constructed as malleable through time and influences. This is 'identity' as 'ipse' or 'selfhood' that mainly finds its way through 'difference' (Ricouer 1992:3, Hall 1990:223-225). Following these lines, 'identities' become perceived as in a state of 'transition', always succeeding in finding windows of self- transformation (McGuigan 1996:135). In this sense, the 'polysemy' of 'self' over time becomes broadly acknowledged (Ricouer 1992:318).

Independently of which theoretical tradition one chooses to follow, 'identities' remain forms of 'narrativisation' of the 'self' (Hall 1996:4). They are ways of representing the 'self' to the 'self' and 'others' (Park 1950:375, Hall 1990:222, Hall 1996b:5). They are personal discourses on who we are and where we are heading. One of the best ways to understand narrative identity is to approach it through Aristotle's work on dramatic storytelling. As Ricouer (1992) argues, 'A character is the one who performs the action in the narrative. The category of the character is

therefore a narrative category as well, and its role in the narrative involves the same narrative understanding as the plot itself' (Ricouer 1992:143). To put it differently, if action is character, and action is plot, then character is plot too. In short, we tend to become the stories that we say to ourselves; we tend to transform into narrative plots of the 'self' to the 'self' and others.

In the light of this analysis, I examine personal and collective stories of identification, belonging and self-transformation; I am putting emphasis on narratives of collective and individual 'selves'. My main objective is to expose the narratives that these 'natives' say to themselves for themselves and others. As Ricouer (1992) has argued again, narrative identity stands between a 'selfhood' as 'sameness' and a 'selfhood' as 'difference' (Ricouer 1992:165). To put it differently, narratives of the 'self' are either inclined to present a 'self' moving through difference, or alternatively a 'self' stagnated in its own 'sameness'. They tend to present a 'self' as capable of changing through context, influence and time, or alternatively, they tend to construct 'identity' as permanent, unchangeable or rigidly anchored. In this sense, any attempts to narrate the 'self' neccessarily seem to oscillate between the states of 'fluidity' or 'fixedness'. In what follows, my aim to uncover narrative journeys of the 'self', as moving between, these opposing poles of identification.

As I shall argue, the first 'identity' narrative, goes on to construct the local Bangladeshi community as a 'diasporic' entity that succeeds in finding its way through difference (Hall 1990:226). Secondly, I focus my attention on the emergence of a hyphenated Britain, characterised by the creation of a British-Pakistani or British-Bangladeshi ethnicity and culture. Thirdly, I expose a narrative that goes on to construct cultural or 'ethnic' 'identity' as in a state of transition. Following on from this, I take a closer look at issues of synthesizing the multicultural 'self'. As I shall argue, a dominant narrative of the 'multicultural' self, as able to unify within its own existence the 'best of both worlds', appears to break into the fore. From this perspective, the 'multicultural' self becomes portrayed as capable of a personal 'dialectics of cultural negotiation' (Bhabha 1994:228). It becomes depicted as adequate to proceed into acts of 'self'

'transculturation' (Pratt 1992:6). Accordingly, the multicultural 'self' can become a unified multicultural 'subject' (Touraine 2000:190).

To begin with, the first narrative that emerges gives away an image of local Bangladeshi community as capable of working through difference. As mentioned before, the very definition of 'diaspora' involves 'an identity who lives in and through difference' (Hall 1990:226). In this sense, 'It is a fundamental error to mistake their diasporic ways of life [of ethnic minorities communities] as simply in slow transition to assimilation. They represent a new cultural configuration – 'cosmopolitan communities'- marked by extensive tran-culturation.' (Hall 2000:221)

Following these lines, the local Bangladeshi community becomes constructed as a 'diasporic' collectivity. It becomes depicted as an 'adaptable' community, which historically has learnt its way through differences. The prime example of this alleged collective 'adaptability', is the ability of its members to penetrate into 'other' languages. To put it differently, foreign languages become portrayed as penetrable differences, through which the 'diasporic' Bangladeshi community can easily find its way. But let us hear, Muhamed again, threading his own collective narrative on adaptability and change:

Muhamed: I believe my Bengali community, I mean there is so adaptable, we find our way to learn other languages, not just English, English is very easy to take it up, wherever you are, through everything, I know another language cause I deal with another community, because of business I can deal with the Indian community, so I adapted in their language, and I know a little bit of French and a little bit of German, I mean its not too much, but is just that, is just that adaptability comes naturally to people, most Bengali people know a Hindi Indian dialect, because its so similar to our language so its easy to grasp it, I always believed our community is so adaptable, it will always be adapting to a situation, to a problem we face, we always try

to adapt for the better of our problems, face our problems, adapt to them and change them and became better, there must be some sort of historical basis for us doing that, but sometimes we come into a situation where people are asking us how do you know so many languages, I believe that's down to our community, we are adaptable.

In a similar fashion to this, the next narrative that I seek to exemplify speaks about the emergence of a hyphenated Britain. More specifically, it narrates the ways that 'cultures' or 'ethnicities' change and come to influence each other. By all accounts, this is another instance of the deployment of the language of multicultural 'self' and contaminating differences. In brief, it's through this specific deployment of a language of 'hybridity' and 'transculturation' that the alleged rise of a British-Pakistani or British-Bangladeshi culture becomes articulated. At the same time, a story of success for the younger generation breaks into the fore. Following these lines, it is further argued that colour, 'race' or postcolonial difference, do not constitute obstacles anymore, for breaking into 'mainstream' jobs. In this sense, an image of a 'just' multicultural Britain becomes almost communicated. Sanur again, argues:

G.M: What's your opinion about the present state of multiculturalism in this country?

Sanur: Its changing, I think the children who are born in this country, their mentality is totally different, because more or less, the people that have been born in this country they are westernised, they are British-Bangladeshi, British-Pakistani, so more or less the children, that they go to school, they are going to college, they are going to universities, they are taking their degree, I mean they are getting good jobs, I mean it doesn't matter what is his colour or what is his origin, but where he grew up and where he studied.

After these narratives of collective 'adaptability' to differences, I shall alternatively focus on individual narratives that speak about journeys of 'self' transformation. Accordingly, I move away from a narrative of 'diasporic' communities to narratives of 'diasporic' individuals.

In what follows, Sanur again, goes on to narrate his own condition of 'marginality':

G.M.: Can you tell me a little bit more about yourself?

Sanur: Obviously, when I was back home, my mentality was different, so now I came here, ten years ago, so when I came here I changed loads of jobs and now I have my own business, so when I think ten years ago where I was, I think completely my way of thinking and lifestyle has changed, I changed, so its no matter of keeping all the tradition, I mean where I was before, I mean, what I want to tell you is that where I am now, I am living here, I will be living here, that's my own destination, so I need to think about this country, I need to think about my business, I need to think about my family.

[my emphasis]

What is specifically interesting about this narrative, is the way that Sanur uses spatial references in order to locate his own existence and sense of 'self'. More than once, he mentions the phrases, 'where I was' and 'where I am now'. These are the workings of a cultural identity in transition. This is an instance of a conceptualisation of the 'self' as a journey that succeeds in finding its way through differences. In this sense, differences become perceived as contaminating, able to penetrate the skin and corrode any established sense of 'self'. By the same token, this is a clear instance of the deployment of a language of a multicultural 'self', where 'diasporic' or 'marginal' men and women find their own new ways in this country.

Last but not least, I take a closer look at the ways that multiple parts of the 'multicultural' self allegedly fail or succeed to come together and produce new personal cultural configurations, new cultural identities and new ethnicities (Hall 1992:258, Back 1996:). By all accounts, 'diasporic' men and women become essentially conceptualised as multicultural 'selves'. Accordingly, the main question is whether there is any communication occurring between these multiple parts. To put it differently, what I am investigating are the ways that 'newness enters the world'(Bhabha 1994:227).

Robert Park (1950), at the very dawn of urban studies, acknowledged that as a direct result of migration, a personality change occurs. As he argued: 'When the traditional organisation of society breaks down, as a result of contact and collision with a new invading culture, the effect is to speak to emancipate the individual man...the emancipated individual becomes in a certain sense and to certain degree a cosmopolitan' (Park 1950:350,351).

By the same token, Park (1950:354) coined this emancipated, cosmopolitan individual as the 'marginal man' and woman. Following these lines, 'marginal' men and women of his time, were individuals that had broken with the traditional ties of their 'culture'. They were people that had already become multicultural 'selves'. Their 'ethnic' selves were left behind for the sake of a multicultural existence. Although able to participate within more than one cultural context, they seemed 'doomed' to never be fully accommodated in either; although people of the cultural 'margins', their existence appeared to float somewhere in the middle. In short, 'the marginal man [and woman] is a personality type that arises at a time and place, where, out of conflict of races and cultures, new societies, new people and cultures are coming into existence'(Park 1950:370).

In a similar fashion, 'dominant' British discourses on 'migrants' and 'natives' have been traditionally circulated through a notion of 'having a culture' (Bauman 1996:6). By all accounts, this is a specific construction of ethnicity that takes 'culture' as its central concern (Barth 1970:11, Ericksen 1993:4). From this perspective, each 'migrant' community closely corresponds to an 'ethnic' culture. Following these lines, each cultural subject becomes attributed to a defining

'ethnic' self. From such a perspective, second or third generation migrants, have been habitually depicted as being torn 'between cultures'¹⁰⁰ (Watson 1977:3, Silverstone 1976:11); they have been portrayed as 'multicultural' entities with no ability of synthesizing themselves.

This is an image, of 'marginal' men and women struggling between 'identities'. This is a narrative that argues that 'multicultural' selves can not be easily accommodated in any cultural context. Accordingly, a constant 'shifting' of cultural or 'ethnic' identities becomes essential for the survival of these divided and fragmented multicultural 'selves'.

In sharp contrast to these stagnated images, this thesis will exemplify the uses of a totally different identity narrative; a story of a 'multicultural' self, capable of synthesizing her/his internal differences; a story of 'marginal' men or women, who leave the 'margins' to balance themselves within the centre; a tale of self 'tranculturation' (Welsch 1999:205). But let us hear Muhammed again talking about his condition of internal multiculturalism:

G.M.: Can I ask you a more personal question? I would like to know the ways that you negotiate or bring together your Bengali and British sense of self.

Muhammed: I treat whatever comes to me, I treat it with respect, and so if I speak to Bengalis I speak to them in Bengali, if I speak to Europeans I speak to them in English, so I face whatever comes with the way I feel best, to the best of my ability, culturally wise I am in England, I was brought up in this country, but at the same time I had a lot of Asian, Bengali influence, my family obviously, but I believe in one way I am lucky, cause I have the best of both communities and in a way I try to enjoy that.

¹⁰⁰ See also chapter three: 3.3

In a similar vein, Taril, one of the very few British-Indian owners of restaurants along Brick Lane, argues:

G.M: How do you deal with having more than one culture?

Taril: I think I like it, it's a little bit mixed basically, cause I can speak my parents language, but also, you know, I can interact basically, and so if I was standing outside the restaurant, I can speak to people, but I can also speak to waiters, whatever language, so yeah, I quite like it, it's the best of both worlds really, so yeah.

As it becomes obvious from the above quotes, the old narrative of cultural conflict and being torn 'between cultures' gives away to a narrative of 'best of both worlds'. In this sense, 'multicultural' existences, 'marginal' or 'diasporic' men and women, seem capable of transculturalizing themselves. As Taril says, 'it's a little bit mixed basically'. Accordingly, there might be many differences working through oneself. Nevertheless, these difference, appear as capable of influencing each other. They are capable of personal acts of a cultural 'cut and mix'. Following these lines, the multicultural 'self' is the associate total of different differences, which through their synergy, is more than its constitutive parts.

