The BLACK MARKET

An application of the sound system model to independent filmmaking

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Abstract

The Black Market research project takes an existing underground model from Black British popular culture, namely, the sound system, and transposes it to a filmmaking context to see if it is possible to achieve mainstream distribution, build an audience, and earn a living from filmmaking in a commercial sense using classical filmmaking techniques and a home grown, underground approach to making and disseminating films.

The project was developed along two strands: an independent comedy series *Mandem on the Wall*, and the creation of a documentary archive examining the origins, development and current state of sound system culture, which evolved into the feature documentary *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*.

This thesis places this work within the context of the history of Black British filmmaking and my own personal trajectory and experience of the sound systems culture and its influence on my filmmaking.

Historically, the representation of Black British culture in film and television has been controlled by commissioning editors at broadcasters like the BBC and Channel 4, and public funders, such as the British film Institute (BFI). Reflecting on the past struggles of Black British filmmakers with these institutions to get their voices heard, this project adopted a 'for us by us' (FUBU) approach as an alternative tactic, creating our own opportunities outside the traditional commissioning process, using the ad-supported, free-to-view YouTube platform to take Black youth culture to the mass market and build a loyal audience online.

The methodology used in the production of the online comedy series is built on the audio-visual model of the sound system culture, this model is applied to a visual-audio platform like YouTube and generating cultural and social capital by building a hard-to-reach young black audience. This soon attracted the attention of the traditional gatekeepers, like Universal and Channel 4, and public institutions, like the Tate and the Home Office. However, having broken through into the mainstream, what are the subsequent implications for the Black market model?

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Introduction

The Black British community is already a minority that has been marginalised and made an estranged section of British society. First, second, and third generation Black British people do not fit or comply with the patron model to accept passively what has been commercially provisioned, coded as style and defined in accordance with national comprehension of normalcy. This social problem is deeply rooted in the hegemony of the dominant social order, which is concerned with its own identity and existence and the maintenance of the status quo and social hierarchy. Contrary perspectives, or a contrasting ideology, that stand in opposition to conventional social, political, and economic principles of national classification are given a value as a subversive dialect, a value that is reactive and negative.

The Black Market is a practice-based research project, which uses filmmaking as its method of inquiry in two distinct ways: firstly, as a process of archiving that examines the origins, development, and current state of the sound system culture that evolved into a feature length documentary, *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* (Osborne 2014). This is supported by smaller film production, specifically, two documentaries, *Mama's Mint Ball* (Osborne 2011) and *Aya-Pharell's Haircut* (Osborne 2011), and some experimental shorts, Black *British Holiday* (Osborne 2012) and *Sound Off* (Osborne 2012). These films look at how I was influenced by sound system culture and the Black British experience, and produce cultural texts that communicate and celebrate the contemporary Black British experience in the form of a comedy series and short films namely, *Mandem on the Wall (MOTW)* (Osborne 2011), an independent short film *Both Sides of the Coin* (Osborne 2013) and a film funded by Film London *Chick or Treat* (Osborne 2015).

Inspired by the Black British subculture of the sound system, and using this as a platform model for the dissemination and consumption of a cultural product, this project shows how effective this strategy is in getting the mainstream to sit up and take notice.

Historically, Black Britons have always been positioned on the proverbial back foot due to discrimination. As a result, this diaspora can be coded as being anti-establishment. Those that have made an attempt to adhere to the principles of the established order are still restricted and so are unable to take advantage of and benefit from a level playing field or 'free market' after adopting a culture that is counter to their own. Black British sub-culture is not an attempt to overthrow and/or cause the destruction of the established order by choice, but rather is a method of survival through a lack of viable choices that might lead to assimilation. Freedom of expression, a platform to maintain cultural traditions, the ability to open a discourse on socio-political concerns and equal opportunity within economic markets to promote a more independent community that can sustain itself on a local, regional and national level are all desirable in an FUBU approach. The term was originally coined by

Daymond John, J. Alexander Martin, Keith Perrin, and Carlton Brown who are the founders of FUBU clothing and hip-hop apparel company as discussed by Banks (2015) in his article, *The Rise and Fall of FUBU: A Lesson in Business and Branding.* This term encapsulates my contribution: a filmmaking practice 'for us and by us'. The Black Market research project is an experiment to see if the gatekeepers of traditional broadcasting can be bypassed. This experiment takes place with the support of the academic structure and rigour of critical analysis demanded by doctoral level research in an effort to interrogate existing structures and actively challenge them whilst tracing and analysing the trajectory of this experiment and preserving the results as part of a wider study of Black British filmmaking.

The research questions that this project seeks to answer are as follows:

1. How has the Black experience been reflected in British film and television, and how has this been affected by the struggles of Black British filmmakers to get their work made and seen?

2. How has my personal approach to the production of film drama drawn on real life characters from my own experience, and how do my films relate to Black British films historically?

3. What documentary techniques can be used to capture the history and importance of the sound system to Black culture in the UK?

4. Can the sound-system model be transposed to filmmaking as a strategy to make and disseminate no-budget independent films reflecting and representing the Black experience in contemporary London to a wide audience?

5. How can digital production and distribution tools connect filmmakers directly with their audience and radically change the power dynamic with the traditional gatekeepers in the industry?

The first chapter focuses on identity and representation, examining my own context and experience growing up in South London in the 1980s, after the social integration of the 1950's role models and my initial introduction to the sound system culture. This chapter also looks at the film and television that tried to represent Black British culture and how I saw the Caribbean diaspora depicted in this period to answer research questions 1 and 2.

The second chapter addresses research questions 1 and 5 by offering a deeper analysis of the Black Market, the understanding of the term, and the application of this unrecorded activity by legitimate institutions and low-income societies historically, as well as the

conditions of production and tactics for survival, specifically in the context of Back British filmmaking.

Chapter 3 covers research questions 1 and 2, looking at how Black British filmmaking differs from Black film and Black British filmmaking, using examples of films that reflect elements of sound system culture, and commentary around Black British representation and identity. The struggle to be heard and to obtain funding and the political implications of the prefix 'Black' before 'filmmaker' are also discussed, as is the question of why there is no Black British film director to cultivate the audience for Black British film.

Chapter 4 answers research question 3 and sets the groundwork for question 4. It also explores a sound system archive project, Gladdy Wax, as a sound system icon. This features a case study in the form of a feature documentary, *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*, examining the last sanctioned bastion of the sound system culture in the form of the Notting Hill Carnival and one of its most eloquent veterans. Chapter 4 also analyses the model of the sound system as a means of cultural production, and it details my own experience with sound system culture.

The final chapter answers research questions 4 and 5 by examining the application of the sound system model to the field of filmmaking and the trajectory of the series *Mandem on the Wall (MOTW)* (Osborne 2011). The methodology used in the production of the online series is the application of the audio-visual sound system model, converting it to a visual-audio platform YouTube. It also examines building an audience independently to attract the attention of the mainstream as an alternative way of being recognised as a filmmaker.

The conclusion presents the findings of the project and asks what the next steps are. The research results presented here will provide a voice of who Black Britons are in an attempt to 'Bring Da Noise' rather than conduct a covert analysis of an underground way of life that has influenced and supported my own personal trajectory.

A portfolio of films, which form the main component of the research, accompanies this thesis: The films are to be viewed in the following order:

Aya-Pharell's Haircut (2011)
Run time: 2 mins 36 secs
My son's first haircut at the barbershop, comments on identity with him finding his own individuality and style.

Mama's Mint Ball (2011)
Run time: 19 mins 29 secs
Interview with my late grandmother - head of the family -documenting her journey in relation to my own personal trajectory.

Sound Off (2012)
Run time: 1 min 33 secs
Experimental short: an urban western using the motif of sound systems.

Both Sides of the Coin (2013)
Run time: 19 mins 48 secs
Short film looking at popular youth culture commenting on postcode wars.

Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax (2014)
Run time: 1 hr. 44 secs
Feature length documentary looking at the logistics of Gladdy Wax Sound System being set up and played at Notting Hill Carnival by Gladdy himself and his guests, who captivate and entertain the carnival goers.

Mandem on the Wall (2011)
Series 1
Mandem on the Wall (2014)
Mandem SKITS Season
Mandem SKITS Season *Behind the Skit*
Successful YouTube channel - An online comedy series with 9.2 million views and 74 thousand subscribers. https://www.youtube.com/user/MandemOnTheWall

Chick or Treat (2015)
Run time: 15 mins 50 secs
Short film for Film London, *Chick or Treat* Is a teenage coming of age comedy about friendship and the most awkward time in your life: the inbeTEENS stage.

Sound System (Archive Excerpt)

Run time: 10 mins (sample)

Looking at sound systems

Chapter 1 Identity and Representation

1. 1 WHO AM I?

> When I ask someone Who are you? I expect an extremely long answer!
>
> Stuart Hall[1]

I was born in Germany in 1975; my Jamaican mother raised me as a single parent. We travelled to the UK when I was three and resided in England. My cultural identity from childhood through to adulthood was experienced and shaped by the Black Caribbean diaspora within the context of a British and, specifically, a London experience. To be recognised as a German native, both parents must be inherently German; place of birth does not qualify. As a result, I fell under my mother's nationality and was given a Jamaican passport. This further complicates the situation in understanding my own global positioning in relation to origin and identity. Rather than being considered a German citizen, I was eventually recognised as a British citizen and coded as second-generation British Caribbean, despite never having been to Jamaica. I now have two passports (Jamaican and British) for countries with which I myself have had no direct connection; I had been rejected from the country I was physically born in and aligned with two more countries bureaucratically, with which I have no intrinsic connection. Stuart Hall underlines the realisation of this positioning:

> A further consequence of this politics of representation is the slow recognition of the deep ambivalence of identification and desire. We think about identification usually as a simple process, structured around fixed 'selves' which we either are or are not. (Morley and Chen 1996, p.445)

The duality of my citizenship made me a contradiction in terms. However, I would use this in later life to manipulate visitor/resident positioning in accordance with the laws that control the UK and Jamaican borders. Going through customs in Jamaica, I would use the residents' line, which was always faster, but on leaving, would rely on my British passport, because it was quicker.

> These "ways of operating" are similar to "instructions of use" and they create a certain play in the machine through a stratification of different and interfering kinds of functioning. (de Certeau 1988, p.30)

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[1] *The Stuart Hall Project* (Akomfrah 2013)

I adopted Britain in the physical sense of learning how to manoeuvre as a Black Briton within the framework of British society. Nonetheless, I adopted Jamaica from the stories of my mother, the music and the food, which offered a concept of cultural identity that alluded to being 'home'.

In her biographical documentary *Imagined: Toni Morrison Remembers* (2015), Tony Morrison explains, 'The past colours the future and the future distorts the past.' Thus, during the 1980s as a child living in Brockley in a low to moderate-income environment made up of a community of marginalised Caribbean, African, Asian and Irish diaspora and those native to the UK, I became aware of difference and self. I was thus trying to comprehend the crisis that was my displaced identity and culture as a section of the community with its own attachments to situating itself in an environment of transnationalism and nationalism.

The sections of the community that were marginalised all had an understanding of culture and identity based on their memories and nostalgia of 'back home.' Home [land] is synonymous with diaspora and native identity connected to an individual's specific place of origin. 'Home', here, has two meanings: the marginalised ethnic groups lived in the UK, but did not authenticate or identify the UK as home, as understood by my mother's interpretation of the word, whereas as a child, I understood home to be where I resided, which, in my childhood, was Brockley, South London. My mother authenticated this locale with a statement that was a paradox in itself: 'Let's go home.' The use of this dialectic in conversation meant something entirely different to my mother from what it meant to me: the word *home* meant Jamaica where she was born and where she had lived but which she had left. The UK was where she, like other diasporic migrants, stayed and survived on the premise of economic progression. *Home* geographically positions diasporic communities in relation to their cultural identity and origin in the world. Hall argues, 'Identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall 1990, p.225).

The clarification of my identity was rejected on both sides socially, culturally and economically at different stages of my formative years in Britain, with such rejection being racially motivated and positioned according to class. As a child of Jamaican descent [on paper] and categorised as second-generation British Caribbean, the repercussion of cultural displacement presented difficulties between the generations.

> To many of our parents' generation, we were as English as our white counterparts. This outlook was based upon a different type of racial experience with white folk; many were not born and raised in a society dominated by white people. Therefore, the specific problems the 'black British' faced were alien to many of our parents.
> (Henry 2006, p.139)

At that time, it was not known what the impact would be on future generations of the diaspora that begin to assimilate in a new environment that shapes life and identity in real time. The metaphysical and the physical form a part real, part constructed cultural identity composed of adopted memories and real life experience. The foods I consumed were a mix of British and Caribbean cuisine. Ove reflects on this separation of cultures in the breakfast scene of *Pressure* (Ove 1975); Tony (Herbert Norville), the younger brother born in Britain, has a traditional British breakfast of bacon and eggs, while his older brother Colin (Oscar James) has a more traditional Trinidadian breakfast of avocado and plantain. This scene is indicative of the different upbringing of two *homes*. The brothers sit at opposite sides of the table symbolising their opposing ideals of heritage. Later in the scene, as the parents sit down to eat their breakfast, they discuss the fact that Tony is not like them: 'He's born here.' This highlights the internal family structure, emphasising the difference between the marginalised, who migrated to Britain, and their children, who were born in Britain.

For this generation, the adoption of British culture is both encouraged and criticised; the enthrallment of recollected memories that depict where marginalised Caribbean people living in the UK originated from has by now been romanticised in stories that relate back to our parents' experiences of growing up in the Caribbean. Unbeknown to them, the life they once knew is fast becoming a distant echo, as culture and identity are perpetually in motion and ever changing. Returning to their place of origin discombobulates and makes unrecognisable their native land. In *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Hall argues in reference to Africa,

> History is, in that sense, irreversible. We must not collude with the West which, precisely, normalises and appropriates Africa by freezing it into some timeless zone of the primitive, unchanging past. (Hall 1990, p.225)

At the same time, for the marginalised diasporas that populate Britain, there is bitter contempt of what Britain is not and never will be. The choice to come to the UK was made consciously and out of necessity or from a desire for a better life. This is not without consequences, as their treatment in this country is discriminatory and marginalised. However, the residual effect on the second generation is one of disassociation, of the metaphysical, that is, the abstraction of memories of my mother's origin as perceived cultural identity is in conflict with the physical actual identity experienced through temporal and spatial positioning in Britain. As children, we are shielded from the harsh realities of this displacement by our parents; although we look like them, the cultural relation is impractical, second hand, and indirect. I sound like a native and am more accustomed to their autonomy; thus, my experience is removed from my parents' experience. *Pressure's* commentary reflects my own experience as a child growing up in Britain straddled between two cultures.

Ove reflects on this in Tony's attempt to find work in *Pressure*; Tony graduated from school with more 'O' levels than his peers, and yet he is still unable to find work although he meets the criteria. Tony is not trying to assimilate, but just to live within the only environment he has ever known. Later on, he meets a group of second-generation youths of his age who hold on to their roots; they all eat food that is familiar to them; for example, they choose patties whereas Tony wants chips. Again, Ove uses food to embody and make palpable cultural preferences and allegiances.

In my own experience, at ten years old, I made a point of eating both patties and chips rather than preferring one to the other. My peers and I at school, third generation British Caribbeans, considered ourselves the 'lost children,' caught between two cultures without a clear definitive ownership of origin or settlement, the sense of *in-betweenness* that Roy identifies:

> New studies have modified conventional understandings of diasporas by privileging experience, body and imagination in the constitution of diasporas that demystifies and complicates the place of origin myth, by constituting the homeland itself through the diaspora, by calling attention to 'the double-time' of the diasporas and by celebrating migratory experience in the discourse of hybridity and in-betweenness. (Roy 2008, p.2)

Although I and my peers adopted our parents' homeland as imparted culture, I had only an inherited connection to the Caribbean; the UK, and specifically, South London is the space in which I experienced the effects of a history imbued with racism, difference, and in-betweenness, while navigating a personal timeline with a double point of reference to begin the abstraction of my culture and identity.

The poor treatment and lack of opportunity that we would hear our parents murmur about made me reject my mother's second home, my actual home. However, as children, we were accustomed to modern conveniences and the social infrastructure of the western world that the developing countries of the Caribbean lack and that our parents did not experience. This led to a bastardisation of the two countries, with us embracing the whimsical depiction of the Caribbean and the environmental functions and social framework of the UK. According to Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994 cited in Conway, Potter, and Quirke 2009, p.2), transnationalism is 'a process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders.' Conway, Potter, and Quirke further comment that for Basch et al.,

> These new immigrants were different from the later nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants. Whilst these earlier immigrants generally broke away from their homeland societies and embraced the social and economic practices of their receiving country, later immigrants were fundamentally different; rather than sever links with their ancestral homeland, they built and maintained links with both their country of origin and their country of settlement. (Conway, Potter, and Quirke 2009, p.2)

This contradiction was also echoed in our parent's distinction between *'home'* and *'where we live now'*. Our parents would reminisce on their childhood, remembering warmer climates, blue seas, fresh fruit, and the games they would play as children. At the same time, they acknowledged the benefits of living in the UK. Their financial independence and access to western produce, which would be considered rare imports back *home,* were now in abundance whilst they were still maintaining a connection with family and friends back *home*.

An alternative perspective of a diaspora is the courage to set off to pastures new, to seek adventure, to start a new life in the shadow of colonialism and preconceived ideas of opportunity and better prospects amongst unfamiliar surroundings. As Fanon explains, 'The sweeping, levelling nature of colonial domination was quick to dislocate in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people' (Fanon 2004, p.170).

Thus, people embarked on the expedition of new beginnings not for a sense of alienation, but more for exploration. My mother believed that she had a legitimate connection with Britain; as her father, my grandfather, Kenneth Gladstone Clarke, came from Jamaica and had fought for Britain in the Second World War, my mother felt we had just as much right to be here as anyone else. Roy argues

> As a result, the negative meanings of diasporas, characterized by exile, victimization, alienation and loss, dominated the understanding of diasporas while the positive saga of movement impelled by the desire for mobility, knowledge and adventure remained unexplored. The limited concern of these definitions with experiences of forced displacement, dispersal and exile also prevented an engagement with the meta-discourse of human migration and mobility to which diasporas belong. (Roy 2008, p.1)

This represents a conscious choice to progress and seek mobility. Diaspora here is indirectly forced based on the wake of devastation caused by colonial rule. As a second-generation British Caribbean, the legitimacy of my occupation in Britain was never in question; however, it was underlined by my mother's connection based on how her generation were not embraced. In a scene from *Babylon* (Rosso 1981), Rosso conveys the frustration of second generation British Caribbeans with the hostile attitudes they are subjected to. The white

woman at the arches (Maggie Steed) says to Beefy (Trevor Laird), "Your [sic] everywhere, you jungle bunnies [...] Fuck-off back to your own country," to which Beefy retorts, "This is my fucking country lady, and it's never been fucking lovely..."

1. 2 ECHOES OF RACISM

Growing up, I was too young to understand the significance of the symbols sprayed or etched in public toilets or on walls in my neighbourhood; they looked like patterns to me. The letter 'S' scribed with right angles instead of curves astride one another in different sizes and in various places looked like a pinwheel. However, as I reached my teenage years, I became very aware of its meaning and connotation; written under the swastika, the sign of prejudice, were the words: 'We hate niggers blaks [sic] go home'.
Hall explains,

> In the syntax of white racism, coiling through the "Rivers of Blood," and in the fantasies that drive young bullet-headed white fascists into an unpredictable frenzy, and in the obscene scrawls that trail their slime across the face of Black people's houses, and shops, that are cut into the wall of public lavatories and on the sides of apartment blocks, has one read, hiding behind what is actually said, the great unsaid? (Hall 1984, p.9)

Isaac Julian's *Young Soul Rebels* (1991), set in 1977, has a scene demonstrating racial social commentary scribed on walls. Chris (Valentine Nonyela) leaves the barbershop and sees a large swastika on the wall; he slams his fist against the obscenity before walking away in disgust. This resonated with my own encounters of public defacement. Racism was indirect; we never saw the illiterate scribe of 'No Blaks' in the physical process of making the belligerent statement, but we did recognise the cowardice of vandalising an area under the cover and safety of darkness, of using the dark to maintain anonymity to make a statement, to not be seen, just like the Black people, us 'Darkies', whom they did not want to see.

Enoch Powell's infamous speech on immigration underlined this sentiment without providing any context and without the juxtaposition of what he considered to be Great Britain and the commonwealth[2]. The colonisation of Caribbean countries, among others, by the British could be considered a form of dominant diaspora by the ruling class, that is, the opposing side of diaspora. The expropriation of the resources of the Caribbean left the island destabilized and disenfranchised by inflicting cultural imperialism in a way that left the country broken and depleted of resources. Only then, on the 6 August 1962, were the Caribbean countries given independence. Nonetheless, 53 years later, Jamaica has still not recovered from colonial rule.

The social unrest of the Brixton and Toxteth riots of 1981 was due more to the lack of equality of those disenfranchised and displaced within their native homeland, now marginalised by a country they were invited to, rather than to an influx of immigrants, as Powell predicted. This

[2] Conservative Association meeting in Birmingham 20 April 1968

was reignited again in the Brixton riots of 1985. Regarding Fanon, Bhabha argues, 'The 'social' is always an unresolved ensemble of antagonistic interlocutions between positions of power and poverty, knowledge and oppression, history and fantasy, surveillance and subversion' (Bhabha 1986, p.xxv).

With one broad stroke, Powell's nationalistic racism tarnished an entire race that initially had been invited under the guise of economic benefit in search of progress. Indeed, many had arrived with qualifications and professions, both blue collar and white collar, but were refused employment and so had had to resort to menial manual labour (factory work). In *Pressure*, Tony's father, Lucas (Frank Singuineau), laments his current social positioning; after living in England for sixteen years, he is nothing, though back *home*, he was an accountant. Obtaining accommodation was thwarted by the same inexcusable treatment. Where Black people were accepted, those who were not prejudiced accepted them all. It was not a case of taking over an entire neighbourhood, but contrary to popular belief, it involved moving into the only environment they could reside in, for example, in areas like West London. This decision was also partly due to fear, as those who could afford to move out, would. Black Caribbean's predominantly ended up in low-income environments, such as Paddington, Notting Hill, Brixton, Peckham, Lewisham, Brockley etc. Stuart Hall reflects on this, considering, 'a scene any day of the week in the immigration 'high season' throughout the 50s and early 60s until the barriers close. Trickling out from these focal points into the grey light of Paddington, Notting Hill, Brixton' (Hall 1984, p.4).

Knowles comments on the same situation:

> In line with the trends in sociological analysis at that time, the psycho-social dynamics of prejudice and cultural dislocation were overlain by more *systematic* concerns. Access and allocation systems in housing, jobs and education were assembled to form a broader picture of the *structural* forces at work in generating racial disadvantage, and an emerging sociology of 'race relations. (Knowles 2010, p.25)

Integration was not given a chance to succeed due to social-economic exclusion, which could be considered as being as polarized now as it was then. The legacy of the diaspora that lived in Notting Hill is the Notting Hill Carnival, which originated in 1964 as a way of entertaining the local children of a marginalized community and offering a release from the constraints of the dominant culture. The present Notting Hill Carnival has changed from supporting the under-privileged children of the area and providing a celebration of social inclusion to offering more of a heavily policed tourist attraction.

My documentary *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* comments on the origins of carnival as well as its evolution from political stance to economic viability. In *Burning an*

Illusion (1981), Shabazz features the London carnival. Pat (Cassie McFarlane) and Sonia (Beverley Martin) go to the carnival, and we see Cynthia (Angela Wynter) watching the procession from her window, thereby situating the world of the film in West London. In addition, *Pressure* is set in West London, thus reflecting its initial Black immigrant community.

As a child, I did not experience racist name-calling. What we saw was the remnant of the hostile attitudes of Englishness of the 1950s and 1960s dubbing British Caribbeans as the problem. The problem extended further into education, leading to the lack of understanding and support for immigrant children. Integration into the educational system involved just the physical insertion of ethnic children into British schools. However, there was a lack of any mental implementation from an educational prospective, and the approach to the application of teaching and the curriculum remained unchanged. In *Step Forward Youth* (1977) Shabazz's short film documentary, a young Black girl discusses her experiences of the school system and her disdain towards the teachers that were prejudiced; however, when the school brought in a Black teacher, the Black pupils were less disruptive and focused on their school work.

The documentary comments on the lack of respect for how the education system failed Caribbean diasporic children. In a multicultural classroom environment, the studies were based on the dominant ideology, and embracing a plurality to account for a wider demographic was not considered. For example, in the teaching of history and geography, studies were localised, meaning the exploration was limited to a national and imperial context, rather than considering a worldview. In the final scene of *Babylon*, Blue (Brinsley Forde) has the microphone at the sound system dance, and is chanting that when he went to school, the teachers "never ever, ever teach I of my history". I can relate to this; studies were based on dominant traditions, colonial conquests, world wars, and past and present monarchies, that is, essentially, a western edification. For me at school, there was no black history; not even slavery was acknowledged. According to Mac and Ghaill, inclusion as opposed to exclusion was

> representing a reactionary racist force in contrast to the liberals' progressive anti-racist ideology. Rather, it is shown that while the former group tends to be overtly involved in racist practises, the main liberal position also serves to maintain a racially structured institution. (Mac and Ghaill 1988, p.37)

This view was clearly demonstrated by the educational system, as echoed in Anthony Rampton's 1981 interim report *West Indian Children in our Schools*, mentioned in the Swann Report (1985) *Education For All* (notes on text), which concluded that 'the main problems were low teacher expectations and racial prejudice among white teachers and society as a whole. (Swann 1985)

I can relate this to my experience as a research student, based on the expectations of my peers or the lack thereof, inside the institute. It was my appearance, my Blackness, that was not associated with my academic level. Questions of whether I had the right to be there (in the research students' common room) were fuelled by the existential problems of cultural identity and difference. The academic, William Julius Wilson, describes a similar personal experience:

> I am an internationally known Harvard Professor, yet a number of unforgettable experiences remind me that as a Black male in America looking considerably younger than my age I am also feared. For example, several times over the years I have stepped into my elevator of my condominium dressed in casual clothes and could immediately tell from the body language of the other residents in the elevator that I made them feel uncomfortable. (Wilson 2009, p.1)

Similarly, those who encounter me compound my awareness of myself as a Black man; within the social sphere of Britain, you are partly how you are seen versus how you see yourself. *Burning an Illusion* addresses the issues around identity and assimilation in Pat's transformation from a woman trying to achieve assimilation and progress in Britain; conscious of her appearance, she suppresses her Caribbean culture, attempting to speak like a native, without an accent, until coming to the realisation that it makes no difference, as she experiences racism first hand, being shot walking home because she is Black. Bailey explains: It matters how we see ourselves and our social relations, because it enters into and informs our actions and practices (Bailey 1988, p.44).

