Ritual and resistance: (trans)forming queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain

Matthew Richardson

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Geography, Politics, and Sociology at Newcastle University

24/03/2023

Abstract

This thesis centres the lived experiences of eighteen queer Jews in postsecular Britain. In situating my work between postsecular geographies of lived religion and the anthropology of experience, I present rituals as the technologies by which things are brought into being. By foregrounding rituals, I critically outline the haptic, politically conscious, and symbolic acts queer Jews mobilise in the (trans)formation of selves, spaces, and others. My findings are grounded in fourteen months of virtual narrative ethnography. My focus is on the stories participants told, the memories they recalled, and the queered ethnoreligious worlds they (trans)formed through unstructured life story interviews, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. Considering this, I conducted my research in collaboration with the Council of Christians and Jews – a nationwide forum for interfaith engagement – as part of their ongoing LGBT+ initiative.

Throughout this thesis, I illustrate the ritual performances latent in participants' self-actualisation. First, I explore the role of heritage and memory in participants' self-construal. I find that rituals are pivotal in actualising ties to an imagined community or symbolic peoplehood – an affective, (im)material, and fundamentally social entity (trans)formed through the narration of history and recollection of memory. Second, I focus on participants' extrasensory perception of the spatialised power relations they are subjected to, subject others to, and subject themselves to. Here, I find that rituals represent key place-making practices – the tools by which selves, spaces, and others are differentiated as such through the active, agential, and creative (re)aggregation of spatial configurations. Third, I emphasise the actualising power of ritual performance through the ethnographic vignette of Buttmitzvah. I demonstrate how ritual – alongside liminality and communitas – actualises the process of self (trans)formation in a queer Jewish rite of passage that is at once spatially bound and diffused, temporally fixed and transcendent. In doing so, I trace the complicated and often contradictory relationship between structure and anti-structure, communitas and commerciality, ritual and resistance. I conclude by arguing that rituals are more than indexical phenomena, they are the tools by which things are brought into being, worlds constructed, and subjectivities (trans)formed.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the 18 participants who so graciously gave up their time (during a Pandemic no less!) to share their stories with me. This piece of work quite literally would not have been possible without you. I want to express my deepest thanks to you all – I hope that this work does your contribution justice.

I would link to thank my supervisory team: Professor Peter Hopkins, Doctor Raksha Pande, and Professor Yulia Egorova. Your guidance and support over these years has been invaluable. Thank you so much for the expertise, knowledge, and time you have shared with me – you have all been there for me through the many ups and downs of a PhD project.

To mam and dad, thank you for your love and support. To Amy and Luke – my eldest siblings – your endless encouragement has been a godsend. To Hannah – my sister and academic comrade – I won't hold you completing your own PhD half a year before me against you too much. To Ally and Joyce – my aunts and most vocal supporters – who always offered refuge from busy schedules and looming deadlines. To my nana, May, I hope this work does you proud. To all my family, I could not have done this without you.

To my partner, Matt, no words can do justice to the love and support you have given me over the years. In completing this PhD, you have been both my most loyal advocate and my most sensitive critic.

I would like to thank my academic friends and colleagues: Si Long, Alicia, Tom, Melissa, Hannah, Ale, Beth, Zara, Joe, Lottie, Luke, Haris, Emma E., Emma C., Pilar, and Dan. From our exile at Northumberland House to our move to the Henry Daysh Building, we have all truly been in it together. Thank you also to everyone within the School of Geography, Politics, and Sociology at Newcastle University – for such a fruitful research environment and for always lending an ear when needed.

To my friends, the strength of our friendship has only grown stronger. Becky, Evie, and Jess – your hospitality, love, and patience for when I needed to get away from the PhD were a lifeline. To Alex, Josh, and Rachel – thank you for endless nights of laughter and joy.

Table of contents

Table of figures

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Setting the stage: researching social drama

Friday the 29th of January 2021 – the start of a particularly sombre Shabbat. It had been ten months and six days since the former Prime Minister – Boris Johnson – addressed the nation on "the biggest threat" it had faced in decades (Prime Minister's Office, 2020b). Covid-19 had come to pattern nearly every sphere of life – from pathologising everyday social relations to widening health inequalities. The Prime Minister's speech coincided with the proposed start of my fieldwork which – after an initial period of shock and (hopeful) waiting – had to be redesigned and (re)negotiated in line with the fast-moving health emergency. There had been a momentary relaxation of the lockdown rules a few months earlier. For those of us in the Northeast, however, this was short lived with the localised reintroduction of restrictions in late September. The tier system was implemented following the second national lockdown on December 2nd. On January 6th England entered its third national lockdown – one that was to last in some form or another until June 2021. That winter was miserable. Days were spent alternating between an empty office and an apartment I shared with my partner – a cramped space for two people working from home. Nights were cold and dark – the streets quiet and the nearby park empty and waterlogged. Birthdays were missed, weddings postponed, and – most upsetting of all – periods of mourning done alone and/or remotely.

It was in the early stages of this third lockdown that R emailed me an invite to a virtual Friday evening service at their synagogue – a Progressive Jewish congregation they had attended since 2018. R, a queer Jewish lesbian in their early thirties, was to deliver a sermon marking Holocaust Memorial Day – which took place two days prior on January 27th, the 76th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. R was raised in a mixed faith, albeit secular, household. They had "tried to be Christian for a while" in their early adolescence, but felt they were mostly "done with religion" when they "realised" they were a lesbian at age 14 (life story interview, November 2020). While they grew up with some understanding of their Jewish selfhood, it was not until the convergence of several traumatic events

1

in their mid-to-late twenties that R decided to reach out to a Jewish community themselves. What followed over the next few years was a tacitly choreographed journey of queer Jewish 'self-actualisation' (Rogers, 1961) – a unique mode of subject (trans)formation demonstrating agency and creativity in the making of the self.

R was one of the 18 people who agreed to take part in the research project underpinning this thesis – the focus of which centred on the lived experiences of queer Jews in postsecular Britain. The project began formally in Autumn 2019 and aimed to critically explore the role of ritual in the process of queer Jewish self (trans)formation. The project was grounded in fourteen months of virtual narrative ethnographic research comprising of unstructured life story interviews, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation. As outlined below, these ethnographic encounters were intended to explore the three facets of queer Jewish self-actualisation that were informed by – and informed – the research questions. Simply put, these facets include subject (trans)formation, space and place, and ritual performance.

R participated in their first research encounter in November 2020, and it had been a few weeks since our second encounter when they approached me about attending their virtual Shabbat. The Friday evening service was to be a unique opportunity for me to explore the role of ritual in constellating the process of self-actualisation in situ – encapsulating the two guiding aims of this work. It was R's first *d'var Torah* (sermon on a portion of the Torah) since their *B'nei Mitzvah* – the plural and more gender-expansive term for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The service was held over Zoom – an online video conferencing platform which saw increased demand during the Covid-19 pandemic – with the log-in credentials sent to me shortly beforehand by R personally. During this time, we discussed what my role would be during the service, ethical and security concerns regarding its recording, and what to expect from its hybrid nature. I joined the call alongside roughly two dozen attendees – wondering whether anyone in the congregation would question my presence and what I might say in return.

The service was relatively informal – the preamble filled with general 'chit-chat' among the congregants. The evening followed the liturgical order of a

Progressive Friday night service with some additional prayers and thoughts relating to Holocaust Memorial Day. The theme of that year's Holocaust Memorial Day, "Be the light in the darkness," spoke of the triumph of light as symbolic of knowledge, reason, compassion, understanding, and hope (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, 2021). R and their fellow congregants lit their Shabbat candles, a cascade of light flowing across the various digital avatars – symbols which took on dual significance due to the ritual performance's spatial-temporal context. After some negotiation, one of the participants was selected to lead the congregation in song. Congregants sang in chorus following their lead, some on mute and some unmuted – connected to one another through their digital devices in welcoming the Sabbath.

R began their d'var Torah by addressing Holocaust Memorial Day – the painful memories this may elicit among the congregation – before moving on to acknowledge the holiness of Shabbat. Their sermon focused on the story of Jethro, Moses' Kenite father-in-law, and the inertia and loneliness we feel during our most difficult experiences. Just as Jethro had borne witness to Moses' account of the Hebrews' deliverance from Egypt, so too can we learn about resilience and enrichment from the stories others tell us – offering wisdom from our own lived experiences that can be used to enact real change.

The focus of R's sermon centred on what it means to have someone else listen to your story, and really hear it. Like Jethro, R encouraged us to hear the stories of the people in the world around us, listen for things that might call to our own experience, and use this to change the world. The sermon was hard hitting, coming at a time when I was reflecting deeply on my own positionality not only as an insider-outsider researcher, but as a human being. After R's sermon, the service concluded with the *Aleinu* – a prayer typically following the return of the Torah to the ark but now done remotely. In between the Aleinu and the *Kiddush* – the blessing over the wine or challah loaf marking the end of the service – the rabbi paused and asked whether I was present.

Having told R I would keep a low profile during the service and being unsure as to how 'out' they might have been to their community, I became quite nervous – a lump in my throat materialising as I thought of what I could say to deflect any probing questions. The rabbi introduced me as a researcher and mentioned that I

3

had been invited to join the community by R, who then unmuted their microphone and welcomed me to the service also. Neither R nor the rabbi went into detail about the queer aspects of my research or the fact that R was a research participant. I kept my responses to expressions of gratitude to R, the rabbi, and the wider congregation – reflecting and thus (trans)forming an uneven topography of outness within the ritual space-time. Without hesitation, and despite my nervousness, the congregation recited the Kiddush in uniform with some congregants holding up their cups and challah to the webcam. Throughout the ritual performance, darkness was juxtaposed with light, social distance with connection, the past with the present (and future), and despair with hope. In the pale blue light of the Zoom Shabbat, I felt I had encountered a glowing sense of community.

It was by engaging with the Friday night service through participant observation – by experiencing it – that I felt as if I had stepped into a vortex of affects, memories, and performances which revealed in retrospect the numerous social processes operating within the digital event-space. In this way, the Friday night service was a perfect example of a social drama (or convergence of multiple dramas) encapsulating the central argument of this work. Namely, that selves are in a constant state of becoming – (trans)formed in situ through the performance of ritual. I use the term "(trans)form" to emphasise the "intersectionality and interdependence" part and parcel of this process (Schroeder, 2014, p. 178).

Victor Turner – an anthropologist of experience whose main theories of liminality, communitas, and ritual underpin this thesis – understood social dramas as a form of conflict within any given social group due to a breach or interruption in the processes structuring group life (Turner, 1982b). The breach is the first of four observable stages in social dramas. Following Robinson *et al.*'s (2015) interpretation of Turner (1982b), what follows next is a state of crisis or struggle (stage two) in which the social group fragments into competing factions. To address this, redressive means are taken by those dependent on, or most invested in, group cohesion (stage three). Such redressive means seek to impose alternative social arrangements aimed at resolving the cause of the breach. These social arrangements are relative to two opposing poles – (re)integration and segregation – and depend upon the group's ability to address and mediate the

4

breaching conditions (Robinson *et al.*, 2015). Turner has suggested (1982b, p. 9) that social dramas reveal on one hand:

> the taxonomic relations among actors (their kinship ties, structural positions, social class, political status, and so forth), and their contemporary bonds and oppositions of interest and friendship, their personal network ties, and informal relationships.

On another, it is during social dramas that actors bring with them their unique character – or, in the words of Massumi (1997), 'local style' – to the stage. Social dramas reveal the emotionally powerful (and competing) symbols operating across and within all social groups (Turner, 1982b). Drawing on Lévi-Strauss' concept of 'sensory codes' (1969), Turner argued (1982b) that social dramas reveal how information is transmitted between social actors within any given group, the emotional resonance of its reception, and its mobilisation within everyday social processes.

Following Robinson *et al.* (2015) and Sinha *et al.* (2021), Turner's social drama theory (1974, 1982a, 1982b) emphasises conflict, constraints, and fragmentation within social groups – where resistance and struggle are part and parcel of group life. Several social dramas converged around R's Shabbat sermon and this work more broadly. First, the Covid-19 social drama "has brought about massive changes in religious landscapes across the world" (Chen *et al.*, 2021, p. 301). Specifically, governmental responses to the pandemic have "significantly affected religious gatherings, places of worship, and rhythms of ritual practices" (ibid., p. 302). Researchers have also pointed out the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on minoritised ethnoreligious communities. In addition to elevated Jewish mortality from coronavirus in Britain (Staetsky, 2021), the Covid-19 pandemic has led to novel – and in some cases increasing – manifestations of Antisemitism in a variety of public, semi-public, and online-private spaces (Community Security Trust, 2021). For example, there have been several incidents where video conferencing events were 'hijacked' with antisemitic material – something the CST termed 'Zoombombings' (ibid., pp. 9-10). As such, Covid-19 reveals the social process of postsecularisation – where Jewish selves are distinguished as other through the widening of social inequalities.

5

Queer people have also been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 – either because of heightened anxiety around the effect of coronavirus on existing health issues or because of queer people having to self-isolate with abusive families and partners (Kelleher, 2020). In a systematic review of UK research on the impact of Covid-19 on sexual and gender minorities, however, McGowan *et al.* argue (2021) that more robust research is needed to fully understand the sociostructural factors contributing to the disproportionate effects of coronavirus on queer lives. In turn, Covid-19 reveals the social process of heteronormativity – where queer selves are distinguished as other through disproportionate health impacts and 'silencing polemics' in governmental and scholarly responses to the Pandemic (Shah, 2021, p. 323). The Covid-19 breach thus highlights some of the social processes fuelling fragmentation and marginalising subject (trans)formation – leading us on to the second social drama.

Marginalisation and persecution were prominent themes underpinning R's sermon, not least because of its purpose in marking Holocaust Memorial Day. Genocide represents a social drama in that it results in a "historical discontinuity of familial and communal ties" (Harold & Fong, 2018, p. 350). Though this theme will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Four, it is important here to recognise how the cultural trauma generated by the Holocaust was evident in the collective memories, symbols, and theologies transmitted through the Friday night ritual performance (ibid.). Here, the application of the term 'drama' to events such as the Holocaust is by no means meant to trivialise their traumatic effects but to refocus our interpretation to the crises they create – as well as the attempts by social actors to redress the resultant fragmentation. Again, the Holocaust reveals a process of social identification – where Jewish selves are rendered as other due to historical discontinuity, intergenerational trauma, and the transmission of collective memories (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021)

While the persecution of queers was (and normally is) commemorated during Holocaust Memorial Day (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, 2021), it was only implied during R's sermon – perhaps owing to an uneven topography of outness (Boussalem, 2020) and the political connotations of queer inclusion and semiology in Holocaust remembrance (Jensen, 2002). Implicit in R's call to social justice and

tacitly located in the digital constellation of the ritual space-time, queerness triggered its own social dramas – both in the heterosexualisation of the online event-space and the presence of queer selves in the ethnoreligiously defined group (Boulila, 2015; Valentine, 1993). The covert jostling for space and meaning among the gendered and sexed bodies present during the Friday night service illustrates the ongoing subject positioning of queer Jews as well as the 'power geometries' within which they are aggregated (Massey, 1994). This brings us to the third social drama underpinning the Friday night service and the primary focus of this work.

If we take Turner's theory of social drama (1974, 1982b, 1982a) together with Boussalem's research (2022) on LGBT selves from Muslim backgrounds in Brussels, the very existence of queer Jewish selves represents a social drama. Drawing on Butler (1993), Boussalem argues (2022, p. 3) that "existence itself, at this intersection, can have disruptive effects on the strict binaries along which difference is imagined and organised." This argument is one in a growing body of literature which seeks to reaffirm, reconcile, and reframe the relationship between ethnoreligiosity and queerness – emphasising the voices of those in-between and problematising the rigid boundaries between the two. Such research has grown to account for queer Buddhists and Buddhisms (Yip & Smith, 2010), Christians and Christianities (Gross & Yip, 2010; Taylor *et al.*, 2014), Muslims and Islams (Rahman, 2014; Shah, 2018, 2021), and Jews and Judaisms (Schnoor, 2006; Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015).

Returning to Boussalem (2022), selves that are made simultaneously ethnoreligious and queer breach the social norms and imaginations regarding both subject positions. It was Schnoor who argued (2006) that, alongside the homophobia experienced in the Jewish community, queer Jews struggle to find social belonging within the queer community. While Schnoor attributes this to the nature of identity-based movements (ibid.), Burstin points (1999) to the ingrained Antisemitism, racism, and implicit Whiteness in queer spaces. Regardless of the exact cause of this disruption, Schnoor observes (2006, p. 44) how queer Jews "often struggle to find ways to successfully negotiate their ethnoreligious and sexual identities." This theme of identity conflict – or breach – has persisted in more recent literature on queer Jewish identities:

7

> It is difficult enough to be an ethnic and religious minority facing discrimination based upon physical appearance, name, or dress, but adding to that a minority sexual identity can create stress, confusion, and anxiety. (Barrow & Kuvalanka, 2011, p. 473)

This emphasis on struggle, where one experiences a crisis of "tension and anxiety […] between" their queer identity and its perceived incongruence with their religious beliefs and traditions (Zeidner & Zevulun, 2018, p. 473), has persisted not least because of the inseparability between one's queerness and one's ethnoreligiosity (Glassgold, 2008; Milligan, 2013, 2014). I am hesitant, however, of painting an overly essentialising and totalising picture of queer ethnoreligious selves – especially one characterised by conflict and marginalisation. Indeed, Boussalem reminds (2022, p. 16) researchers working at the intersection between ethnoreligiosity and queerness that:

> The intersectional social locations inhabited by LGBTQ people from a Muslim background are not only marked by oppression. At these intersectional locations, ways of existing, living, and identifying outside (or beyond) the rigid norms that discipline social relations are imagined and enacted.

R's Shabbat service is a social drama that reveals the various social processes (trans)forming their queer Jewish subjectivity. In terms of their Jewishness, it reveals a process of collective remembering (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005; Sugiman, 2005) which (trans)forms a subject position based on a socially constructed past and political call to action (Harold & Fong, 2018). At the same time, R's queer subjectivity is (trans)formed through the uneven topography of outness in the Shabbat event-space – one that is implicit, tacit, and vicarious among the social actors engaged in the ritual performance. This reflects findings from Villicana *et al.* (2016), who observe that queers from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to engage in more tacit forms of self-expression regarding their queerness. It also mirrors findings from Boussalem (2020, p. 435) in that it problematises the linear narrative of queerness inherent in "Western discourses around LGBTQ identities and sexualities."

As such, we come to the first aim of this research project; that is*, to explore how queer Jewish selves are (trans)formed in a variety of spaces and at a variety of times*. The spatial and temporal clarification to this aim is made for two reasons. First, it is to guard against essentialising and totalising the various subject positions

8

participants find themselves in. Second, it is because selves are never made in a spatial-temporal vacuum. Clearly, one's subject (trans)formation is dependent upon the radically contingent sociostructural conditions informing – and informed by – this social process. In this way, social dramas uncover the power geometries constellating certain space-times and the subject positions of the selves gathered within (Massey, 1994; Turner, 1974, 1982a, 1982b). As argued above, the Zoom Shabbat revealed a power geometry hinged upon heterosexualising and postsecularising processes – both in the collective memories of genocide transmitted through the liturgical order and the uneven topography of outness (trans)formed by selves and others within the event-space. While I will explore the concept of postsecularism later in this chapter and the next, as well as its manifestation alongside heteronormativity in Chapter Five, the focus here is on how social processes are rooted in space – with self (trans)formation corresponding to one's subject position in a highly contingent social environment.

But such social processes do not act unilaterally upon passive agents. Instead, people themselves engage in their own subject (trans)formation at every turn. It is through ritual performance that selves are made, and social dramas redressed – something acknowledged in both early (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982) and more recent literature on the topic (Reed-Danahay, 2020; Robinson *et al.*, 2015). Drawing on Turner's original theory (1967, 1969), Reed-Danahay rightly observes (2020) that social dramas reflect the transition stage in rites of passage – where the ritual performer hangs between position, status, and selfhood. Influenced by van Gennep's *rites de passage* (1909), this liminal state of separation is characterised by great danger and potentiality and, as such, must be managed through redressive ritual means which work to mediate the struggling factions (Turner, 1967).

Such rituals may seek to reaggregate the competing social factions into one cohesive whole – either through symbolic displays of unity (e.g., eating and drinking together) or performances which (re)affirm members' most basic or widest beliefs (Myerhoff, 1978). When the breach is deemed irremediable, rituals may seek to separate the disruptive forces – as found in the life-crisis rituals of birth, coming-of-age, marriage, and death (Turner, 1967, 1982b). R's Shabbat service

can be seen as an attempt to redress several social dramas through *both* (re)integration and segregation. On one level, the communal acts of chanting, praying, and singing together are a symbolic display of togetherness in a time of pathological social fragmentation. On another, the symbolic light of the candles and audible sermon on social justice unified past traumas with present conditions – paradoxically and simultaneously separating the two through a political call to action, one which aimed to ensure that such horrors remain a thing of the past.

Concerning subject (trans)formation, R's sermon represents a ritualised mode of identity arbitration (Egorova, 2013, 2018). Specifically, by calling upon powerful symbolic referents to collective memory and biblical theology, R tacitly stretched the boundaries of the Jewish community to reincorporate their queer self. Simultaneously, through participating in the Friday night rituals, R (re)affirmed their Jewishness despite their queerness. As such, R's ritual performance represents an empowering act of self-actualisation – reflecting Barbara Myerhoff's argument (1982, p. 261) that selves are made in the dramatised ritual performances which render visible their "actual and desired truths" about who they are and who they want to be.

This leads us to the second research aim underpinning this project; namely, *to explore the innumerate ritual performances queer Jews engage with in the process of self (trans)formation*. Guarding against essentialising and totalising discourses, this aim enables us to understand the highly variegated ways of doing Jewishness *and* queerness through ritual performance. Departing from more functionalist readings of ritual behaviour (Durkheim, 1912; van Gennep, 1909), this approach affirms the argument that rituals do not merely mark the social processes they seek to mitigate – they actualise them through their very performance (Rappaport, 1999). Centring autonomy, ingenuity, and performativity, this thesis seeks to explore the haptic, ritualistic, and symbolic ways in which 18 queer Jews (trans)formed a sense of self in response to the socio-material worlds around them – specifically, postsecular Britain. Rituals are foregrounded as the technology by which people show themselves to themselves and others, construe their positionality, and make sense of their lived experiences. Before moving on to the

aims and questions orienting this project, I want to briefly comment on my decision to open this thesis with a discussion on social dramas.

My interpretation and use of social drama theory is much looser than can be found in Turner's earlier work (1967, 1974), where there are far more rigid parameters determining what can be considered such a (re)generative process – from differences of opinion among actors to a more direct emphases on conflict and strife (Sinha *et al.*, 2021). While social dramas are indeed meta-themes running throughout this thesis (Reed-Danahay, 2020), they are not in and of themselves the primary focus of this work. Instead, they reflect the social transitions, struggles, and acts of resistance that trigger much reflection on the social fabric of the worlds around us – forming the backdrop to the sociostructural conditions in which this thesis was produced. As such, it is worth highlighting some of the more overarching crises which bring into context the following aims, questions, and interpretations.

1.2 Research questions

To reiterate, there are two primary research aims guiding this work: to explore queer Jewish subject (trans)formation in situ and to outline the role of ritual in this process. While such aims were significant in framing both the research process and the written findings below, they by no means downplay the 'chaotic and unplanned nature' of social research (Davies, 1998, p. 27), not least due to the disruption caused by Covid-19 – something I will explore further in Chapter Three. On one hand, the focus and semantic emphasis of the research aims underwent a constant process of negotiation and look quite differently now than in the earliest funding application and project approval form. For example, the research aims originally leaned more heavily into functionalism and the cathartic effect of ritual performance on queer Jewish bodies. While the 'calming' or 'grounding' effects of ritual will form an integral part of this thesis, detailing such a/effects is not the primary aim – since doing so would neglect the agential and (trans)formative power of ritual performance (Rappaport, 1999).

As such, the following research questions were designed to address the primary goals of this work:

RQ1) How do queer Jews (trans)form and perform their queer Jewish selves?

RQ2) What space and place-making practices do queer Jews engage in?

RQ3) What is the role of rituals in actualising queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain?

As highlighted above, these questions were conducive to exploring – and corresponded with – the three facets of queer Jewish self-actualisation that became apparent during fieldwork. To reiterate, research designs are fluid – they move with the ebb and flow of the research process. Like the aims that frame them, the above questions should not be seen as neat and rigid formulae. Indeed, while they guided data collection, codification, and analysis in their original format – as well as the written order of this thesis – they were adapted in line with the emergent data, input from participants, literature-led interpretation, and areas of potential application.

With RQ1, I had initially intended on contouring intersectional identity construction and expression – drawing on Schnoor's study (2006) of gay Jewish identities in Toronto, Canada. While a constructionist approach to researching queer Jewish identities was influential in the design of this research project, I found that the stories participants told about their selves and others revealed a more interdependent, non-linear, and messy process of subject (trans)formation.[1] The move towards selfhood corresponds more closely to participants' own narratives – specifically, the constantly shifting assortment of customs, heritages, memories, relations, rituals, and symbols they drew upon to (trans)form an interdependent, queer Jewish bricolage of self (Myerhoff, 1982). Likewise, while the term identity expression does imply an agential act, I found that performance better accounted for the political and symbolic acts in which participants sought to actualise their selves. Specifically, through ritualistic and symbolic performance, participants (and others) were able to bear witness to the "actual and desired truths" about their selves (ibid., p. 261).

---

[1] It must be noted, however, that Schnoor recognises (2006) that the four negotiation strategies he identified are fluid and dynamic rather than rigid and binary.

With RQ2, I originally devised two separate questions regarding participants' spatial experiences and practices:

- How do queer Jews negotiate queer, Jewish, and urban spaces in postsecular Britain?
- How do queer Jews construct, embody, and inhabit queer Jewish spaces?

These merged into RQ2 for two main reasons. First, participants' data showed a minimal emphasis on urban space over rural space. On one hand, not all participants lived in urban environments and, for those that did, their relationship to this environment changed with the national lockdowns restricting movement within them. This led me to collapse the two questions in terms of scale and scope – reframing the line of inquiry to account for rural and Covid-19-altered landscapes. On another, and as to be discussed in Chapters Five and Six, participants were active agents in space and place (trans)formation – responding to sociospatial structures through various ritualistic and symbolic acts. By shifting the emphasis of RQ2 to one of agency and creativity – I account for the call and response way in which participants (trans)formed selves and spaces.

With RQ3, I had originally leant into a purely functional approach to ritual performance – focusing primarily on how rituals help solidify, affirm, and express queer Jewish identities. As argued above, this neglects rituals' actualising principle in the (trans)formation of self and space. To reiterate, rituals have a structuring principle which brings into existence what they seek to realise (Rappaport, 1999). The interrelationship between ritual and sociostructural (trans)formation is thus emphasised in the modification of this research question – accommodating the concepts of communitas, liminality, and social drama (Turner, 1967, 1969, 1974) which emerged at the personal-structural interface in participants' narratives.

By shifting the focus to (trans)formation, this open-ended question also speaks to Carl Roger's formulation of self-actualisation (1961). Rooted in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) and person-centred approaches to counselling, self-actualisation refers to "man's [sic] tendency to actualise himself, to become his potentialities" (Rogers, 1961, p. 351). Fundamental to the coherent construction of selfhood (see also, Geertz, 1986, 1988 on I-witnessing), self-actualisation is

adopted here to account for the (trans)formative potentialities of ritual performance. This question corresponds to the complex, competing meanings inscribed in – and attributed to – ritual performance by participants' ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed selves.

Above, I have followed Davies' advice (1998) to reflect on the ways in which the aims and questions guiding this work have shifted in the process of doing research. Of course, Davies also stresses (ibid., p. 27) how the selection of sources and questions is dependent upon a "combination of personal factors, disciplinary culture, and external forces in the broader political, social, and economic climate." Below, I outline the personal, political, and academic factors influencing this work.

1.3 Means, motives, opportunities

According to Kanuha (2000), classical approaches to social research were developed by researchers who saw themselves as objectively removed from their work. Increasingly:

> the body of works that represents the most critical analyses of the researcher vis-à-vis the research project has been generated by scholars who are lesbians, men of colour, international feminists, and others whose personal experiences and professional accounts often represent challenges to the hegemonic traditions of science, epistemology, and ontology in academia. (ibid., p. 440)

As researchers, our subject position – the political values we hold, the academic theories we bring – interacts with our research at every stage, from the personal motivations guiding our topic of choice to our political (non-)alignment with collaborative partners (Davies, 1998). In this section, I build on the above literature by paying due attention to the personal, political, and scholarly social dramas intertwined with this work. Of course, these factors are inevitably interlinked; therefore, the below disclosures should be read as a purely reflexive exercise in disentangling their unique contributions to this work.

1.3.1 The personal

As a White, queer, non-Jewish religious minority (Bahá'í), it would be safe to assume that my own lived experiences inform this work. While I will critically explore my insider-outsider positionality in Chapter Three, it is worth outlining here the personal social drama feeding into this research.

I was born into an inter-denominational home in Newcastle Upon Tyne – a post-industrial city in the Northeast of England with a strong provincial and working-class identity – before moving to the Channel Islands later in my childhood. I had a relatively carefree (if not slightly uprooted) youth – moving between the mainland and the island, between the French Catholic primary school and the Protestant senior school. It was in senior school that I started to feel alienated from my peers, something I attributed to a range of factors other than my gender or sexual identity – I had a different family background, I sounded differently, I had curly hair. While I no doubt experienced a process of 'othering' considering all these factors, I also did not have the language or knowledge to express my own queerness – perhaps due to the legacy of Section 28 (Bradlow *et al*., 2017) and the island's institutional Queerphobia (Wakefield, 2020).

There was nearly a decade between that first sense of alienation and my 'coming out' to extended family and friends. At the time, I was completing a study abroad programme in Israel and felt the geosocial distance provided (somewhat problematically) a degree of emotional protection. This queer coming-of-age also coincided with my journey to the Bahá'í faith – a journey which began a year previously upon my arrival in London as an undergraduate student and grew from personal explorations of heritage, spirituality, and selfhood. The first queer venues I visited as an 'out' person were inevitably populated by fellow queers – many of whom were visibly religious. This experience was truly (trans)formative in challenging my own preconceived assumptions about the incongruity between queerness and ethnoreligiosity.

Since then, I have found myself engaging in a constant process of redress – integrating and separating the breaching factions (namely faith and sexuality) depending on the sociospatial context I find myself in. It would be wrong to view this as a linear or smooth process – not least because of the complicated history of LGBT+ inclusion in the Bahá'í faith (Wilcox, 2006), but also the sense of alienation I have sometimes felt in queer spaces due to being a person of minority religion. I have also experienced first-hand an uneven topography of outness – especially in Bahá'í spaces – alongside the feelings of inauthenticity and anxiety that accompany this. As such, there is a deeply personal aim attached to the

completion of this project; that is, to explore the relationship between two integral, albeit incongruent, parts of my being. Inevitably, this runs the risk of psychological projection (Berger, 2013), and I have had to remain cautious of how my own lived experiences could affect the interpretation of participants' stories. As highlighted above, while the identity conflict model for queer ethnoreligious selfhood may indeed illustrate the complex negotiations and struggles selves grapple with in the process of subject (trans)formation, it does not encapsulate fully the innumerate queered ethnoreligious selves actualised through ritual performance. Moving away from such an essentialising and totalising model of selfhood was not only significant in terms of my own self (trans)formation, but methodologically vital in centring participants' lived experiences – a process I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter Three.

1.3.2 The political

I was approached by the Council of Christians and Jews (The CCJ) in October 2016. I was an undergraduate student at the time, and president of the religious studies society, at King's College London – a university that was embroiled in a controversial row regarding Antisemitism and anti-Occupation movements on campus (Ali, 2016). The CCJ were recruiting interfaith representatives to facilitate dialogue among the different faith groups on university campuses. Founded in 1942 by Archbishop William Temple and Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz, the CCJ's main goal is to create a space for Jews, Christians, and others to meet, foster understanding, and facilitate meaningful engagement between communities. I acted as a student interfaith leader for the CCJ between 2016 and 2018 – a role I had to negotiate carefully considering I am neither Christian nor Jewish.

Since then, I have kept up engagement with the CCJ's interfaith activities as an alumnus – attending events organised by current leaders and sharing the work others and I did during our time as campus representatives. In recent years, the CCJ has sought to explore how religious identities interact with other (minoritised) social characteristics – feeding their findings back to faith representatives, practitioners, and policy makers through events such as their *Transforming intolerance* conference in Summer 2021. Such developments coincided with the preliminary stages of this project and, as such, I approached the

CCJ asking whether they wanted to collaborate. We agreed that I would engage with their new LGBT initiative and share with them the key findings/outputs of my research, while they offered access to participants and an opportunity to disseminate my findings.

My relationship with the collaborative partner was far from neutral – something that participants themselves queried during recruitment. At least one person I approached refused on the grounds that they were not comfortable with the CCJ as the collaborative partner – they did not give a reason why and I did not press them any further. Throughout the research process, I maintained that the collaborative relationship was not one of bilateral, unreserved endorsement. Instead, it was a practical and political collaboration which came at a time when interfaith relations were in crisis.

When I began preparations for this study, Antisemitism (Gidley *et al.*, 2020; Home Office, 2018) and Queerphobia (Elks, 2018) were – and still are (Community Security Trust, 2021; Kelleher, 2020) – a growing source of public concern. These converged in a social drama beginning in late-2019/early-2020; namely, the strictly Orthodox school row regarding the introduction of mandatory LGBT+ education in the national curriculum (Rocker, 2020a, 2020b). The breach reached crisis point when the Keser Torah Boy's primary school in Gateshead was criticised by OFSTED for their failure to meet the requirements for LGBT+ inclusion in education (Rocker, 2020c). Proponents of the new guidelines argued the policy would create a more tolerant and welcoming space for LGBT+ Jewish youth within strictly Orthodox schools and communities (Sugarman, 2019). Alternately, some maintain the issue is not with the new guidelines per say, but more the disproportionate focus on strictly Orthodox schools, mixed messages from the Department of Education and OFSTED, and the ambiguity of the guidelines (Rocker, 2020a; Spitzer, 2019).

The widespread coverage of the strictly Orthodox school 'imbroglio' (Rocker, 2020a) came at a time of growing media attention regarding the intersection between Jewishness and queerness – particularly concerning conversion therapy (Rocker, 2018a), the inclusion of transgender Jews in shul (Rocker, 2018b), hate crimes (Sugarman, 2017a), and prominent rabbinical figures

speaking out in support of LGBT+ selves (Rocker, 2017; Sugarman, 2017b). The discourses surrounding the Keser Torah school social drama echoed the "silencing polemics" found in anti-queer, and anti-Muslim, responses to the Pulse Nightclub Massacre (Shah, 2021, p. 323) and the not too dissimilar 'anti-LGBT' Birmingham school protests (Ferguson, 2019). Following Shah (2021, p. 338), such discourses marginalize the lived experiences of queer Jews in that they promote a binary opposition between Jewishness and queerness – 'drowning out' the voices of those in-between. As such, this work is driven by a political motivation to problematise the sociostructural boundary between ethnoreligiosity and queerness by centring the lived experiences of those who are queer *and* Jewish.

1.3.3 The academic

Though the literary and theoretical framework guiding this project will form the focus of the next chapter, it is worth here briefly outlining the academic backdrop to this thesis. The 'postsecular turn' in geographies of religion can be considered its own social drama (Gao *et al*., 2019; Olson *et al*., 2013). Specifically, postsecular scholarship has developed in response to both the (re)emergence or persistence of religion in the public sphere (Holloway, 2013) and an increasing awareness of the fact that conventional secularisation paradigms fall short in contesting the binary, politicised, and racialised nature of secularising logics (Asad, 1993). As highlighted above, this has coincided with growing scholarly attention toward the intersections between race, religion, gender, and sexuality – research which often contests the problematic binaries between minoritised ethnoreligious groups on one hand and minoritised gender and sexual groups on the other (Shah, 2018). In this thesis, therefore, I aim to explore how postsecularism intersects with the lived experiences of queer Jews in Britain.

This thesis comes at a time when "the British Jewish population is on the verge of significant demographic change" (Staetsky & Boyd, 2015, p. 2). Today, most British Jews are either secular or moderately religious – with a "considerable" number of the latter group "leaning toward non-halachic or ethnic forms of Jewish expression" (ibid.). This move may reflect what Herbert Gans understood (1979, 1994, 2017) as symbolic ethnicity/religiosity; that is, a mode of ethnic/religious identification that is (trans)formed out of choice rather than necessity and

characterised by the consumption of ethnic/religious symbols. This thesis thus aims to explore symbolic ethnoreligiosity in a postsecular British context – shedding new light on postsecular geographies and problematising the linear interpretation of religious decline in Western Europe.

While a large portion of modern Orthodox or Progressive Jews may be leaning towards symbolic ethnoreligiosity, the fertility rate among the strictly Orthodox far outweighs those of their co-religionists – as well as Hindu and Muslim populations (Staetsky & Boyd, 2015). Strictly Orthodox Jews currently constitute around 16% of the total British Jewish population per the 2011 Census – a percentage which is expected to double by 2031 (ibid.). At present, around one quarter of those raised in strictly Orthodox communities do not remain strictly Orthodox, opting instead for less halachic forms of Judaism (ibid.). This raises questions regarding religious choice and subject (trans)formation that will emerge repeatedly throughout this thesis.

Drawing on Jaspal and Ferozali's study (2021) on the social representations of Britishness among South Asian gay men, one of the main goals of this thesis is to draw attention to the highly variegated ways in which queer Jews *do* Jewishness *and* queerness. As I will argue in Chapter Two, the anthropology of experience – drawing heavily on Turner and his contemporaries – is most helpful in this regard. Specifically, it is through the lens of ritual performativity that we can engage in the interface between the personal and the structural – paying due attention to the ways in which queer Jews (trans)form *and* perform their selves in response to the worlds around them. Rituals represent a key focus of this thesis as it is through their performance that sociostructural environments are (re)generated and selves (trans)formed (Turner, 1982b). In other words, it is through ritual that we can approach queer ethnoreligiosity in the making – foregrounding agency and creativity in the process (Myerhoff, 1978).

The empirics of this thesis also reflect an academic motive to fill a research gap within human geography and social anthropology; namely, to address the comparative lack of literature regarding religious queers – l*et al*one queer Jews – and the affective, erotic, ineffable, and spatial aspects of religion (Taylor *et al*., 2014). Despite a handful of crucial works on queer Jews in North American

(Drinkwater, 2019; Milligan, 2013, 2014) and Israeli (Adelman, 2014; Hartal, 2016, 2017) contexts, there lacks such a body of literature in postsecular Britain. Combining postsecular geographies of religion and the anthropology of experience, this work is motivated by the need to contribute empirics and theoretics to the personal-structural interface – emphasising the haptic, ritualistic, and symbolic modes of self (trans)formation queer Jews engage with in situ.

1.4 Thesis structure

This thesis is written in monographic form with a narrative arc built between literature and theory on the one hand, and analysis and empirics on the other. Chapter Two is a literary and theoretical review highlighting the key site of rapprochement between geography and anthropology in which this work is situated. Chapter Three explores the methodology underpinning this project – drawing on narrative ethnography and liminality to unpick the complexities of conducting social research as an insider-outsider during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Chapters Four, Five, and Six are the empirical components to this thesis – with each organised around emergent themes from the data; meta-themes relating to incorporation, separation, and reincorporation (Turner, 1967, 1969); and the research questions. Each chapter builds on the one preceding it – teasing out key findings and contributions which are concluded in Chapter Seven.

      Chapter Two – Geographic roots, anthropological routes – reviews the literature within geographies of religion and the anthropology of experience. The chapter begins with a disciplinary biography of the former, outlining three seminal currents in the past half-century of research. In doing so, I identify two scalar poles of analysis around which the emergent literature is oriented – the personal and the structural. Between these poles is a rich, albeit under-theorised, field of geographic analysis. Addressing this, I turn to Turner's theory on ritual performance as a way for geographers to better approach what lies between the individual and the collective. I follow Turner (1967) in highlighting rituals as the performative media through which social beings adjust and adapt to the transitions brought about by various sociostructural processes. This is because rituals actualise what they seek to realise (Rappaport, 1999) – serving human 'interests, purposes, ends, and means' (Turner, 1967).

I recognise queer geographies and geographies of pilgrimage as pivotal sub-disciplines working at the personal-structural interface. On one level, queer geographies reveal how heterosexist regimes of control subjectify bodies as gendered and sexed – as well as the embodied responses to such regulatory powers (Browne, 2007; Valentine, 1993). On another, geographies of pilgrimage demonstrate geographers' efforts at working with liminality (Scriven, 2014; Wigley, 2016) – a key concept in the anthropology of experience relating to the separation stage in rites of passage (van Gennep, 1909).

Chapter Three – Betwixt and between – builds on the premise that virtual ethnography is "most often a messy, personal, highly contextual exercise fraught with anxieties and discomforts" (Abidin & de Sata, 2020, p. 1). In thinking liminally through my fieldwork experiences, I "assuage [the] epistemological anxieties, participatory doubts, and ethical dilemmas" that come with conducting remote fieldwork – stabilising "the research project through self-disclosure and transparency" (ibid.). In doing so, I carve out space for the ethnographically significant data produced through virtual means – problematising the disciplinary norms regarding in-person fieldwork.

First, I explore the space between research design and research practice as indicative of my online embedding in the socio-material context of Covid Britain – a context shared with participants. I explore virtual narrative ethnography as the emergent methodological framework orienting this project before commenting on the chosen methods for data collection. These methods include unstructured life story interviews, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation.

Second, I centre the virtual components of my fieldwork – highlighting the "co-presence" and immersion fostered through digital ethnography (Beaulieu, 2010, p. 453). I explore how the sites of field and home converged through Zoom, the multisensory platform from which I conducted my research. By foregrounding my experiences of conducting research at the home-field site, I unsettle the 'placeness' of ethnography (Haverinen, 2015; Howlett, 2021). Here, I comment on the phenomenon of data imminence and how this influenced data processing and research dissemination.

Third, I highlight the insider-outsider position as a liminal space in the production of ethnographic knowledge. Building on a wealth of research by (post-)feminist scholars (Berger, 2013; England, 1994) and scholars of colour (Kanuha, 2000; Serrant-Green, 2002), I explore my own hazy positionality while unpicking the ethics, politics, and practicalities of conducting research as an insider-outsider. Here, opportunities for research dissemination are emphasised in response to the ethical, moral, and personal responsibilities for social impact stemming from such home-fieldwork (Kobayashi, 2009).

Chapter Four – Heritage, memory, identity – explores the role of heritage and memory as vital resources from which participants '(trans)formed' an interdependent bricolage of self (Schroeder, 2014). By bricolage, I refer to:

> an assortment of symbols, customs, memories, and rituals, blending in a highly ecumenical spirit [...] something from all layers of […] history. (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 265)

These bricolages are interdependent because their (trans)formation reflects a process of self-construal; that is, a process of self-definition mobilising a "constellation of thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). Pioneered by Markus and Kitayama (1991), the language of self-construal is used to highlight the social nature of self (trans)formation. The chapter is hinged on findings from self-construal scholars working at the intersection between ethnicity and sexuality (Ren *et al*., 2019; Villicana *et al*., 2016) – contributing much needed qualitative research to the process of queer ethnoreligious subject (trans)formation.

The chapter is split into two halves – the first focusing on the role of heritage as "the selective use of the past as a resource for the present (and future)" (McDowell, 2008, p. 40). While geographers have tended to emphasise the aesthetic and material forms of heritage (Graham & Howard, 2008; McDowell, 2008), I foreground the symbolic function of heritage narratives as a mode of identity arbitration. In other words, I show how participants incorporated themselves into a millennia-old social drama through the dramatisation of history and mobilisation of powerful symbolic referents to diaspora and Tradition

(Myerhoff, 1982).[2] I argue that rituals concretise identity arbitration – providing participants with the performative medium through which they positioned themselves to a symbolic peoplehood (Myerhoff, 1978), made sense of their lived experiences, and actualised their queer Jewish selves. I draw attention to the relative lack of queer heritages – adopting a narrative approach to queer Jewish self-actualisation while complexifying conclusions drawn by self-construal scholars to date (Villicana *et al.*, 2016).

In the second half of this chapter, I approach memories as the contents which (trans)form heritage (Lowenthal, 1998; McDowell, 2008). First, I look at participants' often juxtaposed childhood memories – showing how such juxtapositions represent a cognitive method for imagining and gaining access to the past (Morrissey, 2012). In exploring how memories are tied intimately to ritual space-times, I too emphasise the "sociality of memory" (Degnen, 2015, p. 1657) as the phenomenon upon which queer ethnoreligious selves are made (Conway, 2010; Hall, 1990). Next, I unpick the relationship between collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and the continuity principle – arguing that collective memories represent the "sensorial, bodily" (Degnen, 2015, p.1645), and "situated" knowledges (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005, p. 153) participants drew upon in the process of self (trans)formation. I outline the uneven memory landscapes (trans)formed through this process of remembering before arguing that ritual represents a form of memory-work which ties together participants' individual and collective pasts, presents, and futures.

Chapter Five – The sixth sense – builds on the premise that space is a social entity symbolic of the life, history, and Tradition of social groups (Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2021). Selves are continually becoming through space in the sense that they are (trans)formed within space and, in turn, (trans)form space (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021). Space, therefore, is both a material and social construct. It is always unfolding – emerging through the perpetual (re)aggregation of power geometries (Massey, 1994; Preser, 2021). Following Bint Abdullah Sani (2015),

---

[2] See Chapter Four (Section 4.1) for an explanation on the capitalisation of 'Tradition' as the building blocks upon which ethnoreligious selves are made.

this chapter builds on a phenomenological understanding of space – whereby participants' acts of identity arbitration, self-construal, and self-actualisation are approached in situ. I highlight rituals as key place-making practices – the techniques by which selves, spaces, and others are (trans)formed as such in place. I open the chapter by focusing on the affective and embodied responses (or sixth sense) indicative of participants' subject (trans)formation in and of their 'perceptual environments' (Taylor *et al*., 2014, p. 244). I argue that these affects represent responses to the three main "techniques of control" working on the "relationship between [their] bodies and their surrounding milieus": surveillance, habitus, and security (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021).

First, I look at the technique of surveillance through heteronormative and postsecular lenses – demonstrating how participants' selves were rendered queer and Jewish through their differentiation as other from the heterosexual, White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestant (WASP) norm. Rituals are highlighted as tools of social differentiation – rendering participants' selves as in and out-of-place depending on context. Following Browne (2007), I argue that this process builds on implicit practices of power and an internalised fear of "being rendered visible as other" (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015) – a mode of self-discipline in the form of a cognitive panopticon (Browne, 2007; Foucault, 1977). I highlight the ritual acts of peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilationism as peri-hegemonic practices performed in response to these regimes of control.

Second, I build on Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1979, 1990) as a technique of power that (trans)forms a sense of emplacement which, in turn, conditions "feelings and experiences" of spatial (non-)belonging (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015, p. 300). I contour participants' emotional responses to habitus through their sense of 'feeling at home' – approaching home as a metaphor for socially and spatially diffused relations of power. I trace participants' (re)aggregations of habitus through queer Jewish ritual innovation – identifying ritual performance as the primary vehicle through which (non-)belonging and self-actualisation is felt and enacted.

Third, I look at how spatialised feelings of safety reveal the third technique of control – securitisation. Here, I adopt Lewis *et al*.'s distinction (2015) between

safety from and *safety to* before adding a third ontological function of safe space: *safety for*. By approaching feelings of safety as structured by various relations of power – gender, sexuality, ethnoreligiosity – I outline "who is most affected by fear, and where" (Pain, 2001, p. 910), commenting on the contested ritual demarcations between spaces that are *safe from*, *safe to*, and *safe for*. Finally, I argue that perceptions of safety reflect wider, geopolitical regimes of securitisation that factor into the collective individuation of ritual space-times.

Chapter Six – Jewish histories, queer Jewish futures – foregrounds ritual performance, tying together the themes raised in previous chapters through the meta-theme of reincorporation. I focus on three cornerstones of Turnerian anthropology of experience – ritual, liminality, and communitas – to account for the ways in which participants (trans)formed their queer Jewish selves via queered ethnoreligiosity in the making.

To begin, I build on the argument that rituals actualise the sociostructural conditions they seek to realise through their performance. In doing so, I unpack two structuring qualities of ritual behaviour: rites of passage and the regulation of time, space, and self. Here, I draw attention to the complex, competing meanings inscribed in – and attributed to – rituals by ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed selves. Next, I establish liminality as the state in which selves and spaces are separated from the sociostructural conditions regulating everyday life (Kapferer, 2019). I highlight summer camp and university as two particularly potent spatialisations of liminality – outlining the (trans)formative potential of both in actualising participants' queer Jewish selves. Building on themes raised in Chapter Three, I propose that liminality represents a unique ontological position (Massumi, 1997; Turner, 1967, 1969). Here, I emphasise the radical – even dangerous – potentiality latent in this subject position while acknowledging the intense feelings of alienation which accompany it.

Having outlined its two core ingredients, I turn my attention to communitas; that is, an affective atmosphere characterised by an intense feeling of belonging to, and identification with, a symbolic peoplehood. Communitas refers to a unique ritual space-time where "social roles are suspended" and ritual performers are "temporarily freed" from the sociostructural conditions operating in everyday

space-time (Myerhoff, 1974, p. 247). I introduce Buttmitzvah – a queer Jewish club night in London's East End – as an affective bricolage of mythic fragments and ritual symbols conducive to the generation of communitas (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982). I show how Buttmitzvah is a liminoid phenomenon, performed by liminal personae, and spatialised in the liminal event-space of the Bethnal Green Working Men's Club. I critically explore the ritual performances which draw on this liminality in the generation of communitas – something which inculcates intense and radically contingent feelings of (non-)belonging, community, and inclusivity which are felt unevenly across a range of ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed bodies.

In doing so, I unpack the complex, contradictory relations between ritual and resistance – structure and anti-structure – through the event's reliance on the commercial night-time economy and neoliberalism-led gentrification. I argue that Buttmitzvah represents a queer Jewish rite of passage – a (re)aggregation of Jewish histories and queer futures which resists competing modes of subjectification structuring everyday experience.

Chapter Seven – Out with the old, in with the queer Jew – concludes the thesis and is split into four main sections. First, I provide an overview of my work's key findings – corresponding these to the research questions that were crucial to exploring, and informed by, the three facets of queer Jewish self-actualisation. Second, I identify the more significant empirical and theoretical contributions this thesis makes to a range of literature. Third, I discuss the implications of these findings and contributions on various professions – speaking more closely to the "interstices of everyday life […] of which they are a part of" (Davies, 1998, p. 28). Finally, I explore avenues for future research – closing the narrative arc to this four-year research project.

Chapter 2. Geographic roots, anthropological routes: new directions in geographies of religion

2.1 Introduction

The geography of religious worlds stretches back to the earliest creation myths and eschatological folklore.[3] In Genesis, God creates the universe by dividing the cosmos into material and immaterial realms – separating the firmaments of the heavens from the earth below, where "the waters teem with living creatures" and "birds fly above the earth" (The Jerusalem Bible, 1974, Genesis 1: 20-1). Humankind is made on the sixth day in God's own image as "masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, and all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth" (ibid., Genesis 1: 26). In Norse mythology, the end of the world is symbolised not by a "fiery lake of burning sulphur" (ibid., Revelation 19:20), but by a terrible winter. "Black becomes the sun's beams" as the celestial bodies are shrouded in a blinding frost (Dronke, 1997, p. 18). The rivers and the lakes and the fjords freeze solid as crops perish and harvests fail (ibid.). Finally, two wolves by the names of Skoll and Hati rise from the underworld – devouring the sun and the moon, plunging the world into perpetual night. These are the events preceding *Ragnarök* – the twilight of the gods.

According to Gay (1971) and Kong (1990), the natural symbols found in these epic sagas represent some of the earliest geographies of religion – where the interrelationship between geography, humankind, and the immaterial world are made tangible through cosmological or mythic storytelling. Since then, geographies of religion have emerged as an academic endeavour in their own right – a kaleidoscopic, vital, yet often misunderstood subset of social and cultural geography. In recent years, geographic research on religion has grown exponentially – encompassing themes and topics including diaspora, movement, and mobility (Chivallon, 2001; Eade & Garbin, 2007); faith, belief, and spirituality (Bartolini *et al.*, 2016; Hume, 1998); gender and sexuality (Boussalem, 2020; Schroeder, 2014); Hindus and Hinduisms (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993; Nye,

---

[3] An abridged and slightly altered version of this chapter was published in *Geography Compass* under the same title (Richardson, 2022).

1993); identity and religion (Brace *et al.*, 2006; Hopkins & Gale, 2007); Islams, Islamophobia, and Muslims (Hopkins, 2007, 2020; Hopkins, 2004, 2006); Jews, Jewishness, and Antisemitism (Valins, 2000, 2003; Watson, 2005); media and religion (Gomes *et al.*, 2020); pilgrimage (Eade & Sallnow, 1991; Maddrell & della Dora, 2013); politics (Bowman, 1993; Jurkovich & Gesler, 1997); and (post)secularism (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012; Wilford, 2010).

With a few notable exceptions (Holloway, 2013; Maddrell, 2020), what is lacking in the above literature is an understanding of the fundamentality of rituals in the (re)generation of religious worlds, and their use as a methodological and theoretical vehicle for approaching the personal-structural interface. The purpose of this chapter is thus twofold; to outline the literature and theory within which this research is situated, and to respond to Lily Kong's call (2010) for geographers to turn to the often disregarded functional, mythic, and symbolic dimensions of religion by (re)introducing rituals to the disciplinary repertoire.

I begin by offering a brief disciplinary biography, acknowledging the earliest sites of rapprochement mentioned above before outlining the three main currents of research that have developed over the last half-century. In doing so, I disentangle two scalar poles of analysis around which the emergent literature is oriented – the micro, individual/personal and the macro, collective/structural. At the interface of these poles is a rich, albeit sparsely studied, field of geographic analysis. Rather than mirroring geographers' tendency to over-emphasise embodiment in reaction to this research gap (Wigley, 2018), I turn to the anthropology of experience and Turner's theory on ritual performance. Here, I introduce ritual, liminality, and communitas as heuristic tools to help geographers better approach the personal-structural interface. Queer geographies and geographies of pilgrimage are also highlighted as pivotal sub-disciplines working at the space between the individual and the collective; as such, due regard will be paid to literature in both fields while the theoretical framework underpinning this project is outlined.

2.2 Geographies of religion

Geography and religion have a long history of rapprochement stretching back to the oldest mythologies and theologies. As highlighted above, these texts show how

the physical and social environment affects religious forms – contouring religious cosmologies with natural symbols that reflect the lived environment from which they come from (Gay, 1971). Drawing on Hultkrantz's ecological approach to religion (1966), Kong observes (1990, p. 358) how the environment:

> provides materials for religious actions and religious conceptions: rites, beliefs, and myths make use of the natural setting in different ways – spirits take the form of important animals in a society; nature in the afterworld is often thought to show the same picture as nature in the living world, and perhaps the obliteration of some traits, and so forth.

In Islamic cosmology, for example, Heaven – *al-janna*, lit. the Garden – is spatialised in rivers of "wine, milk, and honey, and water," as well as bricks of gold and silver and soil of pure saffron (Rustomji, 2009, p. xiv). Hell – *al-nar*, lit. the Fire – on the other hand is spatialised in "fetid waters, blazing sparks, a tree with the heads of demons, and enough pus and decay to contaminate the world in a single drop" (ibid.). According to Rustomji (ibid., p. xvi), these natural symbols are tied not only to the earliest theological narratives of the afterworld but "to the material realities of the Hijaz region of Arabia." The semiology behind the Garden and the Fire provokes powerful emotions which, in turn, guides bodily comportments and ethical dispositions – tying the geography of the afterworld to an embodied Islamic ethic (ibid.). As such, depictions of the afterworld reflect how Muslims:

> have related their lived, earthly lives to the yet to be experienced afterlife […] and how those imaginings often had complicated, multivalent relationships with early realities. While unvisited during most lifetimes, the afterworld provided a comparison to this world. Through reflections about the future world, Muslims articulated both the realities that informed their earthly lives and their expectations of the otherworldly conditions that would provide them utter respite in the garden or intensified toil in the Fire (ibid., p. xiv).

While this section focuses on what Kong (1990) identified as the three main developments in the geographic study of religion, it is worth acknowledging here that such developments represent only the latest chapter in a long story of interdisciplinary exchange – the earliest sites of which were rooted in theological cosmology and folklore. Modern geographies of religion emerged in the mid-20th century (Eliade, 1959; Sopher, 1967), marking a clear departure from previous disciplinary approaches to the study of religion. The purpose of such studies, according to Gay (1971, p. xvii), outlines a clear disciplinary rationale:

> it is not the task of the geographer to evaluate religious experience, and neither is he [sic] concerned with assessing the validity or otherwise of religious claims and beliefs: this is the preserve of theology and the science of religion.

I suspect that such a demarcation between geography, theology, and the science of religion was made for two reasons. First, to demarcate a newly developing sub-field of human geography from existing research in other disciplines. Second, to attend to a perceived growth in the differentiation of religious groups in Euro-American societies.[4] Such texts represent what Kong describes (1990) as the first development in modern geographies of religion. In this current, geographers approach religious forms as phenomena determined by their environment. For Holloway and Valins (2002), though such texts were pivotal in identifying religion as a field worthy of geographic analysis, they resulted in a fixation on the spatial distributions of religious demographics and a misunderstanding of religion as detached from an evolving world. This is perhaps why a contemporary reading of Gay's demographic analysis (1971) finds several ill-fated predictions – for example, that non-Christian religious minorities in Britain would assimilate and eventually abandon their own religiosity due to tightening immigration laws and fettered population growth. To highlight themes raised in the previous chapter, this prediction has thus far been proven incorrect. For example, the rapid growth of the strictly Orthodox Jewish population in Britain has led to an increased presence of strictly Orthodox concerns, institutions, and practices in public spheres such as health (Kasstan, 2019), interfaith relations (Egorova & Ahmed, 2017), and urban planning (Watson, 2005).

In the 1980s, geographers began approaching religion as a 'superorganic' phenomenon influencing the construction and maintenance of sociocultural landscapes – reflecting the second main development in the geographic study of religion (Kong, 1990, p. 362). According to Kong (ibid., p. 359), this current had its roots in the 1960s, "when there was a process of worldwide secularisation," and an increased academic focus on the ways in which religion persisted in contouring

---

[4] For Gay (1971), this social process of ethnoreligious differentiation in England relates to postcolonial mobilities, acculturation, and assimilation. This theme will be addressed in Chapter Six as part of the Buttmitzvah case study.

the sociocultural landscape. One pertinent example of this approach is Curtis'
study (1980) on the (im)material religious landscape of Little Havana, Miami. Here,
yard shrines are foregrounded as one of the more "distinctive urban landscape
contributions" by Catholic and Santeria religionists (ibid., p. 1). Santeria is
highlighted as an assortment of "ritual, magical, medical, and theological beliefs"
forming a "total magico-religious world view" – one which is (trans)formed in
response to diaspora and mobility (ibid.).

While such works may also be critiqued as demographically and spatially
fixated (Holloway & Valins, 2002), they reflect a trend whereby geographers began
approaching religion as embedded in various cultural, economic, political, and
social matrices – representing the near-simultaneous third major development in
geographies of religion (Kong, 1990). Highlighting reciprocity over determination –
and reflecting the sociohistorical and geopolitical circumstances of their time –
studies demonstrating this approach include Bowman's analysis (1993) of religion
and Palestinian national identity construction; Hershkowitz's study (1987) of
religious segregation in Jerusalem; and Jurkovich and Gesler's discussion (1997)
of pilgrimage to post-war Medjugorje.

As religions were (re)inserted into the interrelated matrices of power in
which they operate, new avenues for geographic research emerged (Yorgason &
della Dora, 2009). Rather than monolithic or static phenomena, religions came to
be viewed as animated, fluid, and expressed in a multitude of sacred spaces –
themselves imbued with competing claims, meanings, and identities (Holloway &
Valins, 2002; Kong & Woods, 2016). Geographic research on religion has grown
exponentially alongside this development; a growth which, according to Kong
(2010) and Tse (2014), followed a pattern whereby highly publicised phenomena
(social dramas) relating to religion solidified its presence in the public sphere.
Indeed, this pattern has since been reified with academic attention turning to
phenomena such as the relationship between the Occupy movement and religion
(Cloke *et al*., 2015), White Evangelical support for Donald Trump in the 2020 US
Presidential Election (Baker *et al*., 2020), and Chinese religious community
responses to lockdown regulations during the Covid-19 Pandemic (Chen *et al*.,
2021). These developments have solidified a disciplinary rapprochement whereby:

31

> Religion […] intersects with geography at every turn: from understanding the construction of identity or the meaning of bodily practices at a personal level, to unpicking the complex relationships and politics of institutional space and place at a regional or national level. (Brace *et al.*, 2006, p. 29)

To reiterate, it was Kong who argued (1990) that modern and contemporary geographies of religion emerged alongside three main currents of research: studies approaching religion as determined by its environment (e.g., Hultkranz, 1966); studies emphasising religion's influence on the environment (e.g., Curtis, 1980); and studies highlighting the reciprocity between religion, environment, and a whole range of other factors e.g., culture, ethnicity, socioeconomics etc. (e.g., Sopher, 1967). It is within this third movement that this thesis is situated – where religion and the lived environment are intertwined alongside the matrices of culture, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexuality.

2.3 The collective and the individual: between structure and affect

In a later review, Kong notes (2010, p. 755) how the convergent currents of research highlighted above have culminated in a "burst [of] geographical research on religion in the last decade." Whereas Kong focuses (ibid.) on the "relative [analytical] emphasises and silences," the rise of postsecular scholarship, and religious responses to four global socio-political shifts, I identify two scalar poles of analysis around which the emergent literature is oriented: the collective and the individual. At the macro, collective-structural end of the spectrum, complex relations between religion, politics, and secularisation become loci for researching the multifaceted influences of religio-political social structures. At the micro, individual-personal end, the lived and affective qualities of religions are developed in relation to their embodiment through sacred bodies and spaces. Below, I disentangle the literature oriented around these two poles of analysis – highlighting the relative lack of empirics and theory in-between.

2.3.1 The collective

Secularisation paradigms are highly contested in geographies of religion (Cloke & Beaumont, 2012; Olson *et al.*, 2013). Nevertheless, the ways in which secularising discourses affect religious lives is well documented in a variety of literature on topics such as Islamic veiling practices in contemporary Turkey (Gökarıksel, 2009; Gökarıksel & Secor, 2010); the establishment, maintenance, and demolition of

sacred buildings (Dwyer *et al.*, 2013; Kong, 1993); capitalism-led globalisation, neoliberal market economics, and kosher lifestyles (Diamond, 2002); and revivalism in a 'gospel village' in Shenzhen, China (Gao *et al.*, 2019).

Associated primarily with Steve Bruce (2002), the secularisation paradigm hinges on the idea that organised religion loses its social significance the more societies grow and connect to different populations via trade and cultural exchange (Wilford, 2010). Influenced by Durkheim's theory on the division of labour (1893), Wilford understands (2010) modern societies as comprised of separate, continually specialising spheres of action. As social institutions react to this differentiation, they demarcate and confer upon themselves their own internal logic (ibid.). This leads to the clarification of non-religious spheres from religious ones and, ultimately, the relegation of religion from the public sphere to the private sphere. For Wilford (ibid., p. 335), this results in a religious market whereby religions are successful only if they fill the narrow spaces available to them and offer a plausible (re)enchantment of the world requiring minimum sacrifice while offering maximum reward.

Though I agree with Brace *et al.* (2006) and Kong (1990, 2001) that such understandings are incompatible with the complex matrices and meanings of religious systems, the ways in which secularising discourses interweave with religious lives has been explored in numerous studies. For example, Gökarıksel (2009, 2012) and Gökarıksel and Secor (2010) demonstrate how religious and secular discourses intersect in multiscalar and often contradictory ways through the embodied act of veiling; Diamond shows (2002) how capitalism, globalisation, and neoliberalism facilitate religious traditionalism through the kosher lifestyle economy; and Bartolini *et al.* illustrate (2016) how the processes of compartmentalisation, fragmentation, liberalisation, and personalisation serve as social contexts within which new forms of religious life can thrive. As such, religion pervades in even the most secularised spaces – influencing people's understandings of community, ethics, personhood, and wellbeing (Gökarıksel, 2009, 2012)

This reflects critiques that the secularisation paradigm has been vastly overgeneralised from a Euro-centric standpoint (Kong, 2010) and falls short in addressing the durability of religious forms or the contentious nature of secular

politics (Asad, 1993; Orsi, 2005). Considering this, Müller (2020) draws on Asad (2003) in arguing that secularisation should not be understood solely as a form of social differentiation. Instead, secularisation represents a "political project" – redefining and transcending "existing differential practices of the self that are articulated through class, race, gender, and religion" (Müller, 2020, p. 317). As such, this thesis is premised on the argument that secularisation represents a political project predicated upon the preservation of Anglo-American, secular Protestant hegemony (Asad, 1993, 2003; Orsi, 2005) – a theme that will become a major focus in Chapter Five.

Secularisation, therefore, represents a social structure; that is, a web of relations between socially prescribed – yet inevitably contested – subject positions assigned and maintained by various social institutions (Turner, 1969). Geographers of religion have approached this concept of social structure through the language of "normative regimes governed by different sets of formal or informal rules, norms, and expectations" (Gökarıksel, 2009, p. 658.). As such, secular subjectivities are (trans)formed in the everyday pieties of (ir)religious persons – where bodies are "cultivated" in a call and response fashion to the overt and subtle ideologies governing everyday life (ibid., p. 569). Here, common ground can be found between geographies of religion and queer geographies regarding the hegemonic constellation of space.

Queer geographies have long drawn attention to the fact that everyday space is continually constituted as heterosexual through various symbolic and performative acts (Boulila, 2015; Valentine, 1993). Such acts converge in the construction of space structured around heterosexual hegemony; that is, a state of dominance (trans)formed and maintained through innumerate social structures – the spatiality of which rests on a sense of emplacement/dislocation (Ahmed, 2006; Boulila, 2015). Specifically:

> Hegemonies shape spaces as they allow for some bodies and practices to go unnoticed whilst others stand out as deviant. They define how subjects emerge and take up space. Power processes therefore not only shape how subjects can move, they also affect their ability to act and become. (Boulila, 2015, p. 134)

These hegemonies rest on the "performative script" of common-sense – whether one of heteronormativity or secularisation – which, in turn, has an "ontologising effect as it becomes an invisible point of reference for spatialising performative acts" (ibid., p. 135; Butler, 1999). By heteronormativity, I refer to Hartal's understanding (2016, p. 1196) of the "chronic normalisation of public space, constantly constructed as heterosexual" through the common-sense script of sexuality "as a facet of the private" – something which renders non-heterosexuality hyper-visible in public space. Just as the religious subject is (trans)formed through hypervisibility in the secular public sphere, so too is the queer subject (trans)formed in the heteronormative public sphere. Though I will return to queer geographies later in this chapter and as a primary focus in Chapter Five, it is important to note here that such geographies have developed alongside the convergence of geography and religion – a coincidental rapprochement largely unnoticed in either sub-discipline, though with a few notable exceptions (Boussalem, 2020; Hartal, 2016)

Returning to the secularisation paradigm, Julian Holloway has noted (2013, p. 203) that growing discontent with the theory:

> has led to talk of an emergent 'post-secularism' which recognises […] the limits of reason, rationality, and secularism, the restrictions of a liberal consensus of separate public-political and private-religious spheres, and a political pluralism that […] includes constituencies of the religious and the faithful.

Postsecularism refers to the limits of the secularisation paradigm and its inadequacy in addressing phenomena such as the growing role of the church in secular social care and political movements (Finlayson, 2012; Cloke *et al.*, 2015); the emergence of new spiritualities (Wigley, 2018); and the persistence of religious practices in pluralistic urban settings (Bartolini *et al.*, 2016; Cloke & Beaumont, 2012). Without denying the process of differentiation (Bartolini *et al.*, 2016), postsecularism serves as a critical lens for tracing the effects of politicised secularisation as it interacts with religious lives.

One of the most apparent places this happens is in the (trans)formation of postsecular subjectivities. Following Butler's performativity theory (1990, 1993, 1999), postsecular subject (trans)formation conflates personal and public

identities, traverses intersecting social characteristics, and aggregates individual and collective power (Birt, 2009). For example, Birt argues (ibid.) that British Muslim identity movements mobilise along religious lines, decentring the public-private distinctions of the modern neo-liberal state. Though similar dynamics are found in analyses of historic Methodism and Cornish nationalism (Brace *et al.*, 2006, 2007); the mediation of pan-Caribbean identities via the demarcation of Christian praxes (Chivallon, 2001); and Christian identity production among Congolese and Polish diasporas (Eade & Garbin, 2007); the linchpin of Birt's theory (2009) is that experiences of sociostructural marginalisation act as a unifying force for identity-based, counter-hegemonic action. According to Birt (ibid.) this process creates a unique community bound by experiences of racialised subject (trans)formation, conflating and transcending cultural, ethnic, and national differentiation.

Similar conclusions are drawn by Nimrod Luz, who found (2008, 2013) that sacred sites function as a nexus for identity formation, collective memory, empowerment, and resistance as they act as symbols for ethnic identity and struggle. It is the affective quality of these spaces, sensed through the bodies gathered within and around them, that makes them stand out against other sites and operate as a platform to 'rally people and groups that do not necessarily agree or cooperate on a daily basis' (Luz, 2013, p. 62). Subject (trans)formation, then, is not just about an individual sense of self – it is also about identifying with, and committing yourself to, the shared values and beliefs of the collective to which you belong at a deeply embodied level. Self (trans)formation is thus an interdependent process – crystallised around sites of collective emotional significance and mobilised around periods of political poignancy (Schroeder, 2012, 2014). It is this quality of sacred spaces – the sensuous and the affective – that reflects the alternative, highly individualised current in geographic research on religion.

2.3.2 The individual

Alongside the emergence of postsecular scholarship is a growing recognition regarding corporeal autonomy in the (trans)formation of postsecular subjectivities (Gökarıksel, 2012; Klingorová & Gökarıksel, 2018). Responding to this, Wigley argues (2018) that some geographers have adopted an embodiment perspective

whereby the body acts as the primary site of rapprochement between the collective-structural and the individual-personal. This corporeal turn reflects an attempt to mediate between the two poles of analysis – an attempt which, as discussed below, relies on numerous epistemic missteps. That said, the body emerges nevertheless as the primary site through which religious phenomena are experienced, enacted, and challenged.

Embodiment and lived religion are two distinct yet inextricably linked concepts. Embodiment centres the body, alongside the (im)material spaces it inhabits, as the primary loci for religious experiences. Lived religion alludes to religious phenomena as manifest in actions, beliefs, and the codification of behaviour. I prefer the term lived religion over 'unofficially sacred' (Brace *et al*., 2006; Kong, 2010) – both terms associated with the subjective turn (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Wigley, 2018) – as sites such as the body and the home emerge repeatedly as 'officially' sacred in religious laws, texts, and prescriptions (Diamond, 2002; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993). Likewise, I prefer the term lived religion over everyday religion since, though acting as a useful tool for raising 'critical questions' about religion and society, the latter directs focus to religious 'nonexperts' who lie outside organised religious institutions (Ammerman, 2007, p. 5). Though such literature was pivotal in refocusing scholars' attention to the ways in which 'ordinary people' approach and express religion (McGuire, 2007, p. 188), I think it is unwarranted to assume that those who sit outside the mosque or synagogue walls are not religious 'experts.' Instead, following Tse (2014), it is important to recognise that religious subjects are often experts at drawing from a range of cultural, religious, political, and social repertoires when (trans)forming and performing their own subjectivities – regardless of their level of formal, theological education (Finlayson, 2012; Hume, 1998).