To conclude my analysis, I would like to introduce Alain Touraine's concept of the 'subject'. According to Alain Touraine (2000), a subject is an attempt to refuse 'to allow our experience to be reduced to a kaleidoscopic existence or a discontinuous set of responses...prevent our personalities being torn apart' (Touraine 2000:14). Being a subject is 'an attempt to unite different cultures within the lived experiences and life projects of individuals'(ibid 2000:190).

Accordingly, a subject can be conceptualised as a self-conscious 'multicultural' self. To put it differently, a subject is an attempt to synthesize and take account of the differences within ourselves. As Muhammed characteristically says 'I treat whatever comes to me, I treat it with respect'. Following these lines, this is a kind of statement, coming from the part of a multicultural 'self', who is able to balance

his different cultural influences within his own experience and life. In this sense, Muhammed, in sharp contrast to previous narratives of cultural 'self' fragmentation as ontological or identity confusion, declares his ability to accommodate consciously his different 'selves'. Accordingly, his sense of 'self' is not a confused or fragmented multicultural existence, but instead, it is a conscious handling of different cultural influences. Following these lines, the former identity paradigm of divided, fragmented and problematic multicultural 'selves' becomes substituted by a story of intercultural competence and a multicultural existence at ease. A multicultural 'self' that can confidently declare its abilities to personify within her/his own existence, the 'best of both worlds'.

7.6 Conclusions.

In this chapter I focused my attention on 'native' narrative constructions of Brick Lane. Firstly, I had a short look at the evolution of local forms of 'ethnic' multicultural capitalism. Subsequently, I attempted to cast some light on the ways that the 'ethnic' might be deployed in favour of the 'marginal'. More specifically, I drew emphasis on the possibility that contemporary processes of commodification of differences may empower some of those deemed as different. Following these lights, I asserted that contemporary urban developments related to the Banglatown story appear to produce or even capitalize upon authenticised or folkloric forms of Bengali ethnicity.

Additionally, I went on to expose narratives that presented Brick lane as a significant 'port of arrival' to the capital. In a similar manner, I exemplified the uses of narratives that depicted migration as the 'regenerating' or 'driving force' of any host society. At the same time, postcolonial migrant settlements within the UK became narrated as part, or better, as continuation of the former colonial legacy. As Kobi says 'They were there before we came here'. From this perspective, successive waves of postcolonial migration to Britain become attached to a firm historical resonance.

To continue, contemporary processes of redevelopment along Brick Lane became narrated through a narrative of content. This specific narrative appeared to emerge through a comparison between a recreated as problematic local 'past' and a local 'present'. Nevertheless, through this comparative juxtaposition, the present condition of Brick Lane becomes portrayed as 'progress' or 'improvement'. At the same time, this local narrative of content was antagonised by a local narrative of concern that was based on future imaginings of the area.

Following these lines, one is led to consider that local politics of regeneration became verbalised and expressed through the narratives of local content and concern. As regeneration stands for the future reinvention of space these narratives brought together issues related to ethnicity, space and time. Accordingly, narrativisations of space and time became intertwined with temporalisations of ethnicity and the cultural 'self'. Through these minglings, local pasts, presents and futures provided a unified narrative trope where stories of a changeable ethnicity could unfold. In this sense, notions of ethnicity became related to ideas of a changing ethnoscape.

In relation to constructions of local multicultural, a number of narratives appeared to render local conditions of multiculturalism meaningful. To start with, there was a dominant narrative that constructed present multicultural life within the vicinity as 'harmonious' and 'tolerant'. Again, 'present' local multicultural harmony became compared and evaluated to a racially tensed 'past'. At the same time, the language of 'ethnic' diversity appeared also at work. Following these lines, diverse urban conditions became presented as good in themselves. In this sense, local diversity becomes depicted as a competitive advantage.

The last two narratives that depicted multicultural Brick Lane deployed two diametrically different languages of difference: the language of structuralist or strictly designated differences versus the language of post-structuralist or 'self' contaminating differences; the language of monocultural 'selves' versus the language of multicultural 'selves'; the language of an unconnected monocultural multiculturalism versus the language of multiculturalism as 'a meeting of cultures' (Touraine 2000:172).

In terms of narratives of 'ethnic' or 'cultural' identity, these could be separated between collective and individual ones. Following these lines, there was a specific collective narrative that represented Bangladeshi community as a 'diasporic' entity able to find its way through difference. In similar vein, a second collective narrative went on to suggest the rise of a hyphenated Britain. This was another instance where the language of post-structuralist difference and multicultural selves was at work.

In terms of individual identity narratives, there was a scenario that viewed the 'self' as a transformative journey. In this sense, 'ethnic' or 'cultural' selves become constructed as malleable or changeable; they seem to be vulnerable to differences. These are the 'marginal' men and women of our times; these are instances of multicultural 'selves'.

Last but not least, I examined the workings of differences within oneself. I tried to cast some light on the communication or synergy between the different parts of the multicultural 'self'. As I argued, a specific kind of narrative emerged that constructed the multicultural 'self' as possessing the 'best of both worlds'. Accordingly, internal cultural conflict allegedly gave away to a personal multicultural ease. In effect, we are witnessing the rise of the multicultural 'subject' able to unite within her/his own existence the different cultures of oneself. Only a subject can have the 'best of both worlds'.

8. Conclusions: the present and future of the multicultural city.

I started this thesis by asking Bhabha's question 'how can this world live its difference? How can a human being live otherwise?' (Bhabha 1994:64). However, I was not interested in an abstract or purely theoretical handling of differences; I did not intend to approach differences in a general or generic way. Alternatively, what I was looking for were particular instances where processes of negotiation between different differences took place within contemporary multicultural London. As the time of the research coincided with one of the biggest property booms or periods of economic expansion of the capital, processes of residential or commercial gentrification were quickly transforming the face of 'ethnic' London; processes of urban postmodernization were penetrating swiftly into some postcolonial spaces of the metropolis. For the aims and objectives of this research, the areas of Brixton and Brick Lane transformed into the spatial laboratories for an exploration into contemporary metropolitan multiculturalism; a kind of an emerging multiculturalism that brought different people together into a negotiation of their differences, under the aegis of urban capitalism and commerce.

What I had in mind was to write a kind of a cultural narrative that could perplex political economy's stories; a kind of a sociological narrative that would complicate the efforts to render the city visible strictly through economics. Keeping that firmly in mind, I embarked on a narrative study of cultural dialogue within contemporary instances of 'ethnic' gentrification in Brixton and Brick Lane; a study of the ways that meaning was created in relation to processes of negotiation between different differences; an exploration into the forms and limits of the multicultural 'sayable' in regard to 'race', culture or ethnicity. I am using this notion of the multicultural sayable to imply the levels of discursivity within constructions of local multiculturalism and 'ethnic' or 'cultural' selfhood. In short, I investigated the kind of contact that took place within these contemporary 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992:4).

My main theoretical preoccupations were related to narrative processes of identity and community construction within the areas of Brixton and Brick Lane. At the same time, I explored the narrative workings of ethnicity through space and time; the ways that changing notions of 'ethnoscapes' (Appadurai 1996) and the 'ethnic' self corresponded to separate stories and notions of cultural or 'ethnic' belonging; the ways that 'diaspora' became inscribed within the lives and experiences of my 'ethnic' informants.

First and foremost, I was interested in processes of inner-transformation, as a result of an exposure to different differences, to either disorient or reify the cultural bearings of the metropolitan subject; processes of identity displacement that resulted, or not, from living side by side with different differences. In short, could a displacement of identity take place within these contemporary 'zones of transition'? Could Brixton and Brick Lane function as 'narrative spaces' (Sennett 1990:195) where strong multicultural fictions had the powers to displace 'fixed' notions of the 'self'? Could liminal identities (Back 1996) be produced out of these liminal spaces (Zukin 1992)? By asking these questions, I aimed to bring together two different literatures: the literature of urban transformation and city change and theories of inner-transformation, identity and the 'self'.

Furthermore, I explored the ways that different people were either willing, or not, to proceed into spontaneous acts of identification as a multicultural 'we'. This exploration was based on a notion of community as an 'act of will' (Sennett 1970). In effect, could Brixton and Brick Lane function as new 'survival communities' (Sennett 1970:143) where a new form of 'we' could emerge and people could accept differences without having any preconceived ideas about themselves and 'others'? Could local multicultural fictions bring these different people together into acts of narration of a strong multicultural 'we'?

Last but not least, I approached ethnicity in a 'processual' (Bauman 1994:94) way; I investigated the ways that narratives of cultural or 'ethnic' belonging changed through time; Appadurai's (1996) notion of the 'ethnoscape', as an imagined landscape, provided me with the means of inscription of ethnicity in urban space and time. Accordingly, ethnicity, space and time became irrevocably linked.

A few years ago, Stuart Hall (1996a) suggested that 'race' should be understood as the 'floating signifier' that lends itself to different meanings. In a similar fashion, Homi Bhabha (2000) proclaimed that 'The multicultural has itself become the 'floating signifier' whose enigma lies less in itself than in the discursive uses of it.' (Bhabha 2000 cited in Hesse 2000:1)

In a related manner to the above statements, this research demonstrated that local narrative constructions of identity, community and ethnicity were closely associated with different meanings or notions of 'culture'; the multicultural city or instances of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism became almost exclusively presented through different ideas of 'culture'. If one wanted to follow this metaphor of the 'floating signifier' further, always in relation to this research, one could argue that 'culture' has become the 'floating signifier' where different people from different backgrounds and incomes try to make sense of their lives and experiences within the multicultural city. By the same token, as Stuart Hall (2000) has more recently argued, multicultural communities constitute 'the most advanced signifiers of urban postmodern metropolitan experience.' (Hall 2000:221) Accordingly, if multicultural communities like Brick Lane and Brixton are the 'most advanced signifiers' of postmodern urbanism, then culture provides the discursive arena where these experiences become articulated, verbalised and expressed; it delineates the limits of the multicultural 'sayable' that create and diffuse meaning within the ethnically diverse metropolis. For instance, within the framework of this research, some narratives expressed 'culture' in clearly racialised ways (Cohen 1999). In other cases, 'culture' became narrated as open-ended, fluid and changeable. From this angle, diverse cultural participation and fusion allegedly created an urban synthetic 'multiculture' (Back 1996). To continue, 'ethnic' diversity narratives celebrated culture while clearly designated cultural belongings resulted in readings of local multiculturalism as one of unconnected realities; they produced images of the multicultural city as 'a mosaic of little words that touch but do not interpenetrate.' (Park 1967:41). The only instance, where culture lost its delegating and delineating powers was through the view of multicultural life as one of individuality and self-efficiency.

The original contribution of this thesis in relation to theories of 'race', was its conclusion that contemporary conditions of postmodern-postcolonial urbanism or multicultural life at large became effectively communicated through a new lexicon of 'culture' that substituted old readings of 'race'; readings of culture replaced 'race' within the context of my interviews (chapter 4,5,6,7) and local regeneration vocabulary (chapter 3); culture as 'race' emerged as the basic discursive determinant within various instances of local multicultural talk; culture transformed into an open signifier where different people from different backgrounds and incomes attached their own meanings to it. At the same time, constructions of the 'ethnic' self became also verbalised through different narratives of culture. In effect, culture appeared as the main discursive determinant of local multicultural life at large.