Regarding the film's treatment of this issue, Henry quotes Shabazz:

> *Burning an Illusion* for me was the recognition of self. Black people in this society have become almost emasculated from who they are. They have become separated and caught up in kind of thinking that in order for them to become, they had to become somebody else. (Henry 2006, p.1)

In terms of identity, this reflects two perspectives: the outside looking in, making assumptions based on perception, and the inside looking out, which looks inward first because of preconceived ideas around perception before considering myself externally within a particular situation.

There has been little progress in media representations of Blackness without the association of a lack of opportunity, crime, and poverty. The formulation of the image of Blackness is continually positioning Black people as marginalised. Within the landscape of Britain, we

have no control over our own image; therefore, we have no power, but instead suffer from the inability to present ourselves subjectively, perhaps leaning towards constructs that present diasporic Black British community from a more positive positioning.
According to Hebdige,

> Issues concerning the marginalisation and scapegoating of Black youth, the sources and uses of stereotypical images of the "youth problem" –are so self evidently serious that they sometimes threaten to obscure the significance of other forms of cultural resistance of youth. (Hebdige 1988, p.19)

The lack of the ability to represent ourselves and to not be 're-presented' or categorised here brings forth many problems within media construction. Images are not tied to a single narrative; they are used to connote meaning and steer perception denoting the perspective of the dominant ideology. Reconstruction of these stereotypes continues to reinforce the establishment disempowering Black British society. Hall argues,

> In these spaces blacks have typically been the objects but rarely the subjects of the practices of representation. The struggle to come into representation was predicated on a critique of the degree of fetishization, objectification and negative figuration, which are so much a feature of the representation of the Black subject. There was a concern not simply with the absence or marginality of the black experience but with its simplification and its stereotypical character. (Hall 1996, p.442)

This is driven by racially highlighting Black Britons as a problem excavating the real issue around densely populated areas, with high unemployment, particularly for Black males which inevitably leads to frustration with no platform and no voice to protest against the inequalities. *Handsworth Songs* (Akomfrah 1987) addresses the issue surrounding race relations, discrimination, and police brutality, shedding light on the matter by following the riots of 1981 in Toxteth and Brixton. Akomfrah provides a voice for the Black and Asian diasporas, expressing feelings about the injustices they face and echoing what was on the minds of the Black and Asian marginalised diaspora living within the British framework. The collection of approximately 70 hours of archive footage correlated with still photography from Vanley Burke, as well as poetry, music and sound, form a visual essay that narratively de-constructs and then re-constructs these issues, providing a voice to those who do not normally have a platform to open a dialogue regarding social unrest in marginalised communities.

1. 3 PLAYING TOGETHER

Everything outside of Foxberry Road, Brockely, was in some way decentralised to how we were living within the larger sphere of London. This was the normalcy of our community bubble. Personally, for me, the pin that burst that bubble was the Brixton riots of 1985. This activity within Brixton was represented on television in the news and was reported as 'Riots and Looting in Brixton.' The moving images and photographs did not put these actions of resistance into the context of how, why, and what happened. What was conveyed was an environment far removed from the Brixton I recognised.

Brixton was a 20 min bus ride away, and was where my mother would source Jamaican foods in the early 1980s. It was an event to go and see the road sign 'Electric Avenue'; indeed, the song, 'Electric Avenue' (Eddy Grant 1982) was how I first became aware of Brixton's iconography. Before the riots, I had not noticed the mass congregation of Black families all shopping in the same environment. Why would I? They were like me, and it was just shopping. However, the riots of 1985 in the wake of 1981 started to highlight for me not only my identity but also the potential for the type of problems I was to face in the future, which Akomfrah addresses in *Handsworth Songs*. In school, there were obvious differences. For example, the majority of the class were white children; this led to the self-realisation that I was not white. As a child, naively, that is where the colour distinction of difference stopped.

Foxberry Road, Brockley, was my world. The outside world did not interfere with my youth; it was more on the fringe or the boundary of how far away I was allowed to play from the house. Our pastimes consisted of riding our BMXs, Choppers, Grifters and Budgie bikes up and down the road, racing each other and performing bike tricks. This was the inspiration for my film-making practice at undergraduate level *Lose to Win* (Osborne 2009), which comprised a short shot on Foxberry Road about a race around the block that was loosely based on an event in my childhood. For me as a child aged nine playing on Foxberry Road, our distinctions in regards to playing games together only went as far as boys against girls. The images of the 1985 riots portrayed an image of Blacks against Whites, but the issue was the resistance against authority and anti establishmentarianism. Nonetheless, implicitly, colour and socio-economics were definite factors.

There were positive elements to my childhood that made these issues less poignant: playing together, staying out late, playing football until it was too dark to see the ball, and watching television. *No Problem* (1983-85) was a Channel 4 comedy series about a family of siblings who were left to fend for themselves because their parents had returned *home* to Jamaica. As a child, I remember the show as my first introduction to seeing Black people on screen, reflecting elements of Black British culture in Britain. The first show that centred on a Black British family was *The Fosters* (1976-77) and featured a young comedian, Lenny Henry.

The BBC began broadcasting *The Lenny Henry Show* in 1984, and in 1987, broadcast a show set in Brixton about a pirate radio station, the Brixton Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), and DJ Delbert Wilkins (Lenny Henry). Although it was a caricature, Delbert was relatable because of the pirate radio stations of the time that I listened to, such as DBC (Dread Broadcast Corporation), Sky Radio, Kiss FM etc. These stations were broadcasting on unofficial frequencies, playing Black music that the conventional legal channels did not play or of which they played only a limited amount.

An integral part of my youth was listening to music from my culture about my culture, with which I could identify with. In *Young Soul Rebels,* the two main characters are pirate radio DJs. Pirate radio stations, another form of DIY culture and Black music, have influenced both television shows and Black British filmmakers, who comment on its relevance within racially discriminated and marginalised communities. This unofficial platform played a large part in supporting the sound system culture and other musically orientated events and in supporting local Black businesses. *Desmond's* (1989-94) was 'unquestionably the most successful Black British sitcom and one of Channel 4's biggest comedy hits' (Duguid n.d.) A main part of my viewing pleasure was that I could relate to, as it depicted the experiences of first and specifically second-generation British Caribbeans navigating through life in London. This was a lighter commentary on multiculturalism and transnationalism than Ove addressed in *Pressure*, and this use of the comedy genre resonated with me.

There was also the Black American import *The Cosby Show* (1984-92), which offered a fresh perspective and positive depiction of a well-off Black family. Within the British sphere, this was something to aspire to; it represented a successful diaspora, as the family did not appear to be marginalised or de-stabilised. The show was a paradox of verisimilitudes in every sense in comparison to both the social positioning of the marginalised Black British diaspora and the experience of the Black American diaspora. In contrast, there were attempts to address the changing social structure of Britain because of the Afro-Caribbean influx, with sitcoms like *Curry and Chips* (1969), *Love Thy Neighbour* (1972-76), *Till Death Us Do Part* (1966-75), *In Sickness and in Health* (1985-92), and *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum* (1974-81) to name but a few, which attempted to address the issues around social integration.

The aim here was to devalue and ridicule racist attitudes towards Black people in Britain and reduce the social conflicts between the natives and the immigrants. However, the resulting effect and portrayal of natives just conveyed the incessant racist abuse of marginalised communities in Britain. I would argue that though the commissioners were trying to open a discourse between different cultures, they instead succeeded only in representing the views of the majority audiences of this time in order to capture ratings. Those of marginalised communities would watch in disgust but would watch all the same, as this was the only representation of the Black and Asian experience, and many of the majority would watch due

to their agreement and sympathy with the racist views demonstrated. When shows like *Desmond's* and *No Problem* were broadcast, although stereotypical, they were not racist. Producer Charlie Hanson saw a gap in the market to appeal to a British audience that was socially integrated but had not been incorporated with a more balanced approach to the representation of contemporary Britain, which was made up of a diverse population. In correspondence between Charlie Hanson and myself, he comments:

> *No Problem* was designed to appeal to a large and growing black audience in London and other cities that were not being catered for on screen. It was created by the young black cast and written by two black writers, so it portrayed a world they could relate to. *Desmond's* followed and was even more successful. Again a black writer, but this time exploring a wider range of black characters, of different ages and different cultural backgrounds - Caribbean, African, London born blacks and Buppies. It appealed to a black audience too, but opened the doors to a large white following too. [3]

Both *No Problem* and *Desmond's* were broadcast from 1983-1994 whereas *Till Death Us Do Part* and its later incarnation *In Sickness and in Health* ran for a total of 38 years extolling a racist approach to the issues around social integration, which both affects and reflects the ideas and views around race relations in Britain. Schaffer argues,

> The BBC had been concerned about the influence of *Till Death* from the start, but seem to have been reassured in the 1960s that its intentions and impacts were generally positive. However, by the time of the programme's 1972 return, the BBC was well aware that its impact was more complicated. In this year, an audience survey report, focused entirely on *Till Death*, was commissioned. It found that far from combating prejudice, *Till Death* tended to make viewers less tolerant of immigrants.
> (Shaffer 2010, p.111)

Foxberry Road was a stone's throw away from Overcliff Road, home of the sound system Saxon International, which narrated the revolutionary thoughts and principals of Caribbean culture and the Black struggle through music. As a child, I would be playing out on my BMX, and I would see a van pull up and a group of young Black men jump out and start unpacking speaker boxes, and I would know there was going to be a party, and that I would hear the bass through my bedroom walls that night. This was my initial introduction to Black British Caribbean subculture, which developed independently, providing a soundscape that turned homes in my neighbourhood into 'blues' or 'sell-drink' parties: an underground form of socio-political activism, another DIY street culture using music. Thus, as part of my research, I

[3] Email correspondence, 29 August 2015

have produced an archive of interviews and films I have made of reggae festivals[4], such as the Notting Hill Carnival (2011, 2012 and 2013) and other sound system events, investigating the evolution of Black Caribbean British sub-culture in line with my personal trajectory.

Sound systems provided a platform for the Caribbean community to come together. *Pressure*, *Babylon*, and *Burning an Illusion* all reflect this element of the Black British experience, displaying the semiotics of a communal space with music and familiar voices that contextualise the characters' stories of love, loss, happiness and struggle, and provide some escape from the repression and alienation they felt. What is interesting about the attitudes towards this DIY culture and these independent platforms is the destruction of these platforms by the authorities. Malini Guha comments,

> Other forms of street-based oppression include the recurring trope of the police raid upon the space of the dancehall, which occurs in all three films. These unmotivated raids often have dire consequences for the characters. In *Burning an Illusion*, Pat's partner Del is arrested while trying to defend himself from an officer and is then incarcerated, while in *Pressure* Colin is arrested after a Black Power meeting that had just turned into a dancehall event. In *Pressure*, the injustice of the raid is made explicit when Sister Louise asks if the officer has a warrant and he replies: 'The laws are not concerned with you and your lot'. *Babylon* ends as the police are about to burst into the dancehall, while Blue and others continue to sing 'We can't take no more of that' as the screen cuts to black. (Guha 2009, p.182)

In my youth, it was commonplace to see blues parties and other events being shut down. When I was child, sound systems provided the soundtrack of my environment and marked particular memories as I was growing up. The impact makes the sound system culture a trope of my cultural identity today, as it permeates into my own filmmaking and research. The sound system culture provided the tools to navigate through the community by understanding the unofficial channels and social positioning and by learning from each other how to structure a market around social enterprise.

The first sound system I became a part of was Posse in Effect in 1987 (Derby). As a younger sound, we were heavily influenced by the new sound of hip-hop, which made up a considerable proportion of our record catalogue. This new music brought with it a new form of expression, the dancing that was associated with the music; I started as a hip-hop dancer and box boy.

[4] One Love Reggae Festival in Essex (2011, 2012, 2013), The Albertine (2012), Gladdy Wax (2012-2013), see Methodology chapter 4.2

In 1990, Posse in Effect evolved into Kill-a-watt Sound. As we got older, the reggae music started to resonate with us more because we could relate more, especially as there were UK reggae artists and very few UK rappers at the time. The name was derived from building new speaker boxes and developing amps and pre-amps with more power. The sound and our playing style began to be recognised and started to compete with the already established reggae sound systems.

Moving back to London in 1994, I joined my step-brother's sound Medallion (Peckham, London) – DJing and contributing towards the cost of buying equipment and records. We played on Gloucester Grove and North Peckham estate, putting on blues dances, appealing to a market that was too old to stay in but too young to get served in pubs – the *inbeTEENS*

Forming a sound system was a natural progression from following the paths of the older men in the community, who had built their own aural platform. As a collective of Black youths, the one thing we did have in common was the music that echoed the same voices of struggle and of being destabilised and that provided escapism in the form of entertainment. However, building a sound system was more than a statement of resistance; it was due to a lack of choice, as there were no platform and few amenities or activities within our community for the local teenagers to take part in, and what little provision there was had only limited spaces. The trajectory to building our own sound system started with us being part of the audience in the Black community and then eventually becoming masters of ceremony (MCs), DJs, and owners of our own platform. The catalyst for this next step was the sound tapes we listened to. They allowed us to relive the events we went to and catch up on the ones we missed. According to Henry, 'The inference then is that to fully appreciate the culture we need to consider these 'self-generated concepts' as the modes we use to define and record our own experiences' (Henry 2006, p.14).

This was cultural capital, our newspaper, our *Top of the Pops* for Black music, which also allowed us to associate music with a particular time.

We learnt the tools of the trade starting off as box boys, carrying equipment, unaware at the time that we were making social connections, understanding how to operate through unofficial channels, which would therefore allow us later to learn how to build and maintain our own sound systems. The venues that we played at were people's homes, houses, and flats. We would use part of the proceeds from the bar and/or the door to sub-let these spaces in the local community. We operated underground within the black market before we knew what the black market was.

Members of the sound system learnt carpentry and sourced the right material with the correct structural integrity to handle the vibration of the bass, building boxes for 10, 12, 15, and 18-

inch speaker cones. Others learned electronics, building equipment made up of circuit boards, transistor or valve amps, and pre amps to regulate and drive power to the speakers using the correct ratio of watts to ohms. Still others were better at PR, understanding the target audience, and knowing when to promote a dance, leaving enough time for everyone to be aware for maximum attendance. Location and transportation were also logistics to be considered. Thus, we all shared the responsibility for the equipment, with various members storing the speakers, the amps, the decks and the records. As a small sound system, we only played out in our local environment (manor). Methods of moving the equipment varied from carrying the equipment using a superstore shopping trolley to transport heavier components to a venue if it was very close, or asking [paying] someone we knew with a van. We arranged security to take the money on the door and prevent 'gate crashers'. This arrangement was not without its own set of problems - the takings from the door did not always reflect the attendance - but through trial and error, we started to collect money from the door at intervals through the night. Nonetheless, this did not stop security letting their friends in for free. We knew how and where to promote unofficially by word of mouth and by flyers, avoiding environments that would divulge this information to the police, which would have enable them to raid and shut down these unlicensed events.

Being financially competent in profit and loss, we bought beverages with a mark-up to cover indirect and direct costs, and so we were able to break even on the drinks we brought and on obtaining transportation for getting the stock to the venue. However, events were not driven by profit; initially, it was more to cover costs because we just wanted express ourselves using a medium that made us independent orators of the music we were interested in.

Later, due to popularity amongst our peers, we started to generate more money to not only maintain and increase the sound system, by buying records and so on, but also having a little extra money to divide amongst the crew. The physical platform gave us notoriety, which led to opportunities to play with bigger sound systems because we were pulling large young audiences that liked our approach to the medium. We were mixing new forms of revolutionary music in the forms of hip-hop with the more traditional sounds of reggae associated with sound systems.

From the 1950s onward, the sound system culture has been perpetually in motion in Jamaica and Britain amplifying the sounds and voices that are not directly heard in mainstream popular culture. Sound systems provided us with the opportunity to engage with our peers and culture directly in the context of our community within our marginalised socio political and economic context. Thus, the sound system became more than just cultural expression; it gave us a skillset from which to obtain practical experience and essentially work: an underground youth training scheme, an alternative to the sanctioned YTS set up by the Thatcher government, but one that utilised knowledge of the black market and provided us

with a trade. My contemporaries went on to become electricians, carpenters, DJs, accountants, PR officers and club promoters, and some of us became filmmakers and academics.

The comprehension of who you are and what you stand for is integral to your quest for clarity, finding out who you are and what you stand for through your life experiences. Initially, your experiences are all new - your first kiss and heartbreak, first day at school/college, your first party and dance with a girl - but as you get older, you see and experience things that are similar but no longer have that initial first feeling; therefore, in most cases, you learn and are better prepared. Looking back across my own trajectory, I can see a line through my own experience of popular culture growing up that has informed my filmmaking practice and research.

Identity is not static; it is a life-long journey, and real understanding and meaning come through experience. The young mind comprehends this only at a surface level, so to have this thrust upon you at a young age, compounded with resentment and rejection, prematurely initiates a quest for understanding and acceptance.

1. 4 ROLE MODELS

There were some instances where Black celebrities were permitted, who broke through or were allowed to break through into the entertainment industry, as long as they remained within the boundaries of docile racial stereotyping. Lenny Henry was admired in the 1980s and early 1990s as the Black British version of Eddie Murphy, known for his various characters that portrayed an image of Blackness that was acceptable. As a teenager, I thought he was excellent, and I laughed with him although I felt perhaps some people were laughing at him because he was a caricature. Hall argues, 'White discourses have been constructing us as simpletons, as simple-minded primitives, as smiling country people not yet quite up with the fast ways of the advanced world, for centuries ever since slavery' (Hall 1984, p.4). Similarly, Donald Bogle states that 'the coon's antics [have] always been used to indicate the black man's satisfaction with the system and his place in it' (Bogle 2006, p.8).

Contrary to Bogle, perhaps as my mother would say, Lenny Henry was 'playing the fool to catch wise.' Although a large figure of a Black man, he was not seen as a threat, which allowed him to straddle the line and benefit from public adoration and greater earning potential while also spreading awareness about worthy causes. He was assimilated into British culture, caricaturing his own culture, for example, Deakus, an old Jamaican man; Theophilus P Wildebeest, the overtly sexy soul singer; and Delbert Wilkins, the pirate radio station DJ. This characterization by a Black man is perceived in different ways, such as FUBU but on the larger platform; it further perpetuates the stereotypical imagery 'for them by

us'. What must be considered is who is providing the platform and what audience is this content targeted to, whereby the ridicule of Black on Black is considered inert. Weedon argues that

> absurdity and ridicule can be read in different ways and in thinking about comedy we need to ask whether it is always possible to distinguish between caricature and the subject being caricatured. How does one ensure that this difference is recognised by the audience? In evaluating the effects of comedy sketches, various factors need to be taken into account. These include the question of who is speaking for or about whom – in other words, who is the butt of the joke – and what power relations govern the positions of speaker, subject to ridicule and audience. (Weedon 2004, p.127)

From one perspective, Lenny Henry did not pose a threat, and instead he benefited from alternative opportunities to raise his profile as a comedian/actor. From another perspective, he is loved by the public but not considered a leader, a person that could constitute a following that would go against the dominant ideology. Bailey argues, 'This makes the Black comic an exotic figure, one that we can laugh at and poses no threat in terms of economic class or intelligence. The comedic stereotype thereby reinforces the inferior position of Black generally' (Bailey 1988, p.37).

MOTW shows how as a collective, we are in control of our platform and conscious of who our target audience was/is. As mini broadcasters and authors of our own product, we were parodying elements of the Black youth culture that permeates through youth culture in Britain. It is this melting pot of youth culture, influenced by Black culture together with the comedy genre, that eventually broadens the target audience. The dialect, mannerisms, fashion, and music that make up part of popular culture today resonate in the comedy. Travelling on a bus and listening to young people sitting behind me speaking to each other, I cannot differentiate where they originate from; however, I can identify with the elements of the colloquial terms they use that stem from the subversion of the English dialect mixed with Jamaican nuances, i.e., "wa gwarn fam". This change in English identity is reflected in the comedy we output, inviting audiences to laugh with us. We have the control and do not adhere to the hegemony of a broadcaster that outputs programmes based on their conditions.

Gramsci comments that 'one of the key elements of any hegemonic strategy is the formation of links with existing elements of culture, in this case a growing identification by English people with their national symbols' (Gramsci 2006, p.7).

By taking advantage of his environment and of his positioning in society, Lenny Henry was then able to benefit from the public perception of him as 'The Friendly Black Comedian.'

According to de Certeau, 'By an art of being in-between he draws unexpected results from his situation' (de Certeau 1988, p.30).

Lenny Henry has been a prolific fundraiser for charitable causes, as one of the founders of Comic Relief and raising over a billion pounds for charities foreign and domestic, cementing his positive impact on British society. He has also inspired a new generation of Black entertainers both behind and in front of the camera. I have first-hand experience of this, as I directed and edited the trailer for Danny Robins' Radio 4 theatre play *Rudy's Rare Records* (2014) starring Lenny Henry[5]. Henry is currently researching his PhD by practice at Royal Holloway University of London in race, class and gender in the sports film.

As a Black British filmmaker, I feel there is a responsibility for me to continue to contribute to the representation of Black Britons in film. However, my approach is different; I want to make films with excellent stories first and foremost rather than statements. I believe films with a poignant story are more memorable and therefore make the statement more insightful. I am Black; therefore, my films inevitably will always make a statement. Regarding this issue, Hooks argues,

> No one asks a white filmmaker in the United States or Britain who makes a film with only white characters if he or she is a white supremacist. The assumption is that the art they create reflects the world as they know it, or certainly as it interests them. However, when a black filmmaker, or for that matter any filmmaker of color, makes a work that focuses solely on subjects exclusively black, or white, they are asked by critics and their audiences to justify their choices and to assume political accountability for the quality of their representation. (Hooks 2009, p.86)

The inequality around filmmaking is apparent when the content is expected to reflect filmmakers who are non-white. The free-licence is only free if you are white, because being white is not even bought into question. Mainstream cinema reflects the dominant ideology, and everything else must be coded as a subordination of that.

I am pursuing a career in mainstream cinema, which debunks the statement above; my aim is to make films with content that is reflective of my identity. As I mentioned earlier, being Black makes a statement without me having to state it. I want to make films not because I am Black, but because I love film. I have no intention of being restricted to making just Black films any more than I want to be restricted to a specific genre. I'm going to make films based on the genres I am interested in, whether thriller, action, comedy, science-fiction or horror, with excellent stories that make cinema an amazing experience. There are other Black directors who have made huge box-office films on this premise, such as Antoine Fuqua,

[5] Lenny Henry was instrumental in the commissioning of *MOTW* stage show

director of *South Paw* (2015), *Equalizer* (2014), *Olympus Has Fallen* (2013), *King Arthur* (2004) and the *Training Day* (2001). He is currently working on a remake of the Western, *The Magnificent Seven* (2016). Other black directors include F. Gary Gray director of *Friday* (1995), *Set It Off* (1996), *The Negotiator* (1998), *The Italian Job* (2003), *Law Abiding Citizen* (2009) and *Straight Outta Compton* (2015) and, closer to home, Steve McQueen director of *Hunger* (2008), *Shame* (2011), and *12 Years a Slave* (2013). All the above films are from different genres featuring black and white leads from filmmakers making the prefix 'Black' irrelevant. In an interview with Adrian Hennigan, Faqua comments,

> The dumbest question I've ever been asked always starts off like this: "As a black director...I hate that! It's a dumb question because I don't look at things as a black director, just as a director, so ask me as a director first and we can segue into the colour thing later. That's a dumbass question because you don't ask any other artist – "As a Jewish director, Mr Spielberg..."(Hennigan 2014)

My research has directly contributed to Black representation based upon my experiences and the experience of other Black people in Britain. I have used both documentary film making, in *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*, and comedy and drama genre conventions, in *MOTW* to entertain, develop a platform and target audiences, to be recognised by the British film industry and further afield, and to demonstrate my abilities in order to go on and make feature films. Chapter 5 will explore my methodology in more detail.

At 15-years old, living in Derbyshire but returning to London almost every weekend, the issue of difference was more prominent as the environment was less diverse. The ambivalence of my peers was highlighted when it came to sports. I would be expected to participate because of my presumed athletic ability, but in other social environments, my counterparts would distance themselves. I was comfortable with who I was; I did not want to assimilate socially. This was expressed in how I wore my clothes, which reflected my interest in Black popular culture, that is, sound systems and hip hop music.

I knew Black people who had been born and raised in Derby. Those I knew from areas with a concentrated Black/Asian population in the city of Derby had a clearer sense of their identity, and those from predominantly white areas of Derbyshire, such as Mickleover, assimilated into an environment innate to their development. Based on what I knew from existing within a larger environment of the diaspora in London, I saw some of those from Derbyshire ridiculed for attempting to assimilate into a British culture with no residue of their inherent culture that I could recognise or identify with. Although arguably being inherent of that environment, perhaps the reference point of belonging to a Black diaspora was within their internal family structures.