Following Finlayson (2012), Holloway (2006), and Kong (2010), the term lived religion – instead of resting on problematic binaries of religious (non)experts – calls for greater attention to the lived experiences of religious people, as well as religions' affective and emotional registers. Such a reorientation is reflected in studies such as Bailey *et al.*'s historical analysis (2007) of Victorian Methodist teetotallers and the adherence to bodily codes of conduct; Cloke and Beaumont's

study (2012) of faith-based organisations in postsecular cities and the embodied ethic of care among volunteers; and Dewsbury and Cloke's paper (2009) on Christian landscape construction whereby spirituality manifests corporeally and is constitutive of everyday life. As such, this thesis is situated within growing literature on lived religion, foregrounding lived experience and subjectivity in queer Jewish ritualised self (trans)formation – a methodological as well as theoretical orientation that I will discuss further in the next chapter.

As mentioned above, the corporeal turn reflects an attempt to reconcile lived religion and social structure. For example, Gökarıksel (2009) uses the term 'corporeal piety' to refer to the ways in which the body acts as a mobile site of contestation in the (trans)formation of pious women's subjectivities in Istanbul. For Gökarıksel (ibid.), veiling represents an embodied spatial practice which (trans)forms the self through corporeal performance and the sensory experiences gleaned from traversing various heterosexualising, nationalising, and secularising normative regimes. Following both Gökarıksel (ibid.) and Olson (2013), experiences of religion are not restricted to the concrete confines of sacred spaces, they are lived as part of everyday life via the medium of the body which is, in turn, informed by multiscalar discursive forces. Similar sentiments can be found in Bint Abdullah Sani's study (2015) of *Jum'ah* – Friday or Congregational prayer – in a university campus chapel. Here, the demarcation of an Islamic prayer space is made not only through an array of material place-making practices, but in the appropriate bodily dispositions that are inculcated by – and conducive to – the Islamicness of the transient prayer space.

Following this corporeal turn, a recognition of affect as the sensory consequence of the personal-structural interface is needed. Though elusive and complex phenomena, O'Neill characterises (2013, p. 1095) affects as "raw, reactive sensation" occurring "before consciousness and before discourse." This relates to Anderson's understanding (2009) of atmospheres, which are the result of collective affects; a class of experiences occurring pre-emptively and simultaneously alongside subject (trans)formation, across micro-individual and macro-superindividual planes, and in-between subject/object distinctions. Affective atmospheres are the "shared ground from which subjective states and their

attendant feelings and emotions emerge" (ibid., p. 78). These intensive space-times are found in Luz's study (2013) of identity (trans)formation among minoritised Muslims in Israel whereby they act as the emotional and motivational platform for the production and mobilisation of a particularly powerful identity politics. Moreover, and reflecting Turner's theory on social drama (1974, 1982a, 1982b), Luz argues (2013, p. 62) that such space-times represent a nexus whereby various social processes relating to "self-empowerment, memory design, identity politics, and more" are underway. Considering this, I argue that affects illuminate the embodied triggers for, and responses to, innumerate sociostructural processes – crossing the epistemic and ontological gap between the personal and the structural to account for the process of space and subject (trans)formation.

As such, in this thesis, I approach affects as intrinsically embodied, emotional, and personal while maintaining that they are also political, structural, and social. Again, queer geographies have shown us how affective responses to heterosexualising sociostructural forces illustrate one's conformity to, or divergence from, the common-sense logics operating across various space-times (Browne, 2007). For example, by transgressing the "performative script" of heteronormative common-sense logic through public displays of queerness (e.g., handholding, gender-divergent dress), the queer subject is rendered other in public space (Boulila, 2015, p. 135) – an object of hatred, repulsion, or tolerance (trans)formed in the heterosexualised public (Hartal, 2016; Preser, 2021). Affects thus imply a sociostructural contract whereby space, and the actors gathered within, are constelled around the prevailing hegemonies operating across them. Through the feeling of visibility, the queer subject simultaneously (trans)forms and confirms their queer subjectivity – reflecting the "ontologising effect" of sociostructural hegemony as "an invisible point of reference for spatialising performative acts" (Boulila, 2015, p. 135)

Likewise, it would be safe to assume that the articulation of affects through bodily performances has tangible results on the construction of religious landscapes which shape, in turn, our experiences of being-in-the-world (Davidson & Milligan, 2004). For example, Finlayson found (2012) that affects – as articulated through the embodied feelings of home, peace, and power – reveal a process of

sacralisation, one which may challenge the social norms and expectations around mainstream religious space-times. Similarly, Valins found (2003, p. 168) that affects correspond to physical, symbolic, and ritualistic boundary demarcation among strictly Orthodox Jews in contemporary Britain – where the 'outside' social environment is objectified as a "thing of immorality and corruption." Contrarily, affects relating to a sense of community support and cohesion correspond to the (trans)formation of the inside social environment – reflecting an 'all-encompassing, day-to-day attempt to police' group lines in a contemporary, ethnoreligiously pluralist society (ibid., p. 172).

Holloway's study (2006) of Spiritualist séances also stands out here as another noteworthy example. Séances – characterised by anticipation, fear, and gendered bodies (both living and dead) brushing up against one another in the dimly-lit, highly intimate sacred circle – are indicative of deeply affective ritual space-times (ibid.). The carnal proximity between the apprehensive, believing, and sensing bodies allowed for the transgression of Victorian sensibilities regarding 'respectable' bodily practices and represented a performative mediation between the personal and the structural (ibid.). At this interface is a rich, albeit sparsely researched, field of geographic analysis in which this thesis is situated – where rituals are key to understanding the (re)generation and negotiation of religious worlds.

2.3.3 The in-between

Despite a few notable exceptions (Holloway, 2003, 2006, 2013; Luz, 2013), geographers have tended to overlook the role of ritual as the performative medium for religions' (re)generative processes. For example, in their study of postsecularity and protest during the Occupy movement, Cloke *et al*. rightly identify (2015) rituals as instrumental to facilitating a politics of solidarity and subversion of dominant sociostructural forces. But in analysing the ritual practices displayed during the Occupy movement through wholly structural/political or personal/affective lenses, they fall short in recognising how ritual performers traversed these poles through space and subject (trans)formation (ibid., pp. 517-518). Another pertinent example in this regard is Connolly's essay (2005) on the Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine. Here, Connolly moves between macro-level discussions of politics,

40

theology, and market economics to explain micro-level, embodied responses to the deployment of such superindividual, discursive forces. Ritualistic performances clearly have a role to play in the construction of an embodied politics of resentment (ibid., pp. 879-880). What is lacking, however, is a bilateral discussion of exactly *how* this process works.

This is not to single out or dismiss either contribution to the sub-discipline, but to draw attention to a common misstep whereby the internal dynamics of rituals as manifest at the personal-structural interface are overlooked (see also, Kiong & Kong, 2000). As implied above, queer geographies have made substantial ground in this regard – taking performative acts such as same-sex handholding, and the affectual responses they engender, as indicative of the queer subject's grappling between the individual and the collective (Browne, 2007; Hartal, 2016). Through ritual performance, actors play with the personal and the structural in the process of space and subject (trans)formation – highlighting agency and creativity while acknowledging structure and social hegemony.

Following Finlayson (2012), it is by centring ritual performance that geographers can better approach the personal-structural interface and gain a fuller understanding of the affective responses indicative of religious world-building. In other words, rituals enable us to explore "how profane space is made sacred and intelligible for worship, bodies are conditioned to approach the sacred, and attitudes are disciplined in piety" (Boulila, 2015, p. 134) – while remaining conscious of the sociostructural processes constelling ritual space-times. Below, I respond to Kong's call (2010) for geographers to turn to the often neglected functional, mythic, and symbolic dimensions of religion by drawing on the anthropology of experience – particularly the concepts of ritual, liminality, and communitas – as vital to this approach.

2.4 Ritual, liminality, communitas: the anthropology of experience

The anthropology of experience emerged alongside the poststructural turn and "deals with how individuals actually experience their culture, that is, how events are received by consciousness" (Bruner, 1986b). With roots in Turner's theory on ritual performativity (Turner, 1982a, 1982b), the anthropology of experience is hinged upon the fact that experiences are "more personal" than behaviours – they

refer to "an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes action" (Bruner, 1986b, p. 5). Experience incorporates feelings and reflections about our actions – the communication of which is self-referential in its performance (ibid.). Pre-empting the methodological argument outlined in the next chapter, Bruner argues (ibid.) that experience structures expression – we make sense of others and their expressions by drawing from our own experiences. At the same time, expression structures experience – we make sense of our experiences by drawing from a repertoire of expressions.

Rituals are the performative media through which the structuring principles of experience – and its expressions – are communicated (ibid.). By focusing on rituals, scholars can explore one's sociostructural experiences and how these are expressed in the process of space and subject (trans)formation. Below, I go back to Turner's theory on ritual performance – starting with an exploration of the Ritual Complex before introducing the concepts of liminality and communitas. In doing so, I show how this thesis is situated at the personal-structural interface – bringing the anthropology of experience to geographies on religion to better understand the (re)generation of ethnoreligious worlds.

2.4.1 The Ritual Complex

Turner defined ritual as the "prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routing, having reference to beliefs in mythical beings or powers" (Turner, 1967, p. 19). Rituals go hand in hand with symbols, the "smallest unit of ritual […] the ultimate unit of [a] specific structure in a ritual context" (ibid.). Symbols can be any empirical thing, be it object, activity, relationship, event, or gesture; for example, in Chapter One I introduced both candles and the challah loaf as potent ritual symbols in the Friday evening Shabbat service – condensing within them collective memories of the Holocaust alongside the holy significance of the Sabbath. Myths are a fundamental component of ritual symbols and comprise of:

> sets of conceptions which draw upon, and reflect, people's cultural environment, and shape the actions and perceptions of those who accept or challenge them (Lugosi, 2007, p. 168)

In other words, myths are what imbue symbols with their resonance and social importance; they are the result of "a continuous process of interpretation"

42

which contributes to and reflects the polyvocality of symbols (ibid.). Taken together, myths, symbols, and rituals make up the Ritual Complex – a term borrowed from Myerhoff's Symbol Complex (1974) and which refers to the mode by which individuals and groups (trans)form conventions of behaviour, maps of knowledge, social structures, and temporal orders (Rappaport, 1999). Turner argued (1967) that symbols are involved in social processes whereas rituals are media for groups to adjust and adapt to internal and external changes. Here, Turner draws (ibid.) on van Gennep's *rites de passage* (1909). Specifically:

> The universe itself is governed by a periodicity which has repercussions on human life, with stages and transitions, movements forward, and periods of relative inactivity. (ibid., p. 3)

Such transitions do not occur without "disturbing the life of society and the individual, and it is the function of rites of passage to reduce their harmful effects" (ibid., p. 13). There are always thresholds to cross and, as such, there will always be rituals designed to mitigate the resultant state of transition – be it in the transition between months, years, or seasons (Hume, 1998); changes in social office or status (Hayton, 2018); life crisis rituals surrounding birth and death (Gaer, 1995; Maddrell, 2020); and entry into sacred spaces (Jurkovich & Gesler, 1997). Following Davies (2011), rituals are thus clearly fundamental in mitigating and facilitating the biological, cosmic, cultural, and social changes characteristic of human life. As mentioned previously, this is because rituals do more than merely signal the transitions they seek to mitigate, they actualise them through their very performance (Rappaport, 1999) – bringing into existence the selves, spaces, and others they seek to (trans)form.

Specifically, ritual symbols are motivating factors in social action – serving human "interests, ends, and means" by providing ritual performers the opportunity to rejuvenate or resist the structures they form (Turner, 1967, p. 20). Two important clarifications are needed here regarding Turner's definition of rituals. First, rituals are performed in outwardly secular contexts with no such obvious references to 'mystical forces.' For example, Davidman finds (2007) that ritual performance by secular Jews serves as an effort to retain warm family memoires and a politically conscious act of identity affirmation. Here, ritual performance actualises a mode of symbolic ethnoreligiosity; that is, a combination of Gans' concepts of symbolic

ethnicity (1979) and symbolic religiosity (1994). Symbolic ethnicity refers to a form of ethnic identification (trans)formed out of choice rather than necessity, marked by the consumption of ethnic ritual symbols, and "intended mainly for the purpose of feeling or being identified with a particular ethnicity" (ibid., p. 578). Symbolic religiosity goes hand in hand with symbolic ethnicity, but refers primarily to:

> the consumption of religious symbols apart from regular participation in a religious culture or in religious organisations, for the purposes of expressing feelings of religiosity and religious identification (ibid., p. 577)

My decision to combine the two concepts reflects Bakalian's argument (1993) that the boundaries between culture, ethnicity, family, and religion are blurry and ill-defined. On one level, therefore, the decision to situate this thesis between geographies of religion and the anthropology of experience rests, in part, on the latter's ability to account for the more functional or symbolic forms of ethnoreligiosity – something neglected in recent geographic research (Kong, 2010).

The second clarification relates to Bellah's theory of civil religion (1967), whereby secular phenomena undergo various processes of religio-mystification (Bellah, 1985), and links back to the significance of symbols. Ritual is a process, not a static phenomenon – something recognised in more recent geographic literature (Finlayson, 2012). For Turner (1967), ritual symbols are relative to two opposing poles: the concrete (individual/affective) and the ideological (collective/structural). Symbolic referents to affective, physiological experiences cluster at the concrete pole whereas symbolic referents to moralising discourses, norms, and principles cluster at the ideological.

During ritual, these poles fuse; blending the moral and the discursive with the material and the affective. In other words, during the symbolic interchange between the concrete and ideological 'poles of meaning' (ibid., p. 28), the collective's highest ideals are flushed with emotion while physiological affects are ennobled through contact with such elevated beliefs and principles (Myerhoff, 1974). For example, during R's Friday evening service, theological values of remembrance were fused with powerful affects pertaining to social connectivity – imbuing the moral with the emotional and vice versa through ritual performance.

44

This process fostered the generation of communitas, a state characterised by an acute sense of social belonging akin to Anderson's atmospheres (2009) and Durkheim's effervescence (1912), but more to do with the maintenance, resistance, and subversion of social structures than both (Turner, 1967, 1969).

In her ethnography of a kosher day centre, Myerhoff argues (1978) that myths, symbols, and rituals have their origins in the most fundamental layers of childhood. As demonstrated in her reflection on the funeral of a popular resident:

> The Kaddish prayer provided the occasion […] for bringing the past into the present. Originating in the most basic layers of childhood, rooted there with the earliest emotions and associations, the Kaddish had Proustian powers for arousing deep involuntary memories [bringing with them] the essences and textures of their original context, transcending time and change. (ibid., p. 225)

Akin to Asad's (2015) and Zubrzycki's (2012) concept of Tradition, Myerhoff used the term 'domestic religion' (1978, pp. 225-6) to explain the sort of ethnoreligiosity acquired in childhood. Associated primarily with family and the home, domestic religion blends nurture and ethnoreligious complexities to create a hearth-based religion which endures time and tumult (ibid.). The performance of domestic religion incorporates well-known sensory triggers. In the case of the day centre, the smells of the Sabbath stew and challah alongside the heat and light of the candles converged to (trans)form a deeply affective (and ritualised) space-time identified above as communitas (ibid.).

There is a clear link between Myerhoff's concept of domestic religion and Holloway's use (2003) of Massumi on collective individuation (1997). Holloway begins (2003) by emphasising the necessity of individual, ritualised performance in the (trans)formation of sacred space-times. But – mirroring the above discussions – ritual performance is as much a collective phenomenon as an individual one. In other words:

> to make sacred is to (attempt to) reconfigure the collective. Thus, embodied action […], senses, objects, others, affect, rhythm, and so on enter into collective individuation of the event, as their force and agency are reconfigured in and through sanctification: all are constitutive elements and thus take part in enacting the differentiation of sacralisation. (ibid., p. 1968)

In Chapter One, I used the term 'vortex' to describe an affective bricolage of collective memories, emotions, heritages, myths, symbols, and rituals – a collective individuation or ritual process whereby space and time, selves and others, are (trans)formed through ritual performance. These unique space-times, identified above as communitas, represent an emotionally effervescent state whereby a sense of community is fostered and felt – albeit unevenly – through the collective act of performance (Alexander, 1991; Myerhoff, 1978). Psychologically speaking, this happens because ritual performance transports us back to the context in which the rite was first learned and reminds us of those closest to us in these formative experiences.

Unlike Myerhoff (1978), I see ritual performance as transporting us back to generally formative, rather than solely childhood, experiences. Though such experiences occur primarily in one's earliest encounters with selves and others, Myerhoff's rather psychoanalytical interpretation of ethnoreligious acquisition lacks a nuanced understanding of communitas among converts, those learning religious prescriptions later in life, and those (trans)forming novel religious worlds and practices (Cox, 2018). On another level, therefore, my decision to situate this thesis between geographies of religion and the anthropology of experience rests on the latter's contribution to understanding the ritual process – be it one of sacralisation, self (trans)formation, or spatial-temporal demarcation.

2.4.2 Liminality

According to van Gennep (1909), rites of passage restore a sense of cosmic continuity through the process of separation, liminality, and (re)incorporation. Associated with change and transition, liminality is tied to ritual insofar that rituals actualise the periods of transition characterised by liminality (Rappaport, 1999; van Gennep, 1909). Though the concept of liminality was originally developed in relation to rites of passage, the term has since been used to describe changes in social office or status (Hayton, 2018; Turner, 1967); places and spaces considered 'in-between' (Cox, 2018; Harold, 2015); a social actor's subject position (Lugosi, 2007; Wimark, 2021); or a convergence of these. For Kapferer (2019, p. 1), liminality creates an affect of ambivalence, a 'quality of possibility' – offering social actors within the opportunity to come together 'individuated, freed, and fully

themselves," stripped of the attributes of structure, and confront one another directly in a state of anti-structure. Liminality involves the suspension of regular roles and responsibilities – a space-time in which one can play with, renew, and subvert the social structures governing everyday experience (Wigley, 2016).

According to Turner (1969), liminality provides the optimal settings for communitas. Between sociostructural conditions, liminality has (trans)formative – even dangerous – potential (Brettschneider, 2003). Betwixt and between, liminal subjects are separated from the sociostructural conditions operating in everyday space-time, a particularly potent state of ambiguity (Turner, 1967). Due to its subversive potential, the entries to and exits from liminality are strictly guarded with rituals ensuring the liminal subject's necessary (re)incorporation and the survival of sociostructural order. In this way, liminality is a crucial counterpart to contemporary geographies of religion which call for greater attention to "those moments where spirituality and modernity are in the process of transformation" – where spiritual/religious subjectivities are (re)formed (Bartolini *et al.*, 2016, p. 351).

One critical site of interdisciplinary rapprochement between the anthropology of experience and geographies of religion has been in studies of pilgrimage (Eade & Sallnow, 1991; Nugent & Scriven, 2015). According to Scriven (2014, p. 249), pilgrimage represents an "embodied mobility" and:

> a meaningful journey in which the performance entwines the outer physical and inner spiritual/emotional journey in a process that defines and shapes the people and places involved.

Liminality is a central component of any pilgrimage mobility (ibid.), a concept developed primarily by Turner and Turner in their study (1978) of image and pilgrimage in Christian culture but evident in earlier works in the anthropology of experience (Myerhoff, 1974). Contemporary geographers of pilgrimage have also noted the liminal character of the pilgrimage journey whereby "pilgrims move across and through material and visual surfaces in search of contact with the transcendent – those moments of porosity and breakthrough" (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013, p. 1107). In this way:

> Religious pilgrimage has long been seen as an opportunity, and means of, personal and collective renewal, with that renewal traditionally

pivoting on penitence leading to a fresh start born out of forgiveness, or the healing of a physical or mental ailment. (Maddrell, 2013, p. 63).

Geographies of pilgrimage have grown to become a small yet significant sub-discipline, with contemporary analyses represented in studies such as Campo's ground-breaking article (1998) on civil, cultural, and organised religious pilgrimage in late-20th-centrury America; della Dora's commentary (2012) on the 'blurred' boundaries between pilgrimage, tourism, and the landscape; McDowell and Crooke's discussion (2019) of the Burning Man temporary temple in Derry/Londonderry; and Sharpe's ethnography (2005) of structured liminality and communitas in an outdoor leisure service provider. Increasingly, academic attention has turned to the interrelationship between pilgrimage geographies and everyday mobilities and subjectivities – suggesting that structure and anti- or inter-structure exist along a spectrum rather than a strict binary (Wigley, 2016).

According to Wigley (ibid., pp. 696-7), 'micro-pilgrimages' – here, the Sunday morning journey to church – brings the "extraordinary journeys of pilgrimage […] closer to the ordinary social conditions." Liminality thus becomes a facet of the everyday – with social actors crossing between sociostructural conditions patterning daily life. Alongside these developments, Banfield has argued (2022, p. 1) that geographers ought to "progress from identifying more and more spaces as liminal to spatialising liminality itself." Corresponding to the micro-subjective turn in geographies of pilgrimage, this approach emphasises the "multiple, staggered, scattered, nested, and mobile" spatialisations of liminality alongside the novel subject (trans)formations provoked within (ibid., p. 6). As such, this thesis has been written in light of a growing geographic literature on the interrelationship between mobility, liminality, and subjectivity – foregrounding the everyday and mundane liminalities intersecting lived religion and vital in provoking novel modes of space and subject (trans)formation.

2.4.3 Communitas

To reiterate, liminality provides the optimal settings for communitas – a state characterised by anti-structure and an acute feeling of belonging to, and identification with, both the social actors who inculcate it and an imagined community (Anderson, 1991) or symbolic peoplehood (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982). As highlighted above, communitas occurs during the symbolic interchange – where,

through ritual performance, the moral and the physiological symbolic poles converge in a highly affective moment both in and out of time. During communitas, according to Turner (1982b), ritual performers are offered a snapshot of alternative ways of being through the anti-structural nature of the moment. These snapshots, like flashes from a camera, provide performers with deeply affective glimpses of what life could be. This diverts their behaviour in the direction of "radical change" (ibid., p. 33) which can then be used outside communitas to alter the regulated ways of being in ordinary space-time. In this way, communitas has the propensity to act as the foci for sociostructural (trans)formation.

Examples of this process can be found in Cox's account (2018) of the Los Angeles Wisdom Tree whereby leisurely pilgrimage to the tree facilitates connections to an imagined landscape detached from the mundane realities of urban living; Nowicka's ethnography (2016, p. 249) of indigenous folk-dance festivals in Buryatia and Yakutia whereby communitas fosters "unity, uniformity, and communality" over "internal diversity and social structure"; and Rubenstein's discussion (1992) of liminality and communitas during Purim. According to Rubenstein (ibid., p. 152):

> On Purim, the normal contours of Jewish society and religion are inverted. At the same time, communitas reigns with the destruction of regular distinctions that govern Jewish piety and society.

Rituals, by facilitating liminality and fostering communitas, are clearly instrumental in the (trans)formation of religious worlds – though, following Davidman (2007) and Bellah (1967, 1985), this applies to a spectrum of religio-secular contexts. It would be a misstep to assume, however, that such (trans)formations are always in the direction of radical progress. More critical readings note (Alexander, 1991; Eade & Sallnow, 1991) that communitas is also prone to the buttressing of the status quo by diverting attention away from legitimate challenges to the prevailing hegemony.

A contemporary example of this can be found in Nahum-Claudel's ethnography (2019) of the fishing-dam-building ritual of the Enawenê-Nawê whereby uneven topographies emerge in the (re)generation of communitas. For the Enawenê-Nawê, the men of the village experience communitas because they are the ones tasked with performing the necessary ritual (ibid.). This shows us how

the conditions conducive to communitas are patterned according to (gendered) sociostructural regulations. These relations of power facilitate the generation of communitas among some but not others – a process which, in turn, ensures the return to regulated structure and preservation of gendered hegemony. Another example can be found in Lugosi's study (2007) of leisure, nightlife, and queer communitas. Though patronage to queer, night-time leisure spaces represents a politically conscious act of self-affirmation and visibility, the communitas experienced within these spaces is still by bound by the processes of commercial exchange due to its occurrence within the neoliberal night-time economy.[5]

This relates to the temporary nature of communitas and the ambiguities inherent in whether it results in progressive or regressive ways of being. These ambiguities, I argue, are a key site of rapprochement between geographies of religion and Turner's theory on ritual performance within which this thesis is situated. Liminality and communitas are never fully cleaved off from structure. According to Myerhoff (1975), when communitas is sought as the replacement for social structure instead of as a (re)generative part of it, it becomes a sociostructural end – evacuating itself of any rejuvenating value. For Alexander (1991) and Turner (1982b), the unity between communitas and structure is not one whereby the former reinforces the latter; it is a bilateral relationship whereby complex alternatives or assurances for social structures are possible.

For example, in their discussion of the relationship between the Trinity Wall Street Church and the Occupy movement, Cloke *et al*. identify (2015) a breakdown in relations between the two social groups – from relations of hospitality and solidarity to those of conflict and contention. The authors correctly establish that communitarian relations, originally fomented through ritualised performance (ibid., p. 504), began to fray following increased recognition of the Church's role as a landowner and growing disillusionment from Church officials regarding the protestors' intentions. An understanding of communitas, however, would have enabled Cloke *et al*. to better formulate this pattern. Communitas unified the

---

[5] This tension between commerciality and communitas, ritual and resistance, will be explored in much greater depth in Chapter Six.

innumerable social bodies – themselves carrying competing meanings and powers – (trans)formed within the ritual space-time of the Church, but ultimately entrenched social divides between them once the state of anti-structure assimilated into pre-existing social structures. The utopian communitarianism experienced in communitas faded following at least one party's – primarily the Church's – return to sociostructural regulation (ibid.). Here, communitas resulted in novel modes of regression which widened the divide between the social actors present. This is because, through the ritual process, unique subject positions were (trans)formed – covetous Church leaders and raucous protestors – with increased criticism and civil disobedience directed towards the former due to their rescinding of hospitality towards the latter.

Just as the anthropology of experience can help geographers better approach the personal-structural interface, so too do postsecular geographies enable more critical readings of communitas which acknowledge the multiplex "ways in which subjects either dissent or conform to religious hegemonies" (Sutherland, 2016, p. 332). This rapprochement reflects della Dora's call (2018, p. 65) for geographers to engage with a new "lexicon that captures simultaneity and fluidity, while retaining focus on material specificities." Though della Dora moves beyond postsecular narratives to "infrasecular geographies" (ibid., p. 44), such scholarship acts, nevertheless, as a critical lens through which scholars can explore the webs of competing collectives, meanings, powers, and selves which render the outcomes of communitas hugely contingent. As such, this thesis sits at a key site of rapprochement between the anthropology of experience and postsecular geographies of lived religion – whereby the phenomena of ritual, liminality, and communitas enable us to explore the personal-structural interface as well as the ambiguous selves, spaces, and others (trans)formed within.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced the key interdisciplinary site of rapprochement within which this thesis is situated. This work contributes to a growing body of research emphasising postsecularism, lived religion, and affect – a burgeoning area of scholarship oriented around the personal and the structural scales of analysis. At the personal-structural interface is a rich albeit sparsely studied field of geographic

analysis. To address this, I turned to the anthropology of experience – specifically, Turner's theory on ritual performance (1967, 1969) – as a way for geographers to better approach one's sociostructural experiences and how these are expressed in the process of space and subject (trans)formation. By foregrounding the Ritual Complex, I responded to Kong's call (2010) for geographers to turn to the more functional, mythic, and symbolic forms of ethnoreligiosity while highlighting the active, processual nature of rituals. At the same time, I situated this thesis within a growing literature on the interrelationship between mobility, liminality, and subjectivity – emphasising the mundane liminalities intersecting lived religious lives and vital in provoking novel modes of space and subject (trans)formation. By addressing the anti-structural phenomenon of communitas, I further situated this thesis between the anthropology of experience and postsecular geographies of lived religion – where the ambiguous, even dangerous, potentialities and specificities of religious world-building are emphasised.

Rituals are key to the (trans)formation of religious selves, spaces, and others. Following Luz (2013), ritual space-times are highly affective and evocative, serving as efficient platforms to rally together sometimes enormously distanciated groups through the generation of communitas – an opportunity to play with, renew, or subvert the matrices of power within which it is embedded. Of course, this is not to say that communitas does not lend itself to novel modes of regression or the buttressing of the status quo; rather, that ritual, liminality, and communitas are vital in understanding how people actively make their selves and the world around them while remaining conscious of the sociostructural conditions in which they are situated. As such, my decision to situate this thesis at the niche between geography and anthropology reflects not only a theoretical choice but a methodological choice – where rituals are key to understanding how people (trans)form, and ascribe meaning to, their selves, others, and the worlds around them (Bruner, 1986b).

Chapter 3. Betwixt and between: methodological liminality in a time of Covid-19

3.1 Introduction

This thesis is grounded in fourteen months of virtual narrative ethnographic fieldwork conducted during the Covid-19 Pandemic.[6] 18 queer Jews participated in unstructured life story interviews; semi-structured thematic interviews; and participant observation. Fieldwork encounters were guided by the research aims – namely, to explore queer Jewish subject (trans)formation in situ and to outline the role of ritual in this process – in dialogue with the research questions. The methodological approach informing, and informed by, these encounters grew synchronously alongside my experiences 'in the field' – experiences which coincided with the Covid-19 social drama. In this chapter, I make amends with the breach – reflecting on the successive crises it caused while highlighting my attempts to redress its effects. In doing so, I integrate the "messiness, open-endedness, and coarseness of ethnographic research in-the-making" with a sound methodological framework (Abidin & de Sata, 2020, p. 1).

Fieldwork has traditionally been considered a rite of passage (ibid.); a site characterised by great ambiguity, potentiality, and precarity – especially for doctoral students (Krause *et al*., 2021; Sah *et al*., 2020) – whereby the researcher is separated in the field from everyday life at home. In my experience, the 'betwixt and between' quality of fieldwork was heightened by the Covid-19 Pandemic – whereby the fast-paced and unpredictable nature of the health emergency led to a marked separation between research design and research practice (Turner, 1967). In this chapter, I argue that the data produced through this process were simultaneously rich yet confusing, intricate yet untidy (Archibald *et al*., 2019). The complexity of this data was catalysed by my 'agile research approach' (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 2) in response to the Pandemic – where creativity and contingency were emphasised in the shift to virtual methodology (Krause *et al*., 2021).

---

[6] An earlier draft of this chapter was presented to the *(Re)defining fieldwork* conference on the 3rd of February 2022. The conference was held online and hosted by Durham University and Newcastle University.

The chapter is split into three main sections. I begin by offering a cursory timeline of the research project – contouring the diverging paths between my intended research design and my 'agile' research practice (Watson & Lupton, 2022). In doing so, I demonstrate how I was embedded in the socio-material context of Covid Britain, a context shared (however unevenly) with participants. Next, I discuss participant recruitment and demographics – unpicking the complexities of the recruitment process while highlighting notable demographic patterns. Then, I outline (virtual) narrative ethnography as the methodological framework orienting this project, highlighting once more how my socio-material embedding renders this project ethnographic. Here, I explore the methodological significance of narratives and rituals as key expressions of lived experience (Bruner, 1986b). Finally, I outline the three main ethnographic methods drawn upon during fieldwork – illustrating how they produced ethnographically significant data despite their online execution.

Next, I foreground the virtual components of my fieldwork – highlighting the "co-presence" and immersion fostered through digital ethnography (Beaulieu, 2010, p. 453). I begin by discussing the ethical, methodological, and practical steps of remote fieldwork while advocating for the use of Zoom as an appropriate, multisensory ethnographic platform (Watson & Lupton, 2022). In doing so, I unsettle the 'placeness' of ethnography (Haverinen, 2015; Howlett, 2021) – condensing field and home into a single, liminal space-time. While the home-field convergence amplifies my argument that this research can indeed be considered ethnographic, the "blurred lines between personal and professional settings" is itself ethically fraught territory (Sah *et al.*, 2020, p. 1103). This is further complexified when 'leaving the field' (Hays-Mitchell, 2001) – an act of cognitive, personal, and professional boundary demarcation made even more ambiguous by data imminence. Here, I attend to the processes of data recording, transcription, codification, and analysis, as well as opportunities for research dissemination.

Finally, I assess my own epistemic subject position as an insider-outsider researcher – drawing on Audrey Kobayashi's pivotal critique (2009) of standpoint theory and Parikh's understanding (2020) of positionality as process. I outline the contested, subjective nature of positionality – arguing that, while researchers may

consider themselves insiders or outsiders, this may not be a subject position accepted by participants (Kasstan, 2016). I highlight the unfolding, unstable nature of the self and the multiplex ways this influences positionality and knowledge production. I close this section by commenting on the practice of self-disclosure – exploring the kind of knowledge generated through this process of trust-building, its ethically fraught nature, and the responsibilities we have as researchers in its handling.

While online methods "resolve some of the limitations caused by social distancing measures and our inability to access the fields and research populations we study" (Howlett, 2021, p. 389), this work is limited nonetheless by the "empirical insights" missed while conducting virtual ethnography (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 2). My response to this limitation is as follows: this research was conducted during a pandemic – a time in which the regular sociostructural conditions regulating life were upended. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, I experienced anxiety, distress, social isolation, and – on several occasions – prolonged periods of ill-health. My agile fieldwork practice was developed in response to these conditions – conditions that were exacerbated no less by the financial and temporal constraints part and parcel of doctoral research (Watson & Lupton, 2022). As such, the points argued in this chapter are not only methodological but deeply personal in nature – subverting ethnographic "hierarchies" concerning in-person research through reflexive liminality (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 6).

3.2 Between research design and research practice: agile ethnographic research and socio-material embedding in Covid Britain

Fieldwork began formally in March 2020, with ethical approval granted (Appendix A) two days after Covid-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (2020). As illustrated below (Figure 1), the first research encounters took place in Spring 2020 with a flurry of activity that Summer/Autumn – reflecting a solid transition to remote working. The final fieldwork encounter took place in June 2021 – culminating in a rich body of data produced over a fourteen-month period.
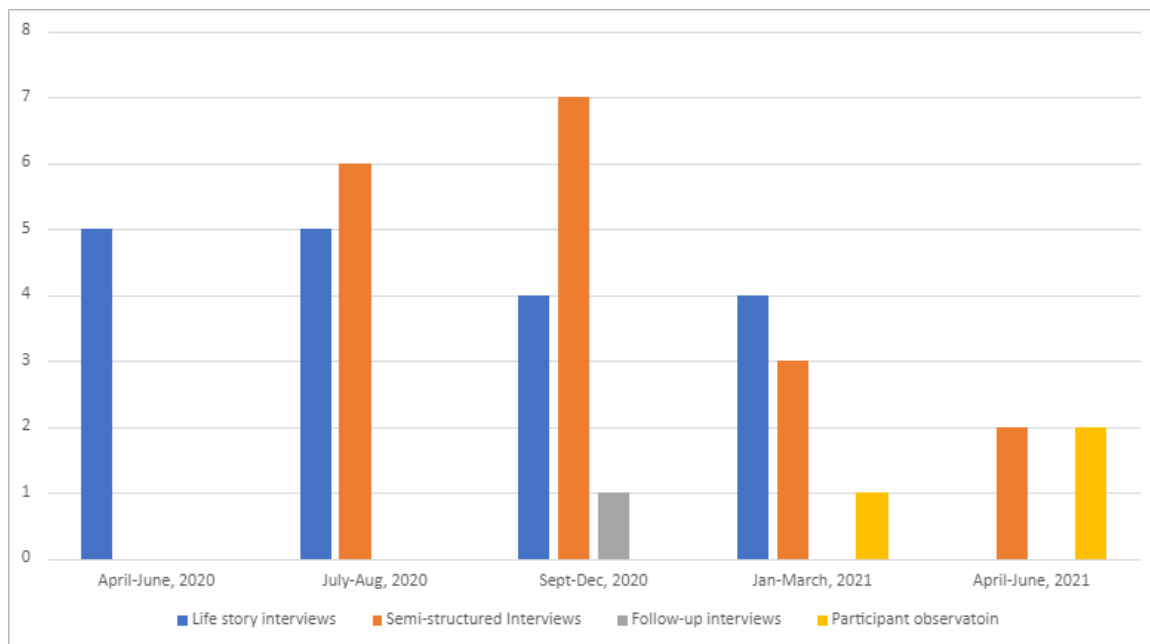
Figure 1: Fieldwork timeline

I conducted 18 unstructured life story interviews (ranging from 54 to 181 minutes in length with an average of around 95 minutes) alongside 18 semi-structured interviews (ranging from 51 minutes to 148 minutes in length with an average of around 88 minutes). I arranged one follow-up interview with Busty Unorthococks (B.C.) following the release of the Netflix series *Unorthodox* (Studio Airlift, 2020). In total, I spent 58 hours interviewing participants excluding warmup conversations, debriefs, and catch-ups – all of which could last well over an hour. There were three opportunities for participant observation: two with participants directly and one with the CCJ. Around 10 hours were spent conducting participant observation excluding all warmups, debriefs, and preparation time. Primary data took the form of audio recordings, diary entries, fieldnotes, and interview transcripts. Secondary data took the form of digital material shared between participants and I during the research process (e.g., pictures, social media posts, TV shows), and statistical research reports published by public bodies such as the Community Security Trust and Home Office.

A conservative estimate of 68 hours was spent conducting fieldwork, culminating in over 500,000 words of interview transcripts and fieldnotes. A more liberal estimate including all warmup conversations, debriefs, and catch-ups would place this at well over 100 hours– excluding the days, weeks, and months spent

applying for project approval and ethical clearance; participant recruitment and negotiating access; immersing myself in participants' data during transcription, codification, and analysis; reading, sharing, and watching audio-visual resources with participants; and organising opportunities for dissemination. In this view, fieldwork activities occupied most of my time over the fourteen-month period.

Here, I focus on the liminal space between research design and research practice by contouring the diverging paths between my *intended* research design and my *agile* research practice in response to Covid-19 – a site of methodological creativity and contingency, and fertile field for knowledge production. I begin by offering a cursory timeline of the research project before outlining the methodological framework I developed synchronously alongside my experiences 'in the field.'

3.2.1 Research timeline

The following timeline begins in Autumn 2019 – when I formally began the PhD – but does so in recognition of the fact that the personal, political, and academic motivations underlying this project stretch back many years beforehand. The insights below are drawn from both my research diary and fieldwork log – encompassing the run up to, and period of, fieldwork.

September 2019 to December 2019, I enrol at Newcastle University as a postgraduate research (PGR) student invested in exploring the cathartic effect of ritual on queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain. The project comes at a time of unprecedented hate crime statistics (Home Office, 2018) and, as such, corresponds to growing public concern regarding rising Antisemitism and Queerphobia (Elks, 2018; Khomami, 2018). My project is funded (grant number: ES/P000762/1) by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and I am in collaboration with the CCJ to conduct the research. I apply for project approval mid-December. On the application form, I outline the proposed research design: a critically reflexive ethnography (Davies, 1998) following a Bourdieusian practice-based approach to fieldwork (Bourdieu, 1989; Nash, 2018). Participant observation

is chosen as the primary method of data collection – followed by semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

January 2020 to March 2020, the new year begins with growing reports on a 'mystery virus' in China (BBC News, 2020a, 2020b) – university management send their first email communication on Coronavirus on the 31st of January. I apply for ethical approval shortly afterwards. While pending, I become sick with a high fever and persistent cough. The doctor assures me that, since I had not travelled to China nor been in contact with anyone who had, it is unlikely to be Covid. I intend on conducting fieldwork across several urban centres due to accessibility, relevant hate crime statistics (Home Office, 2018), and sizeable queer/Jewish populations. I have financial and logistical concerns about my proposed fieldwork – wondering how far the ESRC's £750 fieldwork allowance will stretch in terms of lodging and transport costs. My concerns reflect the 'socioeconomic attrition' that PGRs are vulnerable to in particular (Golde, 2005).

The Covid-19 Pandemic is declared on the 11th of March – my birthday – and my project receives ethical clearance two days after. A week later, and in line with government advice (Prime Minister's Office, 2020a), the university restricts access to campus – guidance for remote working is released and our PGR office is closed. A former schoolfriend dies suddenly in the Channel Islands. Because of local restrictions, only three people are allowed to attend the funeral in-person – the rest of us observe and participate virtually. The UK enters its first nationwide lockdown on the 26th of March 2020. Three days later, the university advises PGRs that any plans for in-person fieldwork are now impossible due to social distancing measures. I finish the semester by re-drawing my research design – thinking of ways to mitigate the disruption caused by Covid-19 within the financial and temporal constraints afforded to my project.

April 2020 to June 2020, I re-structure my research design – prioritising qualitative interviews while waiting for lockdown restrictions to be lifted. I am conscious that the CCJ are adapting their activities to remote delivery and, as such, do not feel it would be appropriate to approach them for participant recruitment. Instead, I place a call for participants (Appendix B) on my personal and professional social media pages. Most participants are recruited through the

original call for participants. I invite participants to take part in qualitative interviews over Zoom – the ethics application and data management plan are, in turn, updated to reflect the shift to virtual methods. Participants are sent a consent form (Appendix C) and information sheet (Appendix D). The first research encounters take place in mid-April, and, from these, I formulate life story interviews as the primary method for data collection. Over the next two months, I conduct five life story interviews – ironing out the kinks of online fieldwork and, in doing so, refining my research practice. Virtual narrative ethnography emerges as the most suitable methodological framework for this project – a symbiotic process whereby my experiences 'in the field' inform my choice of methodology and vice versa. While lockdown measures are eased May through June, restrictions on in-person fieldwork remain. I start arranging semi-structured interviews – devising an interview structure (Appendix E) while updating participants on the next phase of the research process.

July 2020 to August 2020 begins with a second call for participants through social media. While remote working restrictions are relaxed, in-person fieldwork is still impossible due to institutional regulations. I make the decision that all fieldwork is to take place online – no longer waiting for the possibility to conduct in-person research. I update participants on my decision – informing them that I am still working out how to arrange virtual participant observation. Towards the end of August, Covid-19 cases surge in the Northeast. I begin data transcription and preliminary analysis.

September 2020 to December 2020, the second wave of Covid-19 arrives in the UK – triggering new social distancing measures across the country. There is a phased return to our PGR office, and I gain vital access to IT equipment needed for data storage. The office is empty – only a dozen PGRs are allowed in at once, most choose to work from home. On October 31st, a second national lockdown lasting four weeks is announced. Nevertheless, data collection reaches its climax and I have collected most data by December. I attend a Christmas-Hanukkah event organised by the CCJ, who agree to help with a third call for participants. The CCJ advertise the project in their weekly newsletter and on social media. The poster sparks interest from the Faith and Belief Forum – an interfaith organisation founded

in 1997 – who send it directly to shareholders and post it on social media. Four more participants are recruited – bringing the total number to 18 and marking the end to participant recruitment. A third national lockdown is announced mid-December, and any potential leads for participant observation dry up – perhaps owing to "Zoom fatigue" (Wahl-Jorgenson, 2021). While Zoom is useful in facilitating online co-presence through distinctive virtual intimacies, it necessitates a high degree of "cognitive labour" from both participants and researchers in terms of "monitoring [our] own self-presentation and managing conversation flow in a digital environment" (ibid.).

January 2021 to March 2021, the third national lockdown lasts for the duration of this semester. There are eight research encounters – four life story interviews, three semi-structured interviews, and one opportunity for participant observation. Opportunities for participant observation are few and far between. To offset this, hate crime statistics and social media posts are sought as complementary data. This includes research reports from the CST and the Home Office, as well as social media content/pages for queer Jewish organisations/events mentioned during research encounters. My focus shifts to data transcription, codification, and analysis.

April 2021 to June 2021, there are four more research encounters – two semi-structured interviews and two days of participant observation. The first opportunity for participant observation – a virtual Passover celebration organised by Louis and some friends – coincides with the tail end of the Naw-Rúz festive period. This marks the end of data collection with participants directly – informal debriefs follow shortly thereafter. The final research encounter is a virtual event ethnography of the CCJ's *Transforming intolerance* conference. The day-long conference focuses on the intersection between faith and other protected characteristics and brings together "practical workshops, student leaders, and inspiring theologians." Fieldwork formally concludes with the conference – coinciding with the gradual easing of all lockdown restrictions and the government's

vaccine roll-out. Participants are formally debriefed by email – with some electing to remain in regular contact over the course of the coming months.

July 2021 and beyond, data transcription is finalised – I dedicate my time to codification and analysis following a narrative approach (Franzosi, 1998; Murray, 2003). I have begun writing my empirical chapters by the time I test positive for Covid-19 – momentarily interrupting my studies due to a Covid-related chest infection. Towards the project's close, I am in talks with shareholders – the CCJ and a national charity providing emotional support to people in crisis – about holding a continual professional development (CPD) workshop based on my research findings.

The Covid-19 Pandemic widened the gap between my research design and my research practice – diversions summarised below in Figure 2 – particularly regarding in-person fieldwork. It was simply not feasible to sit and wait for face-to-face data collection to resume. A lack of institutional authorisation and ethical concerns around conducting in-person research during a pandemic converged with the financial and temporal constraints characteristic of doctoral research. While – as a PGR – I felt its disproportionate effects (Krause *et al*., 2021; Sah *et al*., 2020), this convergence pushed me to think creatively of a contingency plan that enabled me to continue my research.

	Research design	**Research practice**
Approach	Reflexive ethnography following a Bourdieusian practice-based approach.	Virtual narrative ethnography following literature in counselling studies and the anthropology of experience.
	Devised as part of the project approval form.	Emerged alongside preliminary data collection.
Setting	In-person fieldwork in urban centres with significant Jewish and queer populations.	Virtual fieldwork conducted 'at home' with geographically dispersed participants.
	In-person participant observation within queer/Jewish centres, organisations, and settings.	Interviews conducted online via Zoom. Participants joined Zoom calls from a range of locations; most were at home, but some joined while outside or in public.

	Interviews to be held in-person in a setting of the participants' preference – i.e., coffee shop, community centre, library, or any facilities provided by the collaborative partner. Participants also invited to take part in interviews remotely. Two focus groups were to be held – one in London, one in Newcastle. Facilities were to be negotiated with the collaborative partner.	Participant observation conducted via Zoom. Two instances of participant observation were in formal settings – conference, synagogue. One in an informal setting – i.e., a participants' personal, social network.
Participants	Planned to recruit around 30 participants who self-described as queer and Jewish. Participants recruited primarily through the collaborative partner. Participants who had taken part in participant observation would then be invited to interviews and focus groups. Participants who were unaffiliated to the organisations observed would also be recruited	Recruited 18 research who self-described as queer and Jewish. Call for participants originally shared online via social media. Participants who had participated in interviews were approached about participant observation. Call for participants shared by the collaborative partner and within various queer/Jewish social and organisational networks.
Methods	Participant observation of rituals performed by queer/Jewish organisations. 1:1 semi-structured interviews exploring themes such as religiosity, identity, and experiences of oppression. Focus groups of roughly 6-8 participants exploring themes such as identity, oppression, and religion.	1:1 unstructured, life story interviews. 1:1 semi-structured interviews exploring themes such as heritage, identity, memory, space and place-making practices, religiosity, and ritual. Follow-up interviews where media had been shared. Participant observation. Two encounters with ritual performance

		by participants in formal and informal settings. One encounter in a conference incorporating talks from faith leaders, student representatives, practitioners, and policy makers.
Data	Data gathered would take the form of field notes, audio recordings and transcripts, and focus group materials.	Data gathered include 58 hours audio recordings from 37 interviews, field notes from 10 hours of participant observation, and resources shared by participants or found by the researcher online. Statistical research reports on hate crime incidents also complemented primary data collection.
	Data transcription to be completed by the author and uploaded to NVivo 12.	All data transcribed by the author and uploaded to NVivo 12 – culminating in over 500,00 words of data transcription and fieldnotes, as well as shared media.
	All data to be coded using NVivo 12 via both deductive and inductive coding.	All data coded using NVivo 12 via both deductive and inductive coding. Narrative analysis used throughout.
Dissemination	Research dissemination to take place in tandem with the collaborative partner at an event in London.	Research dissemination took place online. One event was held in collaboration with the collaborative partner, while another will take place in the local branch of a nationwide charity.

Figure 2: Research design, research practice

The contingency plan evident in my research practice shows the reader three things. First, that contingency planning has become "a central part of our research designs" – where researchers must think creatively and quickly on how they might best fulfil their fieldwork obligations (Krause *et al*., 2021, p. 1). Second, the unfolding nature of my research practice reflects what Watson and Lupton describe (2022, p. 2) as "agile research." Specifically:

> a response to suddenly changing research conditions that required quick thinking and action so that we could meet our deadlines but not compromise the quality of our research. (ibid.)

Third, my fieldwork experiences demonstrate how I was, in turn, "embedded" in the socio-material setting of Covid Britain (Howlett, 2021, p. 394) – a context shared with participants (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). This notion of shared experience must not be taken uncritically. According to Sobande (2020, p. 1034), instead of being the "great leveller" of experience, Covid-19 has, instead, exacerbated social inequalities. As such, my argument for online embedding is not to deny such inequalities exist but to highlight Covid Britain as the socio-material setting I shared – however unevenly – with participants. According to Schulte-Römer and Gesing (2022, p.8), ethnographers are:

> trained to acknowledge the socio-material settings that shape our possibilities to access and observe interactions, bodily expressions, practices, and atmospheres in the field.

That my fieldwork moved entirely online – and interviews became the primary method of data collection – reflects the fact that I was embedded in the socio-material setting that framed my research project, my interactions with participants, and the data produced. Professional experiences of conducting agile social research during a pandemic converged with personal experiences of home working, social distancing/isolation, and – at times – bereavement and poor health. These were experiences I shared with participants; experiences which helped foster rapport through the medium of Zoom. Indeed, drawing on Beaulieu (2010), Howlett argues (2021, p. 392) that:

> digital methods can support similar ethnographic research by encouraging co-presence with our participants and by helping us embed ourselves in our research sites from afar.

The liminal space between research design and research practice reflects my online embedding in the shared socio-material context of Covid Britain – producing not only a key site of rapport but a rich body of data. According to Howlett (ibid.), this unsettles the 'gold standard' of in-person ethnographic research – showing instead how conducting ethnographic research virtually produces empirically, methodologically, and theoretically significant data. Below, I discuss

participant recruitment and demographics before introducing the methodology and methods that emerged alongside my fieldwork experiences.

3.2.2 Recruitment and participant demographics

Participant recruitment began at the tail end of March 2020 and ran until December 2020. With help from a friend and colleague, I devised a call for participants (Appendix B) that I posted on social media on three separate occasions.[7] After expressions of interest, I sought participants' informed consent through an information sheet (Appendix D), consent form (Appendix C), and the offer to answer any questions. This process of informed consent was ongoing – not least because of the fluid research design in response to Covid-19. As such, both the information sheet and consent form were treated as living, breathing documents which had to be re-negotiated when necessary to reflect changes in ethical, institutional, and national regulations.

Participant demographics were varied and diverse – diverging both from official estimates of British Jewry (Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2013; European Jewish Congress, 2017) and previous studies of LGBT Jews (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011). Participants were sent questionnaires (Appendix F) – comprising of mostly open-ended questions for them to self-describe their own social characteristics – to gain unique demographic insights not readily synthesised from the primary research methods. It would have been difficult to maintain participants' anonymity had their responses to the questionnaire been included here due to the highly individualised information they disclosed. As such, I have decided to provide participant profiles below (Figure 3) – including their gender identity/identities, sexual orientation/s, age bracket, ethnicity, religious background, religiosity, religious identity, and whether they were affiliated to any particular branch of Judaism at the time of the study. Some details regarding place of birth and current residency are included also. Inconsistencies in classifications, definitions, and terms reflect participants' own words and how they described themselves.

---

[7] Thank you, Kieran, for your help with this.

Participant	Pronouns	Profile
Abby	She/her	Abby is a queer, gay, and bisexual woman living in London. She is in her mid-20s and considers herself White Jewish. Abby was raised in a Progressive Jewish household but is now affiliated with Reform Judaism. She describes herself as slightly observant and says she is religiously and culturally Jewish. Abby was born in Israel and holds British-Israeli citizenship.
Alex	She/her	Alex describes herself as a cisgender female with traits some may view as more 'masculine.' She is in her late 20s and is bisexual or fluid. She is of "Mixed white [sic] European (Ashkenazim/Sephardim)" descent and holds British-German citizenship. She was raised in an agnostic/atheist – yet culturally Jewish – home and is not at all observant. Alex is culturally but not religiously Jewish with no synagogue affiliation.
Anna Marom	She/her	Anna is gender consistent, slightly queer, and on the "cis spectrum." She mostly uses the term queer to describe her sexuality, though also identifies as gay, asexual, and lesbian. Anna is in her 40s and is of mixed Ashkenazi Jewish and Protestant European heritage. She grew up in a secular household but had religious grandparents. Anna considers herself not at all observant and partially culturally, partially ritually Jewish. She attends a Liberal synagogue.
Busty Unorthococks	She/her, they/them	B.C. is a "somewhat female" pansexual person from a strictly Orthodox background. They are White and were born in Israel. B.C. lives in Northwest England and says she is not at all observant. B.C. says they are somewhat culturally Jewish and that they are not currently affiliated to any synagogue.
Blue	She/her	Blue is a bisexual Jewish woman living in London. She is in her mid-20s and describes her ethnicity as 'mixed White.' Blue was raised Orthodox and says she is pretty observant. She is religiously and culturally Jewish, and currently affiliated to a Masorti synagogue.
Dor	He/him	Dor is a queer Jewish man in his early 30s. He describes his ethnicity as Jewish and discloses triple citizenship. Dor comes from a diverse

		religious background and has lived both in the UK and Israel. He considers himself between moderately observant and very observant, and religiously and culturally Jewish. The last synagogue he was affiliated to was Liberal.
H.E.	He/him	H.E. is a White gay man in his mid-30s. He was born in South Africa – though currently lives in England – and grew up in a Jewish household. He is not at all observant and considers himself culturally Jewish but not religiously. He is currently affiliated to a Reform synagogue.
Hannah	She/her	Hannah is a gay cisgender and gender fluid woman in her late 20s. She is White British and lives in London. Hannah's religious background is secular – but her family were members of a Reform community for most of her upbringing. Hannah considers herself slightly observant and culturally but not religiously Jewish. She is not currently affiliated to any synagogue.
Jacob	He/him	Jacob is a gay cisgender Jewish man in his late 20s. He is White Caucasian Jewish and currently lives in London. Jacob was raised Modern Orthodox and considers himself very observant. He is religiously and culturally Jewish and affiliated to a Masorti synagogue.
Josh	He/him	Josh is a gay Jewish male in his late 20s. He considers himself a White other and lives in London. Josh is from a Reform background but now feels "happier and more comfortable in the Orthodox world." He is moderately religious and considers himself religiously and culturally Jewish.
Liane	She/her, they/them	Liane is a queer Jew whose gender is "somewhere between" a cisgender woman and non-binary. They are in their early 30s and live in London. Liane's religious background is Jewish, and she considers herself moderately observant. Their response to the question on Jewish identity is outlined below. Liane is currently affiliated to a Reform synagogue.
Louis	He/him	Louis is a gay Jewish man who is cisgender but gender non-conforming. He is in his early 30s and lived in Southwest England at the time of the study. Louis was born in the USA and was raised American Reform Jewish. His is moderately

		observant and religiously and culturally Jewish. Louis is not currently affiliated to any synagogue.
Maya	She/her	Maya is a queer cisgender Jewish woman in her late 20s. She lived in Northeast England at the time of the study and was born in the USA. Maya is slightly observant and was raised in a Conservative/Masorti household. She is culturally but not religiously Jewish and currently affiliated to a Conservative/Masorti synagogue.
O.K.	He/him, they/them	O.K. is a gay gender questioning Jew in his early 30s. He lives in London and was raised Modern Orthodox. O.K. is slightly observant, as well as culturally Jewish and slightly religiously Jewish. They are not currently affiliated to any synagogue.
Paul	He/him	Paul is a gay cisgender Jewish male in his early 40s. He lives in London and is from a Jewish background. He is not at all observant and culturally but not religiously Jewish. Paul was raised Modern Orthodox but is not currently affiliated to any synagogue.
R	They/them	R is a queer Jewish lesbian in their early 30s. They are non-binary, genderqueer, and gender-fluid. They live in London and are from a mixed Catholic/Jewish household they describe as irreligious. R is moderately religious and currently affiliated to a Liberal synagogue. They are religiously and culturally Jewish.
Tamara	She/her	Tamara is a cisgender Jewish woman who describes herself as gay, but who is unable to pinpoint exactly "where [she is] on the LGBT spectrum." She lives in Northwest England and was raised Orthodox. She is moderately observant and currently affiliated to an Orthodox Sephardi synagogue. She is religiously and culturally Jewish.
T.M.	He/him	T.M. is a bisexual cisgender Jewish man in his early 30s. He lives in London and is from a Reform/Masorti background. T.M. is moderately observant and currently affiliated to a Masorti synagogue. He is religiously and culturally Jewish.

Figure 3: Participant profiles

Several observations can be made regarding the process of recruitment and how this relates to the participant cohort's demographic structure. First, my choice to recruit participants via social media did not, initially, take into consideration inequalities relating to digital access/literacy. This may be reflected in the fact that participants were relatively young in comparison to wider trends in British Jewry (Staetsky & Boyd, 2015) – ranging in age from 24 to 41, with most around the age of 30. To offset this demographic imbalance, a snowball method was employed to recruit participants who either did not want to use, or did not have access to, social media.

Following Byrne (2012), the snowball approach can be a successful method in making contacts for research purposes. Indeed, participants were keen on sharing the poster with friends, colleagues, and acquaintances underrepresented in the wider Jewish population. For example, at least six participants claimed Sephardi, Mizrahi, and/or South Asian heritage – a demographic trend differing from the largely Ashkenazi Jewish population in Britain (Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2013). For Byrne (2012), this reflects one of the key benefits of the snowball approach in that a more diverse range of lived experiences are represented in the participant cohort. However, snowballing had the consequence of introducing social bubbles to the project – raising ethical questions regarding anonymity and confidentiality. To mitigate this, I refused to comment when asked on whether I had interviewed a participant's family member, friend, or ex-lover – bringing the research encounter back to the participant themselves.

Participants were asked to describe their own gender identities. While cisgender men were the largest group represented in the study, cisgender women were more likely to identify with multiple, staggered gendered identities. I use the term queer throughout this project to account for sexualities beyond the strict binaries of sex and gender – accommodating those who do not fit neatly into the term LGBT. Following Boussalem (2020, 2022), my decision to use the term queer is not intended to essentialise or totalise participants' selves – nor deny them the terms they used to self-describe. Indeed, several participants were vocal about identifying with alternate terms – terms I reflected in our conversations together. But in 'queering' my methodology by adopting deliberately ambiguous terms and

definitions (Binnie, 1997; Warner, 2004), a more diverse range of sexual orientations were represented in the participant cohort – widening access for participants who were still exploring their queerness, held multiple sexual orientations, and/or who did not feel they sat comfortably within the binaries of LGBT.

The principle of self-identification applied to Jewish selves also. The question of 'who is a Jew?' has a long and polyvocal history (Egorova, 2014; Wolpe, 1997) – something that will become explicit in the next chapter. Following Faulkner and Hecht (2011), Jewish selfhood is often deduced following the matrilineal principle (where one's mother is Jewish), the nonlinear principle (where one has at least one Jewish parent and is raised Jewish), and/or ethnoreligious indicators (endogeny, ritual practice, etc.). By opting for self-identification, I wanted to incorporate a more diverse range of ethnoreligious selves – particularly from those who self-described as Jewish, but who may have had the authenticity of their claims challenged. As such, eight participants were of mixed Jewish/non-Jewish ancestry; two were raised Jewish, but no longer identified as Jewish; and one was adopted into a Jewish family from a non-Jewish one.

The process of self-identification also levelled the uneven topographies of power inherent in any research relationship. For example:

> Anna: Um, so, when you put out this call I thought "yeah, that's interesting, I want to contribute." Then, I thought "oh God, I can't do that, maybe I'm not in the box that they're looking for? I don't know." Um, and I had a whole internal process about "well, I better find out because I don't want to be in a situation where you find out halfway through the research, where you've put lots of time and effort into interviewing me, that I'm not the right type of LGBT or I'm not the right type of Jew, and you feel like I've deceived you and…" You know, like there's all this that goes on in my head and then I kind of flipped to "well, fuck that. If he's got those ideas [Matt: *Laughs*], fuck him." *Laughs* I'm the one who's setting my agenda. (Life story interview, June 2020)

In 'setting her agenda,' Anna was able to reclaim some ground in the uneven power geometries typical of social research (England, 1994). But in empowering participants to set their own agendas, I positioned myself nonetheless in a position of power – authorising whose voices *could* and *could not* be heard (Cary, 1999).

While I redistributed (some) of this power by relaxing the project's entry points, such actions should be approached with caution and transparency.

While most participants described themselves as White, a range of ethnicities were also represented e.g., Jewish, White Jewish, mixed White, and White other – the political (trans)formation of which will be discussed in the next chapter. The participant cohort reflected wider patterns in British Jewry in that most participants lived in London (Board of Deputies of British Jews, 2013) and were from Orthodox backgrounds (European Jewish Congress, 2017) – ranging from Modern Orthodox to strictly Orthodox. This differs from studies of LGBT Jews in North America (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011; Milligan, 2013, 2014) due to differences in denominational topography. That said, ten participants said they were religiously and culturally Jewish whereas seven said they were culturally Jewish but not religiously Jewish – indicating a shift towards symbolic ethnoreligiosity. Liane, meanwhile, made this important point regarding religious identification:

> Liane: Other – I'm not sure how I feel about the categorization as having separate "cultural" and "religious" aspects because: 1) I think that can be quite a Western/global North or Christian way of understanding a religion and a people – to separate things out as if they are not connected and holistic. Jewishness and Judaism have ancient roots and didn't ever really organize in this way. 2) I think "Jewish culture" is often understood publicly as what Ashkenazi culture is and this can be pretty monolithic. Coming from a Sephardi family it makes it hard for me to identify with some aspects of what might be described as "Culturally Jewish." (Demographic questionnaire response, October 2020)

The question on religious identification was closed with set answers, devised by the author, participants could choose from. Liane's response shows us how researchers can impose, however unintentionally, their own ethnoreligious scripts onto the selves they study – (trans)forming the kinds of data produced through the research process. With their permission, I have included Liane's response as it provokes a moment of critical reflexivity regarding the partial, situated knowledge I produced as an ethnographer working from a "particular vantage point" (Kobayashi, 2009, p. 138). Instead of a failure, this moment should be framed as providing key insights regarding how people self-describe – highlighting the inflexibility and superficiality of ethnoreligious categories that are

imposed on non-Christian bodies via postsecular differentiation (Asad, 1993, 2003).

Participants' current religious affiliation also differed from wider trends in British Jews (European Jewish Congress, 2017) in that there was a relatively even split between those who attended Liberal, Masorti, Orthodox, and Reform synagogues. A handful of participants mentioned they were not currently affiliated to any synagogue in particular – but this did not always indicate their level of religious observation. This mirrors studies of queer Jews in North American contexts (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011) in that Masorti Jews are over-represented in comparison to the wider population – something Maya thought reflected the branch's specific blend between Tradition and progressive social beliefs (semi-structured interview, December 2020). Once more, this shows us that the knowledge produced through the research process is partial and situated – embedded within the socio-material context in which it was produced (Kobayashi, 2009; Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). As such, it is important to engage in critical reflexivity concerning all stages of the research process – being honest and transparent about how we make our research choices and why.

The above reflections are by no means representative of the multiplex ways participants (trans)formed, and related to, their selves and others. Instead, they are illustrative of the participant cohort – providing unique insights and points of divergence from wider demographic trends and other studies. These pathways demonstrate once more that this project is embedded in the socio-material context shared with participants – offering a unique vantage point concerning the selves involved.

3.2.3 Methodology

Ethnography is the written representation of a given culture or social group (Bishop, 1992). Ethnographers seek to understand human experience "by studying events, language, rituals, institutions, behaviours, artefacts, and interactions" (Cunliffe, 2010, p. 227). As such, ethnographers are interested in studying alongside people "in their natural setting" – documenting social worlds "in terms of the meanings and behaviour of the people in it" (Walsh, 2012, p. 248).

72

Running through most understandings of ethnography is the method of participant observation. For Watson and Till (2010, p. 129), it is only "by participating with others" that ethnographers can "better understand lived, sensed, experienced, and emotional worlds." For Hays-Mitchell (2001), however, ethnography is more than a synonym for participant observation; it is a way of engaging with the worlds people (trans)form by investing oneself within them. Increasingly, ethnographers conducting research during the Covid-19 Pandemic have questioned the assumption of in-person fieldwork – chock-full of participant observation – as the "gold standard" within conventional ethnographic practice (Howlett, 2021).

Like Howlett (ibid), I too challenge this disciplinary assumption for three reasons. First, my fieldwork experiences indicate my online embedding in the socio-material context of Covid Britain – a context shared with participants (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). My agile research practice can be considered, albeit unconventionally, a form of participant observation whereby the "messy, personal, and highly contextual" nature of remote fieldwork reflected the social field I was immersed in (Abidin & de Sata, 2020, p. 1). Second, and according to Abidin and de Sata (ibid., p. 5), ethnography is "sometimes confused with participant observation or other components of ethnographic research." Increasingly, geographers have approached ethnography as:

> a methodological and practice-based approach to understanding and representing how people – together with other people, nonhuman entities, objects, institutions, and environments – create, experience, and understand their worlds. (Till, 2009, p. 626)

Ethnography describes a way of being in the world alongside participants – something I experienced in the liminal space between research design and research practice. While participant observation is conducive to this, it does not in and of itself guarantee a project is ethnographic. To deny projects such as my own the label of ethnography would disproportionately affect other doctoral researchers working within strict financial and temporal brackets during a pandemic (Krause *et al*., 2021; Sah *et al*., 2020) – restricting access to ethnographic knowledge while simultaneously contradicting the contextual nature of its production.

Third, and pre-empting arguments below, virtual methods enable ethnographers to develop a "rich understanding of people's everyday lives, feelings, relationships, and spaces without being physically present" in the field (Watson & Lupton, 2022,). As stated above, all fieldwork encounters took place on Zoom – a videoconferencing software facilitating synchronous audio-visual communication across vast geographic distances. In their study of conducting 'home tour' ethnography over Zoom, Watson and Lupton note (ibid., p. 8) how:

> The video-call based method, and the pandemic context in which we undertook our video-call home visits, also cemented for us the ways in which video ethnography can serve as a window into feeling.

As alluded to in Chapter One, the digital elements of my fieldwork did not dampen the affective sense of embodiment I felt with participants; instead, conducting research through digital media amidst a pandemic meant that unique research relationships developed. Similarly:

> That our video-call home visits took place during the early months of Covid lockdown meant they helped generate a mutual window of feeling. Throughout, we were additionally going along with participants in the sense that we were also suddenly working from home and managing our professional and social lives over digital platforms such as Zoom. This helped to cultivate a rich sense of rapport and mutual empathy in many of the home visits as well as an informality that may not have been achieved during an in-person home visit. (ibid., p. 10)

The narrative component of this research project emerged alongside the preliminary research encounters – where I was struck by the stories participants told about their selves and others. Narrative ethnography is tied intimately to the anthropology of experience and emerges from a problematic relationship between experience and expression (Bruner, 1986a, 1986b; Geertz, 1986). As argued in Chapter Two, experience structures expression – and vice versa – in a dialogical process. According to Bruner (1986b, pp. 6-10):

> The critical distinction here is between reality (what is really out there, whatever that may be), experience (how that reality presents itself to consciousness), and expressions (how individual experience is framed and articulated) […] The people we study interpret their own experiences in expressive forms, and we, in turn, through our fieldwork, interpret these expressions for a home audience of author anthropologists.

For Bruner (ibid., p. 9), the purpose of this distinction is not to engage in a (post)positivist search for empirical reality, but to acknowledge that expressions are "people's articulations, formulations, and representations of their own experience" while remaining mindful of the limits of representation. While there are certainly uneven power geometries in Bruner's understanding of the ethnographer-participant relationship, it outlines how the interplay between experience and expression produces ethnographic data. Similarly, Geertz argued (1986) that:

> We cannot live other people's lives, and it is a piece of bad faith to try. We can listen to what, in words, in images, in actions, they say about their lives […] It is with expressions – representations, objectifications, discourses, performances, whatever – that we traffic: a carnival, a mural, a curing rite, a revitalisation movement, a clay figurine, an account of a stay in the woods. Whatever sense we have of how things stand with someone else's inner life, we gain it through their expressions, not through some magical intrusion into their consciousness.

As pioneers in narrative therapy, White and Epston argue (1990) that people express themselves primarily through the storying of experience. Together, these stories form narratives which help us make sense of the world and, in turn, determine the meanings we ascribe to our experiences. Likewise, Faulkner and Hecht argue (2011) that narratives provide access to people's interpretations – and (trans)formations – of the worlds around them. Methodologically speaking, narratives "provide coherence" to our experiences, and "often predominate" in our communication with others (ibid., p. 833) – revealing how we see ourselves and how we want to be seen.

Scholars in mental health studies have noted the somewhat ableist assumption that storytelling is the predominant mode of meaning-making (Johnston, 2019). It is important to recognise, therefore, that narratives are not just limited to storytelling – they can take a multitude of performative forms (ibid.). As such, a narrative approach was adopted for two reasons: to approach the stories participants told about their selves and others *as indicative of the process of subject (trans)formation*, and to account for the storying of experience through ritual performance – *a "technological routing" not necessarily given over to oral storytelling* (Turner, 1967, p. 19). Below, I outline the methods for data collection which not only made such an approach feasible but led to its emergence.

3.2.4 Methods

The chosen methods for this study include unstructured life story interviews; semi-structured thematic interviews; and participant observation. Together, these produced a wide array of data in the form of audio recordings, fieldnotes, and transcripts. Primary data were complemented by secondary data – mainly audio-visual material shared between participants and I during data collection, and statistical research reports published by public bodies such as the CST and Home Office. Both the form and order of these methods developed organically alongside my fieldwork experiences.

Life story interviews were chosen following a chance interaction between Jacob and I in my very first research encounter. After an initial expression of interest, I arranged to meet Jacob over Zoom to discuss the project and any questions he may have had between signing the consent form, reading the information sheet, and participating in the study. After we discussed the logistical parameters of the project, Jacob began to tell me his life story – pausing after a few minutes to suggest that I begin recording the conversation. This is how the first life story interview began:

> Jacob: My parents are from mixed kind of ethnic backgrounds. So, my mum is Egyptian, um, and my dad is Scottish. Um, so dad's family, very scientific and very, um, mostly more secular, and mum's very, um, Arabic and traditional and patriarchal, um, and religiously traditional, um, and conservative. Um, so those were—there were kind of like, where I came from um […] That was the—yeah, that was the space that I was growing up in. (Life story interview, April 2020)

While heritage narratives are a major theme in Chapter Four, I wanted to include Jacob's origin story here as indicative of a rudimentary life story interview. In narrating his life story, Jacob assembled a contextual bricolage of ethnic complexities, religious heritage, and Tradition – converging in an active process of self (trans)formation and world construction (Bruner, 1986b; White & Epston, 1990). After this formative encounter, participants were invited to engage in unstructured life story interviews as the first method of data collection. Following Byrne (2012), these interviews hinged on a single-question-induced narrative: "tell me about your life story."

