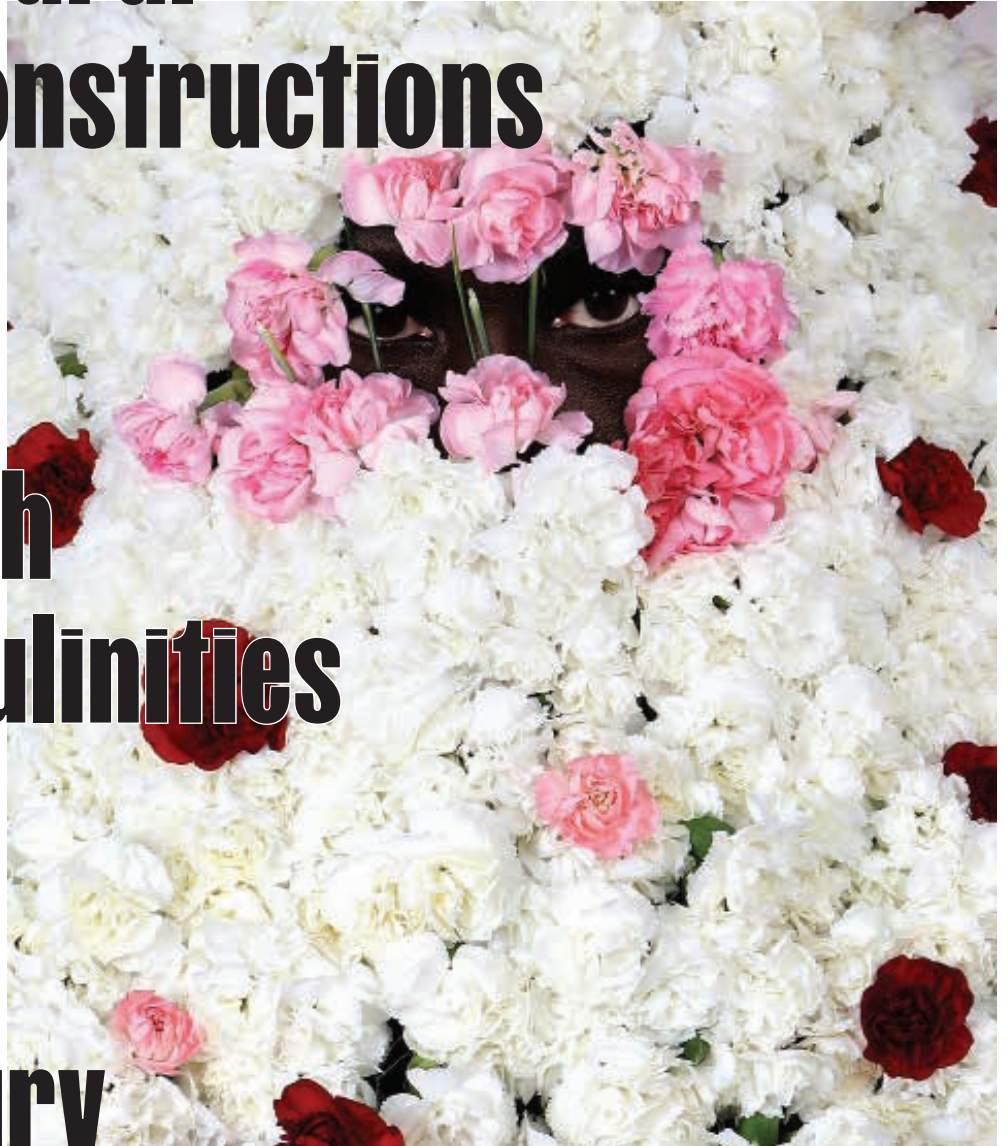# Visual Representations & Cultural (Re)Constructions of Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham

Ian Lloyd Sergeant

Visual Representations and Cultural (Re)Constructions of Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham

Ian Lloyd Sergeant

Front cover
Figure 1: *Is It Just Me? Or Is It You? Red, White and Pink Flowers,*
2018 © Amartey Golding

Visual Representations and Cultural (Re)Constructions of Black British Masculinities in 21ˢᵗ Century Birmingham

Abstract

"Visual Representations" locates Birmingham and the West Midlands as places of cultural significance within contested histories of migration and settlement of African Caribbean people. This practice-based research uses an original, interdisciplinary methodological approach of "cut & mix" to produce new knowledge and insights into the contemporary conjuncture and the pathologisation of Black British men in Birmingham and their communities.

"Visual Representations" draws on the tumultuous histories of the 1970s and 1980s, a period of critical reckoning regarding the economic, cultural and political of Blackness in the UK, which saw the emergence of the counter-cultural practices of the West Midlands collective the Blk Art Group (1979-1984). The research questions, to what extent is the Blk Art Group's art useful in framing constructs of contemporary Black male identities?

In response to the continued silencing of Black British men, methods of socially engaged arts practice and autoethnography centre the voices and experiences of Black British men, as a means of empowerment and critical reflection, in post-Thatcherite neoliberal Birmingham. Their lived experiences, as primary data interpreted through conjunctural and intersectional cultural theory, highlight "what is at stake", due to the hegemony of Westernised epistemologies and pathologies of race, place, gender, identities and sexualities. Hence, how are masculinities defined and understood by Black males, and how do Black males construct their masculine identities?

A further outcome of this practice-based research is *Cut & Mix* the exhibition, to address the research questions: how does popular culture influence these masculine identities, and how are these identities negotiated in their communities? Here, identities are deconstructed and reappraised through newly commissioned and archival artworks by Black male, female and queer artists. The urgency of discourses of representation, warrants public engagement, indicating the intended impact of this thesis through its dissemination in communities and institutions of Birmingham, the Midlands, and further afield.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Figures

Abbreviations

All Black Connect - ABC

Anticipating Black Futures - ABF

Birmingham City University - BCU

Birmingham Race Action Partnership - b:RAP

Blk Art Group - BAG

Black Lives Matter - BLM

British Black Art Movement - BAM

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies – CCCS

High Speed Rail - HS2

LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (+ represents other sexualities)

Midlands 4 Cities - M4C

New Art Exchange - NAE

Practice-Based Research - PBR

Socially-Engaged Arts Practice - SEA

Preface
Format, Content and Structure

"Visual Representations and Cultural (Re)Constructions of Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham" (Visual Representations), is produced in the style of an art journal, i.e. *Black Style* (2004), *NKA: Journal of Contemporary African Art* and *Ten 8*. Produced and published in the West Midlands, from 1979 to *1992, Ten 8* was a "forum for West Midlands-based photographers to come together and share images and ideas" (Bishton, 2011), and a platform for diverse representations. In this format, "Visual Representations" resonates with the history of *Ten 8* as a West Midlands produced publication, locating it to place. Therefore, the format of this thesis is intended to appeal to those who might not necessarily pick up a book or thesis, but may be attracted to a journal with images, due to its discursive theoretical content of Black British masculinities and visual arts practice. Each chapter is presented as an article, supplemented by images of artworks featured in the exhibition *Cut & Mix*, and other works contextualising this practice-based research.

The expositions within this thesis are of lived experiences, generously provided by Black British men in Birmingham and of my own personal experiences. As such, "Visual Representations" appeals to its readers to be considerate, in respect of the time given, personal experiences shared, and the social actors preparedness to be vulnerable. In doing so, it is hoped readers will appreciate what is revealed.

Why Black is spelt with a capital B

The term "Black" is spelt with a capital "B" throughout this research, unless I am quoting directly from speech during socially engaged discussions or verbatim citation. The rationale being, the lower case "b" connotes racial construction of colour, whilst a capital "B" refers to people of African descent and throughout the African diaspora, with shared histories, identities and culture. Throughout this thesis, further discussions will address notions of identities from the perspective of social actors involved in socially engaged art discussions and interpretations of intersectional and conjunctural cultural theory.

Cut & Mix

When referring to "cut & mix" methodologically, it will be written in lower case and in quotation marks. When describing the exhibition *Cut & Mix*, it is capitalised and italicised without quotation marks.

Introduction
Voice and Listening

Our experience, my experience.

"Visual Representations", at times referred to as practice-based research (PBR), utilises curatorial practice and cultural theory, to give voice to the Black British male lived experience in Birmingham. It gives permission for historically marginalised voices to be heard and not dismissed (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002). In turn, it argues for the marginalised within the marginalised to be heard and not silenced, namely voices of Black women and those who identify as LGBTQ+. Why these voices matter (Couldry, 2010), and should be heard, valued, listened to and acted upon, is their call for justice and equality (Bassel, 2017, p. 6). The voices heard within discussions of this PBR, speak from positions of intersectionality in respect of age, race, gender, sexualities, class and place.

At the same time, I seek to find and position *my* voice - a curatorial voice, an academic voice, an authentic voice. In writing this thesis, I have employed a reflective voice, to tell my story. Hence, the use of the critical approach of autoethnography to reflect on issues, such as authenticity of voice and the wider ethical considerations of conducting socially engaged arts practice, SEA. Here, the ethical approach during the SEA discussions was paramount of "informed consent" (Christians, 2000, pp. 138-139), signed consent forms by participants, prior to taking part, and the completion of an academic ethical framework. Further ethical considerations are discussed in the masculinities and autoethnography chapter (Chapter 2 & 3), whilst the narrative device of the reflexive voice contributes to unpicking and reweaving discourses inherent in this practice-based research.

The intention of "Visual Representations" is to platform a range of voices, including my own, and bring new knowledge of Black British male lived experiences in Birmingham into academic and arts institutions. Of equal importance, is the sharing of these lived experiences within communities and society in general. Without this, any real impact of qualitative engagement might not be achieved because the conversations taking place institutionally, are likely to be different to what is being lived and said externally.

1

"Visual Representations" disrupts the power dynamics of speaker(s) and listener(s) (Bassel, 2017, p. 4). This is achieved through the use of discussions as socially engaged arts practice, where the social realities of Black British men in Birmingham have been "listened" to, "heard" and interpreted. Using these methods, their accounts gain value, particularly in the current moment of disavowal (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995, p. 212). The demand to be listened to and heard is the pursuit for "political equality" (Bassel, 2017), exemplified during the SEA discussions. Here, **FT** recollects the lack of Black history taught in his school stating, "this conversation here today, is what should have been happening when I was 10, 11, 12 in defining myself".

FT sums up the severity of the situation we find ourselves in today, encapsulating what this PBR is about, and the urgent need to have these conversations, with ourselves and with others, at the earliest stages in life. The aesthetic value of SEA and dialogical practices (Kester, 2004), I argue, contribute to individual and collective voices being heard, particularly in this neoliberal moment, where there is a "crisis of voice" between the individual and the collective (Couldry, 2010). Thus, "Visual Representations" argues for the act of listening where no singular voice has privilege over the other, adopting an "anticipatory" position of "listening out" (Lacey, 2021). In respect of SEA, Helguera points to a paucity of literature related to conversation (2011, p. 40), indicating the need for, and originality of, this research.

The Conjuncture

"Visual Representations" argues for the importance of reflecting on the past conjuncture of the 1970s to 1980s, in comparison to the present moment in 21st century Birmingham. This is where the question of utilising the art of the Blk Art Group (BAG) of the late 1970s to 1980s comes into effect, curatorially and theoretically, in the formation of Black British masculine identities, past and present.

BAG's art by Donald Rodney, Marlene Smith, Eddie Chambers, Keith Piper, Claudette Johnson, along with other works of Black British artists during the era known as the British Black Art Movement (BAM) of the 1980s, has recently featured in major exhibitions across Britain and abroad (Aitkens & Robles, 2019). Radio (BBC Radio 4, 2017; BBC Radio 3, 2017), and TV documentaries (BBC Four, 2018), discuss their work on themes of race, gender, diaspora and the aesthetics conveyed through their interdisciplinary practices. Tate, Birmingham and Wolverhampton Museums and Art Galleries, and other galleries have purchased works by members of BAG and other Black and South Asian artists for their collections (Culture, 2016), as well as being collected privately. Black British artists

are now represented by galleries of international repute, with their respective practices inspiring symposiums, conferences, research initiatives (Blk Art Group Research Project, 2012a; Museum Sheffield, 2012; BAM, 2016), and scholarly programmes (Rito, 2021).

In recounting the era, Mercer asserted "it is simply *too* early to try to define the 1980s as closed or finished period" (2005, p. 50). My rationale for using this statement of the impact of Black British art on modernism of the twentieth century is metaphorical. "Visual Representations" appropriates this statement as a conjunctural device (Althusser, 2005; Grossberg, 2010; Hall, et al., 2013), to contextualise the past and in viewing the present. As a result, "Visual Representations'" interdisciplinary approach of practice and theory brings new understandings of BAG's radical art through its introduction to new audiences alongside a current generation of artists in the forthcoming exhibition *Cut & Mix*, informed by lived experiences of Black British men in Birmingham.

Of paramount importance is the realisation of PBR through a conjunctural lens. Conjunctural analysis addresses "convergent and divergent tendencies" of "power relations" at a "particular time" (Gilbert, 2019, p. 6). This PBR acknowledges Gilbert's (2019) conjunctural assessment by focusing on a period of time, in its analysis of socio-political and economic conditions in Britain. This is achieved through discourses pertaining to Black British men in Birmingham, of popular and youth culture, in respect of (un)settlements reached under successive governments during 1970s to 1980s, and the present.

"Visual Representations" identifies conjunctural paradigms past and present of crisis, tensions and antagonisms, where "a conjuncture can be long or short" (Hall & Massey, 2010, p. 57). Hall continues, stating the focus of *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law & Order (Policing the Crisis)* (2013) was the conjuncture of post-war migration and settlement, upheavals of the 1970s and the onset of neoliberalism. The focus of this PBR is located within this moment of crisis, in order to articulate we are at another or even a continued conjuncture. This is actualised by neoliberal, globalised capitalist pursuits, since the turn of the 21st century. The idea of the conjuncture, therefore, lends itself well to Mercer's claim of the period not being over (2005, p. 50).

My conjunctural approach is of an ongoing and continuous "organic crisis" in Britain (Grossberg, 2019, p. 56). This is exemplified in three sections of *Chapter 1, "Cut & Mix": A Methodological Approach*, namely, *Why Place Matters* (1.3), *A Place Called Home?* (1.4) and *Becoming* (1.5). In *Why Place Matters* (1.3). I argue, since the post-war migration of African-Caribbean people to Britain, and their settlement due to employment, was then followed by

severe upheaval (Hall, et al., 2013, p. xv). The conjunctural continuation is illustrated in *A Place Called Home?* (1.4) experienced by the "children of the Windrush generation" (Piper, 2012). Due to poor schooling (Coard, 1971), in the 1960s and as they came of age in 1970s, they and their communities in Birmingham were racially and criminally pathologised and stigmatised (Hall, et al., 2013; Palmer, 2019).

The unresolved crisis can be articulated through flashpoints of "ruptural unity" (Althusser, 2005, p. 62), in Handsworth, Birmingham and nationally in 1981, 1985, and more recently in 2011, where Black, white and Asian youths battled against the police and the "existing regime" (Ibid.). "Visual Representations" and *Policing the Crisis* (2013) locates Birmingham as a significant site for conjunctural analysis, with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) being based in Birmingham, bringing the Handsworth incident to their attention.

Becoming (1.5) references the continuing conjuncture into the millennium, which I argue, is realised within the "crisis of hegemony of the British state" (Hall, et al., 2013, pp. 212-213). Here, race and class subordination in Britain was initially achieved during Thatcher's neoliberal free market economics, "law and order society", and currently, due to Brexit. A conjunctural lens implies a continuity, a temporal overlap, a coalescence, which this PBR illustrates by reflecting on the past, drawing comparison to the present and speculating on potential futures.

I argue, we are or have been at this conjunctural moment of crisis for a long time, where significant events have had national and or global repercussions, if we consider the "war on terror" as a result of the felling of the twin towers, prolonged austerity due to the banking crisis, and the inequalities of the Covid-19 pandemic. Running parallel to these seismic moments are the continued and perpetual socio-economic crisis of refugees; pathologizing and marginalisation of Black people in Britain, Grenfell, Windrush scandal; Brexit with its undertones and overtones of nationalism; rise and fall of Trump and advancement of far-right populism, not only in the West but now in the global South.

It is said at the "point of crisis", there is the potential for change (Ehlers, 2006). In Britain, we have arrived at a point of crisis on several occasions, precipitating the art of BAG: the Brixton riots leading to *The Scarman Report* (1982); the murder of Stephen Lawrence leading to *The Macpherson Report* (1999); the Windrush scandal leading to Lessons Learned Review (2020), and the recent and heavily criticised Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021), against the backdrop of the pandemic, murder of George Floyd and

Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020. Furthermore, we are still awaiting the final outcome of the Grenfell fire investigation, which claimed 72 lives and impacted 100s of families and the wider communities. Although, *The Macpherson Report* (1999) brought the issue of "institutionalised racism" to our attention. What all the other reports, reviews and audits have in common, is their failure to recognise the "contradictions" of continued institutionalised and overt racism in Britain (Althusser, 2005), and the intersectional socio-political and economic impact on the lives of Black and ethnic minority people. On top of this, no one is held to account for these failures, which continue to cost lives.

"Visual Representations" is written and produced in the conjuncture of a global pandemic and the racialised murder of George Floyd. These incidences have sparked what I describe as "performative" response and gestures, including "clapping for carers", "Black Lives Matter" public statements by corporate institutions, and "taking the knee" in sports. These performative actions symbolise the need and call for more "radical" thinking and counter-discourses (Andrews, 2018). Radical action and thinking, I argue throughout this research, was undertaken by members of BAG within their practice and in response to the conjuncture of the late 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, conjunctural analysis through cultural theory is critical in reflecting on the past to position the present, in respect of (re) constructing Black British masculinities in 21st century Birmingham.

As such, I regard the SEA devised during this PBR with Black British men, as a radical act, to hear of their lived experiences in Birmingham, of the "dis-ease" in British society (Das, 2019, p. 95). SEA participants of differing generations spoke of the same kind of racism, homogeneity and the pathologising of Black men. They shared experiences of the state of their mental health, which for some, theirs, and other Black men's perceptions of masculinity, made it difficult to talk about with other men. In respect of sexualities, some spoke of being fetishized, and others of being stigmatised and ostracised for being gay. Theoretically, a conjunctural perspective, allows me to move between the past and present, in turn creating an original analysis of the Black British male lived experience in Birmingham. Simultaneously, a practice-based approach has transformed these testimonies into the conceptualisation of the exhibition *Cut & Mix.*

Practice-Based Research (PBR)

PBR establishes a conceptualised framework at the intersection of theory and practice, which I inhabit as "curator-researcher", a "third-space" (Whitchurch, 2008), of "praxis" (Nelson, 2013, p. 5). Praxis in respect of "Visual Representations" is where the interrogation of Black British men's lived experiences in Birmingham are analysed within the theoretical

framework of intersectional cultural theory. This knowledge, when translated into curatorial practice of the exhibition *Cut & Mix*, evidences the "knowing-doing" of practice-based research (Ibid. p.10), through visual and performative interpretations of Black British masculinities. It is within this conceptual framework, where practice resides, and critical reflection of the methods employed takes place.

It must be noted, exhibitions exploring Black British masculinities are rare. Thelma Golden's *Black Male – Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1994) was the first time I encountered an interdisciplinary exhibition addressing representations of Black masculinity. However, in his review, the late curator Okwui Enwezor opines in respect of the exhibition's problematic subjects of race, gender sexualities, and its "obsessive gaze on the 'black' male body" (1995, p. 67). Although *Cut & Mix* is informed by Golden's exhibition on Black masculinity, it heeds Enwezor's concerns of tone and focus on Blackness as spectacle.

"Visual Representations" and *Cut & Mix* are original excavations of Black British masculinities, adopting approaches to academic research and curatorial practice to demonstrate the rigour of PBR whilst contributing to new knowledge. The latter is grounded in the testimonies of the social actors as participants in the SEA discussions, and their preparedness to be vulnerable among other Black men. Here, praxis is the liminal space where new knowledge is generated and the dialogical essence of SEA comes alive performatively, informed by the art of BAG, in respect of identity formations and representations. In turn, praxis produces new knowledge to dispel binary perceptions, stereotypes, and constructs of Black British masculinities. Already, impact from the SEA discussions can be identified in the social actors' contributions to the production and performance of *Revealed* (2019), a play about the emotional world of three generations of Black men, again, challenging Blackness as spectacle.

Intersectionality

This PBR is framed within historical and contemporary cultural studies (Gilroy, 2002; Hall, et al., 2013; Mercer, 1994; CCCS, 1982), which are instrumental in problematising theories of formations of Black British masculine identities. "Visual Representations" is located within intersectional discourses of gender, problematising masculinity as a Eurocentric concept, in arguing its oppositional relationality to femininity (Connell, 2005, p. 68). Feminist theory and Black feminist theories of "intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1989; Carby, 1982; hooks, 2014a; Olufemi, 2020), are barometers by which this original research is measured and critiqued, to disentangle understandings of gender, race, class, sexualities and identities.

Such inequalities are evidenced through discourses of hegemonic masculinities and potential "complicity" of Black men (Connell, 2005), who though at times find themselves subjugated, are liable to subjugate others, in respect of sexualities and gender (Mercer, 1994; Wright, 2004). Through the commissioning of former BAG member Marlene Smith and Midlands-based artist Beverley Bennett, as part of *Cut & Mix,* the idea of the "other" is confronted, aligning the Black female experience in discourses of race and gender.

Discussions in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4) of works in *Cut & Mix*, specifically Rotimi Fani-Kayode's *Everybody Counts (Ecstatic Antibodies)* (1990) and Amartey Golding's short film *Chainmail 1* (2016), indicate how Black queer theory (Best, 2018; Gordon & Beadle-Blair, 2014; Mercer, 1994), is also crucial in problematising understandings of race, gender and sexualities. The premise being, to destabilise "fixed" and "essentialised" perceptions of Black British masculine identities (Hall, 1996). These and other works, I argue, illustrates "Visual Representations'" notions of "becoming" and of "new ethnicities" (Ibid.).

Black queer theory and practice is also instrumental to this PBR, whereby vulnerability implies threat and possibility of harm experienced by Black people in their daily lives. Vulnerability may also imply "[A] more capacious understanding [...] of openness/receptivity/availability to any impactful process, hurtful or not, including love, care, joy and grace" (Bost, et al., 2019, p. 3). Vulnerability and grace are translated in *Cut & Mix* through Amartey Golding's film *Chainmail 1* (2016), where Black popular culture and the homophobia of Bunji Banton's *Boom Bye Bye* (1992), collide and are unsettled by a gay Black male's ballet performance. Similarly, Nadeem Din-Gabisi's short film *Blk Boy Flight (Me & My Cousin)* (2015), depicts the freedom, playfulness, and joy of Black boys out in the fields, woods, and public spaces, without any threat or fear, and challenges urbanised perceptions of the Black British lived experience.

The theorisation of Black British masculinities through an intersectional lens, problematises hegemonies of race, gender, sexualities, place, and class. In discourses of feminism and race, "Black women are sometimes excluded [...] because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). Black queer discourses potentially disrupt fixity of space and time, viewing the rhizomatic as "queer temporality" of "time collapsed" not "straight time" (Allen, 2016). This is inherent in the "way scholars and artists have engaged the question of 'roots' and routes (if we consider the African diaspora - my emphasis) [...] shifting, combining, and rethinking aesthetics, intellectual and political traditions" (Allen, 2016, p. 29). The rhizomatic resonates with this PBR's methodology of cutting and mixing, implying liminal interdisciplinary movement within praxis, space, and time.

Through these theoretical frameworks and methods, Black British masculinities become nuanced, deconstructed, rearticulated and (re)constructed through the lived experiences, and the SEA, of the social actors. "Visual Representations" advocates for knowledge residing between and within the act of curating, of "setting up an exhibition" and of the curatorial, which "explores all that takes place on the stage set-up, both intentionally and unintentionally, by the curator and views it as an event of knowledge" (Martinon, 2013, p. ix). If PBR is, as Candy (2006) states, "an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge, partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice", then "Visual Representations" contributes to new knowledge through the act of curating and the curatorial.

This new knowledge of Black British lived experiences, which are not fixed or homogeneous, are evidenced through the curation of historical and contemporary audio/visual artworks Keith Piper's *Go West Young Man* (1996), Michael Forbes' *Auto Portrait After Rembrandt: A Black Man in a Wig and Baseball Cap* (2018/20) and a newly commissioned digital artwork *Heavyweight Champ* (2021) by by Antonio Roberts. This makes PBR the act of curating - the staging of the exhibition - whilst the curatorial process is inherent in its realisation, "its enactment, dramatization and performance" (Martinon, 2013, p. ix). Such considerations are also inherent in the etiquette and care of the production of this thesis, as outlined in the preface and in the following chapter descriptions.

Chapter 1, "Cut & Mix"*: A Methodological Approach* articulates how and why an interdisciplinary qualitative approach was adopted and the methods incorporated. It illustrates how qualitative research is amenable due to its flexibility, as it "does not belong to a single discipline" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 11). "Cut & mix" as a methodological approach harnesses interdisciplinarity as my working practice, described as "bricoleur" (Levi-Strauss, 1962), and of "quilt making" (Denzin, 1994). This is due to "Visual Representations'" fluidity and movement between disciplines, and its practice-based approach, critiqued for its refusal to be defined (Taylor, 2018), and harnessing knowledge residing outside the academe (Palmer, 2019). I also allude to the canon in visual arts, qualitative inquiry, and cultural theory, questioning whose voice is amplified, stressing the need for "other" voices of Black men and women to be heard, beyond the historical hegemony of Western thought. Diversity of voice is exemplified through autoethnography, as a critical reflexive method and narrative device. In positioning the "self" within this research, I acknowledge my duality, problematising the "insider/outsider" dichotomy as a Black British male (Merriam, et al., 2001, p. 405), as an academic and the privilege of voice and knowledge it affords.

Chapter 2, *On Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham* is an analysis and interpretation of SEA, where social actors provide their thoughts and feelings on a range of

questions, and of their understanding of Black British masculinities. I argue, this method could be viewed as "empowering" (Race, et al., 1994), and "emancipatory" (Sewell, 1997, p. xvi), in respect of historically marginalised voices. Through a semi-structured approach to the discussions (Srivastava, 2009, p. 75), with Black British men, data was derived, analysed and interpreted using "framework analysis" (Rabiee, 2004). The data points to their generational experiences of racial violence and structural racism, homophobia and how their mental health has been impacted socio-politically and economically. The analysis highlights how the social actors have emerged, overcome, and achieved despite these struggles.

Chapter 3, *Autoethnography - The Personal is Political* is an opportunity to critically reflect using autoethnography within past and present conjunctures. This new knowledge emanates from my unique perspective as lived experience. It aligns my coming-of-age experiences in Birmingham with the social actors and during the conjuncture of the 1970s and 1980s, and in relation to the cultural emergence of BAG and subsequent British Black Art Movement. It also situates my lived experience within discourses of radical Black British consciousness, a time where young Black British people were searching for their identities.

Chapter 4, *Cut & Mix as Curatorial Praxis* curatorially interrogates the historical practices of BAG, and how and why their art has been instrumental in framing my praxis, questioning perceptions of Black British masculinities today. Curatorial considerations inherent in this PBR are guided by the "cut & mix" methodological approach, through the selection of interdisciplinary artworks for the exhibition *Cut & Mix.* "Visual Representations" argues from within the realms of historical Black British arts practices, particularly since the emergence of BAG through to the present underpinned by Black British theoretical discourses, to assert hybrid identity formations. In so doing, through praxis, "Visual Representations" challenges historic pathologies and homogeneity of Black British masculinities in 21st century Birmingham.

The conclusion *The End is the Beginning* (5.1) alludes to the ongoing conjuncture and (un) settlement in the present moment. This is despite generations past and present striving for social justice and equality through art, culture, education, and radical activism. Birmingham and Black men are significant in this struggle. However, unless intersectional understandings, where marginalised voices of Black women, gay, disabled, and non-binary identities are heard, listened to and included, no real settlement can be achieved.

This introduction has set the framework for the ensuing discussion and chapters as articles. Using an intersectional approach of Black feminist and Black queer theory enables

the deconstruction of Black British masculine identities. Through these cultural theories, the reconstruction of Black British masculine identities is possible; identities which have always existed but have been overlooked or denied. At the same time, "Visual Representations'" use of a conjunctural lens enables historical reflection, personally and collectively, arguing the critical socio-political conditions remain, in respect of the Black British lived experience. Through the interdisciplinary practice-based approach of "cut & mix", it creates a liminal positionality, of praxis, and is where SEA and the exhibition *Cut & Mix*, are realised. The first chapter, "Cut & Mix": *A Methodological Approach* describes the interdisciplinary methodological approach of "cut & mix", working between disciplines theoretically and in practice.

"Cut & Mix":
A Methodological Approach

Figure 2:

Auto Portrait: After Rembrandt Black Man in a Wig and Baseball Cap (orange), 2018 © Michael Forbes

1.1 Introduction

This chapter details the originality of the interdisciplinary methodological approach of "cut & mix", incorporating methods of autoethnography (Adams, et al., 2015; Atkinson & Atkinson, 2007; Chang, 2016; Holman Jones, et al., 2013; Reed-Danahay, 1997), convening focus groups as SEA (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Carey, 2016; Kester, 2004), and fieldwork (Sewell, 1997; Reid, 2017; Mullings, 2013). I outline the decision to pursue this research as PBR, instead of a traditional ethnographic observational study, or solely through sociology or criminology. Although, these disciplines provide important discourses in framing this PBR, it is also crucial I demonstrate the academic rigour inherent in this PBR through the "interrelationship between theory and practice" (Barrett & Bolt, 2010, p. 1). Through this process, I illustrate "Visual Representations'" unique approach and as a contribution to new knowledge.

Thematically, "Visual Representations" is inspired by James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1963) and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), both books written over fifty years ago by African American authors. *Invisible Man* resonated even more with me in 2011, due to the killing of a young Black man Mark Duggan by the police, in London, sparking riots across the UK, Birmingham included. To me, Duggan's slaying, and the ensuing riots, were reminiscent of the inciting incident in Ellison's novel, of injustices past and foreshadowing present experiences for the Black man and Black people as a whole.

Curatorially, *Cut & Mix* is contextualised by Evans & Hall (1999), Bailey, et al (2005), and Chambers (2014), identifying influential artworks and artists from the era of the establishment of BAG from 1979 onwards. *Cut & Mix's* inclusion of Rotimi Fani-Kayode, I argue, is pivotal to the exhibition in deconstructing Black (British) masculinities and sexualities, "defying binaries" of the 1980s (Bourland, 2019, p. 5). The selection of Marlene Smith and Keith Piper articulates how BAG's art of the 1970s to 1980s frames constructs of contemporary Black British masculine identities and embodiment. Similarly, narratives confronting homophobia in Black popular culture (Chin, 1997), are inherent in Amartey Golding's film *Chainmail 1* (2016) and Samiir Saunders' poetic short films *Coat*, *Swing* and *Snow* (2020). Michael Forbes' *Auto Portrait: After Rembrandt, Black Man in a Wig and Baseball Cap* (2018), a polyptych of self-portraits which seeks to displace homogenised perceptions of contemporary Black British masculinities. These, and other works, curatorially and theoretically align with theories of "becoming" (Hall, 1996; Wright, 2004), and are contextualised by a "curatorial preview" discussion of *Cut & Mix* to gain primary data to inform the PBR. *Cut & Mix* the exhibition, now scheduled to take place in autumn 2021, is the outcome of a research placement with New Art Exchange (NAE), Nottingham, an award winning, internationally acclaimed creative space "dedicated to promoting excellence in culturally diverse contemporary arts through exhibitions, events and engagement initiatives" (New Art Exchange, 2021).

1.2 Iterations of "Cut and Mix"

"Cut and Mix" are the terms used by arts and cultural historian Mercer (2012) to describe the aesthetics and artistic practices of members of BAG, specifically their use of avant-garde, counter-culture collage in their art (Robles, 2019). Otherwise, for Hebdige, "Cut 'N' Mix" describes the style and production of reggae music in the 1980s (1987, p. 10). It is also a reference Hall uses in respect of the "hybridization" of a "new politics of representation [...] of the black experience as a diasporic experience" (1996, p. 447). Beckford's (2006) biblical and musical analogy is of how reggae, jazz and soul rhythms are woven into songs of worship. These references demonstrate the reimagining and reconstruction of culture and representation, inherent in this PBR. They highlight why the inception of BAG, and its legacies, are integral in providing a conjunctural lens, through which formations of contemporary Black British masculine identities in 21st century Birmingham are viewed and problematised.

"Cut & mix" as an approach, when integrated and read theoretically in respect of race through Hall, et al (2013), problematises pathologies of Black criminality in Handsworth, Birmingham in the 1970s and the "moral panic" of the Black "mugger". *Policing the Crisis* (2013) remains culturally relevant today (Ikon Gallery, 2019). Hall's (1996) text also raises evolving discourses articulated in the wave of emerging Black British arts practitioners, problematising homogeneity of Blackness and essential Black identities. Similarly, Gilroy (2002) is instrumental to discourses of race, gender, class, and representation. Mercer is also key to "Visual Representations", providing the term "cut and mix" (2012), and insights of Black British arts practice and the "burden of representation" (1990) that befell a generation of Black British artists, leading to perceptions of the homogeneity of a Black identity. Discourses of intersectionality of Black (British) masculinities gender and sexualities (Mercer, 1994), provide a conjunctural framework to further my argument. Here, the research of Connell (2005) and Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) are also crucial, highlighting the complexities of identity formations, problematised within hegemonies of patriarchy, Eurocentrism and Western thought. More so, how hegemony and complicity perpetuate subordination, in relation to women, and those identifying as LGBTQ+.

Cutting and mixing between these theories provides a framework for the SEA in detailing the Black British lived experiences in Birmingham, at a particular juncture, which is unlike Sewell (1997), detailing young Black men in London, or Archer & Yamashita (2003) talking to Black, White and Asian young men. Their similarities with "Visual Representations" relate to school as an important site to "construct masculine identities" and rites of passage (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000, p. 89). However, unique to "Visual Representations" is its

translation of the SEA discussions into the realisation of the forthcoming exhibition *Cut & Mix*, derived from primary data. Here, the gallery becomes another important site and unique place for discussion.

"Visual Representations" exemplifies how the application of "cut & mix" as an interdisciplinary methodology, highlights the intersectional and conjunctural factors at play. Variations of "cut & mix" articulate the emerging and diverging Black British popular cultural formations distinct to Birmingham (Hebdige, 1987; Beckford, 2006; Hall, 1996). This is in respect of vernacular of Jamaican patois in everyday usage among diverse groups of people, including myself. Here you can hear the convergence of African/Caribbean sounds of "Afro-bashment" being played in a car driven by someone of Pakistani heritage. This thriving hybrid multicultural scene is where BAG came into being, from which this PBR draws generational comparison and inspiration, illustrating the importance of place in shaping identities.

The following chapter section, *Why Place Matters* (1.3), theorises place, space and time, and the relationship between gender and place, where Birmingham and the Black Country were significant beneficiaries and contributors to empire and colonialism. *Why Place Matters* examines how political ideologies of multiculturalism and resultant socio-economics, during the late 1970s and 1980s, transformed Birmingham. More specifically, the implications this had on the lives of generations of Black British men growing up in the city by describing post-war migration of African Caribbean people to live and work in Britain's industrial heartlands (Fryer, 1984). These often historically marginalised experiences illustrate the importance of social spaces of home, food, and formation of communities via the church, sports, and social clubs in Birmingham.

Following this, the chapter section, *A Place Called Home?* (1.4) refers to the descendants of post war migrants, including members of BAG, and how their lives were shaped by the struggle to "belong" and "politics of belonging" (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). It raises the dichotomy of "double-consciousness", their fight and right to be regarded as "Black British", made difficult by the socio-political and economic conditions of the day. Their sense of belonging became framed within a rising Black consciousness in Birmingham, asking where is home?.

The chapter section, *Becoming* (1.5), speaks across the generations, but more in reference to the Black British and "Brummie" millennials, who on the one hand, may only know of life in Birmingham and Britain. On the other hand, *Becoming* refers to the evolving Black British culture and the far from settled multiculturalism of the city, where outwardly and corporately, Birmingham is keen to celebrate its cultural diversity (Birmingham 2022

Cultural Festival, 2021). However, for some young people speaking at the turn of the century (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002), their experience of Birmingham is of an ethnically divided city, of communities living in silos. Yet, *Becoming* still speaks to the hybridity of identities coming into being today, away from more fixed Black identities of yesteryear.

1.3 Why Place Matters

Place, space, and time for post-war African Caribbean migrants in Birmingham, among Britain's working-class, raises issues of belonging, sense of self and identity. "Place-belongingness" of the personal, of "home" is inextricably linked to the "politics of belonging" (Antonsich, 2010, pp. 652-3). However, the desire to belong is predicated and constructed through hegemonic power relations (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). The post-war years and introduction of a welfare state, marked significant socio-political change, affecting the "social identity" of the working-classes of Britain. It is argued, until this moment, the working-class were excluded from the "social fabric" of the nation (Munt, 2000), where "social status" enabled "mobility through social space", providing a "sense of self", essential to the juncture then, as it is now (Ibid., p.3). This relates to Massey's (1994) "space-time" theory, whereby the two are intricately linked, "the spatial is social relations stretched out" (Ibid., p.2). The symbolic gesture of the creation of the welfare state, highlight the "contradictions" of the industrial revolution (Althusser, 2005). A revolution driven by "manual working-class identities" and fuelled by socialist movements" (Miles & Savage, 2013). The emergence of the working-class in post-war Britain, and the arrival of migrants from the Caribbean to Birmingham, is enacted through "spatial organization of society" (Massey, 1994, p. 4), where its citizens old and new, were at times socialised on grounds of race. Until this moment of significant African Caribbean migration, the history of Britain and its people were told and viewed as a "homogeneous island race" even "academically" (Myers & Grosvenor, 2011, p. 150).

Projects such as *West Africa, West Indies, West Midlands*, an exhibition in 1982, developed by Sandwell Local Education Authority's Afro-Caribbean Support Unit, "marked the beginning of the historiography of Birmingham-based black British history writing" (Ibid., p. 152). In the retelling of the triangular trade, these histories identified Birmingham as a place that significantly benefitted economically. Interventions of ethnographic oral histories were told by Black people of their lived experiences, of work, housing, families, and social relations, throughout the 1980s into the 2000s. These spoke of identities created through culture and heritage, of "the struggles to establish new communities, the importance of a sense of 'home' and desire to belong" (Ibid., p. 153). Massey's speculation on the "reputed" and "disputed" notion of 'a place called home' (1994, p. 1), is essential to ideas of belonging.

15

In briefly detailing post-war migration to Birmingham, it highlights the "struggles" generations of African Caribbean and other Black and ethnic minority migrants endured to call Birmingham and Britain "home". A sense of place is always contentious, when constructs of a British past and present are regarded as fixed and the preserve of an "autochthonous history" (Ibid., p. 8).

Coming to England is where Hall, and others like him from the Caribbean and latterly migrants from the African continent, became homogenised as Black people, and where "black became politicised" (Hall, 2018, p. 14). Social mobility was downwards for many Black Caribbean migrants to Britain at the time, who often found work in positions below their skillset, in jobs white British people did not want to do (Fryer, 1984, p. 374). Handsworth, Lozells, Aston, Balsall Heath, Nechells and Smethwick were locations for African Caribbean settlement in Birmingham and the Black Country. Housing was cheap and there was safety in numbers amongst other Black people than in other areas, where white neighbours or white landlords refused to accommodate Black families (McMillan, 2009).

