Amy Ashwood Garvey: Vibratory Spaces

Marika Sherwood & Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa

shifting landmarks

in the streets
in the gardens
on the benches
in the parks
on the walls
on the ground
in the air
on the line
between us
all there
encounters like you

Marika Sherwood I'm a historian, so I know nothing about culture and art—except the things that interest me, of course. I came to researching the presence of Africans here very late in my life. I'm not a born historian, I don't have even a degree in history, but I was so appalled at nobody knowing anything about the presence of Africans in Britain, when I came here as an immigrant in 1965—I come from a Jewish family and what was left of us went from Hungary to Australia in 1948—that I thought, "Something has to be done!" And of course, the universities weren't doing anything at all. I asked my friend Colin Prescod of the Institute of Race Relations, who was teaching at the Polytechnic of North London, to do some research or other. I was a counsellor to students there—I was a trained psychotherapist. I kept pushing Colin and eventually he said to me, "If it's so important you'll get on and do it!" So I sort of took a step back. "I don't know how to do any history research", I told him, and he just said, "If you think it's important you will find out". And slowly I did.

I knew what was taught in school in the old colonies. It was about the glories of Britain, the kings, the queens, how wonderful the industrial revolution was... Nothing at all about the social class differentiation, or the racial differentiation.[1] So for me, when I came here, the shock was enormous. This wasn't what I was taught. I had to try to understand what was going on and I learned how people had been brainwashed in the schools here. Such ignorance! Hungary didn't exist, never mind any part of Africa. The Caribbean? Where was that? It wasn't even the Caribbean, it was the 'West Indies'. And I suppose as a trained psychotherapist I knew how absolutely crucial this was. So I began doing research. I must be honest and admit that I have not focused on women, as there is just too much to do. It is only just a year ago that the first Black Studies department in this country was opened. Imagine that! This was at Birmingham City University, in September 2017. And they don't get nearly as much funding as they need, given all the research that they know needs to be done.

I've done all sorts of bits and pieces of research. For example, in 1993 I was invited to Liverpool, a city I'd never been to, to advise when the first slavery museum was being set up there. I surmised that there had to be a black population because it was and is a large port, and I had already learned that some of our black population are the descendants

no agent floats around by herself
and if it's gravity attaching her to earth
defying gravity sounds like
whose voice
at the front
listen to see the invisible
resound on the ground in the chatter of
pilots and birds
the flight is delayed because she wants to
stay in transit
touch and go

this is touch and go
text, safe representation is akin to a
guy on the couch who controls the
world from his TV
text, progressive writing moves with a
woman in flight
ongoing ongoing
this is the everyday
holding up this building
turn the doomed fuel station
into a landing strip
a touch-down beacon

of seamen working on British ships in the late 19th and early 20th century, who were discharged at the ports where their ship docked. They had to try to get new jobs on ships. The trade union, the National Union of Seamen, didn't want any Blacks employed. The shipping companies wanted to employ them, as black seamen were paid much less than their white counterparts to do the same job. The Union, instead of campaigning for equal wages, fought to preserve all jobs for Whites.[2]
Not surprisingly, there was quite a large black population in Liverpool. Then I discovered that a wonderful man, Pastor Daniels Ekarté[3], had set up a sort of community centre for the black population at the church he founded there in 1931. Nothing had been written up about Pastor Daniels' work! And why he had to do it! I began to research and write up Daniels Ekarté—who was born in Calabar and who had himself come to Liverpool as a seaman—and that taught me just so much! I realised there must be very similar stories in every port in Britain. Had there been any research done? You're joking! Of course not. A little bit at Bristol, a little bit in South Shields but nowhere else. And, well, that's where the black populations started! In sort of 'modern' times, at least.

But the black population in Britain dates back almost 2000 years, I think. With the African regiment, which was part of the Roman Army that invaded Britain in AD 43. It was a mounted regiment. They landed somewhere in Kent and had gone all the way North to what became Hadrian's Wall, where there are some tombstones with North African names from this time. When they were demobilised, because it was rather a long way home—you couldn't go to Heathrow to get an aeroplane—they settled here and married local women.

There are populations descended from the Roman Army all over the territories they conquered. Some archaeologists are now finding North African pottery in other parts of England, so I think it's quite likely there were African soldiers in other regiments, as well. But there is hardly any research about Africa and Africans in Britain between the Roman period and the Tudor period. There are now two books on the Tudor years, both of which start a bit before and end a bit later. One is by Onyeka[4], the other by Miranda Kaufmann[5].

In the absence of university departments, it falls to individuals like me, who work part time to earn ✓

touch and move
humming along and echoing back
we collect losts and interrogate founds
what is in your carrier bag today my dear
what are we filling our pockets with stories
for
what if a critter jumps down from the net
midflight
an invitation to caress
a personal story
skip skip skip
touch ground unground

touch the ground
kiss it
killed it
there is some space in my luggage for your
story
are we going the same way
then bring it in there
a touch-over
a plane in reverse
crosses borders as easily as the one that
just goes up and ahead
go ahead
even if the distance crossed is irreversible
the plane can flow back to the same point
twice
or thrice she can
have you been
have i been where
up in the light

all carried by waves
in waves we come and fly
a planter of bombs
a nanny of bombs[1]
a shooter of stars
we have them all on board
to defy this history's gravity

even if the community of the women on the
aeroplanes
hasn't arrived
it sure is crossing borders inside my head
planted inside me is a fuzzy

enough to be able to do some research. There's just no funding for research. People say, "Marika, your first book came out in 1985 and you've had six or seven books published and untold number of articles—nobody ever offered you a position in a university?" But I'm the last person a university wants. This white woman saying Africans have been here and done this and that...? No, thank you. "Don't you get research money?" Well, I have received a total of £3,000 since they stopped me teaching in 1985. Thirty-three years ago! It's mainly community organisations that are doing the research now, and of course they need a lot of funding, both for the research and to set up archives. Some local archives are very helpful, some are not. Some archives are lost. These are all problems you face as a historian. But also, relatedly, I think there are problems that have to be addressed at a somewhat different level: what is taught in our schools. To this day, most schools and most of the national curricula say nothing about the African presence here. Africa simply does not exist, even now. What does that do to the black kids growing up in our schools? And what does it do to the white kids? So I think, the need to change the school curriculum is absolutely essential, and I will stop there.

Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa Last year, long after I had started working on Amy Ashwood Garvey, Annett told me that the *Women on Aeroplanes* project had somehow begun with a photograph from the 5th Pan-African Conference, held in Manchester in 1945, which is, coincidentally, on the cover of the book about that conference that you and Hakim Adi edited[6]. In that photograph, you can see Amy Ashwood Garvey seated in the middle of the podium, chairing the first day of that historic meeting, but she is misidentified as Amy Jacques Garvey, Marcus Garvey's second wife. The picture is taken by John Deakin, a Soho nightlife photographer who was sent to cover the congress for *Picture Post*. Now it's part of the Getty Images Archive and to get a printable copy would cost around 400 €.

I had no idea that this image had inspired this project. I myself, in trying to think about what to do for this exhibition, had begun by looking more broadly at women who had been active in anti-colonial movements in London—which was historically, of course, an extremely important centre for anti-colonial organising. People from all over the world met here, brought to the city by study, by work and by exile from the colonies.

fuzzy line of flight
read along like me
all here
where it explodes
to make space for something new

1 Venu Chitale speaks of a woman who used to be her friend's family's nanny for seventy years and then went to produce explosives in the war because she had the steady hands needed (in: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle", 19421942, https://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/women-pioneers/walking-the-line.

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A lot of the blacks were frustrated in Manchester at that time; those at the University had no facilities beyond the bar for relaxation, and in town the Africans and West Indians who lived in the area also had few places to go. So I called a meeting and made an appeal: "The Indians and Chinese have restaurants, what about us?" "We have no objections but we have no money." "All right" I said. "I'll do it." So through my savings I was able to get a license for the Ethiopian Teashop; it was a building for which I only paid £4 per week and it had a basement, first and second floors; prices in property were very low, because Manchester had receded greatly during the period before the war, and things hadn't picked up again.

I was particularly inspired by Nydia Swaby's 2014 essay on Amy Ashwood Garvey, which describes the different social spaces that Ashwood Garvey set up during her time here, and argues that these spaces themselves played a significant role in developing and sustaining anti-colonial and anti-discriminatory struggles.[7] Ashwood Garvey's first venture was the International Afro Restaurant, which opened at 62 New Oxford Street in 1935.[8] A year later, together with her partner, the Trinidadian calypso singer Sam Manning, she opened the Florence Mills Social Parlour, a jazz club at 50 Carnaby Street.[9] In the 1950s, she launched the Afro Women's Centre & Residential Club (later known as the Afro Peoples Centre) at her home, Number 1 Bassett Road in Ladbroke Grove.[10] I was taken by Nydia's arguments about the underrecognised role of such spaces in political movements, and about the aesthetic dimensions of political activism. That's where I began.

MS Out of all of these people from all of these conferences I'd researched, Amy was the only woman. There had been a huge outcry among the black population here in 1935 when Italy invaded Ethiopia, because Ethiopia was still independent and there weren't many independent countries left in Africa. They organised a campaign to try to get the European countries to intervene to stop the invasion, which of course did not succeed—and that in itself is a very interesting story. And Amy was among the founders of the International African Friends of Abyssinia, the major campaigning organisation. So I looked into her a bit. Not very much, I confess, partly because I'm not a fan of Marcus Garvey. I think his talking about the need to be proud, to be African, for African unity—that was absolutely fantastic, and he was clearly very good at spreading the message. But he declared himself King of Africa! To me that said "There's something a bit wrong with you, Marcus Garvey. You clearly did not do whatever reading you could have possibly done at that time. How on earth can you as a West Indian, living in the USA, someone who has never been and will never go to Africa, declare yourself..." I just thought, something's gone wrong in his head. I don't know if that pushed me away from Amy, because I know she had left Marcus but in a way she continued to support him. I didn't understand what that was about.[11]

[...] After reconstruction, I was able to fit in twenty-two tables, eleven on the ground floor and eleven above. In the basement I installed two toilets, and used another part as a coal room. I also rigged up a primitive fridge. The running of it was also straightforward; I found a Hungarian woman, Mrs. Adler, who was one of the many Jewish refugees in the city. (We met at the international club.) She took over the place from eight in the morning until five, when I came back from the University. I then joined them in the preparations because most of our trade was done in the evenings up to midnight. Originally I had calculated that if I was able to take £10 a day for four days that would bring in £40 between Monday and Friday; then if one was able to take £20 per day over the weekend (the English worker is paid on Friday), it would bring us about £100 a week. Well, this is exactly what happened for about three months, then suddenly a jump, and we skyrocketed to £50 per day. I felt ashamed that I seemed to be becoming a bloated plutocrat overnight; however, it was a godsend from the business angle hat I was kicked out of the Co-operative College, for I was able to give myself full-time to the new work. I now proceeded further down Oxford Road four blocks, towards All Saints Cathedral and nearer the University. There I found a tremendous building for £8 per week—four floors of it.
It took me some £3,000 to renovate this, and I called it the Cosmopolitan. What distinguished it were its murals. You see, I had a good friend who was an Austrian Jew (I'd met him by chance in London) and just at the time I needed him, Jean appeared in Manchester. I told him, "It's not a question of money, but racial prestige. We have to make these white folks know that we are enlightened. I want you to go to town on this." Well, he did and it took him four months to complete it. He created murals of humanity, showing the contribution of each, wether African, Scots, Welsh or Austrian; he showed the common humanity through depicting the gardens of the world from Japanese style to English. But it wasn't all just decorative. Take the mural on the Poles; one part of the canvas showed the death of Poland in Europe with the cannons and the invasions, and then in the New World we could see the Pole reappearing, but this time what was portrayed was the typical immigrant Pole leading the charge against the blacks. I had him write above this, "Whiter Mankind??" It made a big impact on the Black American soldiers who were pouring into England at this period, and they reached also to the picture of the big Texan with his hat and his pistols, drawn as a threat to the darkies.

EWW I think there is this complication because Amy was actually there at the beginning. She was the co-founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the African Communities League (ACL)—she and Marcus started those organisations together in 1914, long before they got married. Even the Garvey-ists concede that Amy was a co-founder. Although the couple did not stay together for long, in the end, and Amy went off and did her own thing.

MS Wait a minute, I think it is important to emphasize that they are Jamaicans. And they were Jamaicans living in the US. That's part of this very complicated history, too. Who and what are you if you are a Jamaican living in the US at that time? There wasn't yet a mass migration from the Caribbean to the United States. I do wonder what that was like. Sorry, go on.

EWW I was just responding to your remark about how Amy left Marcus Garvey, but in some sense continued to support him. There are aspects of his political program that she was heavily involved in developing, that's without question. It was her program, as well. And even after they divorced and she broke with the UNIA-ACL, she still shares some of its founding beliefs. At the same time, she continues to use and to trade on her connection to him throughout her life. When he dies in 1940, for example, she starts writing this biography of him, which she carries around and rewrites but never finds a publisher for; she sets up organisations in his name right up until her own death in 1969. So she does come back and back and back to Marcus Garvey, but at the same time she does go off and do all sorts of other things.

