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I am becoming my mother: (post)diaspora, local entanglements and entangled locals

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Introduction

This paper explores the concept of (post)diaspora in relation to the concept of entanglement. Deploying Lorna Goodison's materially-engaged poetry as a starting point, the concept of quantum entanglement is explored as entanglement both with and between locals. This concept is then deployed to critically examine postdiaspora as it has been conceived by a range of theorists, followed by an imaginative exploration, via family photographs, of (post)diaspora as lived materiality.

The spelling of postdiaspora is still very unsettled. I therefore consciously deploy three different versions in this article. Postdiaspora is used to describe the general concept that is still being discussed as something distinct from diaspora; post-diaspora is used only when the writers with whom I am engaging use it; and I use (post)diaspora towards the end, as a way of keeping both diaspora and postdiaspora in play, refusing a definitive move from one to the other, but recognising that both have valid claims.

I am becoming my mother: entanglement and materiality

Lorna Goodison's 1986 poem, 'I am becoming my mother', has a 14-line structure that sets in place a fluid yet deeply material entanglement between a daughter and mother. The first stanza gives a deft, pungent portrait of the narrator's mother as a person, her yellow/brown colouring and the smell of her hands, 'fingers smelling always of onion' (38), and the final stanza, introduced with the line 'I am becoming my mother' (38), describes the narrator in almost the same way: 'fingers smelling always of onion', but with the subtle movement to a

‘brown/yellow woman’. This dynamic mirroring is at the heart of the mother/daughter entanglement in the poem. At the end of a second stanza that is filled with fertile and fluid images that connect to mothering and creative care (‘rare blooms’ raised on tea¹, ‘birth waters’ that sing), mother and daughter are explicitly entangled: the stanza ends with the statement, ‘my mother is now me’ (38). By contrast with this ‘now’, the past tense in the very next line is stark - ‘My mother had’. Now that they are separated, perhaps by death, the ‘now’ followed by the past tense highlights that the mother/daughter entanglement is both across space (body to body) and across time. The third stanza develops the spatial and temporal movement and mirroring, but also describes the literal and metaphorical fabric of the mother/daughter relationship: the stanza focuses on a ‘linen dress/the colour of the sky’ (38), as well as ‘lace and damask/tablecloths’ that are carefully preserved and stored for visitors, ‘to pull shame out of her eye’². This is a mother/daughter entanglement that is not simply natural, pre-given. It is one that is literally fabricated, created, not only by the poet and through the poem’s representations of mundane materiality, but more importantly through the many banal interactions with and between different forms of materiality that make up both the mother’s and the daughter’s lives. There are interactions between the linen and the contours of the mother’s body; interactions between the blue of the linen and the blue of the sky that the small daughter notices as she looks up at her mother; all the purposeful contact between fabrics and between ingredients that takes place in the material processes of cooking, caring, folding and storing; and, not least, there is the matter to matter ‘intra-action’ (Barad 2007, 170) between ingredients and skin, producing the ‘fingers smelling always of onions’, a trait shared eventually by both mother and adult daughter.³

Commentators have noted the mother/daughter entanglements in Goodison’s work, as well as its attention to materiality. For example, specifically in relation to this poem, Baugh (1990, 2) notes that strong ‘identification or bonding’ with the mother is the foundation for a