This new lexicon of culture became disseminated, within the context of my interviews, but also, part of it within narratives of local regeneration efforts, through the deployment of the following six languages of difference as culture. I am using this notion of difference as culture, to connote the ways that differences become a way of talking about culture, while culture, transforms into a way of talking about 'race'. Firstly, a language of 'racialised' culture that proceeded into criminalizing specific 'ethnic' populations within the multicultural city. Secondly, a popular language of celebration that argued for the case and merits of 'ethnic' diversity. As I argued in chapter three, this language started from the workplace and eventually expanded into other discourses and narratives. Thirdly, a language of individuality that denounced the powers of culture to define its subjects (October 2000 <http://multiculturalism.aynrand.org/diversity.html>), whilst most importantly, the last two languages of difference that characterised any discussion of multiculturalism and the 'ethnic' self. These were the languages of the monocultural versus the multicultural self; the language of strictly designated differences versus the language of poststructuralist difference as 'a play of differences' (Derrida 1972:25); the language of a 'multiculturalism of difference' versus the language of a 'critical multiculturalism' (Bauman 1999:89). Last but not least, there were occasions where the language of multicultural 'self' did not correspond to poststructuralist readings

of differences; there were instances that the multicultural 'self' was not perceived as a diasporic way of being that worked her/his way through difference and produced new cultural growth. Under these discursive lights, the multicultural self was denied from any personal 'poetics of translation' (Bhabha 1994:212); 'newness' did not enter the world; the multicultural 'self' was presented as a performative, fragmented way of being that did not synthesise or 'transculturalise' (Welsh 1999) its internal differences. These instances of multicultural talk became enunciated through a sixth language of difference or the language of a multicultural, non-diasporic 'self'. In short, through this fusion and confusion between these six different languages of difference the local multicultural question was rendered meaningful.

Before I move any further into summarising the main research findings, I would like to argue for the existence of multiple layers of ambivalence that characterised this thesis; within this narrative study meaning was produced in different and often contradictory levels; the limits and boundaries of the multicultural 'sayable' were often dissident and dissenting; what was often 'said' and 'thought' (Foucault 1991) was successively disputed within the same account. Many a times, different languages of culture as difference were deployed within the same stories of my informants. For instance, narratives of content were antagonised by stories of concern within 'native' attitudes towards local redevelopment. While the former, were based on a open definition of space (Massey 1994) and corresponded to 'fluid' multicultural conceptions of space, culture and identity, stories of local concern were built on close definition of space and 'fixed' monocultural ideas. Nevertheless, these kinds of narrative discrepancies could co-exist within one and the same account. In effect, one is led to consider the ability of narrative studies to create a solid sociological meta-narrative that can exhaust the complexities of urban life; it further problematises any notion of clearly established narrative findings that can reflect accurately on the perplexities of metropolitan urbanism. However, my answer to such difficulties was to avoid simplifying contradictory narratives. Alternatively, I sought to present the layers of ambivalence that characterised these complicated and perplexed accounts. I hope that in some ways I succeeded in doing that.

Chapter three explored the discursive construction of space. As I argued, racial or cultural differences were discursively transformed within successive political imaginings from causes of concern to instances of celebration. More particularly, I identified the following three multicultural moments: a moment of pathology, where 'race' and its spaces of residence were transformed into subjects of processes of criminalisation, a transitory-reflective moment where 'race' was 'seen' through the lenses of cultural differences, whilst lastly, a moment of celebration where cultures as differences were viewed as competitive advantages or assets. Following these lines, discursive constructions of Brixton and Brick Lane appeared to deploy, at different times, different languages of difference: the language of criminalized 'race' versus the language of 'ethnic' diversity. Through these discursive speech acts, the limits of the local multicultural 'sayable' became clearly transgressed.

Chapters four and six reflected on narratives of local multicultural life, community and the 'ethnic' self. These narrative accounts corresponded to processes of residential gentrification in Brixton and 'creative' or 'cultural' industries in Brick Lane that resulted in the creation of 'designer economies' (Lash & Urry 1994:111) within the vicinity. In relation to theories of gentrification, a strong narrative in Brixton defined local gentrification as a non-belonging ephemeral act that correlated to specific life-stages. In effect, Brixtonian acts of gentrification did not lead to spatial forms of belonging; they did not produce specific forms of 'fixed' socio-spatial identities. Most importantly, this narrative was enunciated through a language of criminalized 'race' and was accompanied by future scenarios of moving out.

To continue, both local 'vernacular landscapes' (Zukin 1996:56) appeared to transform into theatricalised/aestheticised spectacles. In effect, locally accumulated diversity was viewed as 'worthy topos of seeing' (Featherstone 1991:106); the charm of 'culture' or differences was clearly acknowledged. By all accounts, these narrative constructions became conveyed through a language of 'ethnic' diversity that proceeded in aestheticising local 'vernacular' cultures and landscapes. In sharp to this, another narrative suggested an 'epic theatre' (Benjamin 1973) approach to

local spectacular 'ethnic' diverse conditions where the charm of differences had to be deconstructed for social conditions to be revealed.

In terms of local communitarian narratives, a sense of a local multicultural 'we' was denied in both cases (Sennett 1970); Brixton and Brick Lane did not appear to function as London's 'survival communities' (Sennett 1970:143) where a new sense of 'we' could emerge out of spontaneous multicultural acts of collective identification; strong multicultural fictions were not at work that could bring these different people together into a sense of community. For the case of Brick Lane, the area became constructed as 'home' to two different communities: a 'creative' and an 'Asian' or Bangladeshi one. Nevertheless, through this local communitarian division hidden issues of 'race', class and income became subtly articulated and expressed (Back 1996). Under these lights, Brick Lane's multiculturalism was conveyed as a geographical form of co-existence that went as far as eye-contact and mechanical greeting. The main reasons for its failure were again related to culture; religion as culture became presented as a strong divisionary determinant that obstructed local multicultural communication. In effect, this narrative was told through the language of monocultural selves and strictly designated differences that failed to influence each other. On the other hand, while local multicultural conditions allegedly failed within the streets of Brick Lane, the redeveloped spaces of the Brewery provided the spaces for a true cosmopolitan ethos. Within the gates of the Brewery, 'otherness' was not perceived through 'knowledge' or simply enjoyed as 'spectacle' (Levinas 1987:198), but instead, it was treated at 'face value' as a generator of creativity, new ideas and visions. In effect, this narrative was disseminated through a synthetic language of 'ethnic' diversity and poststructuralist difference; differences within the Brewery did not become aestheticised, but alternatively, they were dealt as 'assets' that contributed to the creation of new cultural growth manifested through enhanced forms of creativity.

In the case of Brixton, the local multicultural world was narrated as one of acute multicultural separation and disassociation; any possibilities for a local multicultural 'we' were strictly denounced. The main reasons for this were socio-economic or economic and cultural. In the case of the latter, a configuration of low

'income' and racialised forms of culture produced unchangeable 'bad' ethnicities (Cohen 1999:7). In sharp contrast to this, a local microspace where differences lost their delineating powers to separate and divide was the public sauna in Brixton Recreation Centre; within this local 'heterotopia' (Foucault 1986) a sense of a local multicultural 'we', where similarities were more important than cultural differences, was created. In this sense, the inside spaces of the sauna were the 'true' multicultural spaces in comparison to the streets of Brixton. Through narratives like that, the contingent nature of local multicultural identifications became related to particular spaces and times.

Last but not least, identity narratives became again transmitted through different languages of difference. A strong identity narrative, for both Brixton and Brick Lane, deployed the language of monocultural selves and strictly designated differences. From this angle both areas failed to function, as 'narrative spaces' (Sennett 1990:195) or 'zones of transition' that could displace 'fixed' notions of the self; 'liminal identities' (Back 1996) were not produced out of these 'liminal spaces' (Zukin 1992). For the case of Brixton, 'fixed' gentrifying identities proceeded into consumerist acts of local 'selective' multiculturalism; differences remained external to oneself and could only be approached by being consumed into exotic objects. The 'self' remained fixed in her/his cultural positioning and was only entertained or amused by differences.

The original contribution of this thesis in relation to literatures of gentrification (see chapter one) was to define it in three different 'alternative' ways. All of these cases, instead of focusing on gentrification as a purely economic act, they attempted to shed light on the cultural workings of the gentrifying identity. Firstly, there was strong narrative that defined local gentrification as a spatial fetish, which did not have the powers to transform oneself. Following these lines, processes of 'ethnic' gentrification did not appear to result into a transformed 'cultural' self; processes of urban transformation did not correspond to an inner-transformation of 'selfhood'. On the contrary, narrative constructions of identity against 'otherness' occurred in Brick Lane. The local gentrifying 'self' became re-affirmed through acts of

'othering'; the 'other' provided the platform from which one to define herself/himself against.

The second contribution of this thesis in relation to theories of gentrification was to assert that the gentrifying 'self' was a fragmented metropolitan existence corresponding to many different selves. In effect, diverse cultural participation took place through successive performances of different selves within oneself (Bell 1999). From this angle, gentrification was a fragmented performative experience that could not produce new cultural growth. In effect, although this narrative spoke the language of multicultural selves, it did not convey a notion of poststructuralist difference as a 'play of differences' (Derrida 1978); differences within oneself did not come together to produce new cultural growth. Alternatively, this narrative was voiced through the language of a multicultural, non-diasporic 'self'.

To conclude, the third contribution of this thesis in regard to theories of gentrification undermined the influence of heterogeneous space upon the 'self'. According to this account, the 'self' became another through the diverse influences of Brick Lane. This was a narrative instance of the deployment of a language of multicultural 'selves' and poststructuralist difference, whilst at the same time, corresponded to notions of the 'self' as 'incomplete' (Sennett 1990:149).

Chapters five and seven, reflected on narratives related to the 'native' economies of Brixton and Brick Lane; they focused on stories of individuals, whose personal stories and lives, present and future economic gains or stakes, trajectories of self-identification and belonging were tightly intertwined with processes of redevelopment of these areas. Under these lights, Brixton's and Brick Lane's 'native' economies were dealt as the spaces where different differences came together to buy or sell, interact or ignore each other; they were treated as the new 'contact zones' (Pratt 1992:4) where forms of interaction between cultures of gentrification and multicultural or 'ethnic' configurations of urban capitalism unfolded. From such an angle, local spaces of urban multicultural capitalism became perceived as hybridised forms of market and place.

In both cases, local processes of redevelopment became ambiguously articulated through antagonising narratives of local content and concern. At the same time,

these narratives were based on different temporal constructions of place. In short, narratives of local content were based on past and future spatial scenarios of these areas. For instance, redevelopment stories of local content were informed by recreated images of a local problematic past or projections of a local optimistic multicultural future. On the other hand, narratives of local concern were also developed on future spatial projections too; they were informed by future eviction scenarios for local 'native' populations. Most importantly, some narratives of local concern became disseminated through an open (Massey 1994) or poststructuralist definition of identity and place that gave away a positive belief in the future of the multicultural city, whilst on the contrary, other stories of local concern became diffused through 'closed', 'fixed' or structuralist definitions of place that argued about the 'loss' of spatially established identities.

In terms of local multiculturalism, a number of languages of differences were deployed for local conditions of multiculturalism to become transmitted and expressed; layers of narrative ambivalence became manifested in relation to constructions of local multicultural life. In Brick Lane, a language of 'ethnic diversity' that spoke of any multicultural community as a good in itself was antagonised by a language of monocultural 'selves' and strictly designated differences that viewed Brick Lane as 'home' to two different cultures (a mainstream and an 'ethnic' one). At the same time, another strong narrative presented 'mixed' communities and culture as the present and future of Brick Lane and Britain at large; this local multicultural story was conveyed through a language of multicultural 'selves' and poststructuralist, evolving differences. In Brixton, a sense of a local multicultural 'we' was created through inclusive notions of space. Following these lines, 'black' became narrated as not colour but culture; a kind of culture able to accommodate whoever was interested in it. Accordingly, Brixton became constructed as an inclusive cultural space that corresponded to multicultural conceptions of the 'self' and 'processual' notions of culture (Bauman 1994:94). From this perspective, a Brixtonian multifarious way of being, capable of translating external to internal difference through a personal 'politics of translation' (Bhabha 1994:212) was deemed responsible for the emergence of new cultural growth. In sharp contrast to this, two

other narratives suggested that 'race' or 'cultural' wars continued to take place in Brixton; these narratives were disseminated through a language of monocultural or monoracial 'self' and strictly designated cultural or racial differences. Lastly, the language of individuality went on to explain current conditions of multiculturalism within the vicinity. From such an angle, cultural or racial differentiations became deleted in favour of an all powerful, local Brixtonian individual.