Amy must have been one of the most widely-travelled women of her generation. She seems to have been nearly everywhere at some point, always with different names, different job titles. There are places where she is described as a sociologist, others where she's identified as a writer or researcher, others where she's a theatre producer. But she shows up in all sorts of different places and—maybe this is a bit "Marcus Garvey-ish," as well—she meets groups and founds groups but does not necessarily stick around to see things through.
I'm thinking of the 1960s, when she went on a tour of the Caribbean. She visited women in different

It was of course fortunate that Manchester became a base for many of these black troops once America had entered the war, because when these black boys heard they came like wild men. It now took all my time, and I had to buy 58, Oxford Road which I used as a central base. This is where I did all my 'white-market' operations—I won't say black-market! I made a big item of goats, because at that time they were not rationed, but we also used turkeys and other meats. My job was to keep the two restaurants supplied. We formed a link with chaps from Cyprus (they became fraternal members in our Pan-African Federation later); I tended to use them as managers, and employ a few Indian waiters and Chinese. So it really was Cosmopolitan. We had two Chinese cooks whom I had brought over from Cardiff in charge of the Chinese menu which was some thirty dishes, and the Indians made curry dishes.

them all together and it was tape-recorded and the tapes are still available at the British Library[12]. I was supposed to edit it, but... The final book[13] contains some of the speeches and some historical material from me. There were conflicts at this gathering, very polite ones, because some of the people who were there had been communists and others had not. Mind you, the British Communist Party, compared to the one in New York, did absolutely nothing about racial issues. Or colonial issues, until the 1950s. So there were members of the Party who found this very difficult and the group that was set up for Caribbeans was sort of, I would say, almost segregated in some ways.[14] It took the Party a long time to really become communists, if you like. And some of this came up in the interchanges at this meeting, because in bringing together everybody we could find who had known Claudia, we had stepped right into that.

EWW But to come back to Amy Ashwood Garvey, which also connects to how I met Marika: I was in New York in July and at the very last minute, thanks to the efforts of Nydia Swaby, I was able to visit Patricia and Phillip Maillard, who are the daughter and grandson of Lionel Yard, who wrote the first biography of Amy Ashwood Garvey[15] and who went to Bassett Road in the 1970s when the house was

countries, spoke with them about their place in society, encouraged them to become politically active and organise, and then kept on moving. I suppose an iconic example might be the Afro Peoples Centre in London. Hamilton Kerr, a white British Member of Parliament, helped her to get a mortgage on the house, but then wasn't around, and the Centre wasn't able to keep up the repayments. Kerr himself was pressured by the British Government to distance himself from Amy Ashwood Garvey because of her relationship with Claudia Jones, who was an active communist—

MS She was a communist but not an *active* communist! There's a lot on Claudia Jones—when I realised that the older West Indians that I had met through my years here were beginning to die, I said to Colin Prescod, "We really need to gather these people to talk about Claudia because they'd all worked with her, and they're not going to be here much longer." This was in the mid 1990s. Claudia herself had been dead for thirty years. But as you know, she had founded the first major *West Indian Gazette* in 1958, and Amy Ashwood Garvey was involved at the beginning. In any case, we did gather

Soon, however, the two restaurants were not enough, and so I opened another, The Orient, near the University, and this was only curries. Finally, I opened a club. It was difficult to get a drinking licence, and the easiest way was to open a club and we called it Forum Club. This again had a good cuisine, and I added the element of music here with performances by the great calypsonians like Lord Kitchener. A number of my African and West Indian colleagues helped with the organization: Jomo Kenyatta, for instance, at one time was in charge of the Cosmopolitan; George [Padmore] helped out with another small place I acquired called the Belle Etoile. But the crucial thing was planning the menus and the supplies, and once we had organized this, the thing went like clockwork.

Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press 1973, 136-138.

"Voice"—the monthly radio magazine programme in the Eastern Service of the B.B.C. (Left to right, sitting) Venu Chitale, J.M. Tambimuttu, T.S. Eliot, Una Marson, Mulik Raj Anand, C.Pemberton, Narayana Menon; (standing) George Orwell, Nancy Barratt, William Empson. B.B.C. copyright

"Hello, West Indies!
This Is Una Marson Calling..."
Garnette Cadogan

A word to home—a simple call across the waters to say not merely how we are doing, but what we're doing, and to reassure loved ones that, indeed, we are well and are doing good. But even more, a chance to close the distance through the warmth of a human voice. It's World War II, and people in the Caribbean are hungry for news from and about the people who have left for Britain to join the war effort. They crave the voices of those whose sounds no longer populate their streets. So, they tune into the BBC to catch some news, maybe even capture some measure of hope. And to hear their own on the programme *Calling the West Indies*, with its mix of personal messages to relatives and friends, stories of the contribution of West Indians to the war effort, and music? A palpable excitement.

One can catch a glimpse of what *Calling the West Indies* might sound like by going to YouTube to find the 1943 film special, "Hello! West Indies." West Indians in Britain step up to the microphone in a BBC studio, and talk about their service in the armed forces and in civilian jobs. The first to speak, a poet and playwright and journalist, the first black woman broadcaster for the BBC, is the occasion's luminous host: "Hello, West Indies. This is Una Marson, calling you from London." Her bright voice makes her an apt emcee, but also adds to the spirit of uplift—boosterism, even—that suffuses the film reel. "I'm going to ask some of these West Indians here to tell you something about our work in this country," she promises. Royal Air Force pilot; Air Traffic Control aircraftwoman; ambulance driver; Navy air-sea rescuers; Auxiliary Territorial Service plotting officer; nurse; lumberjacks; Jamaica; Trinidad; Bermuda; Barbados; St. Vincent; Antigua; British Guiana (now Guyana); British Honduras (now Belize)—professions and places are introduced, one testimonial after another, piling up evidence that leaves no doubt that West Indians were crucial to the British war effort.