My expression of Blackness seemed alien to them although I looked like them and came from a similar diaspora. There were marginalised communities within Derby, but at the time, these were in more concentrated pockets of the county, so they were more segregated. Mickleover, the area in Derbyshire, where I lived, was a mixture of upper working-class and middle-class; we were one of three Black families. In a school population of approximately 1200-1500 (John Port School), there were a total of six Black children across various year groups; I was one of two in my year.

The mixed attitude towards my Blackness was apparent. I was praised for my physical ability but disliked for my Blackness and Black features, and yet some of my white counterparts would be concerned with getting a tan or being able to play football like John Barnes. Regarding such issues, Bailey argues that

> within these notions of a multiple 'British' identity there is an obsession with an authentic 'Blackness' as well as an obsession with an authentic 'whiteness'. British culture has an obsession with Black style in the form of music, dance, hair, colour and language, which is looked upon as natural and not inhuman. Whereas, when Michael Jackson emulates a particular form of 'whiteness' by bleaching his skin and straightening his nose, he is seen as a freak. (Bailey 1988, p.48)

The television show *Desmond's* written by Trix Worrell (1989-1994) had a white barber, Tony (Dominic Keating), situated comfortably within this Black British world of first and second generation British Caribbean. I was comfortable with this; however, I was uncomfortable with Desmond's (Norman Beaton) eldest son, Michael (Geff Francis), a bank manager trying to assimilate into white British culture as he represented the establishment that had rejected me socially, economically, and culturally.

However, in *The Chef*, Gareth Blackstock (Lenny Henry) is a highly successful chef and restaurateur, managing a kitchen delivering the finest cuisine England has to offer. He portrayed a successful Black man running a business that was productive in an environment that was not associated with Black British individuals and had predominantly white staff under him. This was the first time I had seen a Black man as the person in charge on British television. Regarding this Charlie Hanson comments, '*Chef* was a vehicle for Lenny Henry, where he could portray a successful Black professional running his own business. He was looking for more respect from contemporary Black audiences at a time where he was predominantly liked by white audiences'[6]. Similarly, Hall states, 'For we cannot forget how cultural life, above all in the west, but elsewhere as well, has been transformed in our lifetimes by the voicing of the margins' (Morley 1996, p.470).

[6] email correspondence 29 August 2015

Tony, in *Desmond's* represented a familiar sight of white people who were embraced by diasporic communities; however, Michael, the older brother, was a less familiar and almost unbelievable depiction, based on the exclusion witnessed by the Black community within a Britain that prevented progression.

This obsession with 'Blackness' and 'Whiteness' can be interpreted another way; based on the examples presented here, both personal and academic, the obsession could be considered as Black people assimilating attributes of whiteness and white people assimilating attributes of Blackness. When I consider my encounter with other Black children of the Midlands growing up with no residual remnants of their inherent culture, I refer back to the arguments of Basch and colleagues that perhaps their parents severed links with their homeland and tried to assimilate entirely into British society to fit in. Alternatively, it could be that portrayed Ove's observations of the two brothers and their opposing ideals of heritage. The question of assimilation is a personal and political choice, and one must approach it on one's own terms.

> Thinking about my own sense of identity, I realize that it has always depended on the fact of being a *migrant*, on the *difference* from the rest of you. So one of the fascinating things about this discussion is to find myself centred at last. Now that, in the postmodern age, you all feel so dispersed, I become centred. What I've thought of as dispersed and fragmented comes, paradoxically, to be *the* representative modern experience! This is "coming home" with a vengeance! (Hall, in Baker and Diawara 1996, p.114)

My mother would say to me, "You will not know where you are going if you do not know where you come from." As part of my initial research with reference to my own personal trajectory and film-making practice, I shot a documentary, *Mama's Mint Ball*, about the head of my family, namely, my grandmother. I used this as a dry run in terms of filmic techniques for a larger documentary on Notting Hill Carnival and the collation of archive footage on sound system culture. In addition, in reaction to the statement my mother made above, I thought it important to go to the source, to the beginning.

The film looked at the humble beginnings of her legacy, travelling from Cuba to Jamaica and then to England, then back to Jamaica and then to America. The film, which was shot in Jamaica, documents the dispersal of her children and demonstrates how I understand my own situation. Regarding my identity and cultures, I represent 'Black British Caribbean'; this leaves me centred and aware of my position and of how I have been positioned. I consider how this affects my children as either third generation British Caribbean or as just Black British of Caribbean descent. *Aya-Pharell's Haircut* and *Black British Holiday* look at my family's integration as opposed to assimilation. I provide cultural enrichment and ensure my

children have a clear understanding of their heritage and identity, they have a visual record of this in *Mama's Mint Ball,* seeing and hearing it straight from their great grandmother.

Their psyche only accommodates one sense of *home*, namely, Britain, with an ancestral trajectory that plots the historical journey that situates them within a British landscape. Should they decide to immigrate to another country, perhaps to Jamaica, should it recover and become truly progressive and independent, with the immigration not as repatriation but as exploration, what would the coding be? Caribbean British Caribbean! I ask the question and attempt an answer to demonstrate that at some point, this generational coding must become nullified with individuals being just Black British or citizens of the world.

Chapter 2 – The Black Market Conditions of Production

2. 1 The Black Market: A definition

> In other words, the labour of the private individual manifests itself as an element of the total of society only through the relations, which the active exchange establishes between the products, and, through their mediation, between the producers. To the producers, therefore, the social relations between their private labours appear as what they are, i.e. they do not appear as direct social relations between persons in their work, but rather as material [*dinglich]* relations between persons and social relations between things (Marx 1990, pp.165-6)

The aboveground or sanctioned free market will be represented here as simply The Market; this is the mirror image of the underground black market. Both structures operate in similar ways. Marx's theory of dialectics is useful here and highlights the importance of his philosophy in articulating the structure of how markets function. Marx's project was to understand how a capitalist mode of production works and to develop a conceptual apparatus to understand the complexity of the model.

With the free market, the misconception is in the prefix because the free market is not *free* for everyone regardless of background, gender, social class, and race. The Free Market reflects the hegemonic order and thereby restricts access for those that are marginalised by societal regulations. Gramsci discusses the hegemony of manipulation by implementation as a form of control:

> In western political thought consent is traditionally defined in two ways: either consent creates force and refers to a civil society made up of isolated and atomized who 'give' their consent (mystifying the relations of exploitation and power in capitalist societies); or force creates consent by laws, norms, ideological values and forms of legitimation of power (leading to an under estimation of rights and liberty). (Buci-Glucksmann in Showstack Sassoon 1982, p.117)

The black market operates on the same structure of capitalism but for those excluded by the free market, in the form of channels invisible to the users of the sanctioned market.
As an example relating to the function of physical and virtual platforms later on in this thesis, YouTube offers channel operators a 'free' space for filming providing the operators meet their requirements, which are to have a minimum of 5000 subscribers and to conduct the channel appropriately adhering to YouTube stipulations.
The relationship between the market and the black market is symbiotic; they exist alongside each other. The market(s) will exploit tactics or knowledge in turn and will draw on and reflect

features from each side. The black market exists because of the free market; the two work in tandem. YouTube as a social media platform takes advantage of the gap between the free market and the black market. It is free to watch, providing a wide audience with access to numerous applications, such as music videos, films, online shows, controversial documentaries, podcasts etc. Based on the performance of the channel, it can be monetised, taking advantage of informal activity within a sanctioned space. Lobato explains,

> YouTube and competitors are now the first ports of call for many users seeking movies online. Promoted as platforms for sharing user-generated content, they operate in a legal grey zone. While some of the content they host is perfectly legal, a very significant amount of it infringes copyright...This entanglement between the formal and informal is structural. Video hosting sites are financially reliant on commercially produced content...More page views create more advertising revenue, so these sites have a clear financial incentive to make it as easy as possible for users to upload pirated content. (Lobato 2012, p.102)

As an online distribution model, YouTube sits firmly within a formal and sanctioned market; however, the function of this model can be subverted by users uploading content that infringes copyright. This generates a grey area, allowing YouTube to take advantage of this plurality. While it is the users who are manipulating a formal platform with informal activity, YouTube's tactics capitalise on this activity, whereby YouTube gains more marketing revenue and deletes unlawful content that is brought to their attention. However, until it is made aware of this informal activity, the company continues to profit from it.

The term 'black market' is defined here as the underground economy, the procurement of goods and services via channels that are not regulated or endorsed by the government administration or sanctioned institutions put in place to regulate and measure the exchange of economic activity. These are channels that are unofficial, invisible, unreported, unrecorded, unintended as well as often illegal. However, while some of the goods and services themselves are not always illegal, yet it is the exchange via these channels that makes this economic exchange activity illicit, as it is unsanctioned by the mainstream, the above-ground market.

The aforementioned channels, which exist off the radar, exist because of the radar. The free market of capitalism exists in perpetual motion and relies on technological advancement and reinvention.

Black market activity is a product of social economic exclusion and/or the reaction to the inability to adhere to criteria and regulations that cannot be met within a particular regulated environment. Marginalised communities, diasporic communities, and communities with high

unemployment use these forms of commerce to meet demands where there is limited supply. The demand is there because of the needs of these communities. This can be defined as informal economic activity, which is circulated through word of mouth between those who are marginalised.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau outlines the use of what he calls tactics in navigating social life. This is perhaps the closest formulation of a theoretical articulation of how the black Market functions. Marx's critique of capitalism in Capital offers a theoretical structure to what is taking place in the marketplace, whereas de Certeau claims there are two perspectives: the elevated view and the street view. This is a use of tactics: 'These "ways of operating" are similar to "instructions for use," and they create a certain play in the machine through a stratification of different and interfering kinds of functioning' (de Certeau 1988, p.30).

What is delineated here is an alternate use to the economic mechanism put in place, which by taking advantage of the loopholes, subverts the initial function in order to produce an unintended economic activity, that is, informal activity through formal channels. According to Feige, 'Adherence to the established rules constitutes participation in the formal or aboveground economy, whereas, non-compliance, or circumvention of the established rules, or exclusion from the protection of those rules, constitutes participation in an informal or underground economy' (Feige 1990, p.5).

The establishment of a market inadvertently builds a dividing line and based on your social economic positioning, you are forced to stand on one side or the other. Gramsci's force creates consent or consent creates force. However, those with better financial stability straddle this line and constantly reposition themselves from a dominant position to take advantage of official and unofficial markets.

Historically, wherever an environment and/or situation for the mechanism for supply and demand operates, this, in turn, fuels a subversive economic form of the said exchange. During World War II, food and general consumables were difficult to obtain; therefore, there was an underground trade for surplus and goods to be bought or exchanged. According to Michael Taillard,

> Any artificial shortage of goods and services will be supplemented by the black market. During World War II, parts of France were restricted to specific rations using coupons but these quickly became worthless as the black-market trade became the mechanism by which most goods in these regions were purchased. (Taillard 2012, p.67)

The black market trade also interferes with the world's cultural heritage, for example, the theft of antiquities for private collectors and for public institutions who circumvent the appropriate channels to procure artefacts and antiquities by taking advantage of loop holes in laws and legislations, using licit and illicit methods of obtaining these goods.

> Unlike common law countries such as the United States, good title to a stolen object can be conveyed in the bulk of European continental civil law countries if the object was purchased in "good faith." This means that even if an antiquity was looted and illegally exported from its country of origin, if it was subsequently purchased in good faith in a civil country, then the good faith purchase is favored and the object is no longer legally construed as stolen. (Proulx 2011, p.195)

These objects provide evidence of cultural world advancements, social interaction, political progress as well as religious artefacts continues to make a certain cultures historicity ambiguous and, therefore, incomplete. According to Amineddoleh,

> In 2011, cultural heritage academics were outraged over the ownership dispute of the Ka Nefer Nefer funerary mask. The mask was unearthed in Egypt in 1952, and its ownership was vested in the Egyptian Government, before it went missing in the 1960s. The mask reappeared in the St. Louis Art Museum in 1998, and the museum has refused to return it to Egypt. (Amineddoleh 2013, p.228)

On the 14 November 1970 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) held the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property to protect historic artefacts from the illicit trade in antiquities on the black market[7].

Artefacts that had been acquired via dubious channels prior to this agreement are not affected by this convention. This is, in turn, protecting the history of this illicit trade, which in some respects solidifies the black market's existence. This type of activity has also been immortalised and romanticised in dominant cinema, for example, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (Spielberg 1981), set in the South American jungle in 1936, and shows Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) searching for a gold idol. Indiana Jones is positioned with two South American grave robbers, who intend to double-cross him. The way this is conveyed allows audiences to sympathise with Indiana Jones; viewers are then enthralled by the action and adventure in acquiring this artefact.

[7]Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970 Article 7, (b) (ii)

As the narrative plays out, the protagonist's illicit activity is disregarded; his aim is to bring treasures back to the museum. The premise of this film is based upon unrecorded activity. Later on in the film, Indiana then goes on to intercept a religious artefact that the Nazis are trying to obtain, and he does so heroically; the religious artefact (the Ark) is confiscated and stored by the American government in a top-secret warehouse. This activity within the story and narrative leads to coding that the protagonist is a heroic archaeologist; however, arguably, what is depicted is the theft of historical cultural evidence, which is confiscated preventing the Nazis who want to use it [the Ark] to win World War II; However, withholding it from the Nazis means that it is withheld from all humanity.

The theft of antiquities has been connected to drug smuggling and terrorism. This activity has also been connected to illicit, profits generated from the sale of artefacts used as currency in black market trade of illegal activities. Proulx (2011), in her essay *Trafficking in Antiquities*, discusses how organised criminal groups no longer restrict their business to arms and drugs now also deal in antiquities that have been obtained illegally and how, with increasing frequency, drug raids also uncover looted antiquities.

The trafficking of artefacts and antiquities has also been linked to terrorism; antiquities are being used as currency to finance larger terrorist organizations. Proulx (2011) explains, 'Smuggling of looted antiquities has also been connected to terrorism. Hijacker Mohamed Atta, attempted to peddle stolen antiquities in order to help finance terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001' (Proulx 2011, p.195).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have made valid attempts to eliminate this activity and raise awareness regarding the impact of the trade in black market weapons. According to the Public Interest Report (PIR) in the Federation of American Scientists (FAS),

> The black-market trade in small arms and light weapons today sustains bloody conflicts around the world and arms criminals, terrorists and drug-traffickers. As a result, large areas of the world have become extremely dangerous for civilians, relief and development workers, businesspeople and peacekeepers. (Lumpe 1997)

The film *Lord of War* (Niccol 2005), which is said to be based on actual events, exemplifies the blurred lines between the trade of weapons, which is considered formal, above-ground recorded, official economic activity, and the trafficking of weapons; this is viewed as an informal, underground, unrecorded, unofficial black market economic activity. In one scene, in which Yuri Orlov (Nicolas Cage) is depicted selling small arms, cocaine is used as the currency of exchange, and later in the film, he manipulates freight laws on a large cargo ship to avoid detection. As reported in *The Guardian*, Yuri Orlov is based on Viktor Bout, who was labelled the 'Merchant of Death' by Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain. Viktor Bout worked for

the US government shipping supplies to Iraq on their behalf, and he was also known for shipping aid to Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the tsunami in 2004. He is accused of supplying weapons to Liberian warlord Charles Taylor; of running weapons to Angola, Sierra Leone and the Congo; and of exporting blood diamonds (Campbell and MacKinnon 2008).

These are all examples of the market taking advantage of the black market to appropriate products and legitimise them without acknowledgement of the process of acquisition. In reference to my own work, I use a black market methodology in order to position and be recognized by the mainstream film and television.

2. 2. Black Market Activity

Black market activity filters through every level of society; the historical examples mentioned look at this informal activity used alongside formal activity on a larger international scale. According to Conker and Konkin,

> Even large businesses today could go partially counter-economic, leaving a portion in the "white market" to satisfy government agents and pay some modicum of taxes and report a token number of workers. The rest of the business would (and already often does) expand off the books with independent contractors who supply, service, and distribute the finished product. Nobody, no business, no worker, and no entrepreneur need be white market.' (Conker and Konkin III 2006, p.39)

This duplicitous attitude to business is fuelled by higher profits and lower costs, a business model that does not or should not work in practice considering the fundamental modes of capitalist production. A commodity is valued based on the amount of socially necessary labour time taken to produce it, in direct relation to its surplus value. Marx defines it as follows: 'Every change in the relation between the magnitudes of surplus value and the value of labour-power arises from a change in the absolute magnitude of the surplus-labour, and consequently of the surplus-value (Marx 2011, p.576).'

The labour is objectified in the production process. If the quantity of labour hours output does not match the cost of producing the commodity, then the market reverts back to historical constructs, i.e., slave labour, highlighting the exploited and objectified element of what is being produced as a want and/or need.

However, the black market operates in national and local environments among social agents that are just trying to survive within a structured form of society. These structures are ethnicity, social class, gender, and religion, and the cultural customs of all of these structures form part of the social constructs used to regulate the decisions we make based on how an individual situates their self as socially responsible for their actions. This means making a

conscious decision to abide by the structures put in place or choosing to circumvent this environment to benefit one's self (and one's family).

Relating the black market to my own personal trajectory and experiences amongst peers growing up, the environments were economically challenged with moderate to low income-based families. The distribution of illicit drugs, stolen goods, and 'under the table' dealing was commonplace. This was not alarming in some respects, but instead, made up part of the landscape. There was always a strong awareness of the dangers of drugs and the handling of stolen goods. Stolen goods seemed to be less of an issue because this was a way of levelling the playing field within the community outside / away from the sanctioned mainstream market. It was a way the "have nots" could measure up to the "haves." In *Babylon* Errol (David Haynes) sells stolen goods (televisions and video camera) to Les (Anthony Trent), a well-dressed white man in a suit, who is labelled in the credits as The Fence; this is a filmic example demonstrating that this illicit activity was for all, but came with risk attached.

Just as above ground activity is regulated, there are rules or a code of conduct within the underground market that is assumed knowledge, and the scope of this market varies in its severity from trivial to high-end crime. Social agents within the community are constantly making choices about how they interact with the Black Market and how it affects the wider community. This is a moral judgement based on the social construction of an environment that falls outside of endorsed social constructs. Venkatesh argues,

> Residents must differentiate between those who harm and those who annoy, between those who make a little money on the side and those who jeopardise the community, recognising all the while that they may be the trader one day and the one passing judgement the next. The judgements are not easy, nor made lightly, for dollars are scarce, times are hard, and compromises must be made if life is to go on. (Venkatesh 2006, p.8)

Access to this, illicit activity is hidden; those from that environment are suspicious of outsiders that are not from the community or 'in the know'. There is a dual dynamic occurring, where those who normally abide by the terms and conditions of formal economic activity will straddle the line dividing formal from informal, taking advantage of both. When I was a teenager, the local newsagent would never complain about us loitering outside his establishment. There were those that were just 'hanging around' and those that were subletting that space for illicit means.

It was 'overstood' why we were never moved on, even though the shopkeeper could have taken action to have us removed. It was because 'one hand was washing the other'. As

much as it was a nuisance to some customers, as loiterers, we were customers ourselves. In addition, the alternate use of the space brought illicit customers to the shop, who would make two purchases: they would buy drugs outside and would then go inside the shop to buy cigarettes, rolling papers, beverages etc. De Certeau argues, 'The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain impose on it and organised by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep itself' (de Certeau 1988, p.37).

The dual dynamic facilitated both the seller and the buyer. The shopkeeper would take advantage of recorded sales and unrecorded illegal transactions from within his established regulated, place of business. He would sell us 'singles' (individual cigarettes), although he procured these goods in good faith to sell on in accordance with legislation of the Trading Standards Institute, to NOT break down packs of cigarettes, he flouted this law because there was a market that he could capitalise on from this activity, thus making more money.

At the same time, we could not afford to buy packs of cigarettes because we were unemployed, so he was helping us create an equal and opposite reaction to helping himself; what he was doing was illegal and unrecorded, and therefore he could still account for the sale of a pack and profit from the rest. There was a unique and unspoken agreement between us because we would not inform the authorities and nor would he. De Certeau argues, 'Strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces' (de Certeau 1984, p.30).

We may have been considered a nuisance, but we provided a market that he could take advantage of, thus making more money from those he might consider undesirable while at the same time, remaining secure in the knowledge that we would protect the communal space we were sub-letting.

Taking advantage of these illegal channels of the Black Market trade does have a reverse effect on those that use and become accustomed to it as unofficial sole traders, because that closed network of society although united always stays closed. Venkatesh argues as follows:

> The code of shady dealing is a response to circumstances in inner city ghetto neighbourhoods where joblessness is high and opportunities for advancement are severely limited. Furthermore, both Anderson and Venkatesh clearly argue that these cultural codes ultimately hinder integration into the broader society and are therefore dysfunctional. In other words they contribute to the perpetuation of poverty.' (Wilson 2009, p.19)

There is no option to expand. You cannot make money from those that do not have money: the money just goes around in circles. There may be some small spikes in the income into that environment. However, the ultimate trick here is that those that begin to make large sums of money in this environment make large purchases in the aboveground market. For example, a person sells drugs and makes money, but goes to dealer to buy a Porsche and pays above the retail price because he is paying in cash.

2. 3. Alternate Social Capital

Social capital is the joint effort of individuals and organisations that maximise value by taking advantage of their social connections to promote and amplify economic activity within their circles. Bourdieu in Hauberer defines social capital as 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group' (Hauberer 2011, p.38).

The black market is alternate social capital. It behaves in the same way as social capital in an unofficial underground alternate way; social agents within a close knit community work together; they pool each other's resources and networks for the ultimate goal of economic viability and survival. According to Ionescu and Gomez, 'Social capital is composed of social resources that provide useful capital for individuals. These individuals are involved in entrepreneurial activities at local level and social capital it is one resource available in neighbourhoods where self-employed live' (Ionescu 2002, p.2).

It is not based on the sharing of capital but the *sharing of knowledge to generate capital.* In terms of commodities, according to Marx, there are two types: tangible and non-tangible, objects and services. Alternate social capital uses the same methodology as social capital with the same end game to make profit. It applies the same mode with skills that are transferable; however, the evidence of those skills is not recorded, authenticated, or accredited. If we take the example of sound system DIY culture, the skills developed through this practice are transferable - producing electricians, carpenters, entrepreneurs, masters of ceremonies - but the training ground is not recognised as professional, despite deploying what Marx defines as the socially necessary labour time devoted to producing the use value to put on and participate on an event.

In terms of the commodities of the black market, these can vary from sanctioned commodities to more illicit or illegal products. For example, if the commodity is an illegal or controlled substance, selling is based on the same principles as selling anything else, but on the black market. Firstly, there is the market for this illicit product, that is, supply and demand. Secondly, there is the ability to provide this product (commodity), and thirdly, there is the activity of selling the drugs based on demand (use value), where the drugs are purchased at

cost price and sold with a mark up to make a profit (surplus value). This requires having a firm grasp of mathematics from a financial perspective, a skill-set any successful dealer must have, which demonstrates a basic understanding of supply and demand. This understanding, in turn, is linked to use-value, which comes from a commodity, a capitalist mode of production and consumption. The difference with the commodities of the black market is that the process of exchange is not recorded and not vocalised or made official, thereby enabling the continuation of this underground activity and its use by those who are aware of it.

To record or articulate the mechanics of the black market is to make concrete and visible, something that operates on a fluid and invisible premise. Once it is articulated, it can be pinned down, traced, and eliminated by the free market, as they are in direct competition with each other. However, as both markets are in perpetual motion, they are elusive. As Marx famously stated of capitalism's evasiveness, 'All that is solid, melts into air'[8] (Marx and Engels 1848, Introduction).

Vankatesh's earlier argument arises here in terms of the perpetuation of poverty: as a drug dealer makes a success of his entrepreneurial activity, he becomes chained to the very environment he is trying to free himself from. According to de Certeau, 'Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity' (de Certeau 1988, p.30).

As the only way he knows how to make surplus value/profit is from this particular location/market, he cannot afford to leave it; hence, he is making money and is trapped by it. The ghetto, the [neighbour]hood is also known as the 'Trap'.

As teenagers, one of the few outlets we had as a result of limited cultural diversity and social exclusion in Britain was Black music, music we could relate too, music that provided an empathetic voice, retorting on the struggles and plights of those that had no voice. Henry argues that this is

> the validity of these musical modes of expression, which in fact represent a counterculture that is intrinsic to the physiological wellbeing of the Black downpressed. Moreover, it is the history of resistance against the imposition of European values on non-European peoples that is often the commonality between the supposedly diverse experiences of non-white peoples, as expressed in that which we term Black music. (Henry 2006, p.91)

The medium that provided music, among other things, came in the form of pirate radio stations, which were a key channel in spreading the word and feeding 'alternate social

[8] Marx and Engels, (1848) The Communist Manifesto, Introduction, section 1, paragraph 18, lines 12-14

capital.' Illicit radio stations provided an underground platform for music and small business advertising to a niche audience, as well as somewhere to initiate a dialogue on current affairs that affected the marginalised diasporic community. Fanon argues,

> The memory of the "free" radios that came into being during the Second World War underlines the unique quality of the Voice of Fighting Algeria. The Polish, Belgian, French people, under the German occupation, were able, through the broadcasts transmitted from London, to maintain contact with a certain image of their nation. Hope, the spirit of resistance to the oppressor, were then given daily sustenance and kept alive. (Fanon 1965, p.93)

Pirate radio stations gave the Black community a social identity, a counter-point of reference with a common ground that made the excluded feel included. They brought the sounds of my culture into my space, thus filling the void, providing a level of community empowerment, and embracing our Black British cultural identity.

Involvement in the black market is not a selfless act. Although it may provide necessary goods and services, it is not without economic benefit for those who mediate or operate an invisible channel. Such is a capitalist system.