Last but not least I approached identity as a form of narrativization of the 'self' to the 'self' and others (Hall 1996:4). As I argued, narrative constructions of 'native' identities corresponded to diasporic ways of being (Hall 1990:235); they related to notions of identities that find themselves through differences or produce themselves anew. Following these lines, a collective story of identity emerged in Brick Lane that presented the local Bangladeshi community as a collective diasporic entity, who created and evolved through hybridised forms of being. On an individual level, a dominant identity narrative, both in Brixton and Brick Lane, presented the 'self' as one that was characterised by 'transculturality' (Welsch 1999:198) and a 'play of differences' (Derrida 1978). Following on from this, this narrative was based on a notion of cultural identity as evolving, changing and producing itself anew; it gave away an image of cultural evolution, where 'new ethnicities', 'new identities' and 'new kind of people' were produced (Rutherford 1990:22, Bhabha 1994:1, McGuigan 1996:141). At the same time, in Brick Lane, this 'new breed of person', this diasporic way of being, was also a 'subject' (Touraine 2000:19) able to synthesise consciously within her/his experience different cultural influences and produce herself/himself anew. In effect, only a diasporic, multicultural 'self' can comprise a 'subject' bringing synthetically with her/his existence the 'best of both worlds'.

8.1 What a multicultural city might be like? Exotes, Cosmopolites and others.

In what follows, I investigate multiple ways of being within the multicultural city, but also, some uses of differences as culture within the realms of the ethnically diverse metropolis. To put it differently, I reflect on various ontologies of multiculturalism as they emerge out of this research, but also, on some functionalistic deployments of locally accumulated diversity. As I shall argue, there is more than one way to live and experience the multicultural city, as there is more than one mode to utilise differences within a rapidly transforming multicultural London. From this angle, the multicultural city is transformed into a text to which different readers/users attach their own personalised meanings. Most importantly, these multiple readings are often disseminated through different narrative accounts of culture; different takes on culture clearly command different readings of the metropolis. In some sense, culture as differences is what any multicultural city is mostly about. As this research showed, it transforms into one of the main discursive domains through which people make sense, create meaning and live their lives within the contemporary postmodern-postcolonial metropolis.

As a response to such a cultural pervasiveness within understandings of human differences and urban multicultural life, some writers have suggested a post-anthropological understanding of culture that tries to politicise the cultural and get rid of any distinctions between political, cultural and everyday realms. As Paul Gilroy strongly argues 'Theories about culture are implicated in the divided world they try to explain. There are too many well-fortified zones bounded by deference to the authoritarian claims that origins can make, where purity is prized and mixture and mutability arouse fear and distrust. But there are also precious moments when concern with the mechanisms of cultural transmission and translation must become a priority, when the promiscuous antidiscipline associated with complex cultural dynamics rewrites the rules of criticism in novel, emphatically postanthropological ways.' (Gilroy 2000:271)

As mentioned above, there is more than one way of being within the multicultural city; there is, more than one multicultural ontology, unfolding and developing within the arena of the postmodern-postcolonial metropolis. By all accounts, these different multicultural modes of being become determined in relation to how one defines herself/himself towards differences; they become crystallised and diffused through different languages of culture as difference.

On one level, lie monocultural ways of being that 'see' differences as external to the 'self'. From such a perspective, the 'self' is culturally specific; it clearly corresponds and relates to one learned culture. Everything external to this encoded culture is immediately perceived as 'otherness', alterity or non-communicative differences. The 'self' cannot be influenced by otherness, as external 'otherness' cannot be converted, through a personal 'poetics of translation' (Bhabha 1994:212), into internalised difference. In short, it is argued that we are what we are and we remain culturally what we are despite the continuous multifarious influences of the multicultural city. Nevertheless, apart from this constructed externality of oneself towards 'other' differences, one can proceed into separate deployments of differences within the metropolis; the culturally specific 'self', who is not able to translate external differences into personalised qualities, can either use differences to further define herself/himself against them, or alternatively, she/he can be entertained and amused by them, or both; the monocultural 'self' can either utilise differences to produce a more solid cultural resonance for itself, or function, as a contemporary 'exote'. I deploy this notion of the 'exote', originating from the work of Victor Segalen, to describe metropolitan subjects that get pleasure by consuming differences. As this research manifested, contemporary cultures of gentrification in Brixton and Brick Lane developed around an 'art of exoticism' (Segalen cited in Todorov 1994); postmodern-postcolonial urbanism appeared to correspond to 'aesthetic' forms of cosmopolitanism accompanied by certain levels of intercultural competence (Urry 1995:167, Hannerz 1996:103). From this angle, the differences of the multicultural city cannot really change oneself but alternatively, they can provide an intensification of emotional life through acquisitions of pleasure in diversity (see chapter 6:6.3). At the same time, postmodern monocultural 'exotes'

should not try to assimilate diversity, as differences have to remain external to the self to guarantee the continuation of pleasurable experiences. In effect, the art of exoticism requires a 'fixed' and unchangeable identity, a strong sense of 'self', which differences are not allowed to corrode. Following these lines, personal acts of gentrification are pure practices of a spatial fetish that find pleasure in diversity while remaining 'fixed' in established notions of 'selfhood'; the multicultural city emerges as an entertaining arena where differences are transformed into commodified objects of amusement losing their powers to reorient oneself.

In sharp contrast to this 'art of exoticism', another plausible deployment of difference within the multicultural metropolis is the conscious decision to not use the aesthetic qualities of otherness at all. This is the 'epic' theatre (Benjamin 1973) approach to urban multicultural life that seeks to deconstruct differences from their aesthetic qualities and reveal the social circumstances that ethnic diversity finds itself in; it is a kind of an approach that tries to get rid of sensationalist appeals of contemporary urban multicultural life and alternatively focus on social conditions. Under these lights, metropolitan otherness loses its spectacular character and more politically sensitive readings of alterity break into the fore. The multicultural city becomes transported from the spectacular to the political realm, while postmodern urban exotes become replaced by 'epic'-theatre goers (see chapter 6:6.3). I use this notion of an 'epic' theatre goer to define any metropolitan subject that refuses to participate in any spectacular consumption of differences and alternatively becomes engaged with issues of social justice within the multicultural city.

To continue, other ontologies of being within the multicultural city become disseminated through a language of multicultural 'selves'. This language of multicultural 'selves' can either go along with structuralist or poststructuralist definitions of differences. Following these lines, the multicultural 'self' can either be diasporic, working its way through difference by constantly 'translating' external to internal differences, or alternatively it can function as a multicultural non-diasporic way of being. In relation to the latter, multicultural selves do not evolve into 'subjects' (Touraine 2000:19) able to synthesise within their experiences their different cultural influences within themselves; they do not produce themselves

anew. Instead, they are destined to oscillate between separate performative identities (Bell 1999) without producing new cultural growth.

Through the prism of multicultural diasporic ontologies 'ethnic' gentrification becomes presented, for both 'natives' and 'movers in', as an urban practice that can re-orient the cultural bearings of the metropolitan subject. In this sense, different differences go skin deep and change the 'self'; selfhood becomes corroded through the influences of diversity and heterogeneous space. Following these lines, 'new cultures' and ethnicities are produced; liminal identities (Back 1996) come up and arise out of these spaces of liminality (Zukin 1992); 'ethnic' gentrification transforms established selfhoods.

As mentioned above, one of the original contributions of this thesis in regard to the literature of gentrification was to conclude that multicultural non-diasporic ways of being define the spatial practice of gentrification as a fragmented, performative experience. One's conscious decision to situate her/his body within the ethnically diverse inner-city, either out of need, preference or both, results in a fragmented metropolitan existence. The gentrifying or gentrified 'self' has to perform a number of selves depending on cultural context and circumstances. In this sense, 'ethnic' gentrification clearly complicates and perplexes fixed notions of cultural identity. However, it does not lead to the production of new cultures, new ethnicities and liminal selves.

Last but not least, another way of being within the multicultural city, which at the same time correlates and responds to a particular utilisation of differences, is the cosmopolitan ethos. According to Sennett (1977) a 'cosmopolite', 'is a man [or woman] who moves comfortably in diversity; he [she] is comfortable in situations which have no links or parallels to what is familiar to him [or her].'(Sennett 1977:17) As I argued before in chapter six, the creative places of 'cultural industries' in Brick Lane were constructed as spaces of a pure cosmopolitan encounter that receives different differences at 'face value' and acknowledges their resourceful potentials. But what is the difference between an 'exote' and a cosmopolite? What separates and distinguishes the gentrified multicultural streets of

Brixton from the gated creative enclaves of Brick Lane? Which are the uses of differences between these separate ethnically diverse spaces?

In the case of contemporary 'exotes', differences are consumed for their aesthetic qualities and intensification of emotional life that they supposedly provide; the 'art' of contemporary urban 'exoticism' (Segalen cited in Todorov 1994) rests on a pure aesthetic of diversity; diversity transforms into a spectacle while multiple pleasures of exoticism evolve around it. In the case of creative 'cosmopolites', differences are encountered at 'face' value. They are not perceived as 'knowledge' (knowledge of the subject toward the object = racism) nor seen as 'enjoyment' (spectacle of diversity) (Levinas 1987:198). In effect, an ethical approach to alterity that does not exoticise or aestheticise the 'other', tends to characterise these cosmopolitan encounters. At the same time, differences within such a cosmopolitan context are viewed as competitive advantages that can trigger new creative ideas and visions. Accordingly, this cosmopolitan ethos becomes disseminated through a language of ethnic diversity, which sees differences as assets that can lead to conditions of multicultural competence; differences become perceived as qualities that have the abilities to synthesise themselves and create new cultural growth. In short, the cosmopolitan ontology within the 'creative' metropolis encounters differences at 'face value', refuses to exoticise them and takes advantage of their resourceful potentials.

To sum up, the ethnically diverse creative spaces of the metropolis correspond and relate to a different multicultural ontology and use of differences than instances of postmodern exoticism unfolding within its streets. While a pure cosmopolitan encounter is characterised by an ethical reception of alterity at 'face value', which sees and acknowledges its creative and resourceful potential, postmodern 'exotes' loiter the streets in search of pleasures in diversity. As the fast transforming multicultural city starts to use its differences for its own ends, more research is dictated on how different metropolitan ontologies use differences to regenerate and transform the postmodern urban.

8.2 Multicultural space, time and other.

‘The other is the future. The very relationship with the other is the relationship with the future. It seems to me impossible to speak of time in a subject alone.’

Levinas (1987:77)

In the last pages of this thesis, I would like to reflect on the future of the contemporary multicultural metropolis. However, the particular way that I intend to do so passes through a notion of otherness as a relationship with time. As Levinas (1987) says ‘the other is the future’; the very connection with the other is the bond with the future. In this sense, its not plausible to talk about time, in relation to only one subjectivity; time always involves ‘otherness’ while unfolds in space. Most importantly, I will go as far as to argue that the future of the multicultural city lies with an ‘otherness’ that is not externally found within its streets, but alternatively, it is internally located within ourselves and corresponds to our ability to change. To put it differently, the way foreword for the contemporary multicultural city depends on personal relationships with otherness within ourselves; the multicultural city can have a future as long as we continue to be ‘strangers to ourselves’ (Kristeva 1991); as long as we manifest the ability to become another through time.