At the center of the ambassadorial efforts is Una Mason, bringing speakers and audiences together. This was a role that characterized her entire career—building bridges between home and the exiled. In her poetry (poems about black pride and alienation: "Kinky Hair Blues"; "Nigger"; "Quashie Comes to London"); in her plays (*At What a Price,* about a girl leaving the country for the city in Jamaica; *London Calling,* about a woman leaving Jamaica for London, then returning home by homesickness); with her activism (at the League of Coloured Peoples, highlighting issues of radical feminism); in her participation in international women's organizations (International Alliance of Women, where she championed the rights and struggles of black women worldwide); in her welfare work (supporting the young through Jamaica Save the Children Fund); and, most of all, in her education efforts (to inform Jamaicans about their heritage, to fund the education of poor children, to combat a colonial vision with a Pan-Africanist re-education, to promote a broad variety of Caribbean writers)—she was an outstanding advocate who kept returning to Countee Cullen's poignant question, "What is Africa to me?"

There's a well-known photograph of Marson, sitting at the center of a distinguished gathering, which includes T.S. Eliot, Venu Chitale, George Orwell, and William Empson, all involved in the BBC monthly radio program, *Voice.* She's the only black woman in the room, a state of affairs all too familiar to her, and one that shaped her work and activism, both of which pushed to create rooms in which black women would be seen and heard. (In 1935, at the 20th Annual Congress of the International Alliance of Women Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, where she represented Jamaica, she was again the only black woman in the room, and she challenged white feminists to include the concerns and struggles of black women in their advocacy). Her earlier poetry shows strong marks of her colonial education—Romantic echoes abound—but her time in London (1932–1936, 1938–1945) helped move her more actively along a vector of Pan-Africanism, and she worked tirelessly to present original work from Caribbean voices across the region that would give people in the metropole and beyond a sense of what it meant to hear *home* in the voices on the radio. On programs such as *Calling the West Indies* and its successor, *Caribbean Voices,* she featured writing from Derek Walcott, Sam Selvon, and V.S. Naipaul, she contributed to a richer sense of Caribbean nationalism and black internationalism. For that reason alone she deserves our close, sustained attention.

Through her travels and her multifaceted work she intersected with Haile Selassie (she was his secretary in London during his years of exile), Jamaican poet and folklorist Louise Bennett, Marcus Garvey, Amy Jacques Garvey, Jomo Kenyatta, Andrew Salkey, Samuel Selvon, Venu Chitale, Harold Moody, and other crucial figures in the history of anti-colonialism, Pan-Africanism, and anti-racism. To enter into the archives through her work and movements is to enter into an important history through a room with her at the center, us peering over her shoulder to learn from her, following her concerns and championing the causes she spent her life fighting for—particularly, the need for us to be at home in the world. At a time when the Windrush generation who helped build Britain are being treated with ingratitude and disdain, many being abused and even deported to countries they no longer know as home as a result of Theresa May's "hostile environment policy," the life and work of Una Marson is all the more urgent and deserving of our attention. Let's return to the archives in search of her, so that there will be work that calls across the distance—many distances—to announce, "Hello, West Indies."

what is the sound of your voice[1]

something is cooking
kindness in leaves
i misread help for meat
no, meat for help
some suggestions for doing without meat
is what venu writes to the british
because it is her job
and introduces indian vegetarian cuisine
where nothing has gotten wasted
even outside of wartime
then and now
please don't think this is just an oriental legend
she says so in the home service
underlines that she has an english friend
cuts the fried tomato, and the curry, too
wonders if you will be interested to know
what an indian housewife would do
and see yourself in your kitchen
through eastern eyes
on the radio

Of course, I knew who you were, so I wrote an email to what I know now is simply your desk at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies. I didn't realize that don't have an official position there. And I asked, "Do you happen to know of any other places, short of making a Freedom of Information Act request to the FBI, where I can have a look at these documents?" And you replied, "Come to my house! I've got a file on Amy if you're interested in having a look at it." So at the beginning of August 2018, on a swelteringly hot day, I drove down to where you live in Care, in East Kent, and you generously opened the door and showed me that file, and so much more.

One of the many sobering things about meeting you was learning what it had taken for you to do this work without any institutional support. In my work, I am constantly returning to the question of the institution—whether the education system, the museum, the archive—how they are produced and controlled and what gets in and what gets left out. My mind boggled to think of what it has cost you, materially, to do this work. As you were saying, you received a grand total of £3,000 of research funding in a career of forty-something years. *£3,000 over forty years...* Our whinging about Arts Council budgets for making exhibitions at The Showroom starts to pale into insignificance.[16]

completely derelict and rescued what he could of her papers and her many unpublished manuscripts and took them back to his house in Brooklyn, where they remained until his death in 1986. Some of those documents were traceable but not everything, because strange, mysterious, unresolved, unanswered questions exist as to what's happened to that archive since.

One of the things that I wanted to have a look at while I was in New York was the FBI file on the West Indies National Council—an organisation that supported the movement for West Indian independence in the 1940s, and which, according to the Schomburg Center's database, contained references to Amy Ashwood Garvey. But I did not have time to look at it because I needed to go see the Maillards. I was trying to think if there might be any other place in the world where I could find this FBI file when I noticed in the database entry that their copy had been donated by you, Marika. Which I think is very interesting—that they didn't have it already, I mean—that it was donated to them by you.

a year later
no more recipes
but stories about women
because thanks to the war they now shape the world

1 According to the entry about Venu Chitale in the British Open University's database Making Britain: Discover how South Asians shaped the nation 1870–1950, Venu Chitale "joined the BBC in 1940 when the service expanded to broadcast different Indian languages including Marathi, her mother tongue. From 1941, Chitale assisted George Orwell in his work as a talks programme assistant for the BBC Indian section of the Eastern Service from 1941–43. She broadcast on his series of talks Through Eastern Eyes as well as his 1942 magazine programme Voice. She also broadcast as part of the series of talks The Hand That Rocks The Cradle, which focused on the role of women in the war effort. Like Indira Devi of Kapurthala, she also broadcast on the Home Service, where she served as a newsreader at the height of the war. She contributed to programmes such as Indian Recipes and the Kitchen Front series, which was produced by Jean Rowntree. Orwell was particularly impressed by Chitale and she was often complimented for her speaking voice. She became a fulltime member of staff as the Marathi Programme Assistant in 1942." The entry on Chitale marks a few more events, before she dies in 1995: her involvement in the India League, her friendship with first prime minister Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, her return to India in 1950 and marriage. And a side note is added: "She published several novels and died in 1995." (https://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/venu-chitale)