key feminist literary performance of self-birthing – the daughter becomes or births herself through her quest to find her own mother within herself. Pouchet Paquet (2010) also notes Goodison's focus on women's manipulation of materiality as key to women's agency: besides the flowers and the tablecloths in the poem, for example, in her memoir *From Harvey River* (2009) the sewing room becomes 'a center of creativity, community and women's agency' (170). Goodison's focus on women's agency in relation to everyday matter 'privileges the quotidian and the everyday as the other side of the heroic' (Pouchet Paquet, 2010, 170). Before moving to their importance for contemplating (post)diaspora, I would like to bind these two aspects of Goodison's work, entanglement and materiality, more tightly together conceptually through a very brief⁴ consideration of feminist work in science and technology studies (STS). Karen Barad's (2007) concept of 'agential realism' derives from the work of the physicist Niels Bohr. Agential realism specifically recognises that, in the sub-atomic world that constitutes all matter, 'things-in-the-world' (Hollin et al, 929) are determined (as wave or particle) through their measurement by scientific apparatuses – human and non-human agency does not simply observe and represent matter, but actually makes material reality what it is. In other words, matter is entangled with the local conditions that determine it. The argument is not that particles do not exist before somebody comes along to measure them, but that 'given a particular measuring apparatus, certain properties become determinate, while others are specifically excluded' (Barad 2007, 19). So human and non-human agency entangle with matter, and that entanglement both makes matter what it turns out to be and, in doing so, shuts down versions of what it could have been but now is not. Conversely, the phenomenon that is technically called 'entanglement' in quantum physics is a rejection of what is called 'local realism' (Wendt 2015, 54): two identical photons emitted from the same light source have been shown to stay in relationship (specifically, to affect each other's polarization) instantaneously, no matter how far they are

apart. What this demonstrates is that reality is not actually determined at the local scale: each local reality is inextricably entangled with very many elsewheres. In fact, quantum entanglement makes ‘here’ and ‘there’ not just unimportant (neither here nor there we might say) but actually quite unreal: if we think of all the centuries of light travelling, of its unceasing and all-encompassing mobility, we are drawn to the conclusion that ‘Quantum entanglements are not the intertwining of two (or more) states/entities/events, but a calling into question of the very nature of two-ness and ultimately of one-ness as well’ (Barad 2010, 251). Matter is locally entangled, but it also entangles so many localities so profoundly as to radically undercut the very concept of the local.

Postdiaspora: an entangled concept

This sense of local entanglement and entangled locals has clear implications, not only for the concept of (post)diaspora, but also for the way it is lived as material existence. In terms of the concept, some of the earliest and most pervasive invocations of the term ‘postdiaspora’ are clearly focused on localised entanglements of diasporic communities. In a relatively simplistic deployment of ‘post’, some have seen postdiaspora as a temporal moment that marks an arrival or a definitive change in the direction of travel, a moment after the movement that is diaspora. Salman Rushdie (1992), in a collection of essays written throughout the 1980s, talks movingly about the complexities of ‘post-diasporic community’, the multi-local remembering, affinities and belongings of people who have travelled from the place of their birth to another place, and are living with that legacy. Here the post- limits diaspora to the very moment of movement or scattering. In this view, post-diasporic community is defined in terms of the local conditions that come after movement, the longer process of settling, building, looking back to the ‘homeland’ and looking forward to life in the ‘hostland’ (LaGuerre 2017).

Kinvall and Nesbitt-Larkin (2017) continue this logic inter-generationally, describing as postdiasporic the generation that comes after the diasporic generation, those born in the hostland and formed by it, and whom they see as therefore being differently engaged and identified both with the homeland and with the hostland. It is worth noting here that the UK's recent Windrush scandal⁵ shows that, though it might be heuristically convenient, it is not easy in practice to make this clear demarcation between a diaspora generation and a post-diaspora generation: it has been an in-between generation, those who migrated as children, who were educated and employed in the UK and have lived there for the majority of their life, who have been most at risk of summary disengagement and deportation by the state. The UK state has shown itself able to be quite capricious in relation to such liminal positions, first accepting children of migrants from former British colonies as British, including providing a range of welfare, education and health services, then suddenly removing all of those services and rejecting them as not having sufficient evidence of that Britishness (even where that evidence has been lost or destroyed by that same state) (Gentleman, 2018). In these precarious postcolonial conditions, entanglement is ghosted by moves to disentangle.

For Rushdie and for Kinvall and Nesbitt-Larkin, post-diaspora describes a precarious moment of self-entanglement in the hostland local. In this precarity, the 'post' they describe is not like the 'post' of postmodernism, which Appiah(1991) argues clears a space for the transcendence of the modernisation project, for going beyond its universalist claims. By contrast, just as the post- of postcolonial is about living with a continued entanglement with the colonial, the post- of postdiaspora is about living with the continued consequences of the diasporic move, within the postcolonial conditions that have motivated a wide range of movements to former colonial centres, and which determine the conditions of settlement. Postdiaspora denotes a legacy of diaspora but also of the colonial, and neither is yet settled.