In a slightly interrelated manner, Chicago School ethnographers have argued for the adeptness of migrants to become ‘others’ by accumulating new cultural experiences; through a dual process of acculturation-culturalization the migrants would supposedly assimilate into the ‘culture’ or ‘way of life’ of their host societies. Following these lines, ‘otherness’ within themselves and through time became equated with processes of cultural assimilation. In other words, theories of assimilation¹⁰¹ presumed that after the initial settlement of immigrants within various ‘zones of transition’, levels of interaction with mainstream society and culture would change and transform these individuals into cultural replicas of their fellow ‘native’ citizens. Through the passage of time, a suburbanisation of an assimilating ethnicity would take place too; as migrants appeared to advance

¹⁰¹ For a general discussion on assimilation see Kovacs (1975) and Phillips (1993).

themselves economically within their new societies, they would leave the 'zones of transition' behind and relocate themselves within the comfort of urban periphery. Most importantly, through this traditional narrative of culture and urban change, ethnicity would be lost or better replaced by the 'native' way of life; processes of suburbanization of migrants would almost extinguish their earlier cultural or 'ethnic' traces; former ethnicity would transform into a kind of 'otherness' that replicated or copied 'native' or national culture. In short, it was assumed that the migrant would become another by 'converting' into a native.

In sharp contrast to this, the way that I envisioned plausible futures of the multicultural city do not relate or respond to stories of cultural assimilation and replacement of one 'otherness' by another. Alternatively, my personal visions of the prospects of ethnically diverse urban conditions tend to unfold around a notion of an 'heterocultural dynamism of contemporary multicultural life' (Gilroy 1995:3) that retains the powers to disorient the cultural bearings of any metropolitan subject; these were the workings of difference, within many of my 'native' 'ethnic' informants and few 'movers in', who became 'others' through multicultural space and time. Most importantly, their relationships with their diasporic otherness hold the key to the future of the multicultural city; personalised and embodied diaspora, as a ways of working through differences, is the only anticipated future for the multicultural hereafter.

Iris Marion Young (1990) has suggested that the ideal of city-life is 'being together with strangers' (ibid 1990:237). Taking this statement one step further, I shall argue that my ideal of multicultural city life is a 'being together' of multicultural strangers that turns them into 'strangers to themselves' (Kristeva 1991); a 'being together' of diasporic, multicultural 'selves' that influence and transform each other. At the same time, Michel de Certeau (1984) has proclaimed that 'To practice space is thus to retreat to the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is in a place, to be other and move towards the other.' (ibid 1984:237) Accordingly, what a practice of multicultural space should be like that corresponds to a future multicultural city? How can these multicultural strangers practice ethnically diverse space in a positive

futuristic fashion? How can they realise the future of the multicultural city within its present?

My kind of answer to these questions, advocates a practice of multicultural space that you enter as yourself and transforms you into another; an ideal of city life where multicultural strangers come together and evolve into 'strangers to themselves' (Kristeva 1991). However, as the other within ourselves is the future, through our diverse metropolitan existences, we realise the prospects of the multicultural city; we create the future of the multicultural metropolis within the now of its unfolding; we as 'others' become the multicultural hereafter.

APPENDIX A: BRIXTON.

1. Bits and pieces of local histories¹⁰².

Brixton apparently goes as far back as 1067, but it fundamentally remained undeveloped until the very beginning of the nineteenth century, when residential developments started to spring up in the area. With the development of Vauxhall bridge in 1816 and the introduction of the railway network in the 1860s the residential development of the area intensified very rapidly. At the beginning the peaceful rural ambience of the area mainly attracted wealthy businessmen with their families, who they were willing to commute on a daily basis to the City of London. As a result the first houses in the area were large detached houses able to accommodate their upper-class owners and their servants. Later on, as the cost of railway fares decreased the area became more popular with a less affluent population. Gradually, whole streets of semi-detached and terraced houses were built to accommodate these less wealthy Brixtonians. By the end of the previous century, Brixton had become one of the most prosperous suburbs of London, with good transportation links to the centre and out of London, a thriving shopping centre and the first electrically lit street, Electric Avenue.

However, this local prosperity was not meant to last forever. By the end of the nineteenth century, through a new phase of metropolitan transformation, lower-

¹⁰² At this particular point I would like to make clear that the particular histories of Brixton that are cited here are mainly referring to 'race' and urban redevelopment. By that I mean that the historical information provided in this part of the thesis appears to exclusively refer to local histories of migration settlement, resistance to racism and contemporary conditions of local urban transformation. Nevertheless, Brixton appears to have more histories. For instance, Nataly, one of my Brixton interviewees told me the following: 'there is one thing I want to talk about briefly, is the gay community here, because I think people see Brixton as a kind of Afro-Caribbean, Portuguese, in terms of ethnicity...but there is also a real kind of sense of sexual diversity here as well...the gay liberation front actually which was formed in the early seventies has really strong roots here in Brixton, just on Railton Road, because there was an organisation called the Brixton's Fairies that set up a radical drag commune on Railton Road in the early seventies...there is a long history of gay people living here, you know...' Unfortunately, a detailed discussion of these other histories of Brixton is far beyond the scope of this doctoral thesis.

income classes moved into the area. As a result, the original affluent residents of Brixton started to abandon it in significant numbers. Nevertheless, these new, less well-off residents, could not afford to sustain such large houses as single occupants and as a result, gradually, the area transformed into a district of lodging houses. At the same time, as Brixton had a direct tram route with the West End, the area became increasingly popular amid music-hall entertainers. Subsequently, through the passage of time, Brixton became a boarding-house area for actors and music-hall performers, while slowly acquired the reputation of a 'vice' district'.

The area remained a cheap and tolerant boarding-housing district for the biggest part of the first half of the twenty-century. However, after the end of the Second World War, significant numbers of Irish, Poles, Cypriots and Maltese immigrants started to move in. The boarding-house character of Brixton appeared to prove tolerant enough to accommodate their differences. Nevertheless, especially after the 1948 British Nationality Act, which gave to previous colonial subjects the status of British citizenship and the freedom to migrate to the 'mother-land', significant numbers of West Indians and other migrants started to come to this country.

These successive waves of West Indian, mainly male, migrants were fundamentally seeking jobs and places to stay. Accordingly, they had to reside in areas where manufacturing jobs were on offer. However, postwar Britain at the time was a place of overt racism with very few areas, tolerant enough, to accommodate these 'dark strangers' (Peterson 1963). Brixton was one of these places. Following these lines, some writers have argued that West Indian settlement in Brixton was partly due to coincidence. When in 1948 the Empire Windrush arrived in London, a big number of West Indian migrants were temporarily given accommodation in Clapham Common underground station that used to function as an air-shelter during the bombings of the Second World War. As Ruth Glass (1960) cites:

' The colonial office was by now seriously concerned about the Windrush men. Mr. Creech Jones wrote to the Councilor Jack Simpson, and asked if some welcome could be arranged. Councilor Simpson took a look at the mayoral purse, which allowed £600 for the whole year, and said he could entertain forty Jamaicans. So,

on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 23rd, in a room over the Astoria Cinema, Brixton, a representative group of the Jamaicans took tea with the Mayor.

Local officials and two MPs were there. Colonel Marcus Lipton, Labour member for Brixton, told the men that they should regard Brixton as their second home. The Mayor added his own good wishes to the comment: 'When I heard of you coming here, I was moved. A journey like yours does not take place without a good reason.' Afterwards, there was a free cinema show.

Back at the shelter that evening, the forty men described the reception to their friends. They spoke with enthusiasm, joyous that a few people had taken the trouble to make them feel welcome. The limited sum of money was not important; tea and cakes had been as effective as champagne. In the unknown and perplexing vastness of England, the Jamaicans now felt they could be sure of one place. Brixton was friendly. In Brixton they would make their homes' (Cited in Ruth Glass (1960) p.46-47).

Following these lines, Sheila Patterson (1963) in 'Dark Strangers' goes on to mention a number of other reasons for the initial settlement of West Indians in Brixton. First and foremost, she argues that Brixton's boarding-house character was able to cater for the needs of these newly arrived, immigrants. Secondly, as many of the local landlords and landladies were provided housing facilities to 'coloured' entertainers, through the years of Brixton as a theatrical boarding area, they could not deny accommodation on racial grounds. Thirdly, many of the previous newcomers to the area (Poles, Irish, Maltese, Cypriots) by the time of West Indian arrival, owned their own houses. However, as migrants themselves, they were open-minded enough to let these racially different newcomers become their lodgers (Peterson1963:55).

Following these lines, Brixton all through the late 1940s and 50s was transformed into a 'point a arrival' and 'settlement' for significant numbers of West Indian migrants. It gradually evolved into a metropolitan stronghold of a West Indian 'community'. Nevertheless, during this period of intensive postwar migrant settlement, there was a serious housing shortage in the country. This severe housing shortage was partly due to the fact, that a number of rent-controls had been

introduced during the First World War and still remained, whilst, most importantly, the destruction of London's housing stock by World War Two air-strikes also had its part to play.

Although these newcomers had to deal with this severe housing shortage, they were not eligible unlike British 'native' citizens to apply for Council housing. As Sheila Patterson (1963) argues in relation to Brixton:

'In the rather explosive local atmosphere created by the post-war housing shortage, the local council seems to have been concerned not so much with discriminating against the few coloured applicants on the housing-list as with persuading local ratepayers and voters that they were not in fact discriminating against local applicants in favour of recently arrived coloured immigrants' (Patterson 1963:159).

Additionally, these West Indian migrants, who were excluded from social housing, had to pay local landlords, higher rents than their 'white' counterparts. This was the infamous 'colour tax' of the era. Having to face all these difficulties, the most entrepreneurial of them attempted to get a mortgage, buy a property and successively rent it out to fellow countrymen. In this particular way, by the end of the 1950s, several hundreds of houses had been bought up by West Indian or other 'black' people. Following these lines, Sam Selvon (1956) in 'The lonely Londoners' gives a description of this era:

'It had a Jamaican fellar who living in Brixton, that come to the station to see what tenants he could pick up for the houses that he have in Brixton. This test when he first come open up a club, and by and by he save up money to buy a house. The next thing you know, he buy out a whole street of houses in Brixton, and let out the rooms to the boys, hitting them anything like three or four guineas for a double. When it come to making money, it ain't have anything like 'ease me up' or 'both of we is countrymen together' in the old London. Sometimes he put bed and chair in two or three big room and tells the fellars they could live there together, but each would have to pay a pound. So you could imagine- five-six fellars in one room and the test coining money for so. And whenever a boat-train come in, he hustling down to Waterloo to pick them fellars who new to London and ain't have place to stay, telling them how Brixton is a nice area, that it have plenty of Jamaicans there

already, and they could feel at home in the district, because the Mayor is on the boy's side and it ain't have plenty of prejudice there' (Selvon 1956:27-8).

By the late 1950s, Brixton had been transformed into one of the most recognizable 'twilight areas' of London. In a broad sense, 'twilight areas' were the metropolitan spaces, which because of significant migrant settlement, their cultural landscape had changed to an unprecedented extent. These were the areas where all the multitude of 'black' and 'Asian' bodies resided along with their own 'cultural' traits. Accordingly, for the untrained British 'native' urban vision, which was accustomed to the cultural sameness of the English urban landscape, these areas signified the opening of a new-world; a new world, although culturally so far away, located within the hearts of the British cities.

To continue, Brixton by the 1960s, had transformed into a diverse area where 'black' (migrant) and 'white' (native) populations resided in close proximity. Nevertheless, one should be careful not to assume these locally co-existing 'communities' as homogenous in themselves. For instance, the 'English' or native element of Brixton appeared to contain individuals and families of different 'backgrounds' and incomes. For instance, along with the lower middle-class families that resided in well-maintained local houses they were other individuals, who were attracted to the area for exactly the same reasons as the migrants; cheap rents and a local spirit of tolerance. On the other hand, the migrants themselves, although less diversified in terms of class than their 'native' fellow citizens, they also retained their own differentiations, like 'ethnic' origin, life aspirations etc. to draw them apart. Nevertheless, within these areas of settlement, migrant populations were usually of a lower class than local 'natives'. As Sheila Peterson (1963) argued:

'it is incidentally, often into lower-middle-class and upper-lower-class areas in British cities that the lower-class west Indian newcomers move, and this can produce inter-class tensions' (Pettersen 1963:206).