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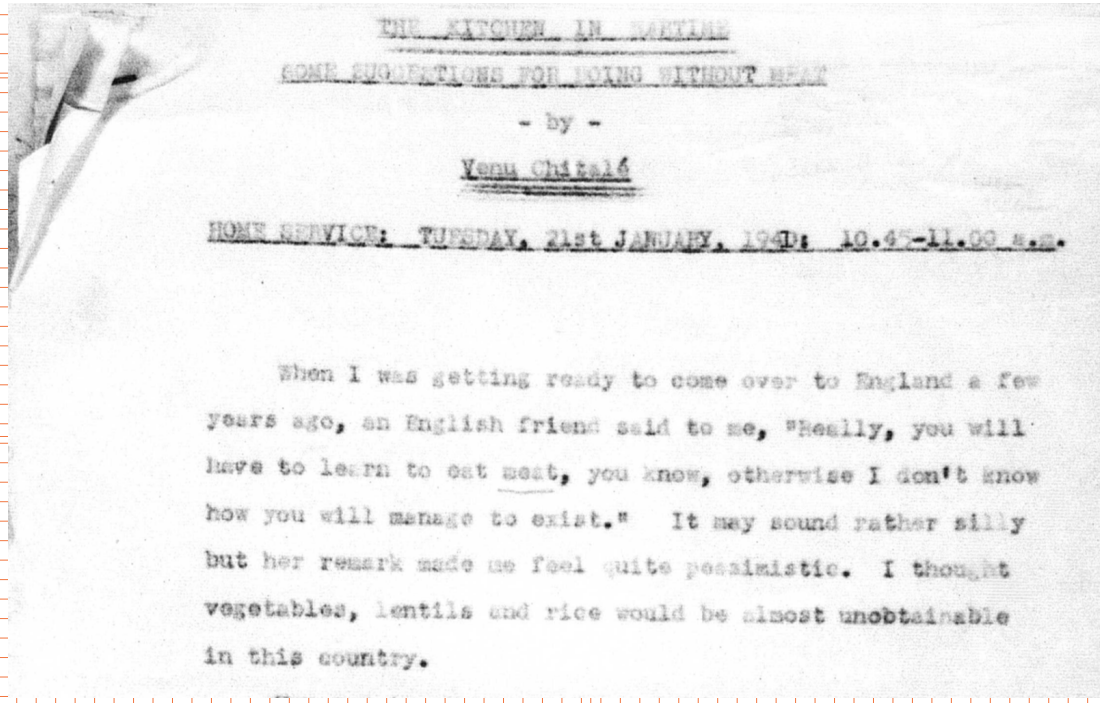
Anyway, when we met last August you asked me if I'd looked into a number of other women that had been involved in the Pan-African movement whose names I didn't knowa. And I was wondering if today you would be able to talk more about some of the women who were involved in these movements—Pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, civil rights—all of these struggles that inevitably overlap, actually, because they were all happening simultaneously. For example, the partner of George Padmore--

MS Dorothy Pizer, a white woman. In the Pan-African movement, I remember, there was the man born George Thomas Griffiths in what was then British Guiana, who after the Italians invaded Ethiopia renamed himself Ras Makonnen after Haile Selassie's father, the general who defeated the Italians the first time they invaded, back in the 1890s. Makonnen was very much part of the Pan-African movement and he moved to Manchester, we don't know why. I think, but I'm not 100% positive, that he set up a very small factory there, making handbags. I am certain that he opened a restaurant that didn't racially discriminate, so it didn't exclude Whites. There was a lot of racial discrimination in those days. And Makonnen had a partner, though I can't even recall her name; I don't even know if it was ever mentioned. I have kept all the material—most of my notes from the National Archives here and in America are hand-written, but they are all at home. Everything I have photocopied is at home, and you are all welcome to come and look. When I die, they will all go to the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton, so they will be available there.
The collection of documents and interviewing people and recording the interviews—this must be done by local groups, and they should be applying to their local police forces for surveillance documents. As far as I know, all political organisations would have been under police surveillance, especially in the 1940s, the 1930s, because that's what the government told them to do. Of course, no police force that I have approached has ever said, "Yes, here you are." Usually, the response is,



THE KITCHEN IN WARTIME

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR DOING WITHOUT MEAT

- by -

Venu Chitale

HOME SERVICE: TUESDAY, 21st JANUARY, 1941: 10.45-11.00 a.m.

When I was getting ready to come over to England a few years ago, an English friend said to me, "Really, you will have to learn to eat meat, you know, otherwise I don't know how you will manage to exist." It may sound rather silly but her remark made me feel quite pessimistic. I thought vegetables, lentils and rice would be almost unobtainable in this country.

I have been over here now for several years, and have kept myself as fit and fed as in my own country without meat or fish. As far as my diet is concerned I have hardly felt the war at all. I must admit, of course, that I rather miss the onions.

Perhaps, whenever you hear somebody mention "Indian food", you say "Ah, curry!" Of course, we do have a lot of curry, but a great number of our savoury dishes do not contain even a pinch of curry powder.

You make so many tasty dishes of meat and fish, so perhaps you don't trouble much about lentils, for instance, and vegetables. We, on the other hand, live entirely on pulses (that is, things like lentils) and grains and vegetables. They must not only be nourishing, but also appetising and tasty.

Venu Chitale, „In the Kitchen in Wartime. Some Suggetions for Doing Without Meat. Home Service, Tuesday 21 January 1941, 10.45 - 11.00," p. 2. https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/women/The%20Kitchen%20In%20Wartime%20-%20Venu%20Chitale%20-%2021-01-1941.pdf

"What makes you think we would have them?" Even the Metropolitan Police says this. To them, I said, "Look, I've found some of your reports in the Colonial Office files. And one of those reports is from a member of your staff who was at a conference in Trafalgar Square. And this particular police officer reports that the square was so crowded that he had to stand at the back of the crowd so he was only able to recognise the people who were up on the stand—and he lists the people he is recognising..." So that tells us something about the level of surveillance. The police were very polite, but my request was dismissed. You will be equally dismissed if you ask under the Freedom of Information Act, or if you ask for the MI5 files, because they would have been part of this surveillance. There is nothing released, for example, on Claudia Jones, on Amy Ashwood Garvey, on George Padmore. The files on George Padmore will probably fill this room! He was so active and he knew absolutely everybody who was active in anti-colonialism and anti-racism around the world—the government would have wanted everything.