2. 4. Black Market Airwaves: Pirate Radio Stations

When I was growing up, licensed radio stations did not particularly accommodate music of Black origin, and when they did air Black music, they were already several months behind the pirate radio stations. Aside from the social circles we moved in, the pirate stations were the cornerstone of social events for all ages of the community. Thus, the stations provided a sense of belonging for the Black community.

The pirate radio stations had a large Black audience because of the lack of diversity within television programming, and the Black audience is still not represented equally today. The pirate stations inspired us to do for ourselves [FUBU]. They would advertise dances, sound system clashes, and blues parties. Top of the Pops did not play an equal amount of popular Black music and, judging from what could be seen in the background, the crowds were predominantly white with maybe one or two Black faces, so it was not particularly diverse or accessible. According to Gilroy,

> The BBC was not interested in including African and Caribbean music in their programmes. When 'pop' charts began to be compiled, black shops and products were structurally excluded from the operations which generated them. (Gilroy 1987, p.165)

The only benefit of watching *Top of the Pops* was to actually see a performance from Black music artists that we were already familiar with, having already heard their songs on the pirate stations, in a blues party, or on a sound system. We saw first-hand how this 'alternate social capital' worked within our community, it was not what you knew but whom you knew that allowed you entrepreneurial opportunities to generate capital.

Sky FM, DBC, and Heatwave - these pirate radio stations advertised parties, events, and domestic products that were geared towards the Black community; they also sold illegitimate airtime for advertising. As the pirate stations became more prolific and well known, their economic motives became much more apparent. The uninterrupted music dwindled away, and the shows were dominated by adverts known as 'a pause for the cause', which suggested that these advertisements supported the operating costs of the station. A further subversion of what de Certeau describes as tactics were used by DJs for monopolising personal adverts regarding events at which they would be playing during their shows as well as scheduled advertisements.

YouTube, Podcasts, and Internet radio have made pirate radio stations almost obsolete by broadening the access from local reception to global; talk shows and music shows are archived and can be revisited as opposed to finite broadcasting. There are some stations that still output a pirate signal, catering to those that do not have Internet facilities, but even those stations have an Internet station to accommodate both audiences.

The parties and dances used the same guise although the nights were filled with cultural music, the aggregation of the community in synergy enjoying a finite social space with a sense of Black British identity and solidarity. The end goal is surplus value, promoters work a deal with the pirate stations to use resident DJ's which gets them free promotion. The plan was to obtain a house or flat for the night; very seldom did the location stay the same, thus making it harder for the police to pin them down. The admission fee was very competitive compared with legitimate clubs in the city, which would charge several times as much to cover overheads, without having to cater for a level of musical diversity (Black music).

The 'blues' or 'sell-drinks' parties would sell alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages with a 150-200 percent mark-up. Dances were always over-packed with no fire exit. Health and safety was not the priority, it was about filling the place to maximum capacity. The sound system and/or DJs were paid at the end of the night. This sometimes caused an issue: if the night had not been a success, there was little or no money to pay DJs, which sometimes led to serious altercations. However, it was all underground, so if individuals were not paid, they could not inform the authorities or use legal means to obtain redress Promoters always received some payment and so did the security and those DJs with strong followings, who could fill the place the following week. However, the less popular DJs would end up playing

for [nothing] but love! Because of the level of social cultural exclusion, those who had the right connections monopolised the gap in the black market, thus using the 'Black Market' to their advantage.

Moving to the Midlands during my teenage years meant the level of access to socio cultural activity was even more restricted, as the environments themselves were behind those of the capital both socially and economically. The same strategies I had experienced in London were applied to this smaller rural environment. I and some friends built a sound system after saving up our sign-on money (Jobseekers allowance). We acquired our equipment from family and friends both borrowing and fixing up old equipment. In *Babylon,* Beefy and Scientist steal speakers from a school to repair their sound system. Although a negative depiction, the scene comments on how young Black males were resourceful in acquiring equipment. Beefy and Scientist use the speaker to appropriate and amplify their own voice as part of their cultural enlightenment. However, the coding needs to be questioned, as their flagrant disregard for education is depicted here, indicating that the music was more important than education. While one could argue that the music was a cultural education, it is clear that formal education was seen as secondary to the cultural enrichment they got from the music.

We played parties for free initially to gain a reputation. As we became more popular, we started to charge, although I would insist on being paid first; as we were young, we did not want the 'olders' taking advantage. As jobless young Black males with limited opportunities, some of our friends had moved out of their parents' house and were just signing on. A hundred pounds between five of us would secure using their place for a 'blues' (dance). The promotion of the dance was by word-of-mouth. The alcohol was acquired from the cash and carry with a hundred percent mark-up; for example, if a bottle of Guinness in the local shop cost £1, our dance price would be £2. A fee was charged on the door. The profits made were reinvested in purchasing new records and equipment.

The sound system was our attempt to develop a platform or space within our environment to play music that formed part of our cultural identity. We felt as if we had no platform because the elements of our culture we wanted to connect with were not available leaving us feeling disorientated and lacking a sense of identity.

Although we were trying to do this to fill the void for our cultural capital; nonetheless, our selfless act was still 'monies Bitch.' This illicit activity was costly because there were legitimate overheads for our illegitimate activity that could not be avoided. Although we had all developed new skills from our endeavours, DJing, marketing, and profit and loss accounting, a record of this skill set was not transferrable. Wilson (2009) discussing Vankatesh's views, makes the following argument:

> Adherence to the code of shady dealings impedes social mobility. The "underground economy enables people to survive but can lead to alienation from the wider world," he states. For example, none of the work experience accrued in the informal economy can be listed on resumes for job searches in the formal labor market, and time invested in underground work reduces time devoted to accumulating skills or contacts for legitimate employment. (Wilson 2009, pp.19-20)

New Jack City (Van Peebles 1991) demonstrates how this illicit form of economic activity uses the same methodology as a legitimate business. Pookie (Chris Rock), a recovering drug addict, goes undercover for the police to obtain evidence to indict Nino Browns (Wesley Snipes) for illicit drug organised criminal activity. Nino Browns' empire is only powerful within that environment. Although very lucrative, his entrepreneurial activity is limited to that environment.

The Black market has also played a part in the film industry as a result of piratical activities in exhibition and distribution. Films have been exhibited illegally by unauthorized vendors who aim to profit from audience attendance in unlicensed screening(s). Further up in the chain is the illicit acquisition of these films in order to facilitate an unlicensed exhibition. Lobato comments,

> Melies' classic 1902 film *A Trip to the Moon* was widely copied, especially in the USA, where the director was unable to secure any profits from its exhibition. Other piratical practices – such as 'bicycling' and 'jackrabbiting', in which exhibitors put on unapproved screenings of popular films in violation of distribution agreements – were common throughout the early cinema period. The black market for 16mm bootleg prints and private projection equipment which emerged in the post-war period would also prove problematic for the established distributors, with army officers frequently emerging as the culprits in bootlegging rings. Every new distributive technology has spawned its own form of pirate exchange. (Lobato 2012, p.14)

This connects back to my earlier comments of informal activity during World War II and brings attention to the illicit activity that is managed and controlled by persons that should be operating within sanctioned environments, but instead, counter-economic informal activity, used as a tactic inside formal activity.

There has been filmmaking production and distribution that has stayed firmly within the invisible channels of the film industry because the outputs are considered taboo, inappropriate and unethical. In particular, pornography is considered by many publicly as above; however, the consumption of said genre is extensive. Lobato comments that 'porn

has long had its own alternative networks that, while informal and subterranean, are efficient and wide reaching' (Lobato 2012, p.14).

The proliferation of the pornography industry also highlights the other side of this invisible activity, which is the market itself and the demand based on consumption. It is also an industry that embraces technological advances instantaneously and inventively. The porn industry successfully distributes within both the informal and the informal marketplaces and bridges the gap between the free market and the black market.

Alternative forms of piracy have been around since the early 1900s, as discussed above, prior to the invention of 8mm, 16mm, VCR, and VHS; and now contemporary DVD and online distribution models continue to facilitate this illicit activity within film. They also help to promote and develop a film culture in remote areas of the world where audiences are not only entertained, but are also inspired to create their own films. An example of this is how the influx of Hong Kong martial arts movies that are distributed and exhibited in Indian cities has influenced Bollywood movies. Sriniva discusses the cultural presence of martial arts films in Andhra Pradesh as follows:

> Hong Kong action films have spawned a new genre of 'detective' fiction and numerous self-help books (learn-kung-fu-in-thirty-days and such like). A new generation of stars performing their own stunts and supposedly trained in East Asian martial arts emerged in the late seventies. (Sriniva 2003)

The informal circulation of film not only has an economic impact on the official channels relating to distribution and exhibition, but also, there is also evidence of the cultural impact in the continued development of film culture in parts of the world that would otherwise not be exposed to a plethora of films, both foreign and domestic. Lobato comments,

> In these low-value markets, profit margins are so slim that established distributors do not bother competing, so this particular system of informal distribution works to fill gaps in the market and facilitate film cultures that would not other wise exist. It is an off-the-books industry that does not show up in indexes of global film trade. (Lobato 2012, p.15)

Nollywood, is good example of an alternative film distribution model that has used the Black Market to develop a substantial industry that outputs an increasingly high volume of films per year. This distribution accommodates a large national and pan-African audience and bridges the gap that has arisen due to socio-economic limitations and cultivates cultural capital and an independent Black African film industry.

Although the informal distribution via piracy has a much broader reach, this illicit activity destabilises the sanctioned above-ground film market, inevitably affecting investors and film makers, which haemorrhage huge losses to this off-the-book industry. There are legitimate distribution models that have made efforts to provide more access to movies online; however, adhering to the legislation of the official channels means they cannot compete with the reach of the informal distribution models. Lordanova comments, 'Legitimate on-line distribution ventures such as Jaman currently compete against illegal BitTorrent websites and P2P downloading that do not have universal rights restrictions and don't incur the costs of rights acquisition' (Lordanova 2012, p.138).

Jaman, Amazon, Apple, Disney All Access and Netflix all provide a legitimate service using an online distribution model, which allows users to stream download and purchase films via the web. However, all of the above platforms must negotiate distribution rights to provide access in particular territories around the world and ensure their budgets can purchase the latest titles as well as an archive of older movies. Informal distribution models, such as BitTorrent, Losmovies, Putlocker and ShowBox, circumvent copyright laws. As video-hosting sites, they are obliged to take-down content when asked to; however, this does not stop users uploading new links. As mentioned before, like YouTube, these sites are supported by legitimate advertising due the amount of traffic to these informal sites. The tactic here is a further subversion of the YouTube model; these sites use formal activity inside an informal platform which is the opposite of the YouTube model, as it involves the formal taking advantage of the informal.

The black market facilitates different levels of economic activity, some more illicit than others. It is in response to restrictions by the white market and is a label given by those who do not use it. We used to say, "We ain't criminals - just criminal minded," which was as a result of circumstances and the way in which we were positioned in order to survive. Vankatesh argues,

> The result is a dense, remarkable, and intricate web. It is very difficult to see, unless you know where to look. And it is constantly changing. Indeed, the only thing constant about it is change, as it is a product of perpetual negotiations, of collusion and compromise, of the constant struggle to survive to find a purpose for your life, to fulfil your desires, to feed your family. (Vankatesh 2006, prologue xix)

The connotation and denotation of the phrase or label 'the black market' and the title of this research project are intrinsically linked. Black British sub-culture has an underground production of exchange that falls off the radar of common usage; however, elements of this activity continue to feed generic popular culture, feeding in turn the 'free market', which repackages this exchange for economic gain (exploited) and claim. However, most of this

movement is unobserved and only partially recorded (not by us and seldom for us (not FUBU)). In this practice-led research, I am interested in looking at the black market in relation to Black British film making, and examining the historical production of funded and unfunded Black British filmmaking. I aim to make a contribution to this limited archive, and pursue my goal to continue to grow as a filmmaker and develop a career in the film industry.

Chapter 3 Black British Filmmaking

3. 1 THE TERM

Before initiating a discussion on Black British filmmaking, it is important first to define the term. Black British filmmaking is the process/activity of making films by directors of a marginalised diaspora; their original heritage and culture derives from native lands of Africa and/or the Caribbean. The term must be separated into two classifications; one denotes identity, the other nationality of the film. When we discuss the origin or nationality of a film, there are several factors to consider: production, crew, cast, and story. Filmmaking is subject to multiple variables within the three phases of film production, namely, pre-production, production, and post-production. Fifty percent of the elements of production must derive from work completed in the UK for a film to be recognised and affiliated as a British film. This is in accordance with the "Golden Points" rule from the BFI, which are funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport[9] in accordance with the British Film Certification Schedule 1. However, this is a fluid concept, as a film can be financed, written, conducted, and performed by person(s) from different nationalities. Furthermore, when you begin to factor in diaspora, it prefixes the national identify of the film.

An example of this is *12 Years a Slave,* Steve McQueen, a Black British director of Caribbean descent, Solomon Northup, an African American writer; and a mixture of American and British cast and producers. The positioning of this film comes down to financing: this film is American, but the filmmaking process is authored by the chief engineer within the discipline of the art form, so I would argue that this is Black British filmmaking in America. Black British filmmaking is not restricted to Black representation' The prefix of 'Black' merely highlights the hegemony of the dominant ideology within film discourse, which is interchangeable with other differentiations, for example, Asian, female, LGBT, disabled etc.. Therefore, anything within cinema without this prefix is indubitably white. According to Mercer, 'To become filmmakers Black artists globally start from the standpoint of resistance, no matter the culture they work in. That is why the term Black filmmaker signifies something different from the simple word filmmaker' (Hooks 1996, p.71).

Although these differentiations segregate the art form, race encapsulates the politics around sexuality, religion, culture and social economics. The subject matter of a film can be specific to a particular genre/style, but is not limited to it. For an artist, self-expression provides free licence; it should be considered 'filmmaking' in its purest form, allowing the filmmaker to make films based on the influences and experiences of his or her environment.

[9] British Film Certification Schedule 1 to the Films Act 1985 Cultural Test Guidance Notes for prospective applicants to understand the requirements for certification as a British Film

For a film to qualify as an authentic Black British film, it must have Black images and a Black protagonist conveying a story central to the main character is a Black film. However, Black films are not always conveying images of resistance; it depends on the ideas or positioning of the filmmaker. Some Black filmmakers just want to make films without feeling responsible for images of counter expression, e.g., Antoine Faqua (*Southpaw* 2015) or F. Gary Gray (*Law Abiding Citizen* 2009) and John Singleton (*2 Fast 2 Furious* 2003). Other Black filmmakers appear to have no inclination to assume this burden and instead make films, which, historically, use traditional techniques, thus further reinforcing the stereotypes. This is different from Black filmmaking, which I refer to in my earlier example of *12 Years a Slave*.

Classifications like Black British film place no restrictions regarding who engineered the film, i.e., those of that race; however, this brings into question the film's authenticity. That is not to say that a film cannot be made about the Black experience from someone who is not black - in fact, what it should do is provide fresh perspectives - but, it raises questions around credibility based on re-presentation, and regarding how much of the aesthetic is based on stereotypes of the dominant ideology or research from primary sources to inform the verity within the film's content.

> These images are usually stereotypical. Until both colonizer and colonized decolonize their minds, audiences in white supremacist cultures will have difficulty "seeing" and understanding images of blackness that do not conform to the stereotype. (Hooks 2012, p.90)

I am particularly interested in looking at Black British filmmaking in line with my trajectory of 1975 - to date; however, there is an indirect relationship between my films and the films that have been made by other Black filmmakers from the UK and further afield prior to 1975 which, although it feels like an innate connection, really just demonstrates that the same issue(s) still echo through the temporality of an unanswered, unresolved discourse and makes a minimal contribution to Black representation. To demonstrate this continual struggle, the trend goes back to Ngakane's *Jemima and Johnny* (1966).

The film *Jemima and Johnny* focuses attention on the story, which inadvertently provides a statement on social unrest. However, this film has to be considered within the context of the time it was made. *Jemima and Johnny* is a story about a native English boy who forms a friendship with a Jamaican girl who has just arrived in England. Their adventure depicts Johnny showing Jemima a day in Johnny's life and the kind of things he gets up to, such as buying chips, riding the 'rag and bone' cart, and listening to music in his little hideaway. The film looks at how children play with each other irrespective of colour or difference and comments on the idea that racism is nurtured by propaganda and ignorance. *Jemima and*

Johnny communicates the statement that we can all get along using clear and concise storytelling and feels like a message to the natives of England. According to Malik,

> Aspiring black filmmakers found it virtually impossible to organize independently, given the comparatively expensive nature of the medium... Since these films were virtually self financed by single filmmakers (with the exception of *Ten Bob in Winter* which was funded by the BFI), they had no immediate dependency on or relationship with other cultural institutions, although this too ensured that they remained further marginalized in terms of exhibition and general support, thus operated on the sidelines of both mainstream and independent film and television practice. (Malik 2002, p.159)

As an independently funded low budget film, not only were the production values low, but access to equipment was scarce and expensive. Ngakane overcame these obstacles to make a film relevant to social feeling around integration in the 1960s.

3. 2 *PRESSURE* AND *BURNING AN ILLUSION*

A film that is socially and historically important on its commentary alone as well as being the first Black British feature is Ove's 1975 film *Pressure*. The narrative centres on Black British Caribbean characters and the inbetweenness they feel and experience: 'The film sets out to 'depathologise' Black British experience by examining the notion of 'Black Britishness' itself... a critique of British multiculturalism and institutionalised race relations' (Pines 2005, p.180).

Tony's character conveys the struggle with acknowledgement of his identity as born in Britain versus Ove's portrayal of how he is seen. The film focuses on Tony's inability to assimilate into and to be accepted by his peers and his country. In an interview with Galeforce TV, Ove talks about his influences of realist and surrealist Italian cinema, which are evident in the film. In an abstract surreal sequence, Tony approaches a stately home that denotes the establishment. In a scene inside the stately home, we see Tony naked in a large room, approaching a bed with a knife. He stabs repeatedly at what turns out to be a pig in satin sheets. This conveys Tony's feeling towards his destabilised position against the establishment and the inability to affect change around the politics of Black identity conveying no resolution; it is further underlined by a flimsy demonstration being battered by rain at the end. Ove recounts:

> I tried several television companies to help me make the film, and they all backed out: nobody wanted to know: they thought I was crazy. But, at the BFI, they offered me some money - not a lot of money – to go ahead try and do it. (GaleforceTV 2010)

The film is detailed in its representation of Tony's experience following the narrative structures expected of a drama-documentary, as discussed by Rollinson:

> Drama documentary has been one of film and television's most popular, but also most controversial, forms. Film and programme makers are attracted to its combination of the languages of drama and documentary either to dramatise research, thereby stimulating interest in issues through empathy with characters and narrative, or to apply documentary style to fictional content, thereby enhancing its immediacy. (Rollinson n.d.)

It is used here to narrate the statement of the experience relevant for the time. To lead with story instead of using docu-drama would have made the Black social realism less impactful: 'The crisis of narrative resolution in *Pressure* should not be attributed to its author; on the contrary, it must be read as symptomatic of a heroic, but compromised, struggle with the master-narrative of race relations discourse' (Mercer 1994, p.84).

Ove also comments on the difficulty in getting his film broadcast: 'It was banned for two years by the government after completion for fear of racial backlash because it was dealing with the real world. No one was ready to expose themselves.' (GaleforceTV 2010) Ove then goes on to conclude, 'The same things are still happening today.' (Ibid.)

In *Burning an Illusion*, Shabazz addresses Black women and their positioning within British society against their Black male counterparts: '*Burning an Illusion* focuses instead on relationships within black communities, especially those between men and women thus the notion of black identity is defined from within the context of a black community' (Pines 2005, p.180).

Pat (Cassie McFarlane) is independent with aspirations to 'fit-in' and get ahead. Shabazz juxtaposes the limitations of Black access and the illusion of it: even if you try to assimilate, you are essentially taking part in a game that is designed so that you cannot succeed. By allowing the female protagonist to narrate the story, Shabazz not only navigates the narrative, but also gives her and Black women of the time a voice. According to Mercer,

> *Burning an Illusion*... signalled growing institutional recognition of Black filmmaking within the terms of "multicultural" funding policy. Yet although this recognition drew black writers and directors into the remit of the independent sector, marking an advance from the earlier period, the time interval between BFI productions and the comparatively modest budgets of the films themselves suggest that, even within the framework of "official" multiculturalism, Black film remained marginal in relation to the

general growth of the independent and avant-garde sector during the 1970s. (Mercer 1994, pp.76-77)

In an interview, Shabazz talked to Ishmahil Blagrove Jr about the film costing £80,000, which was provided by the BFI. However, despite making such a successful film about the Black experience, Shabazz was unable to get other projects commissioned,(Blagrove 2007) which underlines a marginal relationship preventing the progression and the evolution of a Black British film language. If these Black filmmakers were supported the same as white filmmakers, the subject and issues within their films would have developed organically to look at Black life in Britain, perhaps not being centred on racism but focusing on more universal stories with fresh perspectives and innovation in filmmaking.

As complex as Pat's character is in *Burning an Illusion,* the narration brings clarity to how the audience should feel based on the motivation of a particular scene. More than a story, the narrative is based on a statement dramatizing the social political issues of the time from a Black female perspective.

3. 3 *YOUNG SOUL REBELS*

Young Soul Rebels, directed by Isaac Julian (1991), attempts to drive the film using story, not just examining the issues around race through the filter of Black male sexuality. Two friends, Chris (Valentine Nonyela), who is mixed race, and Caz (Mo Sesay), who is Black, run a pirate radio station playing soul/funk music in East London. Chris is framed for the murder of a young gay Black man found dead in a park.

The main story is overshadowed by the sub story of Cass dealing with his rejection from both the Black and white community because of his sexuality, and Chris being rejected because he is mixed race. The film comments on the political unrest around racial, social, and sexual marginality, juxtaposed against the liberal attitudes of youth culture within the punk and soul scene and the homophobic attitudes of nationalism. Race is a backdrop, while homosexuality and its commentary seem to form the main theme at the forefront as a political statement. *Young Soul Rebels* as a Black film also highlights a specific issue, and it initiated a dialogue around social identity that is not representation and identity within the context of how I am using the term. Black British filmmaking is being created here but Julian is widening the parameter of the discipline using story and narrative structure to represent the Black homosexual experience, and in my opinion, it is more statement than fable. However, it is a reminder that Black representation cannot be looked at in absolutes; there is more to Black representation than just being Black - it is part of a larger landscape that all humans traverse, that is, life itself.

> The way in which a transgressive politics in one domain is constantly sutured and stabilised by reactionary or unexplained politics in another is only to be explained by this continuous cross-dislocation of one identity by another, one structure by another. Dominant ethnicities are always underpinned by particular sexual economy, a particular figured masculinity, a particular class identity. There is no guarantee, in reaching for an essentialised racial identity of which we think we can be certain, that it will always turn out to be mutually liberating and progressive on all other dimensions. (Hall 1996, p.465)

The main cast are Black, and they are set within a world that photographs elements of Black life, but the undertone is extremely subjective, drawing the viewer's attention to the issues the filmmaker wants to discuss and looking at a provocative issue of the time, which is not specific to anyone, race. In doing so, this film could also be categorised as LGBT.

Julian's film similarly offers an optimistic resolution. When Chris plays the tape proving that he was not involved in the murder, it seems to dissolve the police's initial accusation through narrative structure, a signifier of the further marginalisation that sexuality can bring. The difficulty with the small canon of Black British films that exist is that because Black filmmaking as an independent art form has such a minimal recognition and support, Julian's film bears the pressure of representing a varied demographic.

3. 4 *BABYLON*

I use *Babylon* as an example to refer back to my earlier comment on the difference between Black British filmmaking and a Black British film about the Black experience. During an interview with Cullen in *the Independent* online (2010), Rosso draws on his own experiences of alienation as an Italian immigrant. He talks about being vilified because of constant headlines about the Messina brothers and their prostitution ring, which tarnished Italian women as prostitutes. This led to fights at school to protect his mothers' honour; as a result, Rosso empathised with the persecution of Black people in Britain. (Cullen 2010, *Independent*)

Rosso's experience of working on previous films relating to Black diaspora also helped to shape his approach to making Black British films. Rosso directed *Dread Beat an' Blood*, (1979), a documentary on Linton Kwesi Johnson renowned for his subversive use of the English dialect to root his political commentary central to the diaspora and its subsequent generations living in Britain. He also edited Ove's television documentary *Reggae* (1971); the exposure to Reggae music of the time was symptomatic of the issues that this diaspora faced. In addition, the content of Linton Kwesi Johnson's poetry provides an insight into the struggles of the Black experience in Britain, highlighting the racial discrimination and harassment the marginalised were subjected to. In the same interview, Rosso also recounts,

> It was a lot easier for us than West Indians or Indians or any people of colour, because we were white so you could in fact hide and disappear into the background. If you kept quiet, nobody knew. (Cullen 2010)

The multiculturalism and in-betweenness of diaspora, although the same, allows European immigrants the ability to blend in or assimilate without any obvious difference. Rosso also directed *Forty Minutes – Struggle for Stonebridge* (1986). His exposure to these productions and his experience are combined, providing primary sources that undoubtedly shaped his approach to *Babylon*. The story is about a group of Black men and it focuses mainly on Blue (Brinsley Forde), a young Black man gaining maturity within a patriarchal family dynamic. His unfair treatment as a Black, blue-collar worker results in him losing his job, and the racism leads to him stabbing a white man. This is offset by his DJing on his sound system, the platform the Black community uses as a communal space to come together. Similarly to Isaac Julian's *Young Soul Rebels*, the film also looks at the homophobic attitudes of the Black community at the time. Blue is kicked out of the family home and is hanging around with some of his other friends, who rob and assault homosexuals. When Blue makes a stand, saying that he does not agree with what they are doing, his friends reject him. Rosso centres the film on Blue's story with the sub story of the sound system and racial treatment by the natives and the police. The film employs a social realism approach. Although it represents

part of the Black male experience, once again, we succumb to a blanket approach to the representation of Black men shrouded in stereotypical nuances within the gaze of the dominant cinema's approach to what was expected in the 1980s, as there was no alternative representation within the same time period, another indication that the canon of films is too minimal.