In order to describe this initial phase of migrant settlement during the 1960s, Pettersen (1963) deployed the term of 'accommodation' 'as an early phase of

adaptation and acceptance in which migrants and local people achieve a minimum modus-vivendi' (ibid 1963:331).

At the same time, Lambeth Council, as early as the early 1960s, proceeded with massive and grandiose regeneration programmes. As a result of local slum-clearance policies, vast amounts of local dilapidated housing stock were torn down and in their place high-rise tower blocks were erected. Nevertheless, as a direct result of local opposition, but mostly because of the severe financial constraints of the 1970s, many districts that were designated for redevelopment remained unused and many regeneration plans were abandoned. As a direct result of this local abundance of empty, dilapidated buildings, a 'culture of squatting' started to spread locally. From the mid 1970s on, these local 'cultures' of squatting grew from strength to strength and eventually created the 'alternative scene' of Brixton.

Nevertheless, the 1970s brought along a totally different chapter in the history of Brixton. As a direct result of continuous worsening economic conditions, local unemployment rates sky-rocketed. More specifically, these worsening economic conditions mainly affected the bulk of manufacturing jobs, hence, migrant populations. Brixton was one of the areas that experienced significant job losses for 'black' or 'ethnic minority' residents. At the same time with this worsening economic climate, a new metropolitan 'moral panic' started to spread through the capital: 'mugging'. Through intense media coverage, specific areas of high 'black' concentration in London became identified as the centre-stages of this new 'epidemic'. As Stuart Hall (1978b) has brilliantly argued in 'Policing the Crisis', the 1970s economic crisis became inextricably linked to 'race'. As he says:

'race has come to provide the objective correlative of crisis- the arena in which complex fears, tensions and anxieties, generated by the impact of the totality of the crisis as a whole on the whole of society, can be most conveniently and explicitly projected'(Hall 1978b:333).

This metonymic correlation between 'race' and 'crisis' became plausible through an equation of 'mugging' with 'black' crime. Accordingly, through these mythologies of 'black' criminality, specific areas of 'black' settlement in South London transformed into the very signifier of this 'crisis'. Following these lines, Stuart Hall

(1978b) again has argued that 'policing the blacks' became translated into 'policing the crisis' (ibid 1978b:332).

In some sense, the policing of Brixton and other similar areas of 'black' settlement of the era, became 'qualitatively different' from the rest of the capital. Through a series of 'Special patrol' unit deployments, 'Swamp operations', and the enforcement of 'SUS law' a tension built up in the area, between police and 'black' youth that culminated in the 'riots' of April 1981. In a similar fashion, another 'riot' erupted in 1985 as the direct consequence of a police officer accidentally shooting Mrs Cherry Groce. Following on, a series of other small-scale 'riots' have erupted all through the 1990s.

To conclude, during the 1990s, Lambeth Council became the recipient of central governments' regeneration aid. In 1992, the Department of the Environment successfully approved Lambeth Council's regeneration bid, as part of the competition phase for the 'City Challenge Programme'. The final approval came in January 1993 and the implementation of a five-year local regeneration programme began in April 1993. The 'Brixton City Challenge' programme specifically targeted the area of central Brixton. It was given the amount of £37.5m with the expectation that this money would attract significant private investment and transform the local urban environment.

As the local council advertised during this period:

'Brixton has arrived. It's cosmopolitan, fashionable, buzzing with nightlife and attracting massive investment from the government and the business'

(<http://lambeth.gov.uk/Lam Webs/local/brix.htm>).

2. The London Borough of Lambeth in numbers.

The Brixton area forms part of the London Borough of Lambeth. More particularly, the Lambeth Borough is divided into a number of wards (Bishops, Princes, Oval, Vassal, Stockwell, Larkhall, Angel, Ferndale, Clapham Town, Clapham Park, Town Hall, Tulse Hill, Herne Hill, Thornton, Streatham hill, St. Martins, Thurlow Park,

St. Leonards, Streatham Wells, Knight Hill, Gipsy Hill, Streatham South). According to the 1998 DETR Index of local deprivation, Lambeth was ranked as the 12th most severely deprived district out of a total of 354 local authority districts in England (DETR 1998). In a similar fashion, Lambeth suffers from high levels of unemployment. Between 1981 and 1991, the number of unemployed individuals in Lambeth increased from seventeen thousand to twenty nine thousand people (Lambeth Economic Development Plan 1993-1994). Most specifically, between July 1990 and July 1993, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of unemployed people in Lambeth from 10.8% to 20,8%, whilst from July 1994 to July 1996 there was a subsequent decrease of this unemployment rate from 20.85% to 16,9% (London Research Centre 1996).

Unemployment rate in the London Borough of Lambeth:

July 1990	10.8%
July 1991	16.3%
July 1992	19,35%
July 1993	20.85%
July1994	19.9%
July 1995	18.5%
July 1996	16.9%

(Source: London Research Centre (1996), The Capital Divided).

To continue, future estimations about the number of households in the Borough appear to predict a substantial increase. According again to research by the London Research Centre (1998), in the years to come Lambeth Borough will accommodate an increasing number of people or family households. By the same token, it can be argued that although the Borough appeared to loose many of its residents, during the postwar decades, primarily resulting from a 'white' flight to other metropolitan or suburban areas, within the last two decades and in the years to come the Borough is predicted to experience a significant increase in its population. To start with, there is a modest prediction which estimates that between 1991 and 2016 the total

number of Lambeth's households will increase from 113,800 to 128,000, while there is a second, less moderate projection, which estimates more substantial increases (from 113,800 households in the year 1991 to 153,100 household units by the year 2016).

Estimated households in the London Borough of Lambeth:

	Projection 1	Projection 2
1991	113,800	113,800
1995	121,100	121,100
2001	123,100	128,100
2006	124,700	136,400
2011	126,300	145,100
2016	128,000	153,100

(Source: London Research Centre (Oct. 1998), Population Advice).

At the same time, the London Borough of Lambeth is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country. Historically, Lambeth has functioned as a very significant point of arrival and settlement for successive waves of Commonwealth immigration from the Caribbean. As a result, today's Lambeth is home to a number of different 'ethnic' communities and individuals. Nevertheless, a clear 'white' majority appears to exist in Lambeth today, which comprises around 69,7% of the total population. Following on, Black Caribbean and Black-African individuals appear to constitute the second and third most populous 'ethnic' groups in the borough.

Lambeth's ethnic structure.

	Percentage of the total population.
White	69,7%
Black-Caribbean	12,6%
Black-African	6,5%
Other Black	2,7%
Indian Pakistani	2,1%
Bangladeshi	0,8%
Chinese	0,7%
Other Asian	1,3%
All Other	2,3%

(Source: London Research Centre, A London Atlas, 1993).

To continue, the London Borough of Lambeth appears to contain a very diversified mix of tenure. A large part of Lambeth's housing stock is owned and managed by the local council. This form of social housing caters for people that are in need of housing and can not afford the prices of the private market. At the same time, another large part of the borough's housing stock, belongs to housing associations and other public sector housing organisations. Lastly, a little bit more than half of the borough's housing stock is privately owned, used either for owner occupancy or private tenancy.

Lambeth's Borough Tenure.

Local Authority	42,630 units
Housing Associations	11,507
Other public sector	427
Private sector	59,715
Total number of dwellings	114,279

(Source: London Research Centre: Focus on London 1999).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that from the early 1980s onwards, a number of local authority tenants started to buy their houses from the council. In more detail, this was part of Margaret Thatcher's 'right to buy' policy for social housing. Following these lines, in Lambeth, the balance between private and public sector housing units appeared to change in favour of the former. More specifically, between 1980 and 1996, 7,545 housing units or 20% of Lambeth's local authority housing stock by the levels of 1980, were bought up and entered the private housing market (London Research Centre (1997), London Housing Statistics).

In terms of housing prices, the London Borough of Lambeth in a similar fashion to any other borough of London has experienced a substantial increase in property prices. In some cases, within a period of a few years housing prices within the borough have doubled or even tripled. For instance, within the year of 1997 to 1998 the average house price in the borough increased by an annual rate of 17%.

Average house price for the Borough of Lambeth.

1997, 4 th quarter	£106,700
1998, 1 st quarter	£111,300
1998, 2 nd quarter	£ 123,300
1998, 3 rd quarter	£ 129,300
1998, 4 th quarter	£ 124,400

Annual change 17%

(Source: London Research Centre (1999), London Housing Prices Bulletin).

3. Borough of Lambeth, Town Planning Office.

1998-Applications concerning Brixton Area (SW2, SW9).

Application no.	Ward	Company/developer	Address	Description
98/0045/out	Town Hall	Goldcrest Homes Plc	124A Lyham Road	Residential development to provide six new dwellings.
98/02523/Ful	Ferndale	Rialto Homes Plc	52-54 Acre Lane	Refurbishment and conversion of existing building from commercial to residential use to provide 72 new flats
98/02031/Ful	Vassall	Buxton Homes	4 Lothian Road	Erection of a three storey block to provide six residential units and two detached houses
98/02437/Ful	Angel	H.Martin	71-73 Atlantic	Demolition of

			Road	existing building and erection of a new one to provide 14 new dwellings
97/00336/Con	Angel	Sunshine Investments Ltd	372 Coldharbour Lane	Demolition of existing building and erection of a new one to be used as a hotel
97/00725/Ful	Vassal	PP Trading Ltd	Children Home 40 Stockwell Park Road	Demolition of the existing building and erection of three residential blocks
98/02239/Ful	Tulse Hill	Fairclough Homes Ltd	Dick Sheppard Secondary School	Redevelopment of the site to provide 65 houses and 166 flats (25% of the units affordable)
98/02157/Ful	Ferndale	Rialto Homes PLC	52-54 Acre Lane	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a 3 ½ storey two 4 storey buildings

				to provide 64 new residential units
98/01019/Ful	Ferndale	Idamel Securities Ltd	1A Concanon Road & 86-88 Acre Lane	Conversion of the existing building in order to provide 14 residential and live/work units
98/00726/Ful	Vassall	Greycoat Investments Ltd	115 Clapham Road	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new three storey building to provide 8 flats and 6 houses
98/01953/LB	Larnhall	Mr. F. Forbes	369 Clapham Road	Change of use to residential and provision of six residential units
98/00526/Ful	Town Hall	Urban Manor Ltd	112E Brixton Hill	Redevelopment to provide six new residential dwellings
98/00988/Ful	Vassall	Peabody Trust	11-13 Hillyard St.	Redevelopment of the site to provide 19 new

				residential units
98/00944/Ful	Tulse Hill	Indexjade Ltd	2A Barkwell Road	Change of use from garage to residential development
98/00830/Ful	Herne Hill	Scandinavian Homes Ltd	50 Effra Parade	Erection of a five storey building for residential use
98/00894/Ful	Herne Hill	Statemanor EnterpriseLtd.	283 Mayall	Erection of a new building for residential use
98/00856/Ful	Town Hall	William Sapcote Development Ltd.	Ashby Mill Primary School	Conversion of the site in order to provide 49 new residential units
98/00885/Ful	Vassall	Greycoat Investment Ltd.	122-124 Vassall Road	Demolition of existing building and erection of a new one to provide six residential units
98/00816/Out	Town Hall	Richard Ellis	300A Brixton Hill	Erection of building for commercial and residential use.
98/00570/Ful	Town Hall	Mr. M Offei	2 Snolbourne Road	Change of use from public

				house to residential use(5 Flats)
98/00526/Ful	Town Hall	Urban Manor Ltd.	112 E Brixton Hill	Redevelopment to facilitate the erection of a two three storey buildings for residential use
98/00414/Ful	Larkhall	C.Bayliss	1A Tregotham Road	Change of use from garage workshop to 8 self-contained residential units
98/00268/Out	Angell	London Law/Land	105 Minet Road	Change of use from industrial and artist space to residential dwellings
98/00104/LB	Ferndale	Mr.Anderson	168-170 Stockwell Road	Retention of the front façade and erection of a four story building for residential use(12 flats)
98/0086/Ful	Fernadale	Charles Church Southern Ltd.	Brixton College - Ferndale	Redevelopment of the site to provide 74 self-contained residential

				units.
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During the same period, within the broader Brixton area (SW2, SW9), 123 houses have been renovated and/or converted into flats.