Trotz and Mullings (2013) notably do not use the concept of postdiaspora – for them, diaspora already does a lot of work around entanglement, not just around entanglement with local conditions, but also around entanglements of different locals. In thinking about diaspora as a concept that is of use for Caribbean Studies, they attest to a consensus that ‘Few among us today would assume that a journey ends on arrival at a destination, severing ties to the sending country’ (Trotz and Mullings, 2013, p. 155). From this starting assumption of entangled locals, where the concept of diaspora refuses disconnections between homeland and hostland, Trotz and Mullings move to discuss the numerous historical circulations and connections of Caribbean people through political movements, such as the Marcus Garvey Universal Negro Improvement Association. They argue that these movements ‘shap[e] Pan-Caribbean political imaginaries’ (Trotz and Mullings, 2013, p. 156), and can be contrasted with more neoliberal imaginings of diaspora. In these recent neoliberal instrumentalisations of diasporic yearning, diaspora becomes an important source of remittances and investment for the homeland. Discursively gendered male and business-oriented, this more instrumentalised view of diaspora tends to ignore the continued importance of women’s roles in sending remittances based on employment in UK care and health services, and linked with intimate familial ties rather than business relationships (see also Mullings, 2012). Trotz and Mullings call for resistance to more neoliberal versions of diaspora and a push towards a more ‘hopeful criticality’ in relation to diaspora as a concept, one that is able to broaden its imaginings and hold onto its complex entanglements (2013, 171).

Holding onto complex entanglements between locals becomes all the more urgent as the concept of postdiaspora becomes increasingly deployed as a means of transcending, or at least getting beyond the most painful aspects, of some of these entanglements. Three recent formulations illustrate this tendency. The first, by Michel LaGuerre (2017), explicitly rejects diaspora, claiming that it is a self-marginalising position. LaGuerre argues that diasporic

communities remain subaltern, always being discursively re-assigned to a homeland elsewhere, and never enjoying full citizenship rights in the hostland. For LaGuerre then, ‘‘diaspora’ is a vector of inequality’ the claiming of which, by migrant communities, has the effect of keeping them ‘in a side-stream of society that stands in opposition to the mainstream’ (2017, 17). The movement to postdiaspora is therefore a positive evolution towards equality of status. LaGuerre’s development of the concept of postdiaspora focuses on French emigrants (from France to Zagreb, Casablanca, Haiti etc), who become ‘postdiasporic’ to the degree that France becomes a ‘cosmonation’ (2017, 128). In short, to become postdiasporic is to develop full citizenship rights in the cosmonational homeland, regardless of where you are living: LaGuerre gives the examples of welfare, educational and emergency services that are provided by the French state to its diaspora living in the French-speaking Caribbean. Correspondingly, the fully realised cosmonation has the resources and institutions to actively nurture and benefit from its postdiaspora transnationally.

In theorising this positive evolution from diaspora to postdiaspora, LaGuerre is remarkably silent about the obvious postcolonial relations of power that underpin France’s cosmonational status, the privileged historical conditions under which France’s diasporic movements came about, and the forms of oppression and impoverishment that have brought about large diasporic movements to France from formerly-colonised countries. However, LaGuerre does recognise that not all homeland nations are able to attain to this level of resource use for their emigrant populations, and indeed that cosmonational reach may not even be fully realised in all areas of social and economic life for France or any other cosmonation (LaGuerre 2017, 22). Moreover, as a direct consequence of the ‘transglobal network nation scheme’ (LaGuerre 2017, 151) that is being produced by the growth of a range of cosmonational connections with postdiaspora populations, new diasporic movements are constantly facilitated and every country is thereby affected. As LaGuerre notes: ‘In Haiti

this phenomenon threatens the very survival of the country... Haitians have become transnationally mobile because of the transglobal network nation, which makes such crossborder movement imaginable and achievable'(151). So the entanglements of the privileged postdiaspora bring even more diasporic entanglements in their train.