The MI5 files on Kwame Nkrumah that have been released only go up to the very beginning of 1953—way before independence. They haven't released the rest.[17] Some pages have been removed and there are lines, whole paragraphs, deleted. But we learn from these documents that they were paying people: there were people in the Gold Coast who gave MI5 the names that Padmore and Nkrumah were using to correspond with each other, because they would have guessed that they were under surveillance. After all, Kwame Nkrumah's office here in London was raided. And it's very interesting, the way they raided his office, as it was very similar to the way Colin Prescod's home had been raided. One day, Nina went off to pick up the children from school; arriving home, they found that all of Colin's files and filing cabinets and his desk and all the drawers had been opened and everything scattered about. And that's exactly what Nkrumah found when he and Joe Appiah went to their office. Everything was opened and papers scattered around, so it's not only that they're not trying to hide that they are surveying you, they're sending you a message.[18]

We know, for example, from these MI5 files on Nkrumah, that his discussions with Padmore about different steps to take towards achieving independence and how should we do this and this and this

were all looked at and copied. What we don't know is what the government did about it. This tells you something about what those struggles for independence meant and continue to mean. Because it wouldn't only have been Nkrumah's correspondence. It would have been all those struggling for independence or against racial discrimination, so the government could consider what steps it could take to prevent anything these activists wanted to implement. Is that why the government will not release papers on any of the British activists from that era? They don't want us to know about this.

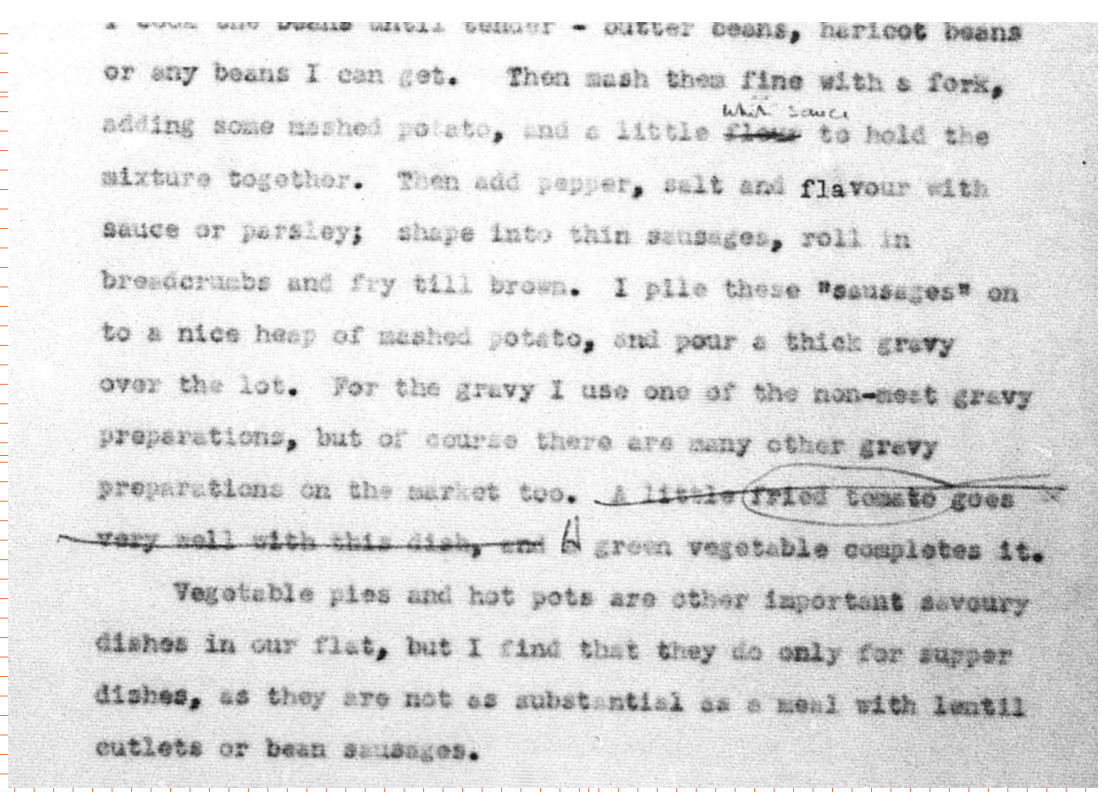
The latest response from the Central FOI Unit was, "We have to have the permission from all these people." I wrote back saying, "I'm asking you for files from the 1930s and 1940s, all these people are long dead." I haven't heard back. But this is how information is hidden. Unless community groups go out and find the people who were active in those struggles and record them—and ask them, "Have you kept any of the records, anything at all? Where can we collect it?"—we won't know the history.

EWW There is this thing Foucault writes about in a 1977 essay called "the Life of Infamous Men"—about how certain people only feature in the historical record in the context of their encounters with "power."[19] And so often the best (or only) sources of information that we have about such people are the archives of those that sought to oppress them at the behest of the state. The FBI archives, for example, contain a wealth of information. In some cases, it is one of the primary sources of information about particular oppositional movements like the West Indies National Council or the UNIA. Which is highly problematic! Getting hold of the FBI files, for example, is really useful—there are copies in the Robert A. Hill Collection at Duke University, which is an enormous archive of Hill's researches into Garvey and Garveyism and many other things—there is a lot of material, 300 boxes, it's huge, and I was only able to spend a short time there. There's only a small bit in the FBI files he acquired that is related to Amy Ashwood Garvey or to the role of women in the UNIA, but the documents he did gather are super interesting. The FBI files are an amazing source of information, but it's such a weird thing and also really problematic, because the sources are not, of course, supporters of these movements but rather those who were infiltrating them, intercepting their mail, copying their letters, in order to discredit, dismantle, and undermine them. At the same time, because the state has often been successful in destroying such organisations—or because such organisations have lacked the resources to create and preserve their own archives—because so much has been lost, we, as researchers of these organisations, often find ourselves reliant on this material, the archives of states that were actively working against them. This is something that I think about a lot.[20]

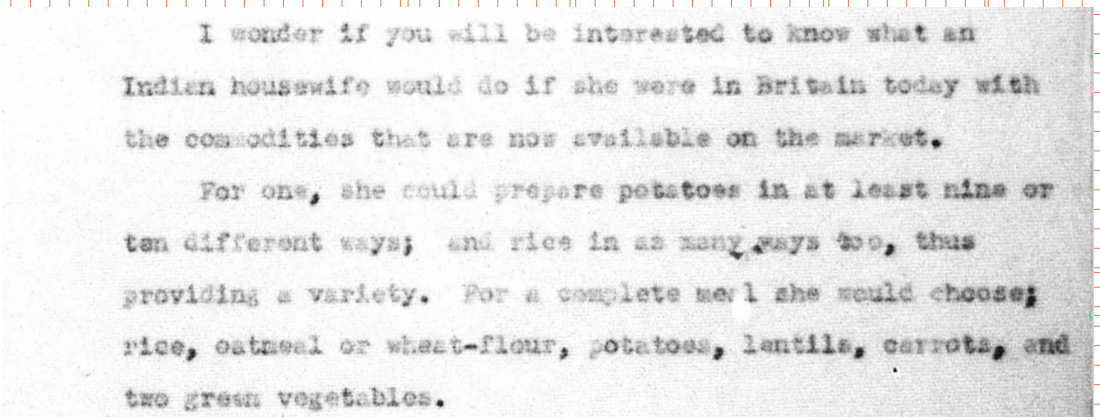
In fact, this is one of the discussions I've been having with Nydia Swaby over the course of this past year has been precisely this question of the mechanisms whereby people do or do not make it into the hegemonic historical record. How do people fall out of the main body of the story? What are the processes by which this occurs? You said something very interesting the other day about Amy Ashwood Garvey's "homelessness" being an important feature of her biography—that this very homelessness makes it difficult to locate her in the hegemonic narratives of the movements in which she participated, because it's simply not clear where she belongs, who she belongs to. I was just wondering if you were willing to share a few of your thoughts on that.