Though underrepresented in geographic research – albeit with a few notable exceptions (Fincher, 2009; Hopkins & Pain, 2007) – the emotional knowledge produced through life story interviews is a particular benefit to their use (Jackson & Russell, 2010). Life stories generate data that are emotionally powerful, rich in detail, and – at times – personally challenging (Chaitin, 2003). According to Kanuha (2000, p. 442):

> the preferred use of narratives, life histories, and intensive interviews is related to the reliance of many marginalised populations on oral communication, cooperative and mutual relationships, and narrative traditions that may be antithetical to many classical research methods.

Because of this, life story research can challenge the heteronormative and WASP scripting of the lifecourse – especially when centring the voices of those who fall outside these hegemonic narratives (Bailey, 2009). My decision to opt for life story interviews reflects this – particularly considering life story approaches have been used with both Jews (Myerhoff, 1982) and queers (Weststrate, 2021). As such, life story interviewing reflects a political choice as much as a methodological one – a participatory mode of knowledge production within which counternarratives to the heteronormative and postsecular structuring of the lifecourse were made (Wagaman *et al*., 2018). The participatory quality of life story interviews rests on their unstructured and flexible design – promoting a more collaborative, egalitarian, and safer research encounter (Johnston, 2019). That said, their unstructured nature meant that participants would often express dismay at where to start. For example:

> Matt: Okay, so, my one question for this is please tell me about your life story? Um, you can take it at whatever pace you like, you can include whatever information you like, you can exclude it, it's totally up to you.
>
> Anna: Okay.
>
> Matt: Um, but—yeah, just, uh, feel free to go ahead when you're ready.
>
> Anna: Are you interested specifically in aspects that relate to Jewish identity or everything?
>
> Matt: Everything- everything that you feel is relevant.
>
> Anna: Oh, my goodness. *Laughs* Um […] okay… Oh, that's so broad.
> (Life story interview, June 2020)

Participants regularly asked for my help in (re)focusing their life stories for them – fostering a more participatory mode of knowledge production where both researcher and participant were involved in the narrative process. Despite these early hesitations, participants were still able to narrate lengthy oral histories. In this light, life story methods have been critiqued for pertaining to realist, positivist ontologies by seeking greater 'truths' via contextualisation (Cary, 1999). While Cary's critiques (ibid.) result from their attempt to shoehorn constructivist methods into a critical realist approach, I adopted a life story approach to foreground creativity and subjectivity. Drawing on Bartolini's study (2019) of Spiritualist heritage and memory in Stoke-on-Trent, life stories reveal how participants *feel* about the past, in the present, and with consideration of their hopes for the future – feelings which are themselves indicative of the narrator's subject position, self (trans)formation, and world construction.

Life story interviews produce data that are highly biographical and sensitive in nature – thus risking exposure (Jackson & Russell, 2010). Participants agreed to participate in this study under the guarantee that I would do my best to protect their anonymity and confidentiality. Despite the use of participant-selected pseudonyms, I had to remain cautious of the level of anonymity guaranteed (Davies, 1998). Due to the snowball method of recruitment, close-knit nature of the queer Jewish networks represented in the study, and the fact that two participants came from my own social circle, I had to be upfront about the fact that absolute anonymity could not be guaranteed (ibid.). I consulted participants on this risk – offering them a space to discuss their concerns as well as any decisions to anonymise factors such as age, job role, or location either through alternatives or redaction. While such changes are marked on the written transcripts, they are not included in this thesis to guard against directing any unnecessary attention toward particularly sensitive information. Participants were reassured and reminded that they were in control of the disclosures they made, and it would be a questionable ethical, methodological, and political act for me to censor their narratives without consultation – stripping them of any agency in the production of knowledge and undermining the process of informed consent.

Semi-structured interviews were developed as a form of externalisation whereby vital aspects of participants' lived experience – storied and un-storied in the first interview – were explored through open questioning. Following White and Epston (1990), these interviews were a space for the re-evaluation of participants' lives, relationships, and experiences. Inspiration for the interview structure was taken from Day's study (2012) of (Christian) belief and social identity in Northern England and Taylor *et al*.'s research (2014) with queer Christians across Britain. Inevitably, these were heavily Christian-centric and thus only partially applicable. Further inspiration, therefore, was taken from Faulkner and Hecht's study (2011) of LGBT Jewish selves in the USA, as well as from quantitative studies using the Katz-Francis Scale of Attitude towards Judaism (Francis & Katz, 2007; Francis *et al*., 2004). The result was a loose interview structure (Appendix E) exploring participants' reflexive responses to their Jewishness and queerness.

Interviews were semi-structured insofar as there were no fixed answers to the questions asked. Terms could be changed, questions omitted, and alternate lines of inquiry explored as and when necessary. Following Day (2012), participants were reminded that they could set their own boundaries regarding the content and direction of their responses, the terms they felt comfortable with, and the level of information they disclosed. For example, in our first interview together, B.C. disclosed the bereavement of a close friend four years previously (life story interview, August 2020). B.C. and their friend celebrated Hanukkah together – with B.C. narrating warm memories of exchanging gifts, lighting candles, and playing dreidel. In our second interview together, the subject of Hanukkah came up again:

> B.C.: I very may well have cultural Jewish things because they're fun and I'm not—why would—if I'm gonna keep Christmas, why wouldn't I keep Hanukkah?
>
> Matt: Mmhmm.
>
> B.C.: Which—I probably would do both just because why wouldn't you? If you have more access to the fun bits *Laughs* why not use them?
>
> Matt: Do you still keep Hanukkah?
>
> B.C.: Um, well see this year—I have to, now, not because I want to but because I have to. Do you want me to re-explain?
>
> Matt: No, I remember.

B.C.: Yes, which is why I'm asking you. I have to. (Semi-structured interview, September 2020)

Here, sensitive conversations concerning bereavement were facilitated through active listening whereby I showed B.C. that I had listened to, and heard, their story of loss. Such a moment of subtle contingency helped generate a shared understanding from which we were able to engage in a fruitful discussion regarding Jewishness as a social identity and secular ritual performance. The liminal space between research design and research practice fostered a more in-depth form of knowledge production – whereby data produced in the life story interview were reinterpreted and re-evaluated in the semi-structured interview (White & Epston, 1990).

To function as a form of externalisation, participants were invited to take part in the semi-structured interview only after they had participated in the life story interview. While I had anticipated a period of around two to three weeks between interviews, I found that – in practice – this was much harder to execute due to a variety of personal, practical, and professional reasons. Intervals between both interviews could range from one week to around four months. Inevitably, this affected the data generated. Interviews with shorter intervals between them featured more references and call-backs to the first interview whereas those with longer intervals featured more information that had to be repeated or retraced.

Again, questions I had designed to be open-ended could come across as ambiguous or vague – with participants asking for greater clarity concerning the kind of responses I was 'looking for.' For example:

Matt: What do you think is your favourite childhood memory?

Blue: […] Hmm […] what are you- what are you defining as childhood?

Matt: Zero to 18, although I suppose [Blue: Well, that's quite a range.] that can be anything.

Blue: I was going with like nought to six. Uh, oh God, that's a much wider pool that I've got to choose from. I'm- I'm getting one here … (Semi-structured interview, April 2021)

Once more, this shows the dialogical and participatory nature of narrative research – where knowledge is produced through subtle exchanges of collaboration, contingency, and creativity. The risk of harm to participants is an

important ethical consideration for all stages of the research process but became particularly apparent during the semi-structured interviews – possibly due to a more specific focus on alienation, marginalisation, and memory. To address this, some researchers have advocated an ethic of friendship when conducting social research (Clark & Sharf, 2007; Hays-Mitchell, 2001). As demonstrated above, this can be achieved through active listening, attending to participants' needs and concerns, and responding compassionately to their experiences (Allmark *et al*., 2009). But an ethic of friendship comes with ethical, methodological, practical, and political baggage – especially concerning the blurring of personal-professional boundaries, closure, and role confusion (Clark & Sharf, 2007). To mitigate this, I drew from this ethic of friendship critically – debriefing participants at the formal end of the fieldwork and maintaining a systematised, professional safeguarding process. This included checking whether participants had access to personal support networks, raising any concerns with the supervisory team, and signposting participants to relevant, specialist support services if necessary.

Participant observation followed the two interview encounters – reflecting an agile reformulation of the research design following lockdown restrictions. As the emergent themes, mechanisms, and perspectives in participants' lives were explored through qualitative interviews, the conditions for such phenomena became apparent (White & Epston, 1990). Such conditions included specific constellations of socio-material contexts and relationships. Following Foucault (1977), White and Epston argue (1990) that such constellations are hinged upon techniques of power which people are subjected to, subject themselves to, and subject others to. This links to Massey's concept (1994, p. 149) of 'power geometries' whereby the (trans)formation of space occurs simultaneously alongside uneven relations of power relating to flow and mobility. As such, socio-material contexts are constantly made and remade in a process of struggle "over meanings and ownership" (Luz, 2013, p. 59). I chose participant observation to explore the (trans)formation of selves and spaces in situ; that is, within the socio-material constellations of power in which they are (re)made.

My plans for participant observation had to be re-drawn following the successive nationwide lockdowns. As such, opportunities to practice this method

were sporadic. As outlined in Chapter One, the first opportunity for participant observation took place in January 2021 when R invited me to attend the Friday evening service at their synagogue. During the service, I experienced a clash between ethical principles when the rabbi publicly acknowledged my presence and welcomed me onto the Zoom call. Researchers must remain explicitly aware of the power dynamics between themselves, participants, and others during participant observation (Davies, 1998; Walsh, 2012). This requires continual affirmation of the participants' willingness to be observed and the explicit reiteration of the researcher's role in the socio-material context in which they are embedded (Walsh, 2012). At the same time, anonymity and confidentiality must be protected. How can we, as ethnographers, make our personal-professional subject position clear while maintaining anonymity and confidentiality? Both R and their rabbi were happy with me attending the service – something evident in their warm, enthusiastic welcome. But in being welcomed, both R and I were 'seen' by all those participating in the Friday night service – jeopardising R's confidentiality and running the risk of 'outing' them to their community. Neither R nor the rabbi disclosed the queer aspect of my research, nor the fact that R was a research participant – something I reflected in my response.

Such interactions provide unique insights regarding the heteronormative (trans)formation of space. By omitting queerness in my response to the congregation, I not only tried to balance the ethical principles of confidentiality and professional disclosure but (trans)formed an uneven topography of outness. While these topographies are a key theme in the following chapters, my active participation in their (trans)formation shows that conducting participant observation, however sporadically, provided me with key insights regarding the heteronormative (and postsecular) constellation of space.

The second opportunity for participant observation came in early April 2021 when Louis invited me to a "Passover themed sharing get together" on Zoom. During the gathering, participants were invited to join the organisers in "making a virtual seder plate of […] liberation stories, tools, resources, and recipes." The seder plate is the sensory invocation of the Israelites liberation from bondage in Egypt – a potent symbolic trigger converging the sensations of smell, taste, and

touch with the Passover story (Jacobs, 2015). Each item on the seder plate symbolises an aspect of the Passover story. According to Jacobs (ibid., n.p.), these items include *karpas* (a green vegetable symbolising the "initial flourishing of the Israelites during the first years in Egypt"), *haroset* (a sweet fruit paste symbolising the mortar used in Pharoah's construction projects), *maror* (a bitter herb representing the bitterness of slavery), *zeroa* (a lamb shank bone symbolising the sacrificial lamb), and *beitzah* (an egg symbolising the circle of life and the *hagigah* sacrifices offered on every holiday during the days of the Temple).

It is worth noting the rich and varied assortment of poems, prose, song, and visual artifacts brought to the virtual seder plate. From Louis' contribution of a commentary on Rebecca Solnit (an American writer of mixed Jewish-Catholic heritage) to a guided, somewhat psychoanalytical, meditation where we were asked to picture the wants and needs of our inner child, the Zoom seder culminated in the virtual (re)aggregation of the Passover ritual space-time. It was a highly affective moment – one that I will characterise in Chapters Five and Six as communitas – experienced through observing and participating in the ritual act. As such, participant observation provided vital corroboration and additional complexity to the data produced through qualitative interviews – illustrating the affective bricolages people (re)aggregate in the (trans)formation of selves and spaces.

The third opportunity for 'event ethnography' emerged towards the fieldwork's end (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). This event – the *Transforming intolerance* conference – also revealed the uneven relations of power constellating the ethnographic field. According to Schulte-Römer and Gesing (ibid., p. 6), such events can be a "salient alternative to month-long research stays" characterised by "an intense short-term immersion in the live interactions […] or 'buzz' of a conference or event." During these occasions:

> some events, actors, and activities are more accessible and observable than others because they are highlighted, echoed, and amplified by event participants, organisers, and media or, simply, microphones. (ibid., p. 8)

Virtual event ethnography, then, reveals the uneven power geometries operating across selves and spaces – here, specifically relating to faith leaders, policymakers, practitioners, and other scholars. One insightful moment from the

conference came from the contribution of a genderqueer, lesbian rabbi – who challenged the heteronormative, WASP constellation of the Women's Liberation Movement through the (trans)formation of a grassroots Jewish lesbian movement. This move (re-)shuffled the WASP power geometries which 'marginalise the identity and experience' of Jewish lesbians – creating a 'sisterhood' connected to a 'people' with a long history of 'creativity and also horrific persecution, exclusion, and genocide.' The words, spoken into an Anglican church heavily damaged in an IRA bombing, provided the opportunity for 'growth and revolution that are hidden within crisis and conflict' (participant observation, June 2021).

Rather than a deficiency or detriment, the agile research practice developed in response to Covid-19 generated an abundance of ethnographically significant data. As such, this work can be considered ethnographic insofar as the data underpinning it were generated in the socio-material context of Covid Britain – a context reflected in the liminal space between research design and research practice and, above all, shared with participants. Methodological liminality thus functions not only as an exercise in critical reflexivity, but as an ethnographic justification hinged upon my virtual embedding 'in the field.' Next, I attend to the virtual component of my fieldwork and the liminal space between field and home.

3.3 Approaching the field while staying at home and away from others: co-presence, immersion, and virtual ethnography

Videoconferencing software enables ethnographers to reach the field from afar and collect data not so far removed from those produced through in-person fieldwork (Howlett, 2021). Conducting research on Zoom fosters 'online co-presence' which, in turn, facilitates the construction of a "new digital and socially meaningful space" that is "neither our present locations, nor a common physical setting" (ibid., p. 393). Within these digitally mediated space-times, unique ethnographic encounters occur (ibid.). In this section, I outline the ethical, methodological, and practical steps for conducting narrative ethnography virtually. In doing so, I unsettle the 'placeness' of ethnography (Haverinen, 2015; Howlett, 2021) – subverting the 'hierarchies' between home and field (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022) in the convergence of personal-private/professional-public settings (Sah *et al*., 2020). I begin with an account of the "multisensory ethnography" facilitated through Zoom

(Watson & Lupton, 2022) before considering the implications of this process on 'leaving the field.'

3.3.1 Conducting virtual ethnography

Digital ethnography is nothing new (Beaulieu, 2010) – and the use of Zoom has been discussed in methodological literature pre-Covid (Archibald *et al*., 2019). While the use of videoconferencing software like Zoom has been considered the 'next best thing' to in-person fieldwork for some time now (ibid., p. 4), the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted further evaluation regarding the empirical and methodological efficacy of online fieldwork. Specifically:

> it must be recognised that, as the Pandemic continues, much more of our lives, and our participants', are being lived online, and thus, knowledge produced through physical immersion in a particular site may now be more 'partial' than ever before. (Howlett, 2021, p. 399)

Online methods can enhance the data we collect 'in the field' – providing us with unique insights otherwise un-storied in conventional offline ethnographies. Zoom was chosen as the primary research platform due to its audio-visual interface, cost-effectiveness, ease of access, in-house data management and recording capabilities, security features, and synchronous nature (Archibald *et al*., 2019; Lobe *et al*., 2020). I joined Zoom calls from the living room/kitchen of the small Tyneside Flat I shared with my partner – a relatively cramped space for two people working from home. I dressed casually – my laptop balanced atop a pile of books on the kitchen worktop. In the background were a bookshelf filled with a mix of academic and casual readings and a handful of family photographs. Participants joined calls from a range of locations – in bedrooms and on balconies, in kitchens and in living rooms, indoors as well as outdoors. Some participants wore formal attire; most dressed casually. Participants joined from a range of devices, though all of these were portable bar one. Neither participants nor I remained static during the research encounter – with both of us moving around our living spaces for a variety of reasons. Mostly, this was for refreshments:

> Blue: Um, so I've grown up in the UK and most of my family is in the UK, but I've got family also like in other places as well. Um, that's the kettle, it's boiled.
>
> Matt: It's okay.

Blue: One moment *Laughs*

Blue takes her phone with her to the kitchen. A clatter is heard on the audio recording as she searches for a mug followed a few seconds later by the sound of a metal spoon mixing the hot tea.

Blue: Okay, now I have tea I can talk forever.

Matt: *Laughs*. (Life story interview, August 2020)

Such interactions demonstrate the 'digital mundane' indicative of the "affective, relational, and routinised […] dimensions" of virtual ethnography (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 6). As Howlett found (2021, p. 394), the relaxed nature of online interactions meant that "I often felt like I was speaking with a friend rather than a research participant." As such, "the more intimate and egalitarian nature" of virtual ethnography led to a shift in emphasis from co-location to co-presence – unsettling the placeness of ethnography through the convergence of the home-field site (ibid.). This challenges arguments that the "reduced and mediated co-presence of online interactions makes it difficult to observe body language, tacit exchanges, and reactions" (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 14). Instead, the audio-visual, informal, and synchronous nature of Zoom forces us to "rethink the idea of full immersion in our research fields" as field-site and home-site become one (ibid., p. 1).

That said, the move to virtual means required me to "reconsider and attempt to compensate for the loss of embodied participation and location in the field" (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 10). But virtual ethnography is not without embodied participation as selves do not engage immaterially with the online world. Participation in virtual activities such as the Friday night service or virtual seder plate incorporates an array of embodied affects inculcated through the acts of observing, participating, praying, singing, and speaking. Such a collective individuation (Holloway, 2003; Massumi, 1997) transcends the emotional and material distance between field and home – fostering a deeply embodied sense of co-presence through the screens of our devices (Beaulieu, 2010; Howlett, 2021). Instead of asking "what we *missed* by not being there," we should turn our attention to how material, "multisensory elements" are "augmented" by the virtual (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 10).

The multisensory nature of virtual ethnography became apparent when the backdrop to participants' virtual avatars became the focus of our conversations:

> Matt: And do you also have the, is it the right word, the *Balaboste*?[8] The candlesticks? Or [Josh: Um…] do you use something else?
>
> Josh: We don't. Actually, there are—I suppose they're not really candlesticks. We—I'll show you what we use. I have to admit I'm not a wild fan of these actually [Matt: *Laughs*.], um, but it's- it's his [Josh's partner's] thing. These are just like little like tea light holders for Shabbat candles and then we just put tea lights inside on Shabbat.
>
> ~
>
> So, like, um, yeah, we've got a Hanukkiah there *Nods to a bookshelf behind him*. So, actually, this isn't—behind is actually the more religious, um, bookshelves. *Josh walks over to the bookshelf, raising his voice so he can be heard on the recording* We've got a couple [Matt: Oh, wow.] but this is, um, the one we've got here. I have to say most of these are my partner's, not mine. Um- um, this is, by the way, a couple of chapters of Talmud. This is his *Hamesh* which is like the Torah. Um, this is like, um, a book by a famous rabbi from the 18th century that's all about the nature of God. Um, we've got the Siddur there. (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

Despite their online delivery, Zoom calls were highly tactile environments – with participants introducing empirical things into their narratives. Participants would also share audio-visual material with me over the course of the fieldwork. For example, Maya sent me the *Shtetl alignment chart* (Figure 4) after our second interview together – where I asked her to define a Jewish space. These contributions not only widened the "window into feeling" characteristic of multisensory ethnography (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 8) but were, themselves, valuable narrative devices representing how participants both perceived and (trans)formed the social worlds around them (Geertz, 1986).

By virtually walking me through their lived environments, by sharing fragments of media they felt conveyed their experiences, participants actively contributed to this feeling of co-presence – bringing the field to the home through digital technology and immersing me in their worlds (Howlett, 2021; Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). In doing so, they too subverted the "hierarchies" between home

---

[8] This is an incorrect term that comes from my misreading of Myerhoff's account of domestic religion (1978, pp. 248-9). Balaboste is a Yiddish term meaning homemaker.

and field (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 6) – converging the two into a liminal home-field site in which ethnographically rich, multisensory data were produced.

Figure 4: The Shtetl alignment chart

While the move to virtual ethnography ameliorated the "resource-related inequalities" I faced as a PGR, the online approach may have proved inaccessible for those with limited access to digital infrastructure or with limited digital literacy (ibid.). Reflecting limitations in similar studies (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011), while the snowball method of recruitment mitigated this inequality, my reliance on digital approaches may have excluded participants living in more strictly Orthodox households. The reason for this is alluded to by B.C. – who is from a strictly Orthodox background:

> B.C.: It's interesting because I had a phone before the days when you were allowed to have a phone and I'd literally have it in school but then it became a thing for people to have phones and then they were all

banned and now you get something called a kosher phone which has no Internet and no nothing … (Life story interview, August 2020)

Researchers conducting virtual ethnography must remain aware of the voices they silence in their methodological approach – however egalitarian or well-intentioned this may be. Additionally, the shift to remote fieldwork took plenty trial and error. It was not rare for calls to drop unexpectedly due to low batteries or unstable Internet connections. Inadvertently:

the experience of overcoming initial technical difficulties may have facilitated rapport building via collaborative problem-solving and by lengthening the initial "bonding" period between researcher and participant. (Archibald *et al*., 2019, p. 5)

As Archibald *et al.* found (ibid.), while there were several technical malfunctions over the course of the fieldwork, Zoom remained the most viable option for both participants and I – something evident in the fact that no other alternatives were suggested. Another ethical complexity relates to the sense of co-presence fostered through Zoom. According to Howlett (2021) and Watson and Lupton (2022), this feeling is in part due to people becoming increasingly reliant on digital media like Zoom for facilitating their personal, professional, and social lives during the Pandemic. While this lent itself to developing an ethic of friendship, it was not without uneven relations of power. According to Howlett (2021), the home-field convergence makes it harder to democratise the uneven power relations inherent in any research relationship – as with greater emotional investment in the home-field site comes a greater chance of role confusion between our personal and professional lives (Sah *et al*., 2020). Appropriate channels for communication, critical reflexivity, professional distance, and regular supervision mitigated this complexity.

There were also concerns regarding confidentiality. To ensure privacy, I relegated my partner to the bedroom at the opposite end of our flat – a makeshift soundproofing on the connecting door made from a duvet cover and pillows. But not everyone can afford this access to privacy. Occasionally, participants would alter their way of speaking for fear of being overheard by others:

B.C.: So, those are the two [Jewish observances] that I keep, and obviously Passover with my grandma, which we'll not have again

because she's dying [Matt: Mm.] but she can probably hear me, so I have to whisper that. (Life story interview, August)

Moreover, it was not uncommon for research encounters to be interrupted by family members, friends, partners, and housemates. For example:

Alex: Or- or I guess I try and be understanding before I become judgemental about people that aren't the same as me. Um, I'm probably one of the- the- the most—sorry, there's a hand just taking a towel from behind the door. (Life story interview, September 2020)

These encounters reflect the ethical complexities of conducting research online while stay-at-home orders are in effect (Kobakhidze *et al.*, 2021; Rahman *et al.*, 2021) – considerations made even more pressing by the prospect of queer people being stuck at home with non-affirming housemates (Kelleher, 2020). It would be wrong, however, to single out digital approaches in this regard. Home is a contested space, one which is intimately imbued with emotion and power (Morrissey, 2012) – but so too are public spaces in terms of both ethnoreligiosity (Gökarıksel, 2012) and queerness (Preser, 2021). While there are risks to conducting sensitive social research in participants' domestic spheres, it could be argued that these are spaces they know intimately and, perhaps, have more control over. With record breaking rates of hate crime incidents across Britain (Home Office, 2018), how far would I have been able to ensure participants' safety in public space?

For Howlett (2021, p. 394), online methods transfer greater agency and power to the participant. Following Goffman (1974), participants have greater control in framing the field – making deliberate choices in what they show us through the screen (Howlett, 2021; Watson & Lupton, 2022). While our choices may have been limited during lockdown, videoconferencing software enables us to orchestrate the environments we display – emphasising agency and creativity in the window into feeling we frame for our digital audiences (Watson & Lupton, 2022). While some argue this results in a "trade-off" in that we only see what participants want us to see (ibid., p. 9), others argue that:

participants' online self-representations might now actually be more similar to their offline self-presentations as people are becoming much more familiar with digital platforms in using them in their everyday practices. (Howlett, 2021, p. 395)

Additionally, the "single-click" entry and exit points to Zoom have been noted as a particular benefit to its use as a research platform (Lobe *et al.*, 2020, p. 3) since participants can quickly leave the call if needed – protecting their privacy in ways unfeasible during face-to-face fieldwork (Watson & Lupton, 2022).

Clearly, co-presence and immersion are facilitated through the digital, multisensory components of virtual ethnography – thus complicating "traditional understandings about accessing and entering a 'field site'" (Howlett, 2021, p. 392). In this way, Covid-19 has pushed us to reconsider the ways in which "mediated approaches can be immersive in ways not typically discussed or previously realised" (ibid.). While the liminal home-field site emerged alongside digitally mediated co-presence and immersion, this convergence muddied the spatial and temporal boundaries of my fieldwork.

3.3.2 Leaving the field? Closure, imminence, and online methods

Ethnographers have long questioned whether it is possible to truly leave the fields in which we study (Till, 2001). According to Hays-Mitchell (2001, p. 320), while ethnographers may be able to return 'home,' they are left with the question: "what of those who have shared their lives with me?" This question is confounded for those of us who conduct our research virtually – whereby digital recordings of our encounters stretch the spatial-temporal boundaries of our experiences 'in the field' (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). The home-field convergence is amplified further for ethnographers who choose to centre lived experiences not too dissimilar from their own – leading to "political, moral, and personal engagement with the lives of others and the conviction to make a political difference" (Kobayashi, 2009, p. 140). Below, I explore how the practices of data recording, transcription, codification, and analysis further muddied the boundaries between home and field through imminence. I also consider the opportunities for research dissemination and publication.

Interviews were audio recorded via Zoom and/or a digital voice recorder – something communicated to participants during the process of informed consent. I personally transcribed all audio recordings in as full verbatim as possible – a process taking roughly five to six months. Having the audio data readily available – or imminent – greatly facilitated the process of transcription. That said, I had to

remain cautious that the promise of an audio recording at the end of an interview did not detract from being cognitively co-present during the encounter itself. According to Schulte-Römer and Gesing (2022, p. 8):

> the availability of recordings not only affects the physical but also the cognitive presence negatively when the possibility to come back another time and [listen to] the recording more attentively is always, theoretically, a given.

Detailed fieldnotes greatly facilitated the process of transcription as they provided me with a retrospective window into feeling regarding the research encounter (Watson & Lupton, 2022). Through audio recordings and fieldnotes, I was able to 're-visit' the field – (trans)forming a unique home-field site through data imminence from which I was able to (re)evaluate the interactions at hand (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022). While traversing the socially constructed distance between field and home enabled me to immerse myself in participants' data ad-hoc, it muddied the "emotional, spatial, and temporal boundaries between the here and the there" (Howlett, 2021, p. 396). Keeping a research diary where I could practice critical reflexivity alongside regular supervision helped "assuage" some of the "epistemological anxieties, participatory doubts, and ethical dilemmas" that emerged from this liminal stage of fieldwork (Abidin & de Sata, 2020, p. 10)

Interviews were transcribed in as full verbatim as possible as off-the-record disclosures were omitted from the transcript, though clearly indicated and time-stamped from the point the disclosure began to the moment the 'record' resumed. This includes all responses to the disclosure as well as any potential information elicited by it over the course of the interview. This practice follows Byrne's advice (2012) to anonymise data from an early stage – especially during transcription. But such practices also pose complex ethical questions regarding representation (Till, 2001). Critical feminist geographers have noted how the research process is inherently hierarchical as "surely the published text is the final construct and responsibility of the researcher" (England, 1994, p. 86). While the ethnographer returns home, their writings may have a tangible impact on the socio-material conditions of the people they write about – converging field and home once more through epistemic violence (ibid.). To mitigate this, I followed Faulkner and Hecht's practice (2011) of providing participants with the opportunity to read through their

transcripts and respond to their contents. Three participants accepted this offer; only one was unhappy with how they were represented in the transcript, making substantive alterations to the text.

As Till found (2001), the practice of sharing transcripts can provoke anxiety, damage research relationships, and even jeopardise confidentiality. While ethnographers may be well-versed in returning to the field via audio recordings and verbatim transcripts, this may not be a practice familiar to participants. As such, sharing transcripts can result in a rude re-introduction to the fieldwork encounter – bringing participants back to the field through data imminence alongside feelings of worry and surprise that what they read does not correlate with "their memories of the conversations and interactions we had" (ibid., p. 53). In this instance, I reassured the participant that transcripts are a particular technical method of representing the spoken word, and accepted their alterations so they felt comfortable with how they were represented.

Participants were offered a copy of all written products stemming from the research. Such a measure is cited by Till (ibid.) as indicative of responsible scholarship in that participants have the right to read the finished works and respond to them. While such measures do not rid the research relationship of any form of hierarchy, they do help counterbalance it (England, 1994). It is the researcher who chooses which quotes to use and whose voices to include (ibid); as such, it is their responsibility to represent participants with integrity – opening themselves up to assessment regarding the ways they represent selves and others.

Analysis followed a narrative approach and, reflecting its phenomenological orientation (Nolen & Talbert, 2011), attempted to explain the sociostructural systems – alongside their highly variegated elements – operating across participants' data (Franzosi, 1998). Narrative analysis is particularly helpful in analysing the (trans)formation of selves in that it approaches their active making as indicative of the socio-material contexts in which they are formed and vice versa (Murray, 2003). Plainly speaking, I approached data as stories – drawing on the meta-themes of incorporation, separation, and reincorporation (Myerhoff, 1982) during the lifecourse (Bailey, 2009; Fincher, 2009) to outline critical changes

concerning "experience and its expressions" (Bruner, 1986b, p. 3). Following Jackson and Russell (2010), fieldnotes were kept throughout the process of codification and analysis so that I could move back and forth between field (as represented in the data) and home (as represented in my analysis, literature, and theory).

I began by creating eight deductive codes in NVivo based on the theoretical orientation of this project. This developed quickly into a practice of inductive coding as I immersed myself in participants' stories. Initial codification took about six to eight weeks, with the number of codes growing from eight to over 50. These codes were malleable and mutable – often being collapsed together, clarified from each other, or reshuffled in terms of hierarchy. Codes were categorised by file (transcript) and reference (coding stripes) and ordered according to those with the highest crossover between these. As alluded to in Chapter One, I identified three key analytical bottlenecks around which satellite codes gravitated towards: self-construal, space and place, and ritualised self-actualisation.

As noted in Chapter One, data codification and analysis fed into the alteration of the research questions – showing us how the data we gather in the field follow us home in (trans)forming our theoretical approach (Davies, 1998). Nevertheless, I am cautious of painting an overly straightforward or self-fulfilling narrative regarding the movement from theory to fieldwork and back again. Throughout this process, I guarded against projecting my own theoretical standpoint onto participants' data by attending to contradictory and unexpected narratives as and when they arrived. Following Faulkner and Hecht (2011), regular supervision and opportunities to present my preliminary findings were also vital in assessing my interpretations and considering alternative meanings.

Leaving the field is further complexified for those of us researching expressions that might call to our own experiences. My experiences as a queer ethnoreligious minority inevitably affected my relationship to – and distance from – the field. This not only drives our personal motivations for engaging with the projects we choose (Davies, 1998), but provokes us to invest ourselves morally, personally, and politically in the social worlds we study (Kobayashi, 2009). Indeed, the degree to which we share experiences with participants forms the basis for

"successful political action" once we return home (ibid., p. 140). But in sharing common ground, in narrowing the gap between field and home, ethnographers encounter difficulties concerning closure both for themselves and their participants (Till, 2001). While the betwixt-and-between nature of the liminal home-field site fosters an array of personal, political, social, and theoretical possibilities (Brettschneider, 2003), it runs the risk – if left unfettered – of perpetuating epistemic harm through feelings of abandonment, disruption, and exploitation (Abbott & Scott, 2019). As such, the home-field site must be demarcated with certain ritual acts – including "closing conversations" and de-briefs on one hand (ibid., p. 1435), and socio-political action on another (Kobayashi, 2009). These practices not only provide closure to our research encounters (Howlett, 2021), but level the playing field in the ethnographer-participant relationship (England, 1994; Kobayashi, 2009).

For Johnston (2019), it is important to depart from research encounters on a note of empowerment – keeping in mind that there is a higher purpose behind their projects than the completion of a dissertation. To reiterate, participants were offered a copy of all written outputs stemming from the project. This included both the formal, written thesis and a research report written in plain language. Only a handful of participants expressed interest in reading the thesis – all of whom had completed, or are completing, doctoral research themselves – while most opted for the research report.

I began this project due to a range of personal, political, and academic motivations oriented around knowledge production and representation regarding the lived experiences of those who are simultaneously ethnoreligious and queer. Currently, I am working on two main research outputs: a research report that is to be shared via the CCJ, and a CPD workshop to be delivered to the local branch of a nationwide charity providing emotional support to the public. Through these, I hope to improve the socio-material conditions of those who are not only queer and Jewish, but who sit between the categories of ethnoreligiosity and sexuality – amplifying the voices of those often silenced by others (Shah, 2021).

While I disagree with H.E.'s idea of 'giving a voice' to participants, his motivations for engaging with my research reflects its intended purpose:[9]

> Matt: What do you think made you want to take part?

> H.E.: I think it had a lot to do with, uh, representation of these groups and the knowledge that research about minorities' experience is so fundamental because it demystifies it and gives it a voice and gives it scientific clout when these debates enter the public forum, because so much public debate is now based on assumption and this is where you get stereotyping, whereas if you can say there is a study that found it's more complicated than you think or these people have more in common with you than you think or that societal pressures have damaged them in certain ways and perhaps we shouldn't say that they're damaged just because they're born that way but actually that you have damaged people who are otherwise normal or—all these sorts of things, it's- it's about having a voice out there and potentially someone who's too afraid to take part and goes "actually, I'm not alone." (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

3.4 Emic, etic, or something in-between? Conducting social research as an insider-outsider

> Alex: I feel like if this was reversed and, you know, next time I was interviewing you [Matt: Yeah.], we would have very similar conversations and very similar upbringings and very similar experiences and probably very similar questions about who we are and what our place in the world is… (Life story interview, September 2020)

Common ground was shared between participants and I due to my own subject position – a liminal space between similarity and difference in which complex and rich data were produced through learning, rapport, and understanding. Rather than a concrete foundation, this ground was constantly shifting – hinged upon subtle perceptions and performances of self. For Longhurst (2009b, p. 580), positionality refers to how people are positioned relationally to the "various contexts of power" which shape the way they understand the world. Positionality affirms the idea that knowledge is situated and embodied – resulting in a corporeal epistemology in need of critical reflexivity (Kobayashi, 2009). Below, I engage in such introspection by first reflecting on my own status as an insider-outsider – drawing on Kobayashi's

---

[9] Following Pain (2004), I am unsure whether power can, or should, be transferred in such a paternalistic way.

critique (ibid.) of standpoint theory. I follow Parikh (2020) in arguing that positionality is a process dependent on the perception and performance of selves and others – raising complex questions concerning access, ethics, and power. Next, I comment on the unfolding and thus unstable nature of selves before unpicking the ethical complexities surrounding the practice of self-disclosure and trust.

3.4.1 Beyond the insider/outsider binary

Today, reflections on positionality can be found in a wide range of disciplines from cancer research (Suwankhong & Liamputtong, 2015) to human geography (DeLyser, 2001; Mullings, 1999), from mental health research (Johnston, 2019) to social work (Berger, 2013; Kanuha, 2000), from nursing studies (Abbott & Scott, 2019; Serrant-Green, 2002) to sociology and social policy (Laube, 2021; Perez, 2006). Broadly speaking, literature concerning researcher positionality hinges on the following epistemic question: should researchers belong to the social groups – with whom they presumably share common experiences – they study? The positionality question rests on the idea that all knowledge is partial and situated; that is, produced from a specific vantage point or subject position (Harraway, 1988; Kobayashi, 2009). Knowledge production is always subjective to the "epistemic subject's" position within the various social matrices of power – class, gender, race, sexuality, etc. (Kobayashi, 2009, p. 138). For Parikh (2020, p. 440):

> Historically, ethnographers were relatively privileged 'outsiders,' expected to produce 'objective' knowledge due to their positioning. Countering these positivist tropes, some feminist scholars have valorised the ability of insiders to study groups to which they belong.

Increasingly, insider researchers argue that their epistemic position affords them a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under observation as they are embedded in the socio-material settings of the field (Berger, 2004, 2013; DeLyser, 2001). At the same time, insider research runs the risk of assumed similarity, with participants refraining from explaining their lived experiences fully due to a presumed level of knowledge (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Some argue that insider researchers are at greater risk of projecting their own lived experiences onto the expressions of others (Berger, 2013; Kanuha, 2000) –

although, according to Serrant-Green (2002), such charges are levelled disproportionately at researchers who are ethno-racial minorities.

Such arguments reflect a standpoint approach to epistemology whereby "social and epistemic positioning are interrelated, so that 'who' knows is just as important as what they know" (Kobayashi, 2009, p. 138). But:

> To adopt an essentialised epistemic position based on identity is to deny the very process through which identity is socially constructed, multiply positioned, and contingent. (ibid., p. 140)

Alongside these developments, feminist scholars (Berger, 2013; Mullings, 1999) and scholars of colour (Kanuha, 2000; Serrant-Green, 2002) have critiqued the socially produced binary between insider and outsider – emphasising the epistemic positions in-between (Parikh, 2020). As a queer (non-Jewish) ethnoreligious minority, I too was positioned betwixt-and-between epistemic subject positions – something participants noticed:

> Abby: I feel like I would find it way more—I would find it uncomfortable if you were a straight Jew carrying this out. I think I'd find that a lot more jarring [Matt: Mm.], that element of it, like, but I don't know why I feel that. (Life story interview, February 2021)

> Matt: So, I wonder how you feel taking part in a research project like this where I'm not Jewish myself?

> Hannah: Yeah, I don't know. I feel like I remember being like slightly surprised by that but, um, you said that you're Bahá'í, right, and I actually don't know that much about the religion, but it just takes me back to being on Israel Tour as a 16-year-old and going to the Bahá'í Gardens in Haifa. So, I kind of feel like there must be some connection. It doesn't feel like you're a million miles away. Um, so, yeah, kind of still feels sort of like there's a kinship or something … (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

As an insider-outsider, I was both appropriately different from, and necessarily similar to, participants – a productive space in which points of similarity and difference were (re)shuffled indefinitely in the process of knowledge production (Parikh, 2020). The insider-outsider position can thus be considered a process (ibid.) – a liminal site characterised by endless relationality. When necessary, I was an insider – someone who too shared experiences of being a queer ethnoreligious minority in postsecular Britain. When appropriate, I was an outsider – someone

who, as removed from their (heteronormative) social networks, participants could trust. My liminal subject positioning meant I could take on the role of curious learner and co-informant when necessary – drawing on bridges and gaps in shared knowledge during research encounters:

> Blue: I- I suppose actually I should just ask you like, so that I know what vocab to translate [Matt: Mmhmm.], what's your level of like learning and like experience and stuff so that I know what to translate as I go?
>
> Matt: Um, so have we spoke about me not being Jewish?
>
> Blue: No, I'd assumed you were Jewish *Laughs*.
>
> Matt: No, I'm not. I'm Bahá'í, so, I'm not Jewish.
>
> Blue: Sorry, I'd completely assumed that no one would be interested in this if they weren't Jewish *Laughs*.
>
> Matt: No, I mean like, I did live for a study abroad in Israel as part of my first degree. I had to learn either Hebrew or Greek, so I learnt Hebrew… So, I know a bit, but—yeah, um, I know a bit, but yeah, I'm doing okay at the moment. I'm doing okay.
>
> Blue: Okay, rewind, I'll explain a bunch of things then. You know what a *shul* is? Like a synagogue? I don't know if you know it.
>
> Matt: Mmhmm.
>
> Blue: Fine. Bat Mitzvah, yes?
>
> Matt; Yep.
>
> Blue: Cool, what else did I say that was relevant? Oh, *Megillah* and Purim? Um…
>
> Matt: I know what Purim is.
>
> Blue: Fine, the Megillah is the scroll that you read on Purim. It's a different [Matt: Okay.]—it's like—it's a different book of the Bible essentially … (Life story interview, August 2020)

In addition to illustrating how I sat across the insider-outsider binary – and how I used this to establish a base of shared understanding and areas of further learning – this interaction also raises critical questions regarding two practices fundamental to positionality: self-(re)presentation and self-disclosure.

3.4.2 Performing selves, making sense of others

One's positionality rests also on how they (re)present themselves to selves and others. I had met Blue at an interfaith event back in 2019, where we both talked over canapes about our respective queer, ethnoreligious backgrounds. Although I

remembered Blue, and thus assumed she perceived me as an ethnoreligious outsider, she did not remember me – positioning me as a Jewish insider due to my interest in the topic. Following Dwyer and Buckle (2009), this shows the importance of clarifying the ethnographer-participant relationship from any previous social relations to avoid role confusion and ensure both parties approach the research encounter on the same page.

This leads us to the matter of perception; who gets to decide who is an insider or an outsider? Researchers may consider themselves insiders, but this may not be a position that is accepted by participants (Berger, 2013). Kasstan's critically reflexive essay (2016) on his fieldwork experiences with strictly Orthodox Jews is particularly insightful here. As a 'Jew-ish' ethnographer (ibid.), Kasstan found that participants would sometimes use their own authenticity as insiders against him – positioning him as an inauthentic outsider. Again, this shows us how researchers move across the insider-outsider position, and how such epistemic vantage points are contested social constructs.

I attempted to make my positionality clear to participants before the formal research encounters. Despite this, a few participants assumed I was also Jewish during these. As seen above, when such assumptions were made, I immediately corrected them and stated my own subject position. Following Berger (2013) and Kasstan (2016), crossing between insider and outsider status both benefitted and stalled the research process. While the flow of the encounter was disrupted by the need to clarify my positionality, these interactions offered unique insights into the (re)presentation and perception of selves and others. On one hand, they revealed how participants would speak about their Jewishness to outsiders in comparison to insiders – something demonstrated in Blue's decision to "rewind" and "explain a bunch of things" (life story interview, August 2020). On another, it provided me with the opportunity to explore the subtle performances participants thought indicated (non-)Jewishness:

Abby: Yeah, I also assumed you were Jewish and queer.

Matt: Yeah.

Abby: Um…

Matt: What do you think made you make that assumption?

100

Abby: I think I felt a bit like—I don't know- I don't know because obviously when you make an assumption you don't think about why you're making it because it's an assumption, so you don't think about it *Laughs*, but, um, on reflection maybe it's- maybe it's like "well, who would be interested?" *Laughs* I find it like—because I feel like the Jewish community can be so small and it can be kind of like a bubble, it's like when things happen in Jewish communal politics that make it to mainstream media, I find it really funny and kind of weird. Um, so I feel like maybe partly that, um, and now speaking to you I understand why you'd be interested, but I think that was probably like "oh, yeah, this is so niche." (Semi-structured interview, May 2021)

Through subtle performances of self, Abby perceived me first as an insider, then as an outsider, before finally coming to see me as an insider-outsider. This reflects the argument that selves are constantly becoming – unfolding in the various (re)aggregations of power which constellate space. As such, selves are unstable by nature – raising additional ethical complexities regarding researcher positionality. To address this, I take us back to Louis' Passover get-together.

The get-together took place a week or so after Naw-Rúz – the Bahá'í and Iranic new year. Marking the celebratory end of the month of fasting, Naw-Rúz represents a material and spiritual springtime where old feuds are put to rest and promises remade. I decided to share with attendees the practice of making a *Haft-seen* table – thinking it resembled the seder plate. The table holds an arrangement of seven items with symbolic referents to the new year: sprouting grass (symbolic of re-birth), *samanu* (a sweet paste symbolising strength), oleaster (symbolising love), sumac (symbolising sunrise), vinegar (symbolising patience), an apple (symbolising beauty), and garlic (symbolising good health). I showed attendees my Haft-seen table (Figure 5) while narrating the story of the new year – a message of hope and re-birth. I discussed the emotional connection I felt with my faith alongside the journey I had taken since those early days when I was exploring my heritage and the subsequent reckoning between my queer ethnoreligious self. Louis and the other participants thanked me for my contribution – with Louis stating, "I'm sure there are many of us here who also share these experiences." My decision to share the story of Naw-Rúz alongside the material symbols on the Haft-seen table represents an ethnoreligious self in the making whereby I moved from outsider to insider-outsider, bringing home with me to the field. Following Parikh (2020) and Vertovec (1997), this illustrates how researchers, and people

more generally, draw on a repertoire of performative acts in the process of self-representation – fostering mutual understanding and rapport in the process.

Shortly after this exchange, one attendee invited everyone to meditate deeply on our gender identities. During the silence, I reflected on my own identity as a cisgender man – and the instability of this. This encounter set in motion a great deal of thought and development regarding my gendered self – something I feel more and more uncertain of. When I began my fieldwork, I identified comfortably as a gay, agnostic Bahá'í. Over the past three years, this self-identity has shifted – often in response to my fieldwork experiences. Currently, I self-describe as a queer cisgender(?) Bahá'í – a self-construal that will likely change repeatedly.

Figure 5: My Haft-seen table the night of Naw-Rúz

We do not enter the field as fully formed selves, nor do we leave the field as fully formed selves. Selves are constantly becoming through a process of self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961) and, as such, show us how the binary between insider and outsider is not so much a binary at all but a continuum along which researchers – and participants – situate themselves daily (England, 1994).

3.4.3 Disclosing selves, handling trust

In contouring my subject position through intimate reflexivity, I follow Bishop's (1992) and Geertz's (1988) advice to become a convincing 'I-witness' – rendering my ethnographic accounts credible by rendering myself so. Part and parcel of this process is self-disclosure. Researchers argue that, in being honest and open about their positionality, a greater level of trust is gained (Berger, 2013; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). But in disclosing their subject positions, researchers run the risk of over-identifying with participants, making them uncomfortable by over-sharing, and re-traumatising them (Johnston, 2019). Like reflexivity, self-disclosure risks "becoming a kind of academic self-indulgence," where the focus of the research shifts away from participants (Kobayashi, 2009, p. 140).

In commencing the biggest research project of my life to date, I found myself frequently reaching out to researchers conducting projects I could participate in. One notable encounter occurred when I participated in a project concerning the experiences of bereaved persons who had used mediums – and any potentially therapeutic benefits they may bring. I could not have disagreed further. In the run up to the interview, I had hyped myself up to deliver a scathing critique of mediums as exploitative charlatans preying on vulnerable people. Before I could launch into my diatribe – and before the audio recording began – the researcher disclosed she had used mediums following the death of her mother. She was an insider. While I still voiced my concerns over the practice of mediumship, I was far more sympathetic to the researcher's own lived experiences – resulting in a more dialogical encounter in which the pros and cons of mediumship were discussed. While I was glad the researcher disclosed her own experiences, it felt like something had been taken away from the encounter through the act of disclosure – that I did not feel comfortable saying what I really wanted to. But the impassioned critique I had built up internally was no more 'truthful' or 'pure' than the more

compassionate, collaborative, and interpersonal dialogue that ensued. It was a performance of the same meaning but to a different audience (Bruner, 1986b; Geertz, 1986). In this way, being an insider or an outsider does not make you a better researcher, "It just makes [you] a different type of researcher" who produces a certain kind of knowledge (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 56).

The push for ethnographers to be transparent about their positionality is sometimes at great personal risk (Johnston, 2019). In this thesis, I have disclosed more details of my ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed self than to some members of my family. When asked about my doctoral research in some Bahá'í settings, I often find I self-censor the queer aspect of my project for fear of adverse reaction – constructing an uneven topography of outness. This is the first time I will be publicly 'out' about my sexual and gender identity, and how this relates to my ethnoreligious identity. There is a very real chance that this will affect membership to my own ethnoreligious community. Here, I do not refer so much to formal community membership, but, instead, to complicated social dynamics with co-religionists in a faith that has an ambiguous and complicated history of LGBT+ inclusion (Wilcox, 2006). Our research changes us – often in challenging or highly sensitive ways – further closing the gap between field and home, insider and outsider (Abidin & de Sata, 2020). In pushing ethnographers towards full disclosure, we must also consider whose voices we might be silencing in the production of ethnographic knowledge. Such 'silencing polemics' must be addressed if we are to challenge the heteronormative practices latent in qualitative research (Shah, 2021, p. 330; see also, Binnie, 1997).

Finally, one of the main benefits cited by insider researchers is the access gained to participants' lived experiences due to a perceived level of trust based on sociocultural similarity (Berger, 2013; Suwankhong & Liamputtong, 2015). Both the depth and intimacy of the information disclosed – alongside the level of access granted – is determined by this level of trust. But in reading, for example, Suwankhong and Liamputtong's reflection (2015) on cross-cultural research with Thai women, the reader may be tempted to question how ethical it is to take knowledge gained as an insider and repackage this in palatable ethnographic vignettes for outsiders. Should I, as a non-Thai man, be reading descriptions of

how participants checked their breasts for signs of cancer (ibid., p. 4) when such details were, according to the authors, communicated to them because of their cultural, ethnic, and gender-mediated insider status? Applying this critique to myself – what right do I, as an insider-outsider, have in (re)presenting participants' narratives to non-queer, WASP readers?

England argues (1994) that such acts of appropriation are an inevitable consequence of fieldwork, but that there are methods to mitigate this – critical reflexivity being one of them. Going further than this, Kobayashi argues (2009, p. 140) that reflexivity is an "extremely weak political act," and that ethnographers should strive to make meaningful social impact from their work to level the playing field. Here, I am drawn to R's sermon marking Holocaust Memorial Day. As ethnographers, we have a moral duty to hear the stories of the people in the world around us, listen for things that might call to our own experience, and use this to change the world with whatever means available to us – be they research reports or CPD workshops.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I outlined the messy realities of conducting ethnographic research online during a pandemic. Rather than a deficiency or a detriment, these realities demonstrate how I was embedded in the social field I shared with participants – leading to the production of ethnographically significant data. Liminality proved useful in exploring the various in-between spaces in which these data were produced. For example, the space between research design and agile research practice is a site of tremendous methodological possibility in which the chosen methods and methodology guiding this study developed organically alongside my fieldwork experiences. This work is ethnographic insofar as the rich body of data underpinning it was generated in the socio-material context of Covid Britain – a social field in which both the participants and I were situated. A narrative approach was adopted for two reasons: to approach the stories participants told about their selves and others as indicative of the process of subject (trans)formation, and to account for the storying of experience through ritual performance.

Virtual ethnography is not without embodied participation or immersion – unsettling the placeness of ethnography while converging the sites of field and

home. Zoom provided me with the opportunity to engage in multisensory ethnography – whereby the online world was approached as a highly tactile environment textured by a range of audio-visual data. The virtual frames participants and I orchestrated through Zoom provided a mutual window into feeling – fostering a unique sense of online co-presence while bringing the field to the home and vice versa. But with the potentialities latent in the liminal home-field site came unique ethical challenges relating to access, confidentiality, and safety. The home-field site is narrowed further through the process of data recording, transcription, codification, and analysis – particularly when such data speak to our own experiences. While data imminence greatly facilitates these practices, it complicates the process of closure. De-briefs and social impact were highlighted as methods for reincorporation – whereby I could appropriately yet sensitively exit the field.

Following pivotal research from (post)feminist scholars and scholars of colour, I identified the insider-outsider process as a liminal site from which I was able to establish a benchmark for shared understanding and areas for further learning. When necessary, I was insider – someone who too shared lived experiences of being a queer ethnoreligious minority in postsecular Britain. When appropriate, I was an outsider – someone who, as removed from their (heteronormative) social networks, participants could trust and feel comfortable with. But this process raised critical ethical, methodological, and political questions surrounding self-(re)presentation and self-disclosure. Positionality relies on how we perform ourselves to others and, as such, is something that is socially produced and unstable. Positionality also rests on the practice of self-disclosure – a practice which itself raises complex ethical questions relating to access, intimacy, and trust. Again, social impact was foregrounded to level the playing field – reflecting the fact that the liminal spaces between research design and research practice, field and home, insider and outsider, led to great ethical, moral, personal, and political investment in the research project. In the next chapter, I return to the narrative component of this research – particularly the highly subjective heritages and memories participants mobilised in the process of self-construal.

106

Chapter 4. Heritage, memory, identity: (trans)forming an interdependent bricolage of self

Matt: What do you understand of Judaism being a cultural identity?

H.E.: It's a story, it's a people, it's a history, it's a shared suffering. It's this journey of these loud, clamouring, disagreeing people who have gone through history and forever been the… kind of the butt of a joke, I suppose; forever been the ones that got squashed and found their way back. Um, I hope it's also something to do with being a people who- who care, and that's not- that's not always true. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

4.1 Introduction

In narrating their life stories, participants drew on rich and deeply subjective heritages and memories – tying themselves to a symbolic peoplehood which, in turn, enabled them to make meaning out of their position in the worlds around them.[10] As such, the past functioned as a vital resource for the present – from which participants construed an interdependent bricolage of self. In this chapter, I foreground the role of heritage and memory – as mobilised through symbolic action and ritual performance – in the process of self (trans)formation.

Following H.E.'s understanding of cultural Judaism, I begin by emphasising the mythic and symbolic dimensions of heritage. I argue that, in storying a heritage of flight and dispersal, H.E. engaged in a symbolic act of identity arbitration whereby he incorporated himself into a "thousands of years old" social drama (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 268) – culminating in a queer Jewish selfhood in the present. According to Myerhoff:

One of the most persistent but elusive ways that people make sense of themselves is to show themselves to themselves, through multiple forms: by telling themselves stories; by dramatising their claims in rituals

---

[10] The findings of this paper were presented at two different conferences in 2022. The first focused on participants' heritage narratives and was presented to the Durham University PGR anthropology conference under the title *"There's so much to be learnt from people that came before you": heritage, memory, and queer Jewish self-construal*. The second focused on collective memory and was presented to the Royal Geographic Society's annual conference at Newcastle University under the title *Grief, guilt, and ghosts: collective memory and intergenerational trauma among queer Jews in postsecular Britain*.

and other collective enactments; by rendering visible actual and desired truths about themselves and the significance of their existence in imaginative and performative productions. (ibid., p. 261).

I explore two major themes in the heritage narratives participants storied – diaspora and Tradition – and how participants made sense of these as queer ethnoreligious selves. By diaspora, I draw on Vertovec's understanding of the term (1997, pp. 227-8) as a social group characterised by their "relationship-despite-dispersal." By 'Tradition' – capital T – I refer to an ethnoreligious inheritance participants associated with, though not necessarily identified as, Jewishness. While there is certainly an overlap between both Jewishness and Tradition, the latter is something that is (re)appropriated from the past while the former is the present-day (trans)formation of this (re)appropriation. Together, Jewishness and Tradition are the building blocks through which ethnoreligiosity is made.

Though their contents were varied and diverse, these themes functioned as important symbolic referents facilitating the process of identity arbitration (Egorova, 2013, 2018). By identity arbitration, I refer to a process of subject (trans)formation whereby participants: stretched the symbolic boundaries of the groups they positioned themselves in relation to, ascribed meaning to this positionality, and retained a sense of uniqueness. When successful, this rendered congruent and meaningful their lived experiences as queer ethnoreligious selves – culminating in states of self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961) concretised via ritual performance (Myerhoff, 1982).

The ability to narrate stories of diaspora and Tradition thus reflects an interdependent mode of self-construal; that is, an affective bricolage of "thoughts, feelings, and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others" (Singelis, 1994, p. 581). In storying their heritage narratives, participants made a "claim to belonging […] by their ability to tell such stories" – an ability which was "predicated in no small part by [an] embodied knowledge" indicative of ethnoreligious enculturation among others (Degnen, 2015, p. 1658). I close this section by attending to the queer silences in participants' heritage narratives – challenging claims from contemporary self-construal scholars who argue (Villicana *et al.*, 2016) that ethnoreligiosity supersedes queerness in self-construal. I move from origin story to life story – re-directing focus towards the

storytellers present subject position and how this adds nuance to narratives they curate.

Next, I focus on memories – both individual and collective – as the contents which (trans)form heritage (Lowenthal, 1998; McDowell, 2008). Following Degnen's understanding of 'embodied knowledge' (2015), I argue that the symbolic referents mobilised in the process of identity arbitration are acquired through memory. I begin by looking at participants' often juxtaposed childhood memories. Turning to Morrissey (2012), I show how such juxtapositions represent a cognitive method for imagining and gaining access to the past – enabling participants to make sense of their own lived experiences. Centring the "sociality of memory" (Degnen, 2015, p. 1657), I explore how memories are tied intimately to ritual space-times – revealing how rituals transmit and reinforce the 'symbolic identity kits' carried throughout the lifecourse as embodied knowledge (Milligan, 2017, p. 17). Finally, I trace the relationship between collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and principles of Jewish continuity. In doing so, I outline the uneven memory landscapes (trans)formed through this interplay – from functioning as the basis for group and self-identification, to concretising heterosexist expectations for reproduction and a politics of resistance. I argue that ritual represents a form of 'memory-work' (Buciek & Juul, 2008, p. 109) – tying together participants' individual and collective pasts, presents, and futures.

4.2 "Part of something in a meaningful way": heritage, diaspora, Tradition

> Paul: So, maybe I'll start from the beginning, and it makes more sense in that respect to talk about my Jewishness, um, as I said to you before, I… I mean, I- I am not religious, um, I was brought up with a degree of religiosity I think the word is in, um, my family. Um, so, just to give you some context of my background, my dad is—was born in Israel in the 50s and then moved here by his parents [Matt: Mm.] when he was three. His mother is—was… my nana was Moroccan; my grandfather was Egyptian. They moved to the State of Israel shortly after its founding and it was too difficult to live there, for them, financially. So, they moved to London first on my grandpa's Egyptian passport, and then spent about ten years living in Paris with- with my grandmother's family, and then here, and then eventually they settled not far from where I live at the moment in Stamford Hill.
>
> Matt: Mmhmm.

Paul: They were—my grandmother was very religious. She was a Moroccan woman born in, I think, the 20s, she doesn't have—she hasn't got a birth certificate. Um, she- she was devout.

Matt: Mmhmm.

Paul: My dad, um, who had three sisters, um, went to shul every single week, was in the choir. Um, they kept kosher at home, um, and so on and so forth. Um, my mother is a more typical profile of a British Jew in that, I mean, both her parents were born in Britain. My grandfather's family were from… we don't know whether it was Poland or Russia because, I think it was that part of the world which kept changing [Matt: Mm.], and they moved in the 20s. They lived in the East End of London. Apparently, my grandfather's grandfather was a rabbi, but my grandmother was not religious. Like, those grandparents were not religious. So, they sent my mum to- to Jewish schools now but when I was growing up, it was the only Jewish school, I think [Matt: Mm.], and so she's also, in terms of religiousness, she- she's not particularly religious. My dad, I think, more is. But she knows the rituals, and she knows all the songs, and she gets pleasure out of them because she was taught them. She has a pleasure of participating to some degree in that kind of stuff. In terms of my—so, we were brought—I've got a brother, we were brought up in Northwest London and felt very much part of that Northwest London Jewish community. (Life story interview, May 2020)

Paul's origin story illustrates a recurrent theme in the way participants construed their positionality. The stories of our lives begin long before we are born, reflecting Agnew's argument (2005a, p. 3) that:

The past is always with us, and it defines our present, it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences, and explains how we came to be ourselves and inhabit what we call our homes.

The past is almost indistinguishable from the present in Paul's life story – his repeated modulation between past and present tense demonstrating an irrevocable link between the two. Paul's life story is also markedly interdependent – his self-construal tied biologically, culturally, and symbolically to his parents, aunties, uncles, and ancestors. The tie is biological in the most literal sense. It is cultural in that it was the setting for his own enculturation. It is symbolic in that the familial ties to parents, grandparents, and ancestors are fundamental to his sense of Jewishness i.e., his tie to a symbolic peoplehood (Myerhoff, 1978) or imagined community (Anderson, 1991). The contents of his story are varied but converge in a coherent narrative encapsulating themes of diaspora and Tradition. Such themes

represent pools from which he (trans)formed his Jewishness as a "cultural" and fundamentally social identity (Paul, life story interview, May 2020).

Though the contents, outcomes, and uses of such narratives are multiplex, their function as a symbolic act of identity arbitration is recurrent. By "identity arbitration" (Egorova, 2013, p. 295, 2018, p. 549), I refer to the construction and mobilisation of:

> narratives of inclusion and exclusion that define communities and the ways in which these latter are rendered specific and differentiated. (Graham & Howard, 2008, p. 5)

I use the term identity arbitration over "identity concretion" (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995, p. 130) or "identity stabilisation" (Buciek & Juul, 2008, p. 116) since the former incorporates more explicitly issues relating to agency, fluidity, intragroup dynamics, and power (Egorova, 2013, 2015, 2018; Egorova & Perwez, 2012). In storying their heritage narratives, participants created a coherent account of self which rendered meaningful their lived experiences as queer ethnoreligious selves and validated (at least in their eyes) their claims to Jewishness and (more tacitly) queerness. Below, I explore the two recurrent symbolic referents participants mobilised in their narratives – diaspora and Tradition – before accounting for the relative lack of queerness within them.

4.2.1 Diaspora

Stories of diaspora, dispersal, and displacement were some of the most recurrent narratives participants positioned themselves with. This theme arose both in tangible genealogies and in more symbolic, abstract terms e.g., a story of a "journey" (H.E., semi-structured interview, August 2020) or the "cliché of the wandering Jew" (Anna, life story interview, June 2020). Diasporic narratives stretched across vast geographic distances: from Austria to India, from Czechoslovakia to Uzbekistan.

Participants related to their diasporic selves in diverse ways. For example, both Dor and T.M. emphasised the value in cherishing diasporic complexities:

> Dor: … when I moved to, um, London, you know, I would go to Shabbat services all the time, and, um… and it was, you know, really there in my life. Since coming here [to Israel] probably less because, you know, Judaism is in the streets and in the sky and in the wind and, um, it's very

different. I do miss that feeling of diaspora life. (Life story interview, October 2020)

T.M.: Um, I am very happy with my Judaism and I'm very happy with my Britishness, and I'm happy with, um, being a Jew in Britain, and- and I've also got a real sense of richness, um, of British Jewish culture but also of diaspora Jewish culture in general, um, and… yeah, I think there's something sad about the amount of culture which is kind of been mushed up to create Israeli culture. (Life story interview, July 2020)

Some associated their diasporic heritages with a sense of loss. For example, H.E. was struck by a profound sense that Jews had journeyed throughout history and "forever been the […] butt of a joke" (Semi-structured interview, August 2020). For Anna:

Anna: … you know, my family isn't from the UK originally if you trace it back, and you only have to go back one generation and there's nothing in the UK. So, often times like when I- when I see friends who talk about like going to visit their grandparents in the next town or, you know, even like two hours away, I'm like "oh, yeah," but in my family that's not- that's not the case and it hasn't been the case in most of my family for most generations. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

Clearly, the diasporic heritages participants mobilised were highly subjective – contingent on their familial and sociocultural environments. Nevertheless, their significance as symbolic of the Jewish experience ran throughout this heterogeneity – reflecting the integral, yet complicated, relationship between diaspora and Jewish selfhood:

The Jews, as a diaspora people, have always had the problem of establishing an identity in the context of the culture in which they lived. Much of Jewish history is a struggle to live in some dynamic tension between the expectations of society and the expectations of being Jewish. (Wolpe, 1997, pp. 222-3)

By drawing on such well-known themes of dispersal, participants' heritage narratives facilitated a process of identity arbitration whereby they defined and positioned themselves in relation to a symbolic peoplehood. These narratives were often complex and lengthy – reflecting a mythic construction of selfhood which drew on "all layers of history" (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 264). For example:

Alex: Um, so it's my dad's family that are Jewish, which makes me half Jewish, and I know it technically makes me half Jewish from my dad's side, which some people would argue doesn't make you Jewish at all or

at the very most makes you Jew-ish. I personally think that following a biblical-times-era rule about, um, inherited birth right through your maternal side, we don't live in a time now anymore where the majority of paternity is left as questionable *Laughs*. Um, so I think it's pretty obvious most of the time who a person's biological parents are. Um, my dad is Jewish, his parents on both sides were Jewish, their parents on both sides before them were Jewish and so on and so forth right the way back until before the Spanish Inquisition and then the records get really ropey for my particular family members. So, I think when you've been Jewish on both sides of one side of your family, going back for like 4/5/6/700 years at this point, like, you tend to get classed as Jewish when it counts and when it doesn't count really, um, but that obviously came with being half German and that is, uh, difficult and challenging but also, I feel is quite interesting, quite an unusual mix, um, particularly because I grew up in Manchester which is a predominantly White, working-class, English Northern town and, um, as far as I know *Laughs* in the entire five years I was at school, I was the only Jew with the exception of my sister. We were also the only Germans. So, kind of any time that you'd learn about the War, everybody would turn round and look at me or ask me *Laughs* what it was like, and I got that on both sides. You know, like I remember being in a history classroom and some kid opening a textbook and pointing at an open grave at Auschwitz and asking if I recognised anyone, if I was related to anyone, but then, you know five minutes would go past and it would be like "oh my God, Alex's mum shagged Hitler, that's how she got born."

~

She [Alex's grandma] already had a tough start in life, then the Nazis roll up into power *Laughs*. You're living in Prague, and, um, they tried to get out and my grandma always used to tell me when I was little that the rule said at the time that you were allowed to bring people or belongings with you but not both. So, my grandma's mum, my great-grandma, insisted that they bring three of her brothers with them to England because my grandma's mum was one of eight [Matt: Mmhmm] and they got on the boat and they stayed in England for three weeks and then my grandma's mum said "I really don't like it here, I want to go back home, the weather's too cold," you know, "yatter, yatter, yatter," whatever, and they went back, um, and then they got back to Prague and their friends were like "what the hell are you doing?" You know, like "you guys need to leave now, they're rounding your lot up on the trains basically," and they got back on the boat and they were allowed back in England and they decided to stay. That's what I was always told.

Matt: Mm.

Alex: Now, a few years before my grandma actually died … we were at her house in… they lived in the south of France, my grandparents, and we found a bunch of old passports including my grandma's passport from when she'd been a child and in it was a stamp for a visa for three weeks. Um, so my grandma's mum didn't hate the UK, she didn't want

to go back home, it's just that, when they fled, they were only given a three-week stay. So, they were sent back.

~

… you know, I'd- I'd spend God knows how many years of my life, and my dad spent God knows how many years of his life too, thinking like that we almost all never existed off the back of like the whim of my great-grandma who just really didn't like England and, no, Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia were given a three-week visa, as if that's going to do anything.

Matt: Mm.

Alex: Like, just go for a little holiday to the UK in the middle of World War Two. That's something that none of my classmates, none of my peers, nobody I knew and was friends with growing up could- could share. No one could share that with me. (Life story interview, September 2020)

This heritage narrative, marked by themes of flight and expulsion, is an intricate tapestry – the weaving of which renders meaningful and thus congruent Alex's complex, often conflicting, subject positions. By drawing on extensive yet "ropey" oral histories of diaspora, Alex subverts the matrilineal principle to Jewish selfhood. In doing so, she arbitrates her ethnoreligious self as authentically Jewish in defiance of those who seek to exclude her – others who remain unspecified. She validates this claim by calling upon events, memories, and stories deeply evocative of the Jewish experience – from the Spanish Inquisition to the deportation of Czechoslovakian Jews in 1939 (Figure 6).[11] In this way, Alex's heritage narrative represents a "paradigmatic scene" (Needham, 1981, p. 1) – an image symbolic of collective experience and key to unlocking "complex cultural, or indeed religious, worlds" (Murphy, 2018, p. 119). Alex is Jewish because these stories – and the symbols put to work within them – are, in her mind, meaningfully Jewish.

In rendering her lived experiences meaningfully Jewish, Alex accounts for the alienation she felt growing up in a predominantly White, working-class Northern English town. This sense of alienation was compounded by her German heritage. Not included above is a similar, albeit far less detailed, Protestant German heritage narrative. By narrating two unique heritage narratives, Alex makes congruent two

---

[11] Photo extracted from Louise London (2000)

"sides" of her identity placed in opposition by others. In doing so, she makes a critical step towards self-actualisation (Rogers, 1961); that is, a cognitive state whereby an individual actualises their sense of self through continual reflection, performance, and the reinterpretation of lived experience.

Figure 6: The deportation of Czechoslovakian Jews from Croydon Airport

The use of heritage narratives in this way reflects Zubrzycki's study (2012) of Jewish revivalism in Poland in that their aim is to "soften and stretch the symbolic boundaries" of the social groups participants positioned themselves in relation to. But identity arbitration does not imply (or result in) homogeneity or unproblematic group membership. Indeed, such methods are often contested (Egorova, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018) and, from my findings, cannot be used to predict religiosity or community participation. Alex, for example, expresses her Jewishness "by announcing it to the world," often humorously (semi-structured interview, October 2020). R, also a patrilineal Jew, does so by giving "people things on Jewish holidays, normally food," and learning Yiddish – the "little habits" they "weave into [their] daily life" (semi-structured interview, December 2020). What is important, however, is how participants put these narratives to work in rendering meaningful

115

and valid their claims to a symbolic peoplehood. In other words, heritage narratives are constructed to arbitrate identities to an imagined community (Anderson, 1991), i.e., a deeply subjective, socially constructed community participants positioned themselves in relation to.

Diaspora can be understood as a social form representing an identifiable social group characterised by their "relationship-despite-dispersal" (Vertovec, 1997, pp. 227-8). This reflects participants' tendency to perceive their disparate heritages of displacement as symbolic of the Jewish experience – validating their efforts of identity arbitration. The fact this ran through various, intersecting axes of identity – here class, ethnoreligiosity, nationality, and regional identity – also reflects the idea of diaspora as a form of consciousness. This is because participants built a sense of diaspora on a set of mutable symbolic referents which provided an "imaginary coherence" to a range of "malleable identities" (ibid., p. 282; Hall, 1990).