Year 1999 (From 1/1/1999 to 1/10/1999).

New residential developments within the broader Brixton Area (SW2, SW9).

Application Number	Ward	Name of Company/Developer	Address	Detail Use
99/00763/Ful	Angel	Simon Tov Properties Ltd	216 Coldharbour Lane	Redevelopment of the site to provide a three storey building for residential use
99/01160/Ful	Town Hall		88 Doverfield road	Change of use and conversion from a workshop to residential units
99/00135/Ful		Intercontinental Property	106 Chistchurch Road	Redevelopment of site to provide a three storey building for residential use
99/00217/Ful		Howland	31-35	Redevelopment

		Management Ltd.	Blenheim Gardens	of the building to provide 8 self-contained live/work units
99/00831/Ful	Tulse Hill	Bankway Properties Ltd.	60-68 Atlantic Road	Conversion of the existing building into self-contained flats
99/00108/Ful	Ferndale	Greenwich Home Properties Ltd.	18 Trinity Gardens	Conversion of industrial units into live/work units
99/00758/Ful	Ferndale	Haviland Trading Ltd.	48-50 Acre Lane	Conversion of the site into 15 self-contained residential units
99/00022/Ful	Angel	Simnat PLC	296 Coldharbour Lane	Redevelopment of the site to provide a three storey building for residential use
98/02158/LB	Ferndale	Rialto Homes	52-54 Acre Lane	Erection of a four storey building to provide 64 self-contained residential units(16 of them for

				affordable housing)
99/oo720/Ful	Town Hall	R.Patel	104-106 Brixton Hill	Erection of a three storey building to provide 7 residential units
99/00022/Ful	Town Hall	Simnat Plc.	296 Coldharbour lane	Redevelopment of the building in order to provide two self-contained residential units
99/00366/Ful	Ferndale	Coldcrest Homes Plc.	Stockwell Depot	Demolition of existing buildign and erection of a new one to provide 59 dwellings
99/00386/Ful	Town Hall	Precious metal Coin Co.	75 Acre Lane	Redevelopment of the site to provide commercial and residential units.
99/00009/Ful	Town Hall	Bankway Properties Ltd.	1-31 Morrish Road	Redevelopment of the site to provide 45 self-contained residential units

99/00038/Ful	Town Hall	Bankway Properties Ltd.	53-59 New Park Road	Erection of a three storey building for commercial and residential use
99/00301/Ful	Town Hall	Courtenay Investments Ltd.	Courtenay House 9-15 , New park Road	Change of use from office to residential in order to provide 118 residential dwellings
Z99/01546/Ful		Bellway Homes Plc.	40 Stockwell Park Road	Erection of a new residential site to provide 4 new houses and 8 self-contained flats
99/01708/LB	Vassall	Presentation Housing	17 Groveway	Conversion of the building from office to residential use in order to provide 4 self-contained flats
99/01841/Ful	Vassall	Amber Estates Ltd.	257-259 Brixton Road	Conversion of three houses into 10 self-contained flats

During the same period within the broader Brixton area (SW2, SW9) one hundred and thirty four houses had been renovated or/and converted into self-contained flats.

APPENDIX B: BRICK LANE.

1. Some notes on its history.

The Brick Lane area, alternatively known as Spitalfields, is geographically located at the eastern edge of the City of London. Historically, the area has functioned as a backyard, accommodating undesirable operations, banned from the City of London. The very name of it derives from the fact that it was a brick-manufacturing site along with other local industries like tanning, brewery etc.

On the other hand, Brick Lane (Spitalfields) has also functioned as a settlement area or 'point of arrival' (Bermant 1975) for successive waves of immigrants through the centuries. The very first influx of migrants consisted of Huguenot refugees (French Protestants) that came and settled in the area during the end of the 17th century. As it is widely known, they brought along the 'fine art' of weaving silk that would make Spitalfields famous for the years to come. Successively, Irish migrants in the 18th century, Jewish refugees¹⁰³ in the 19th and more recently Bangladeshi migrants have all settled in the area¹⁰⁴ (Fishman 1979:76). Nevertheless, recent years appear

¹⁰³ Zangwill (1892) has described the Jewish settlement within the area as follow: 'Into the heart of East London, they poured from Russia, from Poland, from Germany, from Holland, streams of Jewish exiles, refugees, settlers, few as well to do as the Jew of the proverb, but all rich in their cheerfulness, their industry, and their cleverness. The majority brought with them nothing but their phylacteries and praying shawls, and a good-natured contempt for Christians and Christianity' (Zangwill 1892:2).

¹⁰⁴ At this point I would like to argue that any attempt to narrate the history of Brick Lane should include the events of the summer of 1978 (see Bethnal Green & Stepney Trades Council 1978, Tower Hamlets Trades Council & Hackney Legal Action Group 1978, CRE 1979, Leech 1980). For a number of years, the National Front used to have its headquarters just off Brick Lane and members of the party used to sell their racist literature within the heart of the Bengali community. During the summer of 1978, Altab Ali was murdered in Whitechapel by three local 'white' youths. As the murder was racially motivated, a big outburst of the local Bengali community erupted as a result. Anti-racist protestors and their sympathisers rallied to stop National Front activities within the area. In effect, clashes between anti-racist demonstrators and members of the National Front and police erupted on a massive scale. Nevertheless, the media coverage of these disturbances would characterise the area in the years to come. As Buttler (1984) describes Brick Lane during the 1980s: 'To many people the area to the east of the City of London is regarded depressing, run-down, and even positively dangerous to the casual visitor, a 'ghetto' which has in the past achieved notoriety because of 'racial' disturbances' (Buttler 1984:19).

to have experienced the successive settlement of a number of diverse refugee and migration waves within the area (Somalis, East Europeans, Latvians etc.)

As part of this long tradition of settlement, cultural traces of all these historical migrations are widely evident in the area. Most remarkably, the same building at the corner of Brick Lane and Fourier St, through the passage of time has functioned successively as a chapel for the Huguenots, a synagogue for the Jews, whilst lately, as a mosque for the local Bangladeshi population.

2. Bangladeshi settlement.

The end of British rule in 1947 saw the partition of India into two separate states: India and Pakistan. The newly independent Pakistan state comprised of two wings: East and West. East Pakistan had its own Bengali language and heritage, while West Pakistan, had Urdu as its official language (Leach 1976).

Most of Tower Hamlets' Bangladeshi population comes from Sylhet¹⁰⁵, a rural district in the North East of Bangladesh (former East Pakistan). They speak a dialect, Sylheti, which has no written tradition (Duffy 1979:3). There is a long history of migration in the district of Sylhet. Initially, young Sylheti males went to find employment in the ports of Bombay and Chittagong. In effect, European shipping companies recruited some of them, as seamen. Following these lines of migration, small Sylheti settlement developed in Singapore, Burma, Hong-Kong and the USA (Dilsher & Rowshan 1991:2). By far the largest Sylheti settlements took place in Britain mainly because of colonial links. Sylheti seamen established themselves in Cardiff, South Shields and Sunderland. Nevertheless, the largest area of settlement was the East End of London becoming established from the 1930s onwards. This was the first phase of Sylheti (Bangladeshi) settlement in Tower Hamlets.

The second phase of Bangladeshi settlement in Tower Hamlets was of unaccompanied males during the late 1950s, early 1960s. Poverty in East Pakistan

¹⁰⁵ Most Bangladeshis in Britain appear to come from the area of Sylhet, almost a 95% of them (Disher & Rowshan 1991:1).

and postwar British need for additional labour appeared to translate into population movements from Sylhet to the capital (Duffy 1979:3). As Eade (1989) argues: 'As in other urban areas of Britain with large concentrations of ethnic minorities, Bangladeshis appeared to be taking over space that white residents did not want or wanted less keenly than space elsewhere' (Eade 1989:28).

These migrants were mostly single men from small landowning families in Sylhet. They were Muslims of Sunni persuasion. Nevertheless, their initial intention was to come for a short period, make some money and return 'home'. As they had to support financially their families back 'home', they lived in overcrowded conditions and worked long hours. They mainly took up employment in factories and the 'rag trade'.

During the 1970s, the third phase of Bangladeshi settlement in Tower Hamlets took place (Duffy 1979:3). On one hand, as the dream of return faded away for the majority of these single migrants they decided to bring over to Britain their wives and families. Nevertheless, this process of reunification of families was slow. This was mainly because of the high cost of travel, the difficulty of finding appropriate housing and growing levels of 'racial' abuse from the part of the 'natives'. On the other hand, processes of internal Bangladeshi migration from other parts of the UK to Tower Hamlets appear to have taken place too (CRE 1989:1). The reason for such internal migrations were the lack of jobs in the North and the belief that Bangladeshi settlers could do better in the 'clothing industries' of the East End. As a result of these internal and external processes of migration all through the 1970s, more than one fifth of the whole British Bangladeshi population took residence in Tower Hamlets. Nevertheless, the distribution patterns within the borough were uneven with three neighbourhoods accommodating the majority of the local Bangladeshi population; these were the areas of Bethnal Green (Brick Lane), Stepney and Wapping (Shadwell) (Dilsher & Rowshan 1991:4).

3. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets in numbers.

According to the 1991 deprivation-index, Tower Hamlets was ranked as the 5th most deprived borough in London and as the 7th within the country. In terms of an average score of the three most deprived wards, Tower Hamlets ranked as the most deprived borough within the capital and the rest of the UK (source: London Research Centre 1996:180).

In a similar fashion to this, Tower Hamlets appears to suffer from high levels of unemployment. Between 1990 and 1996, the number of unemployed individuals in the Tower Hamlets increased from 9,901 to 14,232 people (source: London Research Centre 1996:152). In more detail, between July 1990 and July 1993, there was a substantial increase of local unemployment rates from 12.6% to 24.7 %, whilst from July 1993 to July 1996, there was a subsequent decrease from 24.7% to 20.7%.

Unemployment rate in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

July 1990	12.6%
July 1991	19.9%
July 1992	23.4%
July 1993	24.7%
July 1994	23.5%
July 1995	22.0%
July 1996	20.7%

(Source: London Research Centre (1996) The Capital Divided).

Between the Censuses of 1981 and 1991 Tower Hamlets' population rose by 7.5%; the only London borough to have an increase (Census Research (1997)). At the

same time, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets is one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in the country. Historically, the western part of the borough (Spitalfields area) has functioned as an important 'port of arrival' for successive migration waves within the capital. As a result, Tower Hamlets today is home to a number of different 'ethnic' communities and individuals. Nevertheless, a clear 'white' majority appears to exist in Tower Hamlets today, which comprises around 65% of the total population of the borough. Subsequently, Bangladeshi people appear to constitute the second most populous 'ethnic' group in the borough.

The Ethnicity of Tower Hamlets' population.

1991

white	65%
Bangladeshi	23%
Black	7%
Other Asian	4%
Other	4%

(Source: Census Research (1997a))

In what follows, we draw our emphasis on the Bangladeshi population of Tower Hamlets. To start with, the 1991 Census showed that 22.9% of Bangladeshi people in Britain live in Tower Hamlets. Following these lines, Tower Hamlets had the highest proportion of Bangladeshi people amongst any other London Borough or any district or area within the UK. At the same time, future projections for Tower Hamlet's Bangladeshi population appear to give an image of a continuous rise. Accordingly, from 1991 to 2011, it is expected that Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi population will increase its percentage rate from 22.9% to 32.28% of the boroughs' population.