The primary sources used to produce *Babylon* are experiences within a time frame, and although authentic, they differ from observed and lived experiences. In light of the demand for more Black British filmmaking at that time, I would have assumed Ove would have been better suited to make this film, having already made *Pressure*, and would perhaps be less likely to fall victim to certain presumptions associated with Black British characterisation. *Babylon* informs my own work, taking into account Black British films and Black British filmmaking. As a contemporary filmmaker of the present generation, I am very conscious of the coding used to communicate a story and the characters in agreement with Mercer: 'Certain aesthetic qualities generated by self-consciously cinematic strategies at work in new forms of black filmmaking today, however, indicate significant shifts and critical differences in attitudes to the means of representation' (Mercer 1994, p.53).

Black filmmaking is affected within the framework and development of film language predicated on the dominant aesthetic of white supremacy and on how it has coded the communication of how Black images are presented and conceived. This is similar to the subsequent impact of the male gaze, discussed at length by Laura Mulvey in her seminal text *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975). She discusses how the language of cinema is codified to represent the male character as the agent of the narrative and the female characters for their to-be-looked-at-ness and how this influences the way in which female filmmakers subconsciously position women under the male gaze within their films based on their initial positioning within film language. Black filmmakers reproduce images that fall in line with the fleeting stereotypes we are accustomed to seeing as diaspora imagined. Alternate images would be harder to accept as a truer depiction of the representation of Black images addressing the political issues around race.

All the films mentioned above were and are vitally important in providing an alternate voice and in initiating a counter-discourse that refutes political ideas and depictions of diaspora communities. Any subconscious appropriation can be forgiven in the dawn of conception. The use of social realism was important to acknowledge that these stories stem from real issues around Black life in a British space. However, a trend in all these films is the imbalance of story and statement, leaning towards statement, which I believe makes the narrative harder to recount. The films that are the most memorable are those with a strong story.

> Stan Brakhage uses the phrase "aesthetic ecology" to articulate his belief that there must be a delicate balance between showing conscious concern for the political in artistic production and allowing an unfettered expression of artistry to emerge..."be very careful not to allow social and political impulses to dominate" his or her work, because that would "falsify the balance that are intrinsic and necessary to make an aesthetic ecology. (Hooks 1996, p.88)

It is a starting point to reference Black British cinema, which although it carries the burden of representation, lays the foundation for the contribution to an archive of work to grow and evolve from being just shrouded in political commentary. These pioneers inform both my research and my filmmaking, and, as mentioned earlier, the innate connection my work has with feeling the need to comment on relative struggles within the context of my trajectory reflects an on-going conversation on Black representation, a fertile ground for new images, whether they are images of resistance or just Black creativity.

3. 5 *HANDSWORTH SONGS*

When discussing Black British filmmaking from a documentary perspective, *Handsworth Songs* is a prime example of addressing Black issues in context. The hybridised modes of documentary address the issue around race relations, discrimination, and police brutality, shedding light on the matter following the riots of 1981 in Toxteth and Brixton. During a Q&A at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in December 2013, Lina Gopaul and John Akomfrah discussed the 1981 Black Audio Film Collective, which wanted to react to the social unrest, but at that time, lacked the necessary equipment. Indeed, it was not until 1985 that they had access to equipment that enabled them to address and archive those important events, which are still relevant today. Akomfrah and the collective provided a voice for Black and Asian diasporas, expressing the feelings towards the injustices they faced. A closer examination of the modes of documentary used show how the mixing of observational, reflexive, and poetic modes of documentary filmmaking provide a subversive narrative commentary on the action of the police, the reaction and causality of the community, and their attitudes towards their treatment. Akomfrah provides a platform for these voices to be heard and represented, a counter-discourse which also reflects inwards to show how frustrations became internalised. The backlash here is that the environments that are destroyed are the environments the marginalised depend upon so that they are not burning and smashing cars and properties of the [establishment], and the destruction of their environment further fractures their own communities.

The film provides many accounts surrounding issues relating to Brixton and Toxteth, with both communities reinforcing being heard, using repetition and sound to emphasise not being heard or represented. Akomfrah and Trevor Mathison, have worked together on all projects

in the Black Audio Film Collective and beyond; a career spanning thirty years has led them to develop their own unique approach to sound. In an interview for '*Sound and Music*' with Daniel Trilling, Akomfrah discusses his interest in sound, specifically, manipulating non-digetic and digetic forms to construct a specific significance to the images and narrative. Akomfrah comments,

> We're both very interested in noise, for want of a better word: what Trevor at one point called the "post-soul noise". These are sounds that take their cue from pre-existing black musics, be it dub or funk, but they've been defamiliarised, put through a sonic box that renders them strange and unusual. (Trilling n.d.)

In the film, still photography from Burke's archive of Caribbean life in Britain[10], poetry, and powerful positive images of Blacks in Britain are juxtaposed against archive newsreel footage of police brutality subverted by unconventional restructuring to form a multi-layered narrative. Victims' accounts of racial harassment re-present these issues with the voices not normally heard. Winston describes it as follows: 'This has elements of both journey and time but nevertheless does not produce a coherent narrative. It stands, then, as a demonstration that structure in the documentary is by no means an automatic result of simply assembling sequences (Winston 1995, p.109).'

In-comparison, footage of a subsequent televised debate from the *TV Eye* documentary series arranges and re-presents the same stories differently. Although controversial and unorthodox in making the statement, jumping back and forth from the Midlands to London underlines a national problem.

The narrative expertly fuels the debate, providing an objective look into marginalised diaspora. Thus, the film provides a two-way perspective: how the diaspora reflects on what is going on internally and how it is treated externally. The veracity comes from the filmmaking process, with Black issues being filmed by Black people responding to what is happening within British society. Within this framework, the film states its argument, demonstrates its findings, and concludes what needs to be done and/or has not been done as a resolution. The film was made as part of a Channel 4 series *Britain: The Lie of the Land* (Fisher 2015, www.bfi.org.uk).

Akomfrah also challenges the way documentaries are made, commenting on the art itself. The film is still relevant today because the same issues/concerns around police brutality and the unexplained deaths in custody remain, causing community unrest and distrust of the policing of marginalised communities in Britain:

[10] Boy with a Flag is one of Vanley Burke's images that featured in *Handsworth Songs*

> By adopting a neutral or instrumental relation to the means of representation, this mode of Black film practice seeks to redefine referential realities of race through the same codes and forms as the prevailing film language whose discourse of racism it aims to contest (Mercer 1994, p.90)

At the Q&A at MIT (Dec 2013), Lina Gopaul and John Akomfrah were invited to show two of their films: *Handsworth Songs* and *The Nine Muses* (Akomfrah 2010). In the session, they discuss being approached by a number of organisations and institutes and being asked to respond to the 2011 UK riots by making a film. Akomfrah's position was as follows: 'We will not make another film about social unrest unless it involves our generation... The likelihood of fifty-something's taking to the streets is extremely remote.' (MITvideo 2013)

What was all too familiar about the 2011 social unrest was that it was a reaction to the police killing of a Black man, a detail overlooked or omitted in later reporting and commentary on the riots. This oversight by the neoliberal handwringing press is surely a more troubling point than the riots themselves. *Handsworth Songs* was resolute in looking at and critiquing the issues around the riots of 1985, opening a discourse highlighting the issues, and yet the same problems have not been resolved thirty years on. In essence, this feels like a more reactionary and conservative climate.

Looking at my own films in relation to the films mentioned above indicates that Black British filmmaking is discussing some of the same issues, but also informs my own film making practices.

Lose to Win (Osborne 2009), my undergraduate film, centres on a bike race and the relationship between a young Black boy and a white girl who live on the same road. The commentary is not dissimilar to *Jemima and Johnny,* with the same commentary on race relations, which is secondary to the story and narrative.

Lose to Win is set in a relatively contemporary setting in the wake of the frustrations of the 1950s and 1960s. With the different races having learnt how to live together, the film underlines even further that there is no difference; the children who ride bikes up and down the road are a mixture of Blacks and whites. A poignant scene is when Shaun's mother asks him to get some vinegar from the shop, and the little white girl offers to go in his place so he can be in the race. The little girl asks if the mother wants 'black or white' vinegar, and Shaun's mother says, "It does not matter", an indirect comment on race, attempting to emphasise that there is no difference: we are essentially the same. However, this commentary is secondary to the story. The focus is on the story, which can then be supported by a socially significant commentary.

The barbershop scene in *Young Soul Rebels* is very similar to my undergraduate short *A Cut Above* (Osborne 2007). Chris has his haircut while two children sit and wait, and Julian uses cutaways of pictures on the wall. The barbershop is a communal space with images of Blackness and resistance. The scene opens with a montage of portraits of Muhammad Ali and Dr Martin Luther King, juxtaposing achievement and struggle. Chris communicates in patois, demonstrating his ability to still connect with his diaspora as well as converse in his normal cockney English of the East End, thus conveying his in-betweenness.

I have used a similar sequence to comment on an environment that continues to use these images, which denote Black achievement and identity, at undergraduate level, with *A Cut Above* and as part of this doctoral project, with *Aya-Pharell's Haircut*. This film conveys an alternative approach to identity as part of popular culture. My son leaves the house with an Afro, a hairstyle iconic to Blackness, to be proud of who you are ['Shout it out loud... I'm Black and I'm proud'] of the 1960s in America crossing the Atlantic to influence Black British culture. Indeed, as a child aged 8, the same age as Pharell, I had an Afro and so continued the tradition.

My son, influenced by popular culture, wanted a Mohican, a style that had also made the journey across from the States as a style, but which had a distinctly British resonance in my youth as a punk hairstyle. My son was unaware that the hairstyle he had chosen was a step further in non-conformity; in another image we see within *Young Soul Rebels*, Julian uses pictures of punks with anti-authoritarian attitudes, which consistently challenge the backdrop of the Queen's Jubilee, nationalism, and conformity. Julian not only looks at the issues that are directly linked to the main characters, but also contextualises their trajectory with current affairs that affect other sections of youth culture and that have been influenced by music from the marginalised diaspora of the Caribbean.

Skinheads on the Beach (Osborne 2013) looks at the influence of reggae music on inherent British culture and considers how this cultural form of expression connects with other parts of Europe through fashion and style. The influence from across the Atlantic is further underlined by the fashion Chris and Caz wear in *Young Soul Rebels*: American baseball tops and brighter colours. These characters are third generation British Caribbean; they have the ability to operate in both Caribbean and English within British spaces, but in honing their own identity, they embrace something new – arguably, Black-postmodernism.

> Black Britain defines itself crucially as part of a diaspora. Its unique cultures draw inspiration from those developed by Black populations elsewhere. In particular, the culture and politics of black America and the Caribbean have become raw materials for the creative processes which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to

distinctively British experiences meanings. Black culture is actively made and re-made. (Gilroy 1995, p.154)

Both Sides of the Coin is a short drama film that forms part of this research project; the characters and narrative were developed from my own experience and that of the young actors with whom I had been developing the comedy series *MOTW*, which forms a significant part of this research project.

The issue at the centre of this film is geographical rivalries in inner cities, or as the media brand it, postcode wars. This is a social issue; it is not specific to Black Britons but affects the wider youth culture within contemporary London. The film is about Andrew (Joivan Wade) who lives in north London and goes to see his girlfriend in south London. He gets lost on his way home through her estate but the outcome, although considered subjective, avoids the stereotypes associated with this section of London youth culture and the postcode wars. The narrative resolution sees the characters resolve their disagreements cordially rather than resorting to mindless violence. This refusal to pay off the stereotype and instead to offer potential for progression and reconciliation in recognition of similarities rather than be provoked into divisive typecasting is hopeful and political in its message.

Akomfrah's approach to Black representation informs my documentary filmmaking. *Mama's Mint Ball* uses the reflexive approach to a Black woman's life experience and the progression from child, to woman, wife, mother, grandmother and, finally, great grandmother, providing a voice with historical significance relating to the beginnings of my personal trajectory. The modes used here are expository, interactive and poetic. According to Nicholls, 'Modes represent different concepts of historical representation. They may coexist at any moment in time (synchronically) but the appearance of a new mode results from challenge and contestation in relation to the previous mode' (Nichols 1991, p.23).

My grandmother, the subject of the film, knows me better than I know myself; we talk at length, and the camera in the room quickly becomes irrelevant. We discuss her trajectory, and as the camera disappears, my grandmother interacts with [the filmmaker] me more than I with [subject] her. The use of the 'talking head' approach served well to obtain this rich history from the 1930s. Music facilitates my admiration for the 'subject' and the relationship. This film, produced at the beginning of the research project, informed my methodology of shooting archive footage and was effectively the rehearsal for shooting documentaries in longer formats leading to the feature documentary *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*, which mixes observational, expository, interactive and poetic modes in examining the logistics involved in sound systems gearing up and setting up to play the 2013 two day Notting Hill Carnival. The process at each stage forced a change in the mode of representation in order to document the subject in depth. An archive of weekly interviews with Gladdy was collected

over the duration of two years, providing the opportunity to discuss sound systems and their role in British culture in a depth that would not have been possible in a single interview. This in turn reflected the importance of the sound system as a platform for Black Caribbean culture in a British space, and ultimately, allowed the practical and theoretical application of the sound system as the model for my filmmaking and its distribution and development.

> In terms of "syncretic" forms of cultural expression specific to diaspora conditions of fragmentation and displacement. And, without constructing a monologic opposition between the old and the new in Black filmmaking it is precisely the variety and diversity of representational strategies in contemporary practices that begins to critically dismantle the burden of representation. (Mercer 1994, p.90)

The poetic mode made it possible to incorporate romanticised shots of Jamaican landscapes in *Mama's Mint Ball* and slow motion provided artistic expression with an additional layer of emotion to still photography, moving image, and sound.

Akomfrah's unique ways of conveying a point of counter-reference underlined the importance of being heard. What is concerning is that I was not aware of the Black Audio Film Collective until I attended university. These films, which were giving a voice to the Black community, seem to still have been muted and restricted from general consumption.

Relating to my research, it is important to provide a voice within all my work. Black British filmmaking has such a limited archive that the imperative is to ensure that my experiences as filmmaker and the subjects of my documentaries *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* and *Mama's Mint Ball* contribute to Black British filmmaking by providing an alternate voice and perspective to the dominant voices of mainstream cinema. However, they must be made accessible, and new platforms like YouTube are facilitating distribution and allowing these voices to be heard.

Learning from what has been done by the pioneers of Black British film making on Black representation, the commentary on political issues that affect marginalised diasporas, in particular the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, inspires how I contribute to this limited archive. Black British filmmaking since the 1960s has been inextricably concerned with the politics around race and the positioning of marginalised diaspora within Britain. The prefix of 'Black', as mentioned before, does not just differentiate one race from another, but also identifies a political stance which is centred on 'representation' primarily and on 'Black creativity' secondarily. Hall comments:

> I do believe that these repertoires of black popular culture, which since we were excluded from the cultural mainstream were often the only performative spaces we had

> left, were over-determined from at least two directions: they were partly determined from their inheritances; but they were also critically determined by the diasporic conditions in which the connections were forged. (Hall 1996, p.471)

The critique of these films is inexorably political, always looking first at race then at the sub-classifications that affect the human condition in a larger context of the marginalised diasporas living within the framework of British society. The films of the canon look at the relationship between the natives of Britain and the diaspora, Black male representation and sexuality, female representation, the assimilation of sound system culture, and the second and third generation British Caribbean's dealing with the in-betweenness of two cultures and one origin. I have drawn on these examples in relation to my own research and my contribution to this archive of Black British filmmaking, learning from what has been done in the past and how this connects to my work and relating to new approaches to representation within the art form, an art from that is less concerned with the politics of race than with universal stories from a new perspective that resist stereotypes normally connected with images of Blackness.

Some Black filmmakers essentially want to work within the industry without carrying the burden that is associated with always being identified as a Black filmmaker [like myself] but more as a filmmaker. What I have observed during my research is that those filmmakers, like Akomfrah and Shabazz, who use the imaging of blackness in resistance to the established stereotype, do not have a sustained longevity within the mainstream industry, but instead are tarnished by the political undertones of the prefix before filmmaking. They become labelled as a particular type of filmmaker and then work only around the subject matter of Blackness.

In recent years, there have been more films made around subject matters that have been influenced by Black culture, such as *Kidulthood* (Huda 2006) and *Bullet Boy* (Dibb 2004). The majority of these films highlight a negative element, which is centred on youth culture that uses a vernacular that comes from Black British Caribbean culture. There are also those that appropriate the culture and replace central characters that you would expect to be Black with white protagonists; however, the antagonists still remain Black e.g. Giwa and Pasquini's *StreetDance 3D* (2010). This is extremely one-dimensional and, again, perpetuates a particular image of Black British culture Both Black and non-Black filmmakers makes these films, which adhere to the aesthetic stereotypes mentioned earlier and so solidify structural racism. This observation also makes me consider why Black British filmmakers have not had the same impact as their contemporaries in music and fashion. Why are there no breakthrough Black British directors like Spike Lee, John Singleton, Antoine Fuqua, F. Gary Gray, etc. to cultivate the audience for Black British film?

There is little support for or interest in funding Black British creativity in filmmaking, which in the past only seemed to be reactionary. According to Mercer,

> The 1981 events had the symbolic effect of marking a break with consensus politics of multiculturalism and announced a new phase of crisis management in British race relations...the need to be seen to be doing something-was a major aspect of the benevolent gestures of many public institutions, now hurriedly redistributing funding to black projects (Mercer 1994, p.77)

Mercer reflects on institutions reacting based on social unrest and calls for more representation. The films that I discuss were funded on minimal budgets with limited distribution. In an interview with Stephen Bourne (2001), Corinne Skinner-Carter, who acted in *Pressure and Burning an Illusion,* comments,

> Those two films were made by the British Film Institute and they never gave them a chance. They did not promote them properly...it's frustrating because we do good work, and it's not promoted. Nothing happens... Without that it will be difficult for black film-makers to find work in the mainstream. (Bourne 2001, p.237)

In terms of access, I only became aware of some of the films discussed in my research due to my studies at university level. The films seem to lack any crossover appeal, which unfortunately supersedes content, in that Black British filmmakers must be economically viable. This can only be achieved by developing storytelling, which does not consume itself with representation of self. Bourne comments on what Ove has said:

> People don't talk to black film-makers about technique. They talk about politics. But I don't think black people have to only make films about politics. White people can make films about anything or anyone, of any race. There are different audiences within the black community. (Bourne 2001, p.205)

McQueen has managed to provide cross-over appeal winning 85 awards including an Oscar and 76 nominations (IMBD) for *12 Years a Slave, Shame*, and *Hunger.* He has built an international reputation on *Hunger,* which confirmed his status as a filmmaker to secure future funding. However, he is still not prolific as a Black British filmmaker in terms of continuing to nurture and cultivate Black British cinema, although perhaps his approach to not highlighting his prefix of 'Black' before 'director' or 'filmmaker' has favoured him in winning work without the political undertone. Directors Spike Lee and John Singleton have had international success addressing African American social issues, as the appeal of Black American popular culture relating to fashion and music has always resonated with Black Britons starved of any representation in the UK. Hall argues, 'United States, American mainstream popular culture has always involved certain traditions that could only be attributed to black cultural vernacular traditions' (Hall 1996, p.466).

We consume images of Blackness whether they are positive or negative. Nonetheless, even they currently struggle to make films in Hollywood. In conclusion, I stand firm in being recognised as a filmmaker or director not by denying my identity but by actually embracing it, and I demand acknowledgment in the application of this art form. What must also be considered is that British cinema in general is extremely small in terms of cross-over appeal and the making good films, which makes Black British filmmaking even harder to be commissioned.

Chapter 4 Sound System Model

4. 1. Background to Sound System

Sound system culture has been in the UK since the early 1950s. Duke Vin is hailed as the first Caribbean from Jamaica to establish a sound system in the UK. The particular period I am concerned with is from the mid-1980s to 2000, in which sound systems played an active part in my life. The music had already evolved since Duke Vin, known for playing Ska, the father of Reggae and RnB from the 1950s. A sound system was the audio landscape that connected the space I lived in with my culture as second-generation British Caribbean. Sound system culture provided a platform for the Black community to identify with and hear voices they could relate to and so maintain a connection with native cultural traditions. Henry explains:

> To recognise the validity of these musical modes of expression, which in fact represent a counter culture that is intrinsic to psychological wellbeing of the black down pressed. Moreover it is the history of resistance against the imposition of European values on non European peoples that is often the commonality between the supposedly diverse experiences of non white peoples, as expressed in that which we term 'black music.' (Henry 2006, p.91)

Growing up within the society that did not accommodate any forms of Black expression also made it difficult to assimilate into a native culture that seemed to concern itself with keeping the marginalised, marginalised.

Sound system culture was important in conveying our own predicaments with more specificity over the 'version' - the 'B' side of a record, which was an instrumental, allowing DJs to voice their opinions, offering a current commentary on the same rhythms.

> Sound system culture redefines meaning of the term performance by separating the input of the artists who originally made the recording from the equally important work of those who adapt and rework it so that it directly expresses the moment in which it is being consumed. (Gilroy 1995, p.165)

The music that sound systems started to play has suffered a similar fate to the commercialisation of hip-hop, in that it became more about consumerism and bravado and less about revolution and struggle. Sound systems' only sanctioned appearances in the mainstream remain the Notting Hill Carnival and, recently, the One Love festival (beginning in 2008). Gladdy Wax has had a sound system at the Notting Hill Carnival since 1989 and has witnessed the shift from a community event to a more commercial and heavily policed affair.

4. 2 GLADDY WAX: Sound System Icon

The significance of sound system culture in my own history and its inspiration for my work and trajectory, and the oral history element of a largely undocumented culture, demanded an in-depth case study for this research project. *Duke Vin and the Birth of Ska* (Berger 2008) is executed well, but again, the vastness of all the interviews demonstrates a plethora of individual stories that could all merit a documentary in themselves. When I spoke to Berger via email, he stated that he, too, had interviewed Gladdy Wax, but the interview never made it into his film.

From my first year of this research project, I have amassed an archive of over 160 hours of footage and interviews on the subject of sound systems. I drew on this for my research, but the history, development and influence of sound system culture warrants a research project of its own and is outside the scope of this project.

For the Black Market, I opted to make a case study of a specific sound man, rather than try to document the whole movement, thus allowing depth into the subject as opposed to merely breadth. The data I collated also began to answer the question: Can the development of a documentary character archive form the basis for a personal approach to the production of film dramas? In the initial year, I made a short *Sound Off.* Based on interviews with sound system owners, musicians, and my own personal experience, I developed the short, which is sound tracked by the music synonymous with sound systems and which uses an element of sound system culture to visualize the effect of sound system music on popular music culture in the form of a sound clash.

A sound clash is a competition between two competing sounds to see who can play the best tunes and connote meaning from the records played, which is directed at the opposing sound system. The film is influenced by the spaghetti western of Sergio Leone, in particular *Once Upon A Time in the West* (Leone 1968), particularly the opening scene at the train station where a new comer, Harmonic (Charles Bronson), disrupts the status quo.

The film draws similarities to this genre using the iconography associated with the western genre situated in a contemporary urban setting on an estate in London. The stand-off is between two men, and the symbolic showdown involves music as the instrument of the dual. In *Sound Off*, two men play Ludo while listening to reggae, with the song *Sound Boy Killing* denoting sound clash behaviour. They are interrupted by a newcomer on the scene, who is playing dub step, an amalgamation of studio-one dub baselines mixed with contemporary synthesised sounds. The song's cockney introduction, which comments on the mixing of two cultures, is not the first time Jamaican and British music have been mixed to form a new

genre of music. I provide a more detailed answer to this question in Chapter 5, applying the blueprint of sound systems to *MOTW*.

I concentrated on Gladdy Wax, known by other soundmen as an icon in sound system culture, who both worked and was good friends with Duke Vin, the first sound system man in the UK. I met Gladdy at the Albertines public house in 2012 after a brief introduction by Daddy Coolie (owner of *Night Ravers* sound system). We arranged to meet up initially to explain my research and consider how I could relate to the culture directly. Gladdy told me he had been approached by many filmmakers who wanted to record his wealth of knowledge, but never by someone who looked like him, had family structure not dissimilar to his own, and really understood that we need to be archived and recognised FUBU. This is not for profit, but is to make an important contribution to Black British culture, which is not documented and thereby is unacknowledged.

4. 3. Analysis of *Carnival through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*

The film documents Gladdy preparing for his performance at the 2013 Notting Hill Carnival, and opens with him setting off to Notting Hill at 4am. Gladdy loads the equipment the day before. This emphasises the physical logistics of sound system culture. The film follows him setting up on site and playing at the carnival, with the footage underlined with interviews with Gladdy on the subjects of the carnival, sound system culture, and Black British culture.

Structure

The film is structured around interviews with Gladdy Wax before, during, and after the carnival, which describes and explains the logistics considered to play the two-day event in Notting Hill. Observational film practice and still photography are applied to formulate a representation of the Carnival from the perspective of a soundman with 26 years of experience playing Europe's largest street festival. Gladdy Wax has been acknowledged by the British Association of Sound Systems (BASS) with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Black British cultural expression. The film is a detailed look at the processes involved, highlighting sound systems' role in a larger process to facilitate the two-day event of Caribbean culture within the framework of Britain. According to BASS, '2014 marks the 41st Anniversary of (static) Sound Systems being formally invited to participate at Carnival officially as the 5th discipline.'(BASS n.d.)