There are two dimensions of participants' diasporic heritages I want to address here. First, the historical opaqueness of these narratives was recognised by a few participants – something vocalised through adjectives such as "ropey" (Alex, life story interview, September 2020) or "unclear" (Louis, life story interview, January 2021). This reflects understandings that heritage presents itself as a "riddle;" something not always solved by "conventional historical tools" (Egorova, 2013, p. 293). From my findings, oral histories of displacement sometimes ran contrary to bio-historical technologies for self-construal:

> Tamara: Um, my parents are both British, but their parents came from various different places. So, my dad's side, his grandpa was born—his-his father was born in Belgium but, um, his family are originally from Syria and Lebanon. So, I've got, uh, Sephardi heritage from there and I think going back a couple of hundred years, my family were actually originally from India which is really interesting.
>
> ~
>
> Um, I did a 23andMe DNA test, um, quite recently and I was expecting to have mostly… well, I don't know, not mostly Sephardi heritage but I was very shocked that I came out something like 88-point-something percent Ashkenazi Jewish, um, because my whole life I've kind of identified more with the Sephardi part of my- of my genetics. Like, thinking that that was really cool and something quite different, um, you know, because I'm White and people don't expect me to have Sephardi

genes. So, that's something… you know, I've always told people I'm Sephardi [Matt: Mmhmm.] even though it's only like one very small part of my, um, my background, but, yeah, so now I guess I should probably identify as Ashkenazi Jewish, um, because that is most of my genetic makeup. (Life story interview, January 2021)

Tamara had to re-arbitrate her identity considering what she perceived to be a more reliable and valid way of determining heritage than the oral histories of dispersal. This is despite her being raised in a Sephardi synagogue like her father – who "really enjoyed the Spanish and Portuguese type services and the tunes" (life story interview, January 2021). Here, biological ways of determining heritage superseded oral histories of diaspora – reflecting Beim's argument (2007, p. 10) that heritage narratives do not represent "very 'real' past events" due to their socially and culturally produced nature. Instead, following Schwartz (2008), these stories follow culturally (and religiously) informed representations of history that mobilise "symbols to awaken ideas and feelings about the past" (Beim, 2007, p. 10). The ascension of biology in determining self-construal reflects Egorova's argument (2013, p. 292) that:

> DNA research, which builds upon notions of biological determinism, has an unavoidable tendency to naturalise and therefore reinforce existing categories of people based on perceived genealogical and social differences.

For Tamara, the highly subjective nature of oral history positions it beneath bio-history regardless of the lived experience she accrued from her Sephardi upbringing or the contested nature of DNA in determining ethnicity (Egorova, 2013, 2014, 2018; Wolpe, 1997).

Second, diasporic heritages did not always correlate with participants' ethno-racial identities. Of the five participants who did not identify as White: one did not disclose their diasporic origins, two were of Eastern-European descent, and two disclosed mixed Ashkenazi/Sephardi heritage. Indeed, Whiteness (or lack thereof) was more clearly tied to a political self-construal:

> Dor: … when you have these ethnicity forms that you have to fill out, you know, I- I never tick *White British*, I would always tick *Other* and in that I would, um, always write *Jewish* because, um, there are so many nationalities in- in my family that it's difficult to say that you're just White British and, um, I don't think Jews sit in the category of White. Um, so

that answers that one, and then I—the sexuality I would probably write *Gay male*.

Matt: What—how do you—what's your understanding about, um, that Whiteness category not being representative of Jewishness?

Dor: Um, because historically Jews have always been placed outside that category, um, and are seen to disrupt it at the same time. Um, so Jews will always be, um, a minority other and have done historically and what can we—I think for the outside world and the xenophobic time, is that they disrupt that category of Whiteness. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

The tendency for Whiteness to relate more prominently to political processes of assimilation (Gans, 2007; James, 2014) and a politics of disruption reflects findings by Papadelos (2021) regarding the precarious ethno-racial positioning of those who are White-but-not-White-enough. Indeed, the contested (trans)formation of Jewishness in relation to Whiteness has been commented upon by scholars working in both British (Egorova, 2022) and North American (Goldstein, 2006) contexts, with my findings confirming that such a process is not only innately political but deeply emotional. What is important here, however, is that heritage narratives competed with, or confirmed, other ways of authenticating identity arbitration. The efficacy of these tools is highly subjective – with Tamara favouring bio-historical modes of identity arbitration and Dor opting for a more political approach. But diasporic heritages are just one piece of the tapestry participants weaved together during our conversations. Though heritages of flight and expulsion were integral as a form of identity arbitration, more space is needed to explore *what* is inherited through them.

4.2.2 Tradition

Participants tended to treat Tradition – a unique blend of culture, ethnic complexities, nurture, and religion (Myerhoff, 1978) – as the inherited content of their diasporic heritages. This differed somewhat from Jewishness as the present-day mobilisation of Tradition in the process of self (trans)formation. Like their stories of dispersal, how participants defined and interacted with such inheritances was highly subjective – emphasising the creativity and fluidity of diasporic modes of enculturation (Agnew, 2005b; Vertovec, 1997).

Participants tended to clarify Jewishness as a cultural identity from Jewishness as a religious identity, though the boundaries between the two were

118

often faint and regularly blurred. For example, H.E. argued that "Judaism" as a cultural identity entailed a suffering-informed morality which included "being a people who care" (semi-structured interview, August 2020). Those who saw Judaism as a religious identity also built on this principle, associating it with religious motifs such as *Hineni* (Liane, semi-structured interview, October 2020) and *Tzedakah* (Dor, life story interview, October 2020).[12] There was a slight distinction between culture and religion in ritual practice. Hannah considered herself culturally but not religiously Jewish – she would "quite happily" not fast on Yom Kippur and "not feel guilty about it," though was drawn to Judaism's holiest day of the year as it enabled her to enjoy a "moment of calm and- and being quiet [and] thoughtful" (semi-structured interview, February 2021). Liane did keep the Yom Kippur fast but, like Hannah, found that it provided them with the opportunity for "just doing some reflection" on themselves (semi-structured interview, October 2020). As such, a firm distinction between cultural Judaism and religious Judaism is difficult to arrive at and, as a result, I am hesitant to clarify one totally from the other. This reflects Liane's response to the demographic questionnaire in that Judaism as a religion is inseparable from Judaism as a people – and that any attempts to clarify one from the other reflects a WASP postsecular mode of social differentiation. As such, I have adopted the term ethnoreligiosity when describing Jewish (and Bahá'í) selves.

Belief in God was not clearly split between those identified with Judaism culturally and those who did so religiously. Generally, participants settled on an agnostic position, claiming that God's existence (or lack thereof) would not have tangible consequences on how they related to their Jewishness:

> Matt: Mm. Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?
>
> R: Yes, very much so.
>
> Matt: Why so?
>
> R: Because my religion is—my spirituality, like my spiritual beliefs like my thoughts about God and life and the universe, those are mine. My religion is something that I do. Um, like it's something that I create when

---

[12] H.E. does not believe in God but also paired his cultural Judaism with Tzedakah i.e., the principle of goodwill (semi-structured interview, August 2020).

I- when I- when I connect—when I connect with my spirituality—I guess I would consider like religion, uh, the method through which you express that part of yourself. So, the two things are connected but they're not the same.

~

That's what I think, um, and it's not true for everyone but, um, yeah, I think—um, so I- I'm deeply—I'm involved with- with my synagogue. Um, I go to Shabbat most Fridays. Um, I think deeply about the liturgy and the origins of Judaism and what being Jewish means, um, whether or not—like what I actually believe about capital G God doesn't matter, that doesn't make me religious to me. (Semi-structured interview, December 2020)

This reflects Cohen's findings (2015) that ritual practice and Tradition are just as, if not more, valued than individual faith for Jews. This concept of 'Tradition' – particularly from Zubrzycki (2012) and Riesebrodt (2010) – is key to understanding the complex ways participants conflated and related to the cultural-religious aspects of their Jewishness. Tradition, according to Zubrzycki (2012, p. 443), refers to a complex set of "discourses, symbols, practices, and material resources" that are inherently political and mobilised in the pursuit of self-definition. Tradition is a comprehensive term which accounts for the "classifications of discourses and practices in terms of theological or symbolic continuity […] and also includes ethnicity or culture" (ibid., p. 442). Like Jewishness, Tradition refers to something more tactile than ethnoreligiosity – the building blocks through which ethnoreligious selves are made.

Participants could not simply narrate oral histories of dispersal to render meaningful their Jewish identities, they also had to perform their inherited ethnoreligiosity to selves and others (Myerhoff, 1982). Ritual performance is an integral part of subject (trans)formation, the means by which "faithful dispositions are formed and reformed, amplified and affirmed" (Holloway, 2003, p. 206). Rituals do more than symbolise group or self-identification, they actualise it through their performance (Rappaport, 1999). In this way, Tradition is invaluable for ensuring ethnoreligious continuity. Following Assman and Czaplicka (1995, p. 128), continuity principles are the method by which social groups reproduce their identity, basing their "consciousness of unity and specificity" upon such notions of Tradition. Continuity was tied fundamentally to ritual performance due to its actualising potential:

Anna: I really love candles, in a quiet setting—it doesn't really matter what that setting is as long as it kind of allows that contemplation. It connects me to something, um, but I also light Shabbat candles specifically because, otherwise, it could just be any old candle, it wouldn't really matter, and I could light it on any other day of the week, but, like I said, I think having that as a regular thing is really important, so you don't kind of slip into bad habits [Matt: Mm.], or, um, getting negative and the potential of stopping trying, but I also like that I'm doing something that people have done for many generations and that people in my family have done for many generations. It makes me feel like I've got a link through my lineage and that I'm a line going somewhere, and I don't mean in the sense that I'm gonna have children and pass this on because I probably won't, but in terms of like everybody impacts the world around them and that if you don't have that kind of heteronormative model of how that lineage gets passed on, you need to reinforce that you are actually part of something in a meaningful way [Matt: Mm.], um, and that that ties me to my past and to a future that I don't know yet. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

For Anna, the glowing light of the candles and quiet space of contemplation were potent sensory triggers for a "very- very powerful" symbolic moment both in and out of time – providing her with an affective bridge to a line of Jewish continuity stretching back "many generations." Lighting the Shabbat candles enabled Anna to arbitrate her queer self into an imagined Jewish community, transcending the "heteronormative model of how that lineage gets passed on…" In this view, ritual performance concretises identity arbitration – actualising queer Jewish selves through the performative dynamics of the ritual act. Transcending time and change (Myerhoff, 1978), Anna's queer ritual innovation (Brettschneider, 2003) made tangible the intangible aspects of her heritage – culminating in a powerfully affective moment of self-actualisation. In this way, ritual performance shows us an alternate way of doing Jewishness *and* queerness which incorporates both aspects of the self through its very performance.

Ritual innovation is a core feature of Bourdieu's notion (1979, 1990) of habitus:

the non-conscious set of dispositions and classificatory schemes that people gain through experience, which provides a kind of repertoire for situationally competent action, improvisation, and the generation of new practices. (Vertovec, 1997, pp. 294-295)

Through its performative dimensions, ritual makes congruent Anna's queerness and Tradition – aspects made incongruent through heteronormative

121

models of kinship and inheritance. This demonstrates how habitus is "open to adjustment," reflecting the "changing conditions of the social field" in which the ritual performer is positioned (ibid., p. 295). This mirrors Singh's argument (2008, p. 126) that heritage is not "innate or primordial"; instead, it is the result of "our own marvellously malleable creation" (Lowenthal, 1998, p. 226).

Tradition was also tied to morality, providing participants with an embodied ethical framework which they related to their queerness in diverse ways. Whether participants sought to conform to, diverge from, subvert, or (trans)form the moral principles they associated with Judaism, the link between Tradition and an interdependent morality was apparent nonetheless:

> Matt: Or how can you tell the difference between right and wrong?
>
> Jacob: […] I guess- I guess a lot of it comes from, um, kind of, um, the tradition of Judaism of like—that I've been brought up with, kind of like principles that are kind of drummed into us from a young age of like kind of treat your fellows as yourself and, um, like don't stand idly by while someone gets killed, that kind of thing. Um, like, um, it's- it's not on you to finish the work but you're not free to desist from it.[13] (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

> O.K. … my doctrine is caring about the world around me, um, being kind to other people, um, being self-reflective, um, and I suppose you could say a lot of those things are quite generic and anyone could have that without being Jewish but, for me, I learnt a lot of those things within Jewish environments, therefore, the morality that I've—a lot of my morality, a lot of my identity, a lot of who I am, comes from those learnings within that period. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

> Maya: I don't think killing people is right, um, I also don't think it's a big deal if you try to draw an image of God. I also don't—you know, there are things that are- are clearly meant for a different time [Matt: Mm.] to try to, you know, maintain peace in a different context. If that's- that's what you are emphasising is "I want to keep peace within my community and between my community and other people's community and friendly relationships and supportive relationships and that's what the Ten

---

[13] This moral principle was also mentioned by Anna (semi-structured interview, August 2020), Dor (life story interview, October 2020), and R (participant observation, January 2021). Tradition is not capitalised here to remain faithful to the terms participants used in their interviews.

Commandments and the *mitzvot* were trying to promote," great, I'm all for it, but I'm not gonna sit here and like do a literal interpretation of an ancient text that I don't think was written by God. (Semi-structured interview, December 2020)

Whether as a point of conformity or divergence, Tradition and morality are clearly linked. These moral frameworks, moreover, reflect a blended independent and interdependent mode of self-construal. It is interdependent in that it depends on the acquisition of Tradition through socialisation within the group – something that cannot be shirked completely in later life (Cohen, 2015). It is independent in that participants' queerness sometimes acted as a point from which they sought to differentiate themselves from the traditional moral codes of the group – constructing "alternative narratives" that projected a novel understanding of "collective selfhood" (Moon, 2012, p. 1371). Tradition is thus performed as a mode of positionality, along moral lines, in relation to an imagined community.

Tradition provided the touchstone for performing ethical queer lives – something that can be found in Dor's reflection on Pride:

Dor: Have you ever been to the Pride festival in London?

Matt: No.

Dor: But you've seen it? There's a lot of, you know, exaggeration, there's a lot of bodies, there's a lot of muscles, there's a lot of drag [Matt: Mm.], and this never sat comfortably with me because it sends a message to the outside world that that is what we're like. We reinforce stereotypes, um, and what I always feel fond of is seeing *Keshet UK* in these demonstrations [Matt: Mm.], where everyone is in all shapes and sizes, colours, and, um, it restores a bit of normality.

~

Dor: The Jerusalem one is extremely political.

Matt: Yeah, I remember at the time—because when I went it was 2016.

Dor: Is that when Shira Banki was killed?

Matt: The year after.

Dor: The year after… um, the Jerusalem one is political because of the place, um, and it's making a statement, you know, "Jerusalem is for everyone, um, and we want an inclusive Jerusalem." Um, so, you don't have, you know, the *S'dom v'Amorah* of the Tel Aviv demonstration where, you know, there's just flesh everywhere. You know, it's a very different one. Um, so, these demonstrations never sat well with me because they just reinforce the stereotype exactly what you said of the

123

gay best friend to go shopping with, um, you know [Matt: Mm.], um, and hell, I love going shopping as much as anyone, but I don't want to be someone's stereotype. (Life story interview, October 2020)

By drawing on the biblical reference to Sodom and Gomorrah – two cities destroyed by God for their wickedness – Dor reifies Moon's finding (2012, p. 1369) that some people believe those "who value LGBT liberation slip occasionally into hedonism." Moreover, the negative association between London/Tel Aviv Pride, hedonism, and "muscles" reflects other findings whereby religious identification provides a touchstone for ethical queer living (Taylor *et al.*, 2014). The embodied response of disapproval is also made in reaction to the highly publicised, somewhat secular, ritual performance of Pride. Dor's lamentation over Pride's hedonism by way of semiology is made in comparison to what he views as a meaningful ritual performance of (both queer and Jewish) Tradition – demonstrating the polyvocality of ritual symbols (Turner, 1967). Ritual thus triggers an embodied moral response based on the re-interpretation of Tradition. For Dor, Jerusalem Pride was such a meaningful performance because of the political statement it made and its symbolic setting in Jerusalem. For Josh:

Josh: … you know, you look at who's actually in the parade at Jerusalem Pride and it's a bit more political, it's a little bit more religious. So, like there's all the LGBT religious groups and ally groups, and it's not like— it's not a party, it's- it's, um, uh, it's- it's making—it's making more of a statement. (Life story interview, May 2020)

In both examples, Tradition is called upon in response to ritual performance to arbitrate selves that are sufficiently Jewish and appropriately queer. Specifically, queerness and Jewishness are made congruent through the biblical parables of modesty and hospitality; political calls to celebration and representation; and the symbolic resonance of Jerusalem Pride's contested setting. Diaspora and Tradition – context and content – are powerful symbolic referents mobilised through, and in response to, the performance of ritual. Their symbolic potency facilitates identity arbitration; here, a process of construing one's positionality in relation to imagined queer and Jewish, diaspora and home communities through the polyvocal ritual performance of Pride. Through rituals – and the embodied responses they provoke – participants displayed themselves to themselves and others through deeply subjective moral codes of conduct, reflecting a state of congruence and self-actualisation.

124

4.2.3 From origin story to life story: the place of queerness

As alluded to above, participants did not centre queerness as much as they did Jewishness when storying their heritage narratives. That said, a couple of them did call upon queer heritages as an important dimension of their self-construal:

> H.E.: I don't know if you've seen *The inheritance*, the play? That's a— that's rather like, um, *Angels in America*. It's a big play about the AIDS crisis but it sort of links through a bunch of generations and says you sort of inherit the journey of the people before you. Like, why we are able to have this conversation openly is partly because others have won with their lives the rights to have a society where we're just about open enough to have a discussion like this, um, and I think that's been on my mind with the Jewish identity, with the gay identity, and becoming aware that I didn't know much. (Life story interview, August 2020)

The AIDS crisis represents a social drama symbolic of the hard-won rights queers have struggled to achieve. That said, queer heritages and, as discussed below, Jewish heritages reflect somewhat a fog in the cultural memory – something H.E. takes as a moral imperative to become more aware of the political journeys we inherit and privilege from.

At first glance, the lack of queerness in participants' origin stories reifies Villicana *et al.*'s finding (2016, p. 470) that ethnicity remains the "primary basis of group-identification and self-categorisation" for queer people from minority ethnic backgrounds. As such, ethnically minoritised queers tend to engage in more tacit forms of self-expression regarding their queerness (ibid.). Due to the unstructured nature of the life story interview, I did not ask participants to narrate specifically Jewish or queer histories – leaving the stories they included (and excluded) up to their discretion.

All participants, however, began their life stories by narrating Jewish histories – reflecting Paul's statement that 'it makes more sense to talk about Jewishness' at the beginning (life story interview, May 2020). The reticent inclusion of queer heritages itself tells us something. According to Treacher (2007, pp. 296-7), silences within history are pervasive, bringing with them particularly powerful "material and political effects." Silences are "transmitted" through "historical" and "public discourses" where they become part of the fabric of "psychic life" (ibid.). Following Phillips *et al.* (2020), it is by attending to the unspoken narratives that we

can develop deep understandings of how people construe their queer ethnoreligious selves.

By reading between the lines, I raise two challenges to Villicana *et al.*'s finding (2016). First, heritage narratives can be considered the origin stories to participants' life stories – the first chapter in a long history upon which self-construal is based. As Myerhoff found (1978, 1982), participants' life stories tended to follow a movement from incorporation to separation to reincorporation. Like rites of passage, these narratives reflected a process of meaning-making which, in turn, illustrated a mode of subject (trans)formation. These movements were highly individualised but, generally speaking, began firmly rooted in Jewishness before being complexified by the emergence of queerness to finally culminating in a (continual) process of aggregation, congruence, and self-actualisation. In this way, the emergence of queerness represents both the breach and crisis stage in social drama – whereby participants typically felt removed from their Jewish heritages – while the processes conducive to self-actualisation represent attempts to redress, re-integrate, and thus make congruent their queer Jewish selves (Turner, 1974, 1982b).[14] Without wanting to essentialise or totalise participants' life stories to this meta-narrative, it is worth outlining below the general pattern of incorporation, separation, reincorporation in three distinct examples (Figure 7).

These examples demonstrate how participants' origin stories are situated in the lifecourse. Heritage narratives are thus not to be approached in stasis; they reflect the first stage in a long and varied queer Jewish lifecourse – the origin story to their life story. In keeping with the narrative approach outlined in Chapter Three, the reincorporation stage does not imply that selves are finished; instead, it indicates that the selves are continuously unfolding in a state of becoming. Second, and following this line of argument, heritage narratives are storied in the present by queer Jewish selves. Following Degnen (2015), such narratives reveal much about the narrator's own subject (trans)formation and their ability to call upon powerful symbolic referents in a process of identity arbitration.

---

[14] As such, I prefer the word 'congruence' when referring to the fourth stage in social dramas.

	Incorporation	Separation		Reincorporation	
		Breach	**Crisis**	**Redress**	**Congruence**
Jacob	"Joyful" memories of his "big Jewish, Egyptian family" (semi-structured interview, July 2020)	"Numbing" and traumatic memories of "conversion therapy" in response to his emerging queerness (life story interview, April 2020)		Ending conversion therapy and developing a Judaism that is still "deeply religious" but more "egalitarian" regarding his "LGBT life" (life story interview, April 2020)	
Paul	"Immersed" in the North London Jewish community – had a "significant […] Jewish social life" (life story interview, May 2020)	Felt "very alienated" and "uncomfortable" in these social circles because of his sexuality. Went to university in a city with a small Jewish population to get away from this community, came out during this time (life story interview, May 2020)		Is happy with his "more cosmopolitan" selfhood. Doesn't "do anything" relating to his Jewishness except go to his parents for Yom Kippur and Passover. Enjoys the "family and the story" associated with celebrating cultural holidays and recognises the significance in passing this on to the "generation beneath us" (life story interview, May 2020)	
R	Raised in a mixed, interreligious household with some knowledge of their diasporic heritage (life story interview, May 2020)	Missed out on the rites of passage their relatives went through e.g., Bar/Bat Mitzvah because they "never got the chance to learn that stuff growing up." Felt alienated from their Jewishness due to their gender and sexual identities. (life story interview, May 2020)		Developed a Judaism which made congruent their gendered, sexed, and mixed ethnoreligious self. Learning more about their Jewishness and having a B'nei Mitzvah. Studying to become a lay reader and leading sermons at their synagogue (life story interview, May 2020; participant observation, January 2021)	

Figure 7: Queer Jewish lifecourses

While, on paper, participants' heritage narratives may be rife with queer silences, it is important to remember that these narratives were storied by queer

voices. As such, they reflect a way of re-incorporating queer selves into a "thousands of years old" social drama – culminating in the right here, right now, and ultimately queer (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 268). As seen in Anna's queer ritual innovation (semi-structured interview, August 2020), and Dor's embodied, moral response to Pride (life story interview, October 2020), ritual performance is apt in demonstrating how participants achieved this without shirking any part of their queer Jewish selves. The Shabbat candles are just as queer as the Pride parade, the parade just as Jewish as the Friday night ritual. Through ritual performance, participants "show themselves to themselves" and others, "rendering visible actual and desired truths about themselves" while reincorporating their queer Jewish selves into a symbolic peoplehood illustrated through heritage (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 261) – a particularly powerful, and convincing, mode of self (trans)formation.

Clearly, the storying of heritage reflects an attempt to create a coherent account of self which rendered meaningful participants' lived experiences and validated their claims to Jewishness and (more tacitly) queerness as queer Jewish selves. Their stories incorporated well-known symbolic referents to diaspora and Tradition, stretching the symbolic boundaries of the social groups they identified with. But how do these symbols gain their resonance? In the next section, I argue that memory is fundamental in the process of ethnoreligious acquisition.

4.3 Death and dinosaur pasta: memory, intergenerational trauma, and repertoires of resistance

> Matt: … what do you think is your earliest childhood memory?
>
> O.K.: Earliest childhood memory is… uh, I think my earliest childhood memory is playing with friends at nursery, um, and I remember—I mean, it all merges into one, um, but I remember—because there was a girl who was in our class when I was—this was—I think I must have been like two—not two, I must have been like three or four, uh, and I remember hanging around in—because it was at- it was at—the shul would do a nursery—my local shul would do a nursery. Before you went to school nursery you went to local synagogue nursery, and I remember hanging round with, uh, kids… other kids. Like, hanging around with them and stuff, and I remember one of the girls she'd died or had cancer while we were all, uh, at nursery, um, and I remember her kind of not being there afterwards. Um, yeah, I remember that.
>
> Matt: Oh, that must have been tough as a young kid?

O.K.: I don't think I've even really kind of explored that or realised that until now but, yeah, that's my earliest memory.

Matt: Mm.

O.K.: I mean, it all merges into one. Like, the whole kind of just being in that nursery merged into one memory [Matt: Yeah.], but, um, I do- I do like remember that- that kind of experience of this girl being a little bit ill, but I don't know how ill or what was different about her when she was ill but I just remember kind of her having died and then I remember going to *shiva* afterwards, I think, or I remember seeing the mother and she was quite distraught, at some point. Um, I also do remember eating dinosaur pasta, I really enjoyed that, with some friends. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

I was struck by O.K.'s association of traumatic memories with joyful memories. On paper, the move between images of the girl's distraught mother and those of dinosaur pasta appear disjointed. During the interview itself, however, this process of remembering was enacted with an air of intrigue and normality – with O.K. exploring the affective bricolage of ethnoreligious complexities and social relations that (trans)formed their earliest memories. Memories, more so than heritage narratives, were filled with false starts, fillers, repetitions, and stutters, bringing with them a flavour of complexity and uncertainty (Phillips *et al*., 2020). This is because:

> memories are the product of the intermingling of past and present lives, the creation of a complex dynamic between the individual and the collective, recalling and forgetting, trauma and nostalgia. (Sugiman, 2005, p. 52)

Memories – themselves often evoking paradigmatic scenes – are the processes by which people reach out "along the various lines of experience" in a process of self-construal (Leyshon & Bull, 2011). They are a "fundamental aspect of becoming" (Jones, 2011, p. 876), establishing ties between "our individual past and our collective past (our origins, heritage, and history)" (Agnew, 2005a, p. 3). That participants' memories modulated dramatically between positive and negative affects represents a means of accessing the past in all its complexity – accounting for the dynamic nature of their lived experiences (Morrissey, 2012). Without memories of grief and loss, O.K. would not have been able to access memories of friendship and happiness and vice versa. Through these contradictions, O.K. accessed "the place and space of memory" (ibid., p. 193).

129

Echoing themes raised in Chapter Three, memories represent the "situated knowledges" or "maps of consciousness" people produce (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005). As social products, they are shaped by the remembering agent's subject position within the various power geometries differentiating their self – differentiations based on categories relating to ability, age, class, culture, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, sex, and sexuality (ibid.). As such, memories are key to exploring the acquisition and actualisation of queer Jewish selves.

If memories are socially produced (Conway, 2010; Halbwachs, 1992), the remembering subject cannot be treated as wholly a passive agent of recollecting. Instead, they are active agents who draw on symbolic frameworks of interpretation to meet present needs for "meaning making, memory making, and identity construction" (Murphy, 2018, p. 118). But this is also a mutually reinforcing process. Through memory, we accrue the mythic, symbolic, and ritualistic material necessary for identity arbitration, self-actualisation, and self-construal. This mirrors Morrissey's argument (2012, p. 193) that how we remember is "constantly caught in our embodiment of the past, through the things, smells, objects, and places that make them uniquely our own." Similarly, Degnen argues (2015, p. 1663) that:

> Memories are thus used and are worked to fashion a sense of continuity, of belonging and of self; memory is at once a personal and a collective endeavour, a site of negotiation and positionality.

In this section, I address first how memories are psychosocial phenomena blending nurture and Tradition with affective triggers and emotional auras. Memories both confirm and (trans)form the heritages they meld, demonstrating their socially malleable nature in meeting participants' present needs. Ritual space-times are foregrounded as providing the optimum setting for the concretion of memory – inverting Myerhoff's understanding (1978, p. 225) of ritual's "Proustian powers" for arousing "deep involuntary memories." Memories imbue ritual with symbolic meaning, rendering ritual space-times the ideal environment for the acquisition of Tradition.

Then, I look at the relationship between collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and the continuity principle. I explore how this interplay manifests in the (trans)formation of group and self-identification; imposition of heterosexist expectations of reproduction; and fomentation of a progressive politics

of resistance. Memories are fundamental to the construction of diasporic heritages, conjuring a line of historical witness facilitating identity arbitration. Memories are also gendered – creating deeply uneven moral geographies over the lifecourse. Ritual innovation is highlighted once again as an attempt to make congruent the continuity principle with queer selves – themselves reflecting two inherently interdependent modes of being (Cohen, 2015; Schroeder, 2014).

4.3.1 Memories as affective, psychosocial phenomena

> Abby: Like, uh, one of my earliest memories is like the big- big mountain of moving boxes in the front garden, like climbing all around it, swimming in it, very fun. Um, then what… then what? I don't know, it's- it's a bit hard to—the beginning's kind of easy and then it's a bit like fuzzy. Um, I guess I went to primary school *Laughs*. I went to nursery, there was someone who spoke—who was Israeli, so I was like paired up with her, had like various Israeli people around me. Like, I remember my, um— like, my nanny when I was a kid was this really- really Israeli woman and she would like smoke and, like, chain smoke in front of me, and just like drink coffee constantly and so now I love the smell. I mean, not that it's particularly unique, but I've just always loved the smell of cigarettes and coffee because I loved her so much but in hindsight it's actually quite bad *Laughs* that she did that but, anyway, yeah, went to local primary school, had quite a hard time there for lots of reasons. (Life story interview, February 2021)

> Liane: … the more I'm understanding about psychology and the brain and therapy, um, the more I don't really have a very good memory about stuff for various- for various reasons of trauma which means that I don't have very good childhood memories, um, like that I can remember. They're like in my body somewhere but I can't remember them, but I do remember- *Laughs* I do remember watching—so, I watched, um, *101 Dalmatians*, the cartoon version, and I woke up—I had a nightmare. I still remember the nightmare. I had a nightmare that my—that Cruella de Vil had come to my house and was—had stolen—was trying to steal me like she did with the puppies, and I was really upset about it and like was absolutely convinced that this was actually happening, and my dad had to calm me down and be like "it's fine like Cruella de Vil is not here. Like, Cruella de Vil is not a real person, she's in a film *Laughs* and also in the film she's a cartoon." So—um, so that. I think I also remember, um—it's weird, like there are—I remember like almost like in a bodily sense like hanging out with my nana [Matt: Mm.], just what it felt to do that, to sit and make cakes and like she was very, um, she still is, of the opinion that basically if you make a mess that's fine as long as you clear it up afterwards. So, she's not very- not very strict in that sense. So, I remember just basically throwing cake better around her

kitchen *Laughs*, um, and just doing stuff with her and feeling pretty safe. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

These examples demonstrate how memory is a deeply affective process in which participants make sense of their lived experience through the embodied responses it inculcates. This 'embodied knowledge' is tied to both people and place – demonstrating memory's situatedness and sociality (Degnen, 2015, p. 1646). Through memory, deeply intimate social ties are paired with emotional auras – the nanny with the smell of coffee and tobacco; the doting dad with the nightmare; the nana with the cake batter and that feeling of safety. By pairing affect with sociality, memories extend social relations into the present, transcending time and change. Following Buciek and Juul (2008, p. 109), "all social groups create and reproduce relationships between their members by actively engaging in memory-work of some kind." The emotional power of this memory-work, I find, lies in the mingling between the affective and the social.

Ritual space-times were often key sites for the concretion of identity arbitration and memory-work:

Jacob: I guess my most positive memory was like Passover as a family. Um, I think before I kind of like realised family dynamics and before I realised kind of like the difficulties of our family, I think we used to go to Passover at my grandma's in Birmingham and there was something so tranquil about it, there was something so special about it, and I think, I don't know, just being with her just felt really wonderful. Um, oh, yeah, you've taken me back into—like, yeah, I don't- I don't think I have many positive feelings about friendships or school or anything like that [Matt: Mmhmm.], but I think being around my big Jewish Egyptian family, like with my grandma's cooking and like the smell of her house, like playing with my cousins underneath the stairs, like that just feels joyful.

Matt: What do you think would be your earliest childhood memory?

Jacob: Um, think my earliest childhood memory, um, is, um, there's this tradition that Jews, some Jews, um, do when they turn three. They, um, some Jews, um, when they have sons, they don't cut their son's hair until they're three years old and then they have a whole ceremony and it's like a kind of like, I guess, mini Bar Mitzvah but it's not- it's not as big as that, it's kind of more like there's some biscuits and everyone kind of cuts a lock of the kid's hair and he gets gifts and stuff like that and that was my first memory. Um, I remember sitting down in this like chair with a cushion like and I got a big *Lion King* toy and something else, I think maybe *Mickey Mouse* toy, and I remember being outside on the—on a small table drawing or something, um, and like lots of people being there and it feeling quite nice… (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

132

Two ritual space-times stand out for Jacob: Passover at his grandmother's house and his *Upsherin*. The association between the affective and the ritualistic reflects Turner's theory (1967) of the symbolic interchange. In remembering Passover, Jacob blends the commemoration of the Hebrew's liberation from slavery with the smells of his grandma's cooking and the "special feeling" of being with his "big Jewish Egyptian family." In remembering his Upsherin, Jacob blends the marking of a male child's commencement of Torah studies with the plush cushion he sat atop and the "nice" feeling of being surrounded by the community. Through the ritual process, the moral and the discursive are blended with the material and the affective, the individual with the collective (ibid.) – flushing the collective's highest ideals with emotion while 'ennobling' the physiological affects through contact with such lofty ideals (Myerhoff, 1974). This interchange fosters the generation of communitas and will be explored in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six. What is most important here is how ritual facilitates the ethnoreligious acquisition of Tradition – or, in the words of Milligan (2017, p. 17), "symbolic identity kit." By blending the emotional with the moral, ritual performance inculcates an "embodied knowledge" in the performer – highlighting the sociality of memory and key to forming affective 'place attachment' (Degnen, 2015, p. 1661).

The emotional resonance of these memories as the wellspring of Jacob's ethnoreligious acquisition persisted throughout his lifecourse – through the states of incorporation, separation, and reincorporation. This inverts Myerhoff's understanding (1978, p. 225) regarding the "Proustian powers" of ritual space-times whereby "deep involuntary memories" are elicited through ritual performance – bringing with them the "essences and textures of their original context, transcending time and change." It is inverted since it takes place in the present; an act of remembering connecting the past to a "lived present" and an "imagined future" (Conway, 2010, p. 443). Memory confirms and (trans)forms the acquisition of Tradition by rendering time congruent through the present acts of meaning-making, memory-work, and ritual performance. Rituals tie the performer to the past, present, and future – delineating time in a moment of self-actualisation. The longevity of such moments was also picked up on by Maya:

> Matt: What did you do your Bar Mitzvah reading on—Bat Mitzvah reading on?

Maya: So, it was, um, for the—so, the, um, *haftorah* was the story of Rahav and the- the red string in the window.

Matt: Yeah.

Maya: Um, so that was- that was really interesting. Also—well, because then it's about doubt, right?

Matt: Yeah.

Maya: So, like two men come back and say, "we had this experience," and then the other men come back and say, "we had this experience," and because it was ten against two, um, they hesitate and then essentially, they have to wait longer to go into the Promised Land. So, um, I was really interested into why some of those men were optimistic and some of them pessimistic.

Matt: Yeah.

Maya: So, my d'var torah was "what can we learn about optimism vs. pessimism," and, uh, I was really interested in- in… uh, it's kind of like kabbalistic almost, but like, naming?

Matt: Mmhmm.

Maya: Like, you can look at the names and all of these names are listed in so-and-so son of so-and-so, son of so-and-so. So, you can sort of see naming culture and I thought that would be a really interesting insight into the kinds of lives people were living.

Matt: Yeah.

Maya: Because there were these people that had names like "violence," or "punch," or like some of them were kind of inconspicuous but some of them were like "these are maybe not good scenarios for people to be in."

Matt: Mm.

Maya: Anyway, these things get burned into your brain *Laughs*. This was when I was 13 and I'm now 28, so… *Laughs* (Life story interview, June 2020)

Aural ritual facilitated Maya's act of remembering, 'burning' into her brain the religious knowledge she acquired in preparation for her Bat Mitzvah. Rituals and memory thus exist in a mutually reinforcing process. Just as memories recall (trans)formative ritual space-times, these space-times sow memories into the mind. In reflecting the optimum conditions for ethnoreligious acquisition, memories and rituals are the meaningful performances needed to render authentic the identity arbitrations participants make. In this way, ritual performance elicits a collective form of memory. Collective memory, also referred to synonymously as

cultural memory (Hua, 2005) and social memory (Degnen, 2015), is defined by Weedon and Jordan (2012, p. 143) as signifying:

> narratives of past experience constituted by and on behalf of specific groups within which they find meaningful forms of identification that may empower.

Rituals draw on collective memories by confirming and (trans)forming the various symbolic frameworks needed to render their performances meaningful (Shahzad, 2011). In other words:

> Collective memory, and the institutions and practices that support it, help to create, sustain, and reproduce the 'imagined communities' with which individuals identify and that give them a sense of history place, and belonging. (Weedon & Jordan, 2012, p. 143)

Memories, rituals, and symbols, therefore, are powerful resources participants drew on in the performative acts of group-identification, identity arbitration, and self-actualisation. To demonstrate this, it is worth revisiting Anna's candle-lighting-ritual highlighted above. Although Anna's Shabbat ritual evoked symbolically powerful collective memories stretching back "many generations," it was not clear where she acquired such memories having been brought up in a "secular assimilated household" (life story interview, June 2020).[15] In lighting the Shabbat candles, Anna performed a version of herself which drew upon newly (trans)formed collective memories transcending time and change. She did so by confirming and making congruent the recent acquisition of Tradition with the "theme of otherness" running throughout her life – actualising this in a politically conscious ritual performance deeply symbolic of Jewish continuity (life story interview, June 2020). In this way, collective memory and ritual performance (trans)formed the symbolic framework from which Anna made meaning out of her past, present, and future. This sense of otherness related to Anna's heritage of dispersal – imbuing the ritual performance with symbolic urgency in resisting historical discontinuity. This leads us into a discussion on the relationship between collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and Jewish continuity.

---

[15] That said, she recognised she had been brought up with some sense of Jewishness and that she had been attending a Liberal shul for several years now to explore her Jewish selfhood.

4.3.2 "Remember that we suffered!" Trauma, continuity, resistance

The paradigmatic scene of flight and expulsion called upon emotionally powerful memories which solidified group cohesion and boundary demarcation (Ashworth, 2008). Individual histories of diaspora confirmed and (trans)formed the collective memory of dispersal; that is, the "interactive framework" with which participants attempted to make sense of the world around them (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995, p. 126). This authenticated participants' attempts at identity arbitration since such memories spoke to the symbolic peoplehood's collective experiences. It would be wrong to assume that participants called upon solely Jewish collective memories. As mentioned above, the AIDS crisis was a social drama participants drew upon as an act of meaning-making and symbolic call to action. More tacitly, some participants would describe themselves as "lucky" (Josh, semi-structured interview, July 2020) or emphasised they had "never felt any conflict" between their queerness and Jewishness (T.M., life story interview, July 2020) – inadvertently constructing a collective experience of religious-based persecution.

That said, I focus here on collective memories of diaspora since these seemed to have the most pervasive effects on participants' queer Jewish self-construal. I look at how traumatic memories of flight and expulsion shaped the deeply uneven moral geographies participants (trans)formed. In doing so, I demonstrate how traumatic pasts stretch across generations – shaping the present and illustrating how "individuals and communities deal with the memory of violence" (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005, p. 151). First, I explore collective memories of violence as the basis for group-identification. Next, I unpack the role of memory and intergenerational trauma in imposing heteronormative expectations of Jewish continuity. Finally, I explore how participants put collective memories and intergenerational trauma to work by (trans)forming a progressive politics of resistance via ritual.

4.3.2.1 Group-identification

> H.E.: … I mean, the rather morbid, um, thing my mother always says is "there's only one person who's ever adequately managed to define what a Jew is and that's Hitler, because the rest of us can't agree on anything." Like, there's nothing—yeah, there's no two Jews—it's like the joke, "if you have ten Jews, you have eleven opinions." There's like

nothing we agree on, and I think that's what's lovely about it. Like, it's not a forced identity, the debate is vibrant, and yet we are a community, um, perhaps a community defined by suffering, but it's a community and it's part of where I come from, unavoidable, and it's something that I've- I've more recently started to think about and explore and figure out what it meant. (Life story interview, August 2020)

In defining the Jewish community as one "defined by suffering," H.E. reflects Birt's finding (2009) that marginalisation acts as a unifying force for group-identification. The collective memory of the Holocaust – and the long history of always being the "butt of a joke" – functions as a potent symbol for ethnoreligious identity and struggle (Luz, 2008, 2013). This illustrates a markedly interdependent self-construal in that H.E. defined himself existentially as part of a heterogeneous group that has forever suffered at the hands of others.

Such acts of memory-work represent a common theme in the study of collective memory (Beim, 2007; Kadar, 2005). In remembering the past, H.E. also acts upon it – the past providing him with the "appropriate resources" (Beim, 2007, p. 19) or "situated knowledges" (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005, p. 153) he melds to meet present needs for group-identification and meaning-making. Memory thus demonstrates the bilateral movement of history – flowing simultaneously from the past to the present and vice versa. This process is interdependent in that the self is defined in relation to the 'other' (Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Said, 1979). Specifically, group-identification and self-construal are hinged upon the threat of violence by imagined others – constructing an "embattled self" which fixes identities around the boundaries of "us" and "them" (Moon, 2012, p. 1350). For example:

R: … eventually my- my granddad was sent to England on the *Kindertransport*, um, and he knows his parents died in the Holocaust. He's not quite sure where, uh, and he's been looking for their graves for most of his life. Um, so we went to Poland because he has some leads, um, and, uh, we didn't find anything, um, but we did—like, we- we spent some time looking around Poland, um, and I remember we were taking a tour of, um, so, uh, some of the Jewish areas of, um, Krakow, and there was this guy following behind us just at a bit of a remove and he was just yelling, "hey" You're Jews, you're fucking Jews!" and so like I think that was the sort of the… was the experience that- that I had attached to being Jewish growing up. I wasn't like—like, the community side of it didn't really want me and I didn't—the only people who ever identified me as Jewish did negatively.

R's memory of visiting Poland to find their great-grandparents' graves and their subsequent experiences of Antisemitism reflect a process by which memories are confirmed and informed (by others) in the present. The visit to Poland itself was an act of memory-work whereby R tried to make tangible their Jewish heritage through empirical thanatological signs (Buciek & Juul, 2008). Paradoxically, their inability to find anything confirmed the paradigmatic scene of dispersal – enabling them to arbitrate their Jewish self as a patrilineal Jew. In other words:

> The historical discontinuity of familial and communal ties resulting from cultural trauma was a shared framework through which respondents constructed collective memory… (Harold & Fong, 2018, p. 350)

For R, the collective memory of dispersal was "further predicated on a past consisting of experiences with modern [A]ntisemitism" (ibid.). The present Antisemitic abuse rendered meaningful R's claims to a symbolic Jewish peoplehood in lieu of formal community membership. In this way, R's experience of Antisemitism 'delimits a clear boundary of belonging and constructs a discursive frame defining in-group members against a threatening other" (ibid., p. 351). This reflects Alex's point that "you tend to get classed as Jewish when it counts and when it doesn't" (Life story interview, September 2020) in that one's Jewishness is construed by collective memory, and present experiences, of persecution by others.

Memories were often deeply symbolic – bringing with them a bricolage of affects, emotions, images, stories, and texts which enabled participants to construct the paradigmatic scenes necessary for identity arbitration and meaning-making (Myerhoff, 1982). Throughout the evening of the 6-7th September 1955, a series of riots against the Greek minority in Istanbul took place. Drawing on collective memories of the Fall of Constantinople (Vallianatos, 2006), the rioters burned and ransacked Greek business, cemeteries, churches, clinics, homes, libraries, and schools. Though the violence was mainly directed towards Greeks, Armenians and Jews were also targeted (Erdemir, 2015). During the carnage, more than 30 people were killed, 300 injured, and 400 raped (ibid.). The riots represent a contested heritage of violence (Vallianatos, 2006), becoming referred to colloquially as "The Turkish Kristallnacht" (Erdemir, 2015, n.p.). Below, Alex engages in memory-work regarding her grandparents' experiences during the riots:

Alex: Yeah, so, um, there was some form of uprising or- or- or movement or something. I don't know the exact details because I've mainly- I've mainly heard about it talked about from my grandma and she was a bit fast and loose with the truth, but, um, there was a real kickback against the Jewish population living in Turkey at the time to the point where one of the, um, standout like, um—the themes of this particular uprising that was going on was that they were taking Jewish pregnant women out into the middle of the street and they were cutting their bellies open so that they'd kill the mother and the baby and my grandma was pregnant. So, she ended up miscarrying, um, they fled back to the UK and it's because of that that they settled in the UK and because she had the miscarriage that they tried again and that's why they had my dad, at least that's always the story I've been told. (Life story interview, September 2020)

Though there were reports – and photographic evidence (Erdemir, 2015) – of brutal violence, I was unable to find any sources verifying the mutilation of pregnant women. On one hand, I wonder whether these rumours were started to instigate terror and flight among the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews of Istanbul. On another, I did recognise the scenes Alex described – not as part of the Istanbul Riots, but of the Chmielnicki Pogroms 1648-1649. First chronicled by Hanover in *The abyss of despair* (1983), accounts from the Chmielnicki Pogroms mirror the scenes Alex recalled above. The association between Alex's oral history of the Istanbul Riots and the Chmielnicki Pogroms reflects a process by which memory is rendered collective through institutionalisation – here literary sources and family histories – and becomes part of the paradigmatic scene or symbolic framework for interpretation (Beim, 2007; Hua, 2005). The emphasis thus shifts from questioning whether these mutilations actually happened during the riots – something Alex herself wonders – to recognising that they *could have* happened because they had happened before. As such, collective memories of the Pogroms acted as the shared symbolic framework for the interpretation of lived experience (Halbwachs, 1992). As a result, history is seen as repeating itself, confirming and (trans)forming the collective act of remembering. Remembering is thus a symbolic act, demonstrating one's orientation within the shared interpretive framework (trans)forming the basis for group-identification.

4.3.2.2 Jewish continuity

Collective memories and intergenerational trauma converged in heteronormative expectations for Jewish continuity. The continuity principle reflects a politics of

139

resistance to the historical discontinuity brought about by heritages of dispersal. These dynamics were most explicit in my conversations with B.C.:

> B.C.: You asked me about something we never discussed, we never mentioned the Holocaust and the impact that has on the [strictly Orthodox] community.
>
> Matt: What impact does it have?
>
> B.C.: Um, we used to have someone come in every year and say "if you do anything bad, this is what will happen to you and your family, and you will be carted off in the middle of the night and killed, um, if you're not careful," and it turns from an existential—when, now as an adult [Matt: Mm.], you can realise it as an existential threat, but when you're six or ten or eleven or twelve, you assume that's gonna happen soon, next year, two years, especially when you're living around a community who- who throw bleach at you, stab you between the eyes, and throw eggs at you.
>
> Matt: Mm.
>
> B.C.: Like, it is somewhat more believable that the end-stage happens sooner.
>
> Matt: Yeah.
>
> B.C.: I remember being specifically told that I need to say religious because, if I do not, Hitler wins.
>
> Matt: Wow.
>
> B.C.: Hitler winning was like the biggest threat they could have thrown at you. "Hitler will win if you do not—but so many Jews died for the freedom…" you're like "no, they didn't. They died because Hitler was a scumbag [Matt: Mm.], they didn't die because of…" They firmly believe that God brought Hitler to stop the assimilation of Jews in Europe. (Follow-up interview, October 2020)

Again, collective memories of the Holocaust both framed and were reinforced by present experiences of Antisemitism (Harold & Fong, 2018) – culminating in a moral imperative to ensure Jewish continuity by refusing to assimilate. The association between assimilation and Jewish continuity was noted by Greene, who argued (2007, p. 282) that:

> The collective group memories of the Holocaust and the atrocities contained therein become "remembered" by younger generations that never actually experienced the Holocaust directly. Symbolism, language, and images of the Holocaust are invoked to socially construct a level of Jewish American suffering at the hands of an oppressor or a perpetrator of a hate crime against the Jewish community.

But what are 'direct' experiences of the Holocaust? Of any genocide? Yes, participants did not live in Europe between 1933 and 1945, but the process of genocide stretches far beyond its historicity across many generations. Indeed, the Holocaust had tangible impacts on the lives of participants: from historical discontinuity to the regulation of religiosity as a remedy to this. Nevertheless, Greene recognises (ibid., p. 283) that memories of the Holocaust, along with the intergenerational trauma they bring, are deeply symbolic – conjuring images of what once was, what is, and what could yet be. These memories converge to construct a bricolage of group identity and boundary demarcation (Moon, 2012) – one that "holds tightly to the past while looking to the future" (Greene, 2007, p. 283).

In this way, "the past continues to exert its ghostly, shadowy influence, often in ways that are gendered" (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 2005, p. 151). For B.C., the continuity principle rested on heteronormative expectations for procreation:

> Matt: So, that really kind of like inter-ethnic, inter-religious marriage seems to be, uh…
>
> B.C.: Does not happen. Well, I mean, it does happen all the time but it's not…
>
> Matt: Do you think it reflects what- reflects what Esty said when she's like "we're building the six million lost?"[16]
>
> B.C.: Yeah, it's exactly that. I got screamed at about that continually, I think I told you that. "You are the reason Hitler came, because people like you needed to be cleansed," because before—Judaism before the Second World War was a different religion because inter-religious marriage was seen as a good thing because it made more people want to be Jewish.
>
> Matt: Yeah.
>
> B.C.: Um, you definitely didn't have the whole—I mean, yes, the long skirts and the high necks because everyone was doing that, but you could wear the modern clothes because that's just what was the done thing, it would've been weird not to, and the people who ended up Hasidic, they were seen as extreme. I mean, they still are seen as extreme by the majority of people but there still are—there's a lot more— it's all about breeding [Matt: Mm.], all about breeding for women. (Follow-up interview, October 2020)

[16] Esty is the main protagonist in the Netflix show *Unorthodox* (Studio Airlift, 2020).

According to Day (2012, p. 144), "women frequently are blamed for the downfall of society." Although Day attributes (ibid., p. 145) this to the idea that women are the "carriers of moral purity," my findings suggest this relates also to the acquisition of Tradition and ethnoreligious continuity. "Given that women are the ones usually charged with raising children" (ibid., p. 143), the responsibilities often compel them to ensure Jewish continuity. This is not to say that men were not held to the continuity principle,[17] but that the heteronormative expectation for procreation resonated more so with women and those assigned female at birth. It was these gendered shades of collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and Jewish continuity that forced B.C. into a position where they felt compelled to leave the strictly Orthodox community:

> B.C.: So, it's very difficult to leave [Matt: Mm.], um, I think as a woman you kinda—it's easier in some ways because you understand where the trapping is coming from. So, you- you have that fire "if I don't do it now, I will have children and I will be stuck," particularly as the courts will side with the Jewish side because, as proven again and again and again, they will. They just will, because it's removing children form what they know versus—because you're losing the whole community… (Life story interview, August 2020)

The gendered orientation of the continuity principle reflects the domestic topographies participants remembered. Nannies and grandmothers, mothers and great-grandmothers featured prominently in participants' earliest and most favourite childhood memories. Echoing Neumann's thesis on the Great Mother (1955), women were often imbued with an air of ethnoreligious authority as they were the ones key to the acquisition of Tradition. This is not to say that fathers were not so – they were, especially for patrilineal Jews – but that maternal figures were more readily associated with ethnoreligious continuity.

Memories of maternal figures, and their centrality to ethnoreligious continuity, resonated with participants' queer selves in highly subjective ways. For Hannah:

> Hannah: … the idea within Jewish celebration of, um—within—like, you know, lighting the candles on the Friday, the mother playing a really key

---

[17] Louis (life story interview, January 2021) and Paul (life story interview, May 2020) also point to the continuity principle.

role with that and, actually, I feel like if I was gonna be, um, a drag king, maybe I'd kind of play up on this a little bit. Like, actually it being really interesting that the Jewish sort of model of a woman and a mother has quite masculine traits, um, you know, is very assertive, is very, um, strong-willed, really dominates the house, is quite directive with, um, with children and the way that the house should be kept and, um—but also the sort of the softer sides. Like, I also really- really love cooking and, whenever I can sense my partner's feeling a bit down, it's always- it's always how I try to, um, help her and, yeah, kind of there is that kind of fluidity, I guess, now that I'm thinking about it with the sort of Jewish mother model of being very caring and very nourishing and making chicken soup, but also being very strong, um, and having that real power and, in a sense, kind of masculinity. (Life story interview, February 2021)

Through ritual innovation, Hannah makes congruent her queer Jewish self. Like Anna, she ties herself to a long chain of ethnoreligious continuity through the ritualistic act of lighting Shabbat candles. The performance resonates with her Jewishness because of the deeply symbolic nature of the Shabbat ritual (Myerhoff, 1978). It resonates with her queerness as it is a consciously political act of identity arbitration which draws on the dual femininity and masculinity of Jewish mothers. Dor also engaged in similar ritual innovation, asking his partner to do the Kiddush while he lit the candles. This enabled him to connect to a more "feminine energy," fostering a connection between him and his paternal grandmother who he felt – as a patrilineal Jew – "embodied" his "Judaism" for him. Nevertheless, Dor was aware of the gendered and sexualised memory-work he was engaging with:

Dor: … you know, our grandparents are born in different places and different times, and we look at them being—as maybe romanticising them as well, I certainly do. Romanticising, you know, their practice and their knowledge, um, but in a context of- of sexuality. You know, you're right, because I couldn't have told her, um, about me being gay because I think it would have broken her heart, um, but I think we're also living in a different time and place where practice is much more fluid and there were things that Jewish men will do and Jewish women will do and, um, you know, it's no longer the days that it's only the woman that will bake and prepare the challah, um, and I think there's a lot of fluidity, um, that, um, creates a space [Matt: Mm.], um, for that. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Though ritual (trans)forms a chain of memory between queer selves those seen as embodying Tradition, Dor recognises that this is highly subjective – rooted in the present and thus fulfilling psychosocial needs for meaning-making and self-actualisation (Murphy, 2018). While ritualised memory-work surely is a powerful

143

tool in queer Jewish subject (trans)formation, such a process leads to the (re)generation of deeply uneven moral geographies.

4.3.2.3 Resistance

The ways in which participants construed their queer ethnoreligious selves in relation to collective memory, intergenerational trauma, and the continuity principle were highly subjective and often contradictory. As alluded to above, the interplay between these factors did not always have negative results; for example, heteronormative expectations for procreation led to the (trans)formation of a progressive politics of resistance – the 'fire' in the Orthodox woman to leave the community. (B.C., life story interview, August 2020). As evident in the morbid joke H.E. cites, participants used humour and joy to approach the intergenerational trauma – caused by a shared history of flight and expulsion – they inherited through ethnoreligious acquisition. This sense of shared suffering was pivotal in the process of identity arbitration. In the run up to their Friday night sermon, for example, R reflected on the popular TV show *Crazy ex-girlfriend* (Lean Machine webbterfuge *et al*., 2015):

> R: There's a song—so, *Crazy ex-girlfriend* is—the protagonist is Jewish, and it's made by a Jewish woman [Matt: Mm.] and there is a song there that is like—it's a- it's a comedy musical show, right, so they have [Matt: Mm.] like—the song that they sing at like, uh, a Jewish celebration, and it's called "Remember that we suffered!" Um, and that taps into, I think— it's kind of a stereotype but it does tap into a very real feeling that like Jewish people like to rest in their own suffering without having it mean anything necessarily, and I don't necessarily think that's true of all Jewish communities, of course, but I do think, in particular when it comes to things like World Holocaust Day, it's not that we suffered, or it's not just that we suffered, but it is that, as Jewish people, we have an obligation because we suffered in this way to make sure it never happens to anyone else. (semi-structured interview, December 2020)

> Rabbi Shari: Now it's time to celebrate; grab a drink and fix a plate. But, before you feel too great, remember that we suffered! Nights like these are filled with glee; noshing, dancing, singing, whee! But we sing in a minor key to remember that we suffered.

> Partygoers: Being happy is selfish; remember that we suffered!

> Rabbi Shari: You have no idea what pain is.

> Partygoers: Remember that we suffered, hey!

144

Rabbi Shari: I mean, would it be such a crime for the Beastie Boys or Haim to mention in their songs one time: remember that we suffered?

Naomi: I don't want to bring up the Holocaust. I know- I know, the Holocaust, but the Holocaust was a pretty big deal.

Rabbi Shari and Naomi: Remember that we suffered!

Partygoers: This DJ is terrific; remember that we suffered!

DJ: My grandma's a survivor.

Partygoers: Remember that she suffered!

Rabbi Shari: The sweet and the bitter.

Partygoers: Remember that we suffered!

Naomi: Streisand and Hitler.

Partygoers: Remember that we suffered!

Rabbi Shari: Spielberg and Hitler.

Partygoers: Remember that we suffered!

Rabbi Shari and Naomi: Have we mentioned Hitler? I'm just saying that we suffered!" (Lean Machine webbterfuge *et al*., 2015, Season Two)

The contradictory relationship between trauma and treasure, grief and joy, was a complicated one for participants – manifesting in "difficult" individual and collective questions regarding "life […] politics […] and how we deal with the fact of the Holocaust as Jewish people" (R, semi-structured interview, December 2020). Earlier, I argued that the modulation between positive and negative affects in participants' childhood memories represented a means of accessing the past in all its complexity – encompassing all aspects of lived experience. The same principle can be applied to collective memory whereby, through the act of remembering, affects relating to grief, gratitude, joy, pain, and loss are converged in an affective maelstrom. For R, this functioned as a powerful emotional platform from which they (trans)formed a politics of resistance in the form of social justice.

Ritual performance facilitated the convergence of contradictory affects brought about by collective remembering:

Matt: And the very last question is: how do you think you express your queer Jewish identity?

Hannah: Um, yeah, it's a really good question. Um, I think just by being in the world, um, I think in a similar way to what I just said about like where I'm most happy. Like, I think just visibility and just being and being

open and saying to people that I'm queer and Jewish and representing kind of… you know, just talking about those aspects of my identity and, because I'm fairly intellectual and work in policy, I kind of always sort of fly the flag for both things in that sense and just kind of through everyday conversations, I guess, and [Matt: Mm.], um, I um… I wear a *chai* necklace, um, and—which I really like, and I really identify with because, um, it's quite subtle. It's a bit of a dog whistle, unless you're Jewish you don't really recognise it as a sort of religious necklace, um, and I've worn it every day since like, I don't know, for the last ten years plus. I think my parents gave it to me for a present for when I was like thirteen, um [Matt: Mm.], and I quite like that it's always there and it's part of my everyday and I don't even think about putting it on every morning anymore or taking it off every night and it's sort of like my little way of expressing it and having it here without sort of shouting about it [Matt: Mm.], um, and sort of similarly with my queerness as well just kind of, in the last few years, I've sort of found my—the way that I like to dress and express my gender a little bit more and, um, I think there is quite a kind of, yeah, sort of queer Jewish woman, sort of a bit hippyish, a bit, um, a bit butch, a bit intellectual, thick glasses kind of thing. That's kind of a look, I think, um, and I probably fit into that. It's just kind of—yeah, I think I wouldn't describe myself as an activist who's always like on the front lines because I don't- I don't, yeah, like big crowds and don't really like being in enormous groups and, yeah, I'm not one of those big community people. I think, for me, it's just by being and being open and always sort of outing myself in both ways and just talking and just being, I think. (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

Participants' self-expressions reflected an interdependent bricolage of self-actualisation – the performances of which displayed "their interpretations of themselves and in some critical respects […] what they claimed to be" (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 263). Hannah expresses her queer Jewish self in performances that are explicit and implicit, external and internal, but always meaningful to both performer and audience. Her decision to express her Jewishness through the chai necklace is significant. Not only does the second nature of the necklace-wearing-ritual reflect a state of self-actualisation, it conjures also fond memories of the gift her parents gave her for her 13th birthday. The necklace is also symbolically significant. The chai symbol – coming from the Hebrew word (חי) meaning living or alive – has a resonance stretching back hundreds of years and proclaims a Jewish identity "more subtly than by an assertive Jewish symbol like a Star of David" (Philologos, 2012, n.p.). It is by being and living that Hannah ensures the continuity of her Jewish self – something she actualises through the symbolic act of ethnoreligious dressing.

But in pairing the chai necklace with her butch, hippyish, and intellectual dress sense, Hannah makes congruent parts of herself deemed divergent by others – again, these others are unspecified. Following Milligan (2013, 2014), the act of dressing Jewishly *and* queerly is a symbolic one of political agency and identity arbitration – stretching the imagined boundaries between Jewishness and queerness to re-incorporate her actualised self. Ritual, then, both reflects and (trans)forms a bricolage of self that is intersectional at every turn – an assortment of affects, heritages, memories, relationships, symbols, and rituals which evolve alongside the present processes of meaning-making and identity arbitration.

4.4 Conclusion: an interdependent bricolage of self

Heritage and memory are two interconnected forces fundamental to participants' self-construal. They reveal the highly subjective ways participants related to their queerness and Jewishness – arbitrating and actualising their selves through symbolic action and ritual performance.

In constructing heritage narratives, participants created a coherent account of self – rendering meaningful their lived experiences while validating their claims to Jewishness and (more tacitly) queerness. By storying their heritage, participants displayed the symbolic codes of reference – diaspora and Tradition – which positioned them in relation to a symbolic peoplehood or imagined community. In doing so, they attempted to make congruent their multiplex subject positions – a holistic act of self-actualisation tying the past, present, and future together. Continuity and morality were both identified as illustrative of congruence-making; revealing the selective, subjective, and symbolic ways participants actualised their queer Jewish selves.

Memories reflect a process of ethnoreligious acquisition. They are highly affective, conjuring powerful – often contradictory – emotional auras in their commemoration. Ritual space-times act as the nexus for the (trans)formation of memory. Conversely, through memory, participants accrued the mythic, symbolic, and ritualistic "sensorial, bodily" knowledge necessary for the processes of identity arbitration, self-actualisation, and self-construal (Degnen, 2015, p. 1645). Collective memories functioned as the interpretive framework from which participants made sense of their lived experiences. Such memories formed the

basis for group-identification – stretching histories of violence across generations. Collective memories and intergenerational trauma also informed the principle of Jewish continuity – manifesting in heteronormative expectations for procreation and a politics of resistance intersecting with participants' queer selves in varied ways.

Ritual performance emerged as a key theme running throughout this chapter. Ritual confirms and informs the processes of self (trans)formation. Through rituals, participants performed who they were, who they are, and who they want to be. Rituals are thus symbolic acts of political potency, rendering congruent the multiplex subject positions participants imagined and embodied. In Chapter Six, I return to ritual's actualising power – exploring the deeply uneven affective topographies (trans)formed through its very performance.

If identities are (trans)formed in response to a radically contingent world, then the place of space within that world is key. In the next chapter, I explore space as a social entity symbolic of the life, history, and Tradition of social groups (Duda-Seifert & Kajdanek, 2021). By foregrounding how participants responded to space – alongside the social processes constellating them – I trace the ways their selves were (trans)formed in situ. But spaces do not act unilaterally upon passive social agents. Instead, people imbue space with meaning – engaging in place and space-making practices which, likewise, indicate the process of self (trans)formation.

Chapter 5. The sixth sense: surveillance, habitus, security

> Matt: How would you, um… what do you think—how would you define a queer space?
>
> Josh: Um- um, I think it's- it's, um—you sort of—well, I don't know, I shouldn't say "you" because it might not apply to you, like, I sort of felt like over time my queer—you know, you can gauge a space and, you know, would you feel comfortable holding your same-sex partner's hand there while talking about being—and then is it—you know, and then once you've established that, is it somewhere where actually, you know, quite a significant number of people gather, um, who are gay? Um, I think… I don't know, like, you can walk—I think you can quite often walk into a bar—like, you know, let's say you didn't know what city you were in and you didn't know really where you were, you could probably walk into a bar and say "okay, I would feel quite comfortable talking about being gay in this bar" and, you know, obviously being with a guy versus "okay, I would probably want to keep it hidden in this- in this place because, you know, I don't know what the reaction would be," um, and- and, you know, I- I think a lot of people just sort of get this sort of sixth sense for just feeling, you know, "okay, yeah, this feels pretty comfortable and I can be myself here" versus, um, "actually, no, I need to stay relatively hidden here." (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

5.1 Introduction

Space was an integral component of the self-bricolages participants construed – reflecting a symbiotic relationship between ontological becoming and spatial belonging. Participants' spatial perceptions were deeply affective – conjuring powerful emotional responses that were simultaneously in and beyond space. In this chapter, I focus on what Josh terms 'the sixth sense'; that is, the affective and embodied responses indicative of participants' (trans)formation of their 'perceptual environments' (Taylor *et al*., 2014, p. 244). From anaesthesiology (Smith & Arfanis, 2013) to parapsychology (Smith, 2021), the sixth sense refers to a mode of extrasensory perception gleaned beyond the tangible senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Here, it relates to participants' perception of the power geometries constellating space (Massey, 1994); that is, the power relations they are subjected to, subject others to, and subject themselves to (White & Epston, 1990). My emphasis on extrasensory perception is not to neglect the material components of space, but to foreground the:

specific conjunctures or assemblages [bricolages] of actors, human and more-than-human, that together produce, reinforce, intensify, and maintain particular ways of perceiving and being in the world. (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021, p. 3; see also, Holloway, 2003, and Massumi, 1997 on collective individuation)

The chapter is split into three main sections, with each exploring the "techniques of control" working on and through the "relationship between bodies and their surrounding milieus" (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021, p. 4). These relations of power include surveillance, habitus, security. Echoing Goffman's frame theory (1974; see also, Hartal, 2017), these techniques work within space to shape and discipline subject (trans)formation – a process seldom uncontested (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021). Such regimes of power did not act unilaterally upon participants as passive agents; instead, participants responded to such techniques through an array of place-making practices (rituals) with radically contingent outcomes.

I begin by foregrounding the technique of surveillance through heteronormative and postsecular lenses - exploring how participants were differentiated as queer Jewish others. Facilitated by ritual performance, this differentiation rests on the sixth sense of 'being rendered visible as other' (Boulila, 2015, p. 138). I look at peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilation as peri-hegemonic ritual practices mobilised in response to these techniques. Next, I explore habitus as a technique which renders space with a sense of 'territoriality, familiarity, and autonomy' (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015, p. 300). I outline how habitus engenders an extrasensory perception of emplacement and, in turn, spatial belonging through the language of 'home.' Echoing themes raised in Chapter Four, I highlight the role queer Jewish ritual innovation in the (re)aggregation of habitus – a politically potent act of place (trans)formation and self-actualisation. Finally, I explore participants' sixth sense for safety and security. I adopt Lewis *et al.*'s distinction (2015) between *safety from* and *safety to* – adding my own category of *safety for* when accounting for participants' extrasensory perceptions of space. Rituals are foregrounded as place-making practices involved in symbolic boundary demarcation which, in turn, reflect wider geopolitical regimes of securitisation.

Throughout this chapter, I will be exploring participants' extrasensory perceptions across various sites, at various scales, and at various times. Though my fieldwork was spatially and temporally bound in the socio-material setting of

150

Covid Britain, it is important to note that participants' place attachments stretched far beyond the parameters of this research (Degnen, 2015). As Boussalem found (2020, p. 436), participants felt deeply emotional attachments to "transnational diasporic communities and networks." As such, the spatial vignettes introduced below are not held in suspension but, instead, embedded in the webs of these wider social landscapes.

5.2 "How long will I last before they kick me out?"

Matt: How do you feel when in Jewish spaces?

Alex: I think, um, as long as I'm in a Jewish space that- that accepts me, very accepted and understood, um, and actually I don't feel on guard unless it's a—hmm, yeah, I suppose it would depend on the situation or the environment, but usually there's like I suppose an unwritten understanding that people get some of what you're going through. Um, I probably feel more on edge in a Jewish space that had religious connotations and, actually, I can feel quite- quite on edge when the Hebrew comes out [Matt: Mm.] because I'm really good at being about half a second behind everybody else and mimicking the sounds, but I can't for the life of me read Hebrew. Like, I can do *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu*… with everybody else but like I almost feel like I'm like "oh no *Laughs*, they're gonna catch me." *Laughs* As soon as somebody starts having a conversation in Hebrew, it's like "how long will I last before they kick me out for not being a real Jew?" Um, but, yeah, understood, accepted… there's a shared level of like [Matt: Mm.], we've been through the same shit and yet, by existing in the here and now, we also represent the lucky ones. That's- that's what keeps me in Jewish spaces even when I don't necessarily feel like it's my Jewish space. Like, I wouldn't turn up to an Orthodox synagogue to go for an Orthodox ceremony because, to be honest, I don't know if they'd let me in, um, but I exist as an example of the fact that my ancestors survived enough to allow me to exist and that—I saw someone, um… I saw someone once describe existing as a Jew in the here and now as activism. Just- just living your life and just existing because so many people over the years have tried to make sure you don't exist [Matt: Mm.] so however you exist in the here and now, however Jewish you are, however religious you are, however much you perform that identity to others, just your existence is resistance and activism, and I think you really get a sense of that when you're with other Jews, um, and probably the same with- with queer spaces actually as well because they can feel really isolating experiences. They can feel really quite lonely and really individual because, you- you know, you wake up one day and you realise "oh my God, I'm in a minority, I'm not in the majority," and all of a sudden you have these spaces where you see all these other people that exist and there's that sense of, uh, "not as alone in the world as I thought." (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

151

Whether it resulted in feelings of apprehension or empowerment, the extrasensory perception of being seen was significant for participants. The theme of visibility stretched across various sites both actual and hypothetical – something participants related to and made sense of in highly subjective ways. For Alex, competing common-sense logics structured her feelings of emplacement via social differentiation and the threat of exposure. Paradoxically, this led to an acute awareness of her minoritisation as a queer Jew, and a sense of belonging to – and identification with – two imagined communities. Alex's spatial perception illustrates how people negotiate and co-construct the various competing hegemonies operating throughout the lifecourse.

Following Browne (2007, p. 997), common-sense refers to "relations, actions, and activities that are assumed to be 'obvious,' normal, and at times 'natural.'" Often left unquestioned, common-sense enables power relations to be (trans)formed interdependently between social agents. "In passing unnoticed," common-sense thus (trans)forms the hegemony of any given space (ibid.). These "webs of control" are propped up by "more obvious forms of exclusion" and "more often, and less perceptible, little acts of exclusion and suppression" (Schroeder, 2014, p. 638; Sibley, 1995). For Alex, these techniques of power ranged from overt attempts at extermination to 'waking up one day' and realising you are minoritised from the imagined heterosexual norm (Browne, 2007). One's conformity to – or divergence from – these normative regimes rests on external and internal behavioural mechanisms. For example, Alex's ritual participation and language proficiency not only differentiated her as minoritised within the WASP hegemony but functioned as external markers which enabled her to pass within Jewish spaces. Nevertheless, the extrasensory perception of surveillance undercut a sense of spatial belonging – both within religious settings by being a "half a second behind everybody else" and heteronormative settings through an internal sense of alienation.

Assumed and unquestioned, common-sense maintains power relations through the technique of (self-)surveillance. The compulsion to adhere to social mores is not always spurred on by literal, external policing (Hopkins, 2011). Instead, it is often through a reflexive, affective panopticon:

In other words, although those subject to surveillance may *not* be watched, the *possibility* of being observed means they/we constantly police their/our behaviours, particularly where these may be considered 'out-of-place.' (Browne, 2007, p. 998)

Surveillance is interdependent – it is shaped as much by the observed as the imagined observer. Feelings of surveillance also have competing, often paradoxical, meanings. For Alex, being rendered other in postsecular spaces confirmed collective memories of persecution and manifested in a politically conscious compulsion to be within Jewish/queer spaces. Simultaneously, resistance demanded a degree of conformity – specifically, ritual participation, religious knowledge, and language proficiency – for Alex to feel a sense of emplacement and belonging. Scholars like Browne (ibid) may also be tempted to ask whether such modes of (self-)surveillance perpetuate existing power relations. For example, by taking the stance of 'existence is resistance' and feeling the push to remain in Jewish spaces, does Alex also confirm the normative regimes differentiating her as other? This question illustrates how participants themselves (trans)formed the power geometries constellating space (Massey, 1994). Below, I explore participants' dynamic spatial (trans)formations through the normative regimes of heteronormativity and postsecularism – foregrounding the peri-hegemonic ritual practices of peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilation in response to such webs of control.