Future projections for Tower Hamlet's Bangladeshi Population

<u>Year</u>	<u>% of borough population</u>	
1991	38,520	22.92%
1996	45,966	25.88%
2001	53,669	28.71%
2006	60,279	30.71%
2011	66,007	32.28%

(Source: Census Research Report (1997b)).

According to the 1991 Census, just over one third of Tower Hamlets' Bangladeshi population were English or British born, while, almost two thirds of them were born in the New Commonwealth (Bangladesh principally).

English or British born Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi population: 37%

New Commonwealth born Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi population: 63%

(Source: Census Research Report (1997b)).

In relation to tenure, more than three-quarters of Tower Hamlets Bangladeshi population were renting from the Council, an 11.7% of them were renting from Housing Associations, whilst the rest were either home owners or renting privately.

The Tenure Distribution of Bangladeshi Households in Tower Hamlets.

Renting from Council	77%
Renting from Housing Associations	12%
Owner Occupation	7%
Private renting	4%

(Source: Census Research Report (1997b)).

4. A short history of local redevelopment strategies.

Spitalfields or the broader area surrounding Brick Lane has been historically subjected to a number of governmental regeneration strategies. The beginning was made in 1987, when the Spitalfields Task Force was formed, as part of the 'Action for Cities' programme. Its main aims were to improve the physical landscape, help local small business, create more employment opportunities for local residents and ameliorate, mainly through training, their economic conditions.

In 1991, as part of the broader 'City Challenge' programme for the regeneration of inner-cities, Bethnal Green was selected as one of the 15 areas that would receive £37.5m over a period of five years. As a result, Bethnal Green City Challenge was formed with a life span extending from 1992 to 1996. The main vision of Bethnal Green City Challenge, can be summarized as following:

'to make a significant, sustainable impact through a practical partnership of private, public and community based bodies which will deliver an imaginative, integrated programme that will change the economic and social fabric of the area, change local's people lives through providing access to new opportunities and confer important benefits on London as a whole'(BGCC1 1995:6).

In 1996 the City Fringe Partnership was formed with the task to rejuvenate the northern and eastern part of the City Fringe. Within this specific redevelopment programme, 'culture' or 'cultural industries' appear to be assigned to a significant regenerative role. Following these lines, the City Fringe Partnership assigned the London Borough of Hackney with the task of delivering the 'Developing Cultural Quarters' programme that included Brick Lane, Hoxton-Shoreditch and Clerkenwell (City Fringe Partnership 1997). The resonance behind such a programme was to improve the 'image' of these areas and successively release the potential of visitor economies of the City Fringe.

During 1996, as Bethnal Green City Challenge was coming to an end, the Tower Hamlets Council and its partners submitted a proposal to 'compete' for Single Regeneration Budget funding (SRB). As the bid was successful, the Cityside regeneration agency was born with a life expanding from 1997 to 2002. The Cityside regeneration programme assigned itself to the following task: 'to capitalise on the recent development of key local sites, the expansion of the visitor and cultural economy and the long established small business sector of the area and its proximity to the City of London, to create sustainable economic growth, improve access to corporate employment and business opportunities for disadvantaged local residents' (Cityside 1997:1).

5. Tower Hamlets, Town Planning Office.

Year 1997 -New residential developments within the Bethnal Green Area(E1, E2).

Application number	Name of company/developer	Address	Details of use
PA/97/0220	Lotus Ltd	8-10 Hackney Road	Change of use to residential.
PA/97/0040	Safeland Plc.	12-13 Hooper st.	Change of use to residential
PA/97/0839	City North 4 PLC	92 Middlesex St	Redevelopment and change of use to provide 23 self-contained flats and 6 live/work units
PA/97/1025	Four Seasons Property Co.	24 Mulberry St.	Redevelopment of the building and

			change of use into residential units
PA/97/0593	Safeland PLC.	26 Princelet St.	Redevelopment of the building and conversion of the upper floors into residential units
PA/97/1212	Magri Developments Ltd.	Ratcliffe Cross St, Cable Street and Caroline St.	Erection of a building for commercial and residential use.
PA/97/0185	St George Ltd.	Folgate St., Spital Square	Erection of a four and seven store building for commercial and residential use (38 flats).
PA/97/1107	BBS Fashion Merchandising.	60-63 Squirries St. & 18-24 Florida St.	Erection of a residential building to provide 19 self-contained flats
PA/97/1043	DGA Architect	Wheler St.	Redevelopment of the site and change of use to provide 3 live/work units and 7 residential self-contained flats
PA/97/1043	Tandoori Catering Consultants	90 Whitechapel High St.	Conversion of a three storey building into residential units

PA/97/079	Ballymore Properties	16-32 White Church Lane	Redevelopment of the site to provide 73 residential apartments and also commercial use.
PA/97/0896	S. Sarbuland	29-33 & 39-41 Whitehorse Lane	Redevelopment of the site to provide 23 self-contained apartments and commercial use

Year 1998-New developments within the Bethnal Green Area (E1, E2).

Application number	Name of company/developer	Address	Details of the use
PA/98/0825	Magri Builders	19 Umbertson St.& Amazon St.	Erection of part two, part three storey building to provide live/work units.
PA/98/0365	City Office Investments Ltd.	56-58 Artillery Lane & 20-24 Frying Pan Alley	Change of use from office space to commercial and residential.
PAA/98/1210	Mansioncrest Holdings Ltd.	51 Bethnal Green Road	Erection of a five storey building for commercial and residential use
PA/98/1371		144-146 bethnal	Conversion of the

		Green Road	building into 4 self-contained flats
PA/98/1121	Aylesbury Development Co. Ltd	463 Bethnal Green Road	Redevelopment of the building to provide 10 live/work units and 5 self-contained flats
PA/98/0949		63b Brick Lane	Conversion of first, second and third floors into flats
PA/98/0017	CTV Howland	66 Brick Lane	Erection of a building for residential and commercial use
PA/98/0120	Optima Investments Ltd.	228 Cable St.	Demolition of the existing building and erection/redevelopment of a new one containing 16 residential units.
PA/98/1362	Spintpost Ltd & Shieldbay Ltd	210 Cambridge Heath Road	Redevelopment to provide 5 live/work units
PA/98/0957	Southbank Couriers	525 Cambridge Heath Road	Redevelopment and change of use to provide 6 live/work units
PA/98/1175	Boundary Street Properties	22 Calvert Avenue	Demolition of the existing building

			and redevelopment of the site for commercial and residential use.
PA/98/0974	Hunt Thompson Associates	Land located on the east side of the Carr St.	Redevelopment of the site and erection of a part two, part three storey building to provide 14 residential units
PA/98/0562	Columbia Road Properties	63-71 Columbia Road and 1a Efra St.	Refurbishment and change of use of the buildings to provide 10 residential units
PA/98/0797	Mr D Sorrell	373-375 Commercial Road	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a three storey building to provide 15 self-contained flats.
PA/98/0858	Huntermville Enterprises Ltd.	1 Commercial St & 111-120 Whitechapel High St.	Erection of a ten storey building, comprising of 359 guestroom hotel, with meeting rooms, restaurants etc.
PA/98/1297	Mr D.Gaind & Mr	16-20 Dock St.	Redevelopment to

	M Jenkins		provide a 7 storey office building
PA/98/1062	Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd.	Land at Europe House	Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment to provide a seven storey office building
PA/98/0411	Greenacre Properties Ltd.	Tower House-Fieldgate St.	Conversion of the building to provide 106 residential units
PA/98/1060	Major Properties	419-437 Hackney Road	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a 4/5 storey building to provide 42 residential units
PA/98/0953	Regalian Homes	Free Trade Wharf	Conversion of part of existing building to provide 37 flats
PA/98/0515	Berkeley Homes North London Ltd.	87-95 Mansell St.	Redevelopment of the site to provide 84 residential units
PA/98/0488	Camile Ltd.	63-67 Mile End Road	Conversion of the existing building into 13 residential units.
PA/98/0405	DB Training Ltd	Patriot Square and Peel Grove	Redevelopment of the site to provide 14 self-contained

			flats
PA/98/0388	John Kelly Ltd.	31-33 Prescott St	Erection of a seven storey building for office purposes
PA/98/1273	Mr. M Azam	8-18 Rampart St.	Change of use from light-industrial to residential.
PA/98/1024	Furlong Homes Plc..	37-41 Raven Row & 3-11 Maples Place	Erection of a multi-store building to provide 23 self-contained flats.
PA/98/0543	DB Trading Lmd.	21-25 Stephney Green and 11-15 Hayfield Passage	Demolition of the existing building and erection of 8 houses.
PA/98/0433	Northcase Limited	Watney St	Redevelopment of the site to provide 101 self-contained residential units and also offer space for commercial use
PA/98/0189	Landbanc One	181 Whitechapel Road	Erection of a five storey building for residential use

Year 1999-New developments in Bethnal Green Area (E1, E2)

Application number	Name of company/developer	Address	Details of use
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PA/99/0338	Ayresmead Estate Ltd.	61-75 Alie St.	Redevelopment of the site to provide residential(no 28) and business units
PA/99/0590	Mansioncrest Holdings Ltd.	51 Bethnal Green Road	Erection of a five store building to provide commercial and residential use (11 flats).
PA/99/0590	Private Property Management Ltd.	143 Bethnal Green Road	Conversion of the uppers floors into six residential units
PA/99/0997		76 Bishops way	Change of use from public house to office and residential units
PA/99/0512	Bee Bee Developments	20-21 Bruke St., 2-6 Tender ground	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a four storey one for office use.
PA/99/0436	Mosaic Property Developments	22 Calvert Avenue	Redevelopment of the site to create business and residential(14.flats) units .
PA/99/1109	Hampstead Homes	29-35 Calvin St	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new building

			comprising of 24 self-contained appartements
PA/99/0661	Drinkwater training Ltd.	22 Wheler St., 36 Calvin St	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new 5 storey building consisting of 2 live/work units and 9 flats
PA/99/1239	Look Ahead Housing	149-153 Cannon St. Road	Erection of a four storey building to provide 11 residential units
PA/99/0719	Bellway Homes	Disused garage & land north of Claphan St.	Redevelopment of the site to provide 19 residential units
PA/99/0689	Imperial developments	41-43 Cheshire St.	Change of use from commercial to 'live and work' units
PA/99/0619	Rainbow Properties	110-116 Cheshire St.	Demolition of existing structures and construction of 12 live/work units
PA/99/1229	Gordene Ltd.	7-9 Exmouth St.	Change of use and conversion from Public House to residential use
PA/99/0264	Windsor securities Ltd.	35-41 Folgate St.	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a

			three storey building for office use
PA/99/0610	The Cromlech Property Co. Ltd.	Middlesex St, Goulston St, Whitechapel High St	Redevelopment of site to provide a 12 storey hotel and a adjacent five storey building for commercial and residential use
PA/99/0847	Bellway Urban Renewal	British Gash Site, Harford St.	Mixed development for residential (475 flats) and commercial units
PA/99/0706	L.R.L Partnership	20a Old Bethnal Green Road	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new building for residential use
PA/99/0002	RS Accident Repair Specialists	Quaker St, Grey Eagle St.	Redevelopment of the site to provide 10 residential units, 10 live/work units and 2 work units
PA/99/0795	Sarah Shah	63 Redchurch St.	Change of use from light industrial to live/work units
PA/99/0454	Creston Land and Estates Plc.	57-60 Royal Mint St.	Erection of a building comprising of 6

			residential units
PA/99/1017	Major Properties Ltd.	71&73 Temple St.	Demolition of the existing building and erection of a new building to provide 14 residential units
PA/99/0021	DGA Architects	23-24 Wheler St.	Change of use and conversion of the existing premises to provide 3 live/work units.

APPENDIX C.

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