Sound systems playing this event organised by BASS prepare for the carnival all year around through meetings with the sound system members who are authorised and who pay to play. Prior to 1973, sound systems would play at the carnival unofficially. For this project, the process was filmed over three days to provide a detailed documentation of what performing at the carnival entails. The film is bookended with Gladdy opening his door on a Sunday

morning at the start of the carnival and ends with Gladdy closing his door in the early hours of Tuesday morning at the end. The mechanisms used to create the narrative arc are demonstrated through watching the carnival start as the crowd begins to builds to an apex of celebration and dancing. Temporal manipulation uses the interview of Gladdy to mark the central point juxtaposed against Byron, one of Gladdy's oldest friends, lifting the tarpaulin from the speaker for the second day, thus moving the narrative along from Sunday to Monday, and concluding in the crowds dwindling as they begin to disperse on Monday evening, when we see Gladdy packing up for the return home. During the interview, Gladdy discusses at length the loading and unloading of the apparatus from home to location and then from location to home. Visitors to the carnival take for granted this process, as the crowds' experience is subjective. They go to enjoy themselves, listen to music, taste Caribbean cuisine, and immerse themselves in the culture of diaspora. However, the film investigates the science behind setting up the speakers and turning the intersection of Portobello road into a 4D immersive sound experience. According to Herrique and Ferrara:

> Sound systems are very often located at crossroads, thus emphasising the effect of being heard and felt, before actually being seen by the wandering crowds... In complete contrast to a stage performance, where the audience is in front of the sound, with the sound systems out on the streets the audience is in the midst of the sound they are literally surrounded by it and immersed in it, as engineered by the configuration of three stacks or columns of speakers with two speaker columns either side of the stage, sound is projected *outward* onto the audience; with three speaker columns in a sound system session, sound is projected *inwards* onto the audience. In simple geometrical terms, this triangulates a surface area of around between the three sources as distinct from the line of sound between the normal stereo pair. (Herriques and Ferrara 2014, p.140)

Gladdy discusses at length the logistics of setting up the sound system in this particular way to amplify the sound that attracts an audience and keeps them there. However, sometimes only two stacks are used in order to adhere to health and safety regulations; instead of having a third stack, the adjacent wall is used to bounce/triangulate the sound back at the crowd and the set. The narrative structure of the film also observes cultural traditions of Carnival and the broad participation, second and third generation British Caribbean's and British people together. Performance by Gladdy Wax and guest DJs on his sound system observing crowd reaction conveyed in entertaining exerts of the event as a sense of inclusion providing a visual-audio experience while being informative and entertaining. Nichols comments in Winston's *'Claiming the Real'* (1995) that 'documentary operates in the crease between life as lived and life as narrativised' (Nichols 1995, p.101).

Gladdy narrates the event juxtaposing his voice against images of himself and others at the event in an attempt to reinforce the film being from the subject's perspective. According to Ruby,

> Being able to hear people tell their stories and observe their lives instead of being told what they think ... clearly offers subjects a greater say in the construction of their image. It recognizes that ... the vision of the filmmakers needs to be tempered by the lived experience of the subjects and their view of themselves. It is 'speaking with' instead of 'speaking for.' However, editorial control still remains in the hands of the filmmaker. The empowerment of the subject is therefore more illusionary than actual. (Ruby 1991, p.54)

In contrast to the last sentence from Ruby, due to me coming from a position of not having a voice and then not wanting anyone to speak for me, I wanted the film to reflect what I believe to be inherent to the sound system platform, which is to provide a voice, and not an interpretation of it. I was responsible for the structuring and the themes of the interview, which supports how Gladdy narrates the film, but which also ensured he was an authority on the film and was included in the post production process in terms of the sequence of questions and the order of execution. According to Nichols, 'Such evidentiary editing adopts many of the same techniques as classic continuity editing but to a different end. Similarly, cuts that produce unexpected juxtapositions generally serve to establish fresh insights or new metaphors that the filmmaker wishes to propose' (Nichols 1991, p.35).

I wanted the filmmaking process to be inclusive, so it is important that Gladdy be an authority on the film making process. We would meet to discuss draft edits of the documentary, to get him to sign off on a particular section of how we were together documenting the process before we moved on.

This is reflected in the logistical process, demonstrating his credentials as an experienced sound system owner, which is conveyed in the way in which he performs and facilitates the performance of other guests at the carnival. Gladdy offers an observation of the evolution of the carnival and the effect of outside influences like the police and gives his reflection on the output. Gladdy comments, 'I'm building something based on how I think the music should be presented' (*Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*).

The aim was for the film to resonate the title *Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* and not *My Interpretation of Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*. This would have gone against everything I had personally experienced and knew about the importance of having a voice and a platform to amplify your opinions in direct relation to my attitude towards filmmaking of this kind.

4. 4 Documentary Filmmaking Methodology

For this research project, I developed a methodology of gathering footage into an archive of oral history and experience of the subject areas. As the film outputs for this project take the form of both fiction and documentary, I began by building a documentary archive, which informed the development of the fiction (*MOTW*, *Both Sides of the Coin* and *Chick or Treat*).

In terms of the documentary methodology, I emphasised a non-hierarchical approach to the subject, who became a contributor on the issue, rather than embodying or representing the issue himself. Through the weekly archival interviews over two years, I built a relationship with Gladdy Wax, which continues to the current day. Professional filmmakers are not usually able to invest this amount of time in their participants; this was a benefit of the timeframe of doctoral research. The fact that this film was part of a research project, within a university, allowed me access to equipment and editing facilities over a sustained amount of time and thereby allowed me to go into the depth that this time afforded. Outside of the academy, I would not have been able to take this methodological approach and would not have seen the effects in terms of the participants' input and trust.

My approach to documentary filmmaking implements several modes, as categorised by Nicholls and Bruzzi, namely the observational, expository, interactive and poetic modes. Each different mode facilitates specific approaches to recording and representing the subject and topic in the most evocative way. *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* makes use of these modes to benefit both filmmaker and film. According to Nichols,

> Situations and events, actions and issues may be represented in a variety of ways. Strategies arise, conventions take shape, constraints come into play, these factors work to establish commonality among different texts, to place them within the same discursive formation at a given historical moment. (Nichols 1991, p.32)

The film was shot in several locations making use of observational mode to record the physical process of setting up and taking down the sound system. The equipment used is small and manageable for two main reasons. Firstly, small DSLR cameras (5D) are more mobile; these allowed me to film under all sorts of conditions from confined spaces, such inside a car or following Gladdy through the crowd. Secondly, because they are still photography cameras, primarily it can be assumed that I am merely taking pictures, an activity that attracts less attention to the filming process and provides a truer picture of the environment. Large video cameras attract much more attention from inquisitive passers-by who would normally walk past but instead stop to see what's being filmed and who seize the opportunity to be on camera themselves, which detracts from the observed subject and

affects the veritas of the environment. Nichols comments, 'Observational mode stresses the non-intervention of the filmmaker. Such films cede "control" over the events that occur in front of the camera more than any other mode' (Nichols 1991, p.38).

However, to contextualise the actions being filmed and to support the narrative, I interact with Gladdy to provide clarity on each stage of what is happening. As Nichols states,

> Interactive documentary stresses images of testimony or verbal exchange and images of demonstration (images that demonstrate the validity, or possibly, the doubtfulness, of what witnesses state). Textual authority shifts toward the social actors recruited: their comments and responses provide a central part of the film's argument. (Nichols 1991, p.44)

In turn, the interactive mode supports the observational mode in providing direct commentary and description of the process by the subject in the process of executing the activity being observed. Interacting with the subject affects the subject and the environment, but by minimalizing the amount of interaction to ensure there is clarity around the process, the observation of the said process is more dominant. What also makes this less intrusive is that the culture I am recording resonates with me; Gladdy knows I am asking questions for clarity and not out of curiosity. *The Blackpower Mixtapes 1967-1975* (Olsson 2011), which is also a mix of observational and interactive modes, demonstrates my point. An interview with Stokely Carmichael's mother Mabel is guarded until Stokely himself offers to interview his mother asking the right questions and getting the answers that we would not have heard otherwise because she was more comfortable talking to her son.

The backbone and structure of the film is supported by the use of the expository mode, which is the most dominant in this filmmaking equation. This mode is subverted to ensure it adheres to my initial focus around ensuring Gladdy has a voice, but is also the voice of authority, the "Voice-of-God", supported by another technique of the expository mode, namely, the "talking-head" interview, which guides the viewer through the journey of the film and establishes who is speaking here. Nichols comments,

> This mode supports the impulse toward generalization handsomely since the voiceover commentary can readily extrapolate from particular instances offered on the image track. Similarly it affords an economy of analysis, allowing points to be made succinctly and emphatically, partly by eliminating reference to the process by which knowledge is produced, organized, and regulated so that it too, is subject to historical and ideological process of which the film speaks. (Nichols 1991, p.35)

Gladdy's narration moves the film on economically and allows us to combine numerous hours of footage over several days into one film. The final mode, which is used from an artistic prospective, is the poetic mode, juxtaposing the sounds of the carnival with all the modes discussed to immerse the viewer in the subject matter and offer my personal perspective in the type of shots used for aesthetic reasons. In *The Story of Lovers Rock* (Shabazz 2011), Shabazz mixes the expository mode with comedy re-enactments to re-enforce his particular point made through the documentary, providing the necessary breathing space around a positive part of Black British culture. I was inspired by this approach for the carnival documentary, as the focus was to look mainly at the positive impact of Caribbean culture. The culmination of all these modes creates a level of hybridity that makes up an equation that accommodates the entire process in one coherent linear narrative

The filmmaker needs to consider the best environment where the subject is comfortable to have their thoughts recorded and their sentiments photographed. For the purpose of this research, I compare my own experience of coming from a marginalized diaspora in contemporary London with Gladdy's experiences of diaspora from Jamaica to Birmingham and then London. The common ground of relative experiences initiated my access and gave a starting point to begin my research, which was investigating the communal spaces available and looking at how we use them. I attended several dances and reggae events without a camera to meet potential contributors "unarmed" or unfettered. From my childhood and teenage years, I understand the social etiquette and nuances of these spaces. This provides me with an advantage over someone who does not fully understand this culture and whose subsequent approach might come from insulting fascination and an aim of exploitation or speaking on behalf of rather than collaborating with and foregrounding voices not usually heard.

The music of the Caribbean culture is what centres us; it is the common factor that initiates themes of unity, struggle, and identity. It provides the connectedness that instigates the modes that allow me to traverse between my experiences and the experiences of the participants. The link here is important; it is the swinging door that allows the filmmaker and the subject to reflect on what we know, what we see, and what actually is the picture of marginalized people in London. Of course, with every responsible documentary, ethics must always be considered in the presentation of the subject and subject matter. The process of making a documentary from the standpoint of academic research is collaborative, and it is necessary to take more time, care and attention with the research in order to build a relationship as opposed to making a documentary in the industry where the researcher is arguably less attached and motivated by deadlines and pay. *Hoop Dreams* (James 1994) follows contributors for several years in order to paint a true picture of African-American boys attempting to play professional basketball, thus providing an in-depth observation of their lives that is far from one dimensional. Ruby comments,

> Most so-called "collaborative" film productions involve anthropologists; undoubtedly a result of the fact that anthropologists tend to spend long periods of time with their subjects, develop a rapport seldom possible with traditional documentary methods, and seek feedback as a means of verification. (Ruby 1991, p.57)

Building a relationship is paramount in gaining the trust of [contributors] Gladdy and allowing him to get to know me as a person first. We discussed at length my thoughts and ideas on a shared experience of our culture and positioning in Britain. Thus, Gladdy becomes the interviewer, judging if my motives are honest and authenticating my ability to represent and convey this truth.

Meeting with contributors without a camera creates a foundation to build from and potentially forge a relationship without the 'glass eye' making the environment feel detached and uncomfortable. Even if the camera is switched off, the equipment being there is an act of hostility. It makes the assumption that I have the intention of filming without asking; in addition, questions emerge regarding whether the camera is actually 'off' or if I am filming in secret. I explained the purpose of my research and my intention, using a set speech/pitch that explained my aims:

> I'm from this culture. I remember going to sound system dances and then obtaining a TDK SA90 tape [session-tape] of that dance. We'd make copies amongst ourselves and discuss the dance as an audio-visual experience: what we heard, who was there and which girls we met. There was a culture around how we experienced the event and how we would reflect upon it using the recording. With the advancements in technology, this part of the culture is all but lost. My kids have no idea what a sound/session-tape is. If we do not document our/your experience(s), part of our Black British sub-culture will become myth and legend.

Regarding this issue Henry argues, 'This is the critical role that Yard/Session tapes play in a truer appreciation of reggae-dancehall culture; these recordings represent the "undocumented" side that can fill in many significant gaps in the documenting of Black cultural history' (Henry 2006, p.109).

My aim here, like the session tapes, is to show that there is a limited visual-audio archive of Black representation and, as a Black filmmaker, I feel a level of responsibility to contribute to this fragmented archive.

Once the camera is brought into the equation, the environment changes because we are all conscious of perception and of how we are perceived. My technique to reduce this

awkwardness is to position the camera furthest from the subject initially and then, over time and throughout a number of meetings, begin to move the camera closer to our interaction. This has allowed me not only to build and grow an archive with Gladdy, but also to develop a relationship based on trust. Applying this technique allows the lines to be blurred between what is in front and behind the camera; it becomes a collective experience. The process of filmmaking becomes interchangeable, and the contribution from both sides becomes integral to being FUBU. The collaboration in this methodology makes the reflexive mode integral to relating and conveying both levels of experience.

The methodology and approach to documentary filmmaking has improved my comprehension of and ideas around drama. I have used a very similar approach to *MOTW*, building relationships by working with people both behind and in front of the camera and the exchange and sharing of knowledge back and forth for a common goal. *MOTW* itself contributes to the Black British archive in its own right.

Thursday archiving

At the beginning of the filming process, the camera was positioned approximately 4.5 metres from Gladdy in a wide shot, whereas the closer we got, and as trust built between us, the closer the camera came, until eventually it was a metre away. By this time, it had become less obtrusive, and the interviews became friendly discussions about sound systems, his record shop, and going to school with Vanley Burke.

As time went on, we began to forge a relationship that developed from me trying to involve him in the filmmaking process by sending him rushes of what we had captured, so he could see and comment at every step on how the filming was progressing.

Later, Gladdy invited me to a Margate weekender playing Ska, to skinheads from all over Europe, which led me to make the short *Skinheads on the Beach,* which looks at the mixing of culture around music and the impact of Caribbean culture on British and European culture. Having built a strong relationship with Gladdy, I asked if I could shoot a feature on him at Notting Hill Carnival from a perspective that had not been documented before, specifically, looking at the logistics of playing at the carnival and what the carnival means to him as well as what he sees and has seen over the years there. It is worth noting that the access I got to him at the carnival would never have been possible had I not forged a genuine relationship with him; indeed, it is safe to say we are now friends.

In order to look at the sound system culture in general, it was necessary to gain this level of trust from owners of other sound systems in order to document a true depiction of 'then and now'. The problem with this, however, is that not everyone is as open as Gladdy was; they have been exploited by broadcasters who have re-presented their image without actually

providing them with a voice, which has left many bitter, suspicious and guarded. In contrast, I offered the fair exchange of footage for knowledge, but even this was not enough. For many sound systems, my time in academia makes me unrecognisable, so to some, I was one of 'them' and not one of 'us.' According to Ruby,

> The directors may have come from the communities they filmed but most continued the dominant pattern... As they became successful, their attachment to the community they first sought to represent became tenuous. In order to obtain production funds, gain access to the monopolistic systems of distribution, and attract the audience they wish, they package their work in a form that many contest is destructive very cultural identity they sought to preserve in the first place. (Ruby 1991, p.57)

I was looked at and treated as part of the establishment. Therefore, it will take me a little longer to break down the barriers and prove that I have no ulterior motive. Burke also comments on this level of suspicion in *Handsworth Revisted with Dr Vanley Burke*, saying he would take a box of photos around with him to show what he was doing and why he was doing it. (Burke 2009)

It is possible that after I have finished my PhD, these sound systems will see what I have and have not done with the images I have recorded and so will be more willing to contribute to British Caribbean culture that is counter to the native culture that has marginalised exploited them and their platforms.

The final film has been received very well by family and friends and by my supervisors. When I met up with Gladdy on 20 February 2014, he told me he was very happy with how he was represented, saying, '*I can see why your University have such confidence* in your ability, Fred; you really captured everything. I know you're gonna go on to make great films'. This, for me, was my finest hour, as my main concern for this project was to ensure that those who contributed were happy with their depiction. The film has been entered into several film festivals, including the Edinburgh and British Documentary Film festivals, and I am also currently in discussion with television broadcasters to air the film for the carnival's 50th anniversary, which is being celebrated over two years: 2015 and 2016.

I still stand by my original ethos of this being part of an archive that has limited resources and is not for financial gain. After I had discussed the film with Gladdy, he was happy for me to submit the film. We both decided to see if we could get the film aired on terrestrial television so it would be available to everyone. Our concern is not making money, but rather outputting this part of our culture via a documentary and allowing these platforms of a DIY culture an even larger stage than the 'audio-visual' platform Notting Hill Carnival provides by giving it the

visual-audio medium that television provides to open a discourse on this counterculture and give a voice to those not normally heard. According to Winston,

> Documentary provides: a source of 'counterinformation' for those without access to the hegemonic structures of the world news and communication; a means of reconstructing historical events and challenging hegemonic and often elitist interpretations of the past; a mode of eliciting preserving, and utilising the testimony of individuals and groups who would otherwise have no means of recording their experience. (Winston 1995, p.257)

The film has been a revelation, as it has involved looking in detail at what exactly is involved in sound systems as a platform now and how I remember them, and examining the individual components and functions involved in bringing this platform to life. Observing this practice has allowed me to extrapolate further a distinct blue print, which I have modified to facilitate my own platform on social media.

4. 5 Sound System Model

The experiment of this research project is in the distilling of the sound system model into a blueprint that can be applied to filmmaking practice, with the intention of drawing on a black market context in order to open up opportunity within the sanctioned market of the film and television industries. Rather than the market capitalising or exploiting the black market for audience reach, this project made the move from the *black* market to the *free* market to adopt common knowledge and practical transferrable skills to break into the mainstream and effect a progression in my career trajectory as a filmmaker beyond the academy.

From the empirical study of sound systems, my own personal experience of being part of a sound system, and the building of the archive beginning in the first year of this project, which resulted in the *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax* documentary, I was able to tease out and formulate a sound system model or blueprint to apply to my filmmaking practice.

The fundamental elements that make up this model are as follows:

- **Skilled personnel:** electricians, carpenters, DJs, MCs, promoters, security, cash and carry, movers (all of us), transport - the workers that maintain and operate the platform.

- **Identity/Brand**: each sound crew has a name and graphic logo.

- **Equipment**: speakers, turntables, mixer, amps, pre-amps, graphic equalizer, tape deck are the physical components used to create the experience tangible platform.

- **Content:** records (message, content) provides an audio-visual immersive experience that brings together like-minded individuals who are drawn to the message in the music, which is reflective and entertaining

- **Location**: roving location within a community; blues or sell drink parties would move around the community to avoid detection and prevent reports of noise nuisance

- **Audience**: comprises peers, neighbours, contemporaries and locals. This component represents the other side of the platform and is external to the internal working parts of this blue-print. Although they make up part of the blue-print, the platform is put together on the premise of attracting this component.

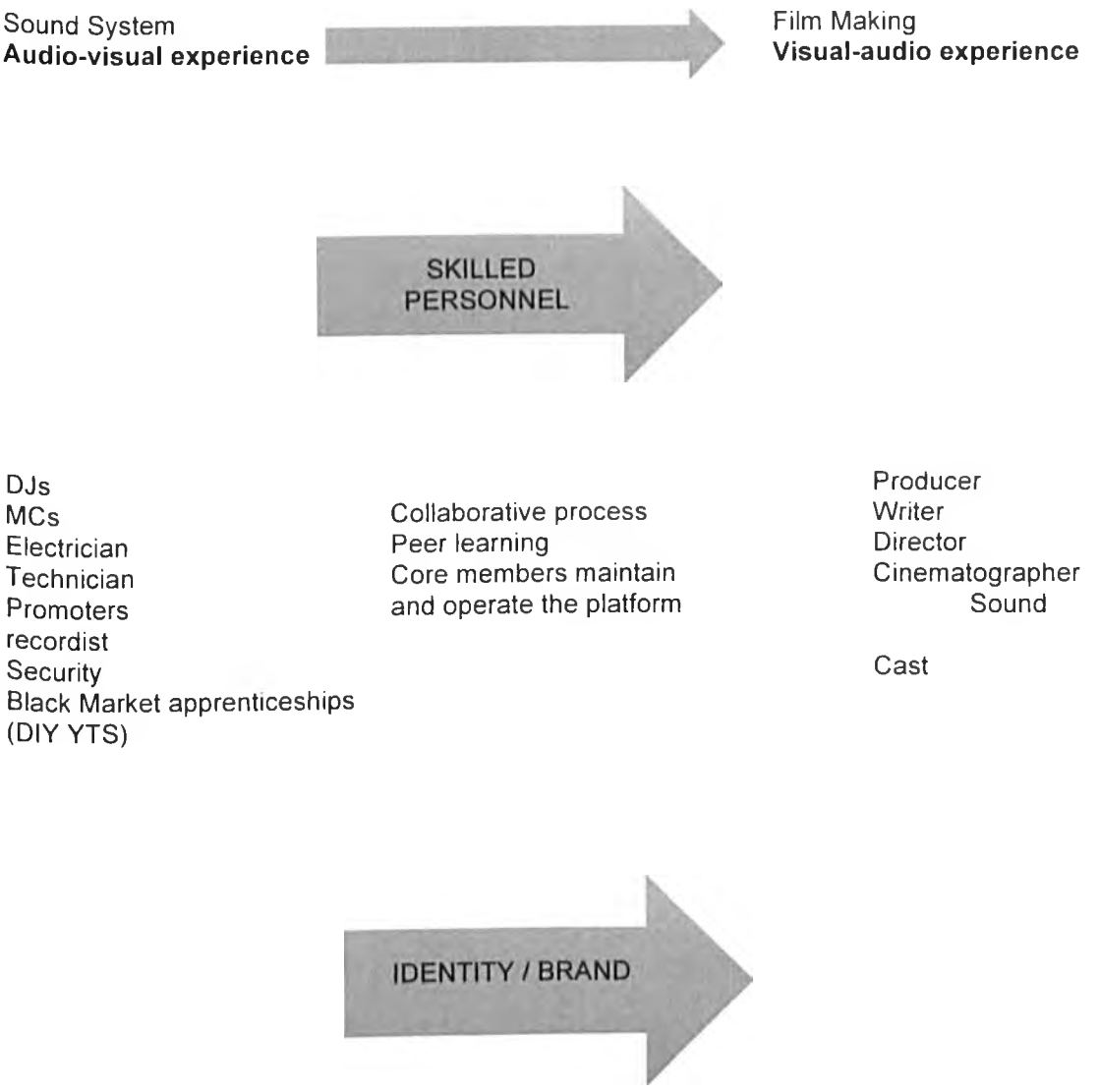
- **Audience experience:** is immersive in a particular time and space. The experience is audio-visual; it allows the development of experiences that are linked to that particular moment of singing and dancing in unison, the congregation of friends, the meeting of new people who all have a shared experience, which is fixed in time and is finite.

See Fig. 1 for an illustrated example of the sound system model distilled as a blueprint that can be applied to filmmaking practice.

The next stage is to apply this model to a filmmaking project to test out the effectiveness of this experiment.

Figure 1

Sound System model distilled as a blueprint and applied to film making practice



Speakers
Turntables
Amps, pre-amps
Mixers
Amps, Pre-amps
Equalizer
Tape Deck

The physical components used to create the experience

1: PRE-PRODUCTION
Scripts, storyboards
Shooting schedule

2. PRODUCTION
Cameras, sound equipment,
Lighting equipment

3. POST-PRODUCTION

Records
MC
Performance

Episodes

Real time, specific place, one-off performance

Online Platform
Multiple interfaces
Transferable, archivable, accessible

AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

Formed of peers neighbours, contemporaries and locals

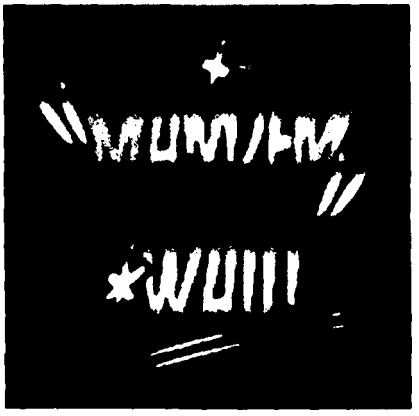
Formed of peers, contemporaries, wider public and international audience

Tangible Platform

Immersive in a particular time and space a finite shared social experience locally

Virtual Platform

Sensory 2D accessible at any point in time viewed repeatedly and shared globally; experience is detached, virtually social, archived, and accessible to all



Chapter 5. Application of the Sound System Model

5. 1 Mandem on the Wall (*MOTW*)

Using the sound system blueprint, I applied these modified elements to incorporate film making to develop a platform and content that stems from documentary research of a character archive, which is the foundation of my personal approach to the production of film within the genre of comedy and drama.

Location: This is virtual (YouTube); it is the target audience that is roving. There are various interfaces that allow reception in the forms of mobile phones, tablets, laptops, and smart televisions.

Equipment: This has two disciplines. The first is the three phases of film making production to produce the online content: pre-production writing, storyboarding, and shooting schedules. Production involves cast, crew, cameras, sound recorders, and lights, while post-production involves using the computer with editing and grading software. The second discipline is the use of a computer with a modem, which has the ability to connect via the superhighway to the WWW (internet), making it possible to upload the content geared at the target audience and allowing access by a potential wider audience internationally.