MS Well, in a way it's something I avoid thinking about because it is quite close to me. In London, where I lived for several decades, I felt relatively at home. But when I moved down to this village in Kent in 2001, I was a total stranger. That you and other "people of colour" come to visit me ensures that I remain seen as a total stranger, especially as I have kept my Hungarian name. Though I speak English, and I suppose I sound like a Londoner to them, I am a stranger. Well, where am I at home? I'm at home among my books and my African carvings and my Hungarian embroidery—that's what I am at home amongst. But I am a white person. What on earth is it like if you're a black person? You might have your house, you've got your family here, all of that you have. You're resident here. But can you be at home, here? Was Amy Ashwood Garvey, who lived some of her childhood in Jamaica, some time in Panama, because a lot of West Indians had gone there when the Panama Canal was being built because there was a lot of work, which was not well paid but it was better paid than what you could get in Jamaica. So she's there and then she's in Jamaica, she's back in Panama, back in Jamaica. And then goes to the US. Who was she? How did she see herself? How did she feel? How was a Jamaican with a Jamaican accent seen? Did she change her accent to an American one? To a New York one? She comes to London with this mixture of accents, but is she American? Is she Jamaican? Amongst whom does she feel comfortable? She wouldn't have felt comfortable among Jamaicans because she wasn't really Jamaican. Maybe among followers of Marcus, but she had left Marcus... It's one of the things that concerns me about immigration in general.

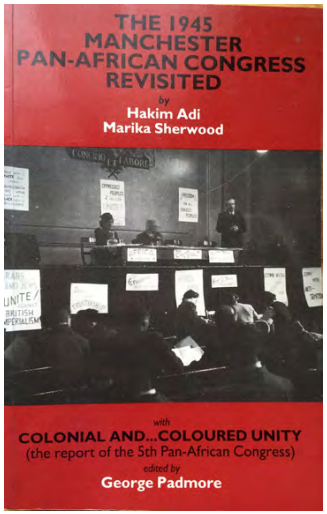
I have no family left in Hungary at all. Some died during the Holocaust, the older ones are all dead, and I had a cousin who was murdered. But Hungary, in a way, is where I am from. Am I at home in Budapest? Yes and no. I left it when I was ten years old, I'm now eighty-one. But it's my home city, in a way. It's where I was formed, I guess, by World War II. But at another level... I took my son there to visit. I took my son with me many times and his two daughters, and to this day they are resentful that I didn't speak Hungarian to them, when they were growing up. "But why?" I asked. "You gave us Hungarian food, you gave us Hungarian novels translated into English, you've shared your beautiful clothes. But you didn't teach us the language, so we can't be at home when we are in Budapest with


or any beans I can get. Then mash them fine with a fork, adding some mashed potato, and a little ~~flour~~ white sauce to hold the mixture together. Then add pepper, salt and flavour with sauce or parsley; shape into thin sausages, roll in breadcrumbs and fry till brown. I pile these "sausages" on to a nice heap of mashed potato, and pour a thick gravy over the lot. For the gravy I use one of the non-meat gravy preparations, but of course there are many other gravy preparations on the market too. ~~A little fried tomato goes very well with this dish, and~~ A green vegetable completes it.

Vegetable pies and hot pots are other important savoury dishes in our flat, but I find that they do only for supper dishes, as they are not as substantial as a meal with lentil cutlets or bean sausages.


I wonder if you will be interested to know what an Indian housewife would do if she were in Britain today with the commodities that are now available on the market.

For one, she could prepare potatoes in at least nine or ten different ways; and rice in as many ways too, thus providing a variety. For a complete meal she would choose; rice, oatmeal or wheat-flour, potatoes, lentils, carrots, and two green vegetables.



you." Which is interesting... My younger granddaughter was the top student in every school and university she was in—it is not that she isn't accepted; she is settled and part of this culture, but she is resentful that I didn't teach her Hungarian so she could be strongly and positively Hungarian as well. Which is interesting, and which I think raises many questions.

EWW I think you put it well the other evening. You said something like, "It has to do with which country claims you. If you've been this much of a nomad, who claims you at the end? And would the Jamaicans want her? Would the British want her? Would the Americans want her?" Amy Ashwood Garvey was a woman on an aeroplane *avant la lettre*. And one of the difficulties of researching her is this nomadism, her not having a "place."

MS She spent her life traveling. She was here, there, there, back here, there, there, back there. She wasn't settled anywhere at all, no, absolutely not.

London, December 2018

From a conversation at The Showroom, part of the public program around the exhibition *Women on Aeroplanes* (October 3 2018 – January 26 2019), featuring new works by Emma Wolukau-Wanambwa as well as Lungiswa Gqunta and Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum (see *inflight Magazine # 3*). In *Carrying Yours and Standing Between You*, Wolukau-Wanambwa presents the archive of her researches on Amy Ashwood Garvey over the last year, using selected texts, images, draws out and reflects upon the many and varied mechanisms that have resulted in Ashwood Garvey's historiographic marginality.

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1 See: Marika Sherwood, "Race, Empire and Education: Teaching Racism", *Race & Class* 42, 3, 2001, 1-28. "Racism in Education?", *Race Equality Teaching* 22, 3, Summer 2004, 6–8.

2 See: Marika Sherwood, "Nationality and Employment Among Lascar Seamen, 1660 to 1945", *New Community: A Journal of Research and Policy on Ethnic Relations* 17, 1991, 229–44.