More acutely sensitive to the postcolonial conditions of postdiaspora movement is Ingyu Oh's (2012) study of the settlement of Korean diaspora in Japan. Based on small-scale ethnographic research, rather than LaGuerre's institutional frameworks and discourses, Oh places postdiaspora within a three-stage temporal 'evolution' (2012, 652). The first historical stage was colonial settlement of Koreans in Japan, as forced labour. Oh calls this moment 'diaspora', and sees it as passive mobility, because it was forced. 'Post-diaspora' was a second stage therefore, a 'cold war' moment when the diasporic communities were able to make more active choices, and began to go back to the two Koreas, as an imagined homeland that had stayed with them as romanticised memory. This is similar to what LaGuerre calls 'de-diasporization', in that the diaspora returned to the homeland (23). However, in the case of the Korean diaspora, a substantial part of the population either did not go back to the homeland or went back but became disillusioned with the homeland, so they 're-diasporised' or returned to the hostland. So de-diasporization is no more a destination than is diaspora. In recognition of the complexity of these entangled locals, Oh shows that postdiaspora is not an endpoint. A third stage, 'transnational diaspora', reflects what he calls an 'identity crisis', in which those who have become 'disillusioned' both with the homeland and with the hostland (because neither socialist nor capitalist development has fully delivered what it promised, in the two Koreas respectively; and because 'ethnic Koreans' have suffered racism in Japan) have begun to learn western languages and entangle themselves with localities well beyond the homeland/hostland nexus.

It has to be said that, perhaps understandably given that it begins with forced migration, in Oh's evolutionary movement from diasporic to 'post-diasporic' to transnational there is a rather neoliberal implication that having the choice to move to the west, or indeed engaging in a disembedded cosmopolitanism, might be in itself a positive arrival. However, what Oh does recognise is that a postdiaspora condition might not mean a disentanglement from diaspora, but might be the addition of a further layer of entanglements between diaspora, hostland and a homeland that cannot hope to live up to the layers of expectation that its diaspora places upon it. A third formulation of postdiaspora, Christopher J. Lee's (2009) discussion piece around South Africa and its postdiasporic politics, resonates with this tension between diaspora and homeland, but in this case it is the homeland that becomes disillusioned with a diaspora that invokes its name but ignores its realities. Lee asks whether a postdiaspora politics for South Africa might be focused on re-centering African sovereignty, and 'relocate[ing] political concern away from the Black Atlantic metropolises of Kingston, Fort-de France, New York and Paris to capitals like Pretoria, Accra and Nairobi' (144). The postdiasporic move here is to focus less on theories coming from the west, and specifically from the Caribbean and US, indeed to focus less on 'black internationalism' more broadly, since? such theories have often only included Africa as an afterthought, and have rarely come out of the continent's actual lived experiences. Instead there is a move to reassert African sovereignty in political thought around the pressing needs of the continent. So this postdiasporic context is one in which the diaspora has definitively left the home continent, and the home continent refuses to be defined by it any longer.

This postdiasporic move by a home continent that has been romanticised, marginalised and ignored by its diaspora carries a great deal of force. But ultimately Africa's long diaspora history itself, perhaps more than any other, shows just how impossible it is at this point in time to transcend the deep and complex entanglements between localities. As

Appiah pointed out, in a classic text about posts, ‘If there is a lesson in the broad shape of this circulation of cultures, it is surely that we are all already contaminated by each other, that there is no longer a fully autochthonous echt-African culture awaiting salvage by our artists (just as there is, of course, no American culture without African roots)’ (1991, 354). This brings us back to the heavily material concepts of entanglement coming out of quantum theory (see above). The circulation and continued entanglement of a wide range of materialities – not only the bodies of migrants, but also fabrics, foodstuffs, technologies – inextricably entangle people with localities and localities with each other.