Skilled personnel: These include director, producer, writer, cinematographer, sound-recordist, and cast. Skilled personnel also include the workers who maintain and operate the platform, scheduling when content should go live, and organising cross promotion on other social media platforms, i.e., Twitter, Instagram and websites to maximise viewing.

Content: This includes the episodes (message, content) that provide a visual-audio experience that appeals to a particular target audience with the same triggers that generate an emotional response to the type of comedy.

Audience: This is formed of peers, contemporaries, the wider public and an international audience. This component represents the other side of the platform and is external to the internal working parts of this blueprint. Although they make up part of the model, the platform is put together on the premise of attracting this component.

Audience experience: The audience experience is via a 2D interface, which is screen-based. Viewers can interact with it at their own discretion, whether it is with a small group of friends or as an individual. The virtual platform also builds an archive, which means the experience is not restricted to one point in time, but can be experienced at the discretion of the viewer(s) and can be re-experienced. There is a heterogeneity to the experience and the interface, and the location of both can be watched on different interfaces at different locations and are transferable. They can be shared countless times and thus open a discourse based on the content/message. However, the social experience itself is detached and virtually social; although the content and the impact are shared, they are generally independent but are commented upon via social media.

5. 2. Guerrilla filmmaking methodology

The approach to filming *MOTW* was to use manageable equipment and a small crew. The university provided access to equipment and green screen facilities, giving me the support to push the envelope and develop content with competitive results, which raised the production values and so made the films stand out. Just because it was designed for the Internet, it should not look like it was shot on a camera phone. In addition, the aim was to attract the attention of potential broadcasters.

While directing and shooting *MOTW*, I aimed to achieve a look that would be recognisable and that would facilitate access to the content. I built relationships with individual cast members to understand what they wanted to get out of each character and to understand their individual abilities and techniques. Joivan Wade and Percelle Ascott both came from the Brit school and so were accustomed to acting in front of the camera and in the theatre, and Dee was a stand-up comedian. The approach Joivan (playing Failia) used was to understand the world in relation to the other characters and to feed off of their reactions. Percelle (playing Tinnie Winnie) believed in his character and built it up from the character detail. Dee Kartier was extremely good at improvising his character's comedic behaviour, which stemmed from his stand-up comedy.

The common denominator I used here was that they all understood stage performance, and I could play to their individual strengths based upon this. I then applied my own inspiration of *Richard Pryor: Live in Concert* (Margolis 1979) for descriptive stand-up and *Desmond's,* for a set-based sitcom with a primary location. I would give the cast time to rehearse while I

observed from a distance, and I would then do a rehearsal with them to factor in where they would hit their markers, and whether to use a wide shot and singles or hand-held or static filming. The notes I gave in earlier episodes were generic, and the aim was mainly to maintain the energy and not to worry about sticking too rigidly to scripts; thus, unless I said, 'Cut!', the cast would keep going, as adlibbing can create magic moments, especially if the cast and the director have the same aim in mind. I noticed the performance they rehearsed without me had fewer inhibitions compared with the run-through we did together, and I obtained a better performance when the trio were relaxed, enjoying filming, and holding back the laughs, which gave rise to the out-takes or blooper reel at the end of episodes. Later on, notes became specific and personal to cast members based on their own techniques, and the relationship we built as friends as well as the relationships of actor to director and director to actor progressively made the content better.

Roles behind the camera were shared. I directed, shot and arranged minimal lights relying predominantly on natural light. Filming was carried out using a full frame DSLR camera (5D), which was the most robust to shoot with under varying conditions. Shooting techniques applied included mixed locked-off shots, with hand held shooting. Initially, the equipment was minimal, but I later introduced prime lenses, which I decided would be the best way to raise production values and provide a more filmic look to episodes. Sound, camera and lighting was operated by all members; I would share my knowledge and experience of filming, such as how to set up 3-point lighting, the optimal way to hold the boom and record audio, and the rule of thirds when setting up a composition for a particular shot if we were using more than one camera.

We were united in the goal to produce good content, to build an audience, and to attract mainstream attention. The four of us worked together as equals. Indeed, the idea was that rather than the hierarchical structure of filmmaking (auteurism/industrial professional model etc.) we would work as a collective, collaborating in all phases of the creative process and the business side, and applying a lateral working model that progressed through non-hierarchical connections.

No single individual was more important than any other; *MOTW* was a team production. Working in this way, combining our networks, gave access to a much larger social capital, i.e., if we each knew 1 person in film production, business management, and branding, we would then have an exponential of 12 connections. If those 3 connections each knew 3 further connections, it became 36. This was initially the basis of the growth and popularity of *MOTW*, making better and stronger contacts within film and television industries from whom we are attempting to gain recognition.

Our window for shooting was approximately six hours, as we started at 6 am and aimed to finish by 12 am to reduce interruptions. We kept episode shoots to two days to reduce inconsistencies in post-production regarding variations in the light. The location, Vulcan Road, was 2 mins from Myatt Gardens Primary School on Rokeby Road, Brockley, so filming beyond 12 am was intermittent, as crew and cast were obstructing a public pathway, and we were filming without a permit. There were other considerations regarding sound; the primary school lunch breaks generated too much noise and Brockley was directly under a flight path for Gatwick.

As a filmmaker, these issues were at the forefront of my mind. Film making always means compromise. According to Jones and Jolliffe (2008), film production has three elements that make up a two-strand equation: fast, cheap and quality:

> Whatever film making discipline you apply, you can only ever two corners... and always at the expense of the third... As an Indie Film Maker, almost certainly you are going to need QUALITY and CHEAP, and it will never be FAST. (Jones and Jolliffe 2006, p.208)

The support of the university improved the quality, as I was able to use the latest digital technology and apply classic filmmaking techniques. I also had access to the institution's equipment, which meant no hiring equipment costs. It took six weeks to make an episode from pre-production to post production and factoring in weather conditions, the acquisition of props, and crew and cast availability. Initially, the narrative structure was based more on slapstick sketch comedy with the characters discussing their individual activities using a flashback-based storyline. Regarding the set-up and pay-off principal, according to Fink,

> The overarching concept of comic structure is the set-up and pay-off. In truth, this is the case with all forms of dramatic writing. The author must introduce something that makes the audience wonder what will happen next - the setup - and then eventually deliver what happens - the payoff (Fink 2014, p.166)

Episodes were short, consisting mainly of punch lines, but these were later developed into more of a comedy drama, which worked well in building a fan base. Following this episode, we put out a short documentary to introduce the comedy and provide background information on the cast as the face of *MOTW*. I wanted to use documentary methodology here, as I was inspired by the archive I was concurrently compiling for sound systems, which was the impetus to apply the sound system model to *MOTW* as a virtual platform for film production drama.

5. 3. Platforms: Physical and Virtual

Unlike sound systems, the internet platform is virtual, so the application of the sound system model involves applying to a virtual platform methods similar to the physical platform appropriating the skills to the differing disciplines of directing, acting, cinematography, creative writing, graphic design, editing, marketing, book keeping, buying production equipment, and location scouting. *MOTW* came together in the summer of 2011. As mentioned previously, core members were Jovian Wade (writer and actor) and Percelle Ascott (writer and actor), who had both recently graduated from the Brit school; stand-up comedian Dee Kartier (writer and actor/comedian); and myself.

Not dis-similar to sound system, we all understood what this platform could do. Our ethos was to create a platform that would showcase our collective and individual talents to a mainstream audience and to the gatekeepers of the dominant film and television culture. Building a fan base was paramount to raising our profile, but our primary concern was to gain the attention of the main broadcasting institutions and large production companies. We had all made significant progress within our respective disciplines and were conscious of the conventional organisations put in place to facilitate our talents, such as film festivals, auditions, and talent shows. However, although these platforms are designed for independence and inclusion, it is difficult to be recognised on them or to break through onto them. [11]

In order to take the next step, we pooled our resources to optimise our potential. We idealistically assumed we already had all the tools we would need, but we did not anticipate that we would learn new skills along the way. What we did learn was that much of what we suspected about the attitude of the dominant broadcasters towards the youth market was actually true, in that they held preconceptions and stereotypical assumptions about this demographic, something that we actively parodied and challenged in our work. We also learnt that this new platform affected the way that the content was made and the attention span of the audience consuming it.

We looked at social media and considered which platform would be the best to build on in order to amplify our voice. The main ones were Vimeo and YouTube. We decided on YouTube because its popularity was higher although Vimeo initially had better formats, and it had been designed with filmmakers and animators in mind. It was slightly similar to the situation of VHS versus Betamax in the 1980s: Betamax was a much better format but VHS had wider social capital and, as a result, better consumer appeal. We designed a logo and

[11] EIFF submission email correspondence 22 April 2015
British Independent Film Festival email correspondence 20th April 2015

began branding the channel, so viewers could quickly identify the show. This was the first step in later turning the comedy into a brand.

We looked for a location that we could use regularly and that would develop an identity in itself so it would be quickly recognised as the iconography of the show. However, we all began location scouting as things developed away from 'the wall' and eventually chose Vulcan Road, which was two minutes from Foxberry Road, Brockley. Joivan, Percelle and Dee all wrote the episodes, and I supported them by ensuring that sketches, which later turned into episodes, were narratively coherent. We then began filming. I wanted to ensure that what was happening in front of the camera was being reflected behind the camera, so I storyboarded episodes and continued to hone my skills in directing and to enhance my ability to interpret someone else's creative writing. This was a skill I was keen to develop for my own work in the future, knowing that I would work on films that I had not written. We shot at the wall from 6 am to avoid too much disruption, as it was a public space. I would bring the equipment, while Joivan, Percelle and Dee would bring the costumes and props relevant to the script. I would then do a rough assembly, after which, we would work together to finalise an episode.

We employed the services of a graphic designer to do the animated introduction, and a music producer to compose the theme tune. The next step was to decide when and how to release the first episode based on our target audience. There are times in a day when audiences are most receptive and likely to use the Internet; therefore, we applied our own social media behavioural habits to 'guestimate' when would be the best time to release an episode. The most effective time was national holiday periods and after popular television shows that were receiving a high number of views from a young audiences'.

The British Audience Research Board (BARB) was a useful tool to capture a snapshot of what programmes currently had the most popular viewership. At the time, it was *X Factor* (2004 – to date), which also had a YouTube channel. We released our first episode on Christmas Eve 2011 at a time when the majority of the population would be at home, alternating between surfing the Internet and commenting on what they had watched or were watching on television and YouTube.

YouTube also allows you to manipulate the metadata in the form of tags; these optimise the probability of your video coming up in a search e.g. keywords that are associated with your channel or with a video. YouTube recommends using only words that are specific to your channel and content. According to Tom Martin in the *Definitive Gudie to YouTube Tags* 'In the short term you may see a boost in views but your watch time (arguably the biggest ranking factor for YouTube's algorithm) will suffer when people click expecting one thing but receive something very different.' (Martin 2014)

I used black market tactics to subvert this advice and used tags that were specific to current affairs or celebrities that were prolific in the news. This not only brought more views to our channel, but also, because of our confidence in our content, we gained new fans, who would return to see new uploads to the channel. In short, if your content is good enough, you can afford to manipulate viewers' expectations and provide them with content they may have never discovered otherwise. However, I understand why YouTube would want content providers to adhere to their guidelines on how to use their algorithm if your content is very niche or not very good.

We all used social media to join debates and initiate a dialogue diverting traffic to our YouTube channel by leaving comments on other channels and on Twitter e.g. 'Have you seen this...YouTube/Mandemonthewall hilarious lmfao' as well as word of mouth.

As mentioned earlier, as in sound systems, the aim was not to make a profit but to obtain exposure. We now had a platform to comment on social issues and popular culture that influenced, or was influenced by, the youth culture. Our initial introduction to this platform underlined the aim of inclusion and amplified Black filmmaking both behind and in front of the camera. Just as sound systems produced a DIY culture to be enjoyed and consumed by the communities where it existed, the online platform offered the opportunity to reflect the views and thoughts of youth culture directly in FUBU.

We started to amass a large number of views and to increase our audience. The popularity of the channel and its content started to get us noticed by Black British music artists, such as Wiley and Giggs, and other British musicians began to comment, showing their admiration on Twitter and other social media platforms. Up and coming actors and celebrities featured in several episodes, including Twist and Pulse, Alex Esmail, Karl Jackson, Ria Zead, Michael Salami etc. Jamal Edwards, founder of SBTV, contacted us saying he really liked what we were doing, and he introduced us to the partnership scheme with YouTube partner Base 79, which led to monetising the *MOTW* channel. Thus, the channel started to make some revenue that would cover our overheads, i.e., website and other sundry costs related to production. We worked with Jamal on several projects mixing his musical business model with our film business model. *MOTW* filmed and produced our own brand of music videos with cameo appearances from Jamal Edwards, who also features in an upcoming skit episode. In addition, *MOTW* did an F64 performance for SBTV. We worked together to cross promote exposing our fans to his network and his fans to our network.

Black culture is appropriated at various levels of consumption, for example, music, fashion and food. Thus, individuals who are not of colour profit from a culture and political identity that is not their own. Filmmaking has also been appropriated, and the protagonist has been

replaced with white leads that appear to be familiar with Black culture within a marginalized space; an example mentioned earlier was *StreetDance* (Giwa 2010). Hall states, 'I know that what replaces invisibility is a kind of carefully regulated segregated visibility' (Hall 1996, p.468).

There are other examples of where the 'Black' in Black popular culture is denied/rejected initially by the mainstream and then later, because of its appeal and rise within popular culture, it is embraced and taken up as their own initiative. As a child growing up, I realised a memorable part of my landscape was how Black people exclusively individualize and modify things to reflect their own sense of style and self. In the 1980s, Black males who had managed to acquire some wealth would purchase high-end automobiles, for example, a BMW, leading to the derogative term 'Black Man's Wheels' used by those outside of the community:

> That name-calling merely reflects the particular model of cultural politics to which we remain attached, precisely, the zero-sum game – our model replacing their model, our identities in place of their identities – what Antonio Gramsci called culture as a once and for all 'war of man oeuvre'. (Hall 1996, p.468)

Cars would be accessorized with tinted windows, loud sound systems, low profile tyres, and alloy wheels. After 2000, large car companies began to advertise the cars on television with tinted windows and alloy wheels as standard, as the appearance made the product more appealing to post-modern consumers, while improved in-car entertainment also came as standard.

Products were also endorsed in line with market trends that were inspired by Black culture and popular music. RUN DMC not only pushed hip-hop music, but it also built on a revolutionary voice of the marginalized community collaborating with rock [Aerosmith] and increased the sales of Adidas, which is heavily associated with hip-hop culture:

> The role of the 'popular' in popular culture is to fix the authenticity of popular forms, rooting them in the experience of popular communities from which they draw their strength, allowing us to see them as expressive of a particular subordinate social life that resists its being constantly made over as low and outside. (Hall 1996, p.469)

Black music is at the forefront of popular culture, and, indeed, it filters into many forms of popular culture. Using this universal medium will mean that other diasporas and nationals can gain an understanding of FUBU. Therefore, the influence of Black culture on popular culture can be a template for film in contemporary London. *MOTW* is a prime example of this.

Our first episode (24 December 2011) was a parody of the 2011 UK riots. This was a response to the media portrayal of the young people involved in the social unrest. The parody involved looking at the stupidity of the behaviour: Younger Baker tries to steal some socks, which he drops as he runs off while Baby Tinnie Winnie steals a big bag of basmati rice. The audience response was huge, and we amassed 1000 views in a week. Though our target for the series as a whole was 10,000, the channel has had 8.9 million views to date, with the first episode still the most viewed episode (1.3 million views).[12]

The reach of the *MOTW* channel has led to numerous opportunities to work with institutions and production companies. The first of these was The Challenge Organisation: 'The Challenge is the UK's leading charity for building a more integrated society. 'We work on a local level to bring together people from all ages, ethnicities and walks of life, connecting communities and building trust' (The Challenge n.d.).

We shot a short promotional video to appeal to young people from inner city environments the brief was to reach 10,000 views a target we exceeded with over 100,000 views. This was our first corporate project, and The Challenge Organisation were so impressed with the video and with us as a collective, they nominated *MOTW* for a Spirit of London Award (SOLA):

> The Spirit of London awards were originally created by the Damilola Taylor Trust in 2008. Developed as a legacy project for not just Damilola but all the young people lost to senseless violence. Looking to create something as a positive legacy the awards were created to shine a light on the positive majority of young Londoners whose contribution to was not getting the same attention by the mainstream media as the negative acts of a much smaller minority. (SOLA n.d.)

The Spirit of London Awards was an excellent opportunity to catapult *MOTW* towards a much wider demographic of young people and for the channel to be endorsed by the government and to raise awareness amongst sponsors. With this in mind, we wanted to take advantage of the press coverage and filming by SBTV. We had just started to produce *MOTW* merchandise (T-shirts and jumpers) to bolster promotion and support the income generated by the channel to increase buying power. Initially, such merchandise was a promotional tool, but it became the first step to turning *MOTW* into a brand. We did giveaways on social media and at any events we were invited to. As nominees for a SOLA, we were invited to 10 Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister, David Cameron, and to network with members from the media industry. Such events continued to build the profile of *MOTW*, which was rapidly becoming recognised as a brand. We also became SOLA ambassadors, like Jamal Edwards. We wore our own merchandise at Downing Street to ensure we were remembered,

[12] Sample of *MOTW* view statistics most viewed episodes

and as there are four of us, we networked individually as well as together to maximise meeting new contacts.

Another positive initiative, *Ted Talks* (*Tedx* Youth@Croydon) invited us as the brand *MOTW* to give an inspirational talk on young entrepreneurial activity, which was broadcast live online and was titled *P.E.P: Leaving Your Legacy: Mandem On The Wall at TedxYouth@Croydon.* (TedxYouth 2013) *MOTW* also presented an award at the 18th anniversary MOBO awards and guest presented interviews on the red carpet. In addition, *MOTW* worked with the Home Office to spread awareness about domestic violence against women and girls as part of the 'In the Know' campaign. There were two strands of promotion: a television initiative and a digital interactive initiative. *MOTW* was one of several YouTubers asked to promote the campaign due to the reach we had.

Indeed, our reach was rapidly becoming a power tool that institutions wanted to take advantage of to bridge the gap in a market that they had historically failed to appeal to. Part of the reason for our ability to do this is our ability to engage with and provide a voice for a young demographic, not dissimilar to the power balance faced by marginalised diasporas. Members of the youth culture in general have always been spoken for rather than being given a position to speak for themselves. An example of a successful youth model is SBTV. Jamal started his channel to promote UK artists in grime and UK rap, and then the channel spread further afield. Jamal is responsible for launching the career of Ed Sheeran. Jamal comments, 'I upload grime or rap every single week without fail. I want to prove that urban music isn't about some black kid rapping and spitting on the streets, it's a culture' (Chopra 2012).

This model is successful in reaching an audience that recognises the voice as one of their own FUBU. This kind of power is very attractive to companies and institutions that want to tap into a market with considerable spending power and influence over popular culture. Regarding this, Jamal states, 'We've got the creative ideas, the platform and the reach and that's why the brands come to us'. (Ibid)

MOTW was also recognised as brand that could reach an audience who were interested in a different type of performing art; compared with SBTV's music-based business model, we focused and developed short film comedy drama. Some of the new skills we developed as a collective as part of the learning curve of the brand included no longer just thinking as creatives, but also considering the business model, negotiating contractual terms, and making the right decisions to grow the brand as a business. To further increase our reach and adapt to the advancements in the digital market place, *MOTW* developed an app to reinforce advertising and keep subscribers up to date with new content. Big Talk Productions approached us and wanted to integrate the *MOTW* characters into the TV sitcom *Youngers*

(Philipson 2013). Levi David Addai, one of the writers of *Youngers* and a fan of *MOTW* recommended us.

I filmed and edited the behind the scenes element using Nick Broomfield's reflexive documentary style mixed with *MOTW's* own brand of comedy to provide a new approach to shooting a behind the scenes and DVD extra content. These films commonly use the expository 'talking-head' mode of approach, but Big Talk wanted us to do what we did on our own platform and apply it to *Youngers* to attract a young audience. The first series had the highest number of views for 4oD. Big Talk production is also interested in producing the *MOTW* TV show, and we are currently in talks to discuss this possibility. In addition, Universal threw the hat into the ring, and we are in talks with them to develop a production. As mentioned earlier, other institutions became interested in our ability to reach an audience that they had struggled to connect with because they lacked the credibility that we had gained as cultural capital, which started off as Black youth culture and then grew to youth culture or social capital as viewership.

Based on the success and popularity of the channel, our YouTube partners, Base 79, were keen meet to discuss projects going forward. They offered audience growth solutions, network opportunities and collaborations with other mini broadcasters [YouTubers]. In addition, YouTube started offering facilities, such as a space that provided a green screen, cameras, lights, and props. According to YouTube, 'It's all-available at no charge to creators with at least 5,000 subscribers and whose account is in good standing.' (YouTube n.d.)

Furthermore, Base 79 were very impressed with how we were able to keep our viewers engaged to episodes, which exceeded 10 minutes, although their suggestion going forward to produce shorter content to encourage viewers to watch more, proved not to be beneficial.

The second series, *Mandem Skits* season, produced shorter, bite sized episodes that were 2-3 minutes long as opposed to the original 10-15 min episodes. These episodes included additional behind the scenes interviews filmed at YouTube studios as a response to our YouTube partners advising us that shorter instalments would attract more views. With hindsight, we should have kept to the longer run time, as we were able to hold our audience for the entire length of an episode and had built a strong following that enjoyed the duration and development of characters and story. However, we decided to listen to Base 79 as a registered partner of YouTube, with the expertise based on their analysis. According to de Certeau,

> Competence is exchanged for authority. Ultimately, the more authority the expert has, the less competence he has, up to a point where his fund of competence is exhausted...That is the (general?) paradox of authority: a knowledge is ascribed to it

and this knowledge is precisely what lacks where it is exercised. (de Certeau 1988, pp.7-8)

By their own admission, Base 79 could not understand how we were able to build our audience and keep them engaged. We were physically doing the work (on the ground) and generating results, as we were the practical experts, relying not on theory but on real results. However, naively, we listened to Base 79 because they were positioned as an authority based on what they had achieved in the past.

The result was that the Skit season was not a success by our standards. Although it still gained on average 40,000 views per episode, another episode from this series on austerity (where the prime minister defers to the Man Dem to speak for him at prime minister's question time) got only 21,000 views. These are still relatively high viewing figures, but based on our previous endeavours, this was a considerable decline.

The Tate Modern also wanted to collaborate to encourage members of the youth culture who were not typically exposed to these art form disciplines. This was essentially 'high culture' trying to connect with popular culture or low culture. However, what became very apparent was that the reach [power] was being exploited. The balance between opportunities to advance the brand and our advertising potential was more in favour of the broadcasters or institutions that used *MOTW* as a vehicle to gain access to a market that was eluding them.

Hackney Empire was one of the few institutions that were interested in an equal benefit from collaborating on a project. I shot a promotional video for *Rudy's Rare Records* (Randall 2014) starring Lenny Henry and Jovian Wade from *MOTW*. This led to us working together on an interactive theatre experience; Hackney was interested in a live show, and we wanted to bring a new dynamic to the theatre, making the experience palatable to our large media fan base. The show mixed various media; the stage, film, and digital media using Twitter so the audience could participate during the intervals, and we held a competition that brought participants from the crowd onto the stage.

The show was a success, and more are scheduled for the winter season. We took advantage of this platform to invite individual(s) from the media industry to show how we could diversify and interlink alternative platforms to widen our reach. This has also helped to support Hackney Empire's initiatives to work with younger people and encourage their exposure to the theatre. *MOTW* continues to grow as a collective; for example, we made a film for Film London working with Charlie Hanson, who has endorsed our talents by being executive producer on the film *Chick or Treat*. The digital technology that supports platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, and Shooting People is broadening the access to film making. Our popularity on digital platforms meant that Film London knew who we were and that we had a

proven track record before we began to pitch the short film, which was well received at the BFI showcase and was watched by television and film producers, who are now also interested future projects.

5. 4. Transferral of the Sound System Model to the Internet

YouTube is virtual, an intangible 2D space, whereas the sound system was a physical apparatus but the spaces it occupied shifted from house to flat; it was a communal and immersive experience that was finite. The YouTube platform still relies on the physical equipment to produce the content, but it is consumed in isolation, rather than as a collective experience. The experience is visual-audio, in contrast to a sound system, which is audio-visual, but also it can be experienced repeatedly as part of an archive, which can be shared online across the globe.

The experience for the viewer is detached on the virtual platform; only we, as authors, have a physical experience. Even now, I have certain memory attachments to locations that remind me of shooting a particular scene and/or episode. Perhaps, for viewers, we made a huge impact in that they remember what they were doing when they first watched an episode.

Content is uploaded onto a virtual platform, thus making access easy to all viewers at any moment in time and on a selection of interfaces, such as phone, tablet, console, PC and smart television, with endless replays and a continuous growth of audiences. In addition, the product straddled the lines of niche and general consumption, being more accessible to everyone who might be intrigued, perhaps, in the evolution of the sound tape in visual form. Using the sound system ethos was the foundation for the development of a platform for cultural exchange.

Sound systems involve hiring, security, and promotional costs and require a space for a particular moment in time for anywhere between 6-8 hours. The film production process, which was guerrilla filming, lasted 3-6 hours, and there were fewer concerns around noise abatement and no hiring costs to distribute the film to our audience. As a practice-based researcher producing films for this doctoral study, I was afforded a certain amount of economic freedom in terms of sourcing equipment. The fact that *MOTW* was produced as a research project was also influential; had this been a commercial or even an independent project, the equipment costs would have rendered it prohibitively expensive, which would have affected the output in terms of quality and sustainability.