5.2.1 Heteronormativity

Participants demonstrated an acute extrasensory perception of the heterosexualising of space. Echoing themes raised in Chapter Two, geographers have long highlighted how everyday space is constituted as heterosexual through various symbolic, performative acts – typically rituals (Boulila, 2015; Valentine, 1993). Following Hartal (2016), such acts construct a heteronormative hegemony whereby sexuality is seen as a private matter and, in turn, performances of non-heterosexuality are rendered hyper-visible. Public displays of affection were cited as examples of this process:

> H.E.: … it's never a neutral act to just slip your hand into your partner's hand and walk down the street. It's always got a little bit to do with who's around you and then you're doing this calculation, "is it something I want to do to make a statement, is it something I'm doing to kind of go 'fuck you' to that group over there who's looking at us funny, is it something

I've checked there's no one around and maybe it's okay now?" It's never just a natural moment, didn't think about it, did it [Matt: Mm.], and I think I feel that. Like, you know, I can be having a great time with my husband in a pub in the middle of nowhere and a part of me is looking around going like, "if I put my hand in his hand are they gonna come over?" kind of thing, and they won't, almost certainly- almost certainly, but there's that and that is sometimes hard. I'm very aware of being gay … (Life story interview, August 2020)

The violation of a heteronormative script – however innocuous – is a politically conscious act. Performative and symbolic, same-sex hand holding is a ritualised representation of power which simultaneously contests heteronormativity and affirms liberal principles of inclusion (Hartal, 2016). Central to the negotiation of this performative script is the principle of tolerance. According to Preser (2021, p. 59), queer selves are (trans)formed as "objects of tolerance" in that they:

> are offered (and expected to embrace) a particular form of assimilation, in which they remain marked as others, however tolerable. Consequently, the space for nonnormative practices shrinks, and the public sphere is reduced to a narrow zone of domestic privacy and respectability…

This argument is useful in understanding why H.E. would feel compelled to hold his partner's hand despite the risk of being differentiated as other. For Preser (ibid.), public space acts as "the locus of recognition and the site where witnessing and validating of one's relationship takes place." Holding hands, then, is a ritual act that not only challenges the "doxa" of heterosexism within public space (Schroeder, 2012, p. 647), but (trans)forms H.E.'s queer subjectivity through its very performance. Nevertheless, H.E.'s hesitation to hold his partner's hand in public demonstrates the form of self-surveillance identified by Browne (2007) and Foucault (1977) – challenging the dominant linear narrative of outness as indicative of a "normative, healthy, and desirable LGBT identity" (El-Tayeb, 2012, p. 86).

Despite initially 'struggling' with coming out to family and friends before engaging on a "journey of personal discovery" (life story interview, August 2020), H.E. (trans)forms an uneven topography of outness in symbiosis with the heteronormativity of public space. In other words, by conforming to heteronormative common-sense logics through self-surveillance, H.E. differentiates his own queer subjectivity – challenging homonormative assumptions that the only path to queer self-actualisation is through public visibility and

provocation (Boussalem, 2020; El-Tayeb, 2012). This is because negative experiences of (self-)surveillance inform a person's self-actualisation as they come to (re)interpret their spatial experiences as other. Mirroring the aforementioned critiques, self-actualisation does not imply a straightforward or wholly positive sense of wellbeing. Instead, it refers to an ongoing crystallisation of interdependent self-construal which enables the individual to actualise their selves through personal development, reflection, and growth (Rogers, 1961).

The pervasive heterosexualisation of space stretched beyond the public realm. For Alex (semi-structured interview, October 2020), it culminated in a personal realisation of otherness; for Louis (semi-structured, January 2021), it was feeling like "the gay guy" in his former house-share. Indeed, the spaces in which participants perceived heteronormativity were varied and diverse ranging from bars (Josh, semi-structured interview, July 2020) to Jewish schools (B.C., life story interview, August 2020), and from workplaces (Hannah, life story interview, February 2021) to gap years in Israel (Blue, life story interview, August 2020). In response to this, some participants felt drawn to queer spaces as places in which they were free from (self-)surveillance and hyper-visibility:

> Matt: How would you define a queer space?
>
> Hannah: Um, whacky *Laughs*, just kind of, um, inclusive, um, and accepting of difference and open, um, and free, I think, it's big—um, free in that I can present myself as me, um, whether that be through the way I dress or feeling actually quite relaxed by—about like being with my partner and holding her hand or kissing her or whatever, um, and also, yeah, kind of feeling the weight of that kind of, you know, the stuff that I spoke about before of that kind of niggling feeling of, um, feeling like you're some kind of sexual deviant *Laughs* or something. (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

As mentioned in Chapter Four, although Hannah actualises her queer Jewish self through (public) ritual performance, this does not mean that such performative acts are free from feelings of apprehension. This is reserved for spaces where queer subjects are free (at least in theory) from the ever-gazing eye of the heterosexual panopticon. In this view, the hyper-visibility felt through the perceived transgression of the heterosexual doxa implies a space that is distinct and separate – one where such performative actions remain political yet free from the anticipation of heterosexual judgement. In other words, while the queer subject

(trans)forms and is (trans)formed by heteronormative space, a new space is implied whereby queerness is experienced *as the absence of* heteronormativity. The weight of the heterosexist norm, the "niggling feeling" of one's 'sexual deviancy,' is absent in queer spaces, providing – if only temporarily – queer archipelagos of respite within the heteronormative hegemony. However, this paints queer space as an unproblematic heterotopia (Doan, 2007) – something seldom experienced by participants.

According to Held (2015), sexual geographers have long shown how non-heterosexual spaces are male dominated – centring gay, able-bodied, White, middle-class, and young clientele. Within these spaces, exclusions are (re)produced on numerous grounds – particularly class, gender, race, and sexuality (ibid.). I found that several participants spoke of Biphobia and Bi-erasure within non-heterosexual spaces. For example:

> Liane: In queer spaces... um, I feel a combination of, um, like belonging and, um, safety. Also [Matt: Yeah.], um, like connection with people and, um, I generally enjoy it. I also feel, kind of contradictorily, um, well two things that are more negative. One is that I don't know if I can—it's not always clear to me that I can bring out the other parts of myself and— like, including my Jewish identity, but also things like queer spaces can be quite Biphobic and that I find quite difficult sometimes because even things that are meant as jokes, it's like, "that is a joke, also it's a bit of a micro-aggression." Like [Matt: Mmhmm.], I remember having a conversation with someone who—we had a conversation about gold star lesbians or something and, um, I was saying like, "I just think this whole like gold star, platinum, whatever bullshit, is just stupid," and, um, she was like, "yeah, you would say that because you would never get a gold star," and I was like, yeah, okay, that is funny," and it was funny, I laughed, but also though, "you do kinda think that. Like, that's what—" and so, sometimes, as well as feeling like I belong [Matt: Mm.], I also feel like sometimes I don't, um, and that's quite weird, to have both, to feel like you don't belong and belong at the same time [Matt: Mm.] in different spaces, with different people, and kind of, sometimes, I think because of the- the like internalised Biphobia I still have bits of, sometimes I also think like "at some point they're gonna find me out." (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Here, belonging in queer spaces is problematised by the exclusionary logic of homonormativity; that is, the privileging of White gay (mostly male) subjects within non-heterosexual spaces (Held, 2015). This homonormativity is upheld by subtle processes of othering – something Liane referred to as "micro-aggressions."

156

According to Browne (2007, p. 1006), such covert methods of control work by policing the "boundaries of self" with the common-sense norms of the prevailing hegemony. Whereas Browne focuses (ibid., p. 1007) on staring and underhand comments, Liane points towards humour as a Trojan Horse within which the performative actions buttressing homonormativity are employed – culminating in a feeling of hyper-visibility and thus out-of-placeness. While Liane still felt a right to belong within queer spaces, they retained a sixth-sense for surveillance that – at some point – an unspecified other would 'find her out.' This projection of otherness – deciphered from the power relations that rendered selves as in and out-of-place – subjectivised ethnoreligious selves as much as queer selves albeit in slightly different ways.

5.2.2 Postsecularism

Like queer others, ethnoreligious others challenge and disrupt the "conventional notions of the public-private boundaries underpinning Euro-American liberal politics" (Watson, 2005, p. 609). In Britain, the Church and the State are:

> intertwined in the figure of the Queen as the Head of the Church of England – a thoroughly Christian institution where bishops are granted a seat in the House of Lords by right. (ibid.)

Anglo-Christian hegemony is maintained through a WASP common-sense logic where minority ethnoreligious practices are acceptable only if performed privately (ibid.). Hegemony is thus maintained through a postsecular social landscape where "the separations between politics and religion, reason and faith, and public and private" are muddy and intertwined (Mavelli, 2012, p. 162). This postsecular logic pervades in all manner of spaces and often goes unobserved to the Christian subject:

> Louis: … so, Christianity, it's very in your face at certain times in the year but also just in the sense of like public morality or ethics comes from Christianity generally. Like, our social values come from Christianity as a society. Our leaders are almost always Christian. Even if they're not, you know, religious Christian, they come from a Christian background and are influenced by Christianity. Our reference points are Christian, um, in our culture, um, and, you know, life events tend to revolve around Christian traditions. So, things like weddings, like, you know, you might have a secular wedding but it's happening in conversation with this past of religion, of Christian religion, um, and the weird thing that people do in the West now is they'll say things like—

they'll talk about Judaeo-Christian values and then have no reference to Judaism or Jewish values at all in these formulations. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

While, as of the 2021 census (Office for National Statistics, 2022), Christians represent less than half the total population of England and Wales, everyday space is still clearly structured around WASP Christianity. Morals, ethics, values, politicians, culture, and Tradition all converge to form an "epistemic framework" which maintains the postsecular hegemony of Britain (Mavelli, 2012, p. 171). Whereas Mavelli is focused on the securitisation of Muslim subjectivities in Europe (ibid.), their argument is fruitful here in understanding how postsecular subjectivation is hinged upon "the privatisation of religion." Although postsecular modes of social differentiation have often rested on the (trans)formation of Muslim others (Amin-Khan, 2012; El-Tayeb, 2012), Louis points to another unique form of subjectivation:

Matt: Mm, it's interesting why they pick Judaeo-Christian out of all the Abrahamic faiths there are.

Louis: Well, I think, my understanding of the history of this term, which is like, you know, Wikipedia level, is that it comes from the US and, I guess, it was originally a way of trying to include Jews maybe or like also a way of making Christians feel better about not being horrible to us potentially. I think that- that it's reversed in meaning quite a lot because it used to be more of a like beyond-Christianity kind of thing but now it's very much a Christian hegemony term but it's—yeah, it excludes Islam, obviously, and other Abrahamic faiths, um, partly I think because, especially in the US, Christians love to love Jews, um, in a way that is often quite creepy and actually hateful, but [Matt: Mm.], um, yeah, they're kind of like a strawman Jew who isn't a real person and doesn't have real opinions that they love to- to bring out. (Semi-structured interview, January 2021)

The 'strawman Jew' exists as the assimilated protégé of the Christian subject – a fictitious social entity operating to conceal the violence of the WASP ordering of postsecular space. Similar findings have been observed by El-Tayeb in their study (2012, p. 79) of "the pitting of the (implicitly White) gay community against the (implicitly straight) Muslim community." For El-Tayeb (ibid.), the queer subject is created as an assimilated minority, unthreatening to hegemony, at risk from an unassimilated, racialised other who threatens the "governance" of space. The postsecularisation of space was felt when participants were rendered visible

as other through their (semi-)public displays of non-Christian ethnoreligiosity. For example:

> Liane: … even when I was doing my comedy course, like, it was great, I loved it, really great queer space, but the- the people on the course who were Black and Brown also weren't queer.
>
> Matt: Mm.
>
> Liane: All of the—like, all of the course that was queer, which was like most of the people, like 20 people or something, the culture was like very kind of White queer woman culture. So, we had a lot of chat about like just like the- the same nonsense like gold star lesbians and like, um, the ways that people interacted with like, what does it mean to be a queer woman, were very White. Like, the way they understood queerness was actually just Whiteness and I think that's something that I just notice in a lot of these spaces, and so they would say things like, um—just like make assumptions about the kinds of things you would do on a date or whatever, and then like me and a few other people would be like "no." Or, even things like "let's all go out on Friday," and [Matt: Yeah.] I'd be like, "no, because I don't go out on Friday. Like, I hang out and make challah, and like- and like do Shabbat on a Friday so I can't come," and they'd be like "oh, okay, that's weird." Like—and it wouldn't even be—with some of my friends who are not Jewish, I'll tell them, and they'll be like "oh, okay, no worries. Let's just rearrange it or whatever," [Matt: Mm.] whereas like in those spaces it's often like, "oh, well- oh, well you can't come." (semi-structured interview, August 2020)

According to Dwyer *et al*. (2013) and Gökarıksel (2009, 2012), spaces are actively made postsecular. Here, the postsecular coding of queer spaces is evident in the behaviour expected of queer subjects on dates and Friday nights. Regarding the former, it is unclear what Liane is referring to exactly – although I suspect it relates to a perceived 'hook-up culture.' What is more explicit, however, is how the ritual space-time of Shabbat competes with the postsecular structuring of queer space. Specifically, queer space and queer time are (trans)formed according to postsecular norms whereby WASP liberal consumers are prioritised as enveloped in the prevailing hegemony. Friday night is the first night of the weekend – a time for fun, leisure, play, and sex. By preferring to "hang out and make challah," Liane is positioned – and positions themselves – outside the postsecular queer space-time. As such, rituals function as a vehicle for social differentiation and, in turn, subject (trans)formation. Liane's disappointment with this process mirrors El-Tayeb's argument (2012) that self-defined progressive spaces rely on often marginalising unquestioned norms which posit individuals and communities as

159

either in-place or out-of-place. For El-Tayeb, this was queer Muslims in securitised Amsterdam (ibid.); here, it is queer Jews during Shabbat.

In conflating queerness with Whiteness and Whiteness with Christianity, Liane also reifies El-Tayeb's finding (ibid.) that queer communities are positioned as implicitly White (and Christian) in relation to an identifiable other. Reflecting the contested (trans)formation of Jewishness in relation to Whiteness identified in Chapter Four, Liane's experience of ethnoreligious otherness reflects Egorova's finding (2022) that the positionality of Jews in Britain is markedly different from that of the WASP majority. Here, Liane's extrasensory perception of otherness within queer spaces around Shabbat echoes Fox and Ore's study (2010) in that ethnoreligiosity is seen as a social characteristic existing outside the realms of queerness. As such, the problem "is not a lack of diversity" within queer spaces "but resistance to knowing differently in these spaces, a resistance that is circulating through an epistemology of ignorance" (ibid., p. 640).

It follows, then, that queer spaces are made postsecular through this epistemic framework – one which excludes different ritual space-times and their regulatory power in the (trans)formation of selves and spaces. But in staying home for Shabbat, Liane simultaneously positions herself outside the postsecular norm operating within queer space-times. Just as queer spaces are distinct from heteronormative spaces, Jewish spaces are rendered distinct from postsecular spaces through ritual performance. As such, rituals represent a symbolic place-making practice fundamental to the process of subject (trans)formation – whereby selves and spaces are continually differentiated in a politically conscious act of actualisation.

Before discussing the peri-hegemonic practices of peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilation, I want to address the postsecular framing of university spaces. Universities were actively made postsecular like the queer spaces highlighted above – challenging findings from Ma (2021) that British universities remain secular environments. For example:

Louise: Yeah, I was very surprised when I moved here for undergrad, my first day of class was on Yom Kippur.

Matt: Mm.

160

Louis: It's like having your first day of class on Christmas. (Semi-structured interview, January 2021)

Tamara: Um, at university I tried to get involved in the LGBTQ+ society. Um, I went to a couple of like coffee meetings and stuff but, like I said to you when we last spoke, they didn't always do events, um, on good days. So, in the- the first year that I went when I was a student, um, they did coffee mornings on- on Sundays which was perfect and like I went to a couple of those and made some friends, um, but then when I came back in my final year and I wanted to get involved they were all on Saturdays and a lot of- a lot of, um, university culture is drinking in the UK and I don't drink alcohol so I missed—I definitely missed out on a lot of things at university because I didn't want to be around people who were drinking. I didn't want to go to club nights and pub nights, and, you know, bar crawls and things. That- that just wasn't me. So, for the- the few events that this society did that weren't revolving around drinking, I couldn't even go to. So, I emailed, um, someone from the society and I explained that I'm Jewish and it would be nice to do some events that- that are not on Saturdays to be more inclusive, and they were like "yeah, of course we wanna be more inclusive so we'll make some events on Sundays," which they did but then they went back to going—to doing events on Saturdays. So, that was a shame … (Life story interview, January 2021)

Structured around the Christian calendar, universities spatially and temporally marginalise ethnoreligious others in "determining the provision of student facilities and students' experiences of campus geographies" (Hopkins, 2011, p. 164). Following Hopkins (ibid., p. 166), although university is often touted as a liberal and progressive space, "there are also clearly aspects of it that are deeply marginalising, culturally exclusive, and institutionally discriminatory in nature (see also, Sharma, 2012; Sharma & Guest, 2012). Additionally, spatial marginalisation disrupts social belonging. Space grounds imagined communities – acting as the foci for the formulation of identity politics (Luz, 2008; Nye, 1993). For Tamara, the (trans)formation of ritual space-times outside the postsecular norm marked her both symbolically and materially as other. Tamara's Jewish subjectivity was (trans)formed in her absence during Saturday events (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021). Because of this, Tamara was unable to form social ties with other selves in the queer space-time and thus make tangible her connection to the imagined queer community within. As such, it can be argued that rituals entrench social differentiation as much as they foster a sense of commonality. Nevertheless, they

161

are still vital to the (re)production of "religious bodies and modes of subjectivation" (Holloway, 2013, p. 205).

5.2.3 Peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilation

Participants would sometimes resist heteronormative modes of subjectivation by actively placing themselves on spatial peripheries:

> Matt: How would you define a Jewish space?
>
> O.K.: Ooh, um, one with […] food, one with, for some reason Hanukkah candles. Um, how do I define—I- I actually don't think I can answer that question because I don't know what my identity means to me now. Um, like I don't know how it kind of expresses itself [Matt: Mm.], um, and, therefore, because I don't know how it expresses itself, I don't know kind of what that space would feel like, and I think also it probably doesn't help that I'm living at home at the moment as well. I think that infringed on my mind over my Jewish experience when, actually, I don't think I associated with that as much.
>
> Matt: How do you think—what do you mean by that infringement?
>
> O.K. Because the Jewish experience here isn't the Jewish experience I—um, it isn't the Jewish experience I relate to, um, and I kind of—again, I only recently realised this week, um, because I went to—um, my brother-in-law's mum died, uh, on Monday, so we went to the funeral. I went to the funeral, and when I'm ever in a Jewish environment I kind of take a step back from the room, from the space. I'm- I'm kind of—I actively will be on the edge of the room, be on the edge of like the social interactions, and I was wondering—and I do that in loads of Jewish situations that I interact with, that are involved, kind of just like weddings, those sorts of things, and I was wondering why- why it was that I sort of do that, and I realised, actually, I think it's because there is this lack of trust in the environment that I'm in. That there's a—as a gay person, you're interacting with this space when you're not necessarily celebrated; you're kind of accepted, but there's never full acceptance because there's an underlying element that you know that you'll never be fully accepted because the faith doesn't allow you—like, the- the faith is—there are—the- the people—I get a feel of like kind of—sorry, I'm trying to find like words for it, um, people are trying—people are kind of—it's like—okay, yeah, it's like subtle- subtle- subtle homophobia that exists within the Jewish community that you kind of aren't really aware of. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

Acknowledging O.K.'s peri-hegemonic strategy of peripheralisation during pivotal rites of passage echoes Boussalem's call (2020, p. 453) for queer studies to:

focus on silence as a productive site, on non-disclosure of sexuality as a functional strategy, and on the ways in which knowledge about sexualities can often circulate in tacit ways.

The high volume of false starts towards the end of the extract reflects findings that "the disciplinary power that emerges from the heterosexual matrix is intelligible but unnameable" (Boulila, 2015, p. 140). Though O.K. manages to address the "subtle homophobia" within some Jewish environments, it is an extrasensory perception that is *felt* more than it is *verbalised* – reflecting what Josh termed the 'sixth sense' (semi-structured interview, July 2020). This perception, in turn, is socially produced by O.K.'s own subject position within the power relations constellating space in a mutually reinforcing process. Similar themes were touched upon by Paul who, instead of using spatial language like O.K., positioned himself on the social periphery of Jewish spaces by being "anti-social" and talking predominantly with his (non-Jewish) husband (semi-structured interview, August 2020). Again, this reflects an interdependent self-construal whereby self-definition is gleaned from the collective individuation of the spatial assemblage (Holloway, 2003; Massumi, 1997).

By placing themselves on the periphery, Paul and O.K. simultaneously reify and resist the heteronormative constellation of Jewish space – reflecting Bint Abdullah Sani's finding (2015, p. 304) that spatial positioning "has the effect of managing and marking one's status within a group." Such place-making ritual practices are peri-hegemonic since the performer not only affects the spatial configuration of the environment in which they are situated but has their own self (trans)formed by the spaces themselves (Finlayson, 2012). But why are O.K. and Paul still drawn to these environments if they are placed (and place themselves) on their peripheries?

For O.K. (semi-structured interview, November 2020), it is because rites of passage are not about putting oneself first – they are "about the person going through what they're going through" and attending is "the important thing to do." For Paul (semi-structured interview, August 2020), it reflects points raised in Chapter Four about the continuity principle and the transmission of Tradition. The heteronormative configuration of Jewish environments is tolerated due to the social and symbolic significance of rites of passage. Specifically, rites of passage mark

163

regulatory changes in social status and relations (van Gennep, 1909) – moments of (trans)formation where subjectivities are made and remade. As discussed in greater depth in the next chapter, to bear witness to such a process is integral to reinforcing kinship ties as they transcend time and change (Preser, 2021). Likewise, peripheralising power relations are tolerated to preserve Jewish continuity through ritual transmission – where claims to a symbolic peoplehood are made tangible through the affective space-time inculcated by the rite.

By emphasising tolerance, my findings reflect Doan's critique (2007) of the expected Foucauldian heterotopia of marginal spaces since peripheralisation is accompanied by feelings of alienation and discomfort. By reinforcing their belonging within queer spaces – only if they 'integrate' to 'family-friendly' behaviour (Doan & Higgins, 2011, p. 16) – queer subjects are nevertheless positioned within a liminal state of precarious emplacement. In fact, the pressure to assimilate or diverge from normative kinship practices was highlighted by Louis:

> Louis: I mean, like there's so much pressure on queer people to—either to conform and to integrate or to, you know, assimilate, whereas like there's no pressure on straight people *Laughs* to do anything except be straight.
>
> Matt: Mm.
>
> Louis: Um, so, everything happens in—kind of in conversation with heterosexuality. Um, like it's kinda unavoidable and then, obviously *inaudible* have been in respect to that. I mean, probably because queerness isn't a thing that can be pinned down in the same way that heterosexuality can. Heterosexuality is, you know, a clear set of practices and, um, expectations. That being said, I mean, heterosexuality is a bunch of different things because there are a lot of different cultures that have different heterosexualities. So, you know, I mean I think at the same time with things like marriage, where it's like it's a much different thing to say that, you know, marriage is anti-queer or whatever or like marriage is assimilation when your audience is a bunch of White people, White Christians, than it is if you're a minority and marriage means something different, where like marriage is part of maintaining difference to the majority, in maintaining, you know, a culture or whatever that is.
>
> Matt: Mm.
>
> Louis: Um, so I do get a little, also, frustrated with some of the conversation about assimilation in- in the queer world because it also, I think, tends to be very White and Christian, um, because it—the idea is that you're- you're refusing—assimilation is something that already—

you already weren't really assimilated into in the same way and that refusing assimilation into a kind of very White-centric queer culture sometimes.

Matt: How do you think queer culture is White, Christian centric?

Louis: Well, just that like it's kind of its negative image where it's like—like I feel like when like the classic, you know, queer ideas, like your chosen family which is like now—that seems to be dying out a little bit now that families are less likely to kick you out of your house, but, um, you know, like everyone getting together on Christmas with your- with your chosen family to celebrate your—the family you've created to replace the family that wouldn't have you but like, in my mind, these images always have something like Christmas in them. It's just like it's always a reaction. I feel like queerness is so focused on reaction sometimes. So, yeah, stuff like marriage, it's like if you don't get married, you're refusing, you know, the cultural expectations that you're going to get marriage but it's not like culture expects you to have like a Hindu wedding, like mainstream culture, so like isn't there something kind of anti-assimilationist or even queer about like having your wedding, you know? It's just like they posit this one culture a lot that you're being oppressed by and then there's no space for you to have your culture. (Semi-structured interview, January 2021)

Louis captures the argument that competing modes of subjectification are "challenged and contested in multiple ways," leading to incomplete and contested subject positions (le Noc & Sarmiento, 2021, p. 14). Again, rituals function as a mode of social differentiation – resisting the totalising postsecular logic of the WASP hegemony through anti-assimilationism. Louis' reflection also indicates a uniquely intersectional mode of subjectivation in that several conflicting regimes of power converge to (trans)form a liminal subject positioning resting on the peripheries of numerous hegemonies (Boulila, 2015). Specifically, Louis' queer subjectivity is rendered through heteronormativity while his Jewish subjectivity is rendered through *both* homonormative and postsecular common-sense logics. As such, Louis is positioned as a liminal persona – othered as queer, othered as Jew – due to competing modes of subjectification, a theme I will return to in the next chapter.

The result of this subjectivation is inevitable marginalisation – the lack of space for "you to have your culture." Interestingly, Louis points to Hindu weddings rather than Jewish weddings as ritual practices which resist these normative regimes. Although Jews are clearly othered in postsecular spaces, I suspect that this is because Louis chooses an ethnoreligious practice more readily identifiable

as other from the postsecular norm. Weddings are rites of passage which act as "significant markers of collective, national/regional/ethnic distinctiveness" (Mohammad, 2015, p. 596) which, in turn, are used to socially differentiate non-White groups as other (Pande, 2014). Echoing themes raised in Chapter Four, rituals thus facilitate identity arbitration, self-actualisation, and self-construal by way of social differentiation – whereby participants rendered their selves as distinct from the heteronormative, WASP norm.

Clearly, the extrasensory perception of surveillance reveals the common-sense logics operating across selves and spaces. Heteronormativity and postsecularism are two hegemonies which structured participants feelings in, and (trans)formations of, space. The outcome of such modes of subjectivation were contested and incomplete – positioning selves as others on the peripheries, caught between assimilation and divergence. Below, I contour the textures of the common-sense logics operating within space by turning to the concept of habitus, the emotional responses of homeliness it engenders, and the (re)aggregation of novel habitus.

5.3 "The space that I've built for myself"

Here, I trace the embodied accumulation, reception, and (re)aggregation of the normative regimes identified above. Bourdieu's concept (1979, 1990) of habitus is crucial here as it represents the generative principle of objectively classifiable praxes, and the system of classification which renders such praxes meaningful. Echoing themes raised in Chapter Four (Harold & Fong, 2018; Sugiman, 2005), habitus can be defined as a process whereby history is internalised and embodied in such a way that it is forgotten as history and experienced as an unconscious present (Bourdieu, 1990). Heritage and memory, then, form part of the epistemic framework engendered by habitus – leading to the production of a common-sense world view, or schemata of perception, for all individuals who are configured in relation to the same sociohistorical conditioning. This common-sense worldview reinforces itself through social consensus on, and harmonisation of new experiences with, the perception of these conditions (ibid.). Ultimately, habitus is a perceptual process whereby new experiences are perceived according to the schemata of perception produced by past, structured conditions.

166

Habitus is most useful in exploring participants' feelings of home within a variety of space-times. By viewing habitus as a mutable phenomenon undergoing a constant process of (re)aggregation, attention can be paid to the innovative (trans)formation of selves and spaces. Special consideration is given to 'noisy spaces,' ritual innovation, and the redivision of religious labour. First, however, I outline the various, competing habitus evident within participants' narratives.

5.3.1 Habitus

> Hannah: My mum, um, is Jewish and from North London and had a very sort of, um… very typical, um, Jewish upbringing, quite Orthodox, um, went to like a Zionist youth movement and pretty much only had Jewish friends and, um, my dad is from a tiny little fishing village, um, outside Southampton, um, and, um, his like first job when he was 16 was like working as a dockhand or something while my mum's first job was working in, um, like a café in Brent Cross, um, which is like a really famous North London, very Jewish, shopping centre, and actually is where I had my first job in Topshop when I was 16, um, and so they have quite a cultural split … (Life story interview, February 2021)

Echoing arguments presented in Chapter Four, Hannah uses space as a visual metaphor – or paradigmatic scene – for the purposes of identity arbitration and socio-spatial differentiation. The dockyards along the Solent (Figure 8) are materially and symbolically disparate from the bustling corridors of the Brent Cross Shopping Centre (Figure 9), but both are integral as the backdrop to Hannah's life

Figure 8: A small fishing village on the Solent

Figure 9: Shoppers in the Brent Cross Shopping Centre

story.[18] In more Bourdieusian terms, two unique socio-spatial epistemic frameworks are aggregated to form a liminal sense of place – around which a 'culturally split' subjectivity is (trans)formed (Butler, 2007). Being able to recognise space as place was indicative of one's enculturation within the habitus of that space – reflecting similar findings from Bint Abdullah Sani (2015). Habitus emerged more clearly in relation to Jewish spaces, and was often couched around the extrasensory perception of mutual understanding, shared language, and familiar points of reference:

> Matt: *Laughs* How do you feel when you're in these [Jewish] spaces?
>
> Abby: Very familiar- very familiar. Like, I love working at a Jewish school and the familiarity of it. That's not to say that I always want to work in Jewish spaces, because I don't, but I do really love the familiarity of it.
>
> Matt: How do you know that you've like entered a Jewish space?
>
> Abby: That's the thing, because there's some Jewish spaces that I don't feel at home in, like more, um, orthodox Jewish spaces. So, I don't think it's about being surrounded by Jews because I think it has to be mutual. Um…
>
> Matt: Mm.

---

[18] Figure 8 is taken online from an Unknown Author (2020) as is Figure 9 (2001)

> Abby: Mm, how do—did you say how do I know when I've entered a Jewish space? I think just like when there's like mutual understanding around [Matt: Mm.], um… yeah. Not mutual understanding like we all agree, but like recognition maybe.
>
> Matt: Mmhmm, yeah- yeah. It's almost like a sense of solidarity, maybe?
>
> Abby: Yeah, and like shared language and points of reference, which is probably as well why I don't feel that as strongly with more orthodox Jews because I think we have massively different points of reference. (Semi-structured interview, May 2021)

Habitus is conditional upon the social actors gathered within a field – the conglomeration of which is structured by the power relations among them (Bourdieu, 1989). Abby expresses this social contract through the language of 'mutual recognition,' a productive assumption that those present within the field are all playing the same game (Holloway, 2003). Habitus thus (trans)forms space and is (trans)formed by space insofar that it represents and structures social relationships in situ. For Luz (2013, p. 59), this structuring principle is oriented around social norms, identity, memory, and cultural codes – something Abby understood as "shared language and points of reference."

The structuring signifiers identified by Luz (ibid.) are notably similar to Turner's definition (1967) of ritual symbols; that is, any empirical thing relative to the concrete and ideological poles of reference. In this way, habitus is evident in the meaningful reception and interpretation of ritual symbols present within space. Symbols gain their resonance through the transmission of habitus – as part of Tradition – via ethnoreligious acquisition. When habitus is not shared, spatial differentiation occurs:

> Tamara: In other synagogues, other denominations, I don't know how it works, um, I did go to a summer camp one time where they had a woman's section on the left, a men's section on the right, and then in the middle it was the- it was the joint section. So, people who didn't- who didn't want to be separated could sit together with their friends and that made me feel very uncomfortable because that's not what I was used to at all. (Life story interview, January 2021)

Habitus is made, not given. It undergoes a constant spatial (re)aggregation dependent upon the social actors present within the field in which it operates. Although multiple habitus can operate within a space, there is usually one that is associated with the hegemonic structuring of that space. As Tamara experienced,

169

if one is unfamiliar with the dominant dispositions expected in space, then a sense of out-of-placeness occurs. As identified above, the dominant habitus (trans)forms space in that the ways of being accepted within it are made to appear common-sense – thus ensuring its hegemony as indicative of the natural order of things (Luz, 2013). As such, "the formation of landscape is inexorably linked to politics, power geometries, and struggles over meanings and ownership" (ibid., p. 59). As seen above, the dominant powers maintaining hegemonic habitus are mostly inferred rather than directly stated, thus making concrete formulations of power within space difficult to achieve. Again, ritual functions as a form of social differentiation whereby the power geometries constellating the ritual space-time are textured according to gendered norms surrounding ritual participation. In this way, ritual performance disciplines ethnoreligious selves in the (trans)formation of space. In other words, habitus represents the semiotic systems which render common-sense the internal functioning of space.

Although habitus was more explicitly recognisable in Jewish spaces, a texture of queer habitus could be gleaned from the sixth sense of one's crossing into queer space:

> Matt: How do you think you would know that you had entered a queer or gay space?
>
> Josh: Um […] I don't know, I- I wouldn't—I certainly wouldn't want to sort of say that this is relevant today because I spend so little time in gay spaces nowadays, but certainly from when I was younger, you know, I think, you know, in places like Manchester and London, you know, it— you know, there was almost always a rainbow flag outside. Either it was in an area of- of the city that you knew it was going to be gay or very gay friendly, there's a flag outside, the music is a little bit different. Like, you don't find very many hip-hop gay bars, um, or, you know- or, you know, heavy metal gay bays or clubs or whatever. Um, you know, the music, the clientele, you know, the décor to an extent. Like, you know, you can just walk in and there's a—I- I'm not sure I can sort of—any sort of hard characteristics on it [Matt: Mm.], on that, it's more just, um, a lot of it is- is feeling I think or, again, prior knowledge. (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

Entry into space is achieved by crossing (im)material thresholds. For Josh, the threshold between heterosexual and homosexual space is marked by a change in the symbolic environment. Flags, knowledge, music, and geographic setting are all ritual symbols Josh (re)aggregates into the collective individuation of space

170

(Holloway, 2003; Massumi, 1997). Habitus is thus not innate but an active ordering "that relies on a [ritual] practice of differentiation" – here between heterosexual and homosexual (Holloway, 2003, p. 1968). Habitus' extrasensory nature – the reason why Josh finds it difficult to put "any sort of hard characteristics on it" – is because such distinction emerges only 'from the very practice of its making' (ibid.). Although the transmission of queer habitus is harder to ascertain than Tradition, its symbolic resonance is amplified and affirmed in the active, ritualised differentiation and (trans)formation of queer space.[19] Habitus, then, explains how space is embodied and emplaced through a sense of familiarity with the dispositions structured in its (re)aggregation. A fruitful way of exploring the uneven topographies of habitus is in attending to this sense of familiarity as allegorical to 'feeling at home.'

5.3.2 Home

Participants discussed home both as an actual domestic site and symbolic sense of similarity:

> Matt: Mm. When do you feel most at home?
>
> Abby: When or where?
>
> Matt: When.
>
> Abby: Uh, in my home that I'm in now, my childhood home, probably—ah, this is such a cliché answer but probably at Shabbat. Probably when it's like we've got a few people round and a couple of my friends and it's—we're just like being raucous *Laughs*. (Semi-structured interview, May 2021)

> B.C.: When do I feel most at home? Um, on the dancefloor *Laughs*.
>
> Matt: *Laughs*.
>
> B.C.: I don't know if that's actually wrong?
>
> Matt: Any particular dancefloor?
>
> B.C.: A very queer space. I feel most at home in queer spaces, non-White specific queer spaces. (Semi-structured interview, September 2020)

---

[19] That said, friends, family, and popular culture were all mentioned as possible sources.

These reflections affirm Finlayson's finding (2012, p. 1774) that homes extend "beyond our legal address and are much more dynamic than they might seem." The heterogeneity of homes mentioned by participants demonstrates that "while the characteristics of home are perceived as universal and fundamental […] home has varied meanings in different social and cultural contexts" (Hartal, 2016, p. 1196). Shabbat ritual space-times and queer dancefloors are identified as sites of familiarity and belonging – challenging the liberal assumption that home is a uniquely private space (ibid.).

Just as home is diffused across a wide range of spatialities, so too are kinship ties lived beyond the household in "family-like relationships which may be likened to a chosen family or personal community" (Sharma, 2012, p. 827). With Louis' observation of the chosen family in mind, its resonance with participants' feelings of emplacement was apparent, nonetheless. For Finlayson (2012, p. 1773), this is because a sense of being at home refers to a "congenial relationship" and sense of familiarity with like-minded others. Home thus refers to a space (trans)formed into a place through mutual resonance and a politics of becoming whereby co-constructionists feel a sense of acceptance, belonging, familiarity, and rootedness (Connolly, 2005; Holloway, 2013).

Home also refers to a rejuvenating shelter from the hegemonic habitus operating in public space:

> Matt: When do you feel most at home?
>
> H.E.: I think with my husband in this house. Um, the little village I'm in is open, it has village politics, but in this space, I am just me. We are around each other and bring out just a lack of need to be anything other than we are, um, and the- the safe space of home is- is where I feel most at home. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

According to Hartal (2016, p. 1196), the liberal assumption of privacy is what enables some queers to experience home "as a shelter, a space of control, approval, belonging and even subversion," where nonnormative gender and sexual identities can be expressed "through spatial and relationship design in a way that is protected from heteronormative normalisation." Nevertheless, home does not always guarantee positive emotional states – especially for queer people (ibid.). As mentioned above, domestic spaces can be places of heteronormative

normalisation (Louis, semi-structured interview, January 2021; O.K., semi-structured interview, November 2020) and a sense of familiarity does not necessarily entail social belonging:

> Liane: … I went to—I went to my—to, um, my nana's synagogue the last couple of years for Yom Kippur because I knew that she would like it and it just isn't really my vibe. So, I did- *Laughs* I did feel quite out-of-place then actually [Matt: Mm.] because it was a bit like, "I know- I know—" it was weird, because it was like, "I know how to behave here, like I know how I'm expected to behave and the things that I can and can't say and the people I can and can't talk to and whatever," but I also felt really out-of-place because it wasn't—it just wasn't my space at all. Um, it didn't have people I—it didn't have my people, it didn't have like, um—yeah, it's just a lot more old-school. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020).

While participants may have been well-versed in the dispositions expected of them in certain ritual space-times, it did not always entail a feeling of emplacement. The affective atmosphere of the synagogue on Yom Kippur did not resonate with Liane despite an adequate sensorial, bodily knowledge of what was expected of them in that space (Degnen, 2015). What caused this sense of alienation was only implicit in the unnamed social norms ("old-school") and social difference ("it didn't have my people") operating within that space (Sharma, 2012). Liane's memory reveals an uneven topography of habitus as something which can be mastered while lacking in emotional and symbolic resonance. This challenges Connolly's (2005) and Holloway's (2013) understanding of religious subjectivation in that the mutual resonance engendered through habitus is felt unevenly across the members engaged in its (trans)formation. In fact, Liane's own Jewish (and queer) subjectivity was (trans)formed as the mirror image to this 'resonance machine' (Connolly, 2005) through the (re)aggregation of habitus facilitated by queer Jewish ritual innovation.

5.3.3 Making space your own: the (re)aggregation of habitus

> Matt: Mm. Can you think of an example of a space that is both queer and Jewish?

> Liane: […] Mm, yeah, but only sometimes. Like, I think when I think of […] when I think of spaces that are both queer and Jewish, they're only queer and Jewish for a very limited time. Like, they don't—I can't—I don't think I've been in a space where I'm like, "oh, okay—" that's maintained both of those at the same time [Matt: Mm.] consistently. The only times that are like quite obviously queer and Jewish, for me, are

when I'm with other queer Jews because it's the most obvious form of that, um, but I think some of the- some of the ways that [Liane's Reform community] have tried to create their space and their culture have been both queer and Jewish spaces. Um, I'm thinking about, for example, during the Yom Kippur services, they—which like—just even online they made a really—they just changed a lot of the things in quite, um, thoughtful ways that means that it was much more queer. Um [Matt: Mmhmm.], so when they talked about some of the stories that we would talk about at Yom Kippur, the way they explained them was very, was a bit more like, "how would we relate to them now in a much more egalitarian and almost queer way?" They also just changed some of the pronouns even. Like, all of the 'he's' they changed to 'they's' and they explained at the beginning like "just so you know, we don't—we've changed all of the pronouns in the text which we understand is an ancient text but also it was written by people who had these pronouns and now we don't have these pronouns [Matt: Mm.] so we're just gonna change them and we want that to- to make—we want that to happen to make sure our queer family feel welcome and any trans members and etc." and I think there are lots of ways that they had obviously tried to make the Jewish space queer and that's why it's weird because I'm not sure it was queer and Jewish at the same time, it was a Jewish space that was- that was like pulling in queerness. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement – is the most sacred and solemn day in the Jewish calendar. It is the "emotional climax of the Jewish faith's high holy days," a festive period beginning with Rosh Hashanah – the new year celebration (Blakemore, 2021, n.p.). A day of fasting, Yom Kippur is marked by an affective atmosphere encompassing a maelstrom of emotions "from guilt to mourning and self-abnegation to resolve" (ibid.). For Liane, fasting is a highly personalised ritual adopted after years of non-observance:

Liane: I've got a bit of like ritual around it [fasting] now, not even necessarily like a spiritual one but, 'how I've held my fast for 25 hours ritual,' where I'm like, "okay, so I need to basically eat every two hours the day before *Laughs* so that I'm really full." Um, I—yeah, the last few years I have [kept the fast], and I found it really helps me connect to just doing some reflection on myself. Before that, I didn't for years and years and years. Like, it just wasn't important to me. Like, I didn't—I just rejected it all. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Collective worship is a critical part of Yom Kippur with synagogues holding five prayer services for Jews to gather and confess their sins collectively. The first service takes place at sundown at the beginning of the fast and includes the *Kol Nidrei* declaration in which "the congregation prays that any vows to God that

cannot be fulfilled during the coming year be declared null and void" (Blakemore, 2021, n.p.). The final services take place at the end of the fast – culminating in the sounding of a *shofar* (ram's horn) which indicates that God's forgiveness has been granted and the fast lifted. Usually, this is followed by a communal breaking of the fast – something Louis, for example, marks by making "delicious bagels" (semi-structured interview, January 2021).

The Reform community Liane references above describes itself on its website as 'a radically relational Jewish community' based in London and online. It is a relatively new community – the result of two smaller groups merging to create an 'intentionally intergenerational community, making meaningful Jewish experiences together.' Members engage in horizontal community building in response to a 'broken world of disconnection, fear, and social and environmental injustices.' Anchored by 'Tradition, rituals, and each other,' the community (trans)forms a sacred space through collective ritual performance where members 'witness each other's joys and sorrows' and 'transform brokenness into wholeness.' A new community is thus (trans)formed in which 'spiritual, emotional, and physical reserves' are replenished, and self-actualisation fostered through personal development and reflection.

The Yom Kippur service is archetypal as conducive to the generation of communitas; that is, an emotionally powerful space-time characterised by an intense feeling of togetherness. During communitas, the regulatory structures governing ordinary time are suspended – culminating in an emotionally effervescent state where the selves gathered within feel connected to a symbolic peoplehood (Alexander, 1991; Myerhoff, 1978). Like Anna's Shabbat candle ritual, Liane perceived the anti-structural quality of the Yom Kippur service through the queer ritual innovation of pronoun changing in the "ancient text." Here, the heteronormative structuring of Jewish ritual space-times was queered through an inclusive performance of gender expansiveness – indicating a state of communitas whereby a novel mode of habitus can be (re)aggregated.

Incubated by the liminal space of the ritual performance, the Yom Kippur service thus provided a snapshot for new ways of doing Jewishness *and* queerness (Atalay & Doan, 2019). In this way, queer Jewish ritual innovation differentiates the

spaces and selves which embody it as both queer and Jewish. Moreover, Liane's ritual innovation represents the (re)aggregation of a malleable queer Jewish habitus (Lowenthal, 1998; Vertovec, 1997) – a moment of congruence facilitated by the rituals "pulling in queerness" through theological reinterpretation. This (trans)formed a certain kind of space-time – akin to Taylor *et al.*'s "spaces of reconciliation" (2014, p. 229) – bringing together the embodied experience of fasting with Tradition and queerness.

The (re)aggregation of habitus does not always need to take place in communal settings, nor does it always guarantee the generation of communitas. For example, the (re)aggregation of habitus is evident in the gendered redivision of religious labour in domestic queer spaces:

> Matt: How do you think that [Shabbat] works in same-sex households with same-sex couples?
>
> Dor: Um…
>
> Matt: Do you live with your partner?
>
> Dor: So, we live together. Okay, so to give you an example, um, I will ask him to do Kiddush on a Friday and I will light the candles, um, and so there's a fluidity and there's a—there's, um, a kind of recreating or redivision of- of roles in that- in that context and I think there are reasons, um, why I feel more connected, um, doing- doing that, by lighting the candles, and you might say that that's a more feminine role or feminine energy, um, but I just feel more connected by doing that. Like, I feel this connection with, say, my grandmother or the *Shekhinah*, like the Holy Spirit, the Shekhinah is a feminine derivative, not a masculine, um, in case you didn't know, um, whereas I'm perfectly happy to get him to do Kiddush or something like that. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Although Dor's Shabbat ritual does not take place in a materially communal setting, a symbolic connection is felt to both his grandmother (who "embodied Judaism" for him) and the Shekhinah. As previously mentioned, it would have 'broken' Dor's grandmother's heart if she knew he were gay. As such, the (re)aggregation of queer Jewish habitus through the gendered redivision of religious labour reflects a familial imaginary created through the unique sacralisation of the domestic space-time (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 1993; Sharma, 2012). This space of reconciliation is deeply embodied in the lighting of the Shabbat candles and the extrasensory connection to non-human entities

(Holloway, 2006, 2013; Taylor *et al*., 2014). Like Liane's Yom Kippur service and Louis' radical seder plate, Dor's private Shabbat rituals actualised his queer Jewish self through a spatial and temporal realisation of a new mode of being. Juxtaposed against heteronormative kinship ties, ritual differentiates and thus (trans)forms Dor's queer Jewish selfhood.

Finally, novel (re)aggregations of habitus compete with the hegemonic habitus operating in any given space. When this occurs, the subversive habitus is perceived as a rupture in the common-sense order of things:

> Blue: Anyway, um, I feel very comfortable around my family. I'm very openly queer around them, not least because my little—one of my little brothers, I have three, is a 16-year-old laddy kid, um, and I feel like I kind of have a moral duty to be like loudly queer in his face to like overt the homophobia that he's gonna get from his classmates. Um, he's very straight [Matt: Mm.], but I have a duty to like, you know, put some queer culture into him. Um, I'm very comfortable talking to my family about being queer. My parents are like of a generation who are vaguely transphobic and homophobic, so like, again, kind of an obligation I feel like to talk loudly and emphatically about my lovely girlfriend and like all of this, um, which I do, um, which I'm very comfortable doing, and I don't live here [at her parents' house] all the time. I live most of the time in a Jewish communal home for young adults, which is where I think I was when we spoke last? (Semi-structured interview, April 2021)

Queerness is associated with loudness in that it transgresses the heteronormative ordering of the domestic space. These competing habitus are positioned as diametrically opposed cultures – lad culture and queer culture – that can be inculcated or learnt like a skill (Bourdieu, 1990). The structural texture of the domestic space changes with Blue's presence and auditory provocations. Blue's obligation to engage in such praxis reflects Boussalem's finding (2020) that there is a clear political and moral imperative for outness. Reflecting themes raised in Chapter Three, the ability to (re)aggregate a transgressive habitus is thus as much a flex of power as the ability to (re)aggregate a hegemonic one regardless of how progressive or inclusive these may be. Indeed, Blue alluded to this when describing her time at the Jewish communal home:

> Blue: It's funny because it's like the space that I've built for myself [Matt: Mmhmm.], like literally I helped us rent that house and I've been there the entire time while we've been—while that house has been in that physical house. So, like, physically I have made it. I mean, I haven't put the bricks there but like, you know, all the posters on the walls I put up,

all this stuff. Um, all the residents who are living there with me at the moment, I have interviewed to live there.

Matt: Mm.

Blue: So, I'm the person who's been there the longest. So, I've really like shaped it into mine and I feel really at home there.

Home – a sense of familiarity and belonging – is inscribed in the materiality and sociality of space. This represents an active (re)aggregation of various elements, the structuring of which reflects the power relations embodied in that space. As such, Blue commands a technique of control in shaping a space in which she is emplaced, a place where she feels at home. Part of this dynamic is a sense of safety. Below, I explore how such feelings of safety relate to the third technique of control – securitisation.

5.4 "When you've got guards standing outside a synagogue, you don't have freedom of religion"

Drawing on Ahmed (2006), Boulila argues (2015) that feelings of (dis-)comfort are how people access their understandings of space and the power relations within. For participants, feelings of (dis-)comfort were often paired with, or expressed in, the language of safety:

Matt: How do you feel when you're in Jewish spaces?

Tamara: Um, I feel safe usually.

Matt: Mm.

Tamara: Um, I feel like there's some kind of protection [Matt: Mm.], um, because of the—there's like, even if you don't know someone—like, I've been to a conference with 700 young Jewish people, like students and young professionals from over 21 different countries [Matt: Yeah.], like, all of them strangers, and I've felt at home. I felt like safe and just knowing that we might not know each other but we have one thing in common and that like really connects us. Um, so what was the question *Laughs*?

Matt: Um, how do you feel when you're in a Jewish space?

Tamara: Oh, yeah, so I would say that I feel, uh, yeah, that sort of—that level of familiarity and- and comfort [Matt: Mmhmm.], um, and kind of like a sense of shared purpose and shared meaning. (Semi-structured interview, March 2021)

For Tamara, it seems that safety is dependent upon one's familiarity with the sociality and spatiality of place – its habitus – and the ability to refrain from

appearing as deviant to the surveillant logics within it. Safety exists alongside fear insofar that they reinforce one another in the process of subjectification. This reflects Pain's argument (2001) that fear, and safety, are structured by social relations based on uneven distributions of power. By paying attention to "*what* is feared and *who* is fearful" (Pain, 1997, p. 233), we can glean the "messy materialisations of power" framing participants' spatial experiences (Boulila, 2015, p. 146).

Below, I explore the various geographies of safety participants (trans)formed, and how these related to competing modes of subjectivation. I adopt Lewis *et al.*'s distinction (2015) between *safety from* and *safety to* before adding a third ontological function of safe space – *safety for*. I go further than Pain in explaining (2001, p. 910) "who is most affected by fear, and where" by unpacking why these fears are felt in the first place. In doing so, I explore the securitisation of space – as well as its contested meanings – as a technique of control over both queer and Jewish selves.

5.4.1 Safety from, safety to, safety for

The interrelationship between gender, safety, and space has been critiqued since the mid-1990s (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Pain, 1997, 2001). Specifically, fear has been approached as a tool for subject (trans)formation which constructs "girlhood and womanhood as fearful states whereby most women are routinely vigilant, consciously or unconsciously" (Lewis *et al.*, 2015, p. 2). During this period, the demarcation of LGBT "safe zones" began to draw critical attention – particularly regarding their conflation with protection and histories of racism, sexism, and Queerphobia linked to the "chivalric" behaviour of White men (Fox & Ore, 2010, p. 630). Likewise, a growing body of scholarship explores how queer safe spaces are imbued with racialising and secularising discourses in postcolonial contexts (Atalay & Doan, 2019; El-Tayeb, 2012). Overall, safe spaces are seen as 'contentious and risky, playful and pleasurable' (Stengel & Weems, 2010, p. 506) – the result of various competing framings of discursive safety (Boulila, 2015; Hartal, 2017, 2020). Routinely, safe space is characterised as a "protected and inclusive place, where one can express one's identity freely and comfortably" (Hartal, 2017).

Lewis *et al*. argue (2015) that (feminist) safe spaces are set up to provide *safety from* and *safety to*. Safe spaces are (trans)formed as places offering shelter from the harassment, abuse, and 'wallpaper heterosexism' marked by heteronormative, patriarchal power relations (ibid., p. 3). Sheltered from such 'routine' marginalising praxes, safe spaces offer women a place where:

> It is 'safe to' – safe to engage in dialogue, to debate, disagree, challenge, learn; safe to express, to emote; safe to develop one's consciousness, to demonstrate one's creative talent, to fulfil one's potential. (ibid., p. 4)

In this sense, safe spaces are places where people are free to engage in self-actualisation, where all aspects of the self are rendered congruent in-place. Participants identified safe spaces more readily as places where it was *safe to* rather than *safe from*. In fact, *safety from* would often need to be inferred from what participants would feel *safe to* in certain spaces:

> Matt: How would you define a queer space?
>
> B.C.: Uh, a space that everyone feels comfortable with as long as they are comfortable with other people.
>
> Matt: Do you go to them often?
>
> B.C.: Yes. Well, not since lockdown, but yes.
>
> Matt: How do you feel when in queer spaces?
>
> B.C.: Um, safe to just be… exist, I guess.
>
> Matt: How would you know that you've entered a queer space?
>
> B.C.: Um, visually. You can usually tell because people who are queer don't tend to fit into the norms of society's looks and everything else that goes with that. Um, you will usually see gay flags everywhere or at least somewhere but, in general, you can just feel there is less judgement and masculinity if it's queer, and that's the difference between queer and gay. Gay's just male, gay hormones everywhere. Queer is very mixed. (Semi-structured interview, September 2020)

> Matt: How would you define a- a gay or an LGBT or a queer space?
>
> H.E.: Mm, I think in terms of modern discussion, to me, it's a space where—I- I guess I can only speak for myself but a space where that part of my identity and others who share it feel completely safe and at ease expressing it. Um, so for example, outside in public is usually not completely an LGBT space even though it is shared by the LGBT community with everyone else because it's one where I have a thought

in the back of my mind about holding my husband's hand or even in safe places like Cambridge, what is going to happen in Cambridge? Who is going to enact actual violent—you know, a violent, homophobic hate crime? And yet it's there. Um, so, somewhere like a gay club, although I don't feel like a massive kinship for that, but that would be an LGBT space. Uh, our house, I suppose because I feel at home and myself in the house. So, I think that has to do with a place of safety for me, a place of safety and perhaps a level of kinship, that the people there are my people, if that makes sense? (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

Queer spaces provided B.C. with environments where they felt able to 'just be.' This "ontological security" is symbolised by the extrasensory perception of safety in not having to fit in with society's expectations of how one ought to look (Lewis *et al*., 2015, p.3). *Safety from* is thus inferred as freedom from the heteronormative, masculinist gaze of heterosexist and gay male spaces (ibid.). The inference is made via aversion to society's heteronormative judgement and the "male, gay hormones" latent within gay spaces. The affective (dis-)comfort caused by spatially diffused testosterone renders queer bodies out-of-place within gay male spaces – echoing Mary Douglas' dirt theory (1966). Drawing on Douglas (ibid.), Misgav and Johnston argue (2014, p. 732) that bodily fluids represent threats to the social collective as they "transgress" the accepted social order:

> In other words, anxieties about pollution and purity are actually ontological anxieties about order and disorder, borders and crossings, being and not being. (ibid.)

By fearing contamination through contact with gay male hormones, B.C. is thus positioned (and positions themselves) as the "queer unwanted" in gay spaces (ibid.). As such, embodied feelings of (dis-)comfort, purity, and safety shape queer "subjectivities, experiences, and the spatial layout" of queer spaces (ibid., p. 741). H.E.'s *safety from* can be inferred as the opposite of his *safety to* self-express within LGBT safe spaces. In deciphering LGBT spaces as places where he is *safe to* engage in self-actualisation, H.E. makes an important observation that space can be shared by many LGBT people without making it an LGBT space.[20] Indeed, public space is shared by LGBT people, but the sixth sense for (self-)surveillance

---

[20] This point was also made in relation to Jewish spaces although for slightly different reasons (Abby, semi-structured interview, May 2021; Anna, semi-structured interview, August 2020; Blue, semi-structured interview, April 2021).

conjured by its heteronormative structuring means that it is not somewhere where it is *safe to* engage in any nonnormative self-expression. H.E. tried to rationalise the extrasensory perception of heteronormativity through the discourse of hate crimes – leading him to view his fear as irrational and purely discursive. Nevertheless, the fear of persecution remains. For Koskela and Pain (2000, p. 278):

> There is no conscious or subconscious decision to be fearful in particular environments based on rational assessments of risk […] Rather, fear is a cumulative process developed over a long period of time, which is affected by and responds to a whole range of social and personal experiences…

In exploring the relationship between 'victimisation themes and Jewish American ethnic identity formation,' Greene argues (2007, p. 275) that, although crimes based on ethnoreligious hatred continue to be a reality of American life, there tends to be a focus on negative data even when said data do not support the perceived threat of continued and increasing persecution. Indeed, the interpretation of hate crime data is a political act of memory-work – (trans)forming a group identity subject to persistent victimisation. In this vein, Pain critiques (2001) the tendency for scholars to conclude that much fear of crime is irrational – notwithstanding the ever-increasing presence of Antisemitic and Queerphobic hate crimes in the British public sphere (Community Security Trust, 2021; Home Office, 2018). Though H.E. acknowledges the unlikelihood of any overt Queerphobic violence, fear remains since heteronormativity is based on unmarked scripts – reflecting Boulila's argument (2015, p. 140) that the disciplinary power emerging from the heterosexual matrix is "intelligible but unnameable." In this view, fear of crime is not irrational, but the affective rationalisation of the sixth sense of heteronormative patriarchy.

H.E.'s definition of safe space also raises the third ontological function that ought to be included in Lewis *et al*.'s typology (2015): *safety for*. Like Tamara, H.E. characterised safe spaces as places marked by social solidarity with an imagined community. Though H.E. and Tamara do not personally know all those gathered within their respective safe spaces, there is an assumed social contract of likeness and mutual recognition. As such, safe spaces are deciphered as those which *belong* to certain subject positions:

182

Matt: … what is a Jewish space?

Alex: For me, in an ideal world, a Jewish space is a space that's safe and welcoming for Jews and non-Jews alike, that upholds the importance of Jewish culture, um, but that doesn't have to be religiously motivated or oriented. (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Matt: How would you define a queer space?

Jacob: How would I define a queer space? […] Um, a space that's safe for queer people. Um, yeah, I think safety sums it up for me when you say that. Um, a space where queer people can be themselves freely, talk about their experiences, celebrate their experiences, that they dominate that space such that like voices that try to, you know, push them out are kind of muffled because their- their voices are the loudest in that space. (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

Ownership of space – or spatial belonging – is the expression of *safety to* and *safety from* combined. Spaces that are *safe for* are (trans)formed in reaction to symbolic violence and liberal logics of freedom and belonging (Hartal, 2017). As such, (trans)forming safe spaces *for* queers and Jews entails a symbolic boundary demarcation rooted in identity politics – whereby the collectivities forged around common social characteristics mobilise towards liberation and resistance (ibid.).[21] For Hartal (ibid., p. 1066):

> The creation of such segregated spaces is based on a logic maintaining the liberal right to cultural life and freedom to say what one wants within those spaces. Also, the fact of separation within LGBT spaces is motivated by a desire for visibility, making a distinguishable space in which specific identity groups can operate.

The symbolic demarcation of spaces *for* is bound by implicit norms – the habitus – formulated within (ibid.). Considering this, *safety for* accounts for the mechanisms by which safe spaces are (trans)formed with the intention of including some and excluding others. These mechanisms of control were often couched within outwardly progressive principles of inclusivity, tolerance, and mutual understanding. This differed from traditional safe spaces – namely gay male (B.C., semi-structured interview, October 2020) and White feminist (Liane, semi-structured interview, August 2020) – which operate along a binary logic and fail to

---

[21] Rituals are also important tools for boundary demarcation and will be discussed in greater detail below.

recognise intersectionality (Fox & Ore, 2010). As such, *safety for* calls to attention spaces which are readily identifiable as *safe for* a particular group of people, but which induce feelings of (dis-)comfort within them depending on one's own subject position:

> Matt: Um, how would you define a Jewish space?
>
> B.C. *Laughs* Is there—ooh, a Jewish space? A space for Jews, a space for Jews to feel safe, I guess.
>
> Matt: Do you go to them often?
>
> B.C.: No.
>
> Matt: No?
>
> B.C.: No.
>
> Matt: If you do have to go to a Jewish space, how do you feel when you're in them?
>
> B.C.: Very uncomfortable, I avoid them at all costs.
>
> Matt: Why do you think you feel uncomfortable in them?
>
> B.C. Um, previously it was just uncomfortableness because it's very triggering, um, then as I become more visibly queer [Matt: Mm.], it's also to feel safe in any religious space is very unusual [Matt: Mm.], they're not very queer-friendly, so I have kind of felt both things going against me there. (Semi-structured interview, September 2020)

A space may be deliberately *safe for* a certain social group, but the accumulation of personal history and unique, intersectional subject positions can disrupt one's belonging to that space. As such, the extrasensory perception of otherness reflects a process of spatial differentiation where the self is rendered out-of-place. This reflects Fox and Ore's critique (2010) that queer safe spaces often operate under the assumption that all queer people experience queerness (and Queerphobia) in the same way – likewise with Jewish safe spaces. Feelings of (dis-)comfort, fear, and safety show how participants' multiplex subject positions respond to the "messy materialisations of power" which structure spatial experience and belonging (Boulila, 2015, p. 146). Below, I attend to the theme of securitisation as a geopolitically diffused, and temporally transcendent, technique for controlling the symbolic boundaries of sociospatial entities.

184

5.4.2 Securitisation

> Dor: I think, um, Britain is going through a bit of an anxiety about its, um, place in the world, um, we see that with Brexit, um, which unleashed this xenophobic tirade, um, and gave people license to say things, or our politicians license to say things, that have previously may have been a bit unacceptable, um, but I think with Antisemitism it's always been there, always. Um, there's this very famous, um, picture of the *Daily Mail* newspaper (Figure 10), um [Matt: Mm.], using the language of the swarm in our streets from the 1930s, um, and that's continuous over history, um, and I think that Antisemitism is expressed, um, a lot more and I- I think it's, um, it's really- it's really scary.[22] I don't—you know, it's not like we have what's happened in France, for example, where everything's happened, um, you know, schools being targeted [Matt: Oh, right. Okay.], um, what happened in the *Hypercacher* supermarket [Matt: Mmhmm.], um, attacks, daily attacks. Um, it's not as brutal as that, um, but when you've got—um, I can't remember who said it, but someone once said on the radio that like "when you've got guards standing outside a synagogue, you don't have freedom of religion." (Semi-structured interview, October 2020)

Figure 10: Daily Mail headline on Jewish refugees during the Holocaust

March 19th, 2012 – a gunman opens fire on the Ozar HaTorah school in Toulouse, France. Three children and one teacher are shot dead during the morning rush

---

[22] Photo taken online from Brown (2015).

hour as children and parents arrive at school. It is the worst Antisemitic attack in France since August 1982, when six people were killed in a grenade and firearm attack at a kosher restaurant in Paris (Irish & Serries, 2012). Nearly five years later, Amédy Coulibaly storms the Hypercacher (super kosher) supermarket in Port de Vincennes, Paris. Coulibaly shot four people dead and took at least 15 others hostage "because they were Jews" (Willsher, 2020, n.p.). The siege ended when police stormed the store, shooting and killing Coulibaly, and freeing the hostages. A few years later, and several hundred miles away, these events were called on by Dor as crucial to the symbolic demarcation of Jewish spaces as sites of securitisation. Confirming, and confirmed by, the collective memory of flight and dispersal identified in Chapter Four, securitisation configures spaces as necessitating tightly guarded boundaries to keep out threatening and undesirable others. Drawing on Mavelli (2012), the securitisation of Jewish subjectivities is not only in response to the Jew's othering within postsecular society, but instrumental in (trans)forming their otherness as postsecular subjects.

Scholars have attended to the discursive genealogies of securitising regimes in several contexts from the (trans)formation of queer Israeli subjectivities (Adelman, 2014; Hartal, 2016, 2017, 2019) to the racialisation of European Muslims (Browne, 2007; El-Tayeb, 2012). Below, I focus less on discursive genealogies and more on exploring the uneven affective geographies these securitisation regimes (re)generate for participants. Pre-empting arguments made in the next chapter, these regimes form an integral component of the collective individuations (Holloway, 2003; Massumi, 1997) or ritual bricolages (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982) participants' (trans)formed. For participants, the securitised configuration of Jewish spaces (and to a lesser extent, queer spaces) spatially differentiated them as other:

> H.E.: I'm very aware of being gay, and the Jewish side, it's like when you go to synagogue and there's a guy that has to let you in through some big gate, I'm aware that I'm Jewish and that is there, or if I wear a yarmulke. There are these—I think I'm most aware of it because they are these identities that other people seek to threaten sometimes, for me, that's- that's- that's where I find myself most acutely thinking about them … (Life story interview, August 2020)

Matt: And how would you know that you had entered a Jewish space?

Josh: Um, I think like just if- if- if you're just using London as- as- as a base, I think it's because it's always sort of—it's always planned. Like, okay, I know I'm going to go and do evening prayers at- at that synagogue or in that *minyon* or at that place or I'm going to have dinner at that kosher restaurant or I'm going to that's person's home. Um, I- I think it's very—I think it's a lot more—it's always—it always has to be a sort of planned thing, um, and you're sort of always, because the community, although not small it's certainly not massive, like you know where you are. So, a good example I think would be like Jewish office spaces. So, you know, I work in an office building that is a small building but it's exclusively Jewish. Um, you know, there are two organisations in it, they're both Jewish organisations, um, with the exception of the security guards, everyone is Jewish, um, in the building, um, and it's—does it… would you be able to walk in there and actually know it's a Jewish space? I don't know, it's difficult to say. Like, it's interesting that one because security—like, at my office building, security is really tight. Um, like you know, you can't even get close to the building without speaking to a security guard and what have you if you're not recognised. Um, so you know, that is, you know, one aspect of- of a Jewish space, I guess, is, you know, quite often there's quite tight security. (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

During participant observation, I had an acute awareness of the need for security despite the shift to online platforms. Returning to points raised in Chapter One regarding the run-up to R's sermon marking Holocaust Memorial Day, they were relieved that I would not be making any audio-visual recordings of the service – explaining that the community would be 'understandably jumpy' about their services being recorded by outsiders (participant observation, January 2021). Likewise, my Zoom invitation to Louis' Passover celebration was password protected – the boundaries of my participation negotiated between the attendees beforehand (participant observation, April 2021). Clearly, ritual space-times need careful boundary policing regardless of how inclusive, progressive, radical, or tolerant they are. Securitisation converges with the embodied acts of dressing, praying, singing, etc. in the collective individuation of the ritual performance (Holloway, 2003; Massumi, 1997) – (trans)forming the selves gathered within as the mirror image to the threatening other.

Threshold demarcation can be moral and metaphorical (based on mutual recognition) and/or concrete and material (gatekeepers granting or withholding entry), but always highly emotive and ritualised – manifesting in rites of passage

as mundane as ID-checks or meeting passwords. The securitisation of space is precariously balanced on the paradox of tolerance and the deep emotions sparked by challenges to sociospatial belonging (Moon, 2012). The emotional gauntlet of the ensuing rites of passage was articulated by Anna:

> Anna: Um, yes it [security] does affect how I feel because I'm quite a logical person. So, I want things to be consistent and I want them to work [Matt: Mmhmm.] and what really frustrates me is I see that there's a need for security. I wish there wasn't and, yeah, it saddens me that that's the case, um, and I would very much like—I don't- I don't—it's kind of a catch-22, well how do you- how do you change that, um, when it- it does open people up to increased risk? Um, I think the thing that upsets me is when—let me backtrack, not that it upsets me, um, people like often feel conflicted about this because who wants to be like in that role of like vetting everyone, it's- it's an emotionally charged role to have and it's- it's a challenge, um, but what happens if you're doing the security, which is a volunteer position, you know, you're doing it for your community, and someone comes along that you don't recognise? Like, how do you handle that? There's not a simple emotional relationship to that and some people don't handle that very well and can be quite antagonistic or, um, dismissive and not, you know, not let people in in a way that doesn't do the community any favours in terms of the way that they'll be seen by them, that person later on, and sometimes you have people that are able to do that with humility and respect, but… So, it's a challenge. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

The ability to symbolically demarcate spaces that are *safe for* necessitates subjectification – where selves and others are differentiated as such through rites of passage. Those who belong are subjectified as at risk – as needing to undergo a rite of passage into a place where they are protected from 'out there.' Those who do not belong are subjectified as other – as unable to cross the threshold or, if access is granted, as out-of-place. Although I am conscious of copying problematic approaches to analysing fear of crime (Greene, 2007), the need for boundary demarcation is well-founded within Jewish spaces in postsecular Britain. Despite an initial lapse during the first lockdown, the Community Security Trust reported (2021) their highest annual total of Antisemitic incidents – an increase of 34% from 2020 and 24% higher than the previous annual record in 2019. As Anna said, the need is there – a continual realisation of the collective memory of flight and dispersal (Greene, 2007). Queer spaces were not securitised in the same way as Jewish spaces. Indeed, the only inkling of their securitisation was in the hate crime discourse mentioned by H.E. (semi-structured interview, August 2020). To close,

however, I wish to comment on a securitised queer *and* Jewish subjectivity (trans)formed in the online postings of an international, non-partisan pro-Israel organisation some participants were affiliated with.

Founded in 2001, StandWithUs is an 'Israel education organisation' whose mission statement is to challenge misinformation and fight Antisemitism. In January 2016, StandWithUs made a post on their Facebook page (Figure 11) reacting to the "outstanding bigotry" at a "gay rights conference" dedicated to advancing and supporting social justice and equality.[23] According to StandWithUs, who based their observations off an article in *The Times of Israel* (Cortellessa, 2016), "hundreds" of demonstrators disrupted the event by obstructing a reception hosted

Figure 11: The Facebook post from StandWithUs

---

by "an organisation that builds connections between LGBTQ communities in North America and Israel" and shouting anti-Occupation chants. The comment thread on the Facebook post featured several comments (Figure 12) displaying highly racialised and sexualised modes of securitisation.

> And then the Palestinians threw them off the tallest buildings and they squealed all the way down to the ground....SPLAT. Stupid gays.

> send them to Gaza to visit, not sure how many would come back, they throw gays of the roof tops. Idiots

> You would think that these 'protesters' (read to mean anti-Semitic haters) would be more accepting, considering LGBTQ was getting support from these Jews. Horrendous action!