Family photographs and the lived materialities of (post)diaspora

Before concluding, the final step in my argument is to think about the materialities of (post)diaspora as I/my mother have lived them in my/our own entangled (post)diasporic position: here, I want to apply the material entanglements in Goodison’s poem to the (post)diasporic locations of my own life and family. Thinking through three family photographs, I do not seek to construct an autobiography or family history (nor indeed an essay in narrative portraiture; see Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005), but rather to offer an imaginative analysis of the heavy materiality of local entanglements and entangled locals. This is not an article about family photographs, but I deploy family photographs here as active spaces for thought. They can be powerful technologies that repeat and repeat conventional family forms – mother, father, child – fixing or, as Sara Ahmed (2006) puts it, ‘orienting’ the family again and again until a particular social form is expected or demanded (p?). As objects, Rose (2003) discusses the ambivalence of family photographs for women in particular: women are peculiarly objectified in the history of pictorial representation, but at the same time it is overwhelmingly women’s role in a family to store and display family photographs in the home and to circulate them, deciding who within and beyond the family to show or send them to. The family photograph is particularly active in relation to

(post)diaspora: it represents the migrant family both to itself and to the extended family in the homeland, telling eloquent stories about how successful or otherwise migration has been (Tolia-Kelly, 2004); and the family photograph circulates in (post)diasporic space as a paper or digital object that both diminishes distance between family members (homeland family looks close-up into the eyes of the person who has migrated) and increases distance (the presence of the photograph standing in for the migrant underlines that the embodied person is truly absent) (Rose, 2006). The power of the family photograph is also unpredictable: Pattynama (2012) reminds us that family photographs are archive objects that are surrounded by rituals of display and interpretation that change over time and space, whilst Pasternak (2013) demonstrates that each family photograph is potentially subversive of official narratives and is subject to diverse and contradictory interpretations.

Family photographs are material objects that connect and entangle a range of localities. I am the youngest in an immediate family of seven: mother, father, with five siblings all in our 50s and looking towards a next generation of adult children and grandchildren. In such a large family there are very many photographs – smiling babies, stiffly-posed bridesmaids and elders relaxing over drinks. They tumble out of ancient photo albums, they are on mobile phones, in picture frames and in boxes around my father's house, my own, and those of all of my siblings. Countless photographs of me, my parents, siblings, children, nieces and nephews are also in frames, on phones, in well-kept albums in the homes of cousins, uncles and aunties in Birmingham, London, Manchester, and in Jamaica, where both of my parents were born, as well as in Sierra Leone, the US and Canada, where some of my extended family members were born and migrated. Photographs are hyper-mobile material objects that entangle localities in my (post)diasporic family: they entangle instantaneously when they travel as digital data through facebook and whatsapp, sometimes for example circulating news about family members living overseas before those who live close to each other can pop

round to talk about it; but even now they still entangle localities through slower forms of travel, as printed objects that link subject, object and viewer via formal poses and multi-sized prints in cardboard wallets from photographic studios, via often-contested final representations of loved ones on the front of funeral programmes, via snapshots folded carefully into letters and envelopes.

Out of this circulating multitude, I have selected three black-and-white photographs, each from a different decade, each testifying to the local entanglements that are visible in my mother's careful attention to clothing us. The first (figure 1) was taken in the late 1960s, on the balcony of the red-brick council-owned maisonette in Birmingham where I grew up. My mother has one arm around each of my twin brothers, who are wearing identical striped T-shirts and dark shorts. I am around three years old and am sitting on her lap. I am profiting from the fact that my mother's hands are full to excitedly turn my face towards her and away from the camera. She looks to be struggling to keep us all still, and the top of the photographer's finger is a prominent blur in the top right-hand corner. Behind us all is the red brick from which the maisonette and much of the city is made. Beyond the railings to our right, just out of view, is the parade of shops (newsagents, chippie) where I would later go with my friends and siblings to buy magazines and hot snacks after school. Unseen all around us is the invisible airborne lead that poisoned our lungs and affected our brains⁶, belched out by the cars going up and down the busy dual carriageway on the other side. Like the deep entanglement of the onions with the skin of both mother and daughter in Goodison's (1986) poem, my heavily-embodied entanglement with Birmingham, at this tender age, was shaping the actual matter of my brain, my breathing and my nutrition. (See also Noxolo, 2018a).