> **"Once, I walked the whole length of a street looking for a room, and everyone told me he or she 'ad no prejudice against coloured people. It was the neighbour who was stupid. If we could only find the 'neighbour' we could solve the problem"** (Fryer, 1984, p. 375).

Rooms in houses were occupied by families, or groups of single men, with shared communal spaces of the kitchen and bathroom - an experience I will recall later - and which McMillan states was a "painful memory of one room cramped and squalid conditions many of my parent's generation had to endure" (2009, p. 140). Black migrants and their families were subject to social control geo-politically and economically due to where they could afford to live (Peach, 1965). Support was provided by a Caribbean community saving and trust scheme known in Jamaica as "pardner" and "sou-sou" in Trinidad (Sivanandan, 1981, p. 114). Banks and loan companies rarely, if ever, offered mortgages to Black families at this time. It was in these new homes McMillan recalls a sense of "diasporic migration began to take shape" in the West Indian "front room" (2009, p. 140). The "front room" as a feminised space, was a hangover of the colonial Victorian parlour in places like the Caribbean, with its "tropes of etiquette of decorum, protocol, polite manners, and proper behaviour performed as rituals of respectability, dignity, and self-reserve" (Ibid., p. 138). A space often adorned with family and self-portraits in their "Sunday best" juxtaposed next to religious images, the front room symbolised settlement, family unity and perhaps a performed sense of civility of ""good grooming" among people of African descent" (Ibid., p. 137).

Through the Black British public sphere, a sense of place and community was created, in which the Black church played an integral role. Beckford's biblical analogy of "exodus" is relevant due to its "socio-political underpinnings for action against oppression for marginalised people today" (1998, p. 11). It alludes to the African diaspora as a concept, due to the triangular history of migration and displacement. For within "exile", it is crucial to consider the link between "home and the new community", as central to diaspora, along with "concepts of freedom and justice" (ibid.). Across the inner-cities of Birmingham, Black churches were established in community and school halls, until funds were raised to establish permanent places of worship, providing sanctuary from the hostilities of "racism and white supremacy" (Reddie, 2008, p. 18).

The Black church provided refuge and was a space for socialisation, with the church outing being one of the few ways working-class Black people could afford a family day trip to the coasts of Britain. Coaches were hired and food was prepared - fried chicken, curry goat, rice, and peas. For many, this might have been the first time they visited locations of Blackpool, Southend-on-Sea, Rhyl, or Weston-super-Mare, giving them a view of Britain's homogeneity outside the inner-cities, synonymous with Black and ethnic minority residence. Establishing Black social and economic spaces of hairdressers, barbershops and wider community support entities were central in these formative times. Buying Caribbean staple produce in local shops or supermarkets during this time would have been difficult, if it were not for the few Caribbean owned stores and South Asian grocery stores along the Soho Road, Villa Cross and off the main high streets of the inner-cities of Birmingham. There is little, if any, academic or social writing on Caribbean cuisine and consumption in post-war Britain, an important aspect of how communities are formed around social relations and materiality of shopping, cooking, and eating.

Figure 5:
Shoppers gather at an Asian grocery shop on Soho Road, 1978
© Vanley Burke

There is a more detailed history of South Asian and Chinese food in Britain, perhaps due to the wider consumption via the establishment of restaurants and take aways (Kershen, 2017). For example, consider the "Balti Belt" along Ladypool Road in South Birmingham. Instead, African Caribbean food history in Britain appears through anecdotal stories and self-publications, such as *Belly Full: Caribbean Food in the UK* (2017). It is through these "quotidian practices and shared memories" (Connell, 2019, p. 121), African Caribbean

migrants inserted their culture, during worship at church, playing dominoes at the pub or Black social club and playing cricket on the field in Handsworth Park (Ibid.). Massey's (1994) concept of space-time and place is crucial, to conceptualise an understanding of the spatial that isn't fixed in historic time or place. This relates to wider social relations, and whenever movements of people occur today, it potentially brings with it a more globalised sense of space and time, where "social relations are never still" (Ibid., p.2).

1.4 A Place Called Home?

The concept of "a place called home", conjures up ideas of being comfortable, feeling safe and welcomed and a sense of belonging (hooks, 2015). My reality of home was not always a safe place, especially for my mother, and is a point of discussion in the autoethnography chapter (Chapter 3). The small victories gained by African Caribbean migration to Britain during the 1950s and 1960s, finding work, renting, or buying a house and raising a family, were soon overshadowed.

For the generation of Black people born to the so-called "Windrush generation", theirs was a renewed battle in staking claim to selfhood, subjectivity and belonging. Hesse (2000) problematises the idea of "Black British" as a "cultural oxymoron", in respect of British racial exclusivity and of Blackness as an "aspirational or transformative" identity (2000, p. 97). Suggesting the symbol of the "Windrush" overshadows the history of an already present Black British community, pointing to Britain's entanglement, profit and residue during the transatlantic trade and empire. An over reliance on the symbol of the "Windrush" denies the complete story of a Black presence in Britain to be told, potentially adding to feelings of unsettlement and of unbelonging (Olusoga, 2016).

Belonging for the generation born, or who came to Britain in 1950s and 1960s as children, is problematised. This is because their sense of belonging was questioned (Tomaney, 2015), and delineated along lines of "political belonging" of "them" and "us" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204). Some of the "Windrush generation" viewed coming to England as a temporary goal - to earn enough money and one day return to the Caribbean, speaks of "belonging superseded [...] by longing" (Ilcan, 2002, p. 1). To call a "place" home, raises questions of identity formations, and speaks to the identities that have never really been acquired by the "Windrush generation", whose historic endeavours are now scandalised (Webber, 2018).

19

In the 1970s, "coming of age" for the children of the "Windrush generation" is a period Chambers describes as both "fascinating and fractious" (2019, p. 135), having witnessed the tribulations of their parents, eking out a living and suffering the racist slings and arrows of British life. The Black British public sphere in Birmingham began to emerge and flourish due to the denial of access to socio-economic and political spaces. Since their arrival, and being denied space to socialise, it was natural over time for Birmingham's Black communities to establish their own means of social engagement - setting up social and sports clubs, shops, businesses, churches, schools, record shops, recording studios and radio stations, among many other ventures. These enterprises not only supported the development of the local community but were linked in some way to support relatives "back home".

Arts and cultural activities are and were central in African Caribbean way of life. It was natural the "shebeens" and "blues" parties held in houses would eventually lead to setting up night clubs in the community. Establishing space in the community away from the city centre enabled Black people to gain entry, as city centre venues often operated exclusionary racist door policies, an extension of the "colour bar" (Taylor, 1994; Rogers, 2019). Popular spaces include the *Rialto* on Soho Road (c.1975), *Santa Rosa* and *Thasha's* (c.1980s) (Birmingham Music Archive, 2016), and *FCF* in Handsworth.

Faith and Confidence Finance (FCF) opened in 1971 on Soho Hill, funded via the same "pardner" scheme used to purchase homes, furnishing and to "bypass any need to rely on the goodwill of white venues when it came to putting on community events" (Connell, 2019, p. 135). These spaces were crucial for Black sociability, playing a significant role in the housing, nurturing and development of Black artistic and cultural talent during the 1970s and 1980s. There was a wider sense of place and space in the neighbourhood, of safety and solidarity within the community. However, during the SEA discussions, **QRI** spoke of being "pushed out" of the Black community, because of his sexuality, illustrating not all identities were welcome and accepted.

Black community solidarity was necessary, given the sinister tone of British politics. For example, the 1962 Commonwealth Act, restricting immigration as a result of growing public hostility and conflict i.e. "race riots" in Birmingham, Nottingham and London in 1958. Whereby, "the racist tail *wagged* (my emphasis) the parliamentary dog" (Fryer, 1984, p. 381). Socio-political attacks on Black communities, Black families and culture fuelled "common-sense" racist ideologies of their threat to British civility (Lawrence, 1982).

This was exemplified by Tory MP Peter Griffiths' overtly racist propaganda in his electoral campaign in 1964, suggesting Black people were not welcome in certain neighbourhoods of the Black Country and prompted Malcolm X to visit Smethwick in 1965. In 1968, Enoch Powell made his infamous "rivers of blood" speech in Birmingham (Powell 2004).

Into the early 1970s, unemployment and recession rocked the nation. Britain was an "apogee of decline" signified by "terrorism, strikers, streakers, muggers, punks and soccer hooligans" (Black, 2012, p. 174). In turn, the 1971 Immigration Act sought to end all primary immigration. It was against this backdrop and in the embers of counter-culture, civil rights, Black Power, and the mounting fight against apartheid in Southern Africa, Black British youth looked for their identities, with some finding guidance in Rastafari. Chambers argues "the hyperconsciousness of black Britain in the 1970s came about as a consequence of decidedly British circumstances" (2019, p. 135), of which Rastafari played a significant role. Chambers recounts the initial confusion experienced by young Black Britons of their identity in 1970s, who were victims of racist attacks in certain parts of Birmingham and told in no uncertain terms they should go back to where they came from (Guardian, 2017). Young Black Britons, Black families and their neighbourhoods were vilified and pathologised through racist rhetoric of police and politicians (CCCS, 1982; Gilroy, 2002; Hall, et al., 2013). This left many young Black Britons asking, "if England wasn't home, where was?" (Chambers, 2019, p. 137).

Perhaps "home" resided in the hopeful and mythological return to Africa, Ethiopia, offered through Rastafarian belief, where the West is considered "Babylon" - the home of capitalism, racism, and wickedness. Jamaican national hero Marcus Garvey offered a vision of Africa as the rightful place for Black people. His United Negro Improvement Association, founded in 1914 aimed to unify Black people around the world. Importantly, it was Garvey whose proclamation that an African king (Haile Selassie) would be crowned and be the redeemer, was of significance in the formation of Rastafari, even though many Black youth in Britain may have grown up through the Black church. Rastafari, and its wider culture of reggae music, language, dreadlocks, "ital foods", "reasoning" (discussion) and militant way of life, offered its followers an "alternative public sphere" (Henry, 2012). This alternative public sphere was also evident in the gathering of young Black Britons in Handsworth Park, Birmingham for African Liberation Day, in 1977, famously captured by documentary photographer Dr Vanley Burke (Bakare, 2021). It is argued, this was the largest "all-Black" gathering in Britain (Ibid.), illustrating further Birmingham's significance as a place where Black and British identities were contested, and where reimagination of the self through African diasporic imagining could take place.

21

Rastafari offered a philosophy to comprehend their lives in "Babylon", one of subjugation. However, in the eyes of the British, Rastas were vilified in a similar way to how they were once ostracised in Jamaica. This was due to their choice of an alternative lifestyle, and being viewed as "violent and dangerous madmen" (Hebdige, 1987, pp. 52-53). At its height, during the late 1970s and early 1980s in Britain, Rastas were pathologised and ridiculed (Palmer, 2019).

Yet, Rastafari's militant and counter-cultural view of Britain and the West, particularly through reggae of roots and dub, resonated with Black youth and wider white youth in Britain and the oppressed globally. It was through a group of young Black men in the tenement building where we lived in Birmingham, my brothers and I were introduced to reggae, sound system, and Rastafari. Similarly, the reggae band Steel Pulse put Handsworth on the global map, with their ground-breaking album *Handsworth Revolution* (1978). On moving to Handsworth, we were literally a stone's throw away from where Steel Pulse rehearsed and would see them perform in Handsworth Park. When *Handsworth Revolution* was released in 1978, it popularised our neighbourhood, making it synonymous with Rasta, militancy, and resistance. We were surrounded by music. At one end of the street was Jungle Man sound system, down the other end of the street was Nyah sound system.

Handsworth Revolution's album cover design depicted a dystopian urban jungle, replete with palm trees and Black youths in African robes, seen as a "critique of Western

22

modernity" (Connell, 2019, pp. 91-92), due to Rastafari's opposition to capitalism and oneness with the environment. This was a very distinct sound that had traversed the transatlantic from Africa to the Caribbean, and remade in Britain, Birmingham, Handsworth. Whether on the pirate radio stations (Palmer, 2021), in the dancehall or in bedrooms, reggae provided an alternative space to imagine and comprehend the "sufferation" of the Black lived experience in Birmingham. "Handsworth's dread culture was a localized performance of diaspora - one that took place in youth clubs, bars and cafes" (Connell, 2019, pp. 93-94).

Rastafari was a potent message for Black British youth in Birmingham to "overstand" their circumstances, particularly as this was not being taught in schools or in wider society. During the SEA discussions (Chapter 2), **GX** spoke of the importance of Rastafari in Birmingham running alternative schools, teaching young Black people about Black history and heritage, giving them a sense of self and history. Adopting a counter-cultural view such as Rastafari, resonates with the intentions of "Visual Representations", of alternative Black British identities, beyond the homogeneous. Through these movements and other counter-cultural positions, the establishment can be challenged, and new knowledge created.

Rastafari, Black Power, civil rights movements and the various non-academic spaces and people provided an alternative message of the Black British experience. Within this understanding, it is important to highlight the significance of the presence of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, headed at this time by Stuart Hall. CCCS was a key institution in popularising cultural studies, post-1968 global uprisings, demonstrations and counter-culturalism and was instrumental in theorising the emerging mass culture and consumerist society. Furthermore, its focus on issues of race and class, particularly in Britain through publications *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (1982) and *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (1978), provide a conjunctural framework to comprehend continued racial injustices in Britain.

1.5   Becoming

In describing generational experiences of travelling, settling, and growing up in Birmingham, I have sought to contextualise their placemaking. Here, placemaking is framed within a socio-political milieu of colonialism, migration, emerging neoliberalism, and its impact on the burgeoning Black British communities in Birmingham and Britain. "Visual Representations" contextualises constructs of Black British masculinities in 21st century Birmingham, utilising the historical conjuncture of the late 1970s and early 1980s in speculating on their identity formations. In viewing the city of Birmingham then and

now, I argue, this raises questions of "being and becoming" (Deleuze, 2006), of what was, what is and what might be. For Deleuze, "there is no being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity" (Ibid., pp. 23-24). Hence, in viewing the histories of Birmingham and the Black communities, we perhaps see fragments of what was.

Yet, these remnants are never stable in a state of being, as through time, memory and recollection are always transformed. This suggests becoming is where new perspectives and insights are realised. Becoming relates to Wright's (2004) assertion of "becoming Black", which "highlights the fluidity of Black identity in the West and our ever-evolving understanding of it" (2004, p. 26). Wright argues Black subjects "cannot" come into being through the West that creates Black/Other, only through "multivalent and intersected historical and cultural formations […] the African diaspora" (Ibid., p.4). This notion of "multivalent and intersected historical formations" are illustrated by the "all-black" attendance at African Liberation Day and my autoethnographic recollections of the presence of Steel Pulse and Rastafari in the local neighbourhood. Each offer alternative cultural formations, through their interpretations and narratives of an African diasporic lived experience. I argue, the socio-political and economic conditions are similar, if not the same, having detailed the lived experiences of the "Windrush generation", and their descendants of Black British born generations.

To contextualise lived experiences in Birmingham further, in 2002, young people, aged 17 to 30, from a range of Black and ethnic minority backgrounds in Birmingham were interviewed in respect of their understanding of their identity. Questions asked how they perceive themselves and how others might define them. The purpose of the survey, conducted by Birmingham Race Action Partnership (b:RAP), speculated the demographics in Birmingham by 2020 would see the city have a population with the majority of its citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds. In essence, the report raised the issue of the young people's "sense of belonging" (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002). The report was produced in the shadow of 9/11 attack in the USA and inter-ethnic riots in some of Britain's northern cities in 2001. When questioned on the best things about Birmingham, respondents described Birmingham positively, due to its multiculturalism, people of different ethnic backgrounds and religions,

> **"I think the best thing is how all the communities get on, Pakistanis, Indians, and English people, how we all get on. Like in most places, like in Bradford and Manchester, most of the communities don't get on. In Birmingham, people are understanding more and there's more chances and opportunities"** (Ibid., p.20).

However, when asked about the worst things about Birmingham, respondents suggested, despite perceptions of "getting on" and the prospect of Birmingham being a Black and ethnic minority, majority city, this did not necessarily mean their living standards, education and job opportunities, would improve. In comparing Birmingham with the USA, one respondent commented, "I mean. I've been to parts of America where there are more Black people than anything else – just means there are more Black people in poverty" (Ibid. p.29). The suggestion being, there remained a socio-economic gap between Black and ethnic minorities, and white citizens in the city. For some of the respondents, Birmingham's multiculturalism is potentially an illusion, where there are enclaves of Black, Asian, and white people living separately, "[It's] very mixed but it's still segregated really" (Ibid., p. 24). Over the years, the veneer of multiculturalism in Birmingham has cracked due to conflicts between the Black and Asian communities, most notably in Handsworth/Lozells in 2005.

Rumours of a sexual assault (King, 2013) may have led to the Lozells conflict in 2005 between Black and Asian youths, in which people lost their lives. The flames of which were perhaps further fuelled by resentment held by some members of the African Caribbean community, who felt the Asian community were doing better than they were, including profiting from selling African Caribbean products. The conflict of 2005 was unlike the Handsworth riots of 1981 and 1985, which involved youths of all races against the police. Incidents such as these point to a multicultural "transruption" (Hesse, 2000, p. 16), of "unresolved discrepancies", and can be traced back to the Caribbean and South Asia to "historical antagonisms and social inequalities which underline cultural differences" (Ibid.). Antagonisms such as these implicate Britain's colonial past of imposing hierarchical racial constructs (Dennis, 2000, p. 199). The relevance of b:RAP's report almost 20 years ago is, as some of the respondents state, Birmingham's multicultural image is skin deep, beneath which lies division, with "Pakistanis in one area, Bengalis in another and Black people kind of in the inner-city" (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002, p. 24).

Walking through the city centre in 2021, gives the impression as the respondents imply, of Birmingham as a multicultural city. Culturally, Birmingham's image of diversity is one which the city eagerly and readily promotes (Birmingham 2022 Cultural Festival, 2021). Yet, if you were to travel with each of the differing ethnic groups back to where they live, would it be to a multicultural or monocultural Black or Asian neighbourhood in the inner-city or a "white area" in the suburbs? It seems belonging for some of these young Black and ethnic minority people in Birmingham in 2002 is contrasted and contradicted by inner-city deprivation and communities living in silos. The prospect of Birmingham being a majority Black and ethnic minority city is tempered by the idea it would remain a "white run city, leading to lack of representation" (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002, p. 60).

20 years on from b:RAP's report, what does it mean to be Black and British for the current generation of young Black people, when previous generations, including myself have struggled with the concept? "Visual Representations'" intention is to impart generational experiences of Black British masculine identity formations in 21st century Birmingham. These testimonies are generationally comparative, where identities are formed through interaction with others as much as they are realised through culture.

Like their predecessors, the current generation of young Black Britons have heavily influenced British popular culture through sport, arts, and music (Boakye, 2017; White, 2020), where today, the artist's heritage is likely to be African, as it was Caribbean in the past. The foundations of the African diaspora resonates through the spoken word of the griot; music of grime, broken beat and hip-hop, remaining true to bass culture of the Jamaican sound system, as much as it does to the drums of African culture (Riley, 2014). Though these new musical expressions speak of syncretism, illustrating the absurdity of racial constructs, it does not mask the pervasive nature of capitalism, creating an individualistic and consumer-led society. The seduction of capitalism has "enticed masses of black folk, calling them away from the resistance struggle for liberation" (hooks, 2004, p. 17).

Although some of the current generations of Black Britons are seduced by creeping capitalism's consumer culture, many remain resolute in their struggle for social justice and equality. Andrews makes the claim "[If] we want freedom, justice and equality we need to root the next generation of mobilisations in the politics of Black radicalism" (2018, p. xxvii). Andrews' 'cri de Coeur' is contextualised by Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in Birmingham, of 2016 in response to the killing of Philando Castile, an African-American. Black people came "en masse" to the centre of Birmingham not only to protest the slaying of another Black man, but because these incidents resonate with recent deaths in Birmingham, Mikey Powell in 2003 (Fedja, 2018) and Dalian Atkinson in 2016 (4WardEverUK, 2021). BLM protests "reenergised Black political movements across the globe" (Andrews, 2018, p. xv).

The significance of these protests happening in Birmingham, is of a visible Black presence, as alluded to by the b:RAP report of Birmingham as a multicultural city and in the SEA discussions, where **FT** describes northern cities like Blackpool as "extreme places" and "white cities". Like previous generations, who migrated to Britain and lived in neighbourhoods where other Black people had settled. Birmingham as a city now represents a visibility of Blackness, you may not find elsewhere in Britain, apart from London. A sense of place and Black presence is also articulated through arts and culture, as well as activism. Festivals such as *Simmer Down*, regarded as Europe's largest free

reggae festival, takes place in Handsworth Park, celebrating Birmingham's "rich cultural diversity" (Visit Birmingham, 2021), where reggae music again is central. An image in stark contrast to that of African Liberation Day, Handsworth Park in 1977.

Other diverse Birmingham-based initiatives include Slanguages (University of Oxford, 2016), an academic and creative industries partnership between BCU; Punch, a Birmingham-based a music and arts agency working predominantly in Black music, and Beatfreeks, "an engagement and insight agency with a vital community of young creatives" (Beatfreeks, 2013). The initiative's outputs of artistic interpretation, performance, exhibition, publication, and research, raise awareness of how non-European and European languages are reimagined and translated within socio-cultural contexts (Birmingham City University, 2020). Slanguages exemplifies the multicultural character of Birmingham, enabling BCU and Oxford University to tap into a youthful city, of which "quarter of its one million-plus residents were born overseas" (Birmingham City Council, 2013), whose languages and cultures are shaping its future.

MAIA, a Black-led arts organisation, based in Ladywood, Birmingham, supports creatives, working in "radical imagination", by creating infrastructure to bring about transformative societal change (MAIA, 2021). Ort Gallery's "Warmth" (Ort Gallery, 2021), as a "radical act of care", reappraises the way visual and arts organisations work internally, externally, in a more inclusive relationship within the local diverse communities it serves. In speaking of establishing CineQ, an annual four day "queer film festival with a focus on stories for and by QTIPOC", its founder, Rico Johnson-Sinclair states, the festival was established due to "having found so much of myself through queer film, I was saddened to see the lack of queer representation in the multiplex and independent cinemas in Birmingham" (2021). Meanwhile, The Black Creative Workforce, took its cue from BLM protests of 2020 in creating 'More than a Moment', a pledge it hopes the wider creative and cultural sector will endorse, positioned as,

> **"[...] the West Midlands Arts sector's promise to take radical, bold and immediate action, to dismantle the systems that have for too long kept Black artists and creatives from achieving their potential in the arts and cultural industries"** (Culture Central, 2020).

"Visual Representations" is framed within the context of arts practice, hence highlighting arts and cultural organisations and initiatives working towards what some call "radical" action, imagination or doing radical events. Each of the groups and projects aim to challenge binary concepts of Black identities. In truth, how radical are these initiatives,

if they become part of the system? When, "Black radicalism calls for an overturning of the system that oppresses Black people, and for nothing short of revolution" (Andrews, 2018, p. xvii). Time will tell whether today's "radical" queer cinema or arts pledge becomes tomorrow's institution, especially if they are financially supported by Arts Council England or the British Film Institute. "Visual Representations" cites countervailing discourses of belonging and becoming, to dispel hegemonic theories, but recognises how entangled the Black British lived experience is to a capitalistic system, which can lead to complicity (hooks, 2004). However, taking such a position is not always the answer,

> **"[It] is learning to stand alone, unpopular and sometimes reviled, and how to make common cause with those others identified as outside the structures in order to define and seek a world in which we can all flourish"** (Lorde, 2017, p. 19)

"Visual Representations" illustrates how historical activities of BAG and current arts, creative and cultural practitioners challenge the status quo, even if it means entering the perceived lion's den of capitalist institutions to seek change or standing alone. The eventual outcome is creating a better place for all to flourish. To realise the previous, in respect of belonging and becoming, within the conjunctural context, I have employed methods of autoethnography, socially engaged arts practice (SEA) and curatorial practice, underpinned by intersectional cultural theories. As previously discussed, this is interwoven and supported by an interdisciplinary approach of "cut & mix".

1.6 Practice-Based Research

I have and will continue to describe throughout this thesis in sections (1.1, 1.7, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1), the liminal space of praxis as the place where PBR resides and is enacted, through SEA and the curation of the forthcoming exhibition *Cut & Mix*. What constitutes PBR requires further explanation to justify its application in addressing the aim of this research of how Black British masculine identities in Birmingham are (in)formed today. The main objective being to illustrate the existence of historical hybrid Black British masculine identities through the art of BAG and society in general. Methodologically, "cut & mix" provides the necessary language of why pathologies of Black men and communities persist. The implementation of a practice-based approach utilising SEA, and the curation of visual arts and performance, provides space for nuanced and non-binary identities to come into being.

A lack of clarity of what defines practice-based research persists, "where there is no one definition of practice in relation to art as research" (Taylor, 2018, p. 92), leading to the question "what does it mean?" (Biggs & Buchler, 2008, p. 5). Scrutinising Nelson (2013),

Barrett & Bolt (2010), Biggs & Buchler (2008), among others, illustrate the ongoing tension between practice and the hegemony of the academic epistemology of knowledge production (Rito & Balaskas, 2020). The tension being some artists are reticent to theorise their practice as research (Barrett, 2010), and the need for the academe to recognise the value PBR offers to the production of knowledge and knowledge formation. I argue, the fluidity and hybridity of PBR, which I have adopted, offers the academe an insight of how innovative approaches to research and pedagogy can be achieved successfully.

As a curator-researcher, I welcome the opportunity to demonstrate how the interdisciplinary approach of "cut & mix" imparts new knowledge, as "knowledge is derived from doing" (Barrett, 2010, p. 1). The discursive nature of "cut & mix", working between cultural theory and practice, raises further tension between these paradigms. Here, theory provides the socio-political and cultural context in which this practice is historically and contemporarily framed. "Visual Representations" is my theoretical response to the continued urgency of the times; historical times of atrocities which have yet to be reconciled and contemporary times of unjust lived experiences, which continue to be denied. The testimonies of social actors during "Visual Representations", interpreted by theories discussed throughout provide a visceral lens, of the past and present of what I regard as an ongoing "rupture" (Althusser, 2005). PBR provides the necessary framework of engagement, underpinned by theory to comprehend, and contextualise the social actors lived experiences.

Therefore, the decision to conduct SEA and curate an exhibition emanate from my research and exhibition related to Donald Rodney's practice during MA studies, to demonstrate why a practice-based approach is again a viable option. "Visual Representations" theoretically situates the practice of BAG as central to framing contemporary Black British masculine identities. This is due to the recognised regional and national importance of BAG and subsequent British Black Arts Movement (Bailey, et al., 2005; Birmingham 2022 Cultural Festival, 2021), in discourses of arts practice and intersectional cultural theory. I argue, this wider public interest has afforded me space and time to formulate "Visual Representations'" argument and delivery as PBR. Space and time afforded due to the need to embed PBR in doctoral research training in UK Higher Education (Taylor, 2018). However, this was not necessarily the pedagogical experience for some BAG members or other Black British artists in the 1980s, as alluded to by Keith Piper or Sonia Boyce, discussed in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4). The importance of pedagogy relates to tensions of cultural relevance of contemporary arts practice in arts schools for Black arts students, if discourses fail to include their ontologies. The difficulty Black art students face

is if their ways of seeing are "at odds with traditional conventions on what constitutes 'good' art practices" (Dash, 2010, p. 72).

Though we are witnessing the impact of calls for decolonising academic curriculums and pedagogies (Bhambra, et al., 2018; Smith, 2012), how far are institutions prepared to go, or how far will they have to go to ensure they are truly inclusive? Knowledge production for the *Cut & Mix* audience will be experienced through interpreted works on display, audio/ visually, performatively, the SEA programme and subsequent discourses. It is at these intersections, interpretations are made and meanings applied. Textually, "Visual Representations" situates knowledge of Black British lived experiences, which are conjunctural and intersectional, interpretations of which are exemplified in *Cut & Mix*. This raises a fundamental question of whether an exhibition is necessary to impart new knowledge. I would argue without experiencing a public facing exhibition, it potentially reduces the intended outcome and impact of "Visual Representations" to engage with the widest of publics, and society in general. This impact of engagement and subsequent discourses, goes beyond what a published thesis alone might achieve.

Cut & Mix provides a viable platform through which wider discourses can take place because of public engagement and discussion. Presentations and papers of research findings will be open to scrutiny by academic peers, addressing disciplines in the arts, humanities, and social science. "Visual Representations'" intention is to be unambiguous in its academic and artistic contributions, adhering to the rigours of interdisciplinary qualitative research of methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Liamputtong, 2005), method (Adams, et al., 2015; Chang, 2016; Helguera, 2011), interpretation (Mercer, 1994; Wright, 2004; Hall, et al., 2013) and analysis (Rabiee, 2004; Parkinson, et al., 2016; Ritchie & Spencer, 2002).

The originality of "Visual Representations" is due to its cumulative effect on discourses of place and contributions to Black British lived experiences. I view this approach to be PBR, due to its harnessing of creative practices in my intention to contribute to new knowledge. This is achieved, "partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice" (Candy, 2006, p. 3). However, I do not necessarily regard this research as practice-led, "concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice" (Ibid.), where the focus is primarily of a theoretical nature without a creative outcome. In the case of "Visual Representations", there are similarities and cross-overs in terms of practice-based and practice-led approaches, where I argue for practice as a viable method of research, exemplified by my curatorial practice.

Through these processes, I convey meaning by way of producing artefacts to be experienced and interpreted by the viewer. However, Scrivener (2002) adds points of caution in respect of PBR and the visual arts, asking "[Why], in the context of debates about visual arts research, has knowledge become such a hot topic?" (Ibid., p.1). In seeking to unpick the contested territories of arts and research, Scrivener acknowledges an art object can communicate knowledge. As such, I regard the text and theory of "Visual Representations", theory and practice of *Cut & Mix,* as inextricably linked (Holdridge & Macleod, 2005). Theoretically, aspects of knowledge produced in "Visual Representations" are contested (Repko, 2008) as emotive and experiential, in respect of testimonies of the social actors. However, this knowledge is framed and interpreted within conjunctural and intersectional discourses, which have then informed the conceptualisation of *Cut & Mix.* Meaning, *Cut & Mix* as an exhibition performs an equally valuable contribution to knowledge that is "complementary" (Scrivener, 2002, p. 2), to "Visual Representations" the thesis.

Cut & Mix is culturally novel, its "[Originality] will be understood as the extent to which the output makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field" (Research Excellence Framework, 2020, p. 34). Furthermore, its originality stems from the translation of theory to practice and practice to theory, with neither having hierarchy over the other. Although, Scrivener argues from a position, which sees "original creations" (my emphasis) that "separates the researcher from the practitioner" (2002, p. 13). I argue from a position of bringing together the curator-researcher. This is akin to Biggs & Buchler (2008) and the need for the arts in collaboration with the academe, through advocacy bodies (Midlands Higher Education & Culture Forum, 2017), to define what is PBR and how new knowledge is produced. PBR provides the ways and means as a curator-researcher to contribute to accumulated knowledge obtained via the varying methods described. In turn, this knowledge is made accessible to a range of audiences. "Cut & Mix" as an interdisciplinary approach is integral to conveying this research as practice-based.

1.7 Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity is described as the "contested terrain […] problems or questions that are the focus of several disciplines" (Repko, 2008, p. 6). My positionality is as an interpretivist researcher, enshrined in the qualitative research tradition of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2016; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Adams, et al., 2014; Chang, 2016). When deployed as an interdisciplinary approach of "cut & mix", it brings into being my personal and critical reflections, in relation to issues of place and the conjunctural. My experience is triangulated in the context of other ethnographic accounts, past and present, including SEA. Autoethnography differs "from self-narratives of autobiography, or memoirs due to the emphasis on cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's behaviours, thoughts, and experiences in relation to others and society" (Chang, 2007, p. 1).

"Visual Representations" as qualitative research is driven by the need to ensure my position as researcher is acknowledged and not value free. More specifically, the socio-political discourses, *my* subjectivity, the voices of the social actors of this research and our "lived experiences" are relevant in terms of representation. This is opposed to a positivist positionality that views reality as fixed and stable using "empirical methods of objective social science" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). It could be argued, as detailed in the introduction, the events of 2020 and 2021 problematise a positivist approach, as people are eager to share their "lived experiences" to contextualise the precarity of the present situation, whether it be their jobs, housing, food or the state of their mental health and wellbeing.

Curatorially, the methodological intentions of "cut & mix" are realised visually and performatively and as a critique of binary social constructs of Blackness, Britishness, and masculinities. *Cut & Mix*, articulates "what is at stake" in respect of historic pathologies of Black British masculinities, and is a call to action *before* the "point of crisis" (Ehlers, 2006). "Visual Representations'" interdisciplinary approach enables "greater interaction with other disciplines, in recognition of the fact that critical cultural practice is always moving between and beyond boundaries of its field" (O'Neill, 2012, p. 2). The notion of boundary crossing relates to Black feminist theory and of intersectionality, instrumental to this research.

Intersectionality highlights historical discrepancies inherent in discourses of masculinities of "men writing about men". Here considerations of disparities at intersections of race, class, gender, and sexualities may have been overlooked (Hearn, 2004). This is exemplified in *Cut & Mix* through artworks of Marlene Smith and Beverley Bennett, in challenging the hegemony of Black masculinity, which potentially erases or "others" the Black female (Wright, 2004). Their respective works problematise masculinity as only being embodied in men (Halberstam, 1998). Similarly, the photography of Rotimi Fani-Kayode "charged with hybrid visual motifs that positioned the black male body as a central figure in transgressive moments of desire, fantasy and memory" (Sealy, 2019, p. 226), raises questions of Black male sexualities. These positionalities are essential to discourses of Black British masculinities and of "becoming". Here, Olufemi (2020) recounts her journey into feminism, from a state of being to becoming,

> **"[E]verybody has a story of how they arrived and keep arriving at radical politics [...] Growing up as a young black woman, I felt the oppressive way the world was organised with my body [...] Revelling in the discovery of the word 'feminism' [...] I found my freedom"** (Ibid., pp. 1-2).

"Visual Representations" goes beyond the "single story" where Black people are depicted as "one thing and one thing only" (Adichie, 2009). The intention is to find the "in-between spaces *which* (my emphasis) provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). The research articulates "cut & mix" within these liminal spaces of subjectivities, formations of identities, in and the through the African diaspora. Here Black identities find space, and in turn negotiate a sense of belonging. However, due to global reconfigurations of nationhood, belonging or a sense of settlement may not be achievable (Ilcan, 2002, p. 3). A complexity confronting young people today, as future "change-makers" within a globalised milieu, where their voices, subjectivities and identities are paramount, and "closely linked to their belonging to a place" (Habib & Ward, 2019, p. 6).

The methods utilised warrant the need for a qualitative approach that "privileges no single methodological practice over another" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 11). Here, voices normally marginalised or outside institutions are heard, and valued within the epistemology and pedagogy of academic discourses. "Visual Representations" takes place within the context of "becoming", bringing into being nuanced identities, through artworks discussed, textually and performatively, and through testimonies shared during the SEA discussions.

1.8 The Bricoleur and Interdisciplinarity

Levi-Strauss makes a case for so called "primitive people" and their supposed ineptitude for "abstract thought" (Levi-Strauss, 1962, p. 1), identified as the ways and means anthropologists of the West demonstrate superiority and rationality. The "science of the concrete" (Ibid.). However, abstract thought "is not a monopoly of civilised language" (Ibid.). The "bricoleur" is one who works with their hands, using "devious means compared to the craftsman [...] [M]ythical thought is therefore a kind of bricolage" (Ibid., p. 11).

It is imperative I acknowledge the origins of the bricoleur in Western thought and how Levi-Strauss upholds the value of non-Western knowledge production. Here, the mythical, magical and the scientific are positioned as parallel pursuits for acquiring knowledge. Levi-Strauss's intention for the bricoleur metaphor was to challenge "then-dominant thinking within anthropology which bifurcated mythical and scientific rationality" (Rogers, 2012, p. 2). This assumed superior knowledge emanating from the West, which relates to earlier discussions of creeping capitalism and the appropriation of Black culture, is summed up below.

> **"[I]t appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and**

seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations" (Smith, 2012, p. 1)**.**

This reflects **FT**'s observations during the SEA of how Black culture of the Sapeurs of Brazzaville having their style commodified. It is incumbent to validate *my* sources of knowledge, of engaging with Black British men in Birmingham, who provide primary data of *their* lived experience. These shared experiences give credence to epistemological and ontological knowledge formations beyond the realms of academia and the institution. I am arguing for more research where the researcher acknowledges their possible privileges, and how this can impact the social actor's engagement and the possible outcomes. As an interpretive researcher, the positionality I strive for highlights the subjective, political, and masculinised gendered hand. This insider lens within the context of an interdisciplinary approach, implies the need for self-critique and reflexivity, in challenging academic hegemony. My research positionality is continuously under scrutiny, whereby "[A]dopting post-positivist epistemologies, interpretive bricoleurs recognize that knowledge is never free from subjective positioning or political interpretation" (Rogers, 2012, p. 4). My ontology, as an interpretive bricoleur, is relevant when viewed through an intersectional lens (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 6). This is self-evident throughout my research analysis, in going beyond the boundaries of the academe to source and evidence new knowledge.

1.9   Reframing: A Light Bulb Moment

Reframing the Moment: Legacies of 1982 Black Art Group Conference, took place in October 2012 at University of Wolverhampton, as part of a wider research project, led by members of BAG, Marlene Smith, Keith Piper and Claudette Johnson. It reflected on, contextualised, and debated legacies of BAG and the subsequent British Black Art Movement (BAM) of the 1980s. It also commemorated the 30th anniversary of the *First National Black Art Convention*, also at the university, then a polytechnic in 1982. Professor Kobena Mercer's keynote presentation "Perforations" situated the "Blk Art Group into a diasporic model of art history by looking at 'translations' of the US Black Arts Movement ideas and the prevalence of a cut-and-mix aesthetic" (Mercer, 2012).

Mercer's speech and BAG became a significant feature of my curatorial practice and in developing this interdisciplinary approach, through his description of their "cut and mix aesthetic" (2012). Mercer described the socio-political and cultural climate in Britain, into which BAG members grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, where "Black could not be conjoined with British [...] separated by the political frontier of a post-industrial heartland" (Ibid.). Mercer described BAG members as self-starters (Ibid.), with little or no historical frame of

reference of Black British artists to respond to or be influenced by. As students, BAG members found there to be a generational and cultural disconnect, between them as Black working-class students and their middle-class white tutors. In creating their art, BAG members found an outlet through avant-gardism, disrupting the "realist relationship between work and spectator", as a prevention against "empiricist" or "secure relationship to knowledge" (Bailey & Hall, 1992, p. 19).

This disruption is evident in the following visual examples; Piper's painterly text calls out companies like British Leyland and Barclays for propping up the apartheid regime. His use of red, gold, green and black, represent the historical colours symbolising Black counter-culture movements, of Pan-Africanism and Rastafari. Similarly, Chambers' paper collage of the Union Jack as a swastika, is a powerful metaphor of the state of the nation as he saw it then. Both these works problematise Black identities and belonging in Britain of the day, highlighting the social inequalities and injustices of the Black lived experience.

 I argue, Piper and Chambers demonstrate "a critical discourse defying the traditional master narratives of authority, mythic individualism, and essentialism in which traditional (my emphasis) literature and painting were heavily invested" (Davis, 2008, p. 246). Furthermore, Creole hybridisation was an enforced and violent act, depicted through African enslavement, colonisation, and Caribbean creolisation,

Figure 7:
Black Assassin Saints, 1987
© Keith Piper

> "[C]reolization can be seen enacted through bricolage as the art of the disparate and fragmentary: the art of adopting and adapting multiple concrete fragments or artifacts as well as elements of imaginative, ideological, cultural, social, or religious practices, experiences, and beliefs" (Knepper, 2006, p. 73).

Figure 8:
Destruction of the National Front, 1979-80
© Eddie Chambers

"Visual Representations" identifies and aligns with these countervailing narratives and practices, where artists of BAG contested Westernised and Eurocentric epistemological hegemony. Their art was a mode of counter-cultural self-expressionism, as depicted in these images, and informs this PBR's conjunctural lens. On creating *Destruction of the National Front* (1979-80), Chambers recalls, "[W]hen the work was made, the National Front had a very strong presence and the streets of Wolverhampton, where I grew up, were festooned with NF stickers declaring 'If They're Black, Send Them Back!' [...] With such casual, but insistent and explicit 'in-your-face' racism" (Juliá, 2012).

1.10   Politics of Knowledge

"Visual Representations" conjunctural and intersectional approach highlights the antagonisms in society past and present. The PBR's uniqueness is its ability to "reconcile conflicting disciplines" (Repko, 2008, p. 6), of cultural theory, visual arts practice and SEA, Black feminist, Black queer theory and autoethnography, as a comprehensive exegesis.

Reviewing aspects of Allen Repko's (2008) definition of interdisciplinary research, a criticism would be of his "othering" of knowledge production and formations, listing a range of knowledge formations pertinent to the interdisciplinary process. These include, knowledge of workers, knowledge of oppressed people's knowledge of their oppressors, knowledge of immigrants, knowledge of the mythical and the vernacular (2008, p. 10). Repko claims, not all knowledge is equal, suggesting "other" sources of knowledge may only

be relevant in specific circumstances, where other sources of knowledge have different value to knowledge that has been expertly "scrutinised" (Ibid., p. 10-11).

Referring to "women's studies" and "oral traditions" as potential sites of inquiry, Repko suggests these knowledges, might gain "credibility in the academy and even find their way into the literature of the disciplines" (Ibid., p. 11). Furthermore, in quoting only part of what Carp et al. states "we don't know what we don't know" (2001, p. 75), I argue is a disservice, highlighting an epistemological elitism inherent in Repko's (2008) argument and other academic circles, detailed throughout this thesis. Carp et al. (2001) explains part of this knowledge formation exists,

> **"[...] outside of penumbra of the currently known (though some may be known to those in other cultures, sub-cultures, or classes excluded from the academy). So make use of examples, to the extent that they help to provide content to what otherwise may seem abstract, but remember that they are limping and halting pointers toward what remains to be discovered"**
> (Ibid., pp. 75-76).

This insight is where "Visual Representations" resides, giving voice to historically "othered" knowledge productions and formations (Wynter, 2003; Smith, 2013). Such epistemic knowledge formation is exemplified in 1970s to 1980s Handsworth, Birmingham, as an "important epistemic space where white sociological studies on 'race relations' converged and diverged with counter-hegemonic political activism of the African Caribbean Self-Help Organisation (ACSHO)" (Palmer, 2019, p. 1). Palmer's critique is supplemented with the acclaimed archival documentary photography of Dr Vanley Burke, as an additional means of eliciting the socio-political conditions of the day.

Similarly, CCCS was an instrumental site of knowledge production through publications (Hall, et al., 2013; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982). They challenged "consequences of neglect" that "fed the discursive machinery of racism [...] largely operated from the circulation of mythological cultural and biological pseudo-scientific falsehoods that were erroneously mistaken as 'common-sense' empirical truths" (Palmer, 2019, p. 4). A positionality demonstrated in the art of Piper and Chambers in calling out the "discursive machinery of racism" (Ibid.).

Such positionalities as artists and academics chimes with "Visual Representations'" pursuit for social justice and providing a platform for marginalised voices and knowledge formations. This PBR's integration of disciplinary methods inherent in cultural studies and

the visual arts, like Palmer (2019), illustrates the value of interdisciplinarity and of "other" knowledge formations. For example, "Burke offers an emphatic insider perspective beyond the imperial lens that is missing from white sociology's readings of the condition of the Black community of Handsworth" (Ibid., p. 17). Ethnographically, "Visual Representations" acknowledges the importance of the past, in defining the urgency of the present and "what is at stake" (Ang, 1996), through the research questions raised and the responses received.

1.11 What is at Stake?

"What is at stake" is another important and recurring narrative device of this thesis. For instance, the conceptualisation of *Cut & Mix* and selection of artists, are in response to this question posed by curator/mentor Ekow Eshun. At other times, it is used to make a statement, indicating the urgency of the situation. I commissioned artists for *Cut & Mix,* I view with similar intent to BAG, as discussed in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4). The question is historically and contemporarily embedded within the artistic practices of BAG, which resonated aesthetically in its messages to Black British communities. BAG's art informed wider discourses of social justice and equality, including Black Studies as an emerging pedagogy in British universities (Shilliam, 2018, p. 53). "What is at stake" is exemplified by Donald Rodney recounting meeting BAG members Keith Piper and Eddie Chambers, and seeing their artwork on the Black British lived experience,

> "[...] until that time at Trent I'd been painting flowers - really pretty flower painting(s). I thought they were dead-on! And then I just stopped. I thought this should be about [...] I should start doing things about me. The actual jump from doing flower-paintings *to this* [my emphasis] might seem like a huge one to anybody else, but to me it was the logical because it was a radicalisation process. I suddenly became aware of what I wanted to say and who I wanted to say it to" (Chambers, 2003, p. 25).

"What is at stake" is a continuation of my MA studies on the practice of Donald Rodney, which raised questions of constructs of Black masculinity, of emasculation and pathologies of Blackness (Correia, 2019, p. 74). "Visual Representations" raises issues of my epistemology, illustrating the urgency of the question, without being positioned purely as either a sociological or criminological inquiry. I argue, BAG conveyed a Black aesthetic that "is at the core of how human beings live in the world, not only in terms of lives worth living but also in the value of those living it" (Gordon, 2018, p. 19). A "Black aesthetic" created due to the racial formation of Blackness and then as artistic and philosophical "expressive practices" in modernity (Taylor, 2016, p. 12). *Cut & Mix* illustrates a Black aesthetic of "expressive practices", within the poetic films of Samiir Saunders' spoken word testimony of

his sexuality, and through Iggy London's *Black Boys Don't Cry* (2016), asking "where do I fit in?" My epistemological perspective is informed by knowledge emanating outside the academe and through the visual arts practices and resultant discourses of BAG and artists in *Cut & Mix*. Bringing this knowledge into the academe and into the public sphere by way of an exhibition, brings into being everyday Black British male ontologies, beyond such pathologies, acknowledging for racialised people diasporic[ally] there is still plenty at stake.

1.12 Decolonising Knowledge

"What is at stake" raises questions of whose knowledge is of value (Repko, 2008), and relates to my position as the only Black male researcher in my cohort amongst my peers within the academe, in a city as diverse as Birmingham. Due to this sense of isolation, myself and two other Black colleagues devised *Anticipating Black Futures* (ABF), a one-day interdisciplinary symposium. The call for papers invited (self-) funded postgraduates, early career researchers, activists and artists to respond to the question "[In] a nation where Black pasts in the UK are erased and the present is under threat, how do we begin conceptualising the future?" (Anticipating Black Futures, 2019).

The symposium challenged the hegemonic Eurocentric academic canon by prioritising Black studies scholarship in Britain. The timeliness of this initiative was later justified through the production of research *The Broken Pipeline,* detailing barriers Black PhD students experience in accessing research council funding (Williams, et al., 2019). The urgency of the situation has come full circle through UK Research England and Office for Students' call for funding applications in October 2020, aimed at "improving access and participation for Black and minority ethnic groups in PGR study" (Office for Students, 2020). This call I brought to the attention of BCU, the impact of which was the instigation and submission of a collaborative bid including M4C, and the Doctoral Training Partnership.

In critiquing earlier drafts of this chapter, I was asked to contextualise and problematise the method of ethnography and its link to empire, post, and neo-colonialism. What is crucial within the context of knowledge formations in this supposedly postcolonial and postmodern moment, is a need for historically marginalised voices to be heard. This personally-encountered problem is canonical, of ensuring my research is valid and read as rigorous, if as Repko (2008) suggests all knowledge is not equal. Who decides what the canon should be?

Discourses in respect of academic and institutional decolonisation including Rhodes Must Fall (2018), Johnson et al (2018), and Bhambra et al. (2018), problematise the structural and historical violence inherent in knowledge production within academia. They cite the

racial and racist politics framing writing, who gets to write, and what histories shape those writings (Johnson, et al., 2018). This is particularly visible in philosophy, a discipline in modern Western universities, which remain bastions of Eurocentrism, and white heteronormative male structural privilege and superiority (Moldonado-Torres, et al., 2018; Mills, 1998). These discourses can be attributed to curricular design, reading lists, promotion, and meritocracy, resulting in the underrepresentation of Black and ethnic scholars in this area of study (Moldonado-Torres, et al., 2018).

"Visual Representations" is not a comparative study between "Black" and "White" masculinities, identities, and sexualities. Instead, it (re)constructs and (re)asserts Black British masculine identities and their lived experiences within conjunctures of Westernised patriarchal hegemony. My decision to adopt methods of autoethnography and SEA, raises the tension of subjectivity and objectivity, of paradigms of positivist and anti-positivisms, to destabilise the supposed canon. The canon is of consequence if those sources, histories, and opinions are questionable and not scrutinised intersectional[ly], and if we simply replace white patriarchal hegemony with Black patriarchal hegemony (Mercer, 1994; Wright, 2004). This is further exemplified in discourses of gender, where for some, feminism is viewed as an attempt to take power away from (white) men (hooks, 2014, p. xi).

1.13   Autoethnography as Method

Autoethnography as a method challenges the canon and is essential to critically reflect and frame my positionality as a Black male researcher, within wider socio-cultural domains, in response to the key research questions. A fundamental aspect of autoethnography is "telling one's story does not automatically result in the cultural understanding of the self and others, which only grows out of in-depth cultural analysis and interpretation" (Chang, 2016, p. 13). As I have identified, "[These] texts are raced, gendered, class productions, reflecting the biases and values of racism, patriarchy and the middle-class" (Denzin, 2014, p. 7). Consequently, my autoethnographic reflections are framed within historical, cultural, and socio-political moment of 1970s to 1980s, and the present. These are aligned to my lived experiences with those of the social actors of the SEA and the emergence of BAG. It is located to place and time in respect of family and growing up in Birmingham and how my formative years are shaped by popular and counter-cultures I experienced of music, TV, and a growing awareness of socio-political injustices experienced throughout the African diaspora. However, I do not view my autoethnographic account as limited to the chapter itself. I regard "Visual Representations" as self-narrative, which is a critical process, aware of the "insider/outsider" dichotomies, creating tensions of objectivity and subjectivity (Merriam, et al., 2001, p. 405). In embarking on this theoretical journey, requires more

than mere objective reflection on the social world, it demands what Callaway describes as" radical consciousness" of reflexivity, of "self-analysis and political awareness" (1992, p. 33).

Yet, reflexivity is disputed. In "studying people's lives, we cannot privilege our impressions as authoritative, even under such impressive labels as 'reflexivity'; rather, we must measure our lives against other people's lives" (Salzman, 2002, p. 808). My critical reflexivity *is* in relation to others and of the social actors in this PBR. My intention is to dispute historical privilege of Western knowledge formations, through giving voice to marginalised people, who have been negatively instrumentalised by "institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles" (Said, 1978, p. 2). This is not a traditional theoretical PhD, because my practice as a curator is central to its realisation. During its development, it was important to convey, through the interdisciplinarity of *Cut & Mix*, what visual representations of Black British masculine identities mean today. Selected artists and their works problematise narratives of heteronormative sexuality and hegemony of gender in respect of men (Mills, 2019), of an essential Black subject. My autoethnographic and qualitative approach defends and critiques these theories through a conjunctural and intersectional lens.

1.14 Socially Engaged Arts Practice (SEA)

The engagement of Black British men in Birmingham discussing their lived experiences, in response to the research questions, was realised through SEA. I utilised the parameters of convening a focus group as a means of empowerment for marginalised voices (Race, et al., 1994), to gain insight into participants' beliefs, perceptions, feelings and lived experience. Participants were selected from people I knew, instead of an open call, who were willing to share their experiences, but not to reaffirm my opinions, avoiding a priori assumptions.

Due to limited time and space, only 2 sessions are referred to in this thesis. The first featured seven male participants of African and Caribbean heritage, of varying ages, including a father and son. Qualitative data was also derived from nine participants for a "curatorial preview", for the exhibition *Cut & Mix*, varying in age, race and gender. The "curatorial preview" provided qualitative feedback of *Cut & Mix's* conceptualisation, artworks and overarching themes. Events were severely impacted by the pandemic and SEA activity moved online, with the exhibition rescheduled for autumn/winter 2021. This process illustrates the benefit of interdisciplinarity, meaning I could literally "cut & mix" between methods, ensuring critical data was ascertained.

Bringing the groups together as opposed to one-to-one interviews, potentially elicits individual responses as well as "group interaction" (Morgan, 1996), and "group effect"

(Carey & Smith, 1994). Individuality was paramount, along with collective responses (Barbour, 2013, p. 315). Discussions were described as" timely" with requests for further sessions, illustrating a need for such conversations to take place among Black men in Birmingham. This highlighted the "empowering" and "emancipatory effect" on participants and myself (Gomm, 2008 , p. 323). The difference between the SEA activities of this PBR and being a "mere" focus group discussion, I would argue, are in its approach and application.

The first SEA session was realised through collaboration with *Menologues,* a theatre production company, which utilises art-based performance, to explore men's emotional world and how they express their feelings through drama and other artistic media. *Menologues'* primary focus are performances enabling the audience to hear thoughts and feelings of men from racialized communities of South Asian, African, and Caribbean in the West Midlands. I partnered with *Menologues* to convene and moderate a SEA discussion, from which the narrative contributed to the dramaturgy of the theatre production *Revealed* (2019). A criticism of SEA is "creating representation - like a play - of a social issue" (Helguera, 2011, p. 7). However, *Revealed* (2019) was not only a play, it included a Q&A with the audience, featuring the actors, a therapist and an academic. The discussions with the audience and panel produced interactions in a "meaningful way" (Ibid.).

Other SEA activities during *Cut & Mix* will include live coding workshops in response to Antonio Roberts' installation *Heavyweight Champ* (2021), and interpretive intersectional curatorial tours and discussions, led by All Black Connect (ABC), a Nottingham-based group of Black female and male, LGBTQ+ and non-binary young people. A hybridised conversation (live/online) will take place, featuring artists, academics, activists and the public, tabling thoughts emanating from the artworks conjunctural and intersectional themes. The aim of SEA aspects of "Visual Representations" are to elicit "communicative action" (Habermas, 2006), determined as "social action" facilitating "communication and understanding between individuals" (Helguera, 2011, p. 7). These activities are anticipated as having a "lasting effect on the spheres of politics and culture as a true emancipatory force" (Ibid.).

SEA is dependent on "social intercourse a factor of its existence" (Ibid., p. 2), and has experienced an upturn in recent years. This is driven by the expansion of international biennials (Liverpool, Sharjah, Coventry), arts organisations working in the public realm (Art Angel, Situations), and funding bodies seeking impact of their investment. Since the 1980s/90s, arts related research is moving from the "margins into the mainstream of qualitative inquiry" (Baden & Wimpenny, 2014, p. 16). In the context of qualitative inquiry, a

shift from positivist to post-positivist research methods in social sciences aided the integration of disciplines equated to arts-based and reflexive approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 11).

As alluded to in the introduction, the ethical requirements of SEA, in this instance reflexivity, demands participants received information of what the process entailed and how their anonymised contribution would be used aesthetically. The information detailed their right to withdraw at any time, or not have their contribution included, should they change their mind. I detailed the subsequent arts activities and use of audio from the discussions in *Cut & Mix*. Guillemin & Gillam (2004) add the ethical framework extends to reflexivity and what Gray regards as the "knowable space" (2002, pp. 62-63). The acknowledgement of what we bring to our research, "our lived experience [...] politics [...] intellectual frameworks" (Ibid.), is discussed in the autoethnography chapter (Chapter 3). Reflexivity is not merely a description of the autoethnographic process. There are wider reflexive ethical implications if we consider assumed dominant knowledge formations. Throughout all the stages of this PBR, I remain critical and reflexive of how I obtain knowledge and how knowledge is generated (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 274).

1.15 Framework Analysis

Qualitative inquiry's fluidity insists I research a range of potential analytical methods including discourse, thematic, content, and narrative analysis. Each have merits of how questions are framed, including categorisation, coding, interpretation, and data analysis, where "every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and ways of knowing that world by the researcher" (Hughes, 1980, p. 13).

Adopting framework analysis as a method for analysing the SEA data, was due to its suitability for novice researchers, an example being the sheer "volume and potential complexity of data to be analysed" (Rabiee, 2004, p. 657). If qualitative methods are to be more widely used in such fields where quantitative measures are the norm, research processes need to be more widely available for scrutiny (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002; Parkinson, et al., 2016). Framework is still a relatively new analytical method, where there is a need for more evidence of its successful application. Framework analysis is likened to "grounded theory" (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009), consisting of a set of inductive strategies for analysing data (Charmaz, 1996), and of theory emerging directly from the data, with an aspirational goal. It emerges independently of the researcher's preconceptions (Burke Johnson, 2019, p. 517).

Framework is a qualitative analytical method, suitable for one-to-one or group interviews. Although, its stages are interconnected, there was room to be creative and identify the

connections between comments and emerging themes (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002, p. 177). Framework is viewed as "better adapted to research that has specific questions, a limited time frame, a pre-designed sample and a priori issues" (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In this instance, a priori issues related to how the research questions were posed, which are then refined during data analysis and from the social actor's responses. Meaning questions such as "What is a man?", created discursive conversations of biology and theology.

During the "familiarisation" of reviewing text, I saw emerging themes of discrimination due to participant's Black identities, and experiences of mental health. Familiarisation highlighted the importance of school life and formative years in shaping identities, including where their identities were challenged or questioned, by themselves or others. Generational experiences were an emerging theme, partly due to the father and son dynamic, enabling corroboration of a racist experience, providing a conjunctural lens to interpret constructs of Black British masculine identities. An ongoing process of "indexing" of data was undertaken, where I made note or reference to significant statements or themes to ensure responses were given to the research questions.

The "charting" of answers and emerging themes was completed by coding participant's sentences against questions. During this process, I began to see emerging patterns and identify passages of text suitable for eventual inclusion. Data was derived from two discussion groups, as opposed to several sessions, due to time restrictions, meaning it was easier to chart responses within respective themes and eventual subheadings. Semi-structured questions were contextualised with cultural theories of Hall (1997) in respect of identities and representation and Connell (2005) in respect of masculinities. Discussions were further aided by visual prompts, in keeping with "Visual Representations'" intersectional themes, a process open to interpretation, "since there is no law which can guarantee that things will have one true meaning" (Hall, 1997, p. 39). This was further evidenced by the different reactions to the questions, illustrated in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4) during the preview session.

The final stages of mapping and data interpretation is where meaning is applied to the responses, through the emergence of patterns and themes. Here, my subjective judgement of meaning and interpretation came into play, regularly returning to the transcripts and audio to ensure responses were categorised within their respective themes. A process which saw some overlapping of thoughts and discussion. Primary data from the SEA discussions have been "triangulated" (Morgan, 1997, p. 3), against the autoethnographic reflexive process, archival research, and curation, bringing new knowledge. The latter has been interpreted through the SEA and the realisation of *Cut & Mix.*

1.16 Data Interpretation

Data was interpreted using framework analysis in respect of words and meaning exemplified by the first question "What is a man?". Contextually, responses illustrated what was asked and responses were at times influenced by previous comments. As the discussion developed, the frequency and extensiveness of comments in relation to place were revealed, particularly school is apparent as an important site of identity formation. There is an internal consistency or consensus amongst the group, on formations of identities, racism, and school experience. In terms of specificity, each of the respondents frequently shared their personal experiences, as opposed to the hypothetical.

The following is a sample of how framework was implemented, leading into the next chapter of the complete analysis. The sample focuses on the data derived and interpreted through intersectional cultural theory, commencing with the question "What is a man?". Responses have been edited at times due to the limitations of the thesis, however the essence of the reply is retained. Social actor's replies appear in *italics* and for confidentiality, their names, names of places and other people have been changed or abbreviated.

1.17 Words, Meaning and Context

Initial respondents to the question "What is a man?" used specific social science and scientific terminology, such as "construct", perhaps indicating some of the participants may have some social scientific knowledge or interest. "A *man is a construct of masculinity that's created through perception* [...] *masculinity is created, when you feel like you need to be perceived as masculine*" (**QRI**). **BZ**'s, approach is from biological and theological perspectives due to how he was brought up,

"[...] a child that is born biologically constructed and thought of as boy, with genitalia, with a penis [...] if you are a creationist, you say god the almighty created human being's male and female there's that theological aspect. I've grown up with that understanding [...] I had two sisters and I use to like to comb the hair of the dolls. And there were times when they would be taken away from me because of that, No!" **(BZ)**.

During the introduction, I referred to my initial research, "*So they suggest the idea of our identities, our masculinities and femininities are actually socially constructed. You might have different views*". I felt it important to contextualise my question, emphasising participants may have differing views. The question, though very simple, is philosophical, as "the process of qualitative analysis aims to bring meaning to a situation rather than the search for truth focused on qualitative research" (Rabiee, 2004, p. 657).

45

BZ's playing with his sister's dolls, possibly relates to discussions of the male/sex role and "Role Theory" (Connell, 2005). Connell argues such attitudes demonstrates the limitations of a functionalist approach of sex role theorists, who believe, "being a man or a woman means enacting a general set of expectations, which are attached to one's sex – the 'sex role'" (Ibid., p. 22). The reaction to **BZ** combing the dolls hair and the aggressive 'No!' he received, illustrates Connell's concern with sex role theory, that "[Role] theory exaggerates the degree to which people's social behaviour is prescribed" (Ibid., p. 26). In respect of context, my question was quite simple, "What is a man?". Reflecting on Connell (2005) and Fausto-Sterling (1993), they make salient points that the male sex does not underlie what it is to "be a man" (Garlick, 2003).

The introduction of theology perhaps reflects the wider struggles inherent in the Black lived experience, whereby in some cases, Black lived experiences and the Black church are inseparable (Cone, 1977). Participants leaned towards masculinity as a social construct, as per language used by **QRI** and **BZ**. However, we are warned of the 'uncritical' use of the terms "man", "male" and "men" and implied "cultural and social category of gender" (Garlick, 2003, p. 160). Contextually, the question can potentially influence individual and group responses (Rabiee, 2004, p. 659). This research was devised to critically interrogate such heteronormative and binary assumptions of masculinities. However, I did wonder whether I was culpable of putting thoughts in their heads. Though, in respect of analysis, there is a level of subjectivity inherent in interpretation an "interplay between researchers and data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), which researchers should acknowledge.

1.18 Frequency and Extensiveness of Comments

In respect of frequency, Rabiee asks the researcher to consider "how often a comment or view is made" and the extensiveness of "number of participants who express a particular view" (2004, p. 659). There is some consensus amongst the group in respect of the notions of biology, gender, theology, and language as the following comments illustrate.

"*I would echo **BZ**'s point. I've seen gender corresponds with the sex because biologically speaking, we have particular hormones that turn us into men and separate us from women. And then by the hormonal make up society tries to define that and tries to emphasise certain points. If a man's hormones is set as such, he's more inclined to testosterone and aggression then society say's OK, they would push them into building or warrior type roles or into fighting types roles of sport and it's the same with the women*" (**ZJ**).

The purpose of hosting this SEA was to engender interactions amongst participants and elicit relevant personal and potentially emotional commentary (Morgan, 1993, p. 6).

Crabtree, et al., (1993) claim focus group data should be sampled and analysed at group level only, which Carey states "a participants contribution is likely to be affected by previous comments in the session" (1994, p. 125). I wanted the participants to trigger each other, creating richer responses to the questions. I interpret **ZJ**'s as related to the historical hegemony of patriarchy and masculinity, where "[Men] gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command [...] [Violence] can become a way of claiming or asserting masculinity in group struggles" (Connell, 2005, pp. 82-83). Schools, the workplace and sports fields are contributing factors in the construction of gender identities (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000), identities intersected by culture, class and ethnicity. In this regard, working-class "laddish" white boys (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000), or the African-Caribbean "rebels" (Sewell, 1997), engender similar hegemonic masculine traits, of inclusion, exclusion, domination or subordination, drawn along lines of race, ethnicity, gender and class. This reasserts heterosexual dispositions that are "not gay as it is not female" (Jewkes, et al., 2015; Noble, 2006; Sewell, 1997; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

"The fact that we are asking this question is a failure of imagination" (**DD**).

DD's asserts we lack the language or the failure of imagination to respond to the question, prompts thoughts of "one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one" (Beauvoir, et al., 2015). This raises the consideration of the social constructionist, interpretivist positionality of this research, whereby meaning is constructed by social actors. In turn, they, through their culture and linguistics, construct meaning through concepts and signs (Hall, 1997, p. 25). There are varying perspectives of "What is a man?", due to the participant's beliefs, culture, linguistic and conceptualising system. If you are referring to gender and masculinities, are you essentially talking about men, as superordinated (Kimmel, 1992, p. 162), and if you are talking about men are you talking about white men?

In Chapter 2 *On Black British Masculinities in 21ˢᵗ Century Birmingham*, I problematise the SEA groups' perceptions of "What is a man?", by asking them to consider "What is a Black man?". This is due to historical portrayals of men and masculinity, determined positively or negatively, where gender "interacts with race and class" (Connell, 2005, p. 71). Furthermore, it is promulgated on the basis of historical "power and subordination" (Mercer, 1994, p. 137), reinforced in Birmingham in the guise of the "moral panic" of the Black men and crime (Hall, et al., 2013, p. 31).

Throughout the stages of data analysis and utilisation of framework analysis, it is essential rigour is applied to ensure validity of findings. Without this, qualitative research is open to

criticism in terms of the reliability of data, compared to the validity criterion inherent in positivist assumptions (Maxwell, 1992, p. 279). Framework analysis charting process provides a "clear and transparent picture of the researcher's subjective inferences prior to mapping" (Kiernan & Hill, 2018, p. 259). Integral to this process is the "systematic construction of theory" arising from the data, from which claims of validity are evident in the "transparency of the approach" (Ibid.).

This chapter detailed the originality of a "cut & mix" methodological approach and provides the framework for the ensuing discussion. "Cut & mix" applies to my positionality as an interpretive bricoleur, merging disciplines and methods to make sense of conjunctural and intersectional themes. These themes locate "Visual Representations" specific to place and time, through SEA testimonies, charting past and present Black British lived experiences in Birmingham because of migration, settlement and an emerging Black British public sphere. Though the experience of Black migration and settlement in Birmingham is littered with testimonies of racism and hardship for many. It could be argued gatherings, such as *African Liberation Day* in Handsworth Park, as captured by Vanley Burke, illustrate a unique historical and perhaps mythological Black unity in the city. A sense of unity contemporary events like *Simmer Down*, is keen to replicate. However, notions of belonging continue to be contested, due to systemic racism in British society, prompting counter-cultural response in the formation of BAG, Rastafarian identities, popular culture of reggae music, Black consciousness and current Black activism.

On Black British Masculinities in 21ˢᵗ Century Birmingham

2.1 Introduction

Methodologically, this chapter addresses the intersectional and conjunctural research questions of Black British masculinities by emphasising the effectiveness of a "cut & mix" approach. Personal testimonies highlight differing lived experiences and why place is significant in the formation of identities (Ward, et al., 2017). "Visual Representations" focuses on African diasporic migration to Britain, specifically, the histories, cultures, heritage, ethnicities and ancestral origins of African Caribbean and African people in Britain, which are very different (Wright, 2004, p. 2). In detailing the Black British lived experience in Birmingham, I illustrate why it is problematic to conflate these experiences, with that of the African American (Yancy & Gilroy, 2015).

The intention of "Visual Representations" is to deconstruct discourses of Black British masculinities. To achieve this the application of Black feminist and Black queer intersectional theories are relevant towards any reconstruction. Here, I utilise Black feminist and queer intersectional theories to address concerns of hegemonic masculinities and patriarchal Western society. Within both understandings the former enables men to assume "characteristics of [the] socially powerful [...] by defining men in opposition to women and subordinate men, especially homosexuals and men of color" (Kegan Gardiner, 2002, p. 5). The latter structurally reinforces white male dominance, and complicit white feminism (Carby, 1982), which historically privileges Western dominance over the global South and continues to do so today. Furthermore, the global hegemony of neoliberalism and capitalism demands the conformity and complicity of nations in the global South, where again women, children and subordinated men are victimised. Additionally, through a conjunctural lens, discourses of cultural studies are significant in trying to make sense of the present, speculate on possible futures and how we might negotiate a pathway there (Grossberg, 2010, p. 57). "Visual Representations" achieves this through interpretations of testimonies of generational Black British lived experiences, past and present.

The testimonies illustrate why "our time is now", as per Keith Piper's call to action in 1981 (Chambers, 2014, p. 107); 40 years on, a sense of urgency remains. This is exemplified by the testimonies of young Black people in Britain today, whose lived experiences are similar, if not the same (YMCA England & Wales, 2020), to that of previous generations. Through discussions with a group of Black men in Birmingham, this PBR "bears witness" to times past and present (Sharpe, 2018, p. xvii). The intention of the SEA was to elicit intersectional and nuanced identities. Though this is not a romanticised pursuit for a more "wholesome" portrayal of Black male characters (Mercer, 1994, p. 137). To contextualise this dialectic, the contemporary lens of criminology is useful to characterise the conjunctural moments of interest to this thesis, of why the pathologising of Black British male persists (Hall, et al., 2013; Cushion, et al., 2011).

2.2   Criminologically Framing Black Men

An estimated 37% of children and young people live in poverty. Equating to approximately 100,000 children and young people. "[Nearly] half of Birmingham's children live in the 10% most deprived areas in the country - with nearly 8,000 living in the 1% most deprived areas" (Birmingham Child Poverty Commission, 2015, p. 2). The correlation between poverty and crime, intersected by gender and race, illustrates the consequences and sequential effects of social deprivation and crime. These consequences repeatedly impact predominantly Black and ethnic minorities, young men in particular, in the "poorest neighbourhoods in England" (Pitts, 2015, p. 32). Youth offending is embedded in these communities, denying "usual pathways to adulthood" (Ibid.). The disenfranchisement of Black men in society, and their resort to criminality is "intelligible as a response to economic necessity" (Mercer, 1994, p. 144). The issues experienced by Black men are structural as "whiteness is associated with access to power and blackness associated with powerlessness and imprisonment" (Glynn, 2014, p. 12). However, even social status of being middle-class and Black does not prevent you from being stopped and search and criminalised (Chakelian, 2020). "Visual Representations" is an alternative to the "single story" of criminology even though pathologies persist, linking Black British men to crime. This SEA provides counter-narratives, especially for those having grown up in deprived neighbourhoods, or were deemed educationally subnormal, as exemplified by **BZ's** testimony in section 2.8 of his struggles with dyslexia and being shunted into a remedial class.

2.3   On Masculinities

Connell's significance is of a comprehension of masculinities and race, problematising historical concepts in relation to constructs of gender and race (2005, pp. 34-35). Historically, the method of ethnography from Westernised and Eurocentric perceptions of masculinities are mired in oppression and disenfranchisement, driven by hegemonic patriarchal capitalism, and fuelled by white supremacist racial imperatives. These hegemonies skew comprehensions of masculinities in the West. Revisions to ethnographic research through inclusion of more diverse voices (Edwards-Kerr, 2005; Gunter, 2008; Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018), enriches contributions to the epistemology of ethnography.

The next section picks up a discussion on the question "What is a Black man?" to gain insights into the beliefs, perceptions and feelings of participants on themes of masculinities, identities, representation, sexualities, place mental health and well-being (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 258; Carey, 2016, p. 731). The discussion contributed to the development of wider SEA activities, including the theatrical production *Revealed* (2019) and the exhibition *Cut & Mix.*

2.4 Masculinities, School and Racism

The thematic focus of this part of the discussion relates to place, school, hyper-masculinity, violence, class, and racism. School experiences are central to the discussions of masculine identity formations, where "school is a site for the production of sex/gender subjectivities [...] and contemporary modes of masculinities" (Mac An Ghaill, 1994, p. 2). This is in the same way local neighbourhoods shape "transitions to adulthood" (Ward, et al., 2017, p. 800). The group shared a range of experiences of knowing and becoming, of the realisation of their Blackness, which was for some, sadly through violent racist experiences. 95% of young Black people witness or experience racist language in school "due to the colour of their skin" where "cultural erasure" is enacted through school policies and in the workplace on issues such as hair styles (YMCA England & Wales, 2020, p. 7). There is a sense of mistrust by Black young people of authorities and institutions, police, health service and academic institutions. Institutionalised racism impacts young Black lives in Britain today in similar ways to the late 1970s and 1980s.

2.5 Always, Already

In response to the question of "What is a Black man?", **CB**'s awareness of his Blackness came at a young age,

"*I went to school for the first time on my own. After school these two white boys beat me up, called me 'black bastard and nigger this', I started crying, got home and went underneath my bed and dad was calling me, asking what's the matter? I said 'I want to be white'. I never forget you* (referring to his father who is present) *saying, be proud of who you are, be proud of your blackness. And that was the first day I realised I was black. Before then, I was a boy, I was going to school I didn't have a reason to question the way I looked because everyone around was same colour as me. It was only until someone identified it in a derogatory way, in a violent way, it made me realise you know what I am, a black boy*" **(CB)**.

CB's response to experiencing violent racism is similar to musician and academic Akala, and the "sense of shame" he felt, when racially abused at school, aged five (2018, p. 38). **CB**'s experience emphasises a "sense of shame" in wanting to be white. Akala's experience was problematised by his mixed-race heritage and having to share his traumatic experience with his white mother. Such fantasy attitudes of "wanting to be white" expressed by **CB,** are characterised in research conducted in 1950s USA, to ascertain racial attitudes and preferences of "negro children" at different ages and stages of development (Clark & Clark, 1950). Self-consciousness of "negro children" of the racialised self "colored" or "whiteness" is identifiable from age three (Ibid., p. 341). They surmise the complicated state of young

minds, conflicted by the social stigma of Blackness, and the realisation "to be colored in contemporary American society is a mark of inferior status" (Ibid., pp. 349-350). Whilst in Britain, "Children become race conscious very early" (Akala, 2018, p. 39).

Akala's statement illustrates how entrenched race and racism remains in neoliberal society. Like **CB**'s father who told him to be proud of his Blackness, Akala's mother took him to Pan-African school to learn about his Black heritage, to instil in him a sense of self and pride. Positive measures of Pan-African schooling, being "Black & Proud", can be lost in historical and contemporary ideologies of racism, which is difficult to define (Back, 1996, p. 9). Racism, as an ideology, is fluid and not monolithic, framed within the historical and contemporary creation of the nation state (Miles & Brown, 2003, pp. 6-7). Though it is accepted "race" is a construct, "we are still required to seek justice through global political systems that facilitate its existence" (Gilroy, 2000, p. 52).

Racist structural systems are exemplified in masculinities in schools amongst white, Black, and Asian young boys. Formations of negative opinions towards boys of African Caribbean descent, from boys of other ethnic origins, are perpetuated by the "British press and public perception" (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000, p. 55). A sense of homogenisation of Blackness and its association with deviance stems from opinions shared in O'Donnell & Sharpe's (2000) interviews with some of the white boys. The West portrays itself as "civilised, advanced and superior" through its demonisation of Africa and Black people as "Other" (Wright, 2004, p. 27). Racist perceptions can be traced to historical thought of European "enlightenment" (Hegel, 2001), positioning the "European man" central to philosophical discourses (Wright, 2004, p. 28; Wynter, 2003). "White (male) philosophy's confrontation of Man and Universe, or even Person and Universe, is predicated on taking personhood for granted" (Mills, 1998, p. 9). Those not regarded as having acquired subjecthood are excluded from such rarefied thought. Hence, Black-led organisations in Handsworth, Birmingham, during the 1970s and 1980s were crucial for Black subjecthood, countering racist sociological discourses (Palmer, 2019). Similarly, Sewell's (1997) ethnographic research of Black boys in London schools found, amongst specific groups and individuals, a desire for knowledge of the self elsewhere than within the school, as some Black boys felt the teachers did not understand them or their culture.

"*I went to a school and there was 7 black kids in the whole school, of 800 pupils that was my reality. There was no black history month there was no blackness in that school whatsoever. I had to stamp my authority on that school, beat up a few white people just to let them know that they couldn't mess with us. It was a very, very, vicious school in that time. I felt I missed out on that whole thing being in that school where there were more black kids and I felt like we had to fight for what we did*" (**FT**).

There is a sense of loss in **FT**'s comment, thinking at other schools where there were more Black children, he might have had better experiences, learning about Black history and culture. It raises the dichotomy of the hyper-visibility of Black bodies (Puwar, 2004), and hyper-invisibility of "Black culture" within the epistemology of the school curriculum (Arday, 2018). **FT** legitimises his hyper-masculine act of violence against certain white people in the school as defence against racism. If one were to have witnessed **FT**'s aggression it would have been easy to categorise him among other hyper-masculine young Black men. Though not excusing **FT**'s violence, "[The] naked truth of decolonization evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it" (Fanon, 2001, p. 28).

2.6 Racism

To contextualise **CB**'s and **FT**'s statements, critically, Miles & Brown is both useful and problematic in the argument for a "reasonable consensus" of what comprises racism (2003, p. 4). If there are no defining parameters the concept is rendered meaningless. Within the scope of this research, there is not the space or function to fully define and extend this analysis. Rather, I concur with the need to position research within the social-scientific "critique of the everyday interaction" (Ibid., p. 5), "simplistic analysis results in simplistic solutions" (Ibid., p. 172). Although, I do not seek to define what comprises racism, I aim to evidence its understanding empirically through the methods discussed, the what and the how of racism, as an intersecting factor in the lives of the social actors.

Discourses of "interpretive practices" within qualitative research is argued to be of value empirically, addressing the "hows and whats of social reality" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 488). Miles & Brown situate and define racism within everyday social phenomena that is intersectional, continuous, and fluid (2003, p. 6). However, Gilroy (2002) is critical, specifically, his ire as related to Miles (1982; 1984), subsuming race into class. Gilroy's concern (2002, p. 11), is Miles' attempt to eradicate racism, through his concept of race as a construct (1982, p. 42). I would also add, dispassionate theories are viable only if one is not the target or victim of structural institutional racism or white supremacist violence. What is unforgiveable is Miles' attack on "black writers" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 12), similarly referenced in respect of African-American studies (Carby, 1999). "Miles clearly disagrees with the political strategy of these authors" exemplified by his "negative evaluation of the politics of black autonomy" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 12). "Visual Representations" also counters Eurocentric academic hegemony, giving voice to the marginalised and discounted lived experience.

Alternatively, I consider Back's (1996) study of multi-racial youth groups in South London, as a more insightful critique. He elaborates on the everyday social phenomena of racism,

described as "duelling play" (Back, 1996, p. 73), predominantly between young Black and white people. This play of "cussing and wind ups" is likened to a form of rites-of-passage, where parameters of cultural and social belonging are defined, overstepped, and learned. Here, racist language is a facet of this type of play as "ritualised expressions of masculinity" (Back, 1990, p. 25). This comments perhaps underplays the hurt and trauma experienced by **FT** in relation to the conceptualisation of racism, where there are conflicts in the discussion of the ideology of racism. Ideologies extended to the intentional and unintentional, vis a vis "institutional racism" (Miles & Brown, 2003, p. 58). Back's conclusion situates "duelling play" within the parameters of the intentional/ unintentional of the everyday social phenomena of racism, where "It is not enough to label "duelling play" as bad behaviour and prohibit it in the hope that this will stop racist abuse" (Back, 1996, p. 97). Though such experiences are part of a young person's rites-of-passage, we cannot deny these are learned behaviours (Clark & Clark, 1950, p. 347). Meaning, if you constantly hear and see being Black is akin to ugliness, you may start to believe it.

Back calls for anti-racist strategies of "progressive folk practices" (1996, p. 97), to address the situation. An example of this is the 1994 dialogical initiative, *The Roof is on Fire* (Kester, 2004, pp. 4-5) - a project between local police and young African Americans and Latinos addressing media perceptions and racial "common-sense" positions of them as delinquent. Historically, the folkloric is trivialised within hegemonies of the Eurocentric world view of epistemology, reinforcing Westernised "regimes of truth" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 257). This leads me to ask, how valuable is knowledge regarded as "folk", knowledge perceived to be "emotional or experiential" (Almeida, 2015, p. 80)? This is due to the intention of this thesis to centralise the experiential, in challenging a Eurocentric epistemological canon of the knower and knowing, as argued in section 1.10 on the politics of knowledge (Chapter 1). Therefore, Back's call for "progressive folk practices" is useful towards the decolonisation of knowledge and methodologies (Smith, 2012). Here, intersectional marginalised groups are able to draw on wider diasporic perspectives, of "double consciousness" (Du Bois, 1994), and where liminality enables the marginalised knower to bear witness to hegemony, as it "attempts to transcend an either/or epistemology" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 262).

2.7   (Not So) Great Expectations

ZJ recalls his experiences of racism, firstly at a private school and then at state school.

"I went to a private school first in Pemberton [...] a predominantly white and Asian school. I never really knew that I was black until the teachers expressed that to me. Because there was only two black people there in my year group [...] the school kids they were cool with me it

was the teachers and their perception of what it meant to be a black guy and their perceptions of a black Caribbean person that was like oh yeah you can't do this [...] when I spoke it irritated them more, because they expect you to be a dumb nigger, you know what I mean [...] but it didn't bother me because the teachers are white and they're going to do that" **(ZJ)**.

Like **CB**, **ZJ**'s realisation of his racialised being was revealed in his interaction with and through white people. **ZJ** speaks of the perception teachers had of him and Black people. It is unlikely these perceptions stem from experiences with other Black pupils, as only two Black people were at the school. Within the culture of school and the classroom, with few if any Black males present, I ask, is the authority and materiality of knowledge of the teacher threatened by the knowledge, authority, and presence of a young Black male in **ZJ**? Again, the circumstances described raises the dichotomy of hyper (in)visibility, where **ZJ** is conspicuous by his mere presence and vocality. Yet, concurrently, he is inconspicuous as one of only two Black people in a predominantly white and Asian school. "For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (Fanon, 1999, p. 417).

ZJ speaks of the low expectations held by the teacher, of him and Black Caribbean people, as alluded to by Sewell who argues teachers "were forced to question themselves through other cultural positions [...] which asked teachers to confirm their own identity [...] in terms of their own personality" (1997, p. 33). Schools are designed within a particular regimen of discipline (Foucault, 1991), with teachers being the authority. This is an authority not to be challenged or threatened, where teachers impose "state and individual control", and at times "unintentionally" stereotypes of race, gender and class are reinforced (Sewell, 1997, p. 39). In respect of **ZJ,** negative stereotypes of the young Black male emerge as threatening, framed within a historical perception of African-Caribbean people within education (Coard, 1971). Furthermore, ethnographic research conducted by Sewell (1997), O'Donnell & Sharpe (2000), Mac An Ghaill (1994) Archer & Yamashita (2003) all point to a collision of cultures, in relation to masculinities, African-Caribbean heritage and cultures of schooling. Young men within these discourses are liable to be portrayed as "folk devils" in relation to crime, unemployment "located in the wider contemporary moral panic of educational underachievement" (Archer & Yamashita, 2003, p. 115). This "silent catastrophe" of structural racism (Graham & Robinson, 2004), means young Black British men are hyper-visible in their overrepresentation in systems of law and order, mental health and discipline and school exclusions. Standards of attainment for early years Black African and Black Caribbean young people in Britain are of continuing concern (Cabinet Office, 2017, p. 22).

Black Caribbean pupils are three times as likely to be excluded from school and twice as likely to be permanently excluded than their white counterparts (Ibid., p. 25). Attainment gaps are replicated and continue later in their educational journey, impacting an individual's decisions and choices at the stages of higher and further education (Williams, et al., 2019). **ZJ**'s perception of how he was treated by some of his white school teachers maybe entwined with the low academic expectations held of Black British boys (Sewell, 1997).

2.8 Lack of Class

"The processes of "race" and "class" formations are not identical. The former is not reducible to the latter even where they become mutually entangled" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 38). Despite Britain's declining imperial grip, the national decision to exit the EU provides a legitimate framework for nostalgia of nationhood, through which white working-classes can perhaps reinscribe a (common) sense of identity (Lawrence, 1982). However, many who sit outside "common sense" identities of Britishness/Englishness are left struggling to become.

"*I really started to question what it meant to be a black man when I went to Citizen's High School, an all-black school and it's interesting that coming from a private school going right back down to Citizen's High School. My dad would drive me in and half of them hadn't even seen their dad. So, he would be driving up to the school, in his Mercedes and they would say how is he coming up in here*" (**ZJ**).

"*Reading Biko and his words and his thoughts that started helping me to be more affirming of me as a black man. There are times I felt inferior, there's times I felt I am not good enough [...] and back to the whole issue of dyslexia I was labelled at school and was put in a remedial class. I felt unable, I felt insecure those things affected me and I thought then of other black men who were in the same class as me, I had affinity to them until I started reading and understanding [...] 'nough examples of black men who have the same experience as you [...] and that started strengthening me and that's why I gone through the whole trajectory going to university, winning scholarship, doing a PhD. Today I am this black man who has achieved, I am man that is a lifelong learner*" (**BZ**).

ZJ and **BZ** both refer to differing experiences of "becoming", in relation to others or through their own enlightenment, complicated by class. For **ZJ**, class perceptions emerge by his attendance at private school, where pupils were "OK" with him, perhaps recognising their privilege, markedly different to state school. Perceptions of class were signified by his father driving a Mercedes. However, signifiers of status, class, or wealth in respect of Black people are at times reduced to and produced through stereotypical assumptions of criminality, due to how

57

they dress, cars they drive or lack of "good values" (Sewell, 1997, pp. 54-55). "The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush" (Fanon, 2008, p. 2). To "become" do you have to assimilate? This was the case of the Windrush generation coming to England, and today where British born Black young people's identities and cultures are erased or challenged (YMCA England & Wales, 2020).

Culture for African-Caribbean boys plays a greater role in constructions of their masculine identities than most other ethnic groups (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000, pp. 98-99). **ZJ** and **BZ**, among others, spoke of becoming through reading and researching Black culture of literature, art, and theology. Yet, the Black male body remains "fixed" in "Western colour-coded visual symbolic economy" (Skeggs, 2003, p. 1). Despite acquiring language and knowledge, the Black man is viewed through the Western gaze. Historically, class was not only founded on the scale of one's wealth, lineage, and occupation, it was on the grounds of economic, political, social, culture and morality (Savage, 2015). Post-war migration enabled African-Caribbean people to claim their British identities and through the language of class "proudly appropriating their working-class identities" (Ibid., p. 38). The idea of being "proud" I find concerning, as their social and cultural capital were impeded, which continues today, due to constructs of race, which also portrays the working class as exclusively white. Therefore, **BZ**'s struggles towards affirmation through Black literature and academic success is "intelligible" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 24), in that any class formation takes into consideration the historical struggles of people and their ability to define themselves.

2.9 Essentialised Subjects

The SEA group conversation moved towards discussions of stereotypes, hyper-masculinised persona, phallocentric and queer identities. Discussions continued in respect of developing Black masculine identities through historical and contemporary literature, Black supplementary schools and radical movements, **DD** states "certain *types of hyper-masculine identity is assumed as a kind of survival mode, I see as huddling together, protecting yourself*". However, we are warned structural systems of a patriarchal society, as in America, that endorses and condones violence, has seen the Black male "derive a certain sense of satisfaction from being able to create fear in others" (hooks, 2004, p. 49). The romanticised "street hustler" is akin to the Wall Street mogul, both seeking power through capitalistic patriarchy (Mercer, 1994, pp. 144-45). For the Black male, there is a sense of complicity in hegemony (Connell, 2005, pp. 79-80). Their hypermasculine survival tactics, despite being in response to white supremacist hegemony, are oppressive towards others including women, other men and unknowingly to themselves (Mercer, 1994, pp. 137-8). A hypermasculine persona could also be a defence mechanism against being targeted by others (Ward, et al., 2017).

Sewell reveals a key aspect within the schools was the social construction of identities (1997, p. 67). Sewell suggests some African-Caribbean subcultures were understandable displays of "resistance" to problematic schooling environments he encountered (Ibid., p.67). However, he wondered whether this form of "cultural expression" would "help or hinder their educational outcomes" (Ibid.) Although, some teachers did show compassion towards Black boys, particularly in relation to their social environment (Ibid., p. 56). Schools are contributing factors in the "formation of problematic modern mode of masculinity" (Mac An Ghaill, 1994, p. 2). Outside the school gates, the Black male remains under surveillance of each other (Gunter, 2008; Lawson, 2012). Here, contemporarily (Home Office, 2020), and historically they are more likely to be stopped/searched, remanded, and receive a custodial sentence (Hall, et al., 2013).

Black men conforming to tropes of hypermasculinity are potentially victims of hegemonic masculinity of institutional systems, which frame the making of masculinities in Black communities (Connell, 2005, p. 80). Of concern, is whether there are only two forms of masculine identities available to Black men, "*unless you are hyper-masculine the only other way to express your masculinity, I've seen is that you be really pro-black*" (**ZJ**). Personas of masculine identities were evident in Mac An Ghaill (1994) and Sewell (1997) in their group categorisations. Both state the purpose of their use of categorisation and the problematics of such practices. For Sewell, his intention was to avoid "essentialist notions of Black masculinity" (1997, p. xvi). Sewell views "masculinity" as fluid and hybrid, though he utilises the term singularly. Similarly, Mac An Ghaill points to the limitations of using "typologies" reducing further the complexity of representations (1994, pp. 18, 54), where categorisation is a "heuristic device" in defining the phenomena (Ibid.).

However, my concern with Mac An Ghaill and Sewell's approach, favouring ethnographic observational practice, is despite recognising the limitations or perhaps the reifying of masculine identities through categorisation, they persist with categorising. Whereas Archer & Yamashita also conducted observational studies of young men but chose not to identify their social actors in "differing masculine types, of only constructing "bad boy" masculine identities" (2003, p. 122). My intention in moderating the discussion and commissioning of the exhibition *Cut & Mix* was for participants and artists to assume agency of their identities. The intention of the PBR is to avoid sensationalising the social actors lived experiences, through a more nuanced analysis of the complexities of their identities (Hesse, 2000; Archer & Yamashita, 2003).

2.10   Gay People are Good at Shopping, Black People are Athletic

The following comments are of assumed phallocentric and fetishized identities, which, at times, are knowingly reinforced by Black men (Hall, 1997).

" [...] for a long time being a black man was always associated with sexuality in terms of black men have bigger dicks (audible agreement). I grew up in H Town and I went to Peach Tree and then Stanton Field, which was a massive culture shock for me, the NF, getting beaten up. But all the white girls gravitated towards me because (gesturing towards his groin) black men, BMW (black man's willy)" (**CB**).

Mercer (1999) raises concern of the way in which white people look at black people as "other", in his critique of the homo-erotic and fetishized photography of Robert Mapplethorpe, of "certain racial and sexual fantasies about the black male body" (p. 436). The objectified Black male body is reduced purely to its sexual essence, thus is rendered "hypersexual", facilitating white male gaze in their "erotic act of looking" (Ibid.). These Black male identities are fixed "historically" and "contemporarily" essentialized and immobile (Skeggs, 2003). The Black male being is reduced to his "penis" (Fanon, 2008; Mercer, 1994; Hall, 1997). Fani-Kayode's photograph *Gold Phallus* (c. 1989) in *Cut & Mix* is a critique of the grotesqueness of the Eurocentric gaze,

> **"[Some] western photographers have shown that they can desire the Black males (albeit neurotically). But the exploitative mythologising of Black virility on behalf of the homosexual bourgeoisie is ultimately no different to the vulgar objectification of Africa"** (Fani-Kayode, 1992, p. 68).

CB describes the potential threat his presence as a Black male is to white men, where "young whites can switch from apparently positive evaluations of black images into the most crass statements of racist rhetoric" (Back, 1990, p. 23). The Black male and female are caught in a binary of oppositions as threat and fantasy to white men and women. Stereotyping is akin to mythologies in signifying practices of representation, not limited to the written word but also "photography, cinema, reporting, sport [...] serve as support to mythical speech" (Barthes, 2006, pp. 261-262). **CB**'s reference and gesture and the group acknowledgement speaks of the internalisation of myths "that did damage" to Black men's "psyche" (Doy, 2000, p. 158). Difference is essential to meaning, within the realms of stereotyping and "othering" differences are exaggerated, simplified and binary (Hall, 1997, p. 234). The purpose these binaries serve is to reaffirm patriarchal white supremacy and hegemony. Continuing the discussion of fetishization of the Black male, **QRI** comments on the stereotypes associated with Black and queer people. Suggesting the fascination and at the same time subjugation and delimiting effect of stereotyping.

"Same thing happened with gay rights where the gay liberation front made loads of stereotypes, like gay people are good at hair, gays are good at shopping to make gay people valuable to society. So, the same thing happened with black people, black people have bigger

dicks, black people are really athletic, to support assimilation into a white society (audible agreement)" (**QRI**).

This raises the concern Black LGBTQ+ people, because of their sexualities, their identities are denied and disavowed (Clarke, 1983). These assumptions also relate to how Black LGBTQ+ identities are denied and disavowed in so-called Black communities (Robinson, 2009). As such, "Visual Representations'" intersectional discourses challenge homophobia, misogyny, and sexism. "The black gay experience is confounded by race, class, gender bias, and assimilation across and with these variables" (Hill, 2013, p. 210). Philosophically, Hegel (2001) and others have negated African history and culture, disavowing a black past (Best, 2018). The absence of history and culture permits social construction and is "functional" for pathologies of Blackness to exist (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995, p. 212). If we are to have progressive intersectional discourses challenging essentialism of identities, we must also address the absence Black LGBTQ+ identities within discourses of Black identities. If not, assumptions are liable to persist.

"[…] *how I've always grown up is that I've only seen white men on TV* […] *they see men as being a sexual conqueror, being the hero of the story able to beat the beast or the villain. So that was the parameters of what a man is the provider and protector in the old school way. And when I found what a black man was, was really like when I went to school or when I seen MTV it was this very bestial looking kind of guy or he was the gangster*" (**ZJ**).

ZJ reinforces assumptions of the white man as hero against the pathologised Black villain, a product of myth making in popular discourse (Barthes, 2006). The essence of **ZJ**'s statement comes at the end "*I only started to get in the premise of what a black man is when I come into contact with white people. But when I am just by myself then I just see myself as a guy*". This speaks to the idea that Blackness can only come into being in opposition to whiteness, "I am not a nigger. I am a man. But if you think I am a nigger, it means you need him" (Peck, 2017, pp. 108-109). The essence of "Visual Representations" is to find the "guy" to whom **ZJ** speaks. This nuance, beyond the prevailing essentialised Black identity, resonates with **QRI**'s observation,

"*I don't think there's a definition of being a black man I think everyone is learning as they go and think if you define yourself as a black man then you'll only find out what a black man is on the day you die, as you would have lived your life as a black man*" (**QRI**).

This raises questions of whether queerness and Blackness sits outside of history, and whether "their very blackness derives from bearing negative relation to it" (Best, 2018, p. 9). I wonder whether **QRI** thinks he too sits outside of history?

61

2.11 Outside of Histories

The thematic framework ponders themes of Black consciousness, Rastafari, counter-narratives, Black literature, popular culture, and stereotypes. Participants speak of influential movements and moments in their lives, gaining guidance and strength from the sense and experience of struggle, permeating the Black diaspora.

"*When I was growing up, I am 56, in my society in my area there was like black holiday schools we had a Rasta movement, who told you about black history, told you about Nelson Mandela, told you about Marcus Garvey and all that. So, we had that it's like we've gone back in time because you're not having that in schools. But I had that, I knew my heroes I knew I was a strong black man; I didn't care who was out there and my dad was very strong man in my life*" (**GX**).

Black supplementary schooling in Britain, established over fifty years ago, was a means of resistance and activism rooted in recognition of the African diaspora. It was part of wider Black social movements of resistance and organisation in combating racism in British society of the day and presently (Warmington, 2014). Teaching and learning of the Black lived experience is essential to liberate them from the historical disavowal (Kirkland, 2021, p. 61). Rooted in Blackness of "African ancestry" (Andrews, 2016), Black supplementary schooling problematised the catch-all approach of "political blackness" (Maylor, 2009). Additionally, Black women educators play a key role within the narrative that normalises Blackness and where whiteness is decentred (Mirza & Reay, 2000). It is interesting to highlight **GX** only gave male examples. This thinking, I argue, obfuscates the crucial role Black women continue to play as intellectuals and activists in struggles for equality and social justice, where "[Slavery], colonialism and migration have often been inscribed as male experiences" (Warmington, 2014, p. 108).

Is it plausible when recounting historic figures that the all-male group spoke of men and not women? This is a situation problematised within Black counter-discourses in its failure to include or address gender and sexualities (Wright, 2004; hooks, 2014). Though Black (British) feminism as an enduring political identity could be considered problematic (Warmington, 2014, p. 109). It is important to recognise the danger of Black masculine complicity and the eradication of the Black female voice within discourses of resistance and equality.

> "[...] it is only when we see Black subjectivities produced through, rather than in exclusion to, these categories of (gender and sexualities) (*my emphasis*) do we arrive at theories of Black subjects that successfully negotiate the ideal and material formations that must predicate Black subject formation" (Wright, 2004, p. 7).

Being outside of history is extended to gender if as Wright contends, Black subjectivities can only be reproduced *through* rather than in *exclusion* to (Ibid.). Its relevance is in relation to the radicalism of Rastafari as a movement in Britain of the 1970s and 1980s, "*Rasta for me in the black community was one of the most radical constructions of blackness*" (**BZ**). Rastafari, as a radical movement, could be viewed as essential to Black consciousness and racial politics in Britain during 1970s and 1980s (Gilroy, 1982). However, the female within youth and subcultures, is said to not be marginally but structurally different, due to the female structured "*secondariness*" [sic] in society (McRobbie & Garber, 2006, p. 179). This was the case in Rastafari and for Rasta women with little analysis of their contribution to the movement (Gilroy, 1982, p. 291), where "[Girl's] subcultures may have become invisible because the very term 'subcultures' has acquired such strong masculine overtones" (McRobbie & Garber, 2006, p. Ibid.).

"The Rastaman Woman, as the term suggests, was Rastafari only through her Kingman" (Christensen, 2014, p. 76). Rastafari, when viewed through a patriarchal lens, problematises its radicalism, begging the question "radical to what?" (Scott, 2013, p. 2). Will female PhD researcher Aleema Gray's "I and I" methodologies, situating Rastafari ideology as "significant in shaping British cultural identity" (Gray, 2019, p. 96), displace the heteropatriarchy of the history of Rastafari in Britain? In Handsworth, in the 1970s and 1980s, and from my memory, Rastafari offered an alternative and radical identity for Black people. Yet, Rastafari was open to scrutiny and stigma, even within the Black community and during its early formations in 1930s Jamaica. This was not only due to their appearance, but in relation to a clash of religious, cultural beliefs (Murrell, 1998), and the "deep ambivalence about African heritage in the Caribbean" (Connell, 2019, p. 104). In Handsworth, Rastafarians were treated with suspicion by the authorities and those who did not understand Rastafarian culture, dreadlocks, language and use of marijuana as a meditative herb. Their criminal racialisation in Handsworth, as "Rasta muggers", identified links between white sociologist's pathological portrayal of Rastafarian communities, i.e. *Rastaman* (1979), with wider media and law and order enforcement (Palmer, 2019, p. 7).

However, there was an understanding between some migrants from the Caribbean and those born in Britain who became Rastas, a dialectic created through shared struggles (Gilroy, 1982, p. 292). Rastafari in Handsworth provided an alternative mode of epistemic knowledge production to become a source of self-identity, an identity that was not European, but of the Black Atlantic. According to Hall, Rastafarianism "saved the second generation of young Black people in British society", (1995, p. 14), as a generation "born at a disadvantage" (Fryer, 1984). Rastafari provided a context and ideology to explain the "down-pressure" they were experiencing in "Babylon", "England is where the truth about I and I lies, so we have to find the truth here before we go back to Africa" (Hebdige, 1987, p. 53).

Within the search for "truths", a contested positionality in qualitative research (Noble & Smith, 2015), historically and contemporarily Rastafari provides an alternative, and at times problematic, radical epistemic knowledge (Shilliam, 2012; Sobers, 2017; Palmer, 2019; Yawney, 1994). Epistemologies and knowledge formations, rooted in Africa, Ethiopia, outside of "Babylon", challenging a "world view" of hegemonic, heteropatriarchal, white supremacist and capitalist structures. Due to **BZ**'s liminality, he has been able to reimagine the self. This liminal perspective reveals "the ways that dominant perspectives distort the realities of the other in an effort to maintain power" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 263).

"There's a worldview we need to understand what it is to have a worldview about black men, about our colour, our attitude, our identity, our approaches, our family ethos, our ethics, our morals, our history, our culture, our approaches, our perception about self and how people perceive us and our faith [...] worldview is where there's a collective understanding and a collective expression about that is what its frame is. So, I think it's similar to black men. So, the media has constructed something. I've reimagined me, that's what I've done over the years, not what the media says, not the stereotypes" (**BZ**).

2.12 Know Your Place

The SEA discussion turns to thoughts on place, where they feel welcome, uncomfortable, accepted, or ostracised (Puwar, 2004). The thematic framework includes ideas and understandings of expectations, vulnerability, emotions, acceptance, assumptions, sexuality, ostracization, black space(s) and white space(s). It is argued masculinities are "constructed in relation to other social inequalities" (Ward, et al., 2017, p. 800), of which class, ethnicity and place reinforce hegemonic masculinised performance.

"I feel more uncomfortable being black in a black environment than I do in a white one, because it's clearly defined who I am as a black person in a white space in a general white space anyway. But I think the only time I've felt uncomfortable in a white space is the higher I go it's that invisible force field and you start stepping across that force field and all the white people's alarms come up, when like 'you're cool', but you're still a nigger, so you better know your place" (**ZJ**).

ZJ qualifies this saying there is an "*expectation you have to be aggressive 24/7 always angry and it's this idea you can't be diplomatic with people [...] you can't express a wide range of emotions or interests*". The feeling of being in Black spaces for **ZJ** is viewed as the stereotype of always already angry, always already hypermasculine. This raises concerns of perceptions and categorising (Sewell, 1997), of Black masculine identities inclined to aggressive behaviour and lacking in showing a range of emotions. Place can be "subjective

and relational [...] made and promoted" (Hopkins, 2013, p. 11). The "space" created for the discussion was constructed for a range of voices to be heard without prejudice, though not without the possibility of conflicting views, theories, or ideologies. The "place" for the discussion is unique in its locality, but there remains a connectedness to other places through those involved (Ibid.). The temporary space offered a sense of trust through the ethical parameters established, to respect views of others, even though the social actors might disagree with what is being said.

ZJ's comments indicate a fluidity of movement between places of permeable boundaries (Ibid.). His preference is being in "white spaces" as he already knows who he is in that space as a "Black man". This is on the proviso that he "knows" his place; an indication of how his Black male identity as **ZJ** is shaped and influenced by 'white' people's perceptions. "The racialization of space is the organizing principle through which uneven development takes place" (Summers, 2019, p. 13).

In the Black environment, **ZJ** describes there appears to be no space for the emotional, "material practice" inherent in hegemonic masculinity, of domination and subordination (Connell, 2005, p. 78). In the "white space", identities are intersected by race and gender, at times informed by "social processes of media or neighbourhood rumours" and micro-aggressions, contributing to places and people within them being stigmatised and stereotyped (Hopkins, 2013, p. 13). To create his own identity, **ZJ** is determined to disavow his association with hyper-masculine tropes and some "Black spaces". In respect of the creation of identities, **FT** continues, "*we play this role and think it's this thing the idea of being black it's playing black to the black stereotype within the black community, we're not true we're not real with each other*". This raises issues of authenticity and supposed racial truths, occurring at a "point of crisis, of risk, insecurity, jeopardy or threat" (Ehlers, 2006, p. 149),

"*[...] a lot a black spaces make me uncomfortable because when I was growing and being gay, I wasn't allowed in many black spaces and it was only when the social idea of being gay or LGBTQ community has changed within the black community I've been accepted back into the black community. But obviously because of the trauma of being actively pushed out by communities of black people being violent with me because I was gay like it still gives me anxiety being in predominantly black spaces*" (**QRI**).

QRI's gay identity concerns the assumed fixity and perceived essentialism of the Black masculine identity within the Black community. These are identities that destabilise, raising doubt and uncertainty (Mercer, 1990b, p. 43). **QRI**'s experience speaks to the perception of

homophobia inherent within Black communities (Buttaro & Battle, 2012), and of its prevalence within Black popular culture (Chin, 1997; hooks, 2004). **QRI** indicates a generational acceptance, suggesting a change of attitudes towards sexualities (Anderson & McCormack, 2018). However, identities in relation to gender, sexualities and the Black male illustrate what could still be conceived as the "crisis of masculinity" (Archer & Yamashita, 2003, p. 149),

"*The image of me as a black man masculine/hyper-masculine tough aggressive is that really the truth? I am probably one of the most vulnerable categories of human beings there is, well male that there is on this planet. But yet I am the big tough bad guy who everybody should be scared of […] it makes me really uncomfortable because the truth of it is, we are very, very vulnerable*" (**DD**).

DD reifies narratives pathologising Black masculinity (Hall, 1997; Gilroy, 2002; Mercer, 1999). Although not rooted in the material specificities of place, it is relational in its historical context, to locate a sense of vulnerability within the boundaries of historical diasporic trauma. Continuing the discussion of vulnerability and place,

"*[…] when my doctor said I was depressed […] I needed anti-depressants and I am thinking I felt vulnerable because I couldn't go to the black space where my man's are […] Yoh! Man up! So, there's something about vulnerability we struggle with in certain spaces in hypermasculine spaces. Bringing this out, say I've been to the doctors, you go to the doctor, and he says anxiety, anti-depression pills? You mad! So, there's something for me I've had to come to terms to redefine me, I don't get phased by nobody I am not intimidated by nothing because I've redefined who I am. But this for me was a vulnerability in terms of my mental health and being able to present and position it in a conversational space with brothers*" (**BZ**).

There is evidence Black men continue to fall between the gaps (Cabinet Office, 2018), and are vulnerable in respect of addressing their mental health. Hosting the SEA provided a momentary safe space for Black men to share their thoughts and feelings of mental health and wellbeing, linked to wider theatrical initiative *Revealed* (2019), addressing the emotional world of Black men. *Cut & Mix* illustrates how dialogical SEA can provide a sense of self, as an emancipatory process (Helguera, 2011), and "self-esteem" (Bowser & Sieber, 1993). Curatorially, vulnerability is reappraised as a sense openness, of selfhood, self-care, and love (Bost, et al., 2019). The curated space of *Cut & Mix* is the safe space where such understandings are encouraged, articulated, and expressed. For example, during the curatorial preview, as discussed in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4), Michael Forbes' *Black Man in a Wig and Baseball Cap* (2018) photographic series drew differing understandings.

For one participant, all they saw was a Black man in a wig, whilst the other saw a normally serious person in Michael Forbes being vulnerable and playful. Illustrating these differing opinions indicates Black masculinities *can* be viewed from different perspectives.

2.13 I Am Because We Are

Responding to themes of identities, appropriation and surveillance, participants express how they are represented and whether they can create their own identities. In his article on the wide-ranging cultures and identities that exist across the islands of the Caribbean as artificially constructed through the violent rupture of empire, slavery and colonialism, Hall (1995) speaks of their cultural identity as an "enigma" perplexing Caribbean people of all classes and positions.

The people of the Caribbean are useful in problematising identities, due to the historical and contemporary links between Britain, Africa, and the Caribbean. At the heart of identity, culture resides. Within the milieu of European domination, to which African, south, and east Asian people were subjugated, and indigenous peoples obliterated in creating the Caribbean, demanded questions and a search for answers as to who they were. Paving the way for counter discourses and collective consciousness, "questions of identities are always questions about representation" (Hall, 1995, p. 5). Are multiple Black identities and cultures able to flourish and co-exist, outside the ancestral home, of Africa? This is an important consideration if Black/African identities are said to be created outside history. We need to remind ourselves the very idea of Blackness was created in opposition to whiteness (Wright, 2004, p. 35), where "Africa and its diaspora become black during a particular stage in their history" (Wagner, 2010, p. 1).

The hostile imposition of British and European cultures in Africa, the Caribbean, and eventually back to Britain and across Europe, inadvertently created an African diaspora (Hall, 1995). This fuelled the demand for Black subjects to assimilate to the dominant culture, leading to raising consciousness and resistance in a search for their cultural identities (Ibid.). In the British colonies and throughout its empire, only particular cultural identities and class were worthy for display (Ibid., p. 7). The British empire and other nations conveyed a performance of class and respectability, against the backdrop of violence and brutality of their conquest across the globe. The Black body was always already savage and uncivilised. It only became "civilised" through British and other European cultures, customs, and religion (Biddiss, 1966). Here, notions of a "New Black Aesthetic" are considered (Ellis, 1989).

67

"*[...] identities now become broader because of the mainstream homosexuality [...] you have hypermasculinity and then you have gay culture which is like the extreme end of what it means to be a man so now everyone is trying to find the middle ground [...]* (referring to Richard Ayoade) *he's mixed-race but he's black and he's able to express different identities when being an intellectual being a computer geek*" (**ZJ**).

I would argue, despite Richard Ayoade's mixed-race identity, his TV and media persona as a "geek", perhaps renders his Blackness harmless. Ellis regards such actions as "shamelessly borrow[ing] (my emphasis) across both race and class lines" (1989, p. 234). The implication of gay culture being at the "extreme" of what it means to be a man, is noteworthy within this hegemony, requiring "the subaltern to speak" (Prakash, 1994; Shilliam, 2012; Spivak, 2013). The conversation continues on certain Black masculine identities, including Caribbean men arriving on the Empire Windrush and "Sapeurs" of Brazzaville, "*[At] no point when you see that you say that they're gay black African men. You just think they look cris*", **FT** continues that at times their style and fashion is appropriated and marketized, "*if you're to look at black identities we did step away from the norm and how people like to step in and copy our identities and then go and sell it and make more money for it*".

Sartorial expressionisms "has always been outside traditional tropes of masculinity - queer, in a sense" (Lewis, 2017, p. 9). Such acts could be viewed as "radical and subversive", challenging the homogeneity of what it means to be a Black man (Ibid.). However, practices perceived as "cool" or "dandy" for Black bodies, can also be a resource for others to appropriate, while the Black body remains fixed, culturally essentialised and ultimately rejected (Skeggs, 2003, p. 2). The idea of the essentialisation of identities are called into question, if we consider it as being "always particular, as much about difference as about shared belonging" (Gilroy, 1997, p. 301).

"When *I came out I was too gay to be black, too black to be gay. I had to forge my own identity and from all the things that I experienced I built myself through trial and error. Because, being chaotic and neutral I think that is kind of the way our generation do it, so it doesn't get taken away from us, everyone's individual personalities is from their own experiences*" (**QRI**).

Within discourses of hegemony the subaltern is "asked to hide or ignore those aspects of identity that do not conform to the heteronormative" (Wright, 2004, p. 229). Through Black feminist and Black queer theory and increasingly in fiction, Black European literary production in the 21st century will align itself within the African diaspora than white Western nations (Ibid., pp. 230-231), where "art calls for a response [...] [As] feminists we are moved by injustice in the world [...] what is happening around us demands a response" (Olufemi, 2020, p. 84).

2.14 Black Identities within the Frame

Being in the Western frame and gaze resonates with the discussions of whether participants believe they are free to create their own identities or whether identities are already assumed, due to their gender and skin colour. Therefore, comments from the group on identities are useful in conjunctural understandings, within regimes of law and order of the late 1970s and 1980s, and today. The need for law and order was a means of wrestling back control of the streets and neighbourhoods, and possibly back to a way of life in the past; back to British and English values and standards, and possibly back to its rightful place as a nation (Hall, 1999). In this regard the Black British community potentially undermines British civil society, and where "black crime in particular" is used as an example of the lack of "reverence for law [...] [and] as a fundamental component of Englishness" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 91).

Artist Donald Rodney, upended Black male homogeneity, becoming the Black everyman through such works as, *Self Portrait as Clinton McCurbin* (1988) - Clinton McCurbin died in police custody in 1987 following an incident at a shopping precinct in Wolverhampton - and *Self Portrait: Black Men Public Enemy* (1990). By situating the self within the frame, Rodney conveyed a wider understanding of the precarity of life for Black men in British society (Nimarkoh, 2003, p. 83). Through their recollection of incidents and personal experiences, the participants placed themselves in the frame, realising like Rodney, they too could be Clinton McCurbin.

"[...] four black men in the shopping mall wearing hoodies. Simple piece of clothing we know why we wear them. They were ejected by the police, arrested for it. And I remember the next day four white women wearing hoodies, put their hoods up and the police came up and said would you mind not wearing those [...] That's within identity because the clothing you're wearing [...] just by wearing certain clothing and acting in a certain way, it puts you at risk as black males" (**FT**).

The potency of the statement of "moral panic" (Cohen, 2011; Hall, et al., 2013), created in wearing a "hoodie" (Marsh & Melville, 2011), is accentuated if the wearers are Black men. Here, "*it's not about what your uniform is that identity, what they see is your skin colour and say that is the identity that is the criminal*" (**ZJ**). To which **GX** raises an interesting observation, "*Age does apply, now, I don't get hassled by the police, they hardly look at me. As a young kid I used to get it all the time. Now since I've got my white beard, I guess I am not a threat to them*". Although Black men of **GX**'s age and generation may no longer be perceived as a threat on the streets, their existential rights as British citizens is threatened

within the "hostile environment" (Cole, 2019). **GX** comments there may be a difference to how Black men are treated in England compared to America, however this is countered by the argument "*when you come back to here, they still base it on your identity*" (**FT**) - a statement relating to the pathologically constructed Black male identity within Western society's gaze. The group's shared anecdotes of lived experiences or of stories heard through the media, point to ways Black male identities are surveilled, individually or in a group. "*We walked through Starbucks, and we were 4, 5 black people walking in Starbucks everyone turned around, it happens on a regular basis that's casual racism*" (**QRI**). However, the concern remains on how identities are lost, maintained, and created.

"*You said we're 3% of the population. But you look at the prison we're overrepresented in prisons. I work in prison a lot and you walk in and see brothers; you see all 'de man dem'. So, we're the minority, yet we're the majority in prison, why is that the case? So, going back to the whole identity, in prison [...] that is totally stripped off you, your liberation is totally gone*" (**CB**).

Due to the "racialisation of social structures" desistance is problematised (Glynn, 2014, p. 2). Glynn's ethnographic approach provides an outlet for Black men within the criminal justice system, to share their experiences to "transcend their racial subordination" (Ibid., p. 4). According to Glynn, the aim is to provide a "counter-narrative" and perspective seldom heard, challenging academic and judicial racialised "regimes of truth" in respect of Black men, crime, and desistance. Through a process of conversion, the self can be reimagined, not through the lens of "white expectation or black subordination" (Ibid., p.3). From a liminal position, "ontological reflection" is possible, and the removal of a psychological mask some Black men wear to protect themselves from historical subjugation and oppression of patriarchal white supremacy (Ibid., p. 4). The concept of the mask resonates in the following exchanges,

"*[...] doesn't it come back to identity because now we are able to look at representation, then within the prison there's a community of black males that probably can't express their masculinity because of what goes on in the prison system*" (**FT**).

To this, **QRI** adds, within prison some men may be inclined to "*hyper accelerate their masculinity*".

"*[...] when I work in prison, I use the metaphor of a mask. The mask being a front that we put on to the outside world to protect ourselves and what a lot of guys have had to learn from a*

young age, based on their situation their upbringing is put that mask on. That's the bravado, say you go to HMP Birmingham first day in the wing you've been locked up for GBH. You're gonna go start crying and go oh I am in prison. You got to walk in the room, Yoh! Wah Gwaan! and put on that front so you putting on that identity. But underneath that mask you're shitting yourself, for want of a better term. If you think about it, you're in prison for 5 years and you're putting that front on for 5 years, when you come out of prison into a resettlement context, then who are you, what do you do? That's why the reoffending rate is extremely high because they come out don't know what to do. I am going to go back because that's where my identity is" (**CB**).

Such hegemonic identities are those which Glynn is keen to address in the "racial disparities" existing within the policing and wider criminal justice system that result in Black men being overrepresented in prisons (2013, p. 5). Black men, Black women, and ethnic minorities are "consistently more likely" to be arrested and receive a custodial sentence for drug offences (Shiner, et al., 2018). This disproportionate situation Fanon argues is the social and economic realities of the Black man's "disalienation" (2008, p. xiv). Fanon's summation of the "inferiority complex", which the Black man experiences, responds to **ZJ**'s question "*would you say the black identity a big part of that is trauma*?" Trauma is rarely addressed, acknowledged, and suppressed in recollections of British history (Laursen, 2012). **BZ** proffers his self-identity is governed by "power" of what others may think of him, through signifying practices, i.e. stereotyping, because of his gender, age, skin colour or even his "Brummie" accent.

"*[…] we* (need to) (my emphasis) *define, redefine, reassign and refine and even reimagine. Because I think we struggle if I am honest with you and this is a generational issue now*" (**BZ**).

There is an assumptive phrase of collectivism in the word "we", which **BZ** later qualifies in suggesting the "we" means Black men, stating "*there's a generational identity issue that we need to understand also about black men*". This understanding counters Descartes Eurocentric worldview of "I think, therefore I am", instead it resonates with the African saying "Ubuntu", "I am because we are", where "the individual's existence and knowledge is contingent on others" (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 257). Within theories of cultural studies and complexities of identity, we need to consider the reflexive "self" and "subjectivity" (Gilroy, 1996), when viewed through the conjunctural lens of intersection of gender, race, sexuality and class, challenges historical hegemonies. Equally, "sameness" raises concerns of difference, where "[D]ifference matters because it is essential to meaning; without it,

71

meaning could not exist" (Hall, 1997, p. 234). This is relevant if we consider discourses within Black feminist theory or Black queer theory, in relation to masculinity and assumed collectivised identities and solidarities. Through these counter discourses within historical socio-political intersectional struggles have "we" been able to appreciate complexities of identities as "a chaotic process that can have no end" (Gilroy, 1996, p. 238)? Particularly, if we consider how language and meaning evolves generationally.

2.15   Yoh! Man Up!

The discussion turned to experiences with mental health and wellbeing, of anxiety, psychosis, suicide, and vulnerability. Assembling a group of Black men to discuss and share their lived experiences was and is an intention to capture the "group effect" (Carey & Smith, 1994). Participants are more likely to share information due to interaction within a group of peers (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005). This is relevant to the idea of men being vulnerable enough to discuss emotions and feelings, as it is argued "hegemonic masculine behaviours" may be a reason some men do not seek help in respect of their mental health and wellbeing (Emslie, et al., 2006). Mental illness of psychotic episodes is "ten times more prevalent amongst Black men compared to White men" (Cabinet Office, 2017, p. 49). Moreover, Black women are more likely to experience depression and anxiety (Ibid.). Though Black adults are least likely to be in treatment for their mental illness, they are most likely to have been detained under the Mental Health Act (Ibid., p. 50).

"Visual Representations" adopts an "emancipatory" approach, where participants and moderators collaborate to develop data through discussion (Sewell, 1997, p. xvi). This has the ability to "empower" participants through group discussion (Morgan, 1996), whose voices are often marginalised, particularly in respect of Black men, and mental health (Watkins, et al., 2007, p. 113). The allyship of Black men to the Black feminist cause is crucial in challenging gender politics "inhibiting (my emphasis) black people's efforts to achieve health[ly] truly liberating stance" (Awkward, 2002, p. 294). Black queer theory inherent in this research, implemented as a narrative device, offers the opportunity to critically scrutinise the internal and at times invisible violence and traumas of Black masculine subjectivities, both historically and contemporarily (Bost, et al., 2019).

*"[…] it's important that we understand upstream what the issues are to self-help and then from there people around you that know you can say to you **BZ** you alright or how's it going for you? So, it's important that people who know you well enough that when you change, they can say something to you. My best friend committed suicide 25 years ago and he took his own life the issue about missing the signs was a big thing and I believe we need to know*

72

what the signs are, take care then internally to help ourselves and we need to be open enough that other people can help us" (**BZ**).

There is a sense of "existential crisis" inherent within discourses of Black masculinities (Obienu, 2019), as alluded earlier by **DD**. Obienu's (2019) recollection is similar to **BZ**, of the need for Black men to open up on how they are feeling, due to "developing harmful coping mechanisms […] to deal with whatever it was" (Ibid., p. 196). It highlights the internal and external forces at play, which some Black men try to manage, but fail. Such forces are the outwardly stereotypical hypermasculine manifestations that turn into internal battles to suppress anxieties to fit in (Bost, et al., 2019). Here, "vulnerability as not only constituted in the not-yet, but also in the not-yet-past of Black diasporic trauma: transhistorical, transgenerational, proximate, recursive, constantly witnessed and felt" (Ibid., p. 2). Like **BZ** stated previously, reflection, "self-definition" and affirmation of his Black identity and not the one created by stereotypes enables reclamation of "mental space", and identity of "Blackness" (Obienu, 2019, p. 199). Importantly, Bost et al. (2019) stress vulnerability is not only about dealing with anxieties of trauma, but also being vulnerable and open enough to experience forces of "love and care", which potentially leads to creating alternative masculine identities. However, love and care can be difficult to express linguistically for many men, "[Somewhere] inside each man is a list of all the other men he's loved without ever finding the words to tell them so" (Jaramillo, 2019).

"I am still trying to define that for myself what it means to have mental health and wellbeing. I guess I think whatever you put your mind to your working towards that and it's also the idea of balance is one the other is acceptance, you also have the dark energies, but you also have the good but you also need to know and put them in perspective what they are instead of letting your perception of energies whether that be anxiety or whatever that thing you have, allow that thing to consume you" (**ZJ**).

There are similarities in what **BZ** shared previously to what **ZJ** expresses. He shares the things that have consumed him, how "*society defines a man*" and "*money*" affords you the control, "*options and sense of influence*". Without "money" **ZJ** says he was unable to "self-actualise" and achieve the ambitious things he had planned. This affected his mental health, where he didn't feel he had self-worth, exacerbated by social media of other people supposedly achieving. Through this SEA discussion "idealised identities" were found to be a cover for "anxiety and insecurities" permeating the lives of many young people who have grown up in traumatic circumstances in deprived neighbourhoods (Irwin-Rogers & Pinkney, 2017, p. 17).

Society determines a man, a trait which is amplified today through narcissistic tendencies through the prism of social media platforms (Fishwick, 2016). **ZJ** is frustrated by not being able to express anger as a Black man, as the Black male is historically and contemporarily hypermasculine. To do so, potentially leads to confrontation with the police (Baker, 2016), criminal justice system, school (Sewell, 1997), or mental health institution (Cabinet Office, 2017). Similarly, Black male anger and frustration is manifested in violence against other men (Pinkney & Robinson-Edwards, 2018). However, these pathological tendencies are also a means by which some Black men are rewarded or idolised (Messerschmidt, 1997).

This chapter, was created through primary data of Black male lived experiences, locating "Visual Representations" specific to place and time in Birmingham. Though the idea of Birmingham is perhaps inferred during the SEA discussion, the pertinence of Birmingham as a place is realised through the social actor's description of other cities like Blackpool as being "extreme" and "white places". The idea of Birmingham as a place, is as described in the introduction, with its large Black and ethnic minority population, whereby the city provides a sense of place of a Black presence – a "huddling together protecting yourself" (**DD**). This huddling together in familiar surroundings of culture and heritage is what created places like Handsworth and how the social actors can relate their experiences.

The discussions responded to the research questions of how Black British masculine identities are formed and informed within communities, and in response to hybridised popular culture, because of Black British migration and Western appropriation. The social actors' generous contributions challenge perceptions that Black men are not willing to be vulnerable. The urgency of the discussion, in respect of pathologies, illustrates "what is at stake" if conversations amongst Black British men do not take place and are liable to manifest as mental health issues. This discussion underlines the historic trauma of Black subjugation, still permeating the Black British lived experience today. The next chapter, *Autoethnography* - The Personal *is* Political (Chapter 3), moves from the macro of societal perspectives on the formations of Black British masculine identities, to the micro of personal interpretation of my lived experience.

Autoethnography:
The Personal *is* Political

3.1 Introduction

I grew up in Birmingham during the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, members of BAG were coming of age as students and artists, launching their first exhibition *Black Art An' Done* in June 1981 at Wolverhampton Art Gallery. This chapter gives my rationale of utilising autoethnography to critically reflect on this period, in relation to the respective trajectories of BAG members and myself. Qualitatively, the method of autoethnography "offers nuanced, complex, and specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences and relationships rather than general information about large groups of people" (Adams, et al., 2015, p. 21). It also made sense to reflect on the "self" in relation to the social actors within this PBR, as autoethnographic writing is produced in relation to the culture of others and wider society (Chang, 2007; Denzin, 2014).

I aim to challenge the single story of my, and other Black British men's, lived experiences in Britain, by evidencing and countering historical and current negative tropes of Black British masculine identities and representation. Situating my experience within the epoch of BAG and British Black Art Movement of the late 1970s into the 1980s, I will allude to the conjunctural ruptures, socio-politically, culturally, and economically. Moreover, I will draw comparisons of then and now, including in response to the research questions, and detail the framing of autoethnography within context of my methodological approach of "cut & mix". However, critical reflection is not limited to this chapter. My subjective positionality extends throughout this PBR theoretically and curatorially. Through the selection of artworks and commissioning of artists, I narrate a range of stories to convey nuanced and complexed lived experiences of Black British masculinities that is not binary or homogenous.

Autoethnography is not limited to biographical text, it can be realised through short stories, poetry, performance, and photo essays (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In the spirit of "commoning" (Moon, 2020), as discussed in the curatorial chapter (Chapter 4), I acknowledge I am not the sole arbiter of *Cut & Mix*, having received support, advice, and guidance from my mentor Ekow Eshun, NAE and the commissioned artists. I regard my experience of curating artists producing work, SEA, and wider participatory activities as a collaborative and cathartic process. Conceptualising the exhibition, sharing stories of our lived experiences is part of the emancipatory nature of self-narratives (Spry, 2001). Furthermore, it contributes to demystifying the role arts and culture play in the formation of identities through the materiality and aesthetics inherent in the exhibition. Bringing into being other subjectivities during the exhibition process and throughout this PBR, exemplifies how "lived experiences are discursively constructed, with no empirical stable "I" (my emphasis) giving a true account of an experience" (Denzin, 2014, p. 2).

Autoethnography addresses the liminal spaces I occupy as insider/outsider, of the observer and observed (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), and is a reflective tool to tell *my* story. More specifically, autoethnographic "stories are artistic and analytic demonstrations of how we come to know, name, and interpret personal and cultural experiences" (Adams, et al., 2015, p. 1). In this PBR, the application of autoethnography is beneficial, enabling critical reflection on the research questions of formations of my masculine identities, historically, in this moment, and in relation to the social actors of "Visual Representations". I aim to impart and contribute to new knowledge as curator-researcher, who is critical and reflexive, due to recognising my subjective positionality, academically and curatorially (Stewart, 2010, p. 124).

3.2 Note to Self: Unpicking Autoethnography

An anthropologist in the field should be considered as a positioned author, as interactions in the field are not just between persons but between social agents carrying certain social predispositions and engaged in power relations (Okely, 2002). Liminality - the threshold, a point of transition, a point of discovery - is where I am reflexive. It is an essential aspect of practice (Schön, 1983), and is not self-indulgent (Kempny, 2012). It is a self-conscious reflection of how one is located within certain power structures and how this may influence methods, interpretations and knowledge production. Liminality can also work against you, as commented on by a participant at the *7th Biennial AfroEuropean Conference: Black In/Visibilities Contested* (2019), likening the slash of "In/Visibilities" as being the liminal space they occupy.

"Visual Representations" resides between these blurred lines, arguing there is a place for emancipatory methods of inquiry, of knowing, where "no one way should be privileged" (Wall, 2006, p. 147). Whereas the essence of a positivist scientific approach is a preference for quantitative methods of measurement and structured questioning. Positivists prefer structuralist explanations, avoiding interpretivist explanations that refer to human intentions and emotions (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005, p. 13). "Visual Representations'" method of SEA platforms marginalised and emotive voices of the Black male to be heard. It begs the question, what is out there that we need to know? My ontology is as a Black British male born in Birmingham, a son, a brother, an uncle, friend, enemy, academic, curator, insider/outsider (Merton, 1972). Embodying these personas situates me within society, where I am viewed differently depending on the people around me, the place, and the role I assume. How I am viewed and how I view myself is impacted intersectionally.

If it were not for the fact, I am currently an academic researcher, it is unlikely I would be writing about the self. What has made it worthwhile, is autoethnography's emancipatory value of critical reflection, working collaboratively with the social actors, giving voice, and

meaning to our lived experiences. I am curious to know how I became the person I am today. What has happened in my life, who and what contributed to me being me? What decisions determined the path I am on today? The part I find difficult is deciding what stories are relevant and important to share, as autoethnography is "ethnographical and autobiographical at the same time" (Chang, 2007, p. 2). The intention of situating my story is to contest the hegemony of a Eurocentric Westernised canon, shifting the axis of power, as to who can or is allowed to tell their story. This resonates with the role of the practitioner and praxis to "challenge old beliefs and to speculate on the what ifs of our concepts and practices" (Stewart, 2010, p. 124). Producing new knowledge, as evidenced by the aesthetic practices of BAG and their countercultural approach, challenges the hegemony of British modern art and history.

3.3 "Cut & Mix": Autoethnographic Aesthetics

The methodological approach of "Visual Representations" is framed, as previously discussed, within the theory of a "cut and mix aesthetic" (Mercer, 2012). This tradition of assemblage became an emblem of postmodern Black British art expression, of which the Black lived experience of self-narratives were integral to BAG's practice, including Donald Rodney who utilised the original method of painting directly on x-ray sheets. Affording him the chance to depict his personal experience of his chronic illness, sickle-cell anaemia, and treatment of an emblematic Black disease. This exposed the wider "dis-ease" of racism in British society (Das, 2019). Similarly, Eddie Chambers' *Destruction of the National Front* (1979-80) is a personal response to the presence of the National Front in Wolverhampton, where he lived.

It is at the historical conjuncture of politics and culture of late 1970s and early 1980s, where this autoethnography is located. Here, moments are "rooted in the politics of anti-racism and the post-war Black experience in Britain" (Hall, 1996, p. 441); a problematised moment of "political Blackness" (Andrews, 2016), for the "multicultural" and of "multiculturalism" (Hesse, 2000; Hall, 2000). This conjuncture called on a new generation of Black British artists to produce work of a politically charged rhetorical character of the Black experience, locally and globally. It embraced and advocated the American ideology of "Black Art", which emerged in the late 1960s (Smethurst, 2005).

For Black British artists this was the much-vaunted era of the Black Art Movement of 1980s Britain of music, fashion, film, photography and street art, challenging marginalisation, and hegemony; an era of discourses of a Black aesthetic and Black consciousness in Britain. Here, Hall (2005) asks how we might begin to "assemble" the 1980s as an object of critical

knowledge, in an attempt to "map" Black arts in Britain, its rhizomes, within the wider context of a political/cultural moment. "The rhizomes connects any point to another point" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2001, p. 21). Rhizomes describe the interdisciplinarity of "Visual Representations" and diasporic connectedness of Black lived experiences, conveyed through a Black art aesthetic. In terms of a "Black aesthetic", what is it and how is it defined? Despite extensive works by Hall, Gilroy and Mercer, what is still absent is an actual theory on aesthetics (Gordon, 2018). Hall (2005) addresses this within context of what he viewed as a relativist approach by BAG, questioning artists like Aubrey Williams' ambivalent theory of a Black aesthetic. This ambivalence related to what Hall regards as Williams' disagreement of the link between that generation's art and their militant Black politics.

As earlier discussed in "what is at stake", I argue, BAG's art conveyed a Black aesthetic (Gordon, 2018; Taylor, 2016), giving meaning to Black lives, i.e. Keith Piper's *13 Killed* (1981), Donald Rodney's *Middle Passage* (1984) and *Framed Youth* (1986). This is the intention of *Cut & Mix,* situating artworks of Amartey Golding, Antonio Roberts and Beverley Bennett within context of the Black British lived experience. The relevance of a Black aesthetic within context of BAG, and the wider Black Art Movement of the 1980s, is a period where I found my political and creative voice.

3.4 My Ontology

I became politicised when reading about the atrocities of apartheid in South Africa, an experience similar to **BZ**, **ZJ** and **GX** during the SEA, who spoke of gaining knowledge when reading Black literature, or learning about historical Black figures. During my time with Birmingham Youth Theatre in the early 1980s, I wrote, directed, and performed in *National Hero* (1985), a play about a young Black British man's sporting ambitions and the consequences of competing in an athletic event in South Africa. Researching the Black Art Movement led to an "epiphany" (Denzin, 2014), of my own experience, of what I was doing during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Moreover, why this "conjuncture" is significant to me now, framing past with the present, artistically, culturally, and socio-politically. "When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity" (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 276). Similarly, participants of the SEA were encouraged to be reflexive in recounting their lived experiences at school, home and in the public sphere.

The theories of place, and memories evoked, provide another layer of this inquiry, asking to what extent is Birmingham significant in the making of these identities? Black and hybridised identities are formed as a consequence of place, including and surpassing the local (Allen,

2016, p. 30). Identities formed and perplexed within the unsettled "signifiers of the multicultural", enflamed by "cultural differences" (Hesse, 2000), are pushed and pulled between "assimilation and integration of conservative and liberal "multiculturalism" (Hall, 2000, p. 210). Within this rubric, Britain's inner cities became a political football punted left, right and centre. Politicians blamed these areas and the unemployed, leading to civil unrest during the 1980s. The uprisings depicted in *Handsworth Songs* (1986), in my view, one of the most important films of its generation, imply a more complexed historical narrative, where there "are no stories in the riots, only ghosts of other stories" (Fisher, 2007, p. 22). Place and space, personal or public are integral to the research question of how Black British masculine identities are shaped and influenced, and in reflecting on the formulation of my own identities. Black settlement in Birmingham requires Black people to explore their social and cultural connections to more than one place, engaging with these geographical spaces as part of their everyday construction of selfhood (Dudrah, 2002). Due to Birmingham's size, within the inner-cities of Birmingham there is still a sense of a Black and ethnic minority presence. Presently, redevelopment is taking place around the city centre, yet the inner-city is not the desirable territory for urban redevelopment. Whereas Bristol, due to its smaller size and spiraling property prices, shows gentrification in the inner-city is leading to the erasure of its historic ethnic presence, or is being appropriated, to add a sense of the exotic and cultural value.

I left Birmingham in 1988, moving to Bristol for work. Like many Black men in Birmingham at the time, I was unable to find a job in my home city. After the great experience I had with Birmingham Youth Theatre, I had no money in my pocket. Now, as an aspiring curator-researcher, I can relate to Dudrah's ideology of construction of selfhood, as it is in Birmingham where I realised my potential. Although, for some of my formative years of self-reconstruction, this realisation happened in other spaces, internally and externally. Conducting this PBR within the city where I was born, is important in understanding how I became the person I am today. Autoethnography allows me to reflect on why I have returned to Birmingham, what has happened during that time and where I fit in, within this discourse. Moreover, my autoethnography "must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders" (Ellis, et al., 2011, p. 276).

3.5   Stories My Mother Told Me

Some of my earliest memories are shaped by the stories told to me by my mother, of her upbringing as a single child, living with her mother in rural May Pen, Beckford Kraal, Jamaica, marrying my father and later coming to live in the UK. Such stories, as a young boy, provided an insight of what Jamaica might be like from the land, the heat, its people, food, language, and religion - its overall culture. Most importantly, something I would later

understand, is the reason why my mother was telling me these stories. They were to give me an understanding of who I was, and why I was. Who I was - I was one of seven children, to parents who were both from rural Jamaica; why I was - they had decided to migrate to Britain, St Pauls, Bristol in the early 1960s. The validity of their, mine and our stories and experiences today, contribute to the diasporic narrative of colonialism, empire, and migration (Carby, 2019). This narrative situates my (auto)biography within a "social context" (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 9), of past and present.

Figure 11:
Mum's scissors
© Ian Sergeant

Recently, I asked my mother what she wanted to be when she was younger. She told me she wanted to be a dressmaker, having learned dressmaking skills when very young and had ambitions of continuing. However, when becoming pregnant at the age of 17, she was told to get married by her father, a minister at the local church. So, she got married. Up until her illness of Parkinson's disease, my mum has been dressmaking - women's slips, dresses, and all kinds of garments. I recently came across the scissors she used. My mum has had these scissors for as long as I can remember. Picking up the scissors, I felt their heavy weight, even in my adult hands. They make a particular crisp shearing sound, only these scissors could make. "Memory is both friend and foe of ethnographer [...] memory selects, shapes, limits and distorts" (Chang, 2007, p. 210).

Reading Steedman (1986) impacted me more than I thought it would, given our differing circumstances of race, gender, history, place, and time. However, our similar upbringing of being in a single parent family, an absent father, and our experience of poverty, I empathised with Steedman's upbringing in the 1950s and 1960s, as her story triggered my memories.

Epistemologically, reflexivity is an essential component of the researcher's "internal dialogue" questioning "what I know" and "how I know it" (Hertz, 1997, pp. vii-viii). My epistemological position is informed as a first-generation Black British born man. Today, it is informed by my burgeoning academic research and curatorial praxis. This epistemology is constructed and determined by historic and contemporary text, literature, performance, and visual art, in challenging the reader and audience's social realities. Feminist literature is important to this PBR, towards deconstructing binaries of gender and in challenging hegemony and subordination (Kegan Gardiner, 2002). This gives meaning and significance to the role my mother played in making me the man I am today. My masculinity was not formed through association with my paternal father, rather, it was through seeing my mother single-handedly raise my brothers, sisters, and me. Despite being poor, she was able to raise us with her "flinty courage" (Steedman, 1986, p. 17). My mother's experience of migration and settlement is the story of many other Black women of her generation. From taking charge, setting up and running the home in a difficult climate, to finding work, somehow managing to send money "back home" from a meagre wage, to support her mother and my siblings left behind. Black women would challenge systemic racism, and sexism of Black men, demanding recognition for their crucial contribution (Williams, 1993).

The previous image is one of few I have seen of us as a family, taken in the late 1960s or early 1970s, in St Pauls, Bristol. In the photo are my brothers, my mother with me on her lap, my sister and my late father. My two other brothers and sister are not in the photo. They were in Jamaica at the time, living with my grandmother as was the experience for many children of the Caribbean in 1960s, being "left behind" with grandparents or extended families (Dillon & Walsh, 2012). Parents came to England and sent for the children later, after securing employment and setting up home. The image replicates the Victorian tradition of being dressed in your "Sunday best" and set in the best room, the "front room". An opulent shrine to kitsch furniture, a symbol of status and respectability, announcing that no matter how poor you were, if the "front room" looked good, then you were "decent" people (McMillan, 2003).

The photograph taken is unlike other family and individual portraits of the time, taken in a photography studio, such as Dyche in Balsall Heath, Birmingham. An area of Birmingham that had gained media "notoriety as red-light district and multicultural halfway house" (Francis, 2019, p. 48). Documentary photographer Janet Mendelsonh's depiction of the people and places of Balsall heath, was the focus of an exhibition by Flatpack in 2018, attracting an audience reminiscent of its historical multicultural make up of white working-class during the 1950s/60s, mixed heritage families of the 1960s/70s and the Asian population of the present time (Ibid.).

Returning to Dyche, the studio was a destination for many African Caribbean, Asian and Africans to have their portrait taken against backdrops, with props, in an Edwardian style, characteristic of both British and colonial linkages. The Dyche collection told stories of migration to Britain. They were a form of pictorial "writing back", against Edwardian backdrops the images are absent of "social reference points" or "material reality" (Courtman, 1999). "The camera did for the poor what painting could not do" (Hall, 1992, p. 108). The images were a form of "documentary" captured in space and time, signifying subjecthood, safe arrival and progress (Ibid.)

Dyche's images are comparable to Sealy (2013) remarking on photographs of young Black couples and individuals, attending the dancehall at Lewisham Youth Centre. This was a generation of young Black people born in Britain to the "Windrush" generation. Goto's portraits were an important "counter-narrative" to how young Black British people were pathologised in the 1970s (Sealy, 2013, p. 7), resonating with the assertion, "Dyche defamiliarize the popular image of the immigrant, commonly portrayed as troublesome on the streets" (Courtman, 1999, p. 13). Reflecting on my family portrait belies the wider story taking place outside the frame. My mother, surrounded by her children, illustrates her maternal role. My father stands slightly separate from the brood, in his suit, in contrast to his daily workwear of overalls. My mother wraps her protective arms around me, a slight smile across her face. I have the expression of a nervy child, trying to disappear further into her embrace. Artefacts and images serve as important memory triggers autoethnographically (Chang, 2016).

However, this is merely my interpretation; others in the photo may provide different narratives of the image and recollection of our lived experience. Experiences "are constituted through discourse in discursive systems which often overlap and contradict one another" (Denzin, 2014, p. 41). The use of the images draws on theories of semiology, concerned with the social effects of meaning and inequalities therein (Rose, 2016, p. 107). My use of text, image and autoethnographic accounts serves as counterpoint to historical anthropology, which constructed romanticised and exoticized notions of "other" cultures. In *Cut & Mix*, artist Michael Forbes (2020) places the self at the centre of image, stating "his work is a physical manifestation of his cultural experience and history", but he understands the photographic image can and will be a representation of something beyond himself. The validity of contextualised images, and this PBR's intention, is to provide space for historically "muted voices" (Atkinson & Atkinson, 2007, p. 124).

3.6 Hands of My Father

I don't think we were poor. We were working-class, which for many Black people in Britain at the time meant they faced discrimination and disadvantage and deprivation (Goulbourne, 1977). However, my father had a good job, as a skilled carpenter with a construction firm, travelling up and down Britain. My mum was training to be a nurse. Our house was one of the first on the street to have double-glazing. We had a car. We were well fed. We got pocket money each week. My love of Western films stems from watching with my father. He knew all the names of the cowboys John Wayne, Victor Mature and Jack Palance.

Their names suggested strength and masculinity, conveying the "tough guy" and "gun-slinging" roles they played in these great Western adventures. The arm of the sofa was my horse. I later discovered the story of the cowboy was the story of many former slaves (Myers, 1999), "I realised the difficulty of growing up in a world of John Waynes, once you discover that you're the little Indian" (Hall & Baldwin, 1972). What the family picture doesn't convey is the domestic abuse experienced by mother at the hands of my father. His reasons we would never know because he never spoke about this to my mother, me, or anyone else. At this point, it is important to raise the issue of the ethics of autoethnography in respect of disclosure and ownership of the story - my story, our story - which implicates other members of my family, friends and colleagues. I need to consider the ethics of naming my father and family in disclosing our experiences, especially because my father has long since died.

The "principle of protecting confidentiality of people in the story is just as relevant to autoethnography" (Chang, 2007, p. 16). My friends and family know I will be writing autobiographically, which involves them. However, I must be mindful of autoethnographic privilege and the "ethics of responsible scholarship" of "how we question" and interpret, and "how we situate ourselves as writers, witnesses and participants" (Dauphinee, 2010, p. 808).

After enduring years of domestic abuse, my mother took my sister and me away one morning. I was around 7 years old and my sister was 9. We boarded a train, but I don't remember the journey. My only memory is of puzzlement at being in another place. Instead of school in Bristol, we were in Birmingham. We went to live with cousins in Handsworth, from the relative comfort of our home in Bristol, to living in one bedroom. In a single journey, she had become a single-parent. My mother's actions were a feminist act of "women who have stood up, spoken back, risked lives, homes, relationships in the struggle for more bearable worlds" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 1).

3.7 Epiphanies and Atonement

These epiphanies have left "marks on my life", and members of my family (Denzin, 2014, p. 52). The displacement experienced, as a family, had an adverse effect on me. I know it has had a profound effect on my mother, who still talks about my father despite the fact she left him over forty years ago, remarried over thirty years ago and he's been dead for over ten years. Yet, "he is just as present in his absence" (Mitchell, 1984). My father's absence was a relief to us all. We were free of the trauma, especially my mother and the helplessness we felt, unable to protect her. I think my father abused my mother out of shame and twisted ideas of patriarchal entitlement, power, and domination (Walker, 1986). There is a long-held stereotype of the Black woman as emasculators of their husbands (Asbury, 1993), meaning my father may have felt belittled in some way by my mother. I never yearned for any reconciliation with him, and he never offered any, even near his death, despite ideas of "reconciliation" of "absent fathers" (hooks, 2004, p. 109). I learned more about my father after his death, sifting through his belongings than I did when he was alive. We buried him with the flat cap he wore to work. Yet, "I still see him in the street […] years after his death, a man of his generation, an old man at a bus stop, his clothes […] his way of walking" (Steedman, 1986, p. 61).

3.8 Tenements, Tribulations and Television

We moved into a single room in a tenement house, in Aston, Birmingham. The single room was where my two brothers, my sister and I slept. It was also the living room, where we would eat and watch TV. There was a shared kitchen, bathroom, and toilet. The house was filthy, infested with mice and the shared areas of the kitchen and bathroom, I find them hard to describe.

The building was owned by a woman from St Kitts, who we only saw when she came to collect the rent. The house was shared with several other families and single occupants, paying to live in squalor, unable to afford to live anywhere else at the time. Despite this, it was there I experienced the long hot summer of 1976, it was there my siblings and I had fun and were free of worry and trauma. Among the tenants, in the room downstairs, were a group of young Black men. I never knew exactly who amongst them lived there, as alluded to in Chapter 1, they introduced us to reggae and sound system culture. The presence of these sound systems and bands living and creating in the neighbourhood was foundational in my understanding of the Black struggle and consciousness. There was a need for militancy to counter the rising rhetoric of racism and violence at the time, with the emergence of the National Front. Recalling these moments, I can see the obvious appeal of reggae "a music that chucks a heavy historical load that is pain that is hunger that is bitter that is blood that is dread" (Johnson, 1976, p. 397).

It was within this socio-political climate of my experience in the late 1970s and early 1980s, that BAG's practice responded to, challenging negative and binary impressions of Black and ethnic communities of Britain and globally. "Visual Representations" draws parallels in line with my understanding and theorising of the socio-political climate of the politics of identity and representation, which are again at the forefront of current discourses. For members of BAG and I, our epistemological understanding was informed by knowledge of reactionary politics of the 1960s through to the 1980s.

> **"I think there was something about the cultural moment of the 1970s that gave rise to the expression of the 1980s, not only in art but in the ways that people related to each other too. You think about the ways in which Black people identified in the aftermath of the New Cross fire [when a number of Black youngsters were killed in an arson attack on a party, which was initially thought to have been a racist attack]. I'm talking about the Black People's Day of Action. I'm talking about Johnny Osbourne recording 13 Dead and Nothing Said with Aswad. These are very particular manifestations of empathy. I very much doubt that the same degree of human empathy would exist at the present time"** (Chambers, 2017).

The aftermath of such tragedies and state oppression of Black British people led to uprisings in the 1980s in Handsworth, St Pauls, and Brixton, drawing the attention of BAG artists. Contrary to Chambers' doubts, BLM and other social justice demonstrations taking place now, including McQueen's documentary about New Cross (BBC, 2021), indicate the current empathy and need to retell particular histories.

My political awareness was reinforced through the man who would later become my step-father. He watched the news constantly, especially anything to do with politics in Africa (late 1970s) to this day. I could be watching children's TV and he would come in from work and switch the channel to the news saying, "*me wah si de news*", hoping there would be something about what was happening in Africa. This caused great annoyance to me and my siblings, but it wasn't the said or done thing to complain. Respect for elders in those days was very much part of the fabric in Caribbean households (Monrose, 2016). He cursed the TV, the reporters, the regimes of the said countries, South Africa, Rhodesia or Angola. He cursed "*Mrs Tatcher*" and the British government, for their complicity in the atrocity unfolding at the time on TV.

Watching TV back in the early 70s/80s was a challenge with only three channels BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. There was very little in terms of Black representation. Shows that did feature Black and brown people were either covertly, or overtly, racist in characterisations

and depictions of Black or brown people. For example, *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* (BBC)*, Love Thy Neighbour* (ITV), or comedians Jim Davidson and Bernard Manning. Each "situation" or joke told reinforced racist stereotypes and caricatures (Malik, 2002, p. 91). However, these rare moments and racist portrayals counted for nothing. If a Black person "did" appear on TV, there would be a cry of "Black people on the telly!", to which we would all rush in to see who it was and what they were doing.

Later in my life and career, in 1993, as a founding member of *Black Pyramid Film and Video Project* (BP), my consciousness of Blackness fully manifested, ideologically and physically. I grew locks, though I wasn't a Rasta, as having locks symbolised an affinity with and to the collective Black struggle (Kuumba & Ajanaku, 1998). BP's work challenged negative portrayals of Black representation in film and cinema, through making films, delivering a film festival, and contributing to wider discourses of Black British and diasporic experiences. Unbeknown to me, at the time, the work we produced reflected our double consciousness, though ideas of double consciousness are problematised (Du Bois, 1994; Gilroy, 1993). The aforementioned is deemed as "post-industrial bourgeois identity constructions or discourses" (Mocombe, et al., 2015, p. 123), delineated along lines of class, rather than race or culture. This is also identified as a rubric marginalising LGBTQ+ identities and Black femininity, due to "power elites of both the black underclass and bourgeoisie of earlier capitalist relations of production" (Ibid.).

> **"You see, the black Atlantic has always been the queer Atlantic. What Paul Gilroy never told us is how queer relationships were forged on merchant and pirate ships [...] [The] queer black Atlantic [...] navigates these crosscurrents as it brings together enslaved and African, brutality and desire, genocide and resistance"** (Tinsley, 2008, pp. 191-192).

However, our ontology of double consciousness at BP in the 90s was epistemologically informed by the filmmakers of the Black workshop movement (Black Audio Film Collective, Sankofa, Ceddo), whose work challenged binary perceptions of Blackness and essentialism. This ontology is similar to the experiences of BAG, "[These] artists, Claudette Johnson, Donald Rodney amongst them, took as their subject matter the history, culture, tribulations and aspirations of Black people throughout the world" (Chambers, 2014, p. 106). On reflection, I realise my consciousness was fuelled by those moments of angst of having to watch the news over children's entertainment. Recollection of these pivotal moments, this "data", constitutes "field text" (Clandin & Caine, 2012), "where the researcher comes in direct contact with others, auto-ethnographic fieldwork often involves others in the researcher's recollection and reflection" (Chang, 2007, p. 5).

The epiphanies of these actions of others became apparent in my later actions, influencing my socio-political views. This was not a random decision. A question I asked myself was how I became the person I am today, of which my political and cultural beliefs now are very much part of how I live my life today. The method of autoethnography is potentially controversial, due to the tendency to "focus on the self rather than the other" (Ellis, 2008, pp. 50-51). However, it is through others, we can understand the self (Krieger, 1991).

3.9 Conjunctures and Crisis

Why are the conjunctures documented here important to this research? The question resonates with ideas of the epiphany. The starting point of understanding my identity, of who I am, biographically, means I "must start with the family […] the zero point of origin" (Denzin, 2014, pp. 7-8). Furthermore, "epiphanies represent ruptures in the structure of daily life" (Ibid., p. 53). Mirroring the writing structure, beginning with the self and widening it to the social world, my autoethnography draws parallels with personal ruptures within the context of the conjuncture of "ruptural crisis" (Hall & Massey, 2010, p. 57), in relation to the 1970s to 1980s, and in the current moment.

Discussions of the conjuncture suggest there needs to be some form of "crisis" or upheaval socio-politically, economically (Althusser, 2005). In recent moments of crisis, i.e. Brexit, the focus for the government appears to be on restoring Britain to former glories of empire, economically, politically and culturally (Virdee & McGeever, 2018, p. 1805). Our focus is constantly shifted by extremist views on immigration, of media and political attention on young Black men and knife crime, similar to Black men and "mugging", "are they not whipping up a moral panic as a foil to deflect attention away from more pressing economic issues" (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995, p. 559). Conjunctures are driven forward by crisis. As such, the purpose of "Visual Representations" is to draw attention to conjunctures of the 1970s to 1980s, and the present as moments of crisis, the meanings of which personal and socio-political, then and now, are always given retrospectively (Denzin, 2014).

To contextualise the conjuncture further, in 2016, I curated my first major exhibition *Reimaging Donald Rodney,* at Vivid Projects, Birmingham. The exhibition culminated several years' research and admiration for Rodney and his storytelling. Equally, I wanted to tell Rodney's story in the region he was born and where BAG hosted *The First National Convention of Black Art* in 1982. To commemorate its 30th anniversary, Piper (2012a) reflected on a "historical moment",

> **"[Within] this context, the 'Blk Art Group' existed from 1979-1984 as a shifting alliance of young visual artists who could be described as 'children of the Windrush generation', and whose political orientation and creative philosophies were in many respects illustrative of the shifting patterns, influences and alliances which characterised the era".**

The convention should be viewed as a catalyst for the British Black Arts Movement during the 1980s, as many of the exponents of the period attended the event, including John Akomfrah, Lubaina Himid and Sonya Boyce. To accentuate the magnitude of the event, Piper (2012) alludes to the publication of *The Scarman Report* in 1982, following uprisings in Britain's inner cities the previous year.

These uprisings were a result of what many Black people perceived as state oppression and police brutality, keenly felt by "children of the Windrush generation" (Piper, 2012a). The relevance of my story from curating *Cut & Mix*, of Rodney, of BAG, was until this point very little, if any attention had been paid to their art and the wider socio-political Black experience, within the annals of British art history. Particularly, in the regional museums and galleries of Birmingham and Wolverhampton where the first convention took place and the first BAG exhibition was hosted. BAG's work is now lauded academically, culturally, and internationally (Bailey, et al., 2005; Chambers, 2014), depicting the Black British experience and throughout the diaspora. In 2015, I was contracted by Wolverhampton Art Gallery to assist the delivery of its *Collecting Cultures* initiative (2015-17). The gallery's aim was to acquire works produced by members of BAG and the subsequent Black Art Movement. Intimating, though the gallery had supported events and hosted exhibitions, it had not "actively collected their work", and recognised the importance of preserving their art, "an important part of the city's history" (Nugent, 2014).

Does this imply, up until this point, art produced by BAG was not considered worthy in contributing to the institutional canon of the gallery's art history (Liakos, 2008)? The value in seeing these works by Black British artists alongside other collected pieces, challenges the "single story" of British (art) history and its canon. Subsequently, recent interventions, *Black Artists and Modernism* (2015), *The Place is Here* (2017), and *Diaspora Pavilion* (2017) to name a few, have taken place regionally, nationally and internationally. The significance of each of these past, current and future events is their intention to challenge hegemonic structures within the conjuncture when issues of identities, race and belonging are at the forefront of national and international discourse. Consequently, conjunctural moments demand "cognitive", "political" and "artistic" questions, "[which] together create possible futures, within which we 'think the present' and to which our practice constitute a reply" (Hall, 2006, p. 4).

This is exactly what "Visual Representations" articulates through curatorial praxis. As a curator-researcher, my aim has been to situate the work of BAG within discourses of culture and society, in problematising formations of Black British masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham. Simultaneously, to reflect on my lived experience, connecting the personal to the cultural (Chang, 2016; Adams, et al., 2015; Denzin, 2015), the personal and political (Hanisch, 2000).

In summarising my supposition of parallels between conjunctures of past and present, to frame constructs of contemporary Black British masculinities, I have raised issues within discourses of generational theory and collective autobiography. "Visual Representations" draws comparison with the "children of the Windrush generation" (Piper, 2012), and the current Black British "millennials" (Williams & Gerber, 2008). It is informed through research of BAG as a collective of artists and academics, whose art has been contextualised by critical and academic writing (Bailey, 2005; Chambers, 2014; Hall, 2003; Gilroy, 1988; Mercer, 2012; Piper, 2012). Furthermore, my research has been informed by collective and individual autobiographies and academic writing of the millennial generation in aspects of race, class, belonging, academia, gender and sexualities (Arday & Mirza, 2018; Johnson, et al., 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Owusu, 2019; Akala, 2018; Pitts, 2019; Bola, 2019).

Generationally, this research speaks of "coming of age", activism and rebellion against "parental institutions" (Hazlett, 1992, p. 77). This rebellion is witnessed in the identities and work of emerging Black British artists of the 1970s and 1980s. The lived experiences of the "children of the Windrush generation" was problematised due to the racist infrastructures of British society, in education, employment, criminal justice system and media portrayal. The lived experience of many young Black men was often not acknowledged by their parents, let alone the authorities or institutions (Monrose, 2016). Within the moment of BAG, the ensuing Black Art Movement of the 1980s and the current generation of writers cited, reveals a collective consciousness. These generations, who under the cloud of Thatcherism, emergence of neoliberalism of the 1980s, and presently of Brexit, Covid and BLM, continue to voice concern of the Black British lived experience through art and literature. However, theirs is not a language of victimhood. It is strident and unapologetic; anti-racist, feminist, and non-binary, demanding the decolonisation of academic patriarchal, Eurocentric intramural structures.

> **"Imagination is central to the anti-racist writer, thinker and teacher. So is bearing witness to one's times. Bearing witness to racism's dynamism [...] [And] the financialisaton of our present"** (Johnson, et al., 2018, p. xvii).

Such language is reminiscent of BAG's rejection of patriarchal hegemony and in the vernacular of the historical rebel music of reggae, "They tell of the burden of the history of oppression, rebellion, and repression; 'of the tribal wars'" (Johnson, 1976, p. 398). Each of these statements suggests the "personal is political", a theory realised out of struggle (Hanisch, 2000). In respect of performative autoethnography, Spry (2001) and Holman Jones (2008) regard this method as emancipatory, personal and inherently political, demanding "contexualisation (my emphasis) giving testimony and witness […] when we bring our texts to contexts, we can make work that constitutes a first steps towards social change" (2008, p. 235). "[A]utoethnographic methods recognize the reflections and refractions of multiple selves in contexts that arguably transform the authorial "I" to an existential "we"" (Spry, 2001, p. 711). Since the eighteenth century, the tradition of history writing in Europe involves not only a description of the past, but also the imposition of a hierarchical view of the world, with Western Europe perched at the top (Liakos, 2008). The "other" is regarded as past, primitive, underdeveloped, or developing (Wynter, 2003; Asad, 1973; Atkinson & Atkinson, 2007).

The rhetoric, art and critic of BAG and the Black British millennial writers cited, suggest the "seizing of time" past and present (Seale, 1991), of space within and without the institutions. Their collective writing and art speak to and about these conjunctures of crisis. BAG's art is useful in framing constructs of contemporary Black British masculine identities, exemplified in my autoethnographic reflexivity and curation of *Cut & Mix.* This PBR is informed by the relational autoethnography's of BAG members in works including Rodney's *Autoicon,* or Chamber's *Destruction of the National Front* (1979-80) and the collective writings of Johnson, et al. (2018) and Owusu (2019). Through my research, and in each of these writings, among others art and reflection, "we" are the "small axe sharp enough" to challenge the historical hegemony in this present moment of crisis.

Cut & Mix as Curatorial Praxis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the theoretical framework of curatorial practice through which *Cut & Mix* is realised, including the historical frame of Black British arts practice, to which *Cut & Mix* conceptually responds. I detail the methods used in its realisation, including descriptions of selected works and artists. The impact of COVID-19 has delayed the exhibition until autumn 2021, yet it provided a unique opportunity of engagement to create a virtual curatorial preview. This comprised convening a group of people, with no direct link to the exhibition, to share their thoughts of the proposed exhibition. Participants' feedback only relates to a selection of works, with some still to be produced. Therefore, not all works included in final exhibition will be discussed in this chapter.

"Visual Representations" responds to the research questions and to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) criteria of "originality", "significance" and "rigour" (Research Excellence Framework, 2020, pp. 34-35). Throughout, I have detailed its originality, of exploring Black British men's lived experiences, particular to Birmingham, and the innovative methodological approach of "cut & mix". The "significance" of this PBR is its realisation through the award of Arts Council England funding to host a major exhibition and engagement programme, featuring artists of international repute (Keith Piper, Rotimi Fani-Kayode). Taking place at NAE, Nottingham, an award-winning and internationally acclaimed visual arts venue. "Visual Representations" is rigorously underpinned by critical reflection and curatorially conceptualised within conjunctural and intersectional cultural theory. A "cut & mix" approach assists to "situate art practice as the production of knowledge within broader theoretical and research paradigms" (Barrett, 2010, p. 1).

4.2 Theory of Practice

Curatorial praxis, as described in the methodology chapter (Chapter 1), is the hyphenated space where practice takes place, informed by theory. The role of the curator has become superordinated, due in part to the prevalence of the international biennial (Moon, 2020). Similarly, to "curate" has become ubiquitous in our compiling of music and even menu creation (Balzer, 2015). Critically, the rise of the curator has "aided and abetted the forces of the global art complex" (Jones, 2021, p. 96). Although some curators operate at a rarefied level of celebrity, for many artists and freelance curators like myself, we operate within a precarious space, of periods of unfunded development, followed by intense periods of production. In addition, I regard the role of many curators of colour, particularly outside the spotlight of the international biennial, remains the same, striving for social justice and equality through the exhibitions and wider discourses generated, exemplified by recent exhibitions *War Inna Babylon* (2021), curated by community activist Stafford Scott, or *Infinity of Traces* (2021) curated by Ekow Eshun.

Curatorial initiatives, including *International Curators Forum*, *Museum Detox* and the *Black Curators Collective*, provide critical space for discourse and professional development for curators of colour, female and non-binary practitioners, nationally and internationally. Each initiative is inextricably linked diasporic[ally], due to the heritage of its members, ensuring their respective practices respond to and reflect the lived experiences throughout the African diaspora. Their existence challenges the hegemony of Eurocentric curatorial knowledge and practice. Through such radical revisions, reimagining and (re)historization, ownership of the Black subject, the Black body can be reappraised because "[The] Black male body is polemical. It is a site of public and private contestation" (Alexander, 2006, p. 74). The recognition of these entities by cultural institutions and funding bodies illustrates the crucial role they play today, in the sensitive minefield of the politics of identity and representation.

The curatorial imperative of "Visual Representations" is it taps into the pertinent discourses of identities and representation, which resonate within so called "Black communities" as issues of concern. *Cut & Mix* is the curatorial response to historical concerns of the pathologising of the Black British male and aims to mobilise participation and engagement among the widest audience. The "research-driven" nature of *Cut & Mix* (Rito, 2020), provides an opportunity for the dissemination of the research itself, addressing key questions, during conversations with practitioners and the public. "Visual Representations" theoretically merges institutions of the arts, academe, and the public. At the same time, the curatorial "disrupts received knowledge" (Martinon, 2013, p. 26), where it is the intention of this PBR to challenge perceptions and hegemony of institutionalised knowledge. The disruptive activity of the curatorial is enacted through the SEA and the act of "commoning", where "shared understandings" of curatorial research "materialise" (Moon, 2020, p. 34), with the potential of having emancipatory effect. Through knowledge exchange, from "stultification to emancipation" (Rancière, 2007, p. 275), the ignorant can become knowledgeable. Participants of this PBR, through dialogue of lived experiences, gained critical understandings and "ownership of the experience" (Helguera, 2011, p. 13). As a "durational process" (Kester, 2005, p. 78), this was achieved by building trust between artists and participants, blurring of roles of the knowledgeable "master and pupil" (Rancière, 2007).

The "cut & mix" approach across disciplines and use of methods has solicited artistic response and insights. "Surface is the plane of the curatorial - a plane that: enables movement across disciplines" (Rito, 2020, p. 51). The dialogical approach of SEA challenges the idea of the passivity of the actor, providing a platform to activate voice(s) "to develop a

cross-cultural dialogue without sacrificing the unique identities of individual speakers" (Kester, 2005, p. 76). This cross-cultural dialogue challenges passivity,

"[...] you're doing something specifically about Black masculinity and you are a Black man. All the way through this I am wondering what's Ian's point on this, what's your relationship to Rotimi's work, what questions do these artists works bring up in you, what questions have you asked yourself?" (**GG**).

Cut & Mix's curatorial intent responds to the aims of this research and questions the formation of Black British masculine identities, challenging the historical embedded pathologies that persist. The body of work selected is the "disruptive activity" of my curatorial act, questioning these pathologies. My position as a Black man is one of frustration, but also of determination. Frustration stems from the fact that as I am writing the UK government in 2021 plans to increase stop and search, despite statistics indicating continued profiling of Black, Asian and ethnic minorities (Home Office, 2020, p. 5); a historical dog-whistle tactic (Hall, et al., 2013), drawing attention away from the ruptures in British society.

To curate is derived from the Latin "*cura*", to care, and my curatorial approach is of the care needed for the most vulnerable - the othered - in neoliberal society today. My determination is to use this curatorial platform to fight for social justice and equality. My relationship with the work of Rotimi and others in this exhibition is recognising their battles for social justice and equality. Art illustrating a "Black aesthetic" (Gordon, 2018; Taylor, 2016), which I attribute to BAG, as earlier alluded to in "What is at stake?" (1.11).

"Visual Representations" acknowledges the importance of recent projects in widening participation, engagement and epistemologies of what constitutes Black British artistic practices. Their relevance is to situate this PBR within wider discourses of Black British arts, practice, and pedagogies. In turn, challenging historic Eurocentric hegemony, curatorially and epistemologically. This includes the *Blk Art Group Research Project 2012* (Piper, 2012), commemorating the emergence of the Blk Art Group and *Black Artists & Modernism* dedicated archival research (Black Artists & Modernism, 2015), positioning Black artists in the realms of modernism in British art history. Reflecting on these epistemologies raises the question of what new knowledge is generated, which may not have been revealed through other research approaches (Barrett, 2010, p. 1). There are also ethical considerations in respect of the public funding of this and other scholarships (Thomson & Walker, 2010, p. 297), ensuring knowledge generated is widely accessible.

Hence, this research is public facing in respect of the exhibition, SEA programme, workshops and performances by local groups and artists. *Cut & Mix*'s interpretative textual materials and other ephemera will be made available online via NAE and other social media platforms, ensuring wider dissemination.

4.3 Ways of (not) Knowing

Artist and academic Sonya Boyce reflects on her early experiences of arts practice as a Black artist at college and university, recalling "the shock" of seeing her first contemporary Black art exhibition (Roberts, 1987, p. 59). The exhibition *Black Art an' Done,* at Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1981, featured work by Eddie Chambers and Keith Piper, founding members of BAG. The shock was more in relation to their artistic approach than the radical message conveyed. Prior to this moment, Boyce struggled to find any references to Black British art history at college. The few books Boyce found were either African-American art and traditional African and Indian art, categorised as "primitive arts". For Boyce, this moment in the early 1980s, Black art and Black artists, male and female were isolated from discourses of equality in arts practice (Ibid.). Black artists' work was marginalised, sometimes even relegated to corridors, as is the case and hence, the title of Lubaina Himid's exhibition at the ICA in 1985, *The Thin Black Line.*

Such experiences illustrate the hegemony of Eurocentric art history, in contemporary arts practices and pedagogy. Research by Dash (2010) and Theuri (2016) analysed teaching and learning experiences of Black Caribbean and African students. Their respective studies pointed to the erasure or invisibility of African and Caribbean cultural identities and the difficulties in developing pedagogies, challenging Eurocentric hegemony in schools, art, and design institutions. We are yet to see the impact of recent global events, BLM protests and continued calls for decolonisation of institutions. However, proposed 50% cut to art education funding (Harris, 2021), is likely to reinforce arts as a pursuit for the privileged, and as a result, less diverse. In the scope of this PBR the 1960s formation of the Caribbean Arts Movement in Britain (Braithwaite, 2000) is relevant. Braithwaite recalls the coming together of the collective, realised out of concern of the isolation experienced by West Indian writers and artists, living in "exile" and the need to connect their work back "to its source in West Indian society" (Ibid., p. 169). This lack of reference of contributions by Black artists was my experience in 2016, while undertaking art history and curatorial MA studies. Boyce admits her knowledge of Black British art history was "sketchy" and the "not knowing" was a "stumbling block" to analyse what has been achieved to date (Roberts, 1987, p. 61). However, what if,

"[...] not knowing was the very stimulus, the spur that acts as a springboard for a process of artistic innovation? What if the enigma and opacity of not knowing one's immediate artistic precursor is built into the very fabric of diasporic life? In other words, what if knowing was the name of the question, at the core of the problem-solving activity that the Blk Art Group were responding to in this moment through acts of answerability and double-voiced responsiveness" (Mercer, 2012).

Does "not knowing" suggest a sense of "becoming" (Delueze & Guattari, 2001), where ones identity is not fixed? Hence, the desire for a sense of place, of self and where identities are re-inscribed and re-articulated. In discussing the work of artist Casper David Fredrich and romanticism, John Akomfrah argues landscape is an important setting for diasporic subjects,

"[...] how does one highlight the question of becoming in a way that realigns the perceptions that people have a background and a foreground, between figures in history (foreground) and places/spaces of the historical (background)?" (Rughani, 2013, p. 217).

The act of becoming and knowing reside in the liminal "in-between spaces [...] emergence of interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). Those who occupy and or imagine such spaces, call into question ideas of fixity of self and communities. It implies hybridity, alluding to possibilities of self-actualisation, of new discoveries due to the rich diasporic references, of dislocation from homelands and (re) location. References of dislocation and relocation are attributed to the "black Atlantic" (Gilroy, 1993) and "double-consciousness" (Du Bois, 1994). These references call for "authenticity of the Black subject's experience in Western History and authenticity of this experience as literal embodiment of the dislocation felt by many modern peoples" (Yaszek, 2005, p. 299).

Years later, Sonya Boyce, now as an academic and artist, launched *Black Artists & Modernism.* An initiative aimed at addressing the "not knowing" of Black British art history, of which Boyce stated "[D]ocumentation is a serious problem. As such, there is a lot of work to be done" (Roberts, 1987, p. 62). Intentions now likely to be prevented by proposed cuts to art education. The epistemological ask of "how we know what we know" (Gray, 2003, p. 62), remains pertinent throughout this research. This is a question referring to ontological positionality, my "knowable space" (Ibid.), determined by an interdisciplinary approach of

curatorial praxis. As discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 1), "Visual Representations" contextualises the lived experiences of Black British males in Birmingham, imparted curatorially within intersectional theoretical frameworks.

4.4 Conceptual Considerations

During the development of *Cut & Mix*, I was mentored by curator and writer Ekow Eshun, realised through funds from Arts Council England's *Developing Your Creative Practice* fund. This was due to Eshun's curatorial experience, particularly on themes of identity, gender, masculinity in *Made You Look* (2016), *Masculinities: Liberation Through Photography* (2020), and diaspora and representation in *Africa State of Mind* (2018). In our conversations, Eshun asked a series of pertinent questions: What is the story? What has changed? Why does it matter to the artists involved? What is and was the socio-cultural and political conditions of the time then and now? What is at stake?

These provocations were posed to address the thematic conceptualisation *Cut & Mix*, of "knowing" (Gray, 2002; Mercer, 2012; Eigenheer, 2011) and thus, avoiding a priori hypothesising. "Visual Representations" contextualises these questions within a critical framework, raising further questions of how meaning is constituted curatorially. The story is revealed through the curatorial act and action of selecting, assembling and interpretation of works. Through such actions, objects take on "changing and dynamic meanings" (Von Bismark, 2011, p. 19), when placed in relation to one another. Here, the curatorial conjuncture comes into play, specifically its "historicity" due to the underlying "socio-political", "economic" and "cultural" context of the works, time, and space (Ibid.).

Cut & Mix's conjunctural curatorial approach affirms my duality as curator-researcher, alongside lived experiences of the social actors, and thematic works produced for the exhibition. Within this context, and in considering the curatorial decision-making processes of *Cut & Mix*, it is important to refer to the research question, "*[To] what extent is the Blk Art Group's art of the late 1970s and early 80s useful in framing constructs of contemporary Black male identities?*". Hence, referral to the catalogue for the *Black Art an' Done* exhibition, at Wolverhampton Art Gallery in 1981, is comparative. The catalogue states the exhibition is a first in Wolverhampton for five young black artists,

> "[...] the Black artist has a growing obligation to acknowledge (in and through his or her work) the fundamental elements that characterise our existence as Black British. The work of the Black artist should be seen has having specific positive functions: a tool to assist us in our struggle for liberation both home

and abroad, as opposed to simply reflecting the moral bankrupcy [sic] of modern times. Black art at the very least, should indicate and/or document change. It should seek to effect by aiming to help create an alternative set of values necessary to better living. Otherwise it fails to be legitimate art"
(Blk Art Group Research Project, 2012, 2012b)**.**

Chambers' polemical statement of what Black art "should" be about and endeavouring to do, problematised the term "Black art", foreshadowing future conflicts. Chambers' intention was to galvanise Black artists and Black audiences at a time when their voice was "ignored" (Khan, 1976), or seldom heard. Is the insistence that the Black artist has an "obligation" what Gilroy argues (1988, p. 34), that such representative political art "obliges them to speak on behalf of a heterogeneous collectivity [sic]?" (Ibid.). This raised issues of the "hierarchical" tensions residing within the "vernacular and literature culture" informed by race and class distinctions (Mercer, 1990a, p. 66); a situation Mercer (1990a) argued exacerbated by the lack of developed space for critical dialogue of Black cultural production. However, within a populist modernist paradigm, Black art was viewed through a binary lens of Black authenticity and identity, at the cost of a works aesthetic value (Ibid.). Keith Piper's (2012b) personal recollections, describes the ensuing decade as a period when,

> **"[Black] art, far from being done as a definitive and closed marker, would become one of the most contentious and slippery of terms. Marking and to some degree distorting creative discourses over the next decade, around what Black art might be, who could make it and where its parameters might lie".**

Hall too, raises concerns of language that could be construed as "separatist" and "essentialist" (2005, p. 11), in contesting Chambers' terminology. Although Chambers' position has since changed, it did lead Hall to ask, "[Does] the category "black art" include whatever a black artist produces, or is there something historically or aesthetically specific about it?" (Ibid.).

The term "Black art" in the 1970 and 1980s was problematised, I argue, due to its usage, where "Black as a political signifier", encompassed people of "African, African-Caribbean and South Asian origin" (Maylor, 2009, p. 369). "Political blackness", as discussed in Chapters 2 & 3 on Black masculinities and autoethnography, is contextualised here by Araeen (2005, p. 23), arguing, not only was the "Black experience" in reaction to white racism, which impacted people of African and African-Caribbean descent through slavery. The Black

experience was in reaction to European colonialism, which devastated and subjugated people of colour globally. Another problematic in discussions of what constitutes "Black art" is due to "populist modernism", which ask the "wrong questions" of "Blackness" that may never be answered (Mercer, 1990, p. 71). Furthermore, Mercer asks what of "non-representational art" of Frank Bowling or Anish Kapoor (Ibid.). This question could also be asked of Antonio Roberts, a Black digital artist with no previous references to race in his practice, until he was commissioned by me for *Cut & Mix*, and through his own project *(Algo|Afro) Futures* (2021), a mentoring scheme for Black artists exploring the creativity of live coding.

Arguments on what constitutes "Black art" are pertinent in framing discourses generated through the artworks of the exhibition *Cut & Mix*. Artworks which speak of conjunctures and transitions, equating to cultural identities and becoming. "[C]ultural identity [in this second sense] is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past" (Hall, 1990, p. 225). The vision of futurity is encapsulated by Jordan (2016), who regards the "Black subject" as removed from an essentialist positionality and "post-Cartesian", for the anti-essentialist Black subject is now neither solely "Afrocentric" nor of the imaginary of "postmodernism" (2016, p. 23).

Though difficult when describing this period and the artists involved, the term Black artists and Black art are useful in contextualising this research (Arya, 2017). The story *Cut & Mix* tells is one of transition, encapsulated within overlapping conjunctural moments. It is a story influenced by the conjuncture of a Pan-African diasporic imaginary where "black artists" found themselves 'burdened' due to "historical marginalisation to means of cultural production" (Mercer, 1990, p. 65). Here, art is viewed to be "representative" of the Black lived experience and speaking for the Black community (Ibid., p. 62). This was exacerbated by the hegemony of publicly funded institutions and the oversimplification of racial taxonomy, of "survey" exhibitions (Hylton, 2007). Here, survey exhibitions were an easy way of bringing Black artists together, even if their respective practices spoke of differing experiences.

The late 1990s and early 2000s saw a paradigm shift in the dynamics of representation and cultural identities. This moment was punctuated by the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, in which the subsequent inquiry deemed many of Britain's organisations "institutionally racist" (Macpherson, 1999). Under a New Labour government, we saw a culture change, after football had "come home". It was a time of "Cool Britannia", Arts Council England's "Year of Cultural Diversity" and "Decibel", and the British Film Institute's "Black World". Multiculturalism's institutionalisation saw the art of the "other" appropriated within notions of Britishness (Tolia-Kelly & Morris, 2004).

101

Within this moment, Hall (2005) opined of the need for the arts and culture sector to seize the opportunity and relinquish the keys to the gates. Suggesting cultural institutions initiate training and recruitment of "minority" artists and curators, where their knowledge is of value in challenging Western/European hegemony in the arts and culture sector (Hall, 2005, p. 30). Sadly, the sins of the father continue to be committed. The wheel of diversity and multiculturalism has been reinvented many times over, presently, in the socio-political and economically heightened times of COVID, BLM and the proposed cuts to arts education. Arts and cultural institutions across Britain are searching for a racial panacea, while collecting financial support to do so. It could be argued, a lack of true institutional structural change is mired within the preservation of historical Westernised/Eurocentric patriarchal hegemony (Lipsitz, 2006), offering a few trinkets of jobs and opportunities, and having an acceptable face to promote itself when required economically or politically.

4.5 A Hint of Cocoa Butter

The curatorial decision-making for *Cut & Mix* could be questioned as replicating previously homogenised concepts of survey exhibitions in respect of race, identity, gender, and representation. *Cut & Mix* cites previous examples, *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art* (Golden, 1994) and *Masculinities: Liberation through Photography* (Pardo, 2020), where group exhibitions interrogate and challenge these perceptions.

However, *Cut & Mix* dislocates the hegemony of the Caribbean and Jamaica in particular, and widens understandings of the impact of diaspora and art emanating from African, European, and British syncretism. Through the selection of Black artists, identifying as male, female, straight, gay, or non-binary, *Cut & Mix* challenges heteronormative concepts in respect of masculinities. Furthermore, *Cut & Mix* attempts to narrate "counter-histories that reweave" Black British masculinities of the past within the present and future (Yaszek, 2005, p. 299). Curatorially, this is replicated through "cut & mix" as a method of selection, responding to the interdisciplinarity of the artists. The centrality of subjectivity - the Black body - problematises the historical bourgeois gallery space and the white male gaze (Richter, 2011). This is exemplified in *Cut & Mix* by artists Marlene Smith and Rotimi Fani-Kayode, whose respective practices will be described later, raise questions of gender, sexualities, ownership, and subjectivity.

By foregrounding the Black body, it disrupts historical myths and tropes realised in its multiple forms of representation, as "the gendered body, the sexual body, the body as subject, rather than object of looking and desire" (Hall, 2006, p. 20). Such is the history of the Black man or woman whose "inferiority comes into being through the other" (Fanon,

102

1999, p. 418). *Cut & Mix* disrupts historical narratives, giving artists the right to define the self, usurping problematised anthropological classification.

Aesthetically, curatorial considerations extend to olfactory triggers to stimulate memories and heritage associations. "Olfactory signals, while being invisible and transient, are inalienable from our memory and our emotional personal baggage" (Miotto, 2016, p. 1). For *Cut & Mix,* the infusion of a hint of cocoa butter is recognisable in the air, as a nod to the practice of self-care in Black family households, where the application of cocoa butter moisturiser protects against the elements and dry skin. The "lingering smell filling their homes, creating a cultural aromatic associated with black womanhood" (Blanks, 2019, p. 3).

This act of moisturising the Black body is deployed as curatorial olfactory metaphor of the need for self-care, towards possibilities of critical reflection, in challenging the fixity of "true masculinity" (Connell, 2005, p. 45). Intersectional theory extends theories of self-care and (self) love, as without "self-esteem" and "self-love" there may not have been any form of female liberation (hooks, 2014a, p. 31). The "black feminist tradition of love-politics, a tradition marked by transforming the love from the personal […] into a theory of justice" (Nash, 2013, p. 2). Similarly, Baldwin's letter to his nephew in *The Fire Next Time* (2017), I contend, is an act of personal love transformed into theories of justice, responding to the socio-political conditions into which they were born. For Okwonga (2019), the realisation of his bisexuality within the pages of a book, dedicated to reclaiming "space" for Black British men, I argue, are also acts of personal self-care in his sharing of lived experience, which might be of comfort and support to readers.

Curatorially, the intention of *Cut & Mix* is to stimulate the audience's senses and memories even before they enter the gallery. During the launch, the public will be engaged by spoken word performances, and a DJ "cutting & mixing" music, audio, and visuals thematically selected. When continuing towards the gallery, audio clips recorded during SEA sessions will be played, contextualising more of what is to come. Hearing these voices is essential in setting the foundational scene, and in "giving (my emphasis) equal weighting to participant's point of view" (Plumb, 2017, p. ii). In the gallery, audiences will experience a space washed in blocks of colour and flower motifs from the work of Amartey Golding, as if they have broken out of their frame. Antonio Roberts' digital animation *Heavyweight Champ* (2021), set against his technicoloured pallet of glitch art, will bring colour to what would normally be a white cube space, a disruption and rejection of this historically constructed, religious like tradition (McEvilley, 1999); a gallery tradition preventing the outside from getting in, of stopping time, creating a "non-space" of "eternal ratification" for those that

encounter it (Ibid., p. 8). Instead, *Cut & Mix* brings the outside in, inviting a diverse public to bring their lived experiences to assist in the demystification of what is heard, seen, and smelt. To do this, and to make sense of experiences to come, the following describes methods of selection, intertwined with SEA comments from the curatorial preview.

4.6 Curatorial Happenstance

To aid the curatorial preview discussion, I produced a 15-minute recorded audio/visual introduction as a time saving device. It was intended to provide a conceptual theoretical framework to the realisation of *Cut & Mix*. However, the recorded presentation, itself, received a mixed reception.

"In terms of the quality of information there is a good quality of information [...] this is academic, made me wonder when the exhibition comes around, is it going to be very academic? Is it going to be received in the way you want it?" (**KF**).

"[...] this is not on your part but from a position as someone who isn't academic, at the beginning I found it intimidating. Should I be in this group, should I be watching this? As the video progressed, I got where you were coming from and what you were trying to do [...] in terms why it was important to add the theory that makes sense now" (**SP**).

"I get it Ian thanks for explaining you've got two audiences for this work; you're doing for the academy to situate it in an academic discourse and lineage and the exhibition is really a public experience. You want everyone to come in and everyone to feel" (**GG**).

"Sorry to be harsh Ian but I think if that introduction was for us as your audience to follow and didn't understand it, then it wasn't appropriate [...] But if this is your audience then your audience needs to understand that first time around and the trick of being an academic is to be able to explain very complex ideas in everyday language" (**LR**).

This "contestation over curating and the curatorial" as "critical practice" is the dichotomy of research and practice (O'Neill & Wilson, 2015, p. 13). This relates to how I convey to different audiences, the varying and developing modalities, methodologies, and paradigms at play curatorially and theoretically. In assessing these tensions, I need to reconsider the level at which the introduction was pitched. For some, it "was not appropriate". Thinking ahead to the exhibition, how do I ensure all audiences who engage with *Cut & Mix* and its interpretations can access the work? Given my intention, it should engage with the widest audience, of communities and society in general. Equally, the design of the thesis, as an arts journal, is intended for a wider readership,

due to its socio-political themes and aesthetics. Is it my responsibility to ensure the language is more widely accessible, given the need to respond in a pedagogic and epistemic framework? "[As] cultural researchers we are 'inside' our object of study, fully and intimately" (Johnson, et al., 2004, p. 44). Reflecting on the differences between the SEA discussion and curatorial preview, I would say time, knowledge and language acquired between then (2018) and now (2021) influenced how each of the sessions were pitched and delivered.

Nevertheless, the preview provided an invaluable "happenstance" of the why, what and who of this PBR. This highlights the entanglement experienced as a curator-researcher, of shifting positionalities, explaining the selection of artworks with NAE, or presenting to fellow students. The qualitative feedback is invaluable to unpick the component parts of the exhibition, whilst ensuring those who encounter *Cut & Mix's* engagement programme of screenings, performance, and workshops, come away with an understanding of its intentions and perhaps contributing to discussions.

Curatorially, my intention is to position newly commissioned art alongside historical works, to "make meaning" of narrating the story and navigating the gallery. Through this curatorial act, I stipulate its conjunctural intentions, theoretically and curatorially. The theoretical intentions are in response to addressing the research questions, which are intersectional. Curatorially, they are also enhanced by Eshun's questions. Its rhizomes (Deleuze & Guattari, 2001; Allen, 2016), are rooted in and routed through place, time and belonging, contributing to identity formations, making distinctions between Black British masculinities in 21st century Birmingham and those of the wider diaspora.

As a result, a more discursive sense of Black British masculinities is realised, of Rotimi Fani-Kayode, who I consider pivotal in exploring pathologies of Black British masculine identities. The inclusion of works by Golding, Nadeem Din-Gabisi, and Lanre Malalou destabilises essentialisms of homogenised Black British identities, viewed only through a Caribbean lens. Here, "self-definitions and cultural expressions draw on a plurality of black histories and politics" (Gilroy, 2002, p. 204); histories dating back to the emergence of the NAE, where the exhibition is hosted.

4.7   Place, In Real Life, Digitally and at a Social Distance

My longstanding relationship with NAE, its history, and the work they deliver, made it the most appropriate cultural venue in the region to host the exhibition. NAE's historical formation, through APNA Arts (South Asian) and EMACA Visual Arts (African Caribbean), is symbolic. There are also historical links between Birmingham and Nottingham in

105

movement of people between these Midlands cities, including members of BAG attending Nottingham Trent University, previously a polytechnic. My experience of NAE was as its previous Education and Learning Manager. NAE's location in the inner-city area of Hyson Green and the surrounding multicultural communities, bears similarities with Birmingham's Handsworth, Lozells and Aston. There is a sense of diasporic affinity to place and belonging in discussions attributed to the "Black community",

"Cut & Mix is relevant to wider conversations we've been having for a longer time [...] It is definitely relevant in terms of a wider conversation within the black community and outside the black community as well" (**SP**).

Does this statement imply romanticised ideas of where the Black community resides, as fixed, stable and homogeneous? As discourses of diasporic sensibilities, the "Black Atlantic" seek to "evade" or "transcend structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity" (Gilroy, 2007, p. 19). People who travelled and settled in locations deemed as "black" are perhaps defined homogeneously, without consideration for their personal histories and lived experiences, until that moment. *Cut & Mix's* curated programme challenges these sensibilities.

Responding to these uncertain times of gradual national re-emergence, *Cut & Mix* is created as a hybrid experience. Its methodological approach, provides flexibility, cutting and mixing between live and recorded performance, virtual and live audiences. The application to Arts Council England to realise Marlene Smith's and Beverley Bennett's performances were in response to the pandemic. Each performance will now exist as digital artefacts, instead of a live experience. Will these performances, reproduced digitally, lack in "presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be?" (Benjamin, 1999, p. 73). I argue, these works are a product of responding to time and space. Through this decision, the aesthetics of performance, presentation and experience are immediately transformed.

During discussions of how these performances were to be experienced, we contemplated the possibility of streaming the performances, taking advantage of Zoom or YouTube, a ubiquitous aesthetic in this moment of social distancing. Since the inception of video, this aesthetic speaks of historical "misappropriation" (Krauss, 1976), of corporate technologies by artists. As such, *Cut & Mix* is subject to hybrid presentations, physical and digital, should "live" experiences not be possible, "challenging (my emphasis) the definition of what constitutes art" (Giannini & Bowen, 2016, p. 238).

4.8 Gallery Design

The effective layout and design of the gallery enhances the visitor experience (Monti & Keene, 2013), and is an essential aspect of my curatorial decision-making in collaboration with NAE. This was achieved by my initial floor plan, translated into a 3D layout by the gallery technician (Figure 14). This enhanced perspective of seeing artworks and text panels in situ, enables tweaking or wholesale changes. The gallery is broken down into three sections, where an audience's "deportment" (O'Doherty, 1999), is cued by how and where images are hung.

Viewing the image left to right, the gallery entrance features the digital screens of Antonio Roberts video game *Heavyweight Champ* (2021), set within his glitch art design (not visible in this image). Opposite, an oversized vinyl print of Amartey Golding's *Red White and Pink Flowers* (2018) and the window encased *Foxtails* (2015) costume. The larger-than-life *Red White and Pink Flowers* (2018) is a closer scrutinization of Black British masculinities. An introductory text panel, with text from *Why Can't Men Say I Love You To Each Other* (2019), problematises frailties of hegemonic masculinity. The second space is a selection of photography from Golding's *Is It Just Me, Or Is It You?* (2018) and prints from *GABOSIA* (2013) series. Opposite are Michael Forbes' *Auto Portrait: After Rembrandt - A Black Man in a Wig and Baseball Cap* (2018) polyptych.

Decisions on whether photographs and prints were framed was agreed with the artists. Forbes' photographs are presented without frames, at his request. The *GABOSIA* series on Drypoint & Monotype printing paper accentuate their studio production and ready-

107

made[ness]. In between these works, presented on three separate and alternating screens, are Keith Piper's *Go West Young Man* (1996), and Beverley Bennett's and Marlene Smith's untitled performance pieces. The third space is dedicated to Rotimi Fani-Kayode. Final decisions of wall colour beyond what has been described, are to be decided.

4.9 Curatorial Call and Response

The online curatorial preview and wider digital engagement with the public, provides opportunities for demystification, theoretically and curatorially. My curatorial role in making the public aware of how I work, is an attempt to remove hierarchy, inherent or assumed, with such labels as curator (Obrist, 2014, p. 129). I wish to engage the public in intersectional discourses of constructs of Black British masculinities and regard this process as a "call and response", emanating from West African griot traditions, to become part of the Black diasporic experience, and vernacular expression.

"Call and response" is heard in Black churches between preacher and congregation, on the dancefloor between DJ and revellers, oratorically at a rally between speaker and the crowd. In response to Black Lives Matter, "call and response" becomes a critical performance pedagogy, as "it allows the marginalized to claim their own identities and shape their own voices in a realm where those identities and voices are routinely framed through hegemonic discourse" (Sharp-Grier & Martin, 2016, p. 564).

The curation of *Cut & Mix* is my "call and response" to and within the historical and contemporary conjuncture of constructs of Black British masculinities; a call to artists and their response through their respective practices. In turn, their art calls the audience who responds in various critiques, and in relation to their lived experiences. "Call and response" operates as a means of dissemination and affirmation.

4.10 Artworks and Narratives

Cut & Mix's conceptualisation was derived during my research of Donald Rodney's artistic practice. As detailed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 1), its realisation is also informed by historical literature of *The Fire Next Time* (1963) and *Invisible Man* (1952). *Cut & Mix* is a response to our times, when it is argued masculinity is in crisis in respect of hegemony, patriarchy, and toxicity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Mercer, 1994; Sewell, 1997). *Cut & Mix* conveys nuanced understandings and articulations of Black British masculinities, ever present, yet overlooked or overshadowed by historical and hysterical pathologizing. *Cut & Mix's* conceptualisation is critically self-reflexive,

"The challenge is to write the I, the first person because that breaks the idea of the masculine voice" (**GG**).

These statements refer to the question of how this PBR contributes to knowledge, objectively and subjectively, as earlier discussed. In response to **GG**, I am conscious of my gendered, masculinised hand and voice, which is why intersectional theories are integral to this research, in destabilising hegemony of masculinity and heteronormativity.

"I am intrigued [...] when you talk about the female gaze [...] It's not a phrase you hear a lot you always hear about the male gaze and the negative connotations [...] I am intrigued as to what that will be, in regard to black masculinity in Britain" (**JA**).

The female gaze is realised through Marlene Smith and interdisciplinary artist-filmmaker Beverley Bennett. Smith's performance piece, *A (Dress) Rehearsal II* - the second iteration of *A (Dress) Rehearsal* (2014) - is an excavation of the memory of people, namely her late father and mother. The performance is aided by music of the early 1970s, *Linger A While* (1971) by John Holt and *Nothing Can Separate Us* (1971). The music situates the performance at a moment of becoming for a younger Smith, against a backdrop of Black British disenfranchisement and racism. These songs are not in the vogue of "sufferation" of counterculture, of Rastafari and reggae music of the 1970s (Chambers, 2019). Smith's selection is music her parents played at home, of joyful reminiscence for Smith and the audience. Reminiscence, furthered by a photograph of Smith with her daughter, who bears the same name as her late grandfather.

Smith subtly reminds the viewer of the intergenerational relationship through such artefacts as the photograph. The performance taking place in her living room, reminds us of the isolation felt during lock-down, and is made more poignant by memories of loss. At the heart of the performance is the idea of embodiment, through the act of putting on her late father's clothing. Does this imply the role women play of "fitting in" to a patriarchal world? In her father's clothing, does Smith's embodiment become androgynous, neither reversion to male nor female, where the regime of the gaze may be altered or dismantled? (Goddard, 2000, p. 34).

Deploying the Black female gaze, "the look" is an act of resistance, "subordinates in relations of power, learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that "looks" to document, one that is oppositional" (hooks, 2014, p. 116). However, Butler (2006) and Lorde (2003) argue such feminist actions take place within hegemonic power structures,

and are therefore "produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (Butler, 2006, p. 4). Does my role as a male curator, reinforce the hierarchy of the male gaze, by appropriating the "other" (Goddard, 2000, p. 28), in seeking to deconstruct gender? If so, what understandings and actions need to be in place to usurp such power dynamics? What knowledge is embedded in this performance that can be acquired and interpreted by the audience in conveying the overarching theoretical and curatorial intentions? To reconstruct understandings of Black British masculinities, a process of deconstruction must first take place.

4.10.1 Beverley Bennett

Figure 15: *Untitled Performance,* 2019 © Beverley Bennett

Beverley Bennett's gesture towards perceptions of gender, is invoked through a performance by four Black male gospel singers performing R&B songs originally sung by women.

"Beverley Bennett's work helps to stir or interrupts the idea of imagery and stereotype" (**JT**).

The audience's gaze is flipped on hearing the lyrics being sung, and the slow realisation for those familiar with the songs and their origin, by female singers, including Deborah Cox, *Nobody's Supposed to Be Here* (1998); Phyllis Hyman, *Meet Me on the Moon* (1991), and Anita Baker, *Sweet Love* (1986). This was the case when I experienced the performance in 2019.

110

The male gospel singer's renditions, blur the lines between Black popular culture and the Black church (Beckford, 2006; Jones, 2018). Tensions relating to sex and sexualities, policed and preached through the heteronormative and patriarchal gaze of the Black church. The performance disrupts and presents an oppositional curatorial narrative to that of Black hypermasculinity, prevalent in aspects of Black popular culture of music production.

The synchronised audio/visual repetition of these works, situated alongside Keith Piper's, *Go West Young Man* (1996), heightens the audience's understanding of the binary pathologies of Black British masculinities. Bringing into being Black female perspectives, alongside the historical practice of Piper, indicate ever present positionalities, since the "Black Atlantic" (Tinsley, 2008). These are positionalities, liable to be othered, or erased, due to the hegemony of masculinity in discourses of race, sexualities, and gender, articulated through experiences in visual arts practice (Himid, 2005; Mills, 2019). This speaks to the "refusal" and the "tension" (O'Neill & Wilson, 2015, p. 18), existing between the curatorial and research. Neither the curatorial or theoretical is reduced at the expense of the other. Here, both are invaluable in articulating knowledge.

"This is the thing about telling a story, a thesis is telling a story, writing bars is telling a story, spoken word is telling a story" (**AM**).

4.10.2 Keith Piper

Keith Piper's *Go West Young Man* (1996) is an iteration of an idea, created while still at school in the late 1970s (Piper, 2021). Over the years, it has been reworked, from a small image and text during *Black Art an' Done* (1981), to a 14 panel photomontage narrative, which toured West Midland community venues in 1987-88. The 1996 version is a short computer animated film, produced for a Channel 4 and Arts Council England commission. In just over 3 minutes, the film narrates the journey of Black bodies since the middle passage to the present day.

> **"Go West Young Man, I first heard that joke 400 years ago. I died laughing. Been dying with monotonous regularity ever since"** (Piper, 1996)

Piper evokes the tragedy of "the drowned, disremembered, ebbing and flowing histories of violence and healing in the African diaspora" (Tinsley, 2008, p. 194). "Go West Young Man" was the adventurous call aimed at young white men by Horace Greeley in 1865, for white settlement in the American West. Its reworking of collage, remix, and appropriation (Symko, 2019), drives home the alternative narrative of the African diasporic experience. The composited images ebb and flow, generated via a Commodore Amiga computer, a style

synonymous to Piper. Framed and overlaid images of the sea, maps, African masks, The Brookes slave ship, Black bodies tightly packed, sardines in a can, head to toe. After which, archival film and images fade in and out. Press cuttings of slave auction and other atrocities flit before our eyes, taking us to the present, newspaper headlines signalling the often-tragic Black lived experience. A rhythmic chant and drum beat plays in the background, over rapid narration declaring the Black man as "the subject of their worst fears and the object of their wildest fantasies. Asset and liability" (Piper, 1996).

Through Piper's film, we witness the dichotomy of the Black male body of emasculation and celebration, where "fear and fantasy came home to roost" (Ibid.). The statement reveals the paradox of the Black male's lived experience, ensnared in neoliberal net of capitalism, of equal value and menace to society. A pathologised body without complexity or subtilty, "tormented by their inability to fulfil the phallocentric masculine ideal as it has been articulated in white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (hooks, 2014b, p. 89).

The creation of *Go West Young Man* as a digital film prolongs its existence, Piper's generosity extends to the creation of his website as an archival repository. This is not an

archive gathering dust, "an inert repository of historical artifacts" (Enwezor, 2008, p. 11). It consists of archives within an archive, containing works from his practice and research related to BAG. This access to information could have been lost to history had Piper not collected, digitised, critiqued, and documented them for posterity.

4.10.3 Rotimi Fani-Kayode

Rotimi Fani-Kayode's, *Gold Phallus* (1989); *Every Moment Counts* (Ecstatic Antibodies) (1989); *Every Moment Counts* (Ecstatic Antibodies) (1990); and *Nothing to Lose I* (Bodies of Experience) (1989) are kindly provided courtesy of Autograph Association of Black Photographers (Autograph), which Fani-Kayode was instrumental in its realisation. Founded in 1988 to support Black photographic practices, Autograph is an international gallery, commissioning entity and archive. Autograph provides an essential service in preserving, documenting,

113

researching, and producing historical and contemporary diverse visual art practices, without which, a large void would exist in respect of Black British visual arts practice.

> **"Nor is the archive that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection; it is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is the system of its functioning"** (Foucault, 2002, p. 146).

Though not inert, due to their global exposure, by "mining the archives" (Stein, 1993), new meanings are created through their resurrection. In relation to other artworks in *Cut & Mix*, these works are pivotal, challenging binary identities historically bestowed on Black British identities, as heteronormative and hegemonically Jamaican. Fani-Kayode's art, thematically opens up *Cut & Mix*, making possible the work of other artists in the exhibition to exist,

> **"[...] in matters of sexuality, in terms of geography and cultural dislocation; and in the sense of not having become the sort of respectably married professional my parents had hoped for. Such a position gives me a feeling of having very little to lose"** (Fani-Kayode, 1992, p. 64).

Through this positionality, "Black photography came out of the shadows in the 1980s" (Mercer, 1994, p. 221). In attributing the break from realist documentary photography to Black female and Black gay artists, Mercer quickly questions his own statement and "whiff of essentialism" (Ibid.), in respect of identities. The intent of Fani-Kayode-Kayode and other artists, Isaac Julien or Marlon Riggs, is to take discourses of identity onto another plane that is "relational and dialogic" (Ibid., p. 222). This is the desired intent of "Visual Representations", to raise the level of discourse beyond the essential and fetishized Black subject, of who or what these artists might be and about "what they do" (Ibid.), and how they do it. Fani-Kayode's work evokes Yoruba mythology, sexuality, and gender, asking deeper questions of meanings implied, and of ourselves as the viewer.

The photographs were to be the first images visitors encountered in the gallery with the intention of immediately introducing audiences to work challenging perceptions. Rather than a shock tactic, the photographs are to be seen as unapologetic and authentic, representative of the inclusivity inherent in *Cut & Mix*. However, in discussing the kinds of visitors to the gallery, which includes schools, a decision was made as to where the images were best located, without compromising the photographs. Censoring this work, undermines the decision to select them in the first place and the objectives of this PBR. To

avoid causing possible concern to visitors, Fani-Kayode's work will be situated at the end of the space, with a content notice.

The focus of this discussion is *Gold Phallus* (1989), widely critiqued for its composition, in respect of the visibility and invisibility of the dark tones of the subject against the dark tones of the backdrop (Sealy, 2019). Fani-Kayode utilises symbolisms of Yoruba mythology, the bird like mask, the "ororo bird of thought and inspiration" (Doy, 2000, p. 158). *Gold Phallus* symbolises the Yoruba god, Esu, a trickster neither male nor female, an androgynous deity. The importance of this work relates to the time of its realisation at the height of AIDS/HIV in the 1980s. Although, the image was linked to the AIDS epidemic, Hirst insists it was more in reference to Black men's phallocentric burden (1992, p. 10),

"[…] it's almost as if you are being seduced into the image, mainly by the penis, but then there's something that prevents "me" from being aroused by it. I think it's because of the mask, speaking directly to the white gaze. It puts a stop to that kind of eroticism, for me" (**JT**).

SP remarked on an exhibition, in which the Black male penis can be seen, referencing the white female gaze,

"You had these pre-teens […] there was this fascination, going in and out the gallery to catch the bit, where you could see all his body parts […] This fascination and humour almost wanting it to be this caricature of black masculinity" (**SP**).

Fanon conceptualises what Fani-Kayode had in mind, "no longer do we see the black man; we see a penis […] He has been turned into a penis. He is a penis" (Fanon, 2008, p. 147). A penis, encased in gold so heavy a burden, it is precariously suspended by a string. Fani-Kayode's artistic philosophy is deeply indebted to his ancestral Yoruba heritage, believing his work would cause uproar if were ever to be shown in Lagos. However, it may be understood in rural areas, "[Perhaps] they would recognise my smallpox gods, my transexual [sic] priests, my images of desirable Black men in a state of sexual frenzy" (Fani-Kayode, 1992, p. 70).

In Britain, the homophobic response to his art reflects the times when Section 28, a law brought in by the Conservative government banning schools and local authorities from promoting homosexuality as a pretended family relationship. "Children who need to be taught to respect traditional moral values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay" (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 1987). Mercer's recollection of the time, is

of the bizarre union between Black parents and the far-right group New Patriotic Movement, marching under a banner of "Gays = AIDS = Death" (1994, pp. 264-265).

Fani-Kayode's photographs were produced during the AIDS epidemic, when it is argued the politics of identity was in crisis (Ibid., p. 259). Photographs, when read within past or present context, elicit a Black diasporic futurity of "Black, African, homosexual, photography - which I must not just use as an instrument, but as a weapon if I am to resist attacks on my integrity and indeed my existence on my own terms" (Fani-Kayode, 1992, p. 70). The importance of Fani-Kayode's practice provides a portal through which the art of Amartey Golding in *Cut & Mix* is realised.

4.10.4 Amartey Golding

Notes of my first meeting with Golding in 2019, refer to him sharing the origin of his ideas, as manifestations of his mixed-race heritage, to an Anglo-Scottish mother, a Ghanaian father and Jamaican step-father. Raised as a Rastafarian, Golding embraces his African-Caribbean heritage. Viewing his work and in conversation, one is aware of the hybrid lens through which he sees the world, steeped in British ancestry, Jamaican subculture, and African mythology - identities revealed through motifs and symbolism in his arts practice. This process also introduces discourses on Black British masculine identities in considering how Golding and other people of mixed-race heritage choose to identify themselves, of which "blackness remains central" to their identity (Joseph-Salisbury & Andrews, 2017).

Golding's *GABOSIA* series (2013) focuses on the mysterious circumstances surrounding his paternal father's death. In many ways, it speaks to Fani-Kayode's use of mythology, rooted in his Yoruba heritage. However, Golding is inspired by popular culture, from the title itself GABOS meaning "Game Ain't Based on Sympathy", a mantra heard in Louis Theroux's documentary on mega-jails in the US. The images gleaned from Google and reality TV, "their likenesses eliciting a dark comedy when so clearly derooted [sic] from their typically esteemed cultural image" (Golding, 2020). The narrative connection of family within Golding's practice becomes clear between selected images of *GABOSIA* (2013) and *Is It Just Me, Or Is It You?* (2018).

The Freudian reference in its title raises questions of the "Oedipus complex", and Golding's relationships with his estranged paternal father and his mother. It raises questions of "rivalry with the father and terror of castration?" (Connell, 2005, p. 11), castration being the separation from his father. Golding's closeness to his mother is read through the femininity symbolised in the use of flowers.

The beautifully assembled *Chainmail* costumes, feature as installation, film, and photography in *Cut & Mix*, have a more sinister origin on battlefields (Larson, 1940). These are symbols which Golding appropriates and subverts. The idea came to Golding in conversations with his godson about knife crime and is of moral concern in respect of Black youths, where simplistic and problematic equations have been drawn (Younge, 2018). Golding's artistic response was to create battledress to protect his kin, his brothers, a soldier, the other a gay ballet dancer. The intricate chainmail designs vary in weight, from a massive 166kg, a key feature in *Chainmail* 3, compared to the foxtail and headdress weighing 65kg. The weight of which is equally demanding, as seen during the ballet performance in *Chainmail* 1.

My curatorial intention was to have a chainmail costume on display, where visitors could see it up close and touch it. However, due to the risk of COVID cross-infection, having an object on display to touch is no longer possible. Yet, sensory experiences in galleries and

117

museums are on the rise, as an important aspect of curatorial practice, where touch alongside "intellectual senses of sight and hearing" are encouraged (Howes, 2014, p. 260). Golding regards chainmail as a symbol of both "life and death". Symbolism brought into being more readily with the inclusion of a headdress/mask of carnations; white being the colour of deep sorrow and death; pink speaks of maternal love, as does red suggest love. The symbolic use of flowers in Golding's art, hints at maternalism, and romanticism of "sincerity or mysticism" (Bourland, 2019, p. 152). A romanticism, which Akomfrah (2013) equates to a diasporic idea of "becoming", underpinning Golding's intention to make sense of his plurality of identities in and through his artistic practice.

Figure 19:
Is It Just Me, Or Is It You? Flowers, 2018
© Amartey Golding

118

The inclusion of the *Foxtails* chainmail costume has not been taken lightly, due to ethical considerations and use of real foxtails. However, the foxtails symbolise the brutality inherent in English/British history, of blood sports, and the brutality of empire building gained through Black bodies. These are considerations, which will no doubt be raised during the exhibition and public engagement,

"[...] how is the public programme bringing up a critical understanding of black masculinity through the practices that will be enhanced allowing for collective imagination. Around people that goes beyond the fixed space of the exhibition or the PhD thesis, that can shift some perspectives, perceptions, stereotypes?" (**CS**).

The curatorial process is holistic, of which the public programme is integral to meaning-making. Interpretation through workshops, performance or discussion play a vital role in engaging the public, artists, and curator through various dialogues with the work and the inherent themes therein. The question of futurity relates to the current generation of artists Golding, Bennett, Roberts, when exhibited alongside Piper, Smith and Fani-Kayode and the intersectional dialogues taking place between these works. Simultaneously, they provide a conjunctural lens through which audiences may gain an understanding or draw parallels between past and present and speculate on the future. The involvement of ABC (described in Chapter 2), and their curatorial interpretation, is a way which these discursive practices will take place. An approach "allowing (my emphasis) for open-ended, cumulative processes of engagement, interruption and possibility" (O'Neill, 2012, p. 128).

SEA is integral to this PBR, of the Black British lived experience of men taking us back to the beginning of this research, where dialogue (Kester, 2004), listening and being heard (Lacey, 2021), is cathartic. This catharsis extends to my own critical reflections and of audiences, artists and others experiencing *Cut & Mix*. Pedagogically, these discursive processes provide a space for dissemination of the theoretical and practice, of "new research paradigms" (Taylor, 2018), inherent to my curatorial-research approach. At the time of writing, speakers are yet to be confirmed for the "conversation", understood as a more inclusive term than "symposium" to ensure the widest public participation. Speakers will reflect the conceptualisation of "Visual Representations" in respect of the conjunctural and intersectional, and through the lens of Black feminist and Black queer gaze, utilised in unsettling, fixed understandings of Black British masculine identities.

Conclusion

5.1   The End is the Beginning

"Visual Representations" is inspired by BAG's radical, counter-cultural arts practice, which challenged the hegemony of British art practices and pedagogies. Today, BAG's "cut & mix aesthetic" (Mercer, 2012), that challenged pathologies of Blackness in Britain and throughout the African diaspora, is celebrated, collected and discussed as an essential narrative within British art history (Nugent, 2014). BAG and the wider British Black Art Movement of the 1980s are now viewed as part of the British art, academic and cultural institutional fabric, as alluded to in section (1.1). Therefore, what does this mean for representations of Black British masculinities in 21st century Birmingham? What does it mean to be a Black male in Birmingham today, compared to the late 1970s and early 1980s?

Feedback during the SEA (Chapter 2) indicates little has changed as to how Black men are viewed today. Anecdotally, they spoke of being fetishized by white women, beaten up by white boys at school, or being overrepresented in the criminal justice system (Glynn, 2014). Statistically, Black and ethnic minorities still live in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city (Reed, 2015, p. 2), in conditions similar to that of the pioneering generations decades previous (Sivanandan, 1976). In the context of education, the group spoke of teachers having low expectations of Black boys, and their experience of being placed in remedial class, where they found other Black boys like them; a recurring theme since Coard (1971). These anecdotes and statistics point to some of the limitations of place intersected by race and gender in Birmingham, where deprivation, crime, and education, potentially limits how far some young Black men can physically go or imagine they can go (Lawson, 2012). However, **BZ, ZJ** and others in the group, have been able to surpass superficial limits and expectations through self-actualisation, where their families, culture, faith, education, and heritage play a big part. These elements are contributory factors to shaping of their identities in 21st century Birmingham. BAG's art, like the social actors' actions, challenges pathologies attributed to place and constructs of race and is a useful prism through which comparisons can be drawn.

Therefore, Birmingham as a "place" does matter in the formation of these Black British masculine identities (Massey, 1994; Hopkins, 2013; Ward, et al., 2017). Historically, Birmingham as a place contributed to shaping these identities due to its visible and sizable Black and ethnic minority population. A population, which has ebbed and flowed due to migration from the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, Eastern Europe, and where cultural identities became hybridised (Hall, 1996), over time. However, there was a concern among Black and ethnic minority young people that despite Birmingham's image as a multicultural city, it was also an ethnically divided city (Birmingham Race Action Partnership, 2002). This implies there is still plenty of work to be done socio-economically, beyond civic multicultural celebrations to truly make the city feel like an equitable and just place for all to live and thrive.

What makes Birmingham and places like Handsworth distinct, and therefore, this PBR, is how a generation of Black British youth articulated radical movements such as Rastafari of the 1970s-80s. Rastafari provided an understanding of their blackness in Britain. According to Dennis (2000, p. 207), not only did Rastafari shatter illusions of the "West Indian's British identity", it was a "cathartic experience: a spirit freed" [...] "Here in Handsworth it has stirred a flowering of artistic talents. Birmingham is richer for it" (Ibid.). This sensibility, I would argue, of the militant stance evoked through the culture and music reverberating through the inner-cities of places like Handsworth, Birmingham, had a lasting impact on these young lives. Thus, in turn, laying an ideological and cultural foundation for BAG and many other young Black British people and generations to come.

These young lives, captured in an image by Vanley Burke during *African Liberation Day* celebrations at Handsworth Park in 1977 as discussed in Chapter 1, distinguish Birmingham as a place of significance in shaping Black identities. I see this gathering of Black people in Britain as comparable to the *Black People's Day of Action* in London in 1981. The momentous *African Liberation Day* gathering is unlikely to be achieved again, as it perhaps symbolised the essentialism of Blackness in Birmingham at the time.

Simmer Down Festival's multicultural gathering has usurped this essentialised image, also photographed by Vanley Burke in Handsworth Park in 2018. The festival celebrates Black and ethnic minority music and culture, supported by commercial and cultural sponsorship, family-friendly activities, festival merchandise and obligatory Caribbean food stalls. Collectively, this indicates Black culture can be embraced to the neoliberal bosom of capitalism when (re)presented in a more palatable "inclusive" frame.

Such an image is a far cry from the historical Pan-African gathering, which symbolised Black resistance in Birmingham. I would surmise to get to a position of hybridisation and inclusivity, it was necessary for Black people in Birmingham, through sharing of their lived experiences at gatherings such as African Liberation Day, to first determine where they had come from and where they might be going, before any room could be made for others to be welcomed in. Perhaps this process of knowing is again required to bring communities in Birmingham out of their respective silos towards greater understanding of each other's cultures, beyond the tired stereotypes, pathologies, and suspicions.

"Visual Representations" began with a conversation with a group of Black British men, in Birmingham, to better comprehend, contextualise and articulate *their* lived experiences, specific to place and time. What was revealed is given time to reflect and a safe space to come together, through the method of SEA, Black men can be vulnerable and open, despite continued negative portrayals. They want and need their voices to be heard. However, efforts to platform a range of voices (Edwards-Kerr, 2005; Mullings, 2013; Sewell, 1997), which speak of differing lived experiences, are overshadowed by the imposition of racial constructs and pathologies, which often render these experiences to the "single story" (Adichie, 2009).

"Visual Representations" argues for the value of PBR (Biggs & Buchler, 2008; Barrett & Bolt, 2010; Taylor, 2018), where methods of SEA and curatorial practice provided invaluable insights and artistic responses, problematising constructs of Black British masculinities. Additionally, the reflexive space of SEA and the curator-research space I occupy, are essential liminal spaces (Bhabha, 1994), where meaning-making culturally and epistemologically (Ladson-Billings, 2000), take place. Here, liminality creates space for the critique of the Western gaze and problematised knowledge production, of Black people and their communities (Palmer, 2019; Gilroy, 2002).

I argue, all of which occurs within a continuing conjuncture driven by global neoliberal hegemony, with no critical space or radical place of transformation for the "other" and where "Black" is still problematised when con-joined with "British" (Mercer, 2012). Yet, it is difficult to ignore the inextricable link between Handsworth, the Caribbean and African diasporic heritage and cultures shaping Birmingham today. These identities and culture are liable to be dismissed at Brexit Britain's borders. Here, we are reminded, "If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you are a citizen of nowhere" (May, 2016). The transatlantic tragedy, which created our diasporic worldview, demands we empathise with others caught in the vice of white supremacist racial oppression. However, our efforts to belong, to find "a place called home" in Birmingham and Britain, are constantly and at times violently rejected.

The conjunctural lens is not opaque; it is clear, pointing to "ruptures" (Althusser, 2005), for which those driving the neoliberal bandwagon accept no responsibility. The significance of *Policing the Crisis* (Hall, et al., 2013), remains apparent due to it being written in and about Birmingham, arising from an incident in Handsworth. This landmark incident led to moral, political, social and criminal judgements that frame how Black British men are portrayed today. Here, it is the low hanging fruit of migrants, Muslims and "folk devils" (Cohen, 2011), of young Black men who are the contemporary faces of Britain's "moral panic" (Hall, et al., 2013). The intersectional approach of "Visual Representations", of Black feminist and

Black queer theory, has proven instrumental, disrupting the homogeneity of Blackness, sexualities, gender, race, place, and class. All of which are essential to the formation of Black British masculine identities. These theories, when implemented during the interpretation of the SEA discussions, challenge aspects of Eurocentric and Western essentialised thought on constructs of race, gender, and sexualities. Moreover, they allow space for Black, female, queer and non-binary identities to come into being, which due to hegemonies of race, gender and sexualities are liable to be erased, or subordinated (Wright, 2004; Best, 2018; Garlick, 2003). This is further problematised by Black hyper-masculinised complicity (hooks, 2004; Connell, 2005).

Curatorially, *Cut & Mix* positions itself within intersectional discourses, expounding hybrid identities of Blackness, gender and sexualities that have always existed (Tinsley, 2008). Conceptually, this is realised through the interdisciplinary approach and practices of Fani-Kayode, Golding, Saunders, and Smith, among others. The socially-engaged programme provides space for youthful curatorial interpretation by ABC and intergenerational conversations between artists, activists and the public. *Cut & Mix*, takes place "[In] the expanded field of curating, the curatorial is itself an activity of research" (Sheikh, 2015, p. 34). I argue, this method of practice is integral to the production of new knowledge, whereby *Cut & Mix* is an original excavation, making a significant contribution to understandings of formations of Black British masculine identities. "Visual Representations'" practice-based approach is the "knowing-doing" (Nelson, 2013, p. 10), situated within epistemologies of what might constitute practice.

This idea of knowing is reinforced through critical reflection, integral to the practitioner (Schön, 1983), and between paradigms of theory and practice (Stewart, 2010). Throughout this journey, I have been conscious of my duality and privilege, as well as the tensions that arise due to constructs of my race and gender. Critical reflection has been instrumental, to comprehend how I became the person I am today, and its relevance to formations of Black British masculinities in Birmingham. The ethnographic method of autoethnography in Chapter 3 and throughout, provided the methodological focus to situate my autobiographical experience in relation to family, social actors, BAG, and wider society. More importantly, autoethnography challenges "canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially conscious act" (Ellis, et al., 2011). "Visual Representations" is my act of activism.

"Visual Representations" calls for a "pedagogy for Black people [that] (my emphasis) is about Black people, useful for the social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and political

emancipation of not only the bruised Black body but also the tethered Black souls" (Kirkland, 2021). The ambition of "Visual Representations" is to start conversations anew, to find "the guy" **ZJ** sees himself as being, where Black young men can be ordinary, be joyful and live outside threat and peril. However, from the social actor's stories, even in their seemingly ordinary lives, constructs of race, gender and sexualities result in them being pathologised or even being the subject of racially motivated violence. "Visual Representations" demands such conversations to be heard, listened to, and responded to. This PBR speaks to the act of "becoming" (Delueze & Guattari, 2001), for the generations of Black British men, women and children rendered hyper (in)visible, based on meaningless social constructs of race, gender, and sexualities.

Therefore, this PBR is a means of "bearing witness" (Carby, 1982; Johnson, et al., 2018), of times past and present, in order to illustrate "what is at stake" which is used as a recurring question and or statement throughout this thesis. "What is at stake" alludes to the many reports produced after a crisis (Windrush, Scarman, Grenfell), where serious incidents continue to happen, and no one is held accountable, due to political pressure and disavowal of Black lived experiences. "What is at stake" also refers to the value of knowledge, who gets to speak, who is heard and what action is taken. "What is at stake" symbolises the artistic response of BAG to the socio-political conditions in Britain of the day, and for Black people throughout the African diaspora. "What is at stake", is expressed in the artworks of *Cut & Mix*, and its public programme, where fluidity of identities can only come into being, if essentialist notions are challenged. Only in recognising "what is at stake" can the necessary action be taken to avert future crisis. Such understandings are made possible through "cut & mix", an intersectional and interdisciplinary methodological approach.

This conclusion draws inference to Hall's suggestion of "identity" as an "ever-unfinished conversation" (Smoking Dogs Films, 2012). This realisation of "Visual Representations" and *Cut & Mix* was due to discussions held with Black British men in Birmingham, whose identities over decades past and present have evolved, in part due to socio-political and economic circumstances. Importantly, their identities, as many of them stated was also shaped culturally, in learning about their history, gaining an education, and working in professions that have value and meaning, despite the obstacles they faced. For **QRI**, asserting his sexuality, as a gay Black man, was crucial to fully realising his identity. Even if this meant being "ostracized" from the "Black community". Or for **BZ** being able to open up about the state of his mental health gave him strength, despite the perceived stigmas of weakness and inability to "man up"as discussed in section 2.15. All of which has taken place against a backdrop of continued racial, socio-political and economic upheaval.

125

Although these are just a few stories, I argue, they reflect the stories of many other Black people in Britain and throughout the diaspora, of their lived experience of having to plough on and through, despite traumas of the Black experience constantly unfolding, past and presently. The resilience shown by the group of Black men, courage of my mother and conviction of the artists in the exhibition, Black activists, young Black people, queer and non-binary, academics and many others who strive for social justice and stand up against inequality, is what brings hope to places like Birmingham and further afield.

Mercer's claim that "[It] is still unresolved and very much ongoing" (2005, p. 50), which I used as metaphor of an ongoing rupture, of crisis, has resonance here, because I regard "Visual Representations" as the beginning of conversations of identities, gender, sexualities, place, class and race. This thesis and *Cut & Mix* the exhibition, offers the space, time and opportunity to interrogate and scrutinise these arguments, where all are invited and welcome to listen and contribute.

Bibliography

Adams, T. E, Ellis, C. & Holman Jones, S. (2014). *Autoethnography: Autoethnography.* New York, New York: Oxford University Press.

Adichie, C. (2009). *The Danger of a Single Story.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_
single_story?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare
[Accessed 19 February 2021].

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a Feminist Life.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Aitkens, N. & Robles, E. (2019). *The Place is Here: The work of black artists in 1980s britain.* Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Akala. (2018). *Natives: race and class in the ruins of empire.* London: Two Roads.

Alexander, B. (2006). Passing, Cultural Performance, and Individual Agency: Performative reflections on black masculine identity. In: *Performing Black Masculinity: Race, Culture and Queer Identity.* New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Altamira Press.

Allen, J. S. (2016). Black/Queer Rhizomatic: Train Up a Child In The Way Ze Should Grow…. In: Johnson, E. P. ed. *No Tea, No Shade: new writings in black queer studies.* Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Almeida, S. (2015). Race-based epistemologies: The role of race and dominance in knowledge production. *Wagadu: A Journal of Transnational Women's & Gender Studies,* Volume 13, pp. 80-105.

Althusser, L. (2005). *For Marx.* London: Verso.

Anderson, E. & McCormack, M. (2018). Inclusive masculinity theory: Overview, reflection and refinement. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 27(5), pp. 547-561.

Andrews, K. (2016). The Problem of Political Blackness: Lessons from the black supplementary school movement. *Ethnic And Racial Studies*, 39(11), pp. 2060–2078.

Andrews, K. (2018). *Back to Black: Retelling black radicalism for the 21st century.* London: Zed Books.

Ang, I. (1996). *Living Room Wars: Rethinking media audiences.* London: Routledge.

Anticipating Black Futures (2019). home. [Online]
Available at: https://blackfuturesuk.wordpress.com/
[Accessed 26 March 2020].

Antonsich, M. (2010). Searching for belonging - an analytical framework. *Geography Compass*, 4(6), pp. 644-659.

Araeen, R. (2005). The success and failure of the black arts movement. In: Bailey, D. A., Baucom, I. & Boyce, S. eds. *Shades of Black Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Archer, L. & Yamashita, H. (2003). Theorising inner-city masculinities: Race, class, gender and education. *Gender and Education*, 15(2), pp. 115-132.

Arday, J. (2018). Understanding Racism within the Academy: The persistence of racism in higher education. In: Johnson, A., Joseph-Salisbury, R., Kamunge, B. & Yancy, G. eds. *The Fire Now: Anti-Racist Scholarship in Times of Explicit Racial Violence.* London: Zed Books.

Arday, J. & Mirza. H. S. (2018). *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, whiteness and decolonising the academy.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Arya, R. (2017). Rethinking black art as a category of experience. *Visual Culture in Britain,* 18(2), pp. 163-175.

Asad, T. (1973). *Anthropology & the Colonial Encounter.* London: Ithaca Press.

Asbury, J. (1993). *Domestic violence: A culturally sensitive approach to violence in families of color.* Symposium conducted at the Meeting of the Association of Women in Psychology. 1993. Atlanta, Georgia.

Atkinson, P. & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* London: Routledge.

Awkward, M. (2002). Black male trouble: The challenges of rethinking masculine differences. In: Kegan Gardiner, J. ed. *Masculinity Studies & Feminist Theory.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Back, L. (1990). Racist name calling and developing anti-racist initiatives in youth work. *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations Research Papers,* Volume 14, pp. 1-35.

Back, L. (1996). *New Ethnicities: Racisms and multiculture in young lives.* London: UCL Press/Routledge.

Baden, M. & Wimpenny, K. (2014). *A Practical Guide to Arts-related Research.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Bailey, D. A., Baucom, I. & Boyce, S. (2005). *Shades of Black: Assembling black arts in 1980s Britain.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Bailey, D. A., & Hall, S. (1992). The Vertigo of Displacement: Shifts within black documentary photography. In: Bailey, D. A., Hall, S., Cameron, A. & Bishton, D. eds. *Ten 8 Critical Decade: Black British photography in the 80s.* Birmingham: Ten 8.

Bakare, L. (2021). *'We're not just passing through': How photographer Vanley Burke immortalised Black Britain.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/aug/12/photographer-vanley-burke-immortalised-black-britain-interview
[Accessed 17 August 2021].

Baker, D. (2016). *Deaths After Police Contact: Constructing accountability in the 21st Century.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Baldwin, J. (2017). *The Fire Next Time.* London: Penguin Random House.

Balzer, D. (2015). *Curationism: How curating took over the art world and everything else.* London: Pluto Press.

Barbour, R. (2013). Analysing Focus Groups. In: Flick, U. ed. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis.* London: SAGE.

Barrett, E. (2010). Introduction. In: Barrett, E. & Bolt, B. eds. *Practice as Research: Approaches to creative arts enquiry.* London, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Barrett, E. & Bolt, B. (2010). *Practice as Research: Approaches to creative arts enquiry.* London, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Barthes, R. (2006). Myth today. In: Storey, J. ed. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A reader.* New York: Pearson Education.

Bassel, L. (2017). *The Politics of Listening: Possibilities and challenges for democratic life.* London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited.

BBC *(*2021). Uprising. [Online]
Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000y313/uprising-series-1-3-the-front-line
[Acessed 10 September 2021].

BBC Four (2018). *Whoever Heard of a Black Artist? Britain's Hidden Art History.* [Online]
Available at: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bcy4kd
[Accessed 28 December 2020].

BBC Radio 4 (2017). *BBC Sounds.* [Online]
Available at: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08vzrth
[Accessed 28 December 2020].

BBC Radio 3 (2017). *Free Thinking: The Influence of the British Black Art Movement.* [Online]
Available at: bbc.co.uk/programmes/b088jl62
[Accessed 28 December 2020].

Beatfreeks (2013). *Beatfreeks Creativity Unleashed.* [Online]
Available at: https://beatfreeks.com/
[Accessed 3 June 2021].

Beauvoir, S., Borde, C. & Malovany-Chevallier, S. (2015). *The Second Sex.* London: Vintage Classic.

Beckford, R. (1998). *Towards a Dread Pentecostal Theology: The context of a viable political theology within black pentecostal churches in Britain.* PhD Thesis. University of Birmingham.

Beckford, R. (2006). *Jesus Dub: Theology, Music and Social Change.* Oxon, New York: Routledge.

Benjamin, W. (1999). The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In: Evans, J. & Hall, S., eds. *Visual Culture: the reader.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: SAGE.

Best, S. (2018). *None Like Us: Blackness, belonging and aesthetic life.* Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Bhabha, H. (1994). *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge.

Bhambra, G. K. Gebrial, D. & Nisancioglu, K. (2018). *Decolonising the University.* London: Pluto Press.

Biddiss, M. D. (1966). Gobineau and the origins of European racism. *Race,* 7(3), pp. 255-270.

Biggs, M. & Buchler, D. (2008). Eight criteria for practice-based research in the creative and cultural industries. *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education,* 7(1), pp. 5-18.

Birmingham 2022 Cultural Festival (2021). *Open Call for Creative Proposals: NATURE, TRAMS and BLACK ART,* Birmingham: Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee.

Birmingham Child Poverty Commission (2015). *A fairer start for all our children and young people. An independent report. Birmingham City Council,* Birmingham: Birmingham Child Poverty Commission .

Birmingham City Council (2013). *Population and Migration Topic Report,* Birmingham: Birmingham City Council.

131

Birmingham City University (2020). *Slanguages.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.bcu.ac.uk/media/research/research-groups/creative-industries/research-projects/slanguages
[Accessed 3 June 2021].

Birmingham Music Archive (2016). Thasha's. [Online]
Available at: https://www.birminghammusicarchive.com/thashas/
[Accessed 9th February 2021].

Birmingham Race Action Partnership (2002). *Beyond Racial Identity,* Birmingham: Birmingham Race Action Partnership.

Bishton, D. (2011). *The Legacy of Ten.8* [Online]
Available at: https://www.derekbishton.com/other-stuff/legacy-ten8/
[Accessed 23 June 2021].

Black Artists & Modernism (2015). About [Online]
Available at: http://www.blackartistsmodernism.co.uk/about/
[Accessed 6th January 2021].

Black, L. (2012). An Enlightening Decade? New Histories of 1970s' Britain. *International Labor and Working-Class History,* (Fall) 2012(82), pp. 174-186.

Blanks, G. (2019). Poetry in Motions (and Cocoa Butter) Discerning Michelle Obama's Body as a Site of Rhetorical Dissent and Performative Black Womanhood. In: Harris, H. E. & Moffitt. K. R. eds. *Michelle Obama and the FLOTUS Effect Platform, Presence, and Agency.* Maryland, London: Lexington Books.

Blk Art Group Research Project (2012a). *Blk Art Group Info.* [Online]
Available at: http://www.blkartgroup.info/conference.html
[Accessed 4th January 2021].

Blk Art Group Research Project (2012b). *Black Art An' Done Handout, June 81.* [Online]
Available at: https://issuu.com/blkres/docs/wolverhampton
[Accessed 13 September 2021]

Boakye, J. (2017). *Hold Tight: Black masculinity & the meaning of grime.* London: Influx Press.

Bola, J. J. (2019). *Mask Off: Masculinity redifined.* London: Pluto Press.

Bost, D., Bruce, L. M. J. & Manning, B. J. (2019). Introduction: Black masculinities and the matter of vulnerability. *The Black Scholar Journal of Black Studies and Research,* 49(2), pp. 1-10.

Bourland, W. I. (2019). *BloodFlowers: Rotimi Fani-Kayode, Photography and the 1980s.* Durham, North Carolina. London: Duke University Press.

Bowser, B. & Sieber, J. (1993). AIDS prevention research: old problems and new solutions. In: Renzetti, C. M. & Lee, R. M. eds. *Researching Sensitive Topics.* California: SAGE.

Braithwaite, K. (2000). The Caribbean Arts Movement. In: Procter, J. ed. *Writing black Britain 1948-1998: An interdisciplinary anthology.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Burke Johnson, R. & Walsh, I. (2019). Mixed Grounded Theory: Merging grounded theory with mixed methods and multimethod research. In: Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory.* Los Angeles: SAGE.

Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity.* New York, Oxon: Taylor & Francis Group.

Buttaro, A. & Battle, J. (2012). More Than Meets the Eye: An ecological perspective on homophobia within the black America. *Black Women, Gender & Families,* 6(1), pp. 1-22.

Cabinet Office (2017). *Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures website.* London: Cabinet Office.

Cabinet Office (2018). *Race Disparity Audit Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Findings Figures Website, (revised March 2018)* London: Cabinet Office.

Callaway, H. (1992). Ethnography and Experience: Gender implications in fieldwork texts. In: Okely, J. & Callaway, H. eds. *Anthropology and Autobiography.* London: Routledge.

Candy, L. (2006). *Practice Based Research: A guide,* Sydney: CCS Report V1.0 November

Carby, H. V. (1982). White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood. In: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. eds. *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain.* London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Carby, H. V. (1999). *Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America.* London, New York: Verso.

Carby, H. V. (2019). *Imperial Intimacies a Tale of Two Islands.* London, New York: Verso.

Carey, M. A. (2016). Focus Groups—What Is the Same, What is New, What is Next?. *Qualitative Health Research,* 26(6), pp. 731-733.

Carey, M. A. & Smith, M. (1994). Capturing the group effect in focus groups: A special concern in analysis. *Qualitative health research,* 4(1), pp. 123-127.

Carp, R. M., Wentworth, J. & Sebberson, D. (2001). Integrative Praxes: Learning from multiple knowledge formations. *Issues in Interdisciplinary Studies,* pp. 71-121.

Cashmore, E. (1979). *Rastman - The Rastafarian Movement in Britain.* Boston: G. Allen & Unwin.

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982). The *Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70's Britain.* London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Chakelian, A. (2020). Stop, search, repeat: The endless journey of prejudice in the police and justice system. [Online]. Available at: https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2020/07/police-racism-black-people-stats-numbers-stop-search-deaths-custody-arrests [Accessed 09 September 2021]

Chambers, E. (2003). The Art of Donald Rodney. In: Hylton, R. ed. *Donald Rodney: Doublethink.* London: Autograph Association of Black Photographers Ltd.

Chambers, E. (2014). *Black Artists in British Art: A history since the 1950s.* London, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Chambers, E. (2017). *Eddie Chambers: Black artists and the DIY aesthetic.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.redpepper.org.uk/eddie-chambers-black-artists-and-the-diy-aesthetic/
[Accessed 15 April 2019].

Chambers, E. (2019). The Jamaican 1970s and its influence on the making of black
Britain. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism,* 23(1), pp. 134-149.

Chambers, E., Hall, S., Hylton, R. & Nimarko, V. (2003). *Donald Rodney: Doublethink.*
London: Autograph ABP.

Chang, H. (2007). Autoethnography as Method: Raising cultural consciousness of self and
others. In: Walford, G. ed. *Methodological developments in ethnography.* Bingley: Emerald
Group Publishing Limited.

Chang, H. (2016). *Autoethnography as Method.* London, New York: Routledge.

Charmaz, K. (1996). Grounded theory. In: Smith, J. A., Harre, R. & Van Langenhoven, L.
eds. *Rethinking Methods in Psychology.* London: SAGE.

Chin, T. (1997). "Bullers" and "Battymen": Contesting homophobia in Black popular culture
and contemporary Caribbean Literature. *Callaloo,* 20(1), pp. 127-141.

Christensen, J. (2014). *Rastafari Reasoning and the Rasta Woman: Gender constructions in the
shaping of Rastafari livity.* Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Christians, C. (2000). Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N. K. &
Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

CineQ (2021). *CineQ.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.cineqbirmingham.co.uk/
[Accessed 2nd March 2021].

Clandinin, D. (2016). *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry.* London: Routledge.

Clandinin, D. & Caine, V. (2012). Narrative Inquiry. In: Given, L. ed. *The Sage Encyclopedia
of Qualitative Research Methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Clarke, C. (1983). The Failure to Transform: Homophobia in the black community. In: Smith, B. ed. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology.* New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Clark, K. & Clark, M. (1950). Emotional factors in racial identification and preference in Negro children. *Journal of Negro Education,* 19(3), pp. 341-350.

Coard, B. (1971). *How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system: The scandal of the black child in schools in britain.* London: New Beacon Books.

Cohen, S. (2011). *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The creation of the mods and rockers.* London, New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Cole, M. (2019). *Theresa May, The Hostile Environment and Public Pedagogies of Hate and Threat: The case for a future without borders.* London, New York: Routledge.

Collins, P. & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021). *Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report,* London: Her Majesty's Government.

Cone, J. (1977). Black Theology And The Black Church: Where do we go from here?. *CrossCurrents,* 27(2), pp. 147-156.

Connell, K. (2019). *Black Handsworth: race in 1980s britain.* Oakland: University of California Press.

Connell, R., (2005). *Masculinities.* Cambridge: Polity.

Connell, R. & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society,* 19(6), pp. 829-859.

Corbin Dwyer, S. & Buckle, J. (2009). The Space Between: On being an insider-outsider in qualitative research. *International journal of qualitative methods,* 8(1), pp. 54-63.

Correia, A. (2019). Self-Portraiture and Representations of Blackness in the Work of Donald Rodney. *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art,* 2019(45), pp. 74-86.

Couldry, N. (2010). *Why Voice Matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism.* London: SAGE.

Courtman, S. (1999). What is missing from the picture? Reading desire in the Dyche studio photographs of the Windrush generation. *Wasafiri,* 14(29), pp. 9-14.

Crabtree, B., Yanoshik, M., Miller, W. L. & O'Connor, P. J. (1993). Selecting Individual or Group Interviews. In: D. Morgan. ed. *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *HeinOnline: University of Chicago Law Review,* 56(1989), pp. 139-168.

Culture Central (2020). *More Than A Moment: Action With & For Black Creatives.* [Online] Available at: https://www.culturecentral.co.uk/mtam/
[Accessed 2nd March 2021].

Cushion, S., Moore, K. & Jewell, J. (2011). *Media Representations of Black Young Men and Boys. Report of the REACH Media Monitoring Project.* Cardiff: School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University.

Dash, P. (2010). *African Caribbean Pupils in Art Education.* Rotterdam, Boston, Taipei: Sense Publishers.

Das, J. (2019). Illness as Metaphor: Donald Rodney's X-ray Photographs. *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art,* 2019(45), pp. 88-98.

Dauphinee, E. (2010). The Ethics of Autoethnography. *Review of International Studies,* 36(3), pp. 799-818.

Davis, D. (2008). Collage inquiry: Creative and particular applications. *LEARNing Landscapes,* 2(1), pp. 245-265.

Deleuze, G. (2006). *Nietzsche and Philosophy.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2001). *Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia.* New York, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (1995). Minority Men, Misery, and the Marketplace of Ideas. In: Berger, M., Wallis, B., & Watson, S. eds. *Constructing Masculinity.* New York: Routledge.

Dennis, F (2000). Birmingham: blades of frustration. In: Owusu, K. ed. Black British Culture and Society: A Text Reader. London, New York: Routledge

Denzin, N. K. (1994). Romancing the Text: The qualitative researcher-writer-as-bricoleur. *University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Council for Research in Music Education,* Fall 1994 (122), pp. 15-30.

Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive Autoethnography.* Los Angeles, London, New Dehli: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In: Denzin, N. K. &. Lincoln. Y. S. eds. *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials.* 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Dillon, M. & Walsh, C. (2012). Left behind: The experiences of children of the Caribbean whose parents have migrated. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies,* 43(6), pp. 871-902.

Doy, G. (2000). *Black Visual Culture Modernity and Postmodernity.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1994). *The Souls of Black Folk.* New York: Dover Thrift Editions.

Dudrah, R. K. (2002). Constructing city spaces through Black popular cultures and the Black public sphere. *City,* 6(3), pp. 335-350.

Eddo-Lodge, R. (2018). *Why I'm no Longer Talking to White People about Race.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Edwards-Kerr, D. (2005). *Articulated Identities: Young black Caribbean men negotiating constraints and opportunities in education and community/citizenship.* PhD Thesis. Manchester: University of Manchester: Faculty of Humanities.

Ehlers, N. (2006). 'Black Is' and 'Black Ain't': Performative revisions of racial 'crisis'. *Cultural Theory & Critique,* 47(2), pp. 149-163.

Eigenheer, M. (2011). Foreword. *On Curating,* 2011(9), pp. 5-7.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. & Bochner, A. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *historical social research/historische sozialforschung,* 36(4), pp. 273-290.

Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2000). Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S. eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, London, New Dehli: SAGE.

Ellis, T. (1989). The New Black Aesthetic. *Callaloo,* 38(Winter), pp. 233-243.

Emslie, C., Ridge, D., Ziebland, S. & Hunt, K. (2006). Men's Accounts of Depression: Reconstructing or resisting hegemonic masculinity? *Social Science & Medicine,* 62(9), pp. 2246-2257.

Enwezor, O. (1995). The body in question: Whose body? 'Black Male: Representations of masculinity in contemporary American art'. *Third Text,* 9(31), pp. 67-70.

Enwezor, O. (2008). *Archive Fever: Uses of the document in contemporary art.* Gottingen, Steidl, London: Thames and Hudson.

Evans, J. & Hall, S. (1999). *Visual culture: the reader.* London: SAGE.

Fani-Kayode, R. (1992). Traces of Ecstasy. In: Bailey, D. A., Hall. S., Cameron, A. & Bishton, D. eds. *Ten 8: Critical Decade: Black British Photography in the 80s.* Birmingham: Ten 8 Ltd.

Fanon, F. (1999). The fact of blackness. In: Evans, J. & Hall, S., eds. *Visual culture: the reader.* London, New York, New Dehli: SAGE.

Fanon, F. (2001). *The Wretched of the Earth.* London: Penguin Modern Classics.

Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin, White Masks.* New York: Grove Press.

Fausto-Sterling, A. (1993). The Five Sexes: Why male and female are not enough. *The Sciences (New York),* 33(2).

Fedja, L. (2018). *Tippa Naphtali speaks : A Legacy for Mikey Powell.* [Online]
Available at: https://4wardeveruk.org/2018/09/tippa-naphtali-speaks-a-legacy-for-mikey-powell/
[Accessed 4 June 2021].

Fisher, J. (2007). In Loving Memory...Archive and Testimony in the films of the Black Audio Film Collective. In: Eshun, K. & Sagar, A. eds. *The Ghosts of Songs - The Film Art of the Black Audio Film Collective 1982-1989.* Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Foundation for Art and Creative Technology.

Fishwick, C. (2016). *Millenials: the trials of generation Y.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/
mar/17/i-narcissist-vanity-social-media-and-the-human-condition
[Accessed 8th December 2020].

Forbes, M. (2020). *Auto-Portrait: After rembrandt black man in a wig and baseball cap.* Nottingham.

Foucault, M. (2002). *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* New York, Abingdon: Routledge.

4WardEverUK (2021). *PC to stand trial in April charged with murder of Dalian Atkinson.* [Online]
Available at: https://4wardeveruk.org/2021/03/pc-to-stand-trial-in-april-charged-with-murder-of-dalian-atkinson/
[Accessed 4 June 2021].

Francis, I. (2019). *This Way to the Revolution: Art, activism, and upheaval in birmingham 1968.* Birmingham: Flatpack Projects.

Fryer, P. (1984). *Staying Power The History of Black People in Britain.* London: Pluto Press.

Garlick, S. (2003). What is a man? Heterosexuality and the Technology of Masculinity. *Men and Masculinities,* 6(2), pp. 156-172.

Giannini, T. & Bowen, J. P. (2016). Curating Digital Life and Culture: Art and information. *Electronic visualisation and the arts*, pp. 237-244.

Gilbert, J. (2019). This Conjuncture: For Stuart Hall. *New Formations,* 96-97(March 2019), pp. 5-37.

Gilroy, P. (1982). Steppin' out of Babylon - Race, Class and Autonomy. In: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. eds. *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and racism in 70s Britain.* London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Gilroy, P. (1988). Cruciality and the frog's perspective. *Third Text,* 2(5), pp. 33-44.

Gilroy, P. (1993). *The Black Atlantic Modernity and Double Consciousness.* London, New York: Verso.

Gilroy, P. (1996). British Cultural Studies and the Pitfalls of Identity. In: Baker, Jr., H., Diawara, M. & Lindeborg. R. H. eds. *Black British Cultural Studies a Reader.* Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.

Gilroy, P. (1997). Diaspora and the Detours of Identity. In: Woodward, K. ed. *Identity and Difference.* London, Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Gilroy, P. (2000). *Between Camps: Nations, Cultures and the Allure of Race.* London: Penguin.

Gilroy, P. (2002). *There Ain't No Black In the Union Jack.* Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Gilroy, P. (2007). *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and double conciousness.* London, New York: Verso.

Glynn, M. (2014). *Black Men, Invisibility and Crime: Towards a critical race theory of desistance.* London, New York: Routledge.

Goddard, K. (2000). Looks Maketh the Man: The female gaze and the construction of masculinity. *The Journal of Men's Studies,* 9(1), pp. 23-39.

Golden, T. (1994). *Black Male: Representations of masculinity in contemporary american art.* New York: Whitney Museum of American Art.

Golding, A. (2020). *GABOSIA.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.amarteygolding.com/5
[Accessed 23 May 2021].

Gomm, R. (2008). *Social Research Methodology: A critical introduction.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gordon, J. & Beadle-Blair, R. (2014). *Black and Gay in the UK: An anthology.* London: Team Angelica Publishing.

Gordon, L. (2018). Black aesthetics, Black value. *Public Culture,* 30(1), pp. 19-34.

Goulbourne, H. (1977). Black Workers in Britain. *African Review,* 7(2), pp. 63-75.

Graham, M. & Robinson, G. (2004). "The Silent Catastrophe" Institutional Racism in the British Educational System and the Underachievement of Black Boys. *Journal of Black Studies,* 34(5), pp. 653-671.

Gray, A. (2002). *Research Practice for Cultural Studies: Ethnographic methods and lived cultures.* London: SAGE.

Gray, A. (2019). *The Price of Memory: Oral history and the rastafari movement in britain.* In AfroEuropeans Conference - Black In/Visibilities Contested. Lisbon, 4-6 July.

Grossberg, L. (2010). Cultural Studies in the Future Tense. Durham: Duke University Press.

Grossberg, L. (2019). Cultural Studies in Search of a Method, or Looking for Conjunctural Analysis. *New Formations,* 96/97(March 2019), pp. 38-68.

Guardian, The (2017). *Fightback: Vanley Burke's black Birmingham – in pictures.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2017/may/25/vanley-burke-birmingham-godfather-black-british-photography-jamaican-cardiff-diffusion-festival-
[Accessed 9th February 2021].

Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J. (2000). Analyzing Interpretive Practice. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, Reflexivity, and "Ethically Important Moments" in Research. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 10(2), pp. 261- 280.

Gunter, A. (2008). Growing Up Bad: Black youth, 'road' culture and badness in an east london neighbourhood. *Crime, media, culture: An International Journal,* 4(3), pp. 349-366.

Habermas, J. (2006). *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and systems, a critique of functionalist reason.* (Vol. 2) ed. Cambridge: Polity.

Habib, S. & Ward, M. (2019). *Identities, Youth and Belonging: International perspectives.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female Masculinity.* Durham, London: Duke University Press Books.

Hall, J. & Baldwin, J. (1972). James Baldwin, A Transition Interview. *Transition,* Volume 41, pp. 20-24.

Hall, S. (1990). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In: Rutherford, J. ed. *Identity, Community, Difference.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Hall, S. (1992). Reconstruction Work: Stuart Hall on images of post war settlement. In: Bailey, D., Hall, S., Cameron, A. & Bishton, D. eds. *Ten 8 Critical Decade: Black British photography in the 80s.* Birmingham: Ten.8 Ltd.

Hall, S. (1995). Negotiating Caribbean Identities. *New Left Review,* Jan 1995(209), pp. 3-14.

Hall, S. (1996). New ethnicities. In: Morley, D. &. Chen. K-H eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies.* London: Routledge.

Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London, Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Hall, S. (1999). From Scarman to Macpherson. *History Workshop Journal,* Issue 48, pp. 187-197.

143

Hall, S. (2000). Conclusion: The multicultural question. In: Hesse, B. ed. *Un/settled multiculturalism - diasporas, entanglements, transruptions.* London, New York: Zed Books.

Hall, S. (2005a). Assembling the 1980s: The Deluge–and after. In: Bailey, D. A., Buacom, I. & Boyce, S. eds. *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain.* North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Hall, S. (2005b). Whose Heritage? Un-Settling 'The Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation. In: Littler, J. & Naidoo. R. eds. *The Politics of Heritage: The legacies of 'race'.* London, New York: Routledge.

Hall, S. (2006). Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'moments' in post-war history. *History Workshop Journal,* 61(Spring 2006), pp. 1-24.

Hall, S. & Schwarz, B. (2018). *Familiar Stranger - A Life Between Two Islands.* London: Penguin Books.

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. & Roberts, B. (2013). *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, S. & Massey, D. (2010). Interpreting the Crisis. *Soundings,* 44(44), pp. 57-71.

Hanisch, C. (2000). The Personal is Political. In: Crow, B. ed. *Radical Feminism: A documentary reader.* New York, London: New York University Press.

Harris, G. (2021). *The Art Newspaper.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/uk-government-sanctions-50-funding-cut-for-arts-and-design-courses
[Accessed 31 July 2021].

Hazlett, J. D. (1992). Generational Theory and Collective Autobiography. *American Literary History,* 4(1), pp. 77-96.

Hearn, J. (2004). From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men. *Feminist Theory,* 5(1), pp. 49-72.

Hebdige, D. (1987). *Cut 'N' Mix: Culture identity and Caribbean music.* London: Taylor and Francis Group.

Hegel, G. W. F. (2001). *The Philosophy of History.* Ontario: Batoche Books.

Helguera, P. (2011). *Education for Socially Engaged Art - A Materials and Techniques Handbook.* New York: Jorge Pinto Books.

Henry, W. L. (2012). Reggae, Rasta and the Role of the Deejay in the Black British Experience. *Contemporary British History,* 26(3), pp. 355-373.

Hertz, R. (1997). *Reflexivity & Voice.* Thousand Oaks, CA, London, New Dehli: SAGE.

Hesse, B. (2000). *Un/Settled multiculturalisms: Diasporas, entanglements, transruptions.* London: Zed Books.

Hill, M. (2013). Is the Black Community More Homophobic?: Reflections on the intersectionality of race, class, gender, culture and religiosity of the perception of homophobia in the black community. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health,* 17(2), pp. 208-214.

Himid, L. (2005). Inside the Invisible: For/Getting Strategy. In: Bailey, D. A., Baucom, I. & Boyce, S. eds. *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain.* Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Holdridge, L. & Macleod, K. (2005). Related objects of thought: Art and thought, theory and practice. In: Miles, M. ed. *New Practices, New Pedagogies: A Reader.* Oxon: Routledge.

Holman Jones, S. (2008). Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials.* Thousand Oaks, CA, London, New Dehli, Singapore: SAGE.

Holman Jones, S., Adams, T. E. & Ellis, C. (2013). *Handbook of Autoethnography.* London: Routledge.

Home Office (2020). *Police powers and procedures England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2020 – Second Edition,* London: Home Office.

hooks, b. (2004). *We real cool: Black men and masculinity.* New York: Routledge.

hooks, b. (2014a). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate politics.* New York, Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group.

hooks, b. (2014b). *Black Looks: Race and representation.* New York, Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group.

hooks, b. (2015). *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics.* New York: Routledge.

Hopkins, P. E. (2013). *Young People, Place and Identity.* London: Taylor and Francis Group.

Howes, D. (2014). Introduction to Sensory Museology. *The Senses and Society,* 9(3), pp. 259-267.

Hughes, J. (1980). *The Philosophy of Social Research.* London: Longman.

Hylton, R. (2007). *The Nature of the Beast: Cultural diversity and the visual arts sector: A study of policies, initiatives and attitudes 1976-2006.* Bath: Institue of Contemporary Interdisciplinary Arts.

Ikon Gallery (2019). *Mugging: A case study in communication.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.ikon-gallery.org/event/mugging-a-case-study-in-communication/
[Accessed 15 January 2021].

Ilcan, S. (2002). *Longing in Belonging: The cultural politics of settlement.* Westport: Praeger Publishers.

Irwin-Rogers, K. & Pinkney, C. (2017). *Social Media as a Catalyst and Trigger for Youth Violence,* Birmingham: Catch 22.

Jaramillo, R. (2019). *The New York Times: Modern love college essay contest.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/10/style/modern-love-college-i-love-you-man-.html
[Accessed 22 June 2021].

Jewkes, R., Morrell, R., Hearn, J., Lundqvist, E., Blackbeard, D., Lindegger, G., Quayle, M., Sikweyiya, Y. & Gotten, L. (2015). Hegemonic masculinity: combining theory and practice in gender interventions. *Culture, Health & Sexuality an International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care,* 17(2), pp. 112-127.

Johnson, A., Joseph-Salisbury, R., Kamunge, B. & Yancy, G. (2018). *The Fire Now: Anti-Racist Scholarship in Times of Explicit Racial Violence.* London: Zed Books Ltd.

Johnson, L. K. (1976). Jamaican Rebel Music. *Race & class,* 17(4), pp. 397-412.

Johnson, R., Chambers, D., Raghuram, P. & Tincknell, E. (2004). *The Practice of Cultural Studies.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: SAGE.

Jones, A. (2018). You Are My Dwelling Place: Experiencing black male vocalists worship as aural eroticism and autoeroticism in gospel performance. *Women & music (Washington, D.C.),* 22(1), pp. 3-21.

Jones, A. (2021). Ethnic Envy and Other Aggressions in the Contemporary Global Art Complex. *NKA Journal of Contemporary African Art,* 48(May 2021), pp. 96-111.

Jordan, G. (2016). Beyond Essentialism: On stuart hall and black british arts. *International Journal of Cultural Studies,* 19(1), pp. 11-27.

Joseph-Salisbury, R. & Andrews, K. (2017). Locating Black Mixed-Raced Males in the Black Supplementary School Movement. *Race Ethnicity and Education,* 20(6), pp. 752–765.

Juliá, C. (2012). Art & Artists. *Eddie Chambers: Destruction of the national front - 1979-80.*
[Online]
Available at: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chambers-destruction-of-the-national-front-t13887
[Accessed 4 June 2021].

Kegan Gardiner, J. (2002). *Masculinity Studies & Feminist Theory.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Kempny, M. (2012). Rethinking Native Anthropology: Migration and auto-ethnography in the post-accession Europe. *International Review of Social Research*, 2(2), pp. 39-52.

Kershen, A. (2017). *Food in the Migrant Experience.* London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Kester, G. (2004). *Conversation Pieces: Community + communication in modern art.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Kester, G. (2005). Conversation Pieces: The role of dialogue in socially-engaged art. In: Zoya, K. & Leung, S. eds. *Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Khan, N. (1976). *The Arts Britain Ignores: The arts of the ethnic minorities in Britain.* London: The Commission.

Kiernan, M. & Hill, M. (2018). Framework Analysis: A whole paradigm approach. *Qualitative Research Journal,* 18 (3), pp. 248-261.

Kimmel, M. S. (1992). Reading Men: Men, masculinity and publishing. *Contemporary Sociology,* 21(2), pp. 162-171.

Kincheloe, J. L. (2001). Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a new rigor in qualitative research. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Qualitative Inquiry.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

King, M. (2013). From Rumour to Riot: The 2005 lozells disorders. In: Waddington, D., Jobard, F. & King. M. eds. *Rioting in the UK and France*: Routledge.

Kirkland, D. (2021). A Pedagogy for Black People: Why naming matters. *Equity & excellence in education,* 54(1), pp. 60-67.

Knepper, W. (2006). Colonization, Creolization, and Globalization: The art and ruses of bricolage. *Small Axe,* 10(3), pp. 70-86.

Krauss, R. (1976). The Aesthetics of Narcissism. *The MIT Press,* 50(Spring 1976), pp. 50-64.

Krieger, S. (1991). *Social Science and the Self: Personal essays on an art form.* New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Kuumba, M. & Ajanaku, F. (1998.) Dreadlocks: The hair aesthetics of cultural resistance and collective identity formation. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly,* 3(2), pp. 227-243.

Lacey, K. (2021). *Listening Out as a Technique of Political Life.* [Online]
Available at: https://bcmcr.org/research/listening-out-as-a-technique-of-political-life/
[Accessed 7 May 2021].

Ladson-Billings, G. (2000). Racialized Discourse and Ethnic Epistemologies. In: Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE.

Larson, H. (1940). The Armor Business in the Middle Ages. *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society,* 14(4), pp. 49-64.

Laursen, O. B. (2012). Telling Her a Story: Remembering trauma in Andrea Levy's writing. *EnterText,* 9 (2012), pp. 53-68.

Lawrence, E. (1982). Just plain common sense: the 'roots' of racism. In: *The Empire Strikes Back Race and racism in 70s Britain.* London: Hutchinson in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Lawson, E. (2012). *From the Post Code to the Globe: How to overcome limitations and realise your potential.* Birmingham: EWL Consultants.

Lewis, S. P. (2017). *Dandy Lion: The black dandy and street style.* New York: Aperture.

Liakos, A. (2008). Canonical and Anticanonical Histories. In: Panourgiá, N. & Marcus, G. E. eds. *Ethnographica Moralia: Experiments in Interpretive Anthropology.* New York: Fordham University Press.

Liamputtong, P. & Ezzy, D. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods.* South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Lipsitz, G. (2006). *The Possessive Investment in whiteness: How white people profit from identity politics.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Lorde, A. (2017). *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.* London: Penguin Books.

Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994). *The Making of Men: Masculinities, sexualities and schooling.* Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Macpherson, W. (1999). *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an inquiry by sir william macpherson of cluny.* London: Home Department by Command of Her Majesty.

MAIA (2021). *History.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.maiagroup.co/history
[Accessed 2nd March 2021].

Malik, S. (2002). *Representing black Britain a history of black and Asian images on British television.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: SAGE.

Margaret Thatcher Foundation (1987). *Margaret Thatcher Foundation: Speech to conservative party conference.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106941
[Accessed 20 May 2021].

Marsh, I. & Melville, G. (2011). Moral panics and the British media–a look at some contemporary 'folk devils'. *Internet Journal of Criminology,* 1(1), pp. 1-21.

Martinon, J. P. (2013). *The Curatorial: A philosophy of curating.* London, New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

May, T (2016). Theresa May's speech to the Conservative Party Conference - in full: [Online]. Available at: https://www.conservativehome.com/video/2016/10/watch-theresa-mays-speech-to-the-conservative-party-conference-in-full.html
[Accessed 18 October 2021].

Maxwell, J. (1992). Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research. *Harvard Educational Review,* 62(3), pp. 279-301.

Maylor, U. (2009). What is the meaning of "black"? Researching "black" respondents. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* , 32 (2), pp. 369-387.

McEvilley, T. (1999). Introduction. In: Butterfield, J. ed. *Inside the White Cube.* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

McMillan, M. (2003). The "west Indian" front room in the African diaspora. *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture,* 7(3-4), pp. 397-413.

McMillan, M. (2009). The West Indian front room: reflections on a diasporic phenomenon. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism,* 13(1), pp. 135-156.

McRobbie, A. & Garber, J. (2006). Girls and Subcultures. In: Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. eds. *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Postwar Britain.* London, New York: Routledge.

McRobbie, A. & Thornton, S. (1995). Rethinking 'moral panic' for multi-mediated social worlds. *British journal of sociology,* 46(4), pp. 559-574.

Mercer, K. (1990a). Black art and the burden of representation. *Third Text,* 4(10), pp. 61-78.

Mercer, K. (1990b). Welcome to the Jungle: Identity and diversity in postmodern politics . In: Rutherford, J. ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.

Mercer, K. (1994). *Welcome to the Jungle: New positions in black cultural studies.* London, New York: Routledge.

Mercer, K. (1999). Reading racial festishism: The photographs of robert mapplethorpe. In: Evans, J. & Hall, S. eds. *Visual Culture: The reader.* London, Thousand Oaks, New Dehli: SAGE.

Mercer, K. (2005). Iconography after Identity. In: Bailey, D.A., Baucom, I. & Boyce, S. eds. *Shades of Black Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Mercer, K. (2012). Perforations. Wolverhampton, http://www.blkartgroup.info/ conferencevid.html

Merriam, S., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G. & Muhamad, G. (2001). Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education,* 20(5), pp. 405-416.

Merton, R. (1972). Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American journal of sociology,* 78(1), p. 24.

Messerschmidt, J. (1997). *Crime as Structured Action: Gender, race, class, and crime in the making.* Thousand Oaks, London, New Dehli: SAGE.

Midlands Higher Education & Culture Forum (2017). *Midlands Higher Education & Culture Forum.* [Online]
Available at: http://midlandshecf.org/
[Accessed 3rd September 2021].

Miles, A. & Savage, M. (2013). *The Remaking of the British Working Class, 1840-1940.* London: Taylor and Francis Group.

Miles, R. (1982). *Racism and migrant labour.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Books.

Miles, R. (1984). Marxism versus the sociology of 'race relations'?. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 7(2), pp. 217-237.

Miles, R. & Brown, M. (2003). *Racism.* London and New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Mills, C. W. (1998). *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Mills, E. (2019). Doing the Discourse: Spaces of black feminist subjectivity in british art history. In: Ridway, E. ed. *Claudette Johnson: I Came to Dance.* Oxford: Modern Art Oxford.

Miotto, L. (2016). Using scents to connect to intangible heritage: Engaging the visitor olfactory dimension: Three museum exhibition case studies. *22nd International Conference on Virtual System & Multimedia,* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2016. Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, pp. 1-5.

Mirza, H. & Reay, D. (2000). Spaces and places of black educational desire: Rethinking black supplementary schools as a new social movement. *Sociology,* 34(3), pp. 521-544.

Mitchell, J. (1984). *Women, the Longest Revolution: Essays on feminist literature and psychoanalysis.* London: Virago.

Mocombe, P. C., Tomlin, C. & Wright, C. (2015). Race and class distinctions within black communities in the United States and United Kingdom: a reading in phenomenological structuralism. *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal,* 8(1), pp. 111-125.

Moldonado-Torres, N., Vizcaino, R., Wallace, J. & We, J. E. A. (2018). Decolonising Philosophy. In: Bhambra, G. K., Gebrial, D., & Nisancioglu, K. eds. *Decolonising the University.* London: Pluto Press.

Monrose, K. (2016). Shame, Scandal and Respectability amongst the Children of the Windrush Generation. A Scholarly Omission. In: Hobbs, D. ed. *Mischief, Morality and Mobs: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Pearson.* New York, London: Routledge.

Monti, F. & Keene, S. (2013). *Museums and Silent Objects: Designing effective exhibitions.* Surrey, Burlington: Routledge.

Moon, J. Y. (2020). Curatorial Research as the Practice of Commoning. In: Rito,C. & Balaskas, B. eds. *Institution as Praxis - New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research.* Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 32-41.

Morgan, D. (1996). Focus groups. *Annual review of sociology,* 22(1), pp. 129-152.

Morgan, D. (1997). *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks, London: SAGE.

Morgan, D. & Krueger. R. A. (1993). When to use a Focus Group and Why. In: Morgan,D. & Krueger, R. A. eds. *Successful Focus Groups.* London: SAGE.

Mullings, S. L. (2013). *Post colonial legacies of marginalisation, as rendered in the visual works of young people in Lambeth.* PhD Thesis. Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Munt, S. R. (2000). *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to change.* London, New York: Cassell.

Murrell, N. S. (1998). Introduction: The Rastafari Phenomenon: In MacFarlane, A., Murrell, N. S. & Spencer, W. D. eds. *Chanting Down Babylon The Rastafari Reader. Philadelphia, P.A. : Temple University Press*

Myers, K. & Grosvenor, I. (2011). Birmingham Stories: Local histories of migration and settlement and the practice of history. *Midland History,* 36(2), pp. 149-162.

Myers, W. (1999). *The Journal of Joshua Loper: A black cowboy.* New York: Scholastic.

Nash, J. C. (2013). Practicing Love: Black feminism, love-politics and post-intersectionality. *Meridians,* 11(2), pp. 1-24.

Nelson, R. (2013). *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances.* Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave MacMillan Ltd.

New Art Exchange (2021). *WHO ARE WE?* [Online]
Available at: http://www.nae.org.uk/page/who-are-we/3
[Accessed 17 August 2021].

Nimarkoh, V. (2003). Image of Pain: Physicallity in the art of donald rodney. In: Hylton, R. ed. *Donald Rodney: doublethink.* London: Autograph - The Association of Black Photographers.

Noble, H. & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-based nursing,* 18(2), pp. 34-35.

Noble, J. B. (2006). *Sons of the Movement: FtMs risking incoherence on a post queer cultural landscape.* Toronto: Women's Press.

Nugent, M. (2014). *Artists of the Black Art movement in Britain 1979-1984 and their legacy.* Wolverhampton: Heritage Lottery Fund.

O'Doherty, B. (1999). *Inside the White Cube: The ideology of the gallery space.* Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

O'Donnell, M. & Sharpe, S. (2000). The social construction of youthful masculinities. In: Ball, S. ed. *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Sociology of Education.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Obienu, K. (2019). Blacksistential Crisis. In: Owusu, D. ed. *Safe: On black British men reclaiming space.* London: Trapeze.

Obrist, H.U. (2014). *A Brief History of Curating.* Zurich, Dijon: JRP / Ringier & Les Presses du réel.

Office for Students (2020). *Improving access and participation for minority ethnic groups in PGR study.* [Online] Available at: https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/improving-access-and-participation-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-pgr-study/ [Accessed 13 January 2021]

Okely, J. (2002). Thinking through fieldwork. In: Bryman, A. & Burgess, R. eds. *Analyzing qualitative data.* London, New York: Routledge.

Okwonga, M. (2019). The Good Bisexual. In: Owusu, D. ed. *Safe: On black British men reclaiming space.* London: Trapeze.

Olufemi, L. (2020). *Feminism Interrupted: Disrupting power.* London: Pluto Press.

Olusoga, D. (2016). *Black and British: A forgotten history.* London: Macmillan.

O'Neill, P. (2012). *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s).* Cambridge Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press.

O'Neill, P. & Wilson, M. (2015). *Curating Research.* Amsterdam, London: Open Editions, de Apel Arts Centre.

Ort Gallery (2021). *Warmth,* Birmingham: Ort Gallery.

Owusu, D. (2019). *Safe: On black British men reclaiming space.* London: Trapeze.

Palmer, L. (2019). 'Each one teach one' visualising black intellectual life in Handsworth beyond the epistemology of 'white sociology'. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power,* 27(1), pp. 1-23.

Palmer, L. (2021). 'Dem a call us pirates, Dem a call us illegal broadcasters!':'Pirates' anthem', PCRL and the struggle for black free radio in Birmingham. In: Henry, W. & Morley.W. eds. *Narratives from Beyond the UK Reggae Bassline.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pardo, A. (2020). *Masculinities: Photography and film from the 1960s to now: Liberation through photography.* Munich, London, New York: Prestel.

Parkinson, S., Eatough, V., Holmes, J., Stapley, E., Target, M. & Midgley, N. (2016). Framework analysis: A worked example of a study exploring young people's experiences of depression. *Qualitative research in psychology,* 13(2), pp. 109-129.

Peach, C. (1965). West Indian Migration to Britain: The economic factors. *Race,* 7(1), pp. 31-46.

Peck, R., (2017). *I am Not Your Negro.* New York: Penguin Books.

Pinkney, C. & Robinson-Edwards, S. (2018). Gangs, music and the mediatisation of crime: Expressions, violations and validations. *Safer Communities,* 17(2), pp. 103-118.

Piper, K. (1996). *Go West Young Man.* [Online]
Available at: https://vimeo.com/85041307
[Accessed 15 March 2022].

Piper, K. (2012a). *blk art group research project 2012.* [Online]
Available at: http://www.blkartgroup.info/
[Accessed 13 May 2020].

Piper, K. (2012b). *Coming Up in the Black Moment. A Personal Reflection on the Blk Art Group.* [Online]
Available at: https://vimeo.com/55719600
[Accessed 24 June 2020].

Pitts, J. (2015). Youth Crime and Youth Justice. *Youth & Policy,* 114(31), pp. 31-42.

Pitts, J. (2019). *Afropean: Notes from black europe uk.* London: Allen Lane.

Plumb, S. (2017). *How might the experiences and perspectives of community participants collaborating in socially engaged art practices be heard, considered and equally valued alongside those of the artist and gallery? What ethical implications for the artist and the gallery arise when community participants' experiences are considered in this way?.* PhD Thesis. University of Leicester.

Powell, E. (2004). Rivers of Blood. *The Occidental Quarterly, 1(1), pp. 13-18.*

Prakash, G. (1994). Subaltern studies as postcolonial criticism. *The American historical review,* 99(5), pp. 1475-1490.

Puwar, N. (2004). *Space Invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place.* Oxford: Berg.

Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *The Proceedings of the Nutrition Society,* 63(4), pp. 655-660

Race, K. E. H, Hotch, D. & Packer, T. (1994). Rehabilitation Program Evaluation Use of Focus Groups to Empower Clients. *Evaluation Review,* 18(6), pp. 730-40.

Rancière, J. (2007). The Emancipated Spectator. *Artforum International,* March, 45(7), pp. 271-341.

Reddie, A. (2008). Black Theology in Britain. *The Expository Times,* 120(1), pp. 16-23.

Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). *Auto/ethnography rewriting the self and the social.* Oxford: Berg.

Reid, E. (2017). *'on road' Culture in Context: Masculinities, religion and 'trapping' in inner city London.* PhD Thesis. Brunel University, London.

Repko, A. F. (2008). *Interdisciplinary Research Process and Theory.* Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE.

Research Excellence Framework (2020). *REF 2021: Index of revisions to the 'panel criteria and working methods' (2019/02),* Bristol: Research Excellence Framework.

Kwoba, B., Chantiluke, R. & Nkopo, A. (2018). *Rhodes Must Fall.* London: Zed Books.

Richter, D. (2011). Exhibitions as Cultural Practices of Showing - Pedagogics. On*Curating. org* (09), pp. 47-52.

Riley, M. (2014). Bass culture: An alternative soundtrack to britishness. In: Stratton, J. & Zuberi, N. eds. *Black Popular Music in Britain Since 1945.* Farnham: Ashgate.

Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L. (2002). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In:

Bryman, A. & Burgess. B. eds. *Analyzing qualitative data.* London, New York: Routledge.

Rito, C. (2020). What is the Curatorial Doing?. In: Rito, C. & Balaskas. B. eds. *Institution as Praxis - New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research.* Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Rito, C. (2021). *Black Arts Movement in Coventry.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/research-directories/current-projects/2021/bam/
[Accessed 12 July 2021].

Rito, C. & Balaskas, B. (2020). Introduction. In: Rito, C. & Balaskas, B. eds. *Institution as Praxis: New Curatorial Directions for Collaborative Research.* Berlin: Sternberg Press.

Roberts, J. (1987). Sonia Boyce: In conversation with john roberts. *Third Text,* 1(1), pp. 55-64.

Robinson, R. (2009). Racing the Closet. *Stanford Law Review,* 61, pp. 1463-1533.

Robles, E. (2019). Collage and Recollection in the 1970s and 1980s - Three Black Artists. *Wasafiri,* 34(4), pp. 52-63.

Rogers, J. (2019). Cross-Cultural Casting in Britain: The path to inclusion, 1972-2012. *Multicultural Shakespeare : Translation, Appropriation and Performance,* 19(1), pp. 55-70.

Rogers, M. (2012). Contextualizing Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research. *The Qualitative Report,* 17(7), pp. 1-17.

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials.* Los Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapore: SAGE.

Rughani, P. (2013). John Akomfrah in Conversation with Pratap Rughani at the AHRC Artists' Moving Image Research Network. *Moving Image Review & Art Journal (MIRAJ) ,* 2(2), pp. 214-226.

Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Salzman, P. (2002). On reflexivity. *American Anthropologist,* 104(3), pp. 805-811.

Savage, M. (2015). *Social Class in the 21st Century.* London: Pelican Books.

Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner - How Professionals think in Action.* London, New York: Routledge.

Scott, D. (2013). On the very idea of a Black radical tradition. *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism,* 17(1), pp. 1-6.

Scrivener, S. (2002). *The art object does not embody a form of knowledge,* London: University of the Arts London.

Seale, B. (1991). *Seize the time: the story of the Black Panther Party and Huey P. Newton.* Baltimore: Black Classic Press.

Sealy, M. (2013). Foreword. In: *Lovers' Rock.* London: Autograph ABP.

Sealy, M. (2019). *Decolonising the Camera: Photography in racial time.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Sewell, T. (1997). *Black Masculinities and Schooling: How black boys survive modern schooling.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

Sharp-Grier, M. L. & Martin, J. L. (2016). Broken Windows, Broken Promises: Grief, privilege, and hope in the mythical post racial, a call and response. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 22(7), pp. 561–567.

Sheffield Museums (2012). *Blk Art Group Symposium 2012.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.museums-sheffield.org.uk/
blog/2012/3/a-look-back-at-the-blk-art-group-exhibition
[Accessed 6th January 2021].

Sheikh, S. (2015). Towards the Exhibition as Research. In: O'Neill, P. & Walsh, M. eds. *Curating Research.* London: Open Editions.

Shilliam, R. (2012). Redemption from Development: Amartya sen, rastafari and promises of freedom. *Postcolonial Studies,* 15(3), pp. 331-350.

Shilliam, R. (2018). Black/Academia. In: Bhambra, G., Gebrial, D. & Nisancioglu, K. eds. *Decolonising the University.* London: Pluto Press.

Shiner, M., Carre, Z., Delsol, R. & Eastwood, N. (2018). *The Colour of Injustice: 'Race', drugs and law enforcement in England and Wales,* London: The London School of Economics and Political Science.

Sivanandan, A. (1976). Race, class and the state: The black experience in Britain: *Race & Class,* 17(4), pp. 347-368.

Sivanandan, A. (1981). From Resistance to Rebellion: Asian and afro-caribbean struggles in britain. *Race & Class,* 23(2-3), pp. 111-152.

Skeggs, B. (2003). *Class, Self, Culture.* London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Smethurst, J. E. (2005). *The black arts movement - Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s.* Chapel Hill, London: The University of North Carolina Press.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies research and indigenous peoples.* London: Zed Books.

Smoking Dogs films (2012). *The Unfinished Conversation.* [Online].
Available at: https://www.smokingdogsfilms.com/projects/exhibition/the-unfinished-conversation/
[Accessed 18 October 2021].

Sobers, S. (2017). Ethiopian stories in an English landscape. In: Roued-Cunliffe, H. & Copeland, A. eds. *Participatory heritage.* London: Facet Publishing.

Spivak, G. C. (2013). Can the Subaltern Speak?. In: Chrisman, L. & Williams, P. eds. *Colonial Discourse and Post Colonial Theory: A Reader.* Abingdon, Oxon. Routledge.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing Autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 7(6), p. 706–732.

Srivastava, A. & Thomson, S. B. (2009). Framework Analysis: A qualitative methodology for applied policy research. *Journal of Administration and Governance,* 4(2), p. 75.

Steedman, C. (1986). *Landscape for a good woman.* London: Virago.

Stein, J. (1993). Sins of Omission: Fred Wilson's mining the museum. *Art in America,* 81(10), pp. 110-115.

Stewart, R. (2010). Constructing neo/narratives: A qualitative research process for the visual arts. In: Barrett, E. & Bolt, B. eds. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry.* London, New York: I.B. Tauris.

Strauss, C. L. (1962). *The Savage Mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, London: SAGE.

Summers, B. T. (2019). *Black in Place: The spatial aesthetics of race in a post-chocolate city.* North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press.

Symko, R. (2019). Riffing the Canon: The pictures generation and racial bias. *Journal of curatorial studies,* 8(2), pp. 206-230.

Taylor, J. (1994). *Breaking down the colour Bar.* London: News International Trading Limited.

Taylor, J. (2018). Research–Practice–Pedagogy: Establishing new topologies of doctoral research in arts. In: Prior, R. ed. *Using Art as Research in Learning and Teaching: Multidisciplinary approaches across the arts.* London: Intellect.

Taylor, P. C. (2016). *Black is beautiful: A philosophy of black aesthetics.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Theuri, S. (2016). *Black African Students and the Art and Design Education Space: Narratives of journeys to higher education art and design.* PhD Thesis. Manchester: School of Arts and Media, College of Arts and Social