Figure 12: Anonymised comments on the Facebook thread

These examples of subject (trans)formation are not only highly Queerphobic (with commenters revelling in the deaths of queers) but notably Islamophobic (with Muslims depicted as violent Queerphobes). A Jewish selfhood is also (trans)formed – one of a supporter and protector of queers, a common securitising trope where Israel (and Jews) are seen as a "welcoming oasis in a hostile [Islamic] Middle East (Adelman, 2014, p. 248). The pitting the queer community against the Muslim community – where the former is (trans)formed as a victim of the latter – reflects a neoliberal securitising hegemony which is, at its core, fundamentally Queerphobic and Islamophobic (El-Tayeb, 2012). Queer selves are (trans)formed as an individual indebted to the tolerant (non-Muslim) heterosexual – a relation of subordination which enshrines the supremacy of the heteronormative order (ibid.). Muslim selves are (trans)formed as 'violent, oppressive, and static' – a relation of subordination to the enlightened, postsecular subject (ibid.). Thoroughly affective – conjuring with them powerful emotional and embodied responses – these modes of subjectivation represent the construction of a fictitious socio-spatial landscape

in which participants were embedded, one imbued with hotly contested and uneven relations of power.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored participants' sixth sense of the socio-structural constellation of space as indicative of the process of subject (trans)formation. I identified three techniques of control participants were subjected to, subjected others, and subjected themselves to: surveillance, habitus, security.

Feelings of surveillance were found to have paradoxical, competing a/effects from the extrasensory perception of otherness to a sense of social belonging. This perception revealed the heteronormative common-sense logic operating across space – whereby selves are (trans)formed as other via hyper-visibility. The heterosexualisation of everyday space implies the existence of separate, distinct spaces characterised by the absence of heteronormativity. Within these spaces, queer subjectivities are free to exist – at least in theory – without the ever-observing eye of the heteronormative panopticon. That said, homonormativity was highlighted as an alternate mode of exclusion operating within queer spaces. Britain is a postsecular space governed by a common-sense logic which renders ethnoreligious selves other through the same mechanism of hyper-visibility. Spaces are actively made postsecular – with rituals operating as a mode of social differentiation. The highly ritualised peri-hegemonic practices of peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilationism reified Boussalem's finding (2020) that silence acts as a productive site and functional strategy whereby ethnoreligious *and* queer knowledges circulate in tacit ways. Intersecting modes of subjectivation (trans)form liminal subjects – an 'intelligible albeit unnameable' extrasensory process of self (trans)formation (Boulila, 2015).

Habitus was used to explore the embodied accumulation, reception, and (re)aggregation of normative regimes. Habitus is (trans)formed through collective individuation, an active process and social contract subject to a politics of becoming and mutual resonance (Connolly, 2005; Holloway, 2003). Enculturation into the dominant habitus of space is accompanied by feelings of home and familiarity – stretching the sociospatial boundaries of home beyond the domestic sphere. Ritual performance is fundamental to the inculcation, and (re)aggregation,

191

of habitus. Queer ritual innovation, the gendered redivision of religious labour, and noisy spaces converged in the generation of communitas – moments characterised by anti-structure and intense feelings of social belonging. Rituals, then, are techniques of control participants used to (re-)shuffle the power geometries constellating space in the process of self-actualisation.

Participants' sixth sense for safety was often paired with feelings of fear and (dis-)comfort – revealing the uneven power relations operating across space. Adopting Lewis *et al.*'s distinction (2015) between *safety to* and *safety from*, I introduced a third ontological function of safe space – *safety for* – to account for the symbolic boundary demarcations facilitated by closely guarded rites of passage. This drew critical attention to the ways in which safe spaces operate under a totalising or essentialising identity politics. *Safety for* also revealed the phenomenon of securitisation – a geopolitically diffused and spatially transcendent part of the collective individuation of ritual space-times (Holloway, 2003). Securitisation is enacted through emotionally fraught rites of passage which represent, in turn, the construction of a fictitious sociospatial landscape which not only shapes, but is shaped by, one's spatial experiences.

My findings suggest that rituals are key place-making practices – the techniques by which selves, spaces, and others are (trans)formed in situ. In the next chapter, I foreground the actualising principle of ritual in the (re)generation of queer religious worlds. I explore the interplay between ritual, liminality, and communitas in the process of self-actualisation – whereby selves are (trans)formed within and across various ritual space-times. Through the case study of Buttmitzvah, I disentangle the uneven affective topographies produced through ritual performance – accounting for the novel, progressive, regressive, and subversive ways of doing Jewishness *and* queerness.

Chapter 6. Jewish histories, queer Jewish futures: ritual and queer Jewish self-actualisation

> O.K.: I decided to do Yom Kippur and to keep it, and I'd never not kept it before and I went to this service called the *Al Chet*—no, we have this prayer called the Al Chet which is like on the evening of Yom Kippur and it's this prayer where you basically… like, you say about 100 different sins that you've done and you hit your chest, like tap it- tap it—tap your chest, um, and I was reading through it in English because I don't really know what I'm saying if I speak it in Hebrew. So, I was reading it through [Matt: Mm.] in English and one of them was—as it went further and further in it was talking about like relationships. It wasn't explicitly kind of like about gays or anything like that, but I- I just kind of like picked up this like underlying tinge of homophobia and I was like, "what the fuck am I doing?" Like, "why am I keeping this fast when part of the reason for keeping it is because I'm supposed to be apologising for something that actually I'm not apologetic for and actually think is regressive?" And so, when I read that line in the middle of the, um… in the middle of the service, I kind of closed the Siddur, put it back on the shelf, and left, and went home and then I kind of didn't keep it. Like, I decided to like not keep it because I was like, "do you know what? Fuck this," um, and since then, I've had this real kind of like—kind of an additional, uh, sort of theological quarrel over whether I believe in- whether I believe in what I'm keeping, um, and again, I think that's to do with what I was saying before about the kind of—there being such little kind of opportunity to find a queer Jewish theology that matches who I am because I'm not willing—I'm a proud Jewish person and I'm not willing to give that up because I really like that aspect of who I am, but it's quite a struggle … (Life story interview, October 2020)

6.1 Introduction

The metronomic thuds of the Al Chet prayer fed into the emotionally charged space-time of the Yom Kippur service – the rhythms and tempos of the ritual performance providing order, meaning, and moral coherence to the symbols within (Myerhoff, 1974; Rappaport, 1999).[24] Catalysed by O.K.'s liminal subject position, the synchronised ritual performance generated a moment both in and out of time – an affective atmosphere characterised by the (trans)formative potential of its anti-structure (Anderson, 2009; Banfield, 2022). During these moments of communitas,

---

[24] An earlier, abridged version of this chapter was submitted as a contribution (pre-publication) to the edited collection *Queer Jews, queer Muslims: race, religion, and representation* by Adi S. Bharat.

"social roles are suspended" and ritual performers are "temporarily freed from social and cultural definitions and restrictions" operating in everyday space-time (Myerhoff, 1974, p. 247).

In the Al Chet communitas, the suspension of conventional norms enabled O.K. to make meaning out of his own subject position and challenge the heteronormative modes of subjectification regulating everyday experience (Alexander, 1991). Redressing the breach in a very personal social drama, O.K. took the liturgical order of the Al Chet and melded it to (re)generate a new religious world – one characterised by theological agency. O.K. approached Buttmitzvah, a queer Jewish club night held in London, as a rite of passage into this world – (re)aggregating his 'Jewish past' with his 'queer Jewish future' in a politically conscious act of self-actualisation (semi-structured interview, November 2020).

In this chapter, I flesh out two integral components to the generation of communitas – ritual and liminality – before returning to O.K.'s queer ethnoreligious world-building through the ethnographic vignette of Buttmitzvah. I begin by foregrounding the actualising principle of ritual. In doing so, I unpack two structuring qualities of ritual performance: rites of passage, and the regulation of time, space, and self. Next, I establish liminality as the "optimal setting of communitas" (Kapferer, 2019, p. 1) – contouring the liminal spatialities patterning participants' lifecourse. I argue that liminality represents a unique ontological position (Massumi, 1997; Turner, 1967, 1969) – emphasising the radical, even dangerous, potentiality liminal personae are imbued with.

Finally, I approach Buttmitzvah as an affective bricolage of mythic fragments and ritual symbols – a liturgical order which renders it meaningful to the ritual performers gathered within (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982). I outline how ritual performers draw upon its potent liminality in the generation of communitas – the (trans)formation of which inculcates intense feelings of (non-)belonging, community, and inclusivity which are, in turn, felt unevenly across a range of ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed bodies. I close by critically exploring Buttmitzvah's radically contingent outcomes – unpacking the complex, contradictory relations between ritual and resistance, structure and anti-structure.

194

6.2 "If you think of Hanukkah, why would you not light the Menorah?"

Rituals have material and social consequences: from the inculcation of symbolic frameworks to the concretisation of identity arbitration. But rituals are not reducible to these consequences; they have a structuring power which brings into existence what they seek to realise. For Rappaport (1999, p. 27), ritual performance:

> logically entails the establishment of convention, the sealing of a social contract, the construction of the integrated conventional orders […] the investment of whatever it encodes with morality, the construction of time and eternity, the representation of a paradigm of creation, the generation of the concept of the sacred and the sanctification of conventional order, the generation of theories of the occult, the evocation of numinous experience, the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic.

Rituals are fundamentally affective phenomena – condensing with them the "social processes" of society (ibid., p. 173). Symbols are an integral part of any ritual; they communicate "human interests, purposes, ends, and means," and are realised through ritual performance (Turner, 1967, p. 20). Symbols are polyvocal and ambiguous; through myths, they are imbued with emotional resonance and social importance – "a continuous process of interpretation" which contributes to, and reflects, their polyvocality (ibid.). Myths, symbols, and rituals operate together in the Ritual Complex – the mode by which individuals and groups (trans)form conventions of behaviour, maps of knowledge, social structures, spatial configurations, and temporal orders (Rappaport, 1999). Below, I outline two structuring qualities of ritual performance evident in participants' narratives: rites of passage and ontological ordering. In doing so, I draw attention to the complex, competing meanings inscribed in – and attributed to – rituals by ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed selves (Bain & Wallis, 2004).

6.2.1 Rites of passage

Human life is characterised by flux and change, and it is the role of rituals to facilitate such transitions (van Gennep, 1909). Rites of passage appeared frequently in participants' narratives – structuring the lifecourse and reflecting pivotal (trans)formations of queer ethnoreligious selfhood:

> Blue: Um, for my Bat Mitzvah in—which was like year seven, so right after I joined senior school, um, I wanted to give a d'var Torah at shul. I

was still like moderately *frum*, um, and I still thought *mechitzahs* were a good idea, was still on the Modern Orthodox kind of track, um, wanted to give a d'var Torah for my Bat Mitzvah at shul. They wouldn't, the shul I was at, the Modern Orthodox shul, wouldn't let me give a d'var Torah during the service. I would have to have given it after *Shacharit* on Shabbat, um, like outside the main context. Everyone would've gone and had Kiddush and those who wanted to listen to a girl give a d'var Torah would have come back into shul to hear the d'var Torah, which is like a nothing of a nothing basically, um, and a) I was already a communicative twelve-year-old, b) my parents were like very feminist and encouraging and progressive, um, and so they didn't want me to have a nothing of a nothing as my Bat Mitzvah. Um, so my grandpa— also, if I say any other words where you don't know what I mean, tell me, so I can explain myself.

Matt: Okay.

Blue: My grandpa on my dad's—so my dad's dad, um, grew up very-very frum. He studies at Gateshead Yeshiva, he like is very knowledgeable. He doesn't believe in anything, but he knows [Matt: Right.] exactly what is what, um, and he also was thinking like he's not having his granddaughter like not do anything for her Bat Mitzvah. I'm the oldest grandchild on that side of the family and he was like, "yeah, my grandchild is not being swallowed up by nothingness for her Bat Mitzvah."

Matt: Mm.

Blue: Um, so he taught me to *leyn* the Megillah, um, *Megillat Esther*, for my Bat Mitzvah which is on—my Bat Mitzvah was on Purim [Matt: Mmhmm.], um, I wasn't allowed to leyn in shul, um, and we weren't— my family wasn't at the stage yet where we were thinking about possibly, um, like allowing a woman to leyn from a *Sefer Torah*, but a Megillah was kind of like a little bit less radical.

Matt: Mm.

Blue: So, my Bat Mitzvah, I leyned part of the Megillah, my grandpa leyned the other part of it, we like split it, it's not like half and half, but— um, so that was like very empowering for me, um, in terms of like gender and Judaism, um, and I think was like one of the starting points where I was learning that like how I wanted to do my Judaism might have to be something that I shaped for myself, um, and not necessarily something that would like be handed to me on a plate as, "here is your position within the community." Um, it would be something I'd have to work out, um, but in like a very positive way rather than in a- a, um, "you're excluded from the community because of your gender" kind of way, um, which I think was like a good basis to be set, um, for like sexuality and community like, later on, um, figuring out that like just because there wasn't a position for you in the community yet doesn't mean that you're not—you don't belong there, they just like haven't thought of one and you need to make it up. (Life story interview, August 2020)

Like the pronoun play during Liane's Yom Kippur service (semi-structured interview, October 2020) or the assortment of liberation stories on Louis' virtual seder plate (participant observation, April 2020), Blue's Bat Mitzvah represents a (re)aggregation of habitus that is both Traditional and novel. By reading from the Megillah, Blue simultaneously reinforces and subverts her ethnoreligious identity as a queer Jewish woman – actualising her self's transition to Jewish womanhood through a ritual performance that is appropriately Jewish *and* necessarily subversive (Milligan, 2017). This shows us how rituals actualise the transitions they seek to realise through their very performance (Rappaport, 1999). Blue's ritual performance of ethnoreligious encoding enacts three important realisations: a "subversive political statement" about the position of (queer) women in the Modern Orthodox community, a reclamation of "spiritual agency," and the creation of "a cultural legacy for future generations" of frum (religiously observant) girls in the community (Milligan, 2014, p. 447). Through its actualising power, Blue's Bat Mitzvah thus strengthened group-identification by expanding the gendered and sexed boundaries to Modern Orthodoxy (Milligan, 2017).

Following Milligan (2014), one may be tempted to ask why young girls do not simply renounce their Jewishness when faced with such gendered regulations. In Chapter Four, I argued that rituals facilitated the transmission of Tradition in a process of ethnoreligious acquisition and continuity. Here, I want to develop this observation alongside the concepts of witness and symbolic ethnoreligiosity:

> Matt: When was the last time you went to, or participated in, a religious service or ceremony?
>
> H.E.: It would've been in South Africa at the beginning of the year because that's when I got married, um, and it wasn't a religious wedding at all, but we went to the synagogue, um, and got blessed by the rabbi and, as I've said, that was, for me, something about my mother, but I guess there was also just something for the community. Being part of it did make me feel part of the community, that you do this thing that happens in the community, and you are—you almost like [Matt: Mm.] get the blessing of the community and- and the thing that someone pointed out was for it just not to be a thing, no one batted an eyelid that my husband and I were standing up there next to a straight couple, it was just two couples that were getting married, no one cared, and my awareness of that as being a thing was- was a step forward … (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

Matt: … in terms of the wedding, because I forgot to ask at the time, was it totally secular?

Paul: So, we did it… I mean, so low key it was ridiculous. Um, we did it—yeah, we went—we did a civil ceremony.

Matt: Mmhmm.

Paul: We only had our immediate family and my gay uncle, um, because we thought it would be nice for him. We had dinner afterwards in a—a very nice fancy dinner in a private dinner room in a nice place. So, that was the, you know, that was the kind of most extravagant thing we did. Um, but that was it. I mean, my mum—my parents—I mean, interestingly, my parents insisted on having a—hosting an event in their garden with all their friends. So, like, me and my husband just kind of turned up and just sat in the corner whilst all their friends kind of socialised and it was kind of catered and stuff, it was so awkward. Um, but it was important for them for some reason. I mean, I don't know, there's a—people at weddings—I mean, there's a Jewishness. Of course, there's all sorts of people that have big weddings, I don't think that's particularly Jewish, but we were sort of in the middle of all the middle-aged Jewish people like, "why are we here? This is supposed to be for us, but I can't…" (Life story interview, May 2020)

Weddings are archetypal rites of passage – actualising transitions in kinship relations and ethnoreligious distinction (Mohammad, 2015; Pande, 2014). Though both participants lacked belief in the ritual performance of their same-sex marriages, they accepted the symbolic significance of such performances in actualising (and thus validating) their partnerships. This confirms Rappaport's argument (1999) that ritual performers do not necessarily have to *believe in* the Ritual Complex they embody through their performance; they simply must *accept* the ritual order and ways of being it seeks to realise. Likewise, it reflects Turner's argument (1967) that rituals (trans)form subjectivities according to the operant social structures within any given society – a process of becoming which is, even if contested, recognisably significant to all those within the same symbolic frameworks.

This is significant for two reasons. First, Preser argues (2021, p. 63) that such performances of coupledom are a project:

a site of blessing for the witnesses who come within its powers. The intimacy is rendered public through domestic rituals that are expected to endure. It is a project that provides the larger community with a model for successful assimilation and a relief of the haunting presence of

separation. By their witnessing, the congregated audience validates the union as worthy of being witnessed.

Through ritual performance, H.E.'s and Paul's same-sex (and interreligious) unions expanded the contours of the communities which bore witness to their coupledom – the fulfilment of a social contract based on tolerance which actualised their presence within the community and transition to married life (Preser, 2021; Rappaport, 1999). Here, ritual *resisted* heteronormative models of kinship through the queer realities it actualised in its performance. At the same time, their unions became a ritual symbol in and of themselves – a relationship open to fetishisation, heteronormative subjectivation, and public scrutiny (Preser, 2021; Turner, 1967).

Second, as participants who identified as "culturally Jewish but not religiously Jewish" (demographic questionnaire responses), H.E.'s and Paul's ritual performance actualised a mode of symbolic ethnoreligiosity; that is, a form of ethnoreligious identification (trans)formed out of choice rather than necessity, marked by the consumption of ethnoreligious ritual symbols, and "intended mainly for the purpose of feeling or being identified with a particular" ethnoreligious identity (Gans, 1994, p. 578). Like the 'new voluntarists' in Davidman's study (2007) of unsynagogued Jews in North America, H.E. and Paul (trans)formed their queer Jewish selves – through ritual performance – in a patchwork of self-actualisation. In (re)aggregating the ritual space-times of same-sex (interreligious) union, H.E. and Paul "choose how to be Jewish, but not whether to be" (ibid., p. 64) – revealing alternate ways of doing Jewishness *and* queerness.

Finally, it is worth highlighting how rites of passage serve structure – particularly regarding heteronormative models of kinship:

> Matt: Have you experienced conflicts in your close relationships because you're both queer and Jewish?
>
> Louis: Yeah, um […] so, I mean, I've had- I've had—I had a big falling out with my friendship group in—from home, um, I guess, in the summer.
>
> Matt: Is that in the US?
>
> Louis: Yeah. I guess I got tired of feeling like they were constantly celebrating each other's heterosexual life milestones and not anything that happened in my life because it wasn't measurable in the same way. I mean, the thing that sparked it was Father's Day and one of my friends wrote in our group chat like, "happy Father's Day," and listed everyone

in the group chat except me, basically *Laughs*, and I—like, I've helped raise a child, like my niece. Like, at that point in time, because like one of my friend's was pregnant and hadn't even had a kid yet, there were two of them—like, only half of the people in the group even had kids yet, two of them were pregnant, like they were about to have kids, and then I had actually a lot more experience of raising a child than a lot of people in the group did [Matt: Yeah.] and—but because like that doesn't fit into a heterosexual world view, it's not—you know, does not compute. So, it really offended me, and I ended up leaving the group. (Semi-structured interview, January 2021)

Rituals demarcate and regulate phases in the lifecourse in accordance with the contested power regimes governing human life. Father's Day – a holy day in postsecular civil religion (Bellah, 1967) – operates as a ritual symbol around which cluster the rites of passage marking transitions to fatherhood. For Louis, these transitions are textured according to heteronormative kinship models. The fact his own parental experiences were not 'measurable in the same way' is because they lay outside the social norms actualised through the Father's Day ritual symbol. As such, Louis is rendered as a queer other in the heteronormative lifecourse. Again, rituals function as a mode of differentiation – technologies ensuring the maintenance of hegemonic social structures and (trans)formation of one's subjectivity through its structuring principles (Turner, 1974). Clearly, subject positions – one's status within any given structure – are neither given nor absolute. Instead, they are fluid and thus in need of regulation via rituals – providing moments for the (re)aggregation of Tradition and actualisation of queer Jewish selves.

6.2.2 Ritual and regulation

Matt: Why do you celebrate the holidays still like Hanukkah?

Maya: I think it's important to, um, mark as many events in your year as possible. Um, especially over the colder months, I find that time moves painfully slowly.

Matt: Mm.

Maya: One of the few things that like keeps it going are holidays. So, the tradition is nice, the nostalgia is nice, but mostly it's about time keeping and- and making sure that you appreciate the time that's- that's happening around you. You know, otherwise I would just wish away half the year and that's not a good use of time either. (Semi-structured interview, December 2020)

Rituals fulfil psychosocial needs by providing "a well-marked road along which each individual's temporal experience can travel" (Rappaport, 1999, p. 177).

200

Instead of 'wishing time away,' rituals enable us to take stock and make use of time – 'a textured experience and experienced texture' (Turner, 1982b). This affirms the argument that the embodied act of ritual performance "differentiates sensuous experience, patterns of organisation, and narratives of meaning" (Dewsbury & Cloke, 2009, p. 701). Rites of passage were crucial in differentiating and rendering coherent portions of the lifecourse into a single narrative. Such rituals could be relatively mundane, or they could converge around "moments of heightened significance" (Rappaport, 1999, p. 180) or social dramas (Turner, 1974, 1982b, 1982a). Whatever the scale, rituals enabled participants to make meaning out of their experiences in the lifecourse through its structuring principle.

Reflecting contemporary shifts in the geographic study of religion (Chen, 2017; Chen *et al*., 2021), rituals were used as tools for spatial differentiation:

> Tamara: I don't know whether it's like candles that you light on the Sabbath that maybe- maybe have been passed down or prayer books or, um, I don't know, things like that you might find in a Jewish space. You might find like lots of different—um, yeah, books are quite a- a giveaway, you see people's bookshelves and they've all got like Jewish books, like the different law—uh, codes of law and like, I don't know, different texts, um, but, I mean, it's not just about physical things as well. Like, there's that- there's that feeling. Like, if you walk into someone's home on the Sabbath and you feel that like warmth and that whole kind of peace, you know [Matt: Mm.] you've entered this- this frame of mind. Like, it's the Sabbath, it's- it's calm [Matt: Mm.], like there are no distractions, you're just gonna spend time with your family or friends. Um, so there is- there is an atmosphere. Obviously, again, it depends on the context, you know, if you're going to a house, if you're going to a synagogue, if you're going to a school, if you're going to a… but, um, yeah, you see people, you see how people are dressed and how they, um, talk to other people and how they interact, um, those can also be signs of, you know, "you're here in a Jewish space and this is how we act, and this is how we are." (Semi-structured interview, March 2021)

Rituals differentiate space through the symbols they employ and the affective atmospheres they generate. As argued in Chapter Five, spatial-temporal thresholds are materially and symbolically demarcated. For Tamara, the thresholds to Jewish space-times are indicated by the ritual symbols of candles, dress, prayer, books, and codes of law. For Josh (semi-structured interview, July 2020), queer thresholds are signalled by the ritual symbols of flags, knowledge, music, and setting. Such units of ritual performance are an integral component in the 'collective

individuation' of the ritual space-time; that is, the "substantial elements of mixture, along with the shards of already abstracts they carry, into sensed potential" (Massumi, 1997, p. 179).

The affective atmospheres triggered through rituals are both necessary conditions for – and emotional responses to – the ritual performance (Anderson, 2009). For Tamara, the calming feeling of entering a home on Shabbat is not just the result of its collective individuation, but an appropriate/obligatory disposition for one's entry into it. With spatial (trans)formation comes a corporeal (trans)formation "aligned toward a set of normative ethical and moral dispositions" (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015, p. 308). Through spatial-temporal differentiation, ritual designates and thus regulates the appropriate dispositions accompanying such transitions – something conveyed often in the language of 'grounding rhythms' (Hannah, semi-structured interview, February 2021), and summarised by Josh in his story of the lost car key:

> Josh: … like yesterday, for example, when I was at, um, evening prayers, I, um—long story short I sort of misplaced my car key and I was- I was quite worried about it but I was like also—like, if I was—it's not like I misplaced it and it was gonna get stolen, it's just like I misplaced it and sort of need to find it, and, um, I knew that nothing-nothing dreadful was gonna happen but also like I was like, "I need to stop thinking about the car key and, um, I didn't do it very successfully last night, but the point is like whatever else is going on, there's no point worrying about something you can't do anything about in that moment. Like, worry about it when it's time to worry about it [Matt: Mm.] and focus on prayers or whatever and so, yeah, I- I definitely like try and—it's not the easiest thing to do but to try and be sort of present in the moment enough to—you know, if you are, um, uh… like, if you're at a funeral but you just had good news like, okay, the good news is great but also you need to engage with the funeral and vice versa. You know, someone has passed away but you're at a wedding and, you know, I appreciate, you know, if it's—that, you know, is quite an extreme example but, you know, as long as it's not someone that like is super close to you but like, yes, you should grieve and feel sadness and go through all that process but equally, you don't do that at the wedding. Like, go to the wedding, celebrate with the couple, and- and do the other stuff outside of it, and, um [Matt: Mm.], I appreciate that's again a very extreme example but, um, yeah, I- I- I think that applies to life more generally as well and, you know, we are- we are here for x amount of time and, uh, we should try and make the best use of that time. (Semi-structured interview, July 2020)

The lost key is an integral component in the collective individuation of the Friday night prayers "where seemingly everyday objects are patterned into a relational topology of senses, movements, rhythms, and affective action" (Holloway, 2003, p. 1967). The key is symbolic of a rupture in the intended bricolage of the ritual space-time – an incongruence which distracts from the expected disposition of the ritual performer. As such, ritual performance requires skill and practice – the inculcation of appropriate dispositions which enable the realisation of the ritual space-time (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015) In this way, rituals configured space-time by demarcating, differentiating, and regulating the appropriate dispositions conducive to the (trans)formation of the affect ritual space-time.

While rituals were instrumental in queer Jewish self-actualisation, they were also used by some to streamline and thus regulate their queer Jewish selves:

> Josh: I think it was only when I was at university, probably, when I started like, uh, going to gay social—gay Jewish social groups, um, that it—I really sort of put the two identities together and then I started going to a shul in London that was—that had quite a lot of gays and there was a whole thing, and they had a Pride service every year and like—so, that made me think about it more [Matt: Mm.], but actually that—I actually found that more off-putting in that, like, I realised I didn't actually want like—if I went to shul, I went to shul to pray and, you know, be Jewish. I don't want the whole like gay stuff—a load of gay stuff going on at the same time. So, like, at Pride, for example, I didn't march with Jewish groups, I marched with other groups because I was just like "well, um, I don't necessarily see the need to put them together." (Life story interview, May 2020)

At first glance, the above quote verifies Villicana *et al.*'s finding (2016) that ethnoreligiosity – rather than sexuality – remains the primary basis for queer ethnoreligious self-construal. That said, differentiation does not entail moral hierarchy: Friday night prayers are no more significant than Pride parades, one's Jewish self no more significant than one's queer self. Instead, ritual differentiation enables one to actualise how they are queer *and* Jewish, not whether they are – traversing the fuzzy boundaries between ethnoreligiosity and queerness, and (trans)forming uneven topographies of belonging (Milligan, 2013, 2014).

Finally, it is worth noting how rituals' actualising principle lies in both their variant and invariant dynamics. Specifically, rituals convey a sense of spatial-

203

temporal (in)variance, continuity, and transcendence in the two classes of information they transmit:

> All rituals […] carry self-referential information, information concerning the current states of participants […] The second class, the canonical, is concerned with enduring aspects of nature, society or cosmos, and is encoded in apparently invariant aspects of liturgical orders. (Rappaport, 1999, p. 58)

Rituals transmit a message of consistency through contingency – tying the performer to an imagined community, and unifying the past, present, and future (Asad, 2015). In this way, ritual continuity regulated the maintenance of kinship ties *across* various life and deathscapes:

> B.C.: Um, the one holiday that I actively enjoy, and I'll explain why I enjoy it, is Hanukkah, and that is because, it must have been four years ago, I lived with—I was—I don't—I'm using the past tense, not because they are no longer my friend but because they are dead. Um, I lived with a person who—we were really- really close, and she was Hindu. Spanish-Indian, but Hindu, and I loved Holi because, obviously, everyone else's culture is way more fun than your own. So, I said, "well, why don't we go to a Holi party?" and she goes "well, only if you pick a Jewish holiday that we can do ourselves," and I said "well, all the holidays—Purim is one day so it doesn't actually count, Hanukkah is quite a nice one." It's also the holiday that my grandma, who I really like, not the one who is dying, the other one who also died of breast cancer a few years ago, um, who always came up and she's lovely. She's also a loud American, I get a lot of that through her too, who was very—she always came up—it was just lovely, because whenever she was there my father was also nicer to us because she would clap back, shall we say. Um, so I was like "well, we'll pick Hanukkah." So, every year that we lived together, and then three years that she was still alive post that, or however many years, we would do Hanukkah together. So, every day we would get each other a little present, light the Menorah, um, and then we'd sit around and play dreidel …
>
> ~
>
> Then, when she died, I was like, "I'm not doing it again." Like, it wasn't ever about me because I didn't start it [Matt: Mm.] to be like, "oh, let me just include my friend in this religious part of me that I really want to celebrate." It was more like, "you wanna do it, I'll do it for you," and I enjoyed it because she loved it, um, but then all my friends were like "that's the worst thing you can do because that's just capped—like closing it, and going well the only reason I ever did it was for her," which is true, but then the only way to keep doing it is to do it for her, which I hate the idea of, but I don't want to hate it for that reason. If I'm not gonna do it, I want it to be a choice for me rather than I'm not doing it

because now she's dead. Because I know if she was alive, we would be doing it. (Life story interview, August 2020)

In sharing small gifts, lighting the Menorah, and playing dreidel, B.C. actualises a relationship to both their friend and their grandmother – transcending time and change across various (im)mortal plains. Reflecting findings from Day (2012) and Heng (2022), B.C.'s Hanukkah performance represents a conscious act of memory-work in which kinship ties are mixed, matched, and realised through the ritual act. Their decision to take a relatively minor rite of passage, abstract it from its traditional context, and imbue it with novel meanings is a perfect example of symbolic ethnoreligiosity (Gans, 1994). Through ritual, B.C. also flexes spiritual agency in the kinship ties she sees as integral to her own subject (trans)formation. That these ties lie outside heteronormative kinship models reflects an ethos of a chosen family which "is not entirely divorced" from such "normative concepts" of the nuclear family (Preser, 2021, p. 70). Through Hanukkah, B.C. actualised a form of intimacy which operated as 'the nexus between individual authenticity and social existence,' and 'became the site' for subject (trans)formation (ibid., p. 71).

To reiterate, it is through ritual performance that people show themselves to themselves in an act of self-actualisation (Myerhoff, 1982):

> Matt: So, why if it wasn't necessarily about the religion, was- was lighting the Menorah candles still important?
>
> B.C.: That's what she liked. Also, you can make them pretty colours each night and we get them for free from Chabad.
>
> Matt: Okay.
>
> B.C.: That's what I mean, it wasn't that—it wasn't like a huge process of [Matt: Mm.] "oh God, there's the—" also, if you think of Hanukkah why would you not light the Menorah? That's literally what Hanukkah is to anyone outside of religion, it is the Menorah. She'd be like, "ooh, I'm going first." Like, that was half the enjoyment [Matt: Mm.], the process, in the same way Holi is half the process of like wiping the colour on the face. Like, why would you do it if you didn't? Because that's what the holiday is. (Life story interview, August 2020)

B.C. shows us what distinguishes rituals from other repetitive acts and habits; namely, they mobilise symbols and are narrated by myths. Ritual symbols are malleable – their enactments reflecting an act of performative agency. That the candles provided by Chabad were used in ways considered unorthodox demonstrates such malleability – a malleability that retains, nevertheless, symbolic

205

power through its perceived invariance. Ritual symbols hang in a delicate balance between ambiguity and invariance – with participants like B.C. reworking their traditional constellations in necessarily authentic performances to regulate cosmological experiences and meet psychosocial needs (Davidman, 2007; Olson *et al*., 2013).

This process is facilitated by the convergence of the canonical and the self-referential, the ideological and the concrete, through the ritual act. In lighting the Menorah, B.C. blended self-referential information relating to the chosen family with canonical information relating to the maintenance of kinship ties and the Hanukkah story. At the same time, concrete symbolic referents relating to the light and the warmth of the candles were associated with ideological referents relating to continuity, dedication, and hope. This symbolic interchange generated communitas – an auspicious moment of subject (trans)formation characterised by acute emotional belonging to, and identification with, a symbolic peoplehood (Myerhoff, 1978).

Clearly, ritual space-times are sites of great porosity and potentiality – with radically contingent meanings and outcomes ascribed to them. Their ability to actualise what they seek to realise cannot be overstated. For rituals are more than indexical phenomena; they are the tools by which things are brought into being, worlds constructed, and subjectivities (trans)formed. Below, I attend to the concept of liminality as providing the ideal conditions for the symbolic interchange.

6.3 "Somewhere in-between": liminality, liminoid, and liminal personae

> Matt: How was that last kind of like day celebrating Hanukkah before you went into lockdown?
>
> Hannah: It was nice. It was kind of bittersweet. Um, it was also my birthday. Um, so, yeah, I think we'd had plans to—so, my birthday was on a weekday, and we'd had plans to go on the Saturday to celebrate the end of Hanukkah and my sister and her partner were gonna come as well, um, and then we were gonna celebrate my birthday as well but then, I think, tier four was announced like the day before my birthday, um, so we couldn't do that anymore. So, we spontaneously, my partner and I, went to my partner's house on my birthday and lit the candles. Um, so it was quite a kind—um, yeah, it wasn't really about Hanukkah. It was kind of sort of that weird like, um, what's the word? I don't know, the whole- the whole feeling of this Pandemic when the rules are about to change and everything feels a bit heightened and a bit like, um,

strange but also like enjoy the moments that you have, that kind of feeling [Matt: Mm.], um, and so, yeah, like it kind of added to it. Like, lighting the candles and feeling that kind of gratefulness to have that evening together but knowing it was probably the last for quite a while. Um, yeah, I guess it was pretty apt this year, actually, lighting the candles in the darkness and, yeah, having that kind of sense of hope and community. (Life story interview, February 2021)

Betwixt-and-between, the pre-lockdown Hanukkah can be characterised as a liminal moment both in and out of time – imbuing the ritual performance with heightened significance and collapsing its self-referential and canonical messages into one (Rappaport, 1999). During rituals, ideological and physiological symbolic referents converge in an emotionally charged moment characterised by anti-structure (Myerhoff, 1974; Turner, 1967). Taking Rappaport, Myerhoff, and Turner together, Hannah's Menorah carried with it a canonical message symbolising the continuity of the Jewish people through the destruction and rededication of the Temple, *and* a self-referential message of anticipation, dread, and hope during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Menorah functioned as an ideological symbolic referent of constancy and creativity, *and* as a physiological symbolic referent of fear and hope in Covid Britain. It was in this moment of liminality that the optimal conditions of communitas were generated.

In this section, I explore the phenomenon of liminality – something originally associated with the separation stage in rites of passage (Turner, 1967, 1969; van Gennep, 1909) but now much more widely applied to numerous structural conditions and subject positions (Myerhoff, 1978; Wimark, 2021). I outline the "multiple, staggered, scattered, nested, and mobile" spatialisations of liminality participants encountered across the lifecourse alongside the various subject (trans)formations they provoked (Banfield, 2022, p. 1). I explore liminality as an ontological position (Massumi, 1997; Turner, 1967, 1969) – something neglected in geographic literature (Banfield, 2022; McDowell & Crooke, 2019), and characterised as inherently powerful albeit isolating, dangerous, and imbued with (trans)formative potential (Brettschneider, 2003).

6.3.1 "Summer camp is very magical for that"

Abby: Went to, yeah, Jewish youth movement growing up which was, because I had such a shit time at school, it was great. When I look back at it, I'm like, "did I enjoy going on summer camp that much?" Like, no,

it was so awkward. It's like you're at your most awkward age and you're put in the most awkward situation, but it was better than school and it was like a chance to sort of reinvent yourself, I guess, a bit and like that, um, in-between space where it's very familiar because you go every year and it's your community but also, it's completely like out of the norms of your normal life. I think like summer camp is very magical for that, um, and like becoming a leader in that context, I think, has been like really transformative, learning about different ways of doing education, like, alternative—like, informal education and like a more holistic approach to education where like my voice was valued way more than at school was amazing, um, and I think, yeah, that's been- that's been—that was wonderful and becoming a leader there was like the most empowering, confidence-building thing that I did as a young person [Matt: Mm.], um, and, yeah, when I was 18, went to Israel on a gap year and that was like, yeah, again, really transformative. (Life story interview, February 2021)

Summer camp was a significant portion in participants' lifecourses – one characterised by liminality and (trans)formative potentiality. Surprisingly, British geographers have contributed little to literature on youth summer camps despite their increasing significance in the lifecourse of young people and (trans)formative potential (Harold, 2015; Povilaitis *et al.*, 2021). Maya and I speculated that this could be because youth camps are more readily associated with middle-class, North American lifecourses than those in the UK (life story interview, June 2020). Jewish summer camps are liminal in that their communal structure "symbolises traditional Jewish life of the Eastern European shtetl" – idealised and in contrast to assimilated Jewish life in the atomised suburbs (Harold, 2015, p. 442). Outside the 'norms of normal life' (Abby, life story interview, February 2021), "the camp experience embodies liminality insofar as Jewishness permeates all aspects of daily life" (Harold, 2015, p. 441). For Abby, this was experienced through holistic educational frameworks that stood in contrast to the rigid educational structures in everyday space-time – structures which marginalised her on the grounds of "neurodivergence" (life story interview, February 2021). Outside the educational structures of the academic school year, Abby was able to play with "different ways of doing education" – a moment of great potentiality which ultimately led to an "empowering, confidence-building" subject (trans)formation.

I use the term 'play' deliberately here to introduce the concept of the liminoid. Following Lugosi (2007) and Turner (1974, 1982b), liminoid refers to anti-structural phenomena produced by, and consumed through, leisure activities –

here part of the Jewish market for summer camps. This reflects Sharpe's argument (2005, p. 256) that leisure providers are increasingly aware of the stakes they have in liminality, communitas, and subject (trans)formation – raising critical questions regarding "authenticity, community, and structural transformation." In manufacturing the conditions pertinent to empowering, confidence-building subject (trans)formation, summer camps have capital gains in the spatialisation of liminality through liminoid experience.

The punctuation of the Jewish lifecourse with summer camp is a significant part of this manufactured liminality. Marketed to those at their 'most awkward age' (Abby, life story interview, February 2021), summer camp occurs at a liminal and thus (trans)formative point between childhood and adulthood (Povilaitis *et al*., 2021). In the shtetl-based structure of camp life, young adults play with and traverse the numerous "roles and responsibilities of adulthood," in a relaxed, communitarian (though highly regulated) environment (ibid., p. 3). Between play and structure, this liminoid phenomenon – spatialised in the space-time of summer camp – leads to intense feelings of potentiality, the outcomes of which are radically contingent (ibid.). For Abby, these outcomes stretched far beyond the spatial-temporal confines of the summer camp – (trans)forming her subjectivity at every twist and turn in the lifecourse.

It should be noted, furthermore, that Harold (2015) and Povilaitis *et al*. (2021) are speaking from North American contexts where the Jewish denominational landscape is markedly different from that in the UK. Despite most participants describing themselves as having grown up in a 'Jewish bubble,' the experience of summer camp was depicted nonetheless as a significant point in the Jewish lifecourse:

> Matt: Do you have a favourite childhood memory?
>
> O.K.: Uh, favourite childhood memory… uh, favourite childhood memory was Cubs. Uh, I remember I went to a camp, and I remember kind of being—like having friends, being popular. Like, not popular, but like I remember everyone around me enjoying their time and me enjoying my time and I remember just like being quirky and people not caring so much. Yeah, I think that's probably my—did you ask my favourite or first, earliest good memory?

209

Matt: First I asked your earliest memory, then I asked your favourite memory.

O.K.: Favourite… ooh, see, favourite… is that my favourite memory as a child? Um, ooh, I mean, that is—that was pretty good—that is a very good memory that I do have from my past. Um, yeah, I think I would go with that. Yeah, I think I'd go with that.

Matt: And this was Cubs, not, uh, one of those Jewish kids' summer camps, was it?

O.K. It was a Jewish Cubs. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

This presents an original research finding in that summer camp remains an integral part of the lifecourse for young Jews in less assimilated/atomised communities where Jewishness textures daily life. This suggests it is summer camp's liminality, more so than its ethnoreligious inflections, that imbues it with (trans)formative potential. This is confirmed by the multiplex suspensions of structure participants recognised – from educational organisation (Abby, life story interview, February 2021) to social networks (O.K., semi-structured interview, November 2020), from models of observation (Blue, life story interview, August 2020) to the gendered spatialisation of religious praxis (Tamara, life story interview, January 2021). This guards against an essentialist reading of summer camp's Jewishness – encouraging instead a polyvocal understanding of the event-space's anti-structural quality.

Summer camp's anti-structural quality also included the suspension of heteronormative structures governing everyday living. For some, this was a pivotal moment in their own queer subject (trans)formation:

Louis: Um, so I got to the age of about fourteen, um, and I went to summer camp and I made a bunch of friends at summer camp who were actually older boys. Um, they were all straight which I—you know, you wouldn't have known at the time, but I know now, um, and I got a real crush on one of them and realised that I couldn't keep lying to myself about it. You know, I'd spent so much time on the school bus thinking about who I was gonna marry, which girl I was gonna marry, and trying to talk myself into why I'd have sex with girls and stuff like that, um, but that was kind of the point when I realised that it was- it wasn't gonna go away, um, and I realised that I really needed to tell someone. (Life story interview, January 2021)

Liminality can be dangerous (Brettschneider, 2003; Turner, 1969), causing a rupture in the perceived order of the lifecourse – here one of heteronormative

coupledom and reproduction. For Louis, this was experienced as an intense, even distressing, psychological realisation of his own queer subjectivity. Again, this shows us how the (trans)formative potential of liminal space-times – and the liminoid phenomenon within them – stretch beyond its spatial-temporal confines. This transcendent quality of liminality was spatialised also in participants' experiences of higher education.

6.3.2 "Now I should tell my family": separation, reincorporation, university

> Hannah: … went to uni in Leeds and I was there for three years and, um, did really well academically, um, kinda continued that, um, but also was pretty turbulent time, um, and yeah, like, um, ended up coming out in my final year, um, which at the time I felt was so late and so old. (Life story interview, February 2021)

> H.E.: I only came out in university and it was sort of like, yeah, I went to the gay club a couple of times and I met people and, you know, I was exploring, um, my sexuality and that I think got to a point when I was-*Laughs* I was with my first boyfriend and in the worst possible way I was like, "now's the time, now I should tell my family, I'm not just gonna say I'm gay, I'm gonna say I'm gay and I have a boyfriend," and they met him and—anyway, so that's how I came out … (Life story interview, August 2020)

University was a pivotal point in participants' life stories – a stage of separation and (re)incorporation in the process of queer Jewish self (trans)formation. While geographers have pointed to the contested role of universities in aged, classed, gendered, and racialised lifecourse trajectories (Dwyer & Shah, 2009; Hopkins, 2011), less attention has been paid to the liminal potential spatialised within them. According to Sharma and Guest (2012, p. 60), "the liminal status of university life leads students to seek out spaces in which they can feel they 'fit in' or belong." Indeed, the liminal spatiality of higher education can trigger an existential crisis – or social drama – where the very fabric of one's subjectivity is (re)negotiated.

All 18 participants had some form of higher education qualification – split into thirds between undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research degrees. This reflects a markedly classed subject position – showing upward socioeconomic mobility – with university functioning as "a rite of passage towards independence, responsibility, and self-determination" (ibid., p. 64).

211

The (trans)formation of queer subjectivities during university implies the suspension of heteronormative regulations in higher education institutions. As Hopkins found (2011), participants perceived university space-times as liberal and tolerant, where – like summer camps – they could experience and explore different modes of being that were both free from the regulations of home life, and prior to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood. As explored in Chapter Five, this was despite the structuring effects of heteronormativity and postsecularism that persisted in university space-times. In another example, H.E. further disclosed how – in the South African context – university space-times were structured by the legacy of Apartheid and sites of (racialised) queerphobia (Life story interview, August 2020).

In this way, we can approach liminal space-times as staggered in terms of the structures residual within them. Instead of being wholly separate, liminality is often sanctioned by structure to buttress or sustain the regimes of power regulating ordinary space-times (Myerhoff, 1974, 1975). Unfettered liminality is dangerous to social structure since, in separating liminal subjects from the structures governing everyday experience, it lures them with novel modes of being which resist (re)incorporation into structure (ibid.). As such, the entries to and exits from liminality are strictly guarded with rituals (matriculations and graduations) ensuring the liminal subject's necessary (re)incorporation and the survival of social structure. However, just as structure is residual in states of anti-structure, so too are the (trans)formations made in anti-structure residual in structure. Following Banfield (2022) and Wigley (2016), this problematises the binary and/or oppositional nature of liminality – forwarding instead a more symbiotic relationship of entanglement. Specifically, the liminal (trans)formative potential of university relies on neoliberal structures governing the provision of education *and* the assumption that students return to the roles and responsibilities governing everyday life. At the same time, the novel subject (trans)formations attributed to the university space-time stretch past the thresholds guarding its exit – informing and confirming lifecourse trajectories well beyond its occurrence.

It is for this reason that liminality and anti-structure are potentially dangerous and in need of regulation – something alluded to by Paul and his uncle's comment about his university choice:

> Paul: I deliberately chose to go to Sussex University. Um, I thought that—my understanding was that Sussex University was a kind of interesting leftie, kind of progressive place and certainly I started to get a sense of those were my politics, and that was the kind of milieu that I'd want to kind of be spending time in. Um…

> Matt: And Sussex University is in Brighton, isn't it?

> Paul: Yeah, exactly, and I remember at the time my- my—I've got a gay uncle who I didn't know was gay until I came out, and then he came out to the rest of his family, but there was a straight uncle who was like, "oh, he's gonna go to Brighton and he's gonna turn gay," or something. (Life story interview, May 2020)

The dangerous potential of Sussex University's liminal spatiality was heightened by its setting within a stereotypically queer city – echoing themes raised in Chapter Five and confirming Butler's finding (2007) that cityscapes carry with them certain identities, configurations, and cultures (habitus). Paul did in fact come out at university; something he felt was 'right to him' and a 'very good experience' (life story interview, May 2020) – demonstrating the competing, polyvocal, and contested meanings attributed to liminal surfaces (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013).

Echoing themes raised in Chapter Four, higher education was also an auspicious time for the (trans)formation of Jewish selves; the separation and (re)incorporation stage in the queer Jewish lifecourse. For some, university was a time for enveloping oneself in the Jewish community (Blue, life story interview, August 2020), for others, it was a rejuvenating separation from the 'Jewish bubbles' of their upbringing (Paul, life story interview, May 2020). Likewise, for some, university was a time for exploring more 'traditional' or observant ways of being Jewish (T.M., semi-structured interview, August 2020), for others, it was for integrating their Judaism with their queerness (Jacob, life story interview, April 2020). Again, the liminality spatialised in higher education was seen as potentially threatening for Jewish selves:

> Tamara: I haven't really experienced first-hand Antisemitism which is kind of surprising considering the times that we live in. Um, I think like a lot of—because I grew up in this- in this school where everyone came from such diverse backgrounds, like, I never witnessed or experienced

any- any Antisemitism there. There was just sort of like an understanding that everyone's different, everyone has a different background, and like we should embrace that, and we should learn about it and, yeah, so when I got to university, um, and left that bubble, um, I- I knew that there was like Antisemitism on campus because you're- you're always warned about it. I even went to this, um, this event before university for Jewish students at, um, a place called *JW3* in London which is like a cultural centre, called *Unifest* and it was basically preparing Jewish students to face Antisemitism at university, um, and they- they were just fearmongering really. Like, saying how bad it was and BDS and just so many things and I know that there was that stuff on campus because I would hear about it through other students, I'd hear about it on the news, um, you know, there were lecturers who said Antisemitic things, there were, um, like riots, I don't know, protests and, um, sometimes they got—like certain societies would get in speakers who were Antisemitic and that always like made news on campus, um, but like as far as I'm aware, I haven't experienced any myself. (Life story interview, January 2021)

Outside the home-life 'bubble,' university is a threatening liminal space-time due to the persistence of Antisemitic structures *and* the lack of safeguarding regulations operating within regular space-time (Gidley *et al*., 2020). Paradoxically, this (trans)forms Jewish subjectivities as ones in need of protection against the (racialised) Antisemitic others roaming unchecked in the liminal space-time. This shows how university campuses are "contested locations" in terms of "politics and power relations" with competing meanings and ambiguous potentialities (Hopkins, 2011, p. 158). Below, I attend to the liminal subject positions (trans)formed in, and of, this state of liminality.

6.3.3 In 'a grey area': alienation and liminal personae

Clearly, liminality functions as an auspicious space-time for subject (trans)formation and the (re)negotiation of identity and belonging. But liminality also represents a unique ontological position caused by, and conducive to, further spatialised liminality (Massumi, 1997; Turner, 1967, 1969), an argument neglected in geographic analyses (Banfield, 2022; McDowell & Crooke, 2019). The term 'liminal personae' refers to those who lie "betwixt-and-between the positions assigned" by structure – typically ritual performers in the separation stage of rites of passage and those in socially marginal positions (Turner, 1969, p. 95). Participants can be considered liminal personae as both queers and Jews

(Schnoor, 2006; Shneer, 2007) – an inherently powerful, potentially dangerous, and uniquely isolating subject position (Brettschneider, 2003). For example:

> Alex: I'm really dismissive of, and often quite fearful of, my emotional self and the messier bits. I can tell you how I'm- how I'm—what I'm thinking about, and I can talk to you at great length about how that feels, but actually feeling it myself is often really difficult.
>
> Matt: Mm.
>
> Alex: I think sometimes that's because, um, I do maybe sit in a- in a grey area of a lot of categories. So- so, you know, I'm not gay, I'm not straight: I'm somewhere in-between. I'm not Jewish, I'm not *goyim*: I'm somewhere in-between. Like, I'm not German, I'm not British: I'm somewhere in-between. I'm not White, I'm not Dark: I'm White passing which is, arguably, somewhere in-between … (Life story interview, September 2020)

Liminal personae are often feared and considered dangerous – even by liminal personae themselves – reflecting Douglas' dirt theory (1966) and the preference for, yet suspicion of, White-but-not-White-enough immigrant populations (Gans, 1979; Papadelos, 2021). In being feared, the peripheralised status of liminal personae is thus affirmed in their marginalisation – ensuring a self-fulfilling prophecy of liminality. For example, the elderly Jews in Myerhoff's ethnography (1978) were spatially segregated in the day centre as their aged bodies were seen by younger people as dangerous reminders of their own mortality. In their segregation, the elderly residents were further separated from the structures of everyday living – thus ensuring their liminal subject position through lack of representation in the social fabric of daily life (ibid.).

Liminal personae often find themselves between numerous social groups – leading to intense feelings of social isolation or alienation. Generally, this was communicated through an implicit sense of otherness:

> O.K.: … I always felt quite different to my family, felt quite different to the people I was at school with. I guess I just felt very different, um, and I guess you can call that the queer experience, but I just felt very different to everything that was going on around me and I had- I had this kind of like seeking, of wanting to know what that was … (Life story interview, October 2020)

> Tamara: I went to the same school my whole- my whole life, um, in- in Manchester and it was an all-girls independent school. Um, it wasn't a

215

religious school but I was actually thinking about this the other day, I guess it- it- it was very Christian because when I was in primary school we had to sing hymns every day in assembly and, at the time, I remember, I don't know, I enjoyed the songs because we did it every day and it was fun, but at the same time like when it got to all, um, the- the, you know, the name Jesus or something, that didn't sit quite right with me. (Life story interview, January 2021)

Reflecting Wimark's study (2021) of queer refugees as liminal personae in Sweden, alienation represents participants' embodied responses to the structuring principles which subjectified their queer Jewish selves. Feeling 'different' or 'not quite right' is thus the mark of liminal personae, of being just outside the regulated subject positions of the prevailing social structures. Though liminality was often considered dangerous or polluting, it also fostered (trans)formative potential. With alienation comes the drive to 'create belongings in the in-betweens' (ibid.) – something evident in B.C.'s experience of their mother's divorce:

> B.C.: I should mention my parents got divorced when I was thirteen. I feel like that should've been mentioned *Laughs*.
>
> Matt: And how did that kinda go down in the community?
>
> B.C.: Ooh, they hate—ooh, they hated it. They hated her, they tried to get her to move out of the community. Um, she was the first woman in the community, at all, since the beginning of time, to divorce her husband. There were other people who—so like we knew—well, not knew, that we've heard of. So, there was a woman who ran away with her lesbian lover, like all of that, but they leave [Matt: Mm.], the man is left, *In a shocked, sympathetic tone* "oh, my God." I mean, obviously, looking back I fully understand why these women left but she was like, "no, I'm still staying, these are my children, I'm not uprooting them just for the sake that you don't want me." See, this is what I mean, I come from like a very strong—even though she has many- many of her own issues and passed them all down to me there's that bit of it that I definitely got which was like, "no, try and—you make me move if you want me." They threatened to not allow her to buy kosher food or let her kids go to the Jewish school. Like, they really tried, um, and then she became friends with all the women who had really- really abusive husbands and made like a little friendship group which is really sweet looking back on it. (Life story interview, August 2020)

Betwixt-and-between, B.C.'s mother could fly under the radar and develop alternate social support networks which ran alongside the hegemonic, gendered structuring principles. This exemplifies why liminal personae are considered potentially dangerous for social order: the drive for belonging leads to political and symbolic acts of resistance manifest in "yearnings for repair, rejuvenation, justice,

and redemption" (Brettschneider, 2003, p. 32). Ritual liminality thus runs alongside structure – providing liminal personae clandestine modes of self-actualisation against the structuring principles of the dominant social order.

6.4 Buttmitzvah: communitas in the city

For some, the early hours of the morning are a time when few are awake, the city quiet, and the streets empty. But in London's East End, the dimly lit alleyways are teaming with late-night revellers. In recent years, districts like Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, and Whitechapel have undergone a rapid, albeit contested, process of gentrification, and are now synonymous with trendy clubs, pubs, and wine bars (James, 2014). The Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (Figure 13), located just off Pollard Square, has been a cultural, political, and social hub of the East End since 1887.[25] Recently, the venue has become a popular watering hole for students at the nearby Queen Mary University of London and a new wave of young urban professionals who are spatially segregated from the club 'regulars':

Figure 13: The Bethnal Green Working Men's Club

---

[25] Photo taken online from Engelhart (2014, n.p.).

Downstairs, the octogenarians still have their cards and gambling machine. But upstairs, the space is used for concerts, burlesque shows, voga (a dynamic fusion of yoga and vogueing), a pop-up Chinese restaurant and [….] wild, unhinged good times. (Engelhart, 2014, n.p.)

Now and again, the footpaths crossing Weavers Fields and the A1209 from the Bethnal Green Underground Station become thresholds – membranes of great porosity and potentiality (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013) – to what has been marketed as the UK's 'first queer Jewish club night' (Smith, 2016). Buttmitzvah is a camp, erotic, playful, and satirical celebration of queer Jewish life in postsecular Britain. The evening is set against the backdrop of the Rimmer family – pun intended – hosting their daughter Becky's Bat Mitzvah. Facilitated by a troupe of highly coordinated performers, Buttmitzvah is more than a raunchy get together. It is a surface of "dynamic textured platforms for journeying and stages for the performance of ritual"; a polyvocal mixture of (im)material 'textures, densities, and thickness' culminating in highly variegated experiences and meanings (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013, pp. 1105-6). Below, I explore the Bethnal Green Buttmitzvah as a special type of space-time characterised by anti-structure; a moment of communitas generated through ritual performance.

First, I outline the mythic backdrop conveyed through, and actualised in, Buttmitzvah. In doing so, I argue that Buttmitzvah represents a liminoid phenomenon, performed by liminal personae, and spatialised in the liminal event-space of the working men's club. Next, I look at how ritual performance generates communitas, before accounting for the uneven topographies of belonging inculcated in its realisation. I close by considering the radically contingent outcomes of communitas – exploring the relationship between ritual and resistance, and the event's reliance on commercial night-time economies and neoliberalism-led gentrification. Ultimately, Buttmitzvah is a collective individuation of exciting potential – a queer Jewish rite of passage which resists competing modes of subjectivation through its very performance.

6.4.1 The Buttmitzvah Becky: myth and the liturgical order

Traditionally a working-class neighbourhood with strong French Protestant, Irish Catholic, and Ashkenazi Jewish heritage, Bethnal Green has seen many cultural, demographic, and political shifts over the years. Immigration to London's East End

has been a notable aspect of the cultural landscape (James, 2014) – following a pattern of successive, culturally distinct waves (DeHanas, 2016).

The first migrant group to become associated with the East End were the Huguenots – French Calvinists fleeing violent persecution from the Catholic state in the early-17th century. The Huguenots, largely weavers by trade, were centralised around Spitalfields – their presence reflected still in the ethnoreligious landscape through the naming of parks and thoroughfares. An enclave community at first, the Huguenots followed a linear pattern of assimilation whereby the increased socioeconomic mobility and stability brought with their associated trade enabled them to disperse to the proto-suburbs growing on the outskirts of the city. The Huguenots were followed by Irish Catholic migrants fleeing *an Gorta Mór* (The Great Famine) in the mid-1800s. Though the London Irish were largely concentrated in Kilburn, Islington, and Camden, a sizeable community settled in the East End – their Catholic faith still manifest in the urban environment via the high concentration of Catholic schools in the area (DeHanas, 2016).

Towards the end of the 1800s, Ashkenazi Jews fleeing pogroms in the Pale of Settlement began to settle in the area – something which, according to Liane (life story interview, August 2020), led to classed and denominational friction with the small yet socioeconomically significant Sephardi community already residing there. By the turn of the 20th century, the Jewish population of the East End had grown to over 100,000 people, leading to the district becoming known colloquially as 'Little Jerusalem' (DeHanas, 2016). Indeed, nostalgic depictions of the East End's Jewish heritage were evident in participants' narratives:

> R: … we learned about some of the- the like, um, the Jews in the old East End, uh, like the working-class Jews, um, who- who helped fight fascism at that time; um, and, uh, I think my nan would've been pleased to hear about that as well, um, uh, may her memory be a blessing. She-she died in 2005, um, and she was a big old Cockney. Um, just the most-the most amazing old lady you ever met … (Life story interview, November 2020)

Such nostalgic cultural memories of the East End have been observed by James (2014, p. 652), in that that collective memories of diasporic space are "appropriated across ethnic boundaries" for a myriad of political ends. Following the devastation of the Second World War, much of the population (Jewish or

219

otherwise) began to leave the East End due to extensive damage sustained during the Blitz and increased socioeconomic mobility.

With the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1972, East Pakistan's independence as Bangladesh in 1971, and the Immigration Act of 1971, a substantial population of (largely Muslim) Bangladeshi migrants began to settle in the East End (DeHanas, 2016). Since then, the area has become renowned for its British-Bengali cultural landscape – featuring prominently in popular and political representations of Bengali Muslims (ibid.). This unique demographic history has led to the emergence of 'infrasecular spaces' (della Dora, 2018) such as the Brick Lane Mosque (Figure 14), which began life as a Huguenot Church in the 18th century before being converted into an Ashkenazi synagogue in the 19th century before finally being (re)opened as a mosque in 1976 (Williams, 2020).[26]

Figure 14: The Brick Lane Mosque

---

[26] Photo taken online from Williams (2020, n.p.).

Such shifts in the ethnoreligious landscape have had widespread ramifications on public discourses on race, religion, and ethnicity. Coaxed by racist and xenophobic structures relating to postsecularism (Asad, 1993; Kong, 2010), debates concerning the role of religion in the public sphere, demographic changes, extremism, and 'grooming gangs' have taken alarming presence in the British public consciousness (Chambers *et al*., 2018; DeHanas, 2016). Such debates often crystallise around highly publicised events – or social dramas (Turner, 1974, 1982b) – which (trans)form, and are (trans)formed by, the postsecular landscape. For example, Saint Mary's Park – located between Adler Street, White Church Lane, and Whitechapel Road – was renamed Altab Ali Park in 1998 after the racist murder of Altab Ali, a 25-year-old Bangladeshi textile worker, in 1978.

It is against this postsecular backdrop that a group of queer Jews founded Buttmitzvah – demonstrating the "multiple and flexible agency of different social actors in relation to the production of complex" ritual space-times (Chen, 2017). Despite this polyvocality, however, the evening follows a highly coordinated liturgical order; that is, the order in which the various components of the Ritual Complex are enacted (Rappaport, 1999). Specifically:

> O.K.: So, uh, Buttmitzvah is, uh, a night in which the idea is that it's- it's centred around a fake Bat Mitzvah for a girl who's got two Jewish parents of which are both drag queens, uh, the man is in drag as- the man is in drag as the male but he's dragged up as a male, um, who play her parents, and it's a night where you go and you dance to Jewish music but also like normal, general like mainstream music. Uh, it's a club night, basically. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

In a satirical performance of a well-known Jewish rite of passage, Buttmitzvah is an event spatialised in the event-space of the Bethnal Green Working Men's Club that centres the presence of liminal personae through the liminoid liturgical form. Liminality is spatialised at various scales during Buttmitzvah. In the broadest sense, it is spatialised in the urban setting of Bethnal Green – a neighbourhood in a process of transition between two different states. Historically a (contested) site of transition for new immigrant populations, the area has felt the brunt of growing gentrification – something catalysed by the 2012 Olympics social drama (Watt, 2013). With property and state-led gentrification, many Eastenders are being driven out by rising housing costs and the gradual,

221

albeit resisted, (re)aggregation of the area from working-class to middle-class (ibid.).

On another level, liminality is spatialised in the segregation of partygoers from regulars in the working men's club (Engelhart, 2014). As sites traditionally associated with classed, gendered, provincialised, and racialised modes of being, working men's clubs are also 'succumbing to modern life' (ibid., n.p.). The club is thus an event-space in transition between an ageing form of recreation and newer, highly individualised leisure activities – where, through liminality, Tradition and contemporaneity brush up against one another.

Buttmitzvah centres the presence of liminal personae through the liminoid liturgical order; that is, through the embodied and discursive (trans)formation of a Ritual Complex blending myth, symbol, and ritual with contemporary leisure activities (Lugosi, 2007; Rappaport, 1999). Buttmitzvah is named as a queer Jewish event; a space *for* queer Jews at a time when "Antisemitism [and Queerphobia] is becoming popular again" (Cole in Tohill, 2019, n.p.). Indeed, naming was an integral component in queer Jewish space demarcation:

Matt: It's a celebration of being both queer and Jewish?

O.K.: Yeah- yeah.

Matt: How so?

O.K.: Um, because the- the people that are—because it—I mean, it's branded as a Jewish event. Like, it's- it's branded as such, um, even the name Buttmitzvah is- is a kind of play on the word Bat but using its spelling in that sort of way, um, and then also because, uh, the jokes that are made by the people that are kind of running the event are Jewish jokes but also queer jokes but also like Jewish queer jokes. It's- it's the inclusiveness of the kind of two aspects of my identity or heritage—and heritage. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

By "stating very loudly" that Buttmitzvah is a queer Jewish space (T.M., semi-structured interview, August 2020), the organisers (trans)form a mythic framing of the event which assumes a common past among the ritual performers and renders the symbols incorporated within it meaningfully Jewish *and* queer (Rappaport, 1999). Following Bint Abdullah Sani (2015), such acts of vocal projection audibly and symbolically demarcate boundaries – inscribing the space-time with the relevant Ritual Complex. For example, the parodical Bat Mitzvah for

a North London, suburban Jewish girl named Becky spoke to a shared ethnoreligious framework:

> Matt: So, in- in this context what does it [Becky] mean?
>
> Blue: It means like very materialistic Jewish princess, like, never expects to have to work [Matt: Yeah.], normally obsessed with fashion, not very interesting or deep. That is—and Jewish, specifically [Matt: Okay.], um, from the name Rebecca like being standard for Jewish names. (Life story interview, August 2020)

To reiterate, myths are "sets of conceptions" which "draw upon and reflect people's cultural environment" – shaping the "actions and perceptions of those who accept or challenge them" (Lugosi, 2007, p. 168). The Buttmitzvah Becky is thus a mythic character who, through the canonical and self-referential information they narrate, imbues the liturgical order with coherency and meaning (Rappaport, 1999).

The ritual performance sanctioned within Buttmitzvah's liturgical order is highly coordinated. The evening features a satirical performance of rituals typically associated with a Bat Mitzvah though not necessarily religiously prescribed – a unique form of symbolic ethnoreligiosity (Gans, 1979). For example, one of the partygoers is elected to stand in for the Buttmitzvah Becky whom the others dance the *hora* around and who is given a raunchy, parodical Bat Mitzvah speech to read aloud to the dance hall. As such, the evening mimics the rituals facilitating and actualising the transition between childhood and adulthood – a performance heightened by the evening's organisation around special and transitory dates in the Hebraic calendar e.g., Passover, Purim, and (almost exclusively) Shabbat. In doing so, the ritual performers transmit the canonical messages associated with pivotal rites of passage in the Jewish lifecourse. Simultaneously, they transmit self-referential messages of persistence and inclusivity – where the performance's setting in the liminal event-space of the working men's club and the (re)incorporation of queer selves into the ritual performance converge with liminoid leisure activities.

Through ritual performance, the past is unified with present – a queer Jewish rite of passage meshing the queer *and* Jewish aspects of oneself in an affective bricolage of mythic fragments and ritual symbols (Myerhoff, 1978). In this way,

223

Buttmitzvah is "less a container than a membrane: a filler of exteriorities continually entering and traversing it" (Massumi, 1997, p. 186) where queer Jewish selves can be actualised in a liminal opportunity "for flexible and transitional thinking in challenging environments" (McDowell & Crooke, 2019, p. 335).

Buttmitzvah's liturgical order is awash with queer and Jewish ritual symbols: the queer Jewish jokes and backstories, the fancy dress and drag costumes, the haptic ritual props (e.g., the chair used in the hora and a Friday Night dinner table set). These ritual symbols are embodied in the liminoid phenomena of the event-space (partying, play, satire) – representing a unique blend between the ideological and the concrete which, in turn, generates a moment both in and out of time marked by an intense emotional belonging to, and identification with, the imagined community actualised within. Below, I look at how these symbols are mobilised in the various ritual performances texturing the event-space.

6.4.2 "I'm making it sound like a utopia"

Hannah: I don't usually feel at home in the sort of queer nightlife but, actually, there's a night called Buttmitzvah, uh, which is a queer Jewish night, um, and I've been a couple of times and it's really nice, um, and it does—it's really cool to feel that intersection of both, um, and I'm not massively into dressing up but, um, I remember the last time I went, I went and I wore like a shirt and a kippah and it felt—and so it was kinda draggy in a sense, um, and it was really nice. It felt very—it was a really cool expression, um, that wasn't—yeah, that was really just like no one was really looking, um, it was just nice. Um, that was really cool. Um, it was very accepting, very inclusive, and it had- it had both—yeah, it had both things that I was just talking about in that, you know, went in and instantly, the group I was with, we all recognised different people, um, because of Jewish connections and we were having really interesting conversations about kind of, you know, what we were expecting from the night and they did some- they did some skits and it was like we were at this Bar Mitzvah and it was kind of this quite intellectual take on things and it was like—um, it was very debatey [Matt: Mm.] in that kind of Jewish like, "what- what do we…" it wasn't kind of—it was having fun for the sake of fun but there was also commentary to it, um, which felt very Jewish, um, but then it was also just ridiculous, and people were wearing all kinda things like drag and not—and just themselves and, um, yeah, it was a real celebration of kind of—um, like someone blew like a shofar on stage, I think, and then like, um, there was like Israeli dancing and things like that but then, at the same time, we were all being so queer in that space and that was quite liberating because I'm sure so many people in that room have felt quite excluded from Jewish spaces if they grew up more orthodox or whatever, but like literally someone was like

wielding a dildo on stage or something, and it was just—yeah, it was just bizarre and whacky, um, but just, yeah, accepting. (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

During the Bethnal Green Buttmitzvah, the blowing of the shofar combines with the camp Europop beats on the dancefloor; the Jewish intellectual Tradition of debate with the party-like aura of the club; the rhythmic dancing of the hora with the dildo-wielding partygoer. These are all ritual symbols with highly sensory components – components which, through their actualisation in ritual, fuse the ideological with the concrete (Myerhoff, 1974; Turner, 1967). It is through this symbolic interchange that Buttmitzvah is differentiated from other queer nightlife spaces. For example, the act of dancing the hora around the Buttmitzvah Becky (Figure 15) provides a psychosocial experience of "being together during the ritual dance" (Nowicka, 2016, p. 250) – an experience conjuring deeply intimate memories of ethnoreligious acquisition and the caregivers associated with its transmission (Myerhoff, 1978). [27]

Figure 15: Dancing the hora around Becky Rimmer and her father

---

[27] Photo taken from the event's Facebook page.

225

The mnemonic sensory triggers, inculcated through emotive ritual performance, generate an affective atmosphere both in and out of time (Anderson, 2009; Holloway, 2006). In these moments of communitas, performers feel:

> an intense feeling of community, manifest through the production of a liminal identity creating a feeling of equality as it erases culturally defined encumbrances of role, status, reputation, class, caste, sex, or other structural niche. (Cox, 2018, p. 32)

Communitas thus reflects an interpersonal relationship which transcends differentiation and actualises one's belonging to, and connection with, an imagined community or symbolic peoplehood (Myerhoff, 1974, 1975, 1978) – something Hannah experienced as a presumed sense of commonality with the other ritual performers. The ability to transcend differentiation rests on communitas' anti-structural quality – "the liberation of human capacities […] from the normative constraints incumbent" upon one's subject position within the sociostructural relations constellating space and time (Turner, 1982b, p. 44).

Reflecting themes raised in Chapter Five, Hannah experienced anti-structure as a sense of liberation from the gendered, heteronormative panopticon regulating everyday experience – a relaxed feeling of 'no one really looking' at her gender-play via ritual dress. At the same time, by dressing 'kinda draggy' and wearing a kippah, Hannah actualised and reinforced the anti-structural quality of communitas – a deliberate yet playful act of externalisation within the in-betweens which (trans)formed her own queer Jewish subjectivity free from the regulating forces of heteronormative and postsecular hegemony (Milligan, 2013, 2014). As such, ritual performance functions as a form of resistance by realising a liminal space-time away from the structures governing everyday living. Within these liminal space-times, ritual performers play with alternate modes of being, make subversive political statements, and take with them their novel subject (trans)formations beyond the spatial-temporal confines of the ritual act (ibid.).