Figure 1

The second photograph (figure 2) was taken in the mid-1970s. It is a more formal shot of my whole family in our front room, the room that was kept for visitors. We are on a sofa in front of the floor-to-ceiling lace curtains that cover the glass doors that led out to the balcony.

Around nine years old, I am standing in front of my mother, in a high-necked short-skirted lace dress, whilst my mother is sitting on one arm of the sofa. She wears a tall hair piece, and her dark dress sparkles with pearls around the neckline. My three brothers are all dressed identically in white polo neck shirts and formal trousers, and my sister wears a shiny short dress with buckled shoes. My father, sitting on the other arm of the sofa, wears a formal suit with a narrow tie and a gleaming white shirt. Half of us seem to be trying not to look at the camera. One thing I have in common with Goodison is that my mother was also a trained dressmaker, and she made almost all of our clothes. She was a regular shopper at Birmingham's fabric markets and knew exactly which stall to visit to get the right kind, weight, colour and price of fabric to take to her tiny sewing room and create something smart and durable. The stall-holders knew her too, and she chatted and joked with Jewish or Asian shopkeepers over both British-made and imported fabrics, while I or one of my siblings reluctantly pulled a full trolley behind her. As Goodison (2007) says of her own home, the sewing room was a domain of female agency, and this was just as true for mine; but my (post)diasporic home in the UK has also in common with Goodison's postcolonial home in Jamaica that the actual materiality of the import and circulation of fabric and the embodied agency of processes of *fabrication* inextricably entangled a range of local people and a range of localities internationally, within a multicultural, trans-local, fractal mat (Noxolo, 2018b) of manufacturers, retailers and friends.



Figure 2

The final photo (figure 3) was taken in the early 1980s, when I was about 17. I remember that my mother had got baptised that morning and we were just coming back from the Christadelphian Ecclesial Hall: she is dressed all in white apart from a dark hat and she looks happy and relaxed, posing with my sister and I in the communal walkway of the maisonette. My sister and I are wearing similar pleated skirts and long jackets: my sister strikes a playfully dramatic pose, with one elbow on my mother's shoulder, her fingers tilting her chin back and her other arm swept out, hand grasping the rail; my own pose is more adolescently guarded, hands and feet crossed, but with a wide smile. The poem with which I began this paper, Lorna Goodison's 'I am becoming my mother', was published in a collection of the same name in 1986. It resonates deeply with my own entanglements that I have set out here, not least because my mother died in 1986, the same year that I turned 21. Having a

significant child-to-adult birthday only a couple of months after losing the most significant adult in my life was a brutal conjunction, and I could not work out how to make an adult life for myself. Every old relationship that I relied on (with my siblings, with my father, with Birmingham) and every new experience that I was privileged to have (graduation, travel, employment) was either pin-pricked or embossed with my mother's absence/presence. I could not leave her behind in my childhood: she was ineradicably present. But I could not find a way to take her with me into adulthood: she was irrevocably absent. Nevertheless, as time continued to flow mercilessly beyond the moment of her death, and at no particular moment of epiphany, a shift occurred. I realised that I had to become, and very soon found I had become, a person who could embody the inescapable reality of my mother's ongoing absence/presence, of my own inescapable entanglement with my mother. So, in this paper and in my life, I have learned to return her gaze looking back at me in photographs, and to live entangled with my mother: not moving on without her, but not losing my life to find her. Like the temporal and spatial entanglements between mother and daughter in Goodison's poem, my own mother/daughter entanglement is a metonym of the larger-scale spatial relationship that is the (post)diaspora – the material reality of our lives means that there is no option but to choose to embody the entanglements that we have with each other.