3 Marika Sherwood, *Pastor Daniels Ekarté and the African Churches Mission*. London: Savannah Press 1994.

4 Onyeka, *Blackamoores: Africans in Tudor England, Their Presence, Status and Origins*. London: Narrative Eye 2013.

5 Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story*. London: Oneworld 2017.

6 Hakim Adi, Marika Sherwood, and George Padmore, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited*. London: Beacon Press 1995.

7 Nydia A. Swaby, "Amy Ashwood Garvey and the Political Aesthetics of Diasporic Social Spaces in London," *Symbolism* 14, 2004, 59–74.

8 Ibid, 64.

9 Ibid, 64.

10 Ibid, 69.

11 I have two biographies of Amy on my shelves: Lionel M. Yard, *Biography of Amy Ashwood Garvey 1897–1969, Co-founder of The Universal Negro Improvement Association*. New York: Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History 1989. Tony Martin, *Amy Ashwood Garvey: Pan-Africanist, Feminist, and Mrs. Marcus Garvey No. 1, Or, A Tale of Two Amys*. Dover, Massachusetts: The Majority Press, Inc. 2007. Also an article by Rhoda Reddock, "The First Mrs Garvey: Pan-Africanism and Feminism in the Early 20th Century British Colonial Caribbean," *Feminist Africa* 19, 2014, 58–77.

12 There are seven recordings, which can be found by searching for Claudia+Jones+Symposium in the British Library's catalog, http://cadensa.bl.uk/.

13 Marika Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Life in Exile*. London: Lawrence & Wishart 2000.

14 This section of the Communist Party of Great Britain was usually referred to as the 'West Indian Branch". See, e.g. Trevor Carter, *Shattering 'Illusions': West Indians in British Politics*. London: Lawrence & Wishart 1986, 56.

15 Lionel M. Yard, *Biography of Amy Ashwood Garvey, 1897–1969, Co-Founder of The Universal Negro Improvement Association*. New York: Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History 1989.

16 The *Women on Aeroplanes* exhibition at The Showroom Gallery was awarded a grant of £12,000 by Arts Council England, and received financial support from The Showroom, the Otolith Collective, the Women on Aeroplanes project and a number of other funders. For more details, see https://www.theshowroom.org/exhibitions/women-on-aeroplanes.

17 The MI5 files on Nkrumah are at the National Archives: KV 3/1847 – 1851. See also, Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah and the Dawn of the Cold War: The West African National Secretariat, 1945–48*. London: Pluto Press 2019.

18 Joseph Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot*. Accra: Asempa Publisher 1998, 167.

19 "What rescues them from the darkness of night where they would, and still should perhaps, have been able to remain, is an encounter with power: without this collision, doubtless there would no longer be a single word to recall their fleeting passage. The power which lay in wait for these lives, which spied on them, which pursued them, which turned its attention, even if only for a moment, to their complaints and to their small tumults, which marked them by a blow of its claws, is also the power which instigated the few words which are left for us of those lives; whether because someone wished to address themselves to power in order to denounce, to complain, to solicit, to beg, or because power desired to intervene, and then judged and sentenced in a few words. All these lives, which were destined to pass beneath all discourse and to disappear without ever being spoken, have only been able to leave behind traces—brief, incisive, often enigmatic—at the point of their instantaneous contact with power. So that it is doubtless impossible ever to recapture them in themselves, such as they might have been 'in a free state'; they can now only be located when seized in the declamations, the tactical partialities, the imperative falsehoods which the power games and the relations with power presuppose." Michel Foucault, "The Life of Infamous Men," in: Michel Foucault, *Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris & Paul Patton. Sydney: Feral Publications 1979, 79f.

20 For a groundbreaking exploration of this problem, see Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26, 12, 2, June 2008, 1–14.

Towards a time and a place where the work is the work

Lubaina Himid

Lubaina Himid in conversation with **Annett Busch, Marie-Hélène Gutberlet** and **Magda Lipska,** recorded in the morning around a kitchen table and in the evening at a museum, one rainy sunny day in Warsaw[1], November 2018.

Before

If you want to understand why the work that I make looks like it looks, the secret is in these words: "trained as a theatre designer." Trained is not quite the right word. I left that theatre design course in 1976 and what I've learned in all those years since is, audience is incredibly important. And that carries on through the work that I make now. I have a total belief that the work doesn't work until it's in the space and audiences are kind of breathing their own life into the work. Bringing their own experience and mapping it over my experience, over the top of bigger, much more traumatic experiences. And nothing really works unless these conversations are happening.

I left school and found out that I was inadequately trained to do anything useful, so I decided to do something useful which was to be a waitress. And as you can imagine, actually, I wasn't a very good waitress either, but then again I learned that restaurants, like markets and streets and museums, are also theatrical places where human beings interact with each other and drama happens. And if you work as a waitress in the same restaurant for many years, as I did, whilst I was doing bits of pieces of kind of designing things—I designed the restaurant's interior, the menus, tables, and all the rest

—you learn to watch people and to listen to them. Not in the way a writer listens to dialogue. But to listen to how they behaved in their space. They were performing in that space, and in a way, we waitresses were the audience for their performance. Men would come in with women at lunch time, however men are at lunchtime with women, and then come in the very same day in the evening with a different woman. And we waitresses were young women, we began to understand lots of things about how people perform in spaces.

What I did in that restaurant was, I set up, in a way, a gallery. We're talking 1976 in Britain. This is a time where restaurants were places you went to eat a meal. You couldn't go in a restaurant in Britain at that time where I have a meal, you have a cup of coffee, and you have a beer. You went to restaurant to have a meal, and if you wanted to drink you had to go to a pub. You couldn't do this French brasserie kind of thing. Then at some point after I had become involved in this restaurant, we needed something on the walls. And there wasn't much money. So I asked friends of mine who I'd gone to art school with to exhibit in this space. And I began to realise that the work on the walls could initiate conversations between groups of people who had gone out to eat and who didn't have anything to say to each other. So I understood that art could make conversation happen.

what we wanted to see in art galleries and what we were not seeing

There's something about the idea of a conversation we find in your paintings but it's impossible to say what the conversation is actually about. The image of an unknown conversation opens up a space where, depending on the mood of the day or something specific that happens in terms of politics, and then the conversation changes again. That was a kind of driving idea, to have a conversation with you about the different notions and moments of changing conversations and how you think about these.

Those conversations are of course different in different decades. And depending where I was living, geographically, or how I was earning my living, the conversations are different again. Then after winning a Turner Prize—my life is the same, but the changed status meant there were then other conversations. My conversations with the gallery that represents me are strangely different because they're having so many conversations now with people who are collecting the work. So they're asking me questions that art historians have never asked. Which is interesting.