Reflecting Doan's critique (2007) of the expected Foucauldian heterotopia of queer spaces, Hannah also recognised the utopian picture of Buttmitzvah she portrayed:

> Hannah: Um, I'm making it sound like a utopia, it was kind of annoying, there were like some people there who were there for the like glitter and

the stuff that I spoke about before. Like, there were people I recognise from like, you know, Jewish camp who aren't gay but were [Matt: Mm.] kind of there as allies and because it was Jewish, which is fun, but it also kind of—there's a part of me that feels quite bitter when, um, I'm in queer spaces when you see—I don't know, there's that debate about—around like, you know, whether straight people should be going to like gay clubs or whatever, um, and there are—you know, obviously, there are different cases where different things work and feel good and whatever, but, um, I do always feel a bit of resentment and when I know that people are there for that kind of gay male fantasy of like [Matt: Mm.], um, "we're gonna have loads of glitter and loads of fun and draw pride flags on our cheeks," and it's like, that's great, that is fun for a lot of people, but, yeah, I want queer spaces to just be [Matt: Mm.] queer for everyone and for people to get equally as excited about drag kings as they do about glitter. (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

Like B.C.'s experience of 'male hormones' in gay spaces (semi-structured interview, September 2020) and Misgav and Johnston's take (2014) on Douglas' dirt theory (1966), Hannah experienced glitter as a polluting substance symbolic of "ontological anxieties" concerning "order and disorder, borders and crossings, being and not being" (Misgav & Johnston, 2014, p. 732). For Hannah, glitter – and the embodied response of bitterness it inculcated – represents the persistence of gendered, heteronormative structures and the fetishised 'gay male fantasy' of queer nightlife into the intended anti-structural space-time of Buttmitzvah. This problematises the intended liturgical order of the Buttmitzvah communitas as one fostering communality, inclusivity, and utopian social belonging.

The persistence of structure within the Buttmitzvah communitas is evident also in Abby's experience of being the 'queer unwanted' (Casey, 2007; Misgav & Johnston, 2014):

Abby: Oh, yeah, like queer Jewish spaces like Buttmitzvah is really fun but it's also like just so- so like, um—it's just very like gay. Like, it's very gay not queer energy and very like male-dominated [Matt: Mm.], um, which is really sad. Um, like the first time I went it was really fun and it was Halloween, and it was great and then the 2nd time I went I was like— I just had that feeling that I was like, "ah, like, I need to be next to someone who like is- is—maybe reads more as queer [Matt: Mm.] so that I can feel like I have a place here." Basically, it was misogynistic like *Laughs* is the long-winded way of saying that.

~

Abby: I've only been to two [Matt: Mm.] and like it could've been any number of things. I just feel like I know that in that moment I felt like I

had to—I wasn't like enough, I didn't feel like [Matt: Mm.]—you know, I was looking at people being like, "you do know like this is my space, right?" It wasn't that—it just didn't feel like implicit, um, yeah [Matt: Mm.], and I think it is just quite hard to find—as—I think it is—I mean, I don't know how I feel now because I think in the past year, I've reached like a new level of like self-assuredness in like most aspects in terms of like [Matt: Mm.] my queerness and queer expression and reading and all of that, but [Matt: Mm.] like it is hard to find, I think, as like a femme woman, to find space where I don't feel like I have to prove my, um, like validity there. (Life story interview, February 2021)

As argued previously, liminality and communitas are never fully cleaved off from structure. For Abby, Buttmitzvah remains a ritual space-time that is 'male-dominated' – (trans)forming her femme subjectivity through a feeling of out-of-placeness and a yearning for belonging. This leads us to an interesting observation regarding the persistence of structure within liminality and communitas: if one is privileged within certain social structures, they may not be aware of their persistent subjectifying power within moments they perceive as anti-structural.

Whereas Josh (semi-structured interview, July 2020) and T.M. (semi-structured interview, August 2020) made no mention of the gendered structures operating within the Buttmitzvah communitas, Abby (life story interview, February 2021) and Hannah (semi-structured interview, February 2021) were unable to overlook them since they remained subjectified as femme queer Jews within the liminal event-space. This does not take away from the liberatory experience of communitas felt by certain selves and others during Buttmitzvah but shows how communitas' effects are felt insofar as one is free from the regulatory structures which persist within its realisation. In other words, (anti-)structure is in the eye of the beholder, and one's experience of communitas may indeed reveal more about their own subject position than the supposed lack of structure.

The excitement and disappointment, alienation and incorporation of the ritual performance adds emotive elements to the collective individuation of the Buttmitzvah event-space – heightening its (trans)formative potential (Massumi, 1997). The unique subject position of each performer adds to the affective bricolage of the working men's club – opening "new doors for gendered struggle" over ownership of, and thus belonging in, the social fabric of the Buttmitzvah communitas (ibid., p. 183). This contributes to the "repotentialisation" of the event-

space; a space where anything could happen from the (trans)formation of novel subjectivities to the desire to actualise social belonging elsewhere (ibid.). Ritual symbols are thus "highly charged emotionally and ambiguous" (Myerhoff, 1974) – their reception and performance dependent upon the unique subject positions of the performers who embody them.

6.4.3 Ritual and resistance: Buttmitzvah as local style

> Matt: Um, have I already asked how you felt when you went there [to Buttmitzvah]?
>
> O.K.: No, um, I remember feeling—I remember the first time I went, it just felt, uh, really liberating. It felt good because it had the positive—it had history, it had my history, but it also had my queer future. It- it sounds really strange. Like, there was something really nice about like, um, interacting with people who've had the same experience that I have had. Um, so there'd be people that I would know there through my Jewish past that—them and I were never out, or we weren't really—didn't really engage with each other because [Matt: Mm.] we weren't out and then—or because neither of us wanted to kind of like recognise—or even just because we were different age groups and therefore we were different—our circles were different, and then being in that environment and then being like "oh, we- we have that in common, we have the fact that we have that history—we have that history, and we also have that kind of identity that we have in common," um, and then also kind of it was amazing to be in an environment that was celebrating the two key aspects, two- two of the key aspects, to my identity. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

Through ritual communitas, Buttmitzvah conveys the size, tenacity, and social composition of queer Jews in postsecular Britain; realising alternate modes of being – if only for a few hours – which are liberated from the heteronormative, postsecular structures regulating everyday experience (Rappaport, 1999). Ritual is resistance since the self-referential information it transmits cannot be falsified in the former's performance. In centring the presence of liminal personae, enmeshing them into a millennia-old social drama, and liberating them – if only temporarily – from hegemonic social structure, Buttmitzvah is a queer Jewish rite of passage which blends the past, present, and future, and thus functions as an undeniable embodiment of queer Jewish selfhood (Brettschneider, 2003; Milligan, 2013, 2014).

Above, I looked at how communitas emerged as a staggered phenomenon due to its anti-structural nature – leading to uneven topographies of social

belonging and (re)potentialisation (Massumi, 1997). Below, I critically explore the political ramifications of Buttmitzvah by looking at the interplay between communitas, its liminoid organisation, and commercialisation before returning to the performative role of ritual in meaning-making and self-actualisation.

As evident in Buttmitzvah's reliance on the night-time leisure economy, liminality and communitas are never fully separated from structure. According to Lugosi (2007, p. 163), "queer consumption in commercial hospitality spaces is often considered a manifestation of community values and identity" – where queer consumers (trans)form the values of an imagined community through commercial exchange. Reflecting Nye's argument (1993) that space grounds imagined communities, queer-focused venues function as an important nexus for the queer community whereby the heteronormative ordering of everyday space can be questioned (Atalay & Doan, 2019; Doan & Higgins, 2011). The embodied performances of the Buttmitzvah liturgical order are central to the production of the liminoid space – routinising and guaranteeing the 'visibility and audibility' of queerness and Jewishness as part of the "normative dimension of patronage" (Lugosi, 2007, p. 171). As such, Buttmitzvah reflects a tension between communitas and commerciality whereby "leisure providers have a stake in whether communitas emerges and may be strongly motivated to work to generate it" (Sharpe, 2005, p. 257).

Diverging from Turner and Turner's original view (1978), Buttmitzvah represents a "rival, mimetic structure" that is dependent on commercial processes of exchange yet outside the heteronormative, postsecular regulations of ordinary space-time (Wigley, 2016, p. 710). In this sense, Buttmitzvah reflects local style – a form of resistance "understood more in the frictional than the oppositional sense: a rub against the rules, rather than a breaking of them" (Massumi, 1997, p. 187). The Buttmitzvah communitas reflects a form of resistance in flow (ibid.), a "vortex for the expression of conflicts and contradictions at the heart of" life in heteronormative, postsecular Britain (Vadakkiniyil, 2019, p. 16). Buttmitzvah thus represents a quasi-state between structure and anti-structure, communitas and commercial exchange – simultaneously subverting and maintaining the social structures texturing everyday experience.

The tension between Buttmitzvah and commercialisation was prominent in participants' concerns over the presence of straights and/or non-Jews:

Matt: How did you find Buttmitzvah?

T.M.: Mm, yeah, I think it's got too big, um, I think it—um, it initially felt like genuinely a place which was, um- um, both genuinely queer and Jewish at the same time and I think as it got larger it starts to be both of those things kind of in name only. So, there's lots of people who are, um—yeah, so- so- so, like the first time I went, there were, yeah, lots of kind of queer Jewish people and by the time—the most recent time I went there, it was kind of a rarity to meet somebody else who was Jewish and queer and there were lots of people who were just Jewish or just queer or neither.

Matt: Mm.

T.M.: Um, yeah, so it felt less of a kind of, um, special space for that.

Matt: So, then do you think it's also the composition of a space that makes it, for example, queer and/or Jewish? As in the people who go there?

T.M.: Um, yeah, I guess because if you're—I mean, it would be- it would be—yeah- yeah- yeah, it does. Yeah, the fact that it seemed like there weren't people, um, and people going along for the ride rather than for the—rather than it being a place for them.

Matt: Right, okay.

T.M.: I guess, because it's what you get from a club night because it's designed to entertain and kind of make- make money as well as like—um, as well as just kind of creating a safe space. (Semi-structured interview, August 2020)

T.M. recognised a growing tendency for queer-focused hospitality venues to assimilate into the mainstream night-time leisure economy through the accrual of "political clout and economic power that is, at least partially, a result of the social and cultural capital" (Doan & Higgins, 2011, p. 6). While the Streisand show tunes, Europop club hits, and hora may unite the Jewish histories and queer futures of queer Jewish performers, they also function as liminoid phenomena which can be marketed and packaged to a wider range of audiences. Following Bint Abdullah Sani (2015, p. 298), when queer Jews inhabit the Buttmitzvah event-space, they (trans)form it "in ways that generate a qualitatively different sense of being-in-place." This (trans)formation helps generate communitas, ground an imagined community, and actualise queer Jewish selves. The presence of non-queer/non-Jewish bodies, therefore, triggers an ontological anxiety concerning the intended

purpose of the liturgical order. This was expressed by participants along three lines: acceptance, (in)authenticity, and ownership of space.

First, following Rappaport (1999) and Holloway (2003, p. 1967), "the collective individuation of the [Buttmitzvah] space-time can be different depending on the resonance and 'thingness'" of the liturgical order for different audiences. Buttmitzvah assumes a social contract between the ritual performers – an acceptance and recognition of the Ritual Complex embodied within (Rappaport, 1999). To accept the liturgical order, ritual performers must first accept the rules of the game – its habitus – to receive the ritual form as meaningful (ibid.). It could be argued that non-queers/non-Jews have not acquired the necessary symbolic identity kits for the liturgical order to hold resonance for them (Milligan, 2017).

But symbolic ethnoreligious acquisition does not guarantee acceptance of the liturgical order:

> Matt: Have you ever been [to Buttmitzvah]?
>
> Paul: It's—I- I have no interest. They seem to be satirising the things that I really dislike about my childhood and I- and I totally get how that works and I've done enough cultural studies to know how people appropriate and re-signify and all that stuff, um, and you know, good for them. I absolutely do not want to be dancing the hora while Vanessa Feltz (Figure 16)—I mean, no- no- no- no- no.[28] But also, I have friends who kind of—I wonder the people who aren't Jewish, how they make sense of it… I don't know, there's something about it that isn't for me. (Life story interview, May 2020)

Symbolic ethnoreligious acquisition is a constant process of flux and change – with radically contingent outcomes flowing over the unique lifecourse trajectories of the ritual performer. This heightens the malleability of ritual symbols which, through their performance, inculcate empowering moments of actualisation in some and strong feelings of aversion in others. Reflecting Gökarıksel and Secor's study (2010) of Islamicness in Turkish veiling-fashion, this shows us how Jewishness *and* queerness are themselves ambiguous and fluid phenomena – reflecting the unique subject positions of the ritual performers rather than fixed identities.

---

[28] Photo taken from the event's Facebook page.

Figure 16: "Auntie" Vanessa Feltz poses for a photo with Becky Rimmer

Whether one can receive the meaningful liturgical order relates to the question of (in)authenticity. "Visceral experiences" are "central to the authentication of place and encounter" (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013, p. 1119). As such, event organisers must inculcate the necessary sensory triggers – through the liturgical form – to ensure the generation of communitas (Scriven, 2014; Sharpe, 2005). If ritual performers do not – or cannot – accept the liturgical order, then feelings of incongruence or inauthenticity emerge.

Reflecting discussions concerning the regulation of communitas (Myerhoff, 1975; Sharpe, 2005), it seems that, for T.M., Buttmitzvah is at a tipping point between authentic communitas and an inauthentic charade of its (trans)formative potential. The event-space's success as a site of empowerment, liberation, and self-actualisation may eventually become its downfall – a shadow of its former self. This shows us how (in)authenticity is a constant process of negotiation – an

233

embodied political struggle over space and the selves which comprise it (Olson *et al.*, 2013).

Disappointing experiences of Buttmitzvah show how ownership over space is contested. While Buttmitzvah's liturgical order may imply a space *safe for* queer Jews, the presence of others clearly disrupted this. For T.M. (semi-structured interview, August 2020), this is because it led to an (in)authentic ritual performance; for Abby (life story interview, February 2021) and Hannah (semi-structured interview, February 2021), this is because it contributed to gendered modes of subjectivation operating within the event-space. These others could have been fellow queer Jews who retained misogynistic behaviours or non-queer-Jews who simply 'went along for the ride' rather than engage with the intended purpose of the calculated communitas.

This shows us how, through symbolic boundary demarcation, a claim to space-ownership is made in the contested urban landscape of postsecular Britain. The polluting presence of others within the Bethnal Green Buttmitzvah demonstrates how the collective individuation of ritual space-times is "marked by ordering bodies in space vis-à-vis others, namely, by authority, gender, and most significantly […] insider-outsider relations" (Bint Abdullah Sani, 2015, p. 305). Indeed, participants were sensitive to notions of "displacement, violation, and intrusion" (ibid.) – attempting to mitigate such notions through spatial ordering:

> Matt: Mm, and what do you think about non-Jews going?
>
> Hannah: Um, I don't know really. I did notice that there were—there was a definite like sort of group of, um, basically like non-Jewish-looking men who were kind of just there for like a party, um, but I don't think that it was—I mean, I didn't—I personally didn't have a problem with it because it- it wasn't taking away from the platform of celebrating the Jewish culture and stuff. Like, I think that's the- that's the line basically. (Semi-structured interview, February 2021)

By peripheralising non-Jewish bodies, Hannah engages in a spatial (re)structuring ensuring the intended purpose of the liturgical order. One may be tempted to ask, furthermore, how Hannah could tell these men were 'non-Jewish-looking' – something left implied in her spatial configuration. Whether realised or not, the intended purpose of Buttmitzvah as a space *for* queer Jews reflects a deliberate claim to space – one which resists heteronormative and postsecular

modes of subjectivation yet relies on commercialised structures of the night-time economy and insider-outsider relations.

Following Atalay and Doan (2019) and Doan and Higgins (2011), we may also ask who is it that Buttmitzvah claims space from? Is it from the social actors who prop up heteronormative and postsecular structures governing everyday experience or the racialised Bengali Muslims who now make up the neighbourhood's largest ethnoreligious demographic (Tower Hamlets Council, 2013, 2015)? Such questions affirm the argument that Buttmitzvah reflects local style – an affective space-time characterised by great potentiality, and whose anti-structural quality rubs up against the social structures operating in ordinary space-time (Massumi, 1997).

To close, it is worth reiterating the empowering, (trans)formative potential of the Buttmitzvah communitas in actualising queer Jewish selves:

> O.K.: So, I kind of think that like events like Homos and Hummus and Buttmitzvah are probably the most important aspect within queer Jews, uh, because I think that like no matter how religious you are, it's a space for being queer and a space for being Jewish so that, even when people are struggling to understand what their Jewish identity is, they can go along and no one's gonna ask them to explain what their Jewish identity is because they can just be Jewish and be queer, um, and I think that, kind of, it's easy to forget how important that is, but actually I think that— well, certainly, for me, I think it's probably one of the most, I didn't realise, but somehow it's one of the most important things to my expression of my identity because it's one of the few places where I feel like the most safe with both those identities together. Um, not that I don't feel safe about being Jewish in other environments, but that it just matches the two. (Semi-structured interview, November 2020)

The spatialisation of queer Jewish selves in the Buttmitzvah ritual space-time represents a passion for meaning (Myerhoff, 1978, 1982) – one born out of a perceived separation between Jewishness and queerness (Schnoor, 2006). Buttmitzvah is a symbolic display of congruence actualised through ritual performance – a queer Jewish rite of passage affirming to varying degrees, at different times, and to performers in multiple subject positions their "widest or most basic beliefs" (Myerhoff, 1978, p. 32). These beliefs – or realisation of a symbolic peoplehood – hold multiple, contested, and often contradictory meanings to ritual performers. As such, Buttmitzvah generates a staggered communitas; one with

uneven topographies of social belonging within its collective individuation (Massumi, 1997).

Buttmitzvah represents queered ethnoreligiosity in the making – the (re)generation of ethnoreligious worlds – which brings with it competing and contested cultures, identities, interpretations, and values (Myerhoff, 1978). Buttmitzvah is a mirror upon which participants impressed ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed reflections which enabled them to show themselves to themselves and others (Myerhoff, 1982). This reflects the very anti-structural nature of communitas – where alternate modes of being are played with and actualised through the ritual act. Buttmitzvah is a local style of endless possibility which resists, subverts, and sustains the social structures regulating everyday space-time. This is a moment of novel subject (trans)formation, of resistance and spiritual agency, of "making everyday social structure serve communitarian ends," and of empowering self-actualisation (Alexander, 1991, p. 27).

6.5 Conclusion

Ritual, liminality, and communitas are vital components to the actualisation of queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain. Rituals mitigate transitions – actualising the changes they seek to realise through their performance. Rituals are processes of differentiation: demarcating and actualising shifts in the lifecourse. In regulating time, space, and experience, rituals provide coherence and meaning to the lifecourse. Through rituals, queer Jews transmit the self-referential message of queer inclusion *alongside* the canonical message of Tradition – expanding the contours of queerness and Jewishness to incorporate their queer Jewish selves. Ritual space-times are sites of great potential and porosity – with radically contingent meanings and outcomes ascribed to their performative power.

Liminality provides the optimal conditions for the convergence of the canonical and the self-referential, the ideological and the concrete. A research gap was identified in the unique spatialisations of liminality for queer Jews in postsecular Britain, with summer camp and university representing two significant (trans)formative periods in the queer Jewish lifecourse. Liminality also refers to a unique ontological position; a self-sustaining role preceding and prescribing sociospatial marginalisation. I found that liminal personae experience acute

feelings of alienation – heightening their inherently powerful, even dangerous, potential in yearning for "repair, rejuvenation, justice, and redemption" (Brettschneider, 2003, p. 23).

The Bethnal Green Buttmitzvah represents an affective bricolage of mythic fragments and ritual symbols – where liminality and ritual are mechanised in the generation of communitas. A queer Jewish rite of passage, Buttmitzvah unifies the past with the present – meshing queer *and* Jewish selves in an emotionally-charged moment characterised by anti-structure and social belonging to, and identification with, a symbolic peoplehood. Ritual communitas transcends differentiation due to its anti-structural nature – manifesting in tangible feelings of liberation from the sociostructural conditions texturing everyday experience. Ritual thus functions as a form of resistance by actualising a liminal space-time *away* from the structures governing ordinary living – where ritual performers play with alternate modes of being, make subversive political statements, and take with them these novel subject (trans)formations beyond the spatial-temporal confines of the event-space.

Liminality and communitas are never fully cleaved off from structure, and one's perception of anti-structure may say more about their own subject position than the suspension of social structure. Buttmitzvah thus shows us how communitas is staggered – resulting in uneven topographies of belonging. As such, Buttmitzvah reflects local style; a quasi-state between structure and anti-structure, communitas and commercial exchange, where alternate modes of being rub up against the social structures operating in daily life. The tensions between Buttmitzvah and commercial exchange were evident in participants' concerns over the presence of others, (in)authenticity, and the symbolic demarcation of space. Again, this reflects the anti-structural nature of communitas – (re)potentialising the event-space for resisting, subverting, and sustaining hegemonic structures.

Buttmitzvah is a near perfect example of queered ethnoreligiosity in the making – the (re)generation of queered ethnoreligious worlds which plays with, brushes up against, and subverts hegemonic social structures operating in ordinary space-time. Buttmitzvah encapsulates the tension between ritual and resistance – a local style of endless possibility, of resistance and spiritual agency, of

237

empowering self-actualisation and subject (trans)formation. Through Buttmitzvah, we can understand why Turner argued (Turner, 1982b, p. 86):

> If you wish to spay or geld religion, first remove its rituals, its generative and regenerative processes. For religion is not a cognitive system, a set of dogmas, alone, it is a meaningful experience and experienced meaning. In ritual, one lives through events, or through the alchemy of its framings and symbolings, relives semiogenetic events, the deeds and words of prophets and saints, or if these are absent, myths and sacred epics.

Chapter 7. Out with the old, in with the queer Jew? Contributions, findings, and avenues for future research

7.1 Ritual, resistance, and queer Jewish self (trans)formation

In this thesis, I have traced how 18 queer Jewish selves were (trans)formed in and of the multiplex worlds around them. Rituals were foregrounded as the technology by which things were brought into being, queered ethnoreligious worlds built, and subjectivities (trans)formed. This revealed the diverse, highly tactile self-bricolages participants curated through ritual performance in the process of self-actualisation.

The thesis began with a recognition of social drama; that is, moments of heightened significance around which personal, political, and scholarly interests crystallise. In Chapter Two, I situated this research at a key site of rapprochement between the anthropology of experience and postsecular geographies of lived religion. I argued that the concepts of ritual, liminality, and communitas enable us to better explore the personal-structural interface, as well as the various spaces and selves (trans)formed within. In Chapter Three, I critically retraced my methodological approach – showing the reader how my agile research practice produced ethnographically significant data despite its online delivery. I paid attention also to the unique fieldwork interactions I encountered due to my continually unfolding insider-outsider positionality.

In Chapter Four, I highlighted the role of heritage and memory as fundamental to the processes of identity arbitration, self-construal, and self-actualisation. I found that rituals actualised and concretised claims to a symbolic peoplehood or imagined community; ethnoreligious acquisition and the transmission of Tradition; and the various forms of memory-work participants engaged in. Selves are made, not given; they undergo a constant process of (trans)formation in and of the power geometries constellating space. In Chapter Five, I approached rituals as haptic place-making practices through which selves, spaces, and others are (trans)formed in situ. Rituals emerged as a mode of social differentiation – the technologies by which selves, spaces, and others are rendered as such in an innately politicised process of subject (trans)formation.

Turning to the meta-theme of reincorporation, I combined the key findings outlined in Chapters Four and Five with the actualising principle of ritual. I found that ritual, liminality, and communitas were vital components in the actualisation of queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain; an active process whereby queer Jews choose not *whether* to be Jewish or queer, but *how* to be. This revealed alternate ways of doing ethnoreligiosity and queerness that traversed the fuzzy boundaries between both socially produced categories. Through the ethnographic vignette of Buttmitzvah, I tied together critical questions regarding the relationship between ritual, resistance, and queer Jewish self (trans)formation that emerged throughout this thesis.

Ritual is resistance insofar as it acts as a remedy to the historical discontinuities brought about by heritages and memories of flight and dispersal – disrupting heteronormative and postsecular lifecourse trajectories through queer Jewish self-actualisation. Rituals enabled participants to expand the imagined contours of both the queer and Jewish communities in a process of (re)incorporation – a reappropriation of the past which actualised queer Jewish selves in the present. Rituals are also peri-hegemonic practices; that is, tools of social differentiation whereby participants positioned themselves (and others) in the intricate webs of power constellating space and time. Similarly, rituals are vital in the (re)aggregation of habitus; an active, agential, and creative act whereby Tradition is blended with the novel through the ritual performance.

Rituals actualised queer Jewish realities – challenging and disrupting the heteronormative, postsecular logics operating across various space-times to varying degrees. Ritual is resistance since the self-referential information of queer Jewish selfhood it transmitted in its performance could not be falsified. Likewise, ritual performance choreographs power, space, and self by realising a liminal space-time away from those sanctioned under hegemony. Here, ritual performance actualises a mode of novel subject (trans)formation, of spiritual agency, and of queered ethnoreligiosity in the making. In this way, rituals are the tools by which people resist, subvert, and sustain the power relations they are subjected to, subject others to, and subject themselves to.

Below, I outline the key findings identified in each chapter – connecting these to the research questions which informed, and were informed by, this work. In doing so, I carve out space for the empirical, methodological, and theoretical contributions this research makes towards a range of disciplines. I attend also to the implications of these findings and contributions, suggesting areas of potential application for policy and practice, before contouring avenues for future research.

7.2 Key findings: responding to the research questions

Three research questions were devised to address the primary goals of this work. These questions were not only conducive to exploring – but corresponded with – the three facets of queer Jewish self-actualisation that became apparent during fieldwork: subject (trans)formation, space and place, and ritual performance. While my key findings should not be seen as straightforward 'answers' to these questions, they correspond nonetheless to the mechanisms of self (trans)formation they sought to address.

7.2.1 Subject (trans)formation

The first research question – *how do queer Jews (trans)form and perform their queer Jewish selves?* – diverged from constructionist approaches to researching queer Jewish identities. Instead, a shift to the language of (trans)formation and performance reflected the non-linear, political, and symbolic processes of subject (trans)formation that emerged during fieldwork.

Heritage and memory were found to be key building blocks from which participants (trans)formed their queer Jewish selves – an interdependent self-construal which drew on "all layers of history" (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 264). In terms of heritage, participants mobilised paradigmatic scenes of diaspora as a mode of identity arbitration. Through their illustration, these scenes indicated an active, creative, and multisensory process of "meaning-making, memory making, and identity construction" that was both situated in, and geographically transcendent of, postsecular Britain (Murphy, 2018, p. 118). I found Tradition to be representative of the inherited contents of participants' diasporic heritages. More historical than Jewishness and more tactile than ethnoreligiosity, Tradition represented the building blocks through which ethnoreligious selves were made.

Participants drew upon, and (trans)formed, Tradition through rituals – enlivening it through their performative dimensions in a (very present) reappropriation of the past. In this way, rituals were key to the concretion of identity arbitration – with queer Jewish ritual innovation emerging as a way for participants to encompass their whole selves through performance. Through rituals, participants subverted heteronormative ways of doing Jewishness *and* postsecular ways of doing queerness. Tradition was tied to morality, providing participants with an embodied ethical framework which reflected a blended independent and interdependent self-construal. Specifically, Tradition was called upon through ritual performance to arbitrate selves that were sufficiently Jewish *and* appropriately queer – rendering congruent two parts of the self in a process of self-actualisation.

Whereas self-construal scholars have argued (Villicana *et al.*, 2016) that ethnoreligiosity remains the primary basis for self-identification, I found that this represents only part of the process – typically the incorporation phase of the lifecourse. While, on paper, participants' heritage narratives were rife with queer silences, it is important to remember that such narratives were spoken by queer voices. Again, ritual innovation was foregrounded as a prime example of how participants took heritage and blended it with the 'queer and now.' Shabbat candles are just as queer as Pride parades, parades just as Jewish as candles. Through rituals, participants reincorporated their queer Jewish selves into a symbolic peoplehood illustrated through the performative act – a particularly powerful, yet unfinished, mode of self (trans)formation.

Memories were fundamental in the transmission of Tradition and acquisition of ethnoreligious selfhood. Like Morrissey (2012), I too found that participants' often-juxtaposed childhood memories reflected the dynamic nature of their lived experiences. Memories were affective bridges to the past along which participants were able to remember, and thus access, "the place and space of memory" (ibid., p. 193). Through memory, participants accrued the mythic, symbolic, and ritualistic material necessary for self (trans)formation. Memories imbued ritual with symbolic significance, rendering ritual space-times the ideal environments for the acquisition of ethnoreligiosity and transmission of Tradition. I found that, just as memories recall (trans)formative space-times, so too do these space-times sow memories

into the mind. In revealing the optimum conditions for ethnoreligious acquisition, memories and rituals are thus the meaningful performances needed to render authentic the process of self (trans)formation.

Collective memories of flight and dispersal had pervasive effects on participants' self-construal. In this way, my findings show how the act of remembering (trans)forms deeply uneven emotional and moral geographies. On one hand, collective memories of flight and dispersal functioned as the basis for group and self-identification – demonstrating the bilateral movement of history and trauma in the process of self (trans)formation. Remembering was found to be a symbolic act, demonstrating one's orientation within the shared interpretive framework functioning as the basis for group-identification. On another, collective memories and intergenerational trauma converged in heteronormative expectations for Jewish continuity. The effects of this collective memory-work were highly subjective – manifesting in markedly gendered ways of ensuring ethnoreligious continuity. I found that participants drew upon the continuity principle to (trans)form a politics of resistance against the historical discontinuities brought about by their diasporic heritages – pairing grief with joy, guilt with gratitude, through the process of remembering. Rituals rendered coherent the contradictory affects brought about by collective remembering – reflecting and (trans)forming a bricolage of self that was intersectional at every turn.

7.2.2 Space and place

The second research question – *what space and place-making practices do queer Jews engage in?* – positioned participants as active agents in the (trans)formation of selves, spaces, and others. Indeed, participants drew on a variety of perceptual and symbolic acts – namely rituals – as key space and place-making practices. Such practices were shaped by, and shaped, the various relations of power operating across multiplex spaces and subjects. I found that participants would make sense of these power geometries through the language of the sixth sense; that is, an extrasensory perception gleaned beyond the tangible senses of sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch. I categorised these power relations into three techniques of control: surveillance, habitus, security.

The technique of surveillance reflected participants' perceptual responses to the compulsion to adhere to social norms. On one hand, everyday space was found to be actively made heterosexual through various symbolic, performative, and highly ritualised acts. I identified same-sex hand holding as a performative and symbolic act running contrary to heteronormativity; a ritualised representation of power which simultaneously contested and reified the common-sense logic of the heterosexual norm. This finding is significant since the resulting uneven topographies of outness show us how queer self-actualisation does not imply a straightforward, or wholly positive, sense of wellbeing; instead, it refers to an ongoing crystallisation of interdependent self-construal. While the queer subject is (trans)formed by, and (trans)forms, heteronormative space, a new space is implied whereby queerness is experienced as the liberating absence of heteronormativity. That said, my findings confirm previous arguments (Casey, 2007; Misgav & Johnston, 2014) that marginalising social structures persist in such spaces – especially along the lines of homonormativity.

On the other hand, I found that ethnoreligious others challenged and disrupted postsecular logics. Postsecular space was actively made postsecular much in the same way as heteronormative space. Here, rituals emerged primarily as a mode of social differentiation – the tools by which selves, spaces, and others were rendered as such through rituals' actualising principle. Particularly, queer and university space-times were marked as postsecular through their spatial-temporal constellation around the WASP norm – with rituals proving fundamental to the (re)production of "religious bodies and modes of subjectivation" (Holloway, 2013, p. 205). Peripheralisation and (anti-)assimilationism emerged as peri-hegemonic practices whereby participants actively configured space alongside the various power geometries within. This cemented the argument that rituals concretise self (trans)formation by way of social differentiation.

Tradition equipped participants with the symbolic frameworks, or habitus, necessary for traversing various webs of control. I found that one's familiarity with the dispositions expected of them in certain space-times was conveyed through the language of home – an affective, mobile, and uniquely social site stretching beyond the concrete domicile to a variety of private and (semi-)public places.

Habitus has uneven topographies; while it can be mastered through ritual practice, it does not always hold emotional or symbolic resonance. Through ritual innovation and the gendered redivision of religious labour, participants took Tradition and blended it with queerness to (trans)form selves that were both queer *and* Jewish – a particularly resonant mode of self-actualisation which demonstrated alternate ways of *doing* Jewishness *and* queerness. In this way, I argued that rituals represented a technique of power through the (re)aggregation of habitus – demonstrating one's ability to (trans)form selves, spaces, and others through their performance.

I found that participants' sixth sense for safety revealed how they accessed their understandings of space and the power relations within. It seemed that safety was dependent upon one's familiarity with the sociality and spatiality of place – its habitus – and the ability to refrain from appearing deviant to the surveillant logics within. As highlighted below, this is an important argument with compelling implications for policy and practice. Safe spaces were identified as places where participants were free to engage in self-actualisation – where all aspects of the self could be rendered congruent. The (trans)formation of safe spaces reflected an assumed social contract of likeness and mutual recognition; as such, safe spaces were deciphered as places *for* certain selves. As the combined expression of *safety to* and *safety from*, this concept of *safety for* raised critical questions regarding the ownership of space and the politics of belonging.

These questions were paramount when exploring rites of passage; that is, rituals key to the construction and demarcation of (im)material boundaries – a politically conscious, and emotionally volatile, mode of social differentiation. The crossing of thresholds could be inferred from the ritual symbols mobilised in-place – in other words, the collective individuation of a particular space-time. Such constellations were made in response to geographically diffused, and temporally transcendent, themes of securitisation which drew upon, and confirmed, collective memories of flight and expulsion. I found that safe spaces were (trans)formed via differentiation from a threatening other – a constant spatial (re)aggregation facilitated by rituals and dependent upon the social actors present within the field in which it was (trans)formed.

245

7.2.3 Ritual performance

With the third question – *what is the role of rituals in actualising queer Jewish selves in postsecular Britain?* – I wanted to foreground the argument that, while rituals have profound socio-material consequences, they are not reducible to these. This is because rituals have an actualising principle which brings into existence what they seek to realise.

Rites of passage were important in demonstrating how rituals actualise the cosmological transitions they seek to mitigate through performance. I argued that rites of passage were auspicious moments for queer Jewish ritual innovation – moments characterised by resistance, theological agency, and the (trans)formation of queer Jewish legacies. Like Mohammad (2015) and Pande (2014), I too found (same-sex) weddings to be archetypal rites of passage which actualised transitions in kinship relations and ethnoreligious distinction. Here, I illustrated how rituals resisted heteronormative models of kinship through the queer realities and domestic imaginaries they actualised. That said, I argued that rites of passage could also serve social structure – demarcating and regulating phases in the lifecourse according to the contested power regimes governing everyday experience. Crucially, I found that the performance of Jewish rites of passage by cultural or secular Jews confirmed the growing trend towards symbolic ethnoreligiosity (Davidman, 2007; Gans, 1979, 1994) – a pivotal contribution that I will discuss in greater detail below.

Rituals fulfil psychosocial needs for ontological ordering by actualising a coherent temporal/experiential structure in their performance. In doing so, rituals aid the (trans)formation of a coherent account of self. As such, the regulatory power of rituals was vital in conditioning the appropriate dispositions expected of queered ethnoreligious bodies in situ. Importantly, I found that rituals facilitated the streamlining of identity – a mechanism by which participants were able to render congruent their queer ethnoreligious selves through cognitive separation. I argued that the centrality of rituals in the process of self (trans)formation lay in their (in)variant character; that is, the spatial-temporal invariance communicated through the two classes of information they transmit. Rituals transmit a message of consistency through contingency – tying the performer to an imagined

community and unifying Jewish histories with queer futures in a queer Jewish present. Ritual continuity was also found to regulate the maintenance of kinship ties *across* various life and deathscapes – fulfilling psychosocial needs in the present.

I identified liminality as a particularly auspicious space-time for self (trans)formation – to which the entries to, and exits from, were highly mechanised via ritual performance. Summer camp was a significant point in participants' lifecourse – one of ethnoreligious distinction and vital in the (trans)formation of Jewish, and to a lesser extent, queer selves. Crucially, I found that it was summer camp's ritual liminality, not so much its ethnoreligious distinction, that facilitated this process of subject (trans)formation. University was also identified as a pivotal chapter in participants' life stories – the stage of separation and (re)incorporation regarding their queer and Jewish selves. The liminal spatiality of higher education could trigger an existential crisis – or social drama – where the very fabric of one's subjectivity was (re)negotiated. As illustrated through the ritual acts of (re)incorporation – matriculation and graduation, for example – unfettered liminality was also found to be dangerous for social structure.

Through the language of alienation, I found that liminality represented a unique ontological position caused by, and conducive to, spatialised liminality. Though the resultant feelings of isolation and loneliness were distressing to some, I found that liminality also provoked a yearning to create spaces of belonging 'in the in-betweens' for others (Wimark, 2021). Buttmitzvah was highlighted as an example of this yearning; the tactile (trans)formation of a Ritual Complex pulling in queerness and Jewishness at a time of heightened Antisemitism and Queerphobia. By texturing the event's backdrop against the postsecular 'surface' of the Bethnal Green Working Men's Club (Maddrell & della Dora, 2013), I explored how participants drew upon ritual liminality to generate a moment characterised by anti-structure and intense emotional belonging to, and identification with, a symbolic peoplehood. During these moments of communitas, participants unified the past with the present – a queer Jewish rite of passage which meshed the queer *and* Jewish aspects of their selves in an affective bricolage of mythic fragments and ritual performances.

247

But my findings suggest that communitas is a contested and staggered phenomenon – an affective topography of social belonging that was felt unevenly across a range of ethnoreligious, gendered, sexed bodies. Ritual is thus associated with resistance in that it is the tool by which selves struggle over meaning and ownership of space – (re)potentialising ritual space-times with heightened affects and yearnings for belonging (Massumi, 1997). The vignette of Buttmitzvah revealed further the relationship between structure and anti-structure, communitas and commerciality, ritual and resistance, through the event's reliance on liberal night-time economies. As such, Buttmitzvah represented local style (ibid.), a "rival, mimetic structure" dependent upon commercial processes of exchange *yet* outside the heteronormative, postsecular regulations of ordinary space-time (Wigley, 2016, p. 710). This (re)potentialised (Massumi, 1997) the ritual space-time of Buttmitzvah – an affective platform from which performers could resist, subvert, or sustain hegemonic social structures through ritual performance.

I found that rituals were fundamental to the process of self (trans)formation since, through their enactment, the performer affirmed and amplified their queer Jewish selfhood – showing us how both Jewishness *and* queerness are made, not given. The malleability of the Ritual Complex thus illustrated much about the performer's own subject position, their passion for meaning, and their "actual and desired truths" about who they are and who they want to be (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 261). As such, queer Jewish ritual innovation represented queered ethnoreligiosity in the making – the (re)generation of ethnoreligious worlds that were necessarily queer *and* sufficiently Jewish.

7.3 Contributions

Due to its interdisciplinary orientation, this work contributes to a wide range of literature – from ethnography to anthropology and geography, from the study of religion to developmental and social psychology, and from queer studies to ethnic and cultural studies. Below, I move between empirics, literature, and theory in outlining three key areas of contribution regarding my research findings.

7.3.1 Geography and anthropology: experience, queerness, (ethno)religion

First, as a site of breach and crisis between two socially produced categories, the relationship between ethnoreligiosity and queerness is of interdisciplinary

248

importance. As this research shows, such social dramas are bottlenecks for the active processes of meaning-making, self-actualisation, and (queered) ethnoreligious world-building. Echoing themes raised in Chapter One, the need for such scholarship is especially pressing given the "silencing polemics" which persist across a range of spheres (Shah, 2021).

For example, while writing this thesis, I have seen much media attention directed towards the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar – particularly concerning the status of both queers (MacInnes, 2022) and women (Sridhar, 2022) in the socially conservative, Muslim-majority country. Such discourses not only encapsulate what El-Tayeb identified (2012, p. 79) as "the pitting of the (implicitly White) gay community against the (implicitly straight) Muslim community," but represent potent acts of subject (trans)formation via social differentiation. From the threatening Muslim other to the assimilated non-threatening queer, the FIFA World Cup is one of the latest social dramas to reveal how selves and others are made in flow and in situ. In Chapter Two, I situated this thesis within the third contemporary movement in geographies of religion – whereby religion and the lived environment are intertwined alongside the matrices of culture, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexuality. As both my findings and these most recent developments show, attending to such social dramas brings into focus the gendered, sexed, and racialised processes involved in subject (trans)formation.

Similarly, my research strengthens the shift towards postsecular scholarship by unsettling the "liberal consensus of separate public-political and private-religious spheres" in a British context (Holloway, 2013, p. 2013). In Chapter Five, I illustrated how a range of (semi-)public space-times were structured according to postsecular regimes of control. Particularly, this challenged the presumed secularity of both educational (Ma, 2021) and queer (Taylor *et al.*, 2014) space-times, as ethnoreligious otherness was (trans)formed through their power geometries as the mirror image to the WASP norm. As such, my research contributes vital empirical scholarship to growing postsecular theory – in terms of both the range of space-times rendered postsecular and the intersection of such power relations with those concerning gender and sexuality.

Second, this research demonstrates how rituals enable us to consider not only how people are (trans)formed by such discursive forces, but how they actively draw upon them to (trans)form selves, spaces, and others. As argued above, this is because rituals reflect a technique of power. As such, rituals are pivotal in centring the voices of those most affected by hegemonic social structures – voices often silenced by those most privileged (Shah, 2021). By drawing attention to such performative acts, this thesis contributes vital empirical knowledge regarding the "marvellously malleable creations" (Lowenthal, 1998, p. 226) ethnoreligious queers make in their politically conscious acts of self (trans)formation. Such an approach is significant for any scholar seeking to explore the (trans)formation of minoritised subjectivities since rituals aptly demonstrate how people are active agents in their own subject (trans)formation.

As highlighted in Chapter Two, the centrality of rituals contributes to a key site of rapprochement between the geography of religion and the anthropology of experience. This interdisciplinary exchange is significant for scholars invested in the active, creative, and contested (re)generation of religious worlds. While geographers are adept at contouring the persistent, multiplex manifestations of religion in a wide range of lived experiences, there is less emphasis on the actualising power of ritual in the (trans)formation of selves, spaces, and others. In Chapters Five and Six, I demonstrated how the regulatory power of rituals was vital in conditioning the appropriate dispositions expected of queered ethnoreligious bodies in situ. This finding makes a particularly pertinent contribution to queer geographies and geographies of religion as it illustrates further the mechanism by which ethnoreligious, gendered, and sexed bodies are rendered as such.

I argued that the anthropology of experience – specifically the ritual process – helps us understand *how* people actively make and re-make the worlds around them. This contribution is significant as it shows that neither Jewishness – nor queerness – are innate, primordial things impressed upon passive social agents; instead, they are malleable, mutable phenomena that are taken and enacted in highly subjective ways. Combining this observation with the argument that rituals represent a technique of power contributes new ways of thinking through the relationship between power, space, and self. Here, postsecular geographies

served as a critical lens through which I could explore the interconnected webs of competing meanings, powers, selves, and spaces which rendered the outcomes of the ritual process widely contingent.

In this light, the interdisciplinary approach I adopted in this thesis makes two important contributions. On one hand, it offers geographers a heuristic avenue to approach the mythic, symbolic, and ritualised process of ethnoreligious world-building. On the other, it offers anthropologists a spatial framework for approaching the deeply uneven affective topographies (trans)formed by – and during – ritual performance. This reflects a vital contribution I make to the anthropology of experience regarding the persistence of structure in ritual liminality and communitas; namely, that anti-structure is perceived insofar as one is free from the regulatory structures which remain in its realisation.

7.3.2 Ethnography and positionality

My emphasis on rituals is methodologically as well as theoretically significant. As implied above, rituals are the vehicles through which scholars can approach the processes involved in subject (trans)formation. For this reason, rituals were chosen as tools fundamental to the storying of experience – the means by which people make sense of, and thus (trans)form, the worlds around them. My focus on ritual makes an important contribution to methodological scholarship which challenges (Johnston, 2019) the ableist assumption that storytelling remains the predominant mode of meaning-making. As demonstrated by my narrative approach, there is much to be learnt from ritual performance – a mode of becoming whereby people actualise themselves to themselves and others (Myerhoff, 1982).

It was by adopting a narrative approach that I was able to gain unique insights regarding the (trans)formation of selves, spaces, and others in situ. In Chapter Five, I foregrounded participants' spatial experiences through the language of the sixth sense; that is, the extrasensory perception of the power geometries constellating space and time. By attending to the intangible, my approach to researching participants' space and place-making practices contributes not only to emotional or non-representational geographies (Davidson & Milligan, 2004; Jones, 2011), but again to new ways of thinking through the complex – even paradoxical – relations between power, space, and self. For

example, it is by exploring the selves and others (trans)formed before, during, and after rites of passage that scholars can untangle the complex power geometries operating across space and time. As argued previously, this is because such power geometries are an important component of the collective individuation of ritual space-times – cementing the above argument that rituals function as the theoretical and methodological medium through which scholars can approach the personal-structural interface.

Practically speaking, this project is hinged upon the agile social research practice of virtual ethnography. As argued in Chapter Three, the space between research design and agile research practice is a site of tremendous methodological possibility – an ethnographic spatialisation of liminality whereby novel ways of approaching the field-home site are developed and negotiated. As such, this thesis functions as an ethnographic testimony to the ways in which researchers (trans)form, and are (trans)formed by, their experiences 'in the field' – a unique mode of socio-material embedding that may prove insightful to other researchers bound by rigid financial and temporal constraints. If the "experience of fieldwork has traditionally been a rite of passage for anthropologists-in-training" (Abidin & de Sata, p. 12), then my experiences show how the ritual contours of this process must themselves reflect the socio-material contexts in which we conduct our research.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has led to the re-evaluation of remote fieldwork and, as such, this work contributes vital empirical scholarship to the argument that virtual methods can indeed enable ethnographers to develop "a rich understanding of peoples' everyday lives, feelings, relationships, and spaces without being physically present" in the field (Watson & Lupton, 2022, p. 1). Virtual ethnography is not without embodied participation or immersion – unsettling the placeness of ethnography while converging the field-home site. My fieldwork experiences demonstrate how Zoom facilitates multisensory ethnography by (trans)forming a highly tactile digital environment that is conducive to ethnographic knowledge production. Specifically, the virtual frames participants and I choreographed through Zoom provided a mutual window into feeling – a unique mode of online co-presence that brought the field to the home and vice versa. Through reflexive

252

liminality, I illustrated how this process produced not only ethnographically significant data, but data that were deeply emotional and innately political.

My experiences as an insider-outsider researcher contribute further methodological reflections to (post-)feminist readings on positionality – whereby selves are understood as contested, fluid, staggered, and unstable (Kobayashi, 2009). Like Parikh (2020), I too found that positionality is more of a process than a fixed standpoint – a methodological finding that was significant for my empirical work on self-construal. By being transparent about my own ethnographic practices as a queer Bahá'í researching queer Jews, I raised critical ethical, methodological, and political questions surrounding self-(re)presentation and self-disclosure. In doing so, I contributed a thus far underrepresented ethnographic voice to literature on positionality – a contribution that is not only methodologically significant but deeply personal in nature.

7.3.3 Queered (symbolic) ethnoreligiosity in the making

To reiterate, neither Jewishness nor queerness are innate primordial things; instead, they are actively made and re-made by the selves and others who (trans)form them. This is because rituals actualise queer ethnoreligious worlds – an active, creative, and fundamentally political process of (trans)formation. Such a world-building process is radically contingent – dependent upon the ritual performer's position within the webs of control they are subjected to, subject others to, and subject themselves to.

My findings on the role of heritage, memory, and ritual in the process of queer Jewish subject (trans)formation contribute much needed qualitative scholarship to self-construal studies (Ren *et al.*, 2019) – revealing not only how people feel about their unique selfhoods, but how they *actively make* and *remake* these. For example, I found that participants called upon Tradition through ritual performance to arbitrate selves that were sufficiently Jewish *and* appropriately queer – rendering congruent two parts of the self in a process of self-actualisation. For some, this manifested in an embodied moral framework for ethical queer living; for others, this resulted in the streamlining of identity. The tactile use of ritual practice in this way contributes another empirical example to arguments made in postsecular geographies of religion (Gökarıksel & Secor, 2010); namely, that

ethnoreligiosity and queerness are themselves ambiguous and fluid phenomena rather than fixed, primordial things.

Furthermore, this finding problematises conclusions drawn by self-construal scholars who argue (Villicana *et al.*, 2016) that ethnoreligiosity, rather than queerness, remains the primary basis for self-identification. Rituals do indeed actualise the streamlining of identity, but such a differentiation does not entail a hierarchical relationship. I found that one's Jewish self was no more significant than one's queer self and vice versa. This is because ritual differentiation enabled participants to actualise *how* they were queer *and* Jewish, not *whether* they were – traversing the fuzzy boundaries between ethnoreligiosity and queerness, and (trans)forming uneven emotional geographies of belonging (Milligan, 2013, 2014). As such, this research contributes unique insights into the creative, non-linear, and messy process of self (trans)formation.

Overall, geographers of religion have tended to overlook the role of ritual as the medium for religions' (re)generative processes. My findings on the relationship between the continuity principle and ritual performance demonstrates how the latter (trans)forms, and is (trans)formed by, uneven topographies of memory. Through rituals, participants rendered congruent heritage, memory, and Tradition with their queer Jewish selves in the present. This process was often deeply affective – the result of a symbolic interchange which blended the moral with the material, the individual with the collective. By infusing the discursive with the emotional and vice versa, ritual space-times were characterised by their heightened potentiality – environments ripe for the transmission of Tradition and (trans)formation of queered ethnoreligious worlds. As such, this thesis illustrates how various social worlds are brought into being through the ritual process.

Liminality was identified as the optimum setting for rituals' (trans)formative potential – an ontological position of betweenness whereby new modes of being could be played with and actualised. Crucially, I found that summer camp represented a unique spatialisation of liminality characterised by ethnoreligious distinction and ritual regulation. As such, this research contributes to a small yet significant literature exploring the importance of summer camps in the transition from childhood to adulthood (Harold, 2015; Povilaitis *et al.*, 2021). Uniquely, I found

that it was summer camp's liminality, rather than its ethnoreligiosity, that rendered it with such potentiality. This is an important contribution since, following Sharpe (2005), these findings enable us to critically explore the stake leisure providers have in manufacturing ritual liminality through the liminoid activities of fun, play, and freedom. University was also a pivotal spatialisation of liminality in the queer Jewish lifecourses – a space-time of separation and (re)incorporation whereby participants could experiment with, and actualise, new ways of *doing* Jewishness *and* queerness. This is an important finding for scholars of higher education in that it illustrates in a new lexicon the process by which selves are (trans)formed in tertiary settings (Hopkins, 2011).

The ethnographic vignette of Buttmitzvah contributes a unique case study into how queer ethnoreligiosity is (re)made in postsecular Britain and, in turn, how queer ethnoreligious selves are actualised and (trans)formed. Rituals were fundamental to the process of self (trans)formation since, through their performance, the performer affirmed and amplified their queer ethnoreligious selfhood – showing us again how Jewishness *and* queerness are made, not given. The malleability of the Ritual Complex thus illustrates much about the performer's own subject position, their passion for meaning, and their "actual and desired truths" about who they are (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 261). Queer Jewish ritual innovation thus represents queered ethnoreligiosity in the making – a mode of selfhood that is (trans)formed out of choice rather than necessity. By highlighting agency and creativity in the making of the self, this work contributes vital empirical scholarship to ethnic and cultural studies – demonstrating a tangible shift towards (queer) symbolic ethnoreligiosity in postsecular Britain today. As explored below, such findings are not only empirically and theoretically significant, but practically insightful for a range of professionals.

7.4 Policy and practice

As outlined in Chapter One, there are two primary research aims guiding this project: to explore how queer Jewish selves are (trans)formed in situ and to explore the role of rituals in this process. Below, I trace the implications of my key findings and contributions, which have been derived from addressing these aims, for a range of professions – from counselling to education, from wellbeing to social work,

and from urban planning to statistics. While these implications are by no means exhaustive or prescriptive – and may indeed confirm long-held approaches and practices – it is my belief that they could be used, at least to some degree, to improve the socio-material conditions of those who sit across the socially produced categories of ethnoreligiosity and queerness.

Alongside the postsecular turn, my findings affirm the significance of ethnoreligiosity for queers of minority ethnoreligious backgrounds and vice versa. This is significant for both practitioners and policymakers regarding the reading and interpretation of the 2021 Census for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2022). On one hand, ethnoreligiosity and queerness are clearly integral to one's self-construal, and census data may not reveal how people feel about – or relate to – their gendered, sexed, and ethnoreligious selves. For example, my findings suggest a small yet significant trend towards symbolic ethnoreligiosity. As argued in Chapter Four, the boundaries between culture, ethnicity, race, and religion are hazy and unstable – with participants regularly moving between them over the course of a single interview. Broad stroke demographic data may not capture the diversity, meaning, or emotional resonance of symbolic ethnoreligiosity – something which undoubtedly would have significance on predicting the population trajectories of ethnoreligious minority groups (e.g., Staetsky & Boyd, 2015).

The shift to symbolic ethnoreligiosity complicates further the relationship between religious identification and religious observance and, from my findings, neither one can be used to predict the other. Whether one identifies as Jewish, for example, does not seem to impact much on ritual performance, community membership, and social activism. As such, census data may not reflect the full size and tenacity of ethnoreligious groups in Britain; instead, my findings imply that often subtle performances of selfhood indicate more about one's self-construal than aural self-categorisation.

On another hand, census data may not adequately capture the fluid, multiple, and staggered ways people relate to their gender identities and sexual orientation/s. Queerness – like selfhood more generally – is in a constant state of becoming, a fluid and mobile site of subject (trans)formation that is difficult to

categorise statistically in terms of fixed identities. The temporally bound nature of the national census – or any demographic form – may not capture how one's queer self evolves over time, and Britain's queer contours may vary dramatically today from when the census was conducted. Again, this echoes the argument that queerness *and* Jewishness are ambiguous and fluid phenomena – reflecting respondents' unique subject positions rather than their fixed identities.

A person's moral beliefs are highly illustrative of their ethnoreligious (and queer) self-construal – particularly around sites of negotiation between independent and interdependent modes of self-definition. A person's embodied ethical framework may prove useful for exploring the intricate ways in which they relate to their gender, sexuality, and ethnoreligiosity. At the same time, it is important to remain wary of prejudging a person's moral standpoint from their own subject position – remaining open to the 'unexpected' parables they narrate. In this way, it is important to recognise the polyvocality of ethnoreligiosity and queerness as socially produced categories and sites of active (trans)formation.

One notable example of this dynamic from my own research can be found in the public performance of Pride. It may benefit policymakers and practitioners to be mindful of the complex, often contradictory, meanings ascribed to such 'secular' rituals by gendered, sexed, and ethnoreligious bodies. The embodied responses outlined in this work suggest that representation matters, and that the question of "is Pride a party, or is Pride politics?" (Josh, life story interview, May 2020) deserves attention from faith leaders, policymakers, and practitioners alike. Like the streamlining of identity, the convergence or separation of Pride as party and Pride as politics does not necessarily entail a moral hierarchy; instead, it reflects the polyvocal nature of ritual symbols as the mirrors upon which people impress their most deeply held beliefs and values. In this way, Pride could be approached as a very public social drama – one which moves between the successive stages of breach, crisis, redress, and reincorporation/separation in its enactment.

Likewise, while my findings may, at first, suggest that ethnoreligiosity supersedes queerness in self (trans)formation, it is important to remember that this is only part of the process. As a result, practitioners could benefit from foregrounding what people do in the here and now, and how this can feed into our

interpretations of what they tell us about the past. As argued by Agnew (2005a, p. 3), "the past is always with us, and it defines our present" insofar as it is mobilised in the present through ritual acts to meet psychosocial needs. This finding is significant as it implies that practitioners ought to move beyond historicism when exploring a person's past. Family histories and memories – both individual and collective – are often contradictory; they represent a means of accessing the past in all its complexity as part of the process of subject (trans)formation. When exploring traumatic histories, we should consider also how these may be used to access more joyful narratives. When recollecting happier times, we should also remain aware of the more traumatic memories latent in a person's memory-work. My findings show how various histories cluster around rites of passage. Because of the pasts and selves inculcated through them, such rituals may serve as useful backdrops for practitioners engaging in psychodramatic approaches (Giacomucci & Stone, 2019; Kedem-Tahar & Felix-Kellermann, 1996).

The symbolic and subjective nature of memory-work is surely of much interest to policymakers as individuals and groups make sense of the historical (dis)continuities caused by intergenerational trauma through the act of remembering. Instead of seeking historical accuracies in the memories people mobilise, policymakers could explore what such (in)accuracies tell us about how individuals and groups construe themselves. Following scholarship on heritages of violence (Ashworth, 2008; Buciek & Juul, 2008), such questions may prove fundamental in remedying collective grief and intergenerational trauma. My findings also imply that rituals are an integral component of this process – actualising spaces of reconciliation between individuals and groups, the past with the present.

My findings on the sixth sense are significant for practitioners who wish to approach experiences of marginalisation. Clearly, discriminatory structures do not always make themselves manifest in tangible ways. Instead, one's extrasensory perception of racism and/or Queerphobia is often gleaned from the subtle and structural forms of violence which actively make spaces heterosexual and/or WASP. A person's sixth sense for safety and surveillance, then, is vital in contouring an ecological model of wellbeing; that is, a thoroughly relational and

spatial understanding of wellbeing that "transfers attention to the interplay of individuals" while "incorporating the social and cultural dimensions that they arbitrate as contributing to their satisfaction with life" (Carter & Anderson, 2019, n.p.). As my research shows, it may be worthwhile for practitioners to familiarise themselves with the spatially diffused, and temporally transcendent, geopolitical regimes of securitisation that are part of this collective individuation. As key place-making practices, rites of passage may indicate how people respond to, and (trans)form, the spaces made and (re)made through these various discursive forces.

Similarly, it is important for policymakers and practitioners to remain wary of adopting an overly rationalist approach to fear – particularly along the discursive lines of 'hate crimes' (e.g., Home Office, 2018). The interpretation of hate crime data is often a political act of memory-work – (trans)forming a subjectivity based on persistent victimisation. As I found, fear of crime – as expressed through the language of hate crime – is an affective manifestation of the sixth sense for safety. As Koskela and Pain argued (2000, p. 278), the question of safety should not be one of (ir)rationality as there is no "conscious or subconscious decision to be fearful [...] based on rational assessments of risk." Instead, "fear is a cumulative process" (ibid.) – something which, again, calls for a more ecological approach to wellbeing. As found in contemporary literature on social work practice (Daly, 2016), such an approach may be vital in understanding minoritised peoples' engagement with policies, professionals, and safeguarding procedures.

Because of their actualising principle, practitioners working with the concept of self-actualisation could benefit from focusing on rituals. Through their performative quality, rituals make congruent all parts of the self – an act of doing by which people show themselves to themselves and others (Myerhoff, 1982). Rituals are a mode of becoming, the performative media through which people display their 'actual and desired' truths about themselves (ibid.). Rituals are thus intimately illustrative of a person's self (trans)formation, and practitioners could better approach this process by walking through the Ritual Complexes performers have at their disposal. As such, rituals have much to offer practitioners – not least because of their function in fulfilling psychosocial needs. While rituals are certainly

259

irreducible to these functions, practitioners could draw on their latent potentiality in therapeutic practice – from fulfilling a yearning for belonging to maintaining kinship ties across various life and deathscapes. As highlighted above, ritual performance may be particularly beneficial in psychodramatic approaches (Giacomucci & Stone, 2019; Kedem-Tahar & Felix-Kellermann, 1996); indeed, the use of psychotherapeutic rituals as facilitators in the grieving process has long been established (Rando, 1985; Romanoff, 1998). As argued in this thesis, this is because rituals not only illustrate the psychosomatic changes they seek to mitigate, they actualise them through their performance.

Ritual space-times are emotionally potent. From my findings, the ownership over space is a contested process of negotiation and struggle – one enacted through ritual performance. Considering Buttmitzvah, policymakers and urban planners may need to consider the deeply actualising power of such ritual space-times. In doing so, they may find that they are not just looking at raunchy club nights, but the (re)generation of queered ethnoreligious worlds. While my findings show that such ritual space-times (trans)form – and are (trans)formed by – highly uneven topographies of social belonging, the ability for such sites to make tangible a symbolic peoplehood ought not to be overlooked. As Nye argued (1993), space grounds imagined communities, and the significance of such sites as the foci for subject (trans)formation cannot be overstated. Furthermore, as has been shown in both rural (González, 2017) and urban (Hosman, 2018) contexts, ritual space-times are often central in both actualising and resisting processes of gentrification. In this light, my research shows professionals how it is the collective individuation of ritual space-times – or the Ritual Complexes mobilised within – that imbues them with their (trans)formative potential.

7.5 Avenues for future research

As mentioned previously, research into queer ethnoreligious selfhood is developing exponentially; as such, the key findings, contributions, and implications highlighted above concretise avenues for future research in a range of contexts.

Methodologically speaking, my research demonstrates how digital approaches enable researchers to "resolve some of the limitations caused" by lockdown restrictions and "our inability to access the field and the research

260

populations we study" (Howlett, 2021, p. 389). While remote fieldwork can indeed produce ethnographically significant data, there is inevitably something to be said regarding the "empirical insights" missed while conducting virtual ethnography (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 2). Although embodied participation is evidently a facet of virtual ethnography, my methodological reflections encourage further in-person research on the actualising role of ritual in (trans)forming queered ethnoreligious selves and others. In other words, if remote fieldwork has revealed so much about the process of self (trans)formation for queer Jews in postsecular Britain, then what else can be found through in-person methods in similar contexts? For example, Avishai's research (2020) with 64 LGBT Orthodox Jews in Israel blends physical and digital ethnographic data to disrupt the identity conflict model of selfhood. Similarly, Ben-Lulu's in-person ethnography (2021, p. 24) of LGBTQ Kabbalat Shabbat rituals shows how ritual actualises both queerness and Tradition in a political space (trans)formed "for the intersection of identities oppressed in Israeli society." Such studies – both digital and physical – are examples of the emerging literature within which the study is situated.

The process of participant recruitment and the sites in which we conduct our research affect the kind of data we produce. While the move to remote methods may have ameliorated some of the "resource-related inequalities" I faced as a PGR, the online approach I adopted may have excluded some (Schulte-Römer & Gesing, 2022, p. 6). Without wanting to essentialise or totalise certain subject positions, this may be implicit in the aged, classed, and denominational cohort I recruited.

Starting with the latter, a reliance on digital methods may have excluded those living in more strictly Orthodox households – reflecting limitations in similar studies (Faulkner & Hecht, 2011). Representation from the strictly Orthodox community matters – especially given the community's demographic trajectories (Staetsky & Boyd, 2015), the highly regulated mode of Jewishness texturing daily life (Valins, 2003), and the silencing polemics at work for those who are both strictly Orthodox and queer (Spitzer, 2019a, 2019b). I was aware of growing strictly Orthodox representation in the queer Jewish social networks participants (trans)formed and, as such, I encourage further social research with strictly

Orthodox queers. While Avishai's (2020) and Faulkner and Hecht's (2011) studies are significant in this regard, far more research is needed across the board.

While no measure is perfect in capturing participants' socioeconomic status, their upward social mobility was indicated in their general ability to claim ownership over portions of the night-time economy, attainment in higher education, and digital proficiency. As reflected in R's nostalgic memory of the working-class Jews in London's old East End (life story interview, November 2020), class was often spoken of in terms of heritage – something that could be drawn upon ambiguously throughout the lifecourse as a mode of identity arbitration. Specifically, Jewish heritages implied a classed heritage reminiscent of the shtetls of Eastern Europe – the narration of which was performed by socioeconomically mobile participants in the present. Class was mostly implied rather than explicitly stated – hovering over participants' heritages and lifecourse structuring. While scholars in ethnic and cultural studies (Gans, 2007, 2017) have drawn attention to the relationship between capital and ethnoreligious identification, there is a unique research gap regarding the link between class, ritual, and symbolic ethnoreligiosity – a fruitful site of future research.

While researchers ought to remain aware of age bias concerning digital literacy (Bowen, 2011), the relatively young participant cohort may reflect the shift to online methods and a lack of representation from ageing queer Jews. The fact I recruited primarily younger queer Jews may also reflect the heritages of the AIDS Crisis outlined in Chapter Four. Often, such heritages are represented in terms relating to the 'lost generation' of queer men and culture (Hallas, 2010) – a historical discontinuity and queer silence that still hovers over the lives of queer people, both young and aged, today. While I certainly would not advocate a paternalistic 'salvage ethnography' in response to this (Davies, 1998), such discursive reactions to the AIDS Crisis may themselves represent a silencing polemic towards older queers (Shah, 2021), and more research is thus needed on the (trans)formation of ageing queer selves. Indeed, queer scholars have long noted (Casey, 2007) that those with ageing bodies are often considered part of the queer unwanted and, as such, the intersection between age, ethnoreligiosity, and queerness would be a productive avenue of future research. A running theme

throughout this thesis is a message of consistency, contingency, and creativity as actualised through ritual performance. As Myerhoff found (1978), rituals are vital in the (trans)formation of ageing selves – the tools by which people assign order and coherence to their dynamic lived experiences – and would function well as the methodological and theoretical vehicle for such future scholarship.

Similarly, while this work forwards an understanding of queer Jewish self-actualisation in the ritualised present, it is important to remember that queer Jewishness is not in and of itself a novel intersection. Increasingly, scholars have drawn attention to the varied interstices between queerness and Jewishness in a range of contexts (Drinkwater, 2019; Sienna, 2019), and I would welcome further historical analyses of queer Jewishness in underrepresented spatial-temporal settings. Likewise, while this research is situated within the socio-material context of Covid Britain, the ramifications of its findings stretch far beyond its spatial-temporal boundaries. On one level, while there has been much scholarship concerning queer Jews in North American and Israeli contexts, more research is needed in other postsecular settings – particularly where state religion(s) operate across a range of gendered, sexed, and religious bodies. Bharat's study (2021) on Jewish-Muslim dialogue in postsecular France and Landry's article (2016) on queer Jewish joke telling in contemporary Germany are both notable examples of such emerging literature.

On another level, while this work incorporates a wide range of sites stretching across many scales, future research could contribute to the plethora of surfaces conducive to, and (trans)formed by, ritual performance. I found that summer camps were space-times full of (trans)formative potential – sites which, to my knowledge, are largely neglected in geographic research (especially in the British context). Following Banfield (2022) and Maddrell and della Dora (2013), researchers may benefit from attending to the multiplex spatialisations of ritual liminality across a range of surfaces.

Time is a latent theme throughout this thesis – a fluid, haptic, and malleable phenomenon that regulates, and is regulated by, ritual performance. As originally intended in my research design, future research could explore the process of self (trans)formation at different points in the calendar. One's queer Jewish self

263

(trans)formation may be markedly different on the eve of Yom Kippur than during Pride. Selves are not made in a vacuum, they are actively made and remade both in and out of time, in and out of space. While such patterns may indeed be inferred from the above works (e.g., Adelman, 2014; Ben-Lulu, 2021), a more focused study on the role of ritual in the (trans)formation of ageing selves throughout the lifecourse would be worthwhile.

Finally, rituals are the cornerstone of self (trans)formation – a performative act of *doing* that is, ultimately, an act of *being*. As demonstrated in the broad range of disciplines and topics drawn upon in this work, it is perhaps best to view rituals themselves as the key site of interdisciplinary rapprochement. Their actualising power cannot be overstated. For rituals are more than just another label for repetitive behaviour and habits, they are the performative media by which selves, spaces, and others are brought into being through the active (re)generation of queered ethnoreligious worlds. By foregrounding the deeply symbolic acts people mobilise at their disposal, researchers can gain a more intimate understanding of how – through rituals – selves separate:

> the curtains between the real and the unreal, imagined and actual, to step across the threshold and draw with them, pulling behind them, witnesses who find, often to their surprise, that they are somehow participating in someone else's social drama. (Myerhoff, 1982, p. 283)

Appendix A: ethical approval (ref. 18141/2019)

Ethical Approval

Wendy Davison <wendy.davison@newcastle.ac.uk>
Fri 13/03/2020 14:02
To:

- Matthew Shahin Richardson (PGR) <M.Richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk>

Cc:

- Peter Hopkins <Peter.Hopkins@newcastle.ac.uk>

Dear Matthew

Thank you for your application for ethical approval of your project *Ritual and Resistance: Performing queer Jewish identities in postsecular Britain*. I confirm that Dr Simon Woods has approved it on behalf of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

Please note that this approval applies to the project protocol as stated in your application - if any amendments are made to this during the course of the project, please submit the revisions to the Ethics Committee in order for them to be reviewed and approved.

Kind regards,

Wendy

Wendy Davison
PA to Professor Matthew Grenby, Dean of Research and Innovation
Mrs Lorna Taylor, Faculty Research Manager
and Ms Louise Kempton, Associate Dean of Research and Innovation
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
10.16, Henry Daysh Building
Newcastle University
NE1 7RU
Telephone: 0191 208 6349
E mail: Wendy.Davison@ncl.ac.uk

Ritual &
Resistance

Call for Research Participants

For the PhD project 'Ritual and Resistance: Performing queer Jewish identities in postsecular Britain'

This project explores the experiences of being both queer and Jewish in contemporary Britain, specifically, we will explore the role of religion, ritual, and identity in the context of these experiences.

All participants are welcome as long as you're over the age of 18 and identify as someone who is both queer and Jewish.

Participants will be invited to take part in interviews, participant observation of religious practices, and focus groups

Participation is voluntary, though refreshments will be provided throughout the data collection

For more information, please contact the lead researcher, Matthew Shahin Richardson, at m.richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk.

Matthew Shahin Richardson
PhD Student in Human Geography and Social Anthropology
School of Politics, Sociology and Human Geography
Newcastle University
m.richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk

E·S·R·C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL

Newcastle University

Appendix C: participant consent form

Participant Consent Form

Information regarding informed consent:

This agreement is made in regard to the Ph.D. research project entitled 'Ritual and Resistance: Performing queer Jewish identities in postsecular Britain.' For any questions regarding the nature and content of this consent form, please contact the lead researcher (Matthew Shahin Richardson) at m.richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk for further information. Note, this form is to be complete **only** after reading the *Participant Information Sheet*.

Declaration

FOR THE PARTICIPANT: I give my consent for the lead researcher to conduct the following research. As a condition of this, I agree that:
(Please **tick** for **yes.** Leave **blank** for **no**)

- I have read and understood the participant information sheet for this study
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that, at any time, I am free to withdraw without providing any reason
- I understand that if I withdraw from the study, my data will be removed and permanently destroyed
- I understand that The University of Newcastle has reviewed and approved of this study (ethical approval no:18141/2019)
- I voluntarily agree to take part in this interview/participant observation/focus group (**please delete as appropriate**)
- I give permission to be interviewed, observed, and participate with others and for this interaction(s) to be recorded and used for research purposes.
- I understand that any recordings (both audio and written) are undertaken for the purpose of data transcription and will be managed, stored, and archived at the University in accordance with the General data Protection Regulation of 2018 (https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/)
- I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential, that all my personal and sensitive data will be anonymised where possible, that the lead researcher will strive to ensure my identity will not be identifiable in any reports or publication
- I understand that sensitive personal data may be collected during this research project. This may include information relating to race or ethnic origin, sexuality and gender identity, political opinions, religious beliefs, physical/mental health, and other characteristics protected by the Equalities Act, 2010
- I understand that the research will be written up as a thesis at the end of the PhD project and that my data may be used in future research in forms including, but not exclusive of, journal articles, research seminars, lecture material, monographs, or book chapters

- I give permission for other researchers and third parties (supervisory team, charities, organisations, policy makers) to have access to the anonymised data when relevant and for any future research purposes
- I fully understand the risks associated with this research project and have had them communicated to me in writing
- I understand how to raise any concerns or complaints about this study
- I give the researcher permission to contact me on the given contact information
- I understand that it is my responsibility to inform the researcher should my contact details change
- *I wish to take participate, organise, and curate the collaborative debrief and exhibition at the end of this project (optional)*
- *I wish for my data to be displayed as part of the collaborative debrief and exhibition at the end of this project (optional)*

*A copy of the signed and data consent form and participant information sheet will be given to the participant and retained by the researcher to be kept surely on file

Name, Signature, and Date (please use block capitals):

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix D: participant information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

1. **Research Project Title**

'Ritual and Resistance: Performing queer Jewish identities in postsecular Britain'

2. **Invitation**

You are invited to take part in my current Ph.D. project. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done, what this will involve, and how your information will be used. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and feel free to discuss it with others if you wish. Do not hesitate to ask me (Matthew Shahin Richardson) if anything is unclear or if need more information. I encourage you to take time in deciding whether or not you wish to take part in this project. It is important to understand that you are free at any time to pull out of this project.