Figure 3

Conclusion

This article has explored the concept of (post) diaspora in relation to both local entanglements and entangled locals. Extending the entanglements in Goodison's poem into quantum entanglements, the article explores the ways in which the concept of postdiaspora is being deployed, including a tendency to push towards disentanglement. It then imagined through family photographs the depth and extent of the materiality of (post)diasporic entanglement.

There are two implications from this deeply material view of (post)diaspora as entanglement. First, in the context of continued moves to disentangle, by hostland states, by homeland academics, by theorists of postdiaspora, there is a need to highlight the material connections between diaspora and both homelands and hostlands. Diaspora is not a deterritorialised state. Diasporic people make places and places make diasporic people – we are not just passing through. Nations, whether 'cosmo' or otherwise, need to accept that (post)diaspora is the material reality through which nations are made.

Second, a focus on the materiality of (post)diaspora is one way to respond to Trotz and Mullings's (2013) call for less neoliberal diaspora understandings. Thinking about entanglements with and between locals moves the emphasis away from the rich, rational, cosmopolitan individual, and towards shared histories in and between places, recognised as steeped in fluid and material power-geometries (Massey, 1994). The emphasis on materiality recognises both human and non-human agency in (post)diaspora, and also recognises that agency is real: it literally makes (post)diasporic agency matter.

¹ If we compare the poem 'I am becoming my mother' with Goodison's imaginative memoir *From Harvey River: a Memoir of my Mother and her Island* we can see that the poem entangles together aspects of Goodison's mother Doris and her aunt Cleodine: in the memoir it is Cleodine who "raises rare blooms", African violets "so strongly coloured you could stain your fingers by touching one of the petals" (Goodison 2007, 120). Equally, it is when Goodison's mother Doris is watering her own mother's "special plants with cold tea left over from breakfast" (114) – a feature that comes to define her mother in the poem – that the man who will be Goodison's father first sees her. Such a comparison is productive, but of course has to be approached with care. Although the poem and the memoir are not

the same kind of imaginative work, both are works of Goodison's imagination: the memoir, for example, is based on conversations Goodison had with her mother when she was alive and also on conversations she had with her in dreams after she died (Goodison 2007, 2). Nonetheless, we can also see both the poem and the memoir as telling us something about mother/daughter entanglements, as well as about Goodison's actual mother and about the rest of her family. See also Anim-Addo on the importance of "inventive spaces" in writing black women's histories (2013, p. 184).

² The phrase 'to pull shame out of her eyes' is explicitly explained in *From Harvey River: a Memoir of my Mother and her Island*: "that is, to put on a small show if visitors came" (Goodison 2007, 187). The memoir tells us that Doris had servants when she was first married, so cooking was a choice and she could dress in fine silks (Goodison 2007, 151). But when the family moved to Kingston, there were no more servants and there were nine children, so the lace and damask tablecloths were not all that was stored away: "Little by little she put away the fabulous Doris... she never worried much about those things again" (187).

³ In *Harvey River*, Goodison (2007) tells us that her mother cooked food every day, not only for her family but also for others, in "Doris's bottomless cooking pot" (234). A feature of her cooking process was rubbing garlic and onion into the meat with her own hands: as a consequence "You could 'smell her hand', as her father once said, 'from the moment you turned into the gate'" (235).

⁴ My very brief excursion into quantum physics may seem rather cursory, but my aim here is really to embed a very particular routing for the concepts of matter and entanglement into the discussion. My earlier work on materiality devotes more space to this complex area (see Noxolo, 2012).

⁵ The Windrush scandal broke in 2018, when it became clear that the UK government was deporting people who had come to the UK from the Caribbean as part of the so-called Windrush generation (named after the Empire Windrush, which brought migrants to Tilbury Docks in 1948). Commonwealth heads of government, who were meeting in London that year, reinforced the extensive campaigning of UK-based MPs, charities and in particular the Guardian newspaper (see Guardian, 2019) to bring the issue to a head.

⁶ Research was already clear about the deleterious effects of airborne lead in the inner city areas of Birmingham, particularly for children (see Day et al., 1975; Waldron, 1975; Grubert, 1997). It took until 2000 for leaded petrol to be banned under EU law (Culmer, 2017)

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