5. 5. Successes and Limitations

MOTW continues to progress and be noticed by the mainstream, affording the collective numerous opportunities within television and film, and it has also inspired some unexpected results, with a cross-over to theatre, too. However, the limitations are very apparent, as the virtual platform begins to decay almost immediately as a product of an environment [YouTube] because it is still in its infancy. There have been numerous discussions within the media of the internet about the new young industry cutting the throat of television. Aidan Radnedge, writing in the London *Metro,* comments,

> The future of television has been decided. It's goodbye to Towie and Made in Chelsea and hello to screaming goats and sneezing pandas. Google executive chairman Eric Schmidt says Internet video has displaced TV and that 'the future is now' for YouTube (Radnedge 2013, p.28)

These observations have been made without hindsight. What television has over the Internet is experience and familiarity. I have commented on the hegemony of the institutions that decide what we watch - unfairly, I might add. However, despite putting the responsibility of broadcasting into the hands of the people, at some point, what actually goes online is still controlled, with further controls to be implemented I am sure. Will it then be a question of who mediates the mediators? Will new academic research make the same commentary I have made about BFI's policies around inclusion? Only time will tell. Aidan Radnedge's article continues, 'Mr Schmidt said "It's not a replacement for something we know. It's a new thing that we have to think about, to program, to curate and build new platforms"' (Radnedge 2013, p.28).

Currently, YouTube is firmly in the middle of popular culture, which means that it has to outlive the fads and the next new interface and stand tall amongst even younger digital technologies that have developed the out-of-touch mould. I am aware that that although everything we have posted stands as a record, it is also dated by the said temporal recording. As with everything else, our master is *time*, and very few things - music, film, fashion - become immortalised as being timeless. The very nature of an interface that promotes interaction can be its own worst enemy, what Delueze and Guttari (2004) call the digital palimpsest of interaction: 'Modern, or State, societies, on the other hand, have replaced the declining codes with univocal overcoding, and the lost territories with a specific reterritorialization (which takes place in an overcoded geometrical space)' (Delueze and Guttari 2004, p.234).

Radnedge, in his article, cites Robert Kyncl as saying, 'TV is one-way. YouTube talks back... TV means reach YouTube means engagement, ; and later in the same article, he goes on to cite Jeffrey Katzenbery, who comments, 'This is a whole new form of content delivery and content consumption' (Radnedge 2013, p.28).

As *MOTW* is a collective, we are all increasing the opportunities that we have earned based on the recognition we have made for ourselves. For example, we won funding to make a film *Chick or Treat* for Film London. *Chick or Treat* is a teenage coming of age comedy about the most awkward time in your life and the spookiest night of the year. It is about two teenage friends, Joivan and Percelle, who have been slowly drifting apart. One wants costumes and candy, but the other wants a very different, more adult, type of Hallowe'en treat. The film is about the inbeTEENS, that is, when you are too old to stay at home with your parents but too young for the pub. We used the same formula as for *MOTW*: the cast wrote the short comedy while I directed, and we worked with Charlie Hanson, who endorsed our talents and was executive producer. *Chick or Treat* was well received when it was shown at the BFI Southbank, gaining interest from independent producers and Channel 4 who are currently looking for new directors. The limitations are that the areas we would like to be even more relevant in are still restricting access.

5. 6. *Both Sides of the Coin*: Mandem Recast in Drama

In light of the success of *MOTW*, I wanted to continue to perfect my storytelling ability. *Both Sides of the Coin* is a story based on my own experience and ongoing issues around the territorial nature of youth culture, which I believe comes from a deeper issue relating to limited access to appropriate activities for teenagers in working class environments. This issue affects not just third generation British diaspora, but also the natives within these impoverished environments. However, the stereotype around this issue is that it is a Black youth problem, rather than being generic, so my approach was to use an all-Black cast, but scratch below the surface to force subjectivity to emerge. This meant depicting them in a more realistic light without compromising the harsh reality of the psychology that is incomprehensible in the media when 'they' discuss postcode wars. This is not a new problem; growing up disputes around territories is due to not having anything to do. Vanley Burke comments on this in a short film interview I found on YouTube about his work *Handsworth Revisited with Dr Vanley Burke*, in which he comments on youth culture in the 1980s when he was a play leader.

> At the time, a lot of young black kids would use the park for recreational purposes. There was very little activities laid on for them, and so they would just move around in groups. From time to time, they would get moved on by the park police or police in general, which brought about some dislike for people in uniforms. (Burke 2009)

Based on everything I had learnt from my research, the production of a short film that makes a statement that is embedded inside a story is more memorable. In addition, due to the success of *MOTW*, I wanted to use popular faces to encourage young audiences to watch and to show these young actors portraying different characters with a more serious subject matter. The filming raised new issues around depiction, I shot the film in Peckham, an area I remembered as being quite volatile when I was growing up, but I had never anticipated that the landscape would have changed so much. The area was completely different to how I remembered it as a teenager: it was extremely quiet, the lighting on the estate was better, and the locals were more personable. I write this now to better understand the effect film has on an area even after you leave it. I do not want *Both Sides of the Coin* to show an area, which has greatly improved, in a bad light and want to make it clear that it was fiction first with commentary on the issue around territory. This is not to forget that in actual fact, the film does not end stereotypically because I wanted to challenge the depiction of youth and to highlight that although these realities can be harsh, they are not harsh all the time. Otherwise, I and many others would not have survived. Films such as *Bullet Boy* (Dibb 2004), *Ill Manors* (Drew 2012), *Kidulthood* (Huda 2006) and *1 Day* (Woolcock 2009) are extremely one-sided in their depiction of Black youth and youth culture in London, offering only a one dimensional depiction that is entrenched in the stereotypes that continue to isolate this demographic as being problematic. This is not to say that the depictions are not close to accurate, but they are the only representation that could raise concern over representation. It cannot be denied that there were atrocities, but there were no more than in any other space in London or further afield. The film was competent in making its point and showing depth to the performance of actor(s) who are more well-known for their comedy roles in *MOTW*.

Conclusion

This research examines Black British filmmaking; it looks at the limited archive of films about Black British sub-culture and contributes to it by drawing on my personal trajectory and on how this is reflected in my own filmmaking.

My filmmaking is based on my personal experiences and the experiences of those around me and is founded on the transferable skills gained from my participation in the sound system culture.

The Black experience has been reflected in British television and film, with comments on how the Caribbean marginalised diaspora struggles to integrate within the British framework due to the lack of opportunity for social economic advancement. The films of Black British filmmakers John Akomfrah, Menilik Shabazz, Horace Ove, and Isaac Julian have a relation to my own films as they address the same social issues, aesthetics and cultural pluralism in environments within the social constructs of Britain

The films discussed in this thesis have all made an attempt at providing an alternative voice and a subjective perspective, which comment on social integration political positioning and perceptions of Black diasporas living within the British framework. Using drama, documentary and a combination of the two, these pioneers of Black British film have attempted to convey and highlight this intolerant attitude towards transnationalism. During my personal trajectory and my exposure to British television, I have witnessed the imbalance in the portrayal of Black British communities in the media and how it has been challenged by dramas, such as *Pressure* and *Burning an Illusion*, and documentaries, such as *Step Forward Youth* and *Handsworth Songs,* all of which de-construct media representation and re-present these issues from the perspective of marginalised communities living in Britain.

As discussed within this research, British TV sitcoms have also made attempts to address these issues that have further compounded hostile attitudes towards social integration. The success of the comedy series *Desmond's* had a much more balanced approach to addressing these issues, but it was aired for only a third of the time compared with racially prejudice sitcoms like *Till Death Us Do Part* and its later incarnation *In Sickness and in Health*. Black British filmmakers have not benefited from an even playing field or free market, and so have been unable to take advantage of the mainstream platform, thus making it difficult for their work to be seen, as mentioned in this research. Thus, the films discussed here, some of which I became aware of only through studying film at university level, further highlights the lack of public access outside of academia. This clearly demonstrates that there has been only a limited attempt to cultivate Black British film as a mainstream output.

As an example of new discussions, my approach to this practice-based research uses two main strands as my method of enquiry. The first strand, *Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax*, explores the Black British sub-culture of sound systems, using a hybrid of the documentary modes discussed in Chapter 4, which facilitate specific approaches to recording and representing the subject and topic in the most effective way. My own direct personal experience within this culture and the understanding of the tactics used to facilitate and maintain the functioning of this DIY culture allowed me [filmmaker] and Gladdy Wax [subject] a relative connection built on the back of the timeframe of doctoral research, which allowed me to examine in real depth how I would capture the history of the sound system culture and its importance to Black culture in the UK. The sound system culture is also evident in the films I have discussed and further underlines the connection to my own filmmaking and personal trajectory.

The sound system culture has also changed; the sound system culture of my youth is not the sound system culture I revisited. The original African drum and rhythm of the Caribbean still resonate within the music, but the messages are not the same, nor are some of the soundmen the same as I remember them. They look the same - maybe older and wiser - but

their experiences relating to the progression of this Black British sub-culture are bitter. During the process of recording the archive material for this research, I experienced much confrontation from those I admired from my youth as providers of a platform for traditional cultural exchange. I was not the first filmmaker to approach many of the sound systems with the idea of examining this Black British sub-culture in detail and providing a voice for a sub-culture I grew up on. Other filmmakers and broadcast companies before me had done this and had exploited the participants and re-presented their information while not fulfilling promises made, which resulted in the participants being guarded and distrustful. Gladdy Wax, who is renowned in the community of soundmen, made this very clear about himself and others; however, he was still very willing to participate once he knew my motives were genuine.

The archive that was produced as part of the methodology for this project, and that includes some 160 hours of interviews with sound men and footage of important cultural events, could be developed further to encompass a history of the sound system culture. This in itself was too broad an approach for this project, but exploration of this avenue is vital avenue in the future. Investigating the sound system as a bigger documentary field involves a much larger body of work that must consider sound systems across the country to provide an even landscape for this integral part of Black British sub-culture, which has not given sound systems appropriate representation regarding their importance and impact on Black culture in the UK. Sound systems are no longer as prevalent as I remember in my youth. However, the DIY culture of sound systems continues today and contributes to British culture with new young and inventive sound systems, such as *Stereo City*, *Wassie One*, *Spinners Choice* and *Young Warrior* (son of *Jah Shaka*) continuing the traditions along with icons *Gladdy Wax*, *Jah Shaka*, *Saxon International*, *Coxone*, *King Tubby's,* and *Lord Gellies* to name but a few within the circuit, who not only still perform to crowds that are made up of diaspora, but who also appeal to native British people who appreciate the music and performance.

Contemporary sound system culture has developed a global impact with sound systems from Europe and further afield: *Heartical* in France, *Abassi Hi Power* in Germany, and *King Addies* in America; and *Mighty Crown* in Japan. As mentioned in Chapter One, the sound system culture is perpetually in motion; the technology and formats have evolved in line with technical advancements and digital technologies, opening a discourse on the sound system culture via podcasts, internet TV and radio and online platforms like IrishandChin.com, which specialises in sound system and reggae dancehall culture internationally. The sound system culture has evolved to accommodate different genres of music. For example, there are sound systems today that specialise in rare groove (5th Avenue); uplifting and soulful house, (KCC and the Rocking Crew); hip-hop, UK bass, and trap (Stooki); and jungle, drum and bass, rap, reggae and Asian sounds (Asian Dub Foundation ADF). These new evolutions in sound system

have used this DIY culture as a model and have applied it to their own particular style(s) of music.

Sound system culture has also been used as experimental art to evoke the memories and atmosphere associated with a history of Black British culture. Dubmorphology, a collective founded by Gary Stewart and Trevor Mathison, uses soundscapes and impressive visuals to comment on socio-political issues. In 2014, the installation *Up Hill Down Hall* (Tancons 2014) came to the Tate Modern. London sound design, by Stewart and Mathison, looks at participation and the art of performance within a public space as a re-enactment inside the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern of the sound associated with sound systems at the Notting Hill Carnival,. Furthermore, in 2015, following the success of *Up Hill Down Hall, Curating Carnival* (Boyce and Goodwin 2015) was a procession in Central St Martins, and London sound design by Stewart and Mathison. (Stewart 2014). The alternative application of the sound system model, normally used as a platform to amplify the art of music, is itself acknowledged as a mode of creativity and as experimental art. Gary Stewart also performs with Asian Dub Foundation, and Trevor Mathison is an original member of the Black Audio Film Collective demonstrating the connection between the sound system culture, Black British culture and other art forms.

One of the original contributions to knowledge that this research has made is identifying and transposing the sound system model into filmmaking as a strategy to make and disseminate no-budget independent films. The application of Black market tactics, which was used as an alternative approach to making film content, and the free access to equipment for the duration of the research made it possible both to build a film archive and to produce the comedy series in intensive production periods – something that would have incurred massive costs outside the university. In essence, this work could not have been undertaken outside the academy without compromising the timeframe and budget and, therefore, the depth of content and quality.

The second strand of my research is the production of cultural texts in the form of films that communicate and celebrate the contemporary Black British experience. The comedy series *Mandem on the Wall*, influenced by my personal trajectory and based on the kind of television I watched in my youth, was produced and received by an audience previously overlooked and inaccessible to the mainstream gatekeepers of culture.

Using the model of sound systems and applying it to a virtual platform reinvents the framework, but not the content. It uses the accessible technology of the internet to increase access to filmmaking and to allow voices not present in the mainstream to be heard directly and their art to be acknowledged. Indeed, in the case of *Mandem on the Wall*, we have found that the mainstream wants more, as exemplified by the commissions from the Tate, the Home

Office, and Channel 4 and by the interest in the brand and its reach. In these terms, the experiment has been successful, and the evidence of this is in the development of the Mandem cast's careers and my own. [13] Joivan Wade, Percelle Ascot, Dee Kartier and I have an independent platform to showcase our abilities and to continue to develop an audience that was initially Black youth, but that has grown to accommodate a much wider youth culture as part of popular culture, which reaches beyond the UK. This level of exposure has brought in new opportunities for acting on television for the cast, and I am currently developing a drama series *Pig Farm* (Osborne 2016) to capitalise on online platform power and consider alternative online distribution models. We have been commissioned by Film London and have had interest from major studios, such as Universal. The difficult question is, what happens next? When the mainstream has been broken into, what is the next step? How long will this opportunity last and what will we make of it?

Spending time with Gladdy Wax and archiving his knowledge was an important part of ensuring that this part of Black British culture is documented and preserved. Building relationships with participants is vital in obtaining in depth and analytical perspectives on subject matter usually tackled only superficially by other media channels (namely, the Notting Hill Carnival, sound system culture and Black British identity) and to convey the richness of experience in detail.

My approach to documentary and drama has been successful in both providing a voice and building a platform. They are intrinsically linked, firstly providing a blueprint to what had been done in the past, by examining and reflecting on Black British culture in detail and with reference to context. Secondly, they make it possible to acknowledge the value of this contribution and to build an approach using new technologies to articulate contemporary Black cultural experience, disseminate it, and thereby identify and ultimately quantify this overlooked audience.

The level of exploitation the sound system culture has experienced is relative to the power of their platform, something *MOTW* experienced due to the power of its online platform. Several institutions and production companies, such as the Home Office, Tate Modern, Big Talk productions, and Universal, have all been interested in *MOTW* and what benefit we could provide for them based on our audience reach. However, this does not involve a two-way

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[13] The *MOTW* has starred in the Hit TV show Youngers series 1 & 2 for Channel 4 and Big Talk, Joivan Wade featured in two episodes of Doctor Who, Percelle Ascott starred in Aliens Vs Wizards. Dee Kartier , Joivan Wade and Percelle Ascott just finished shooting a 2015 Christmas Special with David Walliams. Freddie Osborne Directed and filmed Behind the scenes for Channel 4 and 4oD, mentored by Pete Travis and worked with Charlie Hanson. Freddie Osborne is also set to shoot a comedy feature film in 2016

transaction, which was the point of the development of the platform in the first place, that is, showcasing talent and the ability to work within the industry. While working with some of these institutions has provided invaluable experience, the benefits are yet to materialise. The relationships we have developed are based on an audience business model market: they are short-term projects; they lack the longevity or consistency that has been maintained amongst the *MOTW* cast and are more about exploiting our brand's reach rather than developing any interest in the community we come from. We continue to work together as *MOTW*, assisting on each other's independent projects and working with Gladdy Wax, thus developing and maintaining a personal and professional relationship as a two-way exchange. My work on the online platform and the larger contribution to the archive of Black representation is still in progress, reflecting directly what Vanley Burke says in *Handsworth Songs*: 'A work never stops, is never finished. It is important to breathe new life into the archive.'[14]

Using the archive I have collated, I intend to continue developing my documentary on the evolution of sound systems providing more insight into this Black British sub-culture and adding to a limited body of work in Black British filmmaking. I am pursuing funding to extend the depth and breadth of this research by incorporating sound systems across the UK to provide a broader picture of this DIY/Black British culture

The black market is elusive, unspoken and resourceful; I have used tactics learnt from my personal trajectory and exposure to the sound system culture and the environments I grew up in and applied this way of thinking and practical application to bypass the gatekeepers and traditional pathways into the film industry.

The black market is forever changing to prevent detection and stay up to date with supply and demand. I have discussed at length some of these tactics lifting the veil on some of the processes which are no longer valid as they have been pinned down so they evolve and adapt to continue to avoid detection from those who want to stop it, just as Marx famously states: 'All that is solid, melts into air.'[15] So too, the black market evolves, shifts, and regroups as a resource for those who are marginalised from the dominant discourse, to use as they need to survive. The black market is still in constant motion today; you just have to know where to look and how to see it. I will continue to use black market tactics as part of my life experience's it promotes creativity and ingenuity and gives a good grounding for my career in filmmaking.

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[14] *Handsworth Songs* (1987) Akomfrah, J

[15] Marx and Engels, (1848) The Communist Manifesto, Introduction, section 1, paragraph 18, lines 12-14

I hope this research will be the catalyst for additional contributions in agreement with and contra to my findings, to open a discourse regarding this limited archive and representation of the Black British experience on screen. Filmmakers and content providers building a platform to showcase their work can use the model I have developed.

The prefix of 'Black' filmmaker will only become erroneous and unnecessary by increasing the proliferation of work by marginalised filmmakers, thereby levelling the playing field, so that films may be identified primarily by their genre, their ingenuity, and the stories they tell.

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It Ain't Half Hot Mum (1981) Kilby, J

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NOTES

1. *The Stuart Hall Project* 2013 Akomfrah

2. Enoch Powell's full 'Rivers of Blood' speech he gave at the Conservative Association meeting in Birmingham on 20 April 1968
Available at:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html

3. Working with Charlie Hanson on a Short for Film London, I discussed my research with in person and via sent email correspondence regarding Black sitcom that Mr Hanson had Produced (No Problem, Desmond's, Chef), 29 August 2015

4. Sound system archive

Attended and filmed One Love Reggae Festival: http://www.onelovefestival.co.uk

- Friday 19 - Sunday 21 August 2011 Hainault Forest Country Park London
- Friday 10 - Sunday 12 August 2012 Hop Farm Paddock Wood Kent
- Friday 16 – Sunday 18 August 2013 Damyns Hall Aerodrome, Upminster Essex

Bricklane Festival 2011 2-day Free Music Festival PA provided by King Tubby's sound system
This is a link: http://heatherclifford.co.uk/projects/faces/faces

Albertines Pub Lewisham Way, Brockley London SE4 Reggae Vinyl Meltdown Night every Wednesday night

THE VINYL MELT DOWN, 25/04/2012, Pt. 1 available on the link below:
https://www.mixcloud.com/ButchCassidy/the-platinum-finger-butch-cassidy-flip-man-the-vinyl-melt-down-25042012-pt-2/

The 'Vinyl Melt Down' was exactly what it says on the tin. (Old and rarely heard Jamaican music, and to a lesser extent Rhythm & Blues, as you will hear near to the ending of part 3.) Organised by Daddy Frenchy & PD Coolie, every Wednesday evening. The only rules were; Vinyl only, No tunes recorded after 1984, and no English Lovers Rock

Interviews with Gladdy Wax at his home every Thursday evening for 12 months
Here a selection interviewees regarding sound system culture:

DubPlate Pearl
Maxi Preist– English Reggae Music Artist
Tippa Irie– English Reggae Music Artist
Father Gellies
Wassie One
Night Ravers - Daddy Coolie
King Tubby's Sound System - Cecil
Sis Audrey – English Reggae Music Artist
Saxon – Dennis Rowe
Jason T Dubz
Direct Impact

5. *MOTW*, was commission by Hackney Empire to do an Online Advert for Rudy's Rare Records. Joivan Wade a member of *MOTW* played Ritchie son of Adam (Lenny Henry) Lenny Henry and writer Danny Robins were instrumental in the commissioning of the *MOTW* live show. Promotional video demonstrated our professionalism we were offered a live show of our online comedy show with Danny Robins, which was a success. It debut 11 April 2015 sold out. Due to return in the winter theatre season with dates in London and the midlands tbc http://www.hackneyempire.co.uk/mandemonthewall

6. Email correspondence Charlie Hanson, 29 August 2015

7. Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970 Article 7, (b) (ii)
At the request of the State Party of origin, to take appropriate steps to recover and return any such cultural property imported after the entry into force of this Convention in both States concerned, provided, however, that the requesting State shall pay just compensation to an innocent purchaser or to a person who has valid title to that property. Requests for recovery and return shall be made through diplomatic offices. The requesting Party shall furnish, at its expense, the documentation and other evidence necessary to establish its claim for recovery and return. The Parties shall impose no customs duties or other charges upon cultural property returned pursuant to this Article. All expenses incident to the return and delivery of the cultural property shall be borne by the requesting Party.
Retrieve from:
http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-
URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

8. Marx and Engels, (1848) The Communist Manifesto, Introduction, section 1, paragraph 18, lines 12-14

9. BFI British Film Certification Schedule 1 to the Films Act 1985 Cultural Test Guidance Notes
The guidance notes produced by BFI in conjunction with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to explain the operation of the cultural test for film. This guidance is non-statutory, and has been produced to help prospective applicants understand the requirement for certification as a British Film.
http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-revised-cultural-test-for-film-guidance-notes-2015-03.pdf

10. Vanley Burke's photographs are noted for making visible in a sensitive way black daily life in Britain. Looking straight at the camera the boy presents the viewer with a strong sense of his own identity. The inclusion of the Union Jack reinforces this impression and seems to say 'this is my home, this is my flag.' The image also directly confronts the adoption of the Union Jack by the racist National Front in the 1970s.
Available at:
http://www.search.connectinghistories.org.uk/Details.aspx?&ResourceID=2536&PageIndex=2&SearchType=3

11. 69th Edinburgh International Film Festival & British Independent Film Festival Submission of Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax

Dear Freddie Osborne,

69th Edinburgh International Film Festival Submission of Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax
Submitted 2015

Thank you very much for submitting "Carnival Through the Eyes of Gladdy Wax" to the 69th Edinburgh International Film Festival. This year we received 550 Feature Documentary submissions from all over the world. This provided us with a fantastic choice of films from which to compile our programme but sadly also meant that there were many worthy films, which we were unable to select.

I am sorry to let you know that, after careful consideration, we have decided not to select your film for our Festival programme. We cannot give you a more personal response as regrettably we do not have the resources to provide individual explanations for each decision at this time.

Once again thank you for thinking of EIFF. We very much hope to have the opportunity to work with you in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Thornton
Submissions Assistant

British Independent Film Festival

British Independent Film Festival has sent you the message below regarding your submission of "Notting Hill Carnival Through The Eyes Of Gladdy Wax" with the tracking number BiFF15-698.
Submitted 2015

Dear Freddie,

Thank you for submitting Notting Hill Carnival Through The Eyes Of Gladdy Wax. We really enjoyed your film and were impressed with the high quality throughout. We have a number of selection rounds, before finalising our Official Selection and your project reached the final stages. It did not make the final cut for the festival's Official Selection, but we look forward to watching your career carefully in the future and would like to encourage you to submit to our festival (and festivals in general) in future years, with your next projects. We wish you the best of luck with Notting Hill Carnival Through The Eyes Of Gladdy Wax and thank you for taking the time to enter our festival.

Best wishes,

The Film Festival Guild

12. Sample of YouTube Channel statistics of most viewed episode

Video ID		Video Length	Views	Est. Minutes watched
MOTW Ep 1	L1f6UWkDVGc	8.08	1,385,258	4,140025
MOTW Ep 2	LczPtwZwiN8	11.65	480,902	1,836239
MOTW Ep 3	kLWuOHzTTgQ	13.82	769,102	4,198098
MOTW Ep 4	49_AqbuGU30	11.53	566,653	2,394344
MOTW Ep 5	U5C0mtkYimU	14.03	382,181	2,466556
MOTW Ep 6	5NUPHLtWe64	17.15	369,084	3,239014
MOTW Ep 7	KYbPZspmqo	16.35	364,560	3,113048
MOTW Ep 8	KwldvgViVPE	13.33	336,092	2,381454

MOTW Ep 9	t-Jd0n1JSyI	3.82	300,031	784,666

13. The *MOTW* has starred in the Hit TV show Youngers series 1 & 2 for Channel 4 and Big Talk, Joivan Wade featured in two episodes of Doctor Who, Percelle Ascott starred in Aliens Vs Wizards. Dee Kartier , Joivan Wade and Percelle Ascott just finished shooting a 2015 Christmas Special with David Walliams. Freddie Osborne Directed and filmed Behind the scenes for Channel 4 and 4oD, mentored by Pete Travis and worked with Charlie Hanson. Freddie Osborne is also set to shoot a comedy feature film in 2016

14. *Handsworth Songs* (1987) Akomfrah, J
https://www.closeupfilmcentre.com/film_programmes/handsworth-songs/

15. Marx and Engels, (1848) The Communist Manifesto, Introduction, section 1, paragraph 18, lines 12-14