3. **Purpose of the project**

This project is a study of queer Jewish identities and experiences in contemporary Britain. The research explores when, where, how, and why queer Jews practice Judaism in the contemporary British context. The project also explores Queerphobia and Antisemitism and how these may influence queer Jewish identities and experiences. The ultimate aim of the research is to explore the role of Judaism (if any) in mediating these experiences and constructing these identities. Ultimately, as someone who identifies as both queer and Jewish, this is an opportunity for you to share your experiences and express your opinions about issues relevant to both you and people you know.

4. **Do I have to take part?**

Only you can decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be able to indicate your agreement to this on the consent form. You can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason for withdrawing or deciding not to take part.

5. **What do I need to do?**

Due to the CoViD19 pandemic, methods will, for the time being, will be conducted via digital platforms such as Zoom. You will be asked to take part in some, or all, of the following activities:

a) In-depth, qualitative interviews exploring your experiences as someone who identifies as both queer and Jewish. The interview(s) will last anywhere between 60-90 minutes and follow a biographical pattern. The interviews will be audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder (or Zoom meeting recorder where applicable) and transcribed for analysis. All data used from these interviews will be made anonymous with your collaboration. The interviews will take place wherever you feel comfortable. This can be in your own home or in a public place such as a coffee shop, café, pub, library, community centre etc. Possible interview sites can be discussed with the lead researcher further. If you wish, interviews can also take place over the telephone or digitals platforms such as Zoom. Upon your agreement to take part in the study, we will discuss potential interview sites.

b) Allowing the researcher to observe daily life and participation in Jewish observances (if any at all) or other cultural practices. This may include, but not limited to, Shabbat observation, observing the Yom Kippur fast, or any events/practices you believe reflects your experiences as a queer Jew. Any opportunities for participant observation will be discussed prior and full consent obtained. You can do this as an individual or part of a group, though their consent

will also have to be obtained. Participant observations will be noted down in a field journal and anonymised before being transcribed to a word processor. There may also be moments where informal conversations are audio recorded, though your consent will be obtained before doing this.

c) Focus groups with other individuals who identify as both queer and Jewish. These focus groups will ask participants to express their identity as queer Jews through creative map-drawing exercises. This will be followed by a group discussion on your works. The discussions will be audio recorded using a digital voice recorder (and Zoom meeting recorder where applicable) and transcribed for analysis. All data used from these interviews will be made anonymous. Focus group locations will be in community spaces provided either by the Collaborative Partner (the CCJ) or public places such as coffee shops, cafes, university libraries, pubs etc. These will be discussed and agreed upon with all focus group members before the event.

d) Have the creative maps drawn during the focus groups, segments of interview transcription, and fieldnotes from participant observation, featured in an exhibition of queer Jewish identities in Britain. All material displayed will be anonymised and the event will be strictly invite-only in collaboration with the collaborative partner 'The Council of Christians and Jews.' Additional consent will be sought for this stage of the research project and no material will be displayed without the expressed consent of the participants.

All data collected during the course of the research project will be stored securely at the University of Newcastle and will be completely confidential to the researcher. Any names or identifying features will be removed or modify in collaboration with you, the participant, during the data collection.

6. **Will I be paid to take part in this study?**

There is no payment for participation, however, agreement to participate in this study will result in small tokens of gratitude offered i.e. through the provision of refreshments during the data collection.

7. **Are there any disadvantages and risks?**

There are no overt nor foreseen disadvantages or risks in taking part in this study. Nevertheless, sensitive topics may come up in conversation during this project and this may cause some discomfort. Please be aware, however, that at any time you are able to say that you do not wish to talk about any topics deemed sensitive or withdraw from the study altogether. This project includes the dissemination of anonymised information via academic media (journal articles, conferences) and professional events (debrief and exhibition). Though every possible effort will be made to ensure the utmost anonymity and confidentiality, total anonymity is never possible and identifying characteristics such as speech patterns may be identifiable to someone familiar with this and determined others. It is important to let the research know whether you are worried about this risk and whether it is appropriate to participate in the research or not.

8. **Are there any benefits?**

I cannot promise that this study will provide any immediate benefits, however, the information gathered from the study will be used to raise awareness on the intersection of religion, gender, and sexuality in Britain. This information will inform academics, interfaith leaders, pastoral figures etc. about how queer Jews express and reflect on their identities as both queer and Jewish. Above all, this is an opportunity for you to share your story and express your opinions about issues affecting both you and people you may know. You may ask for any information on results and feedback at any point of the research process.

9. **Will this be confidential?**

Yes, all data gathered will be anonymised with the degrees of anonymity you wish to adopt in this research respect. Universally, all names must be replaced with pseudonyms of your choice. All confidential information will be stored securely. **No collaborative or funding partner/body in this study has the right to view any non-anonymised data**. The only time confidentiality would be broken is only when absolutely necessary and under the indication that you are at the risk of being harm, in danger, or at risk of causing someone else harm. In the rare instance that this would, the process of breaking confidentiality would be fully explained to you.

10. **What happens with the results?**

Data from this research project will be included in the final thesis and submission of the Ph.D. program. Before submission of the thesis, a debrief and exhibition will be held in collaboration with the CCJ (see point 5d). The research will be presented and may be published in written and oral forms which may include but are not exclusive to: the Ph.D. thesis, journal articles, book chapters, conference presentations etc. There is the possibility that these outputs will then be used to raise awareness of queer Jewish identities in Britain and the intersection of Queerphobia and Antisemitism by the CCJ. The Ph.D. thesis, along with all other written projects, will be available on request.

11. **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is funded by the NINE DTP of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). All research is conducted by Matthew Shahin Richardson whilst under the supervision of Professor Peter Hopkins (University of Newcastle), Dr Raksha Pande (University of Newcastle), and Dr Yulia Egorova (University of Durham). The project is in collaboration with the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), an interfaith charity which aim to tackle Antisemitism and promote interfaith relations in the UK. The CCJ will assist in the provision of facilities, materials for research, and travel reimbursement for the researcher. They will also offer a platform for the dissemination of research findings. **To reiterate, non-anonymised confidential data will be viewed and handled solely by the lead researcher (Matthew Shahin Richardson). Neither the funding body (ESRC), supervisory board, nor the collaborative partner (CCJ) will have access to any such data.**

*Ethical Approval

This project has undergone full ethical approval by the University of Newcastle. Ethical referral no: 18141/2019

** Contacts for further information

Matthew Shahin Richardson (Lead Researcher)
PhD Student of Human Geography and Social Anthropology, Newcastle University,
m.richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk
Professor Peter Hopkins:
Professor of Social Geography and University Dean of Social Justice, Newcastle University,
peter.hopkins@ncl.ac.uk
Dr Raksha Pande:
Lecturer of Geography, Newcastle University, raksha.pande@ncl.ac.uk
Dr Yulia Egorova:
Reader in the Department of Anthropology, Durham University, yulia.egorova@durham.ac.uk

Appendix E: semi-structured interview template

1) How did you hear about this research project?

2) How would you describe yourself?

Space, community, and belonging

3) Do you feel like you belong to a community?

4) How would you describe this community?

5) When do you feel most at home?

6) Who do you think is most important you in your life?

7) What do you think is your earliest childhood memory?

8) Do you have a favourite childhood memory?

9) How would you define a Jewish space?

10) How do you feel when in Jewish spaces

11) How would you define a queer space?

12) How do you feel when in queer spaces?

13) Can you think of any examples of a space that is both queer and Jewish?

14) How would you describe your Jewish community?

15) How would you describe your queer community?

16) Do you think your Jewish and queer identities influence your close relationships?

17) Have there been any times when you have felt you didn't belong to a community?

18) Have you ever felt 'out-of-place' at a particular time or in a particular setting?

19) Have you ever experienced conflicts in your close relationships because of being queer and/or Jewish?

20) Can you tell me about your coming out process?

Beliefs, Practices, Religiosity

21) How would you describe your religious or spiritual principles?

22) Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?

23) Do you feel that being religious and being spiritual is different? If so, to what extend do you feel yourself to be spiritual?

24) How long has it been since your last attended a religious service or ceremony?

25) How familiar are you with the religious scripture of the religion you follow? (Or were brought up with?)

26) How do you tell the different between right and wrong?

27) What do you think happens to you when you die?

28) How do you put your religious and/or spiritual principles into practice?

29) When do you find yourself to be happiest?

30) What do you do to comfort yourself when you are upset?

31) How do you think you express your Jewish identity?

32) How do you think you express your queer identity?

Participant Demographic Questionnaire

Please have a read through and complete this demographic questionnaire for the research project 'Ritual and Resistance: Performing queer Jewish identities in postsecular Britain.' For any questions regarding the nature and content of this questionnaire, please contact the lead researcher (Matthew Shahin Richardson) at m.richardson6@newcastle.ac.uk for further information.

Many of the questions on this form rely on self-identification. You may wish to change your self-identification information during the course of the research project and are encouraged to contact the lead research to request to do so. You can respond to any of the questions below with **don't know, not applicable,** or **prefer not to say**.

Confidentiality disclaimer

Like all your data, your responses will be held in the strictest confidence and only the lead researcher will have access to any non-anonymized information.

1) For the purposes of anonymity and confidentiality, participants' real names are replaced with a pseudonym of their choice. If you have not done so already, please state which name you would like to use for the project. Initials are also accepted as responses.

About You

2) How would you describe your gender identity?

3) How would you describe your sexuality?

4) What is your age?

5) How would you describe your ethnicity?

6) How would you describe your current relationship status?

Geographic Questions

7) What is your nationality?

8) What country were you born in?

9) Where are you based now? For participants in the UK please choose from the following regions: **South West, South East, London, East of England, West Midlands, East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, North West, North East, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland**. For participants abroad, please state the **country** you are living in.

10)	What is your first language? If you speak more than one, please can you list these.

11)	How far do you currently live from a synagogue or other Jewish centre? Please estimate in the minutes it'd take for you to walk there, you can answer **don't know** if you don't know.

12)	How far do you currently live from a queer venue such as a bar, club, bookshop, or community centre? Please estimate in the minutes it'd take for you to walk there, you can answer **don't know** if you don't know.

Religious Background

13)	How would you describe your religious background?

14)	How would you describe your current level of religious observance? Please choose from the following categories: **Not at all observant, slightly observant, moderately observant, very observant, don't know, not applicable, prefer not to say**

15)	From the following categories, which best describes you: **Religiously Jewish but not Culturally Jewish, Religiously and Culturally Jewish, Culturally Jewish but not Religiously**

Jewish, Neither Culturally nor Religiously Jewish, Other (please describe below), don't know, not applicable, prefer not to say

16)   Are you currently affiliated to a particular branch of Judaism? If so, please describe the branch of Judaism you are most affiliated with.

Education and Employment

17)   What is your highest educational qualification?

18)   How would you describe your current employment status? (e.g. full-time employment, student, unemployed etc.)

19)   How would you describe your current occupation?

Bibliography

Abbott, L., & Scott, T. (2019). Reflections on researcher departure: closure of prison relationships in ethnographic research. *Nursing Ethics*, *26*(5), 1424–1441.

Abidin, C., & de Sata, G. (2020). Private messages from the field: confessions on digital ethnography and its discomforts. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, *2*(1), 1–19.

Adelman, M. (2014). Sex and the city: the politics of gay pride in Jerusalem. In M. Adelman & M. Elman (Eds.), *Jerusalem: conflict and cooperation in a contested city* (pp. 233–260). Syracuse University Press.

Agnew, V. (2005a). Introduction. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 3–18). University of Toronto Press.

Agnew, V. (2005b). The quest for soul in the Diaspora. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 268–290). University of Toronto Press.

Ahmed, S. (2006). *Queer phenomenology: orientations, objects, others*. Duke University Press.

Alexander, B. C. (1991). Correcting misinterpretations of Turner's theory: an African American Pentecostal illustration. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *30*(1), 24–44.

Ali, A. (2016). *King's College London launched 'urgent investigation; after pro-Israel event "attacked by pro-Palestine group."* https://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/king-s-college-london-launches-urgent-investigation-after-proisrael-event-attacked-by-propalestine-group-a6825116.html

Allmark, P. J., Boot, J., Chambers, E., Clarke, A., McDonnell, A., Thompson, A., & Tod, A. (2009). Ethical issues in the use of in-depth interviews: literature review and discussion. *Research Ethics Review*, *5*(2), 48–54.

Amin-Khan, T. (2012). New Orientalism, securitisation, and the western media's incendiary racism. *Third World Quarterly*, *33*(9), 1595–1610.

Ammerman, N. T. (2007). *Everyday religion: observing modern religious lives* (N. T. Ammerman, Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Anderson, B. (2009). Affective atmospheres. *Emotion, Space, & Society*, *2*(2), 77–81.

Anderson, B. P. (1991). *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (2006th ed.). American Council of Learned Societies.

Archibald, M. M., Ambagtsheer, R. C., Casey, M. G., & Lawless, M. (2019). Using Zoom videoconferencing for qualitative data collection: perceptions and experiences of researchers and participants. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*(January-December), 1–8.

Asad, T. (1993). *Genealogies of religion: discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam*. John Hopkins University Press.

Asad, T. (2003). *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity*. Stanford University Press.

Asad, T. (2015). Thinking about tradition, religion, and politics in Egypt today. *Critical Inquiry*, *42*(1), 166–214.

Ashworth, G. J. (2008). The memorialisation of violence and tragedy: human trauma as heritage. In B. Graham & P. Howard (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 231–244). Ashgate.

Assman, J., & Czaplicka, J. (1995). Collective memory and cultural identity. *New German Critique*, *65*(Spring/Summer), 125–133.

Atalay, O., & Doan, P. (2019). Reading the LGBT movement through its spatiality in Istanbul, Turkey. *Geography Research Forum*, *39*(1), 106–126.

Avishai, O. (2020). Religious queer people beyond identity conflict: lessons from Orthodox LGBT Jews in Israel. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *59*(2), 360–378.

Bailey, A., Harvey, D., & Brace, C. (2007). Disciplining youthful Methodist bodies in nineteenth-century Cornwall. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *97*(1), 142–157.

Bailey, A. J. (2009). Population geography: lifecourse matters. *Progress in Human Geography*, *33*(3), 407–418.

Bain, J., & Wallis, R. J. (2004). Sacred sites, contested rites/rights: contemporary pagan engagements with the past. *Journal of Material Culture*, *9*(3), 237–261.

Bakalian, A. P. (1993). *Armenian-Americans: from being to feeling Armenian.* Transactions Publishers.

Baker, J. O., Perry, S. L., & Whitehead, A. L. (2020). Keep America Christian (and White): Christian nationalism, fear of ethnoracial outsiders, and intention to vote for Donald trump in the 2020 Presidential Election. *Sociology of Religion*, *81*(3), 272–293.

Banfield, J. (2022). From liminal spaces to the spatialities of liminality. *Area*, *AHEAD-OF-P*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12791

Barrow, K. M., & Kuvalanka, K. A. (2011). To be Jewish and lesbian: an exploration of religion, sexual identity, and familial relationships. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, *7*(5), 470–492.

Bartolini, N. (2019). Spirit knows: materiality, memory, and the recovery of Spiritualist places and practices in Stoke-on-Trent. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *20*(8), 1114–1137.

Bartolini, N., Chris, R., MacKian, S., & Pile, S. (2016). The place of spirit: modernity and the geographies of spirituality. *Progress in Human Geography*, *41*(3), 338–354.

BBC News. (2020a). *China pneumonia outbreak: mystery virus probed in Wuhan.* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-50984025

BBC News. (2020b). *Wuhan pneumonia outbreak: mystery illness "caused by coronavirus."* https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-51047576

Beaulieu, A. (2010). From co-location to co-presence: shifts in the use of ethnography for the study of knowledge. *Social Studies of Science*, *40*(3), 453–470.

Beim, A. (2007). The cognitive aspects of collective memory. *Symbolic Interaction*, *30*(1), 7–26.

Bellah, R. N. (1967). Civil religion in America. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *96*(1), 1–21.

Bellah, R. N. (1985). *Tokugawa religion: the cultural roots of modern Japan*. Free Press.

Ben-Lulu, E. (2021). "Let us bless the twilight": intersectionality of traditional Jewish ritual and queer Pride in a Reform congregation in Israel. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *68*(1), 23–46.

Berger, R. (2004). *Immigrant women tell their stories*. Haworth Press.

Berger, R. (2013). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, *15*(2), 219–234.

Bharat, A. S. (2021). Paradoxes and limitations in enacting Jewish-Muslim dialogue in contemporary France: case studies of interreligious and intercultural dialogue initiatives. *Modern & Contemporary France*, *29*(4), 379–397.

Binnie, J. (1997). Coming out of geography: towards a queer epistemology? *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *15*(2), 223–237.

Bint Abdullah Sani, H. (2015). Corporeal poetics of sacred space: an ethnography of Jum'ah in a chapel. *Space & Culture*, *18*(3), 298–310.

Birt, J. (2009). Islamophobia and the construction of British Muslim identity politics. In P. E. Hopkins & R. Gale (Eds.), *Muslims in Britain: race, place, and identities* (pp. 210–227). Edinburgh University Press.

Bishop, W. (1992). I-witnessing in composition: turning ethnographic data into narratives. *Rhetoric Review*, *11*(1), 147–158.

Blakemore, E. (2021). *Why Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year*. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/yom-kippur-history-traditions#:~:text=This%20day%20of%20atonement%20marks,prayer%2C%20repentance%2C%20and%20charity

Board of Deputies of British Jews. (2013). *Jews in numbers*. https://www.bod.org.uk/jewish-facts-info/jews-in-numbers/

Boulila, S. C. (2015). What makes a lesbian salsa space comfortable? Reconceptualising safety and homophobia. In K. Browne & E. Ferreira (Eds.), *Lesbian geographies: gender, place, and power* (pp. 133–152). Ashgate.

Bourdieu, P. (1979). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (R. Nice, Ed.; 2010th ed.). Routledge.

Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, *7*(1), 14–25.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice* (R. Nice, Ed.). Stanford University Press.

Boussalem, A. (2020). In, out, or somewhere else entirely: going beyond binary constructions of the closet in the lives of LGBTQ people from a Muslim background living in Brussels. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *46*(2), 1–30.

Boussalem, A. (2022). A place where there is no need to explain: LGBTQ Muslims, collective disidentification and queer space in Brussels, Belgium. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *AHEAD-OF-PRINT*, 1–18.

Bowen, L. M. (2011). Resisting age bias in digital literacy research. *College Composition and Communication*, *62*(4), 586–607.

Bowman, G. (1993). Nationalising the sacred: shrines and shifting identities in the Israeli-occupied territories. *Man*, *28*(3), 431–460.

Brace, C., Bailey, A. R., & Harvey, D. C. (2006). Religion, place, and space: a framework for investigating historical geographies of religious identities and communities. *Progress in Human Geography*, *30*(1), 28–43.

Bradlow, J., Bartram, F., Guasp, A., & Jadva, V. (2017). *School report: the experiences of lesbian, gay, bi, and trans young people in Britain's schools in 2017*.

Brettschneider, M. (2003). Ritual encounters of the queer kind: a political analysis of Jewish lesbian ritual innovation. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *7*(2), 29–48.

Brown, S. (2015). *Daily Mail headline from 1938 draws comparisons with current reporting of Calais Migrant Crisis*. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/7909954

Browne, K. (2007). (Re)making the Other: heterosexualising everyday space. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *39*(4), 996–1014.

Bruce, S. (2002). *God is dead: secularisation in the West*. Blackwell Publications.

Bruner, E. (1986a). Ethnography as narrative. In V. W. Turner & E. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 139–155). University of Illinois Press.

Bruner, E. (1986b). Experience and its expressions. In V. W. Turner & E. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 3–30). University of Illinois Press.

Buciek, K., & Juul, K. (2008). "We are here, yet we are not here": the heritage of excluded groups. In B. Graham & P. Howard (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 105–123). Routledge.

Burstin, H. E. (1999). Looking out, looking in: Anti-semitism and racism in lesbian communities. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *26*(2–4), 143–157.

Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: on the discursive limits of sex*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (1999). Performativity's social magic. In R. Shusterman (Ed.), *Bourdieu: a critical reader* (pp. 113–129). Blackwell.

Butler, T. (2007). For gentrification? *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *39*(1), 162–181.

Byrne, C. (2012). Qualitative interviewing. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (pp. 206–226). Sage.

Campo, J. E. (1998). American pilgrimage landscapes. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science*, *40*(56), 558–1.

Carter, S., & Anderson, C. (2019). *Wellbeing in educational contexts*. University of Southern Queensland. https://usq.pressbooks.pub/wellbeingineducationalcontexts/

Cary, L. J. (1999). Unexpected stories: life history and the limits of representation. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *5*(3), 411–427.

Casey, M. E. (2007). The queer unwanted and their undesirable "Otherness." In K. Browne, J. Lim, & G. Brown (Eds.), *Geographies of Sexualities: theories, practices, and politics* (pp. 125–136). Routledge.

Chaitin, J. (2003). "I wish he hadn't told me that": methodological and ethical issues in social trauma and conflict research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *13*(8), 1145–1154.

Chambers, C., Phillips, R., Ali, N., Hopkins, P. E., & Pande, R. (2018). "Sexual misery" or "happy British Muslims"? Contemporary depictions of Muslim sexuality. *Ethnicities*, *19*(1), 66–94.

Chen, N. (2017). Secularisation, sacralisation, and the reproduction of sacred space: exploring the industrial use of ancestral temples in rural Wenzhou, China. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *18*(4), 530–552.

Chen, N., Chen, J., & Dean, K. (2021). Religion in times of crisis: innovative lay responses and temporal-spatial reconfigurations of temple rituals in COVID-19 China. *Cultural Geographies*, *29*(2), 301–308.

Chivallon, C. (2001). Religion as a space for the expression of Caribbean identity in the United Kingdom. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *19*(4), 461–483.

Clark, M. C., & Sharf, B. F. (2007). The dark side of the truth(s): ethical dilemmas in researching the personal. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(3), 399–416.

Cloke, P., & Beaumont, J. (2012). Geographies of postsecular rapprochement in the city. *Progress in Human Geography*, *37*(1), 27–51.

Cloke, P., Sutherland, C., & Williams, A. (2015). Postsecularity, political resistance, and protest in the Occupy movement. *Antipode*, *48*(3), 407–523.

Cohen, A. B. (2015). Religion's profound influences on psychology: morality, intergroup relations, self-construal, and enculturation. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *24*(1), 77–81.

Community Security Trust. (2021). *Antisemitic Incidents Report 2021*. https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2022/02/10/antisemitic-incidents-report-2021

Connolly, W. E. (2005). The Evangelical-Capitalist resonance machine. *Political Theory*, *33*(6), 869–886.

Conway, B. (2010). New directions in the sociology of collective memory and commemoration. *Sociology Compass*, *4*(7), 442–453.

Cortellessa, E. (2016). *Protestors obstruct Jewish reception at gay rights convention*. https://www.timesofisrael.com/protesters-obstruct-jewish-prayers-at-gay-rights-convention/

Cox, N. (2018). Tangible communitas: The Los Angeles Wisdom Tree, folklore, and non-religious pilgrimage. *Western Folklore*, *77*(1), 29–55.

Cunliffe, A. (2010). Retelling tales of the field: in search of organisational ethnography 20 years on. *Organisational Research Methods*, *13*(2), 224–239.

Curtis, J. R. (1980). Miami's Little Havana: yard shrines, cult religion, and landscape. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, *1*(1), 1–15.

Daly, J. (2016). Thinking about internal prejudice and anti-oppressive practice in child safeguarding social work with Irish Travellers in the UK. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *30*(4), 335–347.

Davidman, L. (2007). The new voluntarism and the case of unsynagogued Jews. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday religion: observing modern religious lives* (pp. 51–67). Oxford University Press.

Davidson, J., & Milligan, C. (2004). Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *5*(4), 523–532. https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936042000317677

Davies, C. A. (1998). *Reflexive ethnography: a guide to researching selves and others*. Routledge.

Davies, D. J. (2011). *Emotion, identity, and religion: hope, reciprocity, and otherness*. Oxford Scholarship Online.

Day, A. (2012). Believing in belonging: belief and social identity in the modern world. In *Believing in Belonging: Belief and Social Identity in the Modern World* (Vol. 9780199577). Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199577873.001.0001

Degnen, C. (2015). Socialising place attachment: place, social memory, and embodied affordances. *Ageing & Society*, *36*(8), 1645–1667.

DeHanas, D. N. (2016). *London youth, religion, and politics: engagement and activism from Brixton to Brick Lane*. Oxford University Press.

della Dora, V. (2012). Setting and blurring boundaries: pilgrims, tourists, and landscape in Mount Athos and Meteora. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *39*(2), 951–974.

della Dora, V. (2018). Infrasecular geographies: making, unmaking, and remaking sacred space. *Progress in Human Geography*, *42*(1), 44–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516666190

DeLyser, S. (2001). "Do you really live here?" Thoughts on insider research. *Geographical Review*, *91*(1/2), 441–451.

Dewsbury, J. D., & Cloke, P. (2009). Spiritual landscapes: existence, performance and immanence. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *10*(6), 695–711. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360903068118

Diamond, E. (2002). The Kosher lifestyle: religious consumerism and suburban Orthodox Jews. *Journal of Urban History*, *28*(4), 488–505. https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144202028004006

Doan, P. L. (2007). Queers in the American city: transgendered perceptions of urban space. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *14*(1), 57–74.

Doan, P. L., & Higgins, H. (2011). The demise of queer space? Resurgent gentrification and the assimilation of LGBT neighbourhoods. *Journal of Planning Education & Research*, *31*(1), 6–25.

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (2001st ed.). Routledge.

Drinkwater, G. (2019). Creating an embodied queer Judaism: liturgy, ritual, and sexuality at San Francisco's congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 1977-1987. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, *18*(2), 177–193.

Dronke, U. (1997). *The poetic Edda: volume II, mythological poems*. Clarendon Press.

Duda-Seifert, M., & Kajdanek, K. (2021). The experience of satisfaction of visiting a Jewish heritage site in the context of cultural and Jewish heritage tourism: evidence form Krakow, Poland. *Journal of Tourism & Cultural Change*, *AHEAD-OF-PRINT*, 1–17.

Durkheim, E. (1893). *The division of labour in society* (S. Lukes, Ed.; 2013th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Durkheim, E. (1912). *The elementary forms of religious life* (C. Cosman, Ed.; 2008th ed.). Oxford's World Classics.

Dwyer, C., Gilbert, D., & Shah, B. (2013). Faith and suburbia: secularisation, modernity and the changing geographies of religion in London's suburbs. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *38*(3), 403–419. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00521.x

Dwyer, Claire., & Shah, B. (2009). Rethinking the identities of young British Pakistani Muslim women: educational experiences and aspirations. In Peter. Hopkins & R. Gale (Eds.), *Muslims in Britain: race, place, and identities* (pp. 53–73). Edinburgh University Press.

Dwyer, S. C., & Buckle, J. L. (2009). The space between: on being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *8*(1), 54–63.

Eade, J., & Garbin, D. (2007). Reinterpreting the relationship between centre and periphery: pilgrimage and sacred spatialisation among Polish and Congolese communities in Britain. *Mobilities*, *2*(3), 413–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100701597384

Eade, John., & Sallnow, M. J. (1991). *Contesting the sacred: the anthropology of pilgrimage* (J. Eade & M. J. Sallnow, Eds.). Routledge.

Egorova, Y. (2013). The substance that empowers? DNA in South Asia. *Contemporary South Asia*, *21*(3), 291–303.

Egorova, Y. (2014). Theorizing "Jewish genetics": DNA, culture, and historical narrative. In L. Roth & N. Valman (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of contemporary Jewish cultures* (pp. 353–364). Routledge.

Egorova, Y. (2015). Redefining the converted Jewish self: race, religion, and Israel's Bene Menashe. *American Anthropologist*, *117*(3), 493–505.

Egorova, Y. (2018). DNA, reconciliation, and social empowerment. *British Journal of Sociology*, *69*(3), 1–15.

Egorova, Y. (2022). "This is just where we are in history": Jewish-Muslim dialogue, temporality, and modalities of solidarity. In B. Gidley & S. S. Everett (Eds.), *Jews and Muslims in Europe: between discourse and experience* (pp. 231–249). Brill.

Egorova, Y., & Ahmed, F. (2017). The impact of Antisemitism and Islamophobia on Jewish-Muslim relations in the UK: memory, experience, context. In *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: a shared story?* (pp. 283–301). Palgrave Macmillan.

Egorova, Y., & Perwez, S. (2012). Old memories, new histories: (re)discovering the past of Jewish Dalits. *History & Anthropology, 23*(1), 1–15.

Eliade, M. (1959). *The sacred and the profane: the nature of religion*. Harcout, Brace & World.

Elks, S. (2018). *UK police "let down" gay community as hate crimes soar*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-crime-lgbt/uk-police-let-down-gay-community-as-hate-crimes-soar-idUSKBN1K92JB

El-Tayeb, F. (2012). "Gays who cannot properly be gay": queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 19*(1), 79–95.

Engelhart, K. (2014). *Britain's working men's clubs succumb to modern life*. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/travel/britains-working-mens-clubs-succumb-to-modern-life.html

England, K. (1994). Getting personal: reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *Professional Geographer, 46*(1), 80–89.

Erdemir, A. (2015). *The Turkish Kristallnacht*. https://www.politico.eu/article/the-turkish-kristallnacht-greece-1955-pogrom-polites-orthodox/

European Jewish Congress. (2017). *United Kingdom*. https://eurojewcong.org/communities/united-kingdom/

Faulkner, S. L., & Hecht, M. L. (2011). The negotiation of closetable identities: a narrative analysis of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered queer Jewish identity. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships, 28*(6), 829–847.

Ferguson, D. (2019). *"We can't give in": the Birmingham school on the frontline of anti-LGBT protests*. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/may/26/birmingham-anderton-park-primary-muslim-protests-lgbt-teaching-rights

Fincher, R. (2009). Lifecourse approaches. In R. Kitchin & N. J. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of human geography* (pp. 207–211). Elsevier.

Finlayson, C. C. (2012). Spaces of faith: incorporating emotion and spirituality in geographic studies. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *44*(7), 1763–1778. https://doi.org/10.1068/a44580

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: the birth of prison* (A. Sheridan, Ed.). Penguin.

Fox, C., & Ore, T. E. (2010). (Un)covering normalised gender and race subjectivities in LGBT "safe spaces." *Feminist Studies*, *36*(3), 629–649.

Francis, L. J., & Katz, Y. J. (2007). Measuring attitude towards Judaism: the internal consistency reliability of the Katz-Francis scale of attitude toward Judaism. *Mental Health, Religion, & Culture*, *10*(4), 309–324.

Francis, L. J., Katz, Y. J., Yablon, Y., & Robbins, M. (2004). Religiosity, personality, and happiness: a study among Israeli male undergraduates. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *5*(4), 325–333.

Franzosi, R. (1998). Narrative analysis: or why (and how) sociologists should be interested in narrative. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *24*(1), 517–554.

Gaer, E. A. (1995). Birth rituals of the Nanai. In M. M. Balazer (Ed.), *Culture incarnate: native anthropology from Russia* (pp. 143–172). M. E. Sharpe.

Gans, H. J. (1979). Symbolic ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups and culutres in America. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *2*(1), 1–20.

Gans, H. J. (1994). Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *17*(4), 577–692.

Gans, H. J. (2007). Acculturation, assimilation, and mobility. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *30*(1), 152–164.

Gans, H. J. (2017). Another look at symbolic ethnicity. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *40*(9), 1410–1417.

Gao, Q., Yin, D., & Zhu, H. (2019). Secularisation and resistant politics of sacred space in Guangzhou's ancestral temple, China. *Area*, *51*(3), 570–577. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12512

Gay, J. D. (1971). *Geography of religion in England*. Duckworth & Company Ltd.

Geertz, C. (1986). Making experiences, authoring selves. In V. W. Turner & E. Bruner (Eds.), *The anthropology of experience* (pp. 373–380). University of Illinois Press.

Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and lives: the anthropologist as author*. Stanford University Press.

Giacomucci, S., & Stone, A. (2019). Being in two places at once: renegotiating traumatic experience through the surplus reality of psychodrama. *Social Work with Groups*, *42*(3), 184–196.

Gidley, B., McGeever, B., & Feldman, D. (2020). Labour and Antisemitism: a crisis misunderstood. *The Political Quarterly*, *91*(2), 413–421. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12854

Glassgold, J. M. (2008). Bridging the divide: integrating lesbian identity and Orthodox Judaism. *Women & Therapy*, *31*(1), 59–72.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: an essay on the organisation of experience*. Harvard University Press.

Gökarıksel, B. (2009). Beyond the officially sacred: religion, secularism, and the body in the production of subjectivity. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *10*(6), 657–674. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360903068993

Gökarıksel, B. (2012). The intimate politics of secularism and the headscarf: the mall, the neighbourhood, and the public square in Istanbul. *Gender, Place, & Culture*, *19*(1), 1–20.

Gökarıksel, B., & Secor, A. (2010). Islamic-ness in the life of a commodity: veiling-fashion in Turkey. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *35*(3), 313–333. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2010.00384.x

Golde, C. M. (2005). The role of the department and discipline in doctoral student attrition: lessons from four department. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *76*(6), 669–700.

Goldstein, E. L. (2006). *The price of Whiteness: Jews, race, and American identity*. Princeton University Press.

Gomes, C., Kong, L., & Woods, O. (2020). *Religion, hypermobility, and digital media in global Asia: faith, flows, and fellowship* (C. Gomes, L. Kong, & O. Woods, Eds.). Amsterdam University Press.

González, P. A. (2017). Heritage and rural gentrification in Spain: the case of Santiago Millas. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *23*(2), 125–140.

Graham, B., & Howard, P. (2008). Introduction. In B. Graham & P. Howard (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 1–15). Ashgate.

Greene, D. M. (2007). The Holocaust as recurring reality: victimisation themes and Jewish American ethnic identity formation. *Sociological Spectrum*, *27*(3), 275–298.

Gross, M., & Yip, A. K. T. (2010). Living spirituality and sexuality: a comparison of lesbian, gay, and bisexual Christians in France and Britain. *Social Compass*, *57*(1), 40–59.

Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective memory* (L. A. Coser, Ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural identity and diaspora. In J. Rutherford (Ed.), *Identity: community, culture, difference* (pp. 222–237). Lawrence.

Hallas, R. (2010). Queer AIDS media and the question of the archive. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *16*(3), 431–435.

Hanover, N. M., Mesch, A. J., & Helmreich, W. B. (1983). *The abyss of despair - Yeven metzulah: the famous 17th century chronicle depicting Jewish life in Russia and Poland during the Chmielnicki Massacres of 1648-1649*. Transaction Publishers.

Harold, J. (2015). Institutionalising liminality: Jewish summer camps and the boundary work of camp participants. *Sociology of Race & Ethnicity*, *1*(3), 439–453.

Harold, J., & Fong, E. (2018). Mobilising memory: collective memory schemas and the social boundaries of Jews in Toronto. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *41*(2), 343–361.

Harraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599.

Hartal, G. (2016). The politics of holding: home and LGBT visibility in contested Jerusalem. *Gender, Place, & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, *23*(8), 1193–1206.

Hartal, G. (2017). Fragile subjectivities: constructing queer safe spaces. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *19*(8), 1053–1072. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2017.1335877

Hartal, G. (2019). Gay tourism to Tel Aviv: producing urban value? *Urban Studies*, *56*(6), 1148–1164.

Hartal, G. (2020). Touring and obscuring: how sensual, embodied, and haptic gay touristic practices construct the geopolitics of pinkwashing. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *AHEAD-OF-PRINT*, 1–19.

Haverinen, A. (2015). Internet ethnography: the past, the present, and the future. *Ethnologia Fennica*, *42*(1), 79–90.

Hays-Mitchell, M. (2001). Danger, fulfilment, and responsibility in a violence-plagued society. *Geographical Review*, *91*(1/2), 311–321.

Hayton, J. (2018). "They do treat us as a bit normal now": students' experiences of liminality and communitas whilst volunteering on a sports-based outreach project. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *53*(7). https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690216687553

Heelas, P., & Woodhead, L. (2005). *The spiritual revolution: why religion is giving way to spirituality*. Blackwell.

Held, N. (2015). Comfortable and safe spaces? Gender, sexuality, and "race" in night-time leisure spaces. *Emotion, Space, and Society*, *14*(1), 33–42.

Heng, T. (2022). Interacting with the dead: understanding the role and agency of spirits in assembling deathscapes. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *22*(3), 400–423.

Hershkowitz, S. (1987). Residential segregation by religion: a conceptual framework. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, *78*(1), 44–52. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.1987.tb00143.x

Hoelscher S., & Alderman, D. H. (2004). Memory and place: geographies of a critical relationship. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *5*(3), 347–355.

Holloway, J. (2003). Make-Believe: spiritual practice, embodiment, and sacred space. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *35*(11), 1961–1974. https://doi.org/10.1068/a3586

Holloway, J. (2006). Enchanted spaces: the séance, affect, and geographies of religion. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *96*(1), 182–187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.2006.00507.x

Holloway, J. (2013). The space that faith makes: towards a (hopeful) ethos of engagement. In P. Hopkins, L. Kong, & E. Olson (Eds.), *Religion and place: landscape, politics, and piety* (pp. 203–218). Springer.

Holloway, J., & Valins, O. (2002). Editorial: placing religion and spirituality in geography. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *3*(1), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360120114107

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. (2021, January 27). *UK Holocaust Memorial Day: 2021 ceremony*. https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/ceremony/

Home Office. (2018). *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017/18*. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2017-to-2018

Hopkins, P. (2007). Global events, national politics, local lives: young Muslim men in Scotland. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *39*(5), 1119–1133. https://doi.org/10.1068/a38129

Hopkins, P. (2020). Social geography II: Islamophobia, transphobia, and sizism. *Progress in Human Geography*, *44*(3), 583–594. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519833472

Hopkins, P. E. (2004). Young Muslim men in Scotland: inclusions and exclusions. *Children's Geographies*, *2*(2), 257–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280410001720548

Hopkins, P. E. (2006). Youthful Muslim masculinities: gender and generational relations. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *31*(3), 337–352. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2006.00206.x

Hopkins, P. E. (2011). Towards critical geographies of the university campus: understanding the contestec experiences of Muslim students. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *36*(1), 157–169.

Hopkins, P. E., & Gale, R. (2007). *Muslims in Britain: race, place, and identities* (P. E. Hopkins & R. Gale, Eds.). Edinburgh University Press.

Hopkins, P. E., & Pain, R. (2007). Geographies of age: thinking relationally. *Area*, *39*(1), 287–294.

Hosman, S. S. (2018). Allston Christmas: how local rituals reproduce neighbourhood temporality and deter gentrification. *Urbanities*, *8*(2), 69–78.

Howlett, M. (2021). Looking at the "field" through a Zoom lens: methodological reflections on conducting online research during a global pandemic. *Qualitative Research*, *22*(3), 387–402.

Hua, A. (2005). Diaspora and cultural memory. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 652–667). University of Toronto Press.

Hultkranz, A. (1966). An ecological approach to religion. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, *31*(1–4), 131–150.

Hume, L. (1998). Creating sacred space: outer expressions of inner worlds in modern Wicca. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *13*(3), 309–319. https://doi.org/10.1080/13537909808580838

Irish, J., & Serries, G. (2012). *Gunman attacks Jewish school in France, four killed*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-crime-idUSBRE82I07N20120319

Itzhaky, H., & Kissil, K. (2015). "It's a horrible sin. If they find out, I will not be able to stay": Orthodox Jewish gay men's experiences living in secrecy. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *62*(5), 621–643.

Jackson, P., & Russell, P. (2010). Life history interviewing. In D. DeLyser (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 172–192). Sage.

Jacobs, J. (2015). *The seder place: the placement and symbolism of the items on the seder place*. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-seder-plate/

James, M. (2014). Whiteness and loss in outer East London: tracing the collective memories of diaspora space. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *37*(4), 652–667.

Jaspal, R., & Ferozali, R. (2021). Social representations of Britishness among British South Asian gay men. *South Asian Diaspora*, *13*(2), 111–128.

Jensen, E. (2002). The pink triangle and political consciousness: gays, lesbians, and the memory of Nazi persecution. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *11*(1/2), 319–349.

Johnston, M. S. (2019). When madness meets madness: insider reflections on doing mental health research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*(January-December), 1–13.

Jones, O. (2011). Geography, memory, and non-representational geographies. *Geography Compass*, *5*(12), 875–885.

Jurkovich, J. M., & Gesler, W. M. (1997). Medjugorje: finding peace at the heart of conflict. *Geographical Review*, *87*(4), 447–467. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.1997.tb00084.x

Kadar, M. (2005). Wounding events and the limits of autobiography. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 81–110). Toronto University Press.

Kanuha, V. K. (2000). "Being" native versus "going native": conducting social work research as an insider. *Social Work*, *45*(5), 439–447. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/45.5.439

Kapferer, B. (2019). Crisis and communitas: Victor Turner and social process. *Anthropology Today*, *35*(5), 1–2.

Kasstan, B. (2016). Positioning oneself and being positioned in the "community": an essay on Jewish ethnography as a "Jew-ish" ethnographer. *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, *27*(1). https://doi.org/10.30674/scripta.66579

Kasstan, B. (2019). *Making bodies kosher: the politics of reproduction among Haredi Jews in England*. Berghahn Books.

Kedem-Tahar, E., & Felix-Kellermann, P. (1996). Psychodrama and drama therapy: a comparison. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *23*(1), 27–36.

Kelleher, P. (2020). *LGBT+ helpline sees calls double as queer people fear being left with abusive families during coronavirus lockdown*.

https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/03/27/lgbt-foundation-helpline-increased-calls-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic-queer-gay-mental-health/

Khomami, N. (2018). *Antisemitic incidents in UK at all-time high*. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/feb/01/antisemitic-incidents-in-uk-at-all-time-high

Kiong, T. C., & Kong, L. (2000). Religion and modernity: ritual transformations and the reconstruction of space and time. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *1*(1), 29–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649369950133476

Klingorová, K., & Gökarıksel, B. (2018). "God was with me everywhere": women's embodied practices and everyday experiences of sacred space in Czechia. *Gender, Place, & Culture*, *25*(1), 37–60.

Kobakhidze, M. N., Hui, J., Chui, J., & González, A. (2021). Research disruptions, new opportunities: re-imaginging qualitative interview study during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *20*(January-December), 1–10.

Kobayashi, A. (2009). Situated knowledge, reflexivity. In R. Kitchin & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of human geography* (pp. 138–143). Elsevier.

Kong, L. (1990). Geography and religion: trends and prospects. *Progress in Human Geography*, *14*(3), 355–371. https://doi.org/10.1177/030913259001400302

Kong, L. (1993). Ideological hegemony and the political symbolism of religious buildings in Singapore. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *11*(1), 23–45. https://doi.org/10.1068/d110023

Kong, L. (2001). Mapping 'new' geographies of religion: politics and poetics in modernity. *Progress in Human Geography*, *25*(2), 211–233. https://doi.org/10.1191/030913201678580485

Kong, L. (2010). Global shifts, theoretical shifts: Changing geographies of religion. *Progress in Human Geography*, *34*(6), 755–776. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132510362602

Kong, L., & Woods, O. (2016). *Religion and space: competition, conflict, and violence in the contemporary world* (L. Kong & O. Woods, Eds.). Bloomsbury Academic.

Koskela, H., & Pain, R. (2000). Revisiting fear and place: women's fear of attack and the built environment. *Geoforum*, *31*(2), 269–280.

Krause, P., Szekely, O., Bloom, M., Christia, F., Daly, S. Z., Lawson, C., Marks, Z., Millif, A., Miura, K., Nielsen, R., Reno, W., Souleimanov, E. A., & Zakayo, A. (2021). Covid-19 and fieldwork: challenges and solutions. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *54*(2), 264–269.

Landry, O. (2016). Jewish joke telling in Muttersprache Mameloschn: performing queer intervention on the Germany stage. *Women & Performance*, *26*(1), 36–54.

Laube, H. (2021). Outsiders within transforming the academy: the unique positionality of feminist sociologists. *Gender & Society*, *35*(3), 476–500.

le Noc, M., & Sarmiento, E. (2021). "We were turned into Jews": space, subjectivation, and resistance in occupied Paris. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *AHEAD-OF-PRINT*, 1–17.

Lean Machine webbterfuge, Black Lamb, racheldoesstuff, Warner Bros. Television, & CBS Television Studies. (2015). *Crazy ex-girlfriend*. Warner Bros. Television Distribution and CBS Television Distribution.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1969). *The elementary structures of kinship: Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* (J. H. Bell, J. R. von Sturmer, & R. Needham, Eds.; Revised Ed). Eyre & Spottiswoode.

Lewis, R., Sharp, E., Remnant, J., & Redpath, R. (2015). Safe spaces: experiences of feminist women-only space. *Sociological Research Online*, *20*(4), 1–14.

Leyshon, M., & Bull, J. (2011). The bricolage of the here: young people's narratives of identity in the countryside. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *12*(2), 159–180.

Lobe, B., Morgan, D., & Hoffman, K. A. (2020). Qualitative data collection in an era of social distancing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*(July), 1–8.

London, L. (2000). *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933-1948: British immigration policy, Jewish refugees, and the Holocaust*. Cambridge University Press.

Longhurst, R. (2009). Interviews: in-depth, semi-structured. In R. Kitchen & N. J. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of human geography* (pp. 580–584). Elsevier.

Lowenthal, D. (1998). *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*. Cambridge University Press.

Lugosi, P. (2007). Queer consumption and commercial hospitality: communitas, myths, and the production of liminoid space. *International Journal of Sociology & Social Policy*, *27*(3/4), 163–174. https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330710741093

Luz, N. (2008). The politics of sacred places: Palestinian identity, collective memory, and resistance in the Hassan Bek Mosque Conflict. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *26*(6), 1036–1052. https://doi.org/10.1068/d2508

Luz, N. (2013). Metaphors to live by: identity formation and resistance among minority Muslims in Israel. In P. E. Hopkins, L. Kong, & E. Olson (Eds.), *Religion and place: landscape, politics, and piety* (pp. 57–74). Springer.

Ma, L. (2021). Religious pursuits? Chinese international students encountering Christianity in Britain. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *36*(3), 401–420.

MacInnes, P. (2022). *Qatar World Cup ambassador criticised for "harmful" homosexuality comments*. https://www.theguardian.com/football/2022/nov/08/qatar-world-cup-ambassador-homosexuality

Maddrell, A. (2013). Moving and being moved: more-than-walking and talking on pilgrimage walks in the Manx landscape. *Culture & Religion*, *14*(1), 63–77.

Maddrell, A. (2020). Bereavement, grief, and consolation: emotional-affective geographies of loss during COVID-19. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, *10*(2), 107–111. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820620934947

Maddrell, A., & della Dora, V. (2013). Crossing surfaces in search of the Holy: landscape and liminality in contemporary Christian pilgrimage. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *45*(5), 1105–1126.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, *98*(2), 224–253.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370–396.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, place, and gender*. University of Minnesota Press.

Massumi, B. (1997). The political economy of belonging and the logic of relation. In C. Davidson (Ed.), *Anybody* (pp. 174–188). MIT Press.

Matsuoka, A., & Sorenson, J. (2005). Ghosts and shadows: memory and resilience among the Eritrean Diaspora. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 37–53). Toronto University Press.

Mavelli, L. (2012). Between normalisation and exception: the securitisation of Islam and the construction of the secular subject. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *41*(2), 159–181.

Mazumdar, S., & Mazumdar, S. (1993). Sacred space and place attachment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *13*(3), 231–242. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0272-4944(05)80175-6

McDowell, S. (2008). Heritage, memory, and identity. In B. Graham & P. Howard (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 37–53). Ashgate.

McDowell, S., & Crooke, E. (2019). Creating liminal spaces of collective possibility in divided societies: building and burning the Temple. *Cultural Geographies*, *26*(3), 323–339.

McGowan, V. J., Lowther, H. J., & Meads, C. (2021). Life under Covid-19 for LGBT+ people in the UK: systematic review of UK research on the impact of Covid-19 on sexual and gender minority populations. *British Medical Journal*, *11*(AHEAD-OF-PRINT), 1–12. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-050092

McGuire, M. (2007). Embodied practices: negotiation and resistance. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday religion: observing modern religious lives* (pp. 187–200). Oxford University Press.

Milligan, A. (2013). Colours of the Jewish rainbow: a study of homosexual Jewish men and yarmulkes. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, *21*(1), 71–89.

Milligan, A. (2014). Expanding sisterhood: Jewish lesbians and externalisations of Jewishness. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *18*(4), 437–455.

Milligan, A. (2017). Hair today, gone tomorrow: upsherin, alef-bet, and the childhood navigation of Jewish gender identity symbol sets. *Journal of Children's Folklore*, *38*, 7–26.

Misgav, C., & Johnston, L. (2014). Dirty dancing: the (non)fluid embodied geographies of a queer nightclub in Tel Aviv. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *15*(7), 730–746.

Mohammad, R. (2015). Transnational shift: marriage, home, and belonging for British-Pakistani Muslim women. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *16*(6), 593–614.

Moon, D. (2012). Who am I and who are we? Conflicting narratives of collective selfhood in stigmatised groups. *American Journal of Sociology*, *117*(5), 1336–1379.

Morrissey, B. (2012). A domestic geography of everyday terror: remembering and forgetting the house I grew up in. In J. Garde-Hansen & O. Jones (Eds.), *Geography and memory: explorations in identity, place, and becoming* (pp. 184–198). Palgrave Macmillan.

Müller, T. (2020). Secularisation theory and its discontents: recapturing decolonial and gendered narratives. Debate on Jörg Stolz's article on Secularization theories in the 21st century: ideas, evidence, and problems. *Social Compass*, *67*(2), 315–322.

Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, *30*(4), 337–350. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(99)00025-1

Murphy, L. (2018). The British Nativity play: an initiation into a familiar paradigmatic scene. *Journal of the Association for the Study of Religions*, *20*(2018), 118–144.

Murray, M. (2003). Narrative psychology and narrative analysis. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology: expanding perspective in methodology and design* (pp. 95–112). American Psychological Association.

Myerhoff, B. G. (1974). *Peyote Hunt: the sacred journey of the Huichol Indians*. Cornell University Press.

Myerhoff, B. G. (1975). Organisation and ecstasy: deliberate and accidental communitas among Huichol Indians and American youth. In B. G. Myerhoff & S. F. Moore (Eds.), *Symbol and politics in communal ideology: cases and questions* (pp. 33–67). Cornell University Press.

Myerhoff, B. G. (1978). *Number our days: a triumph of continuity and culture among Jewish old people in an urban ghetto*. Simon & Shuster.

Myerhoff, B. G. (1982). Life history among the elderly: performance, visibility, and remembering. In J. Ruby (Ed.), *A crack in the mirror: reflexive perspectives in anthropology* (pp. 99–118). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nahum-Claudel, C. (2019). In permanent transition: multiple temporalities of communitas in the Enawenê-nawê ritual everyday. *Anthropology Today*, *35*(3), 11–15.

Nash, C. (2018). Field theory, space, and time. In J. Albright, D. Hartman, & J. Widin (Eds.), *Bourdieu's field theory and the social sciences* (pp. 217–233). Springer eBooks.

Needham, R. (1981). *Circumstantial deliveries*. University of California Press.

Neumann, E. (1955). *The Great Mother: an analysis of the archetype* (2015th ed.). Princeton University Press.

Nolen, A., & Talbert, T. (2011). Qualitative assertions as prescriptive statements. *Educational Psychological Review*, *41*(1), 105–121.

Nowicka, E. (2016). Siberian circle dances: the new and old communitas. *Polish Sociological Review*, *194*(2), 249–260.

Nugent, L., & Scriven, R. (2015). *Wells, graves, and statues: exploring the heritage and culture of pilgrimage and culture of pilgrimage in medieval and modern Cork city*. On-Demand Publishing.

Nye, M. (1993). Temple congregations and communities: Hindu constructions in Edinburgh. *New Community*, *19*(2), 201–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.1993.9976356

Office for National Statistics. (2022). *Census 2021*. https://census.gov.uk/

Olson, E. (2013). Gender and geopolitics in "secular time." *Area*, *45*(2), 148–154.

Olson, E., Hopkins, P., Pain, R., & Vincett, G. (2013). Retheorizing the postsecular present: embodiment, spatial transcendence, and challenges to authenticity among young Christians in Glasgow, Scotland. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *103*(6), 1421–1436. https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.702516

O'Neill, K. L. (2013). Beyond broken: affective spaces and the study of American religion. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *81*(4), 1093–1116. https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lft059

Orsi, R. (2005). *Between heaven and earth: the religious worlds people make and the scholars who study them*. Princeton University Press.

Pain, R. (1997). Social geographies of women's fear of crime. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *22*(2), 231–244.

Pain, R. (2001). Gender, race, age, and fear in the city. *Urban Studies*, *38*(5/6), 899–913.

Pande, R. (2014). Geographies of marriage and migration: aranged marriage and South Asians in Britain. *Geography Compass*, *8*(2), 75–86.

Papadelos, P. (2021). "Greeks are different to Australians": understanding identity formation among third-generation Australians of Greek Heritage. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *44*(11), 1975–1994.

Parikh, A. (2020). Insider-outsider as process: drawing as reflexive feminist methodology during fieldwork. *Cultural Geographies*, *27*(3), 437–452.

Perez, A. M. (2006). Doing qualitative research with migrants as a native citizen: reflections from Spain. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *7*(3), 1–14.

Phillips, R., Chambers, C., Ali, N., Pande, R., & Hopkins, P. (2020). Mobilising Pakistani heritage, approaching marriage. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *43*(16), 1–19.

Philologos. (2012). *Exploring "chai" culture*. https://forward.com/culture/165445/exploring-chai-culture/

Povilaitis, V., Sibthorp, J., & Warner, R. P. (2021). "It's not real life": liminality and summer camp employment. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *AHEAD-OF-P*, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F07435584211055980

Preser, R. (2021). What therefore discourse has joined together: sexuality, perfomativity, and everyday use of public spaces. *Social & Cultural Geography, 22*(1), 58–75.

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street. (2020a). *Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 18 March 2020*. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-coronavirus-18-march-2020

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street. (2020b). *Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus (COVID-19): 23 March 2020*. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-address-to-the-nation-on-coronavirus-23-march-2020

Rahman, M. (2014). *Homosexualities, Muslim cultures, and modernity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rahman, S. A., Tuckerman, L., Vorley, T., & Gherhes, C. (2021). Resilient research in the field: insights and lessons from adapting qualitative research projects during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 20*(January-December), 1–16.

Rando, T. A. (1985). Creating therapeutic rituals in the psychotherapy of the bereaved. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 22*(2), 236–240.

Rappaport, R. A. (1999). *Ritual and religion in the making of humanity* (2004th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Reed-Danahay, D. (2020). Brexit, liminality, and ambiguities of belonging: French citizens in London. *Ethnologia Europaea, 50*(2), 16–31.

Ren, Z., Hood, R., Yang, C., Lu, X., Su, Q., & Tsingan, L. (2019). The effects of self-construal and the living environment on internalised homophobia among Chinese gay men. *Journal of Men's Health, 15*(3), 25–34.

Riesebrodt, M. (2010). *The promise of salvation: a theory of religion*. University of Chicago Press.

Robinson, S. J., Johnson, J. R., & Rich, M. D. (2015). Inviting the breach: confronting homophobia in the name of social justice. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *62*(7), 902–923.

Rocker, S. (2017). *Dweck's position is as courageous as it is nuanced*. https://www.thejc.com/comment/analysis/dweck-s-position-is-as-courageous-as-it-is-nuanced-1.439169

Rocker, S. (2018a). *Transgender woman who grew up in a Charedi community welcomes plan to ban conversion therapy*. https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/transgender-woman-who-grew-up-in-charedi-community-welcomes-plan-to-ban-conversion-therapy-1.470447

Rocker, S. (2018b). *United Synagogue rabbi: transgender people welcome in shul*. https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/united-synagogue-rabbi-transgender-people-welcome-in-shul-1.472081

Rocker, S. (2020a). *Education secretary should act on LGBT imbroglio*. https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/education-secretary-should-act-on-lgbt-imbroglio-1.496006

Rocker, S. (2020b). *Ofsted has let us down, says head of Charedi schools group*. https://www.thejc.com/education/education-news/ofsted-has-let-us-down-says-head-of-charedi-schools-group-1.495910

Rocker, S. (2020c). *Ofsted presses Charedy school over LGBT issue*. https://www.thejc.com/education/education-news/ofsted-presses-charedi-school-over-lgbt-issue-1.495562

Rocker, S. (2020d). *UK Charedi rabbis issue statement to make clear their schools cannot talk about same-sex relations in class*. https://www.thejc.com/education/education-news/british-charedi-rabbis-declaration-on-lgbt-teaching-1.496816

Rogers, C. R. (1961). *On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy* (2004th ed.). Constable.

Romanoff, B. D. (1998). Rituals and the grieving process. *Death Studies*, *22*(8), 697–711.

Rubenstein, J. (1992). Purim, liminality, and communitas. *AJS Review*, *17*(2), 247–278. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0364009400003688

Rustomji, N. (2009). *The Garden and the Fire: Heaven and Hell in Islamic culture*. Columbia University Press.

Sah, L. K., Singh, D. R., & Sah, R. K. (2020). Conducting qualitative interviews using virtual communication tools amid Covid-19 Pandemic: a learning opportunity for future research. *Journal of Nepal Medical Association*, *58*(232), 1103–1106.

Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.

Schnoor, R. F. (2006). Being gay and Jewish: negotiating intersecting identities. *Sociology of Religion*, *61*(1), 43–60.

Schroeder, C. (2014). (Un)holy Toledo: intersectionality, interdependence, and neighbourhood (trans)formation in Toledo, Ohio. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *104*(1), 166–181.

Schroeder, C. G. (2012). Making space for queer youth: adolescent and adult interactions in Toledo, Ohio. *Gender, Place, & Culture*, *19*(5), 635–651.

Schulte-Römer, N., & Gesing, F. (2022). Online, offline, hybrid: methodological reflection on event ethnography in (post-)pandemic times. *Qualitative Research*, *AHEAD-OF-P*, 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941221110172

Schwartz, S. J. (2008). Self and identity in early adolescence: some reflections and an introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *28*(1), 5–15.

Scriven, R. (2014). Geographies of pilgrimage: meaningful movements and embodied mobilities. *Geography Compass*, *8*(4), 249–261.

Serrant-Green, L. (2002). Black on black: methodological issues for black researchers working in minority ethnic communities. *Nurse Researcher*, *9*(4), 30–44. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2002.07.9.4.30.c6196

Shah, S. (2018). *The making of a gay Muslim: religion, sexuality, and identity in Malaysia and Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Shah, S. (2021). Historical and contemporary silences: the experiences of queer Muslim youth. In D. Marshall (Ed.), *Queer Youth Histories* (pp. 317–345). Palgrave Macmillan.

Shahzad, F. (2011). Collective memories: a complex construction. *Memory Studies*, *5*(4), 378–391.

Sharma, S. (2012). "The church is... my family": exploring the interrelationship between familial and religious practices and spaces. *Environment & Planning A: Economy & Space*, *44*(4), 816–831.

Sharma, S., & Guest, M. (2012). Navigating religion between university and home: Christian students' experiences in English universities. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *14*(1), 59–79.

Sharpe, E. K. (2005). Delivering communitas: wilderness adventury and the making of community. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *37*(3), 255–280.

Shneer, D. (2007). Queer is the new pink: how queer Jews moved to the forefront of Jewish culture. *Journal of Men, Masculinities, & Spirituality*, *1*(1), 55–64.

Sibley, D. (1995). *Geographies of exclusion: society and different in the west*. Routledge.

Sienna, N. (2019, December 12). A rainbow thread: the intersection of Jewish and queer identities from the first century to 1969. *The Jewish-Muslim Research Network's Symposium on Gender & Sexuality*.

Singelis, T. M. (1994). The measurement of independent and interdependent self-construals. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, *20*(5), 580–591.

Singh, R. P. B. (2008). The contestation of heritage: the enduring importance of religion. In B. Graham & P. Howard (Eds.), *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity* (pp. 125–141). Ashgate.

Sinha, P., Jones Smolović, O., & Carroll, B. (2021). Theorising dramaturgical resistance leadership from the leadership campaigns of Jeremy Corbyn. *Human Relations*, *74*(3), 354–382.

Smith, A. (2016). *Say hello to Buttmitzvah: London's first queer Jewish night*. https://www.timeout.com/london/blog/say-hello-to-buttmitzvah-londons-first-queer-jewish-night-101916

Smith, A. F., & Arfanis, K. (2013). "Sixth sense" for patient safety. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*, *110*(2), 167–169.

Smith, P. H. (2021). What's in a name? A lot, actually. *The Journal of Parapsychology*, *85*(1), 16–27.

Sobande, F. (2020). "We're all in this together": commodified notions of connection, care, and community in brand responses to Covid-19. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *23*(6), 1033–1037.

Sopher, D. E. (1967). *Geography of religions*. Prentice-Hall Inc.

Spitzer, E. (2019). *Homophobia is not a feature of Charedi culture*. https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/homophobia-is-not-a-feature-of-charedi-culture-1.487375

Sridhar, S. (2022). *British LGBT activist urges captains to speak out in Qatar*. https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/british-lgbt-activist-urges-captains-speak-out-qatar-2022-10-28/

Staetsky, D. L. (2021). Elevated Jewish mortality from Coronavirus in England and Wales: an epidemiological and demographic detective story. *Contemporary Jewry*, *41*(Spring), 207–228.

Staetsky, D. L., & Boyd, J. (2015). *Strictly Orthodox rising: what the demography of British Jews tells us about the future of the community*.

Stengel, B. S., & Weems, L. (2010). Questioning safe space: an introduction. *Studies in Philosophy & Education*, *29*(6), 505–507.

Studio Airlift, R. F. B. (2020). *Unorthodox*. Netflix.

Sugarman, D. (2017a). *Chief Rabbi condemns homophobic graffiti at JW3*. https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/chief-rabbi-condemns-homophobic-graffiti-at-jw3-1.433890

Sugarman, D. (2017b). *Rabbi attacks Sephardi leader for "dangerous" gay love speech*. https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/rabbi-attacks-sephardi-leader-for-dangerous-gay-love-speech-1.439385

Sugarman, D. (2019). *To would-be Orthodox protesters against LGBT education: you will lose, and cause even more pain*. https://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/to-would-be-orthodox-protestors-against-lgbt-education-you-will-lose-1.487240

Sugiman, P. (2005). Memories of internment: narrating Japanese-Canadian women's life stories. In V. Agnew (Ed.), *Diaspora, memory, and identity: a search for home* (pp. 48–80). University of Toronto Press.

Sutherland, C. (2016). Theography: subject, theology, and praxis in geographies of religion. *Progress in Human Geography*, *41*(3), 321–337.

Suwankhong, D., & Liamputtong, P. (2015). Cultural insiders and research fieldwork: case examples from cross-cultural research with Thai people. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(5), 1–7.

Taylor, F., Falconer, E., & Snowdon, R. (2014). Sounding religious, sounding queer: finding spaces of reconciliation through congregational music. *Ecclesial Practices*, *1*(2), 229–249.

The Jerusalem Bible. (1974). Darton, Longman, & Todd.

Till, K. E. (2001). Returning home and to the field. *Geographical Review*, *91*(1/2), 46–56.

Till, K. E. (2009). Ethnography. In R. Kitchin & N. J. Thrift (Eds.), *International encyclopaedia of human geography* (pp. 626–631). Elsevier.

Tohill, M. K. (2019). *Buttmitzvah is a queer Jewish club night unlike any other*. https://www.heyalma.com/buttmitzvah-is-a-queer-jewish-club-night-unlike-any-other/

Tower Hamlets Council. (2013). *Ethnicity in Tower Hamlets: analysis of 2011 census data*.
https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Ward_profil
es/Census-2011/RB-Census2011-Ethnicity-2013-01.pdf

Tower Hamlets Council. (2015). *Religion in Tower Hamlets: analysis of 2011 census data*.
https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Borough_statistics/Ward_profil
es/Census-2011/2015-04-21-Faith-key-facts-Revised-data.pdf

Treacher, A. (2007). Postcolonial subjectivity: masculinity, shame, and memory. *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, *30*(2), 281–299.

Tse, J. K. H. (2014). Grounded theologies: "religion" and the "secular" in human geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, *38*(2), 201–220.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132512475105

Turner, V. W. (1967). *The forest of symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual* (1970th ed.). Cornell University Press.

Turner, V. W. (1969). *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure* (2008th ed.). Aldine Transaction.

Turner, V. W. (1974). *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: symbolic action in human society*. Cornell University Press.

Turner, V. W. (1982a). Dramatic ritual/ritual drama: performative and reflexive anthropology. In J. Ruby (Ed.), *A crack in the mirror: reflexive perspectives in anthropology* (pp. 83–98). University of Pennsylvania Press.

Turner, V. W. (1982b). *From ritual to theatre: the human seriousness of play*. PAJ Publications.

Turner, V. W., & Turner, E. (1978). *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: anthropological perspectives*. Columbia University Press.

Unknown Author. (2001). *Brent Cross Shopping Centre*.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/charltonlido/200116193/

Unknown Author. (2020). *Sea wall*.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/matlacha/50297922406/

Vadakkiniyil, D. (2019). Mahishi's rage: communitas and protest at Sabarimala, Kerala. *Anthropology Today*, *35*(5), 16–20.

Valentine, G. (1993). (Hetero)sexing space: lesbian perceptions and experiences of everyday spaces. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *11*(4), 395–413.

Valins, O. (2000). Institutionalised religion: sacred texts and Jewish spatial practice. *Geoforum*, *31*(4), 575–586. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0016-7185(00)00020-8

Valins, O. (2003). Stubborn identities and the construction of socio-spatial boundaries: ultra-orthodox Jews living in contemporary Britain. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *28*(2), 158–175. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00085

Vallianatos, E. G. (2006). The mechanisms of catastrophe: the Turkish Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955, and the destruction of the Greek community of Istanbul. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, *17*(1), 133–140.

van Gennep, A. (1909). *The rites of passage: a classical study of cultural celebrations* (M. B. Vizedom & G. L. Caffee, Eds.; 1960th ed.). Chicago University Press.

Vertovec, S. (1997). The three meanings of "diaspora," exemplified among South Asian religions. *Diaspora*, *6*(3), 277–299.

Villicana, A. J., Delucio, K., & Biernat, M. (2016). "Coming out" among gay Latino and gay White men: implications of verbal disclosure for well-being. *Self & Identity*, *15*(4), 468–487.

Wagaman, M. A., Obejero, R. C., & Gregory, J. S. (2018). Countering the norm, (re)authoring our lives: the promise counterstorytelling holds as a research methodology with LGBTQ youth and beyond. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *17*(1), 1–11.

Wahl-Jorgenson, K. (2021). The affordances of interview research on Zoom: new intimacies and active listening. *Communication, Culture, & Critique*, *14*(2), 373–376.

Wakefield, L. (2020). *The Channel Island of Guernsey will finally start protecting LGBT+ people from discrimination... in 2026.* https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/03/04/guernsey-lgbt-legal-protections-discrimination-parliament-liberate-law-channel-islands/

Walsh, D. (2012). Doing ethnography. In C. Seale (Ed.), *Researching society and culture* (pp. 245–262). Sage.

Warner, D. N. (2004). Towards a queer research methodology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *1*(4), 321–337.

Watson, A., & Lupton, D. (2022). Remote fieldwork in homes during the Covid-19 Pandemic: video-call ethnography and map drawing methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *21*(March), 1–12.

Watson, A., & Till, K. E. (2010). Ethnography and participant observation. In D. DeLyser (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 121–137). Sage.

Watson, S. (2005). Symbolic spaces of difference: contesting the Eruv in Barnet, London and Tenafly, New Jersey. *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space*, *23*(4), 597–613. https://doi.org/10.1068/d429

Watt, P. (2013). "It's not for us": Regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London. *City: Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action*, *17*(1), 99–118.

Weedon, C., & Jordan, G. (2012). Collective memory: theory and politics. *Social Semiotics*, *22*(2), 143–153.

Weststrate, N. M. (2021). Using life story methods to illuminate cultural-historical dimensions of LGBTQ+ identity development across generations. In K. C. McLean (Ed.), *Cultural methods in psychology: describing and transforming cultures* (pp. 3–44). Oxford University Press.

White, M., & Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. W. W. Norton & Co.

Wigley, E. (2016). The Sunday morning journey to church considered as a form of "micro-pilgrimage." *Social & Cultural Geography*, *17*(5), 694–713.

Wigley, E. (2018). Unofficial geographies of religion and spirituality as postsecular space. In J. Beaumont (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of postsecularity* (pp. 371–381). Routledge.

Wilcox, M. M. (2006). Same-sex eroticism and gender fluidity in new and alternative religions. In E. v. Gallagher & M. W. Michael (Eds.), *Introduction to new and alternative religions in America* (pp. 243–263). Greenwood Press.

Wilford, J. (2010). Sacred archipelagos: geographies of secularization. *Progress in Human Geography*, *34*(3), 328–348. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509348558

Williams, L. (2020). *Inside Brick Lane's mosque that was a synagogue that was a church*. https://londonist.com/london/history/brick-lane-mosque-east-london-church-synagogue-hugenots

Willsher, K. (2020). *Paris court hears how kosher supermarket attacker killed four*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/21/paris-court-kosher-supermarket-attacker-amedy-coulibaly-killed-four-charlie-hebdo

Wimark, T. (2021). Homemaking and perpetual liminality among queer refugees. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *22*(5), 647–665.

Wolpe, P. R. (1997). If I am only my genes, what am I? Genetic essentialism and a Jewish response. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, *7*(3), 213–230.

World Health Organisation. (2020). *WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on Covid-19 - 11 March 2020*. https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020

Yip, A. K. T., & Smith, S. (2010). Queerness and sangha: exploring Buddhist lives. In K. Brown, S. R. Munt, & A. K. T. Yip (Eds.), *Queer spiritual spaces: sexuality and sacred places* (pp. 111–138). Ashgate.

Yorgason, E., & della Dora, V. (2009). Geography, religion, and emerging paradigms: problematizing the dialogue. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *10*(6), 629–637. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360903068100

Zeidner, M., & Zevulun, A. (2018). Mental health and coping patterns in Jewish gay men in Israel: the role of the dual identity conflict, religious identity, and partnership status. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *65*(7), 947–968.

Zubrzycki, G. (2012). Religion, religious tradition, and nationalism: Jewish revival in Poland and "religious heritage" in Québec. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *51*(3), 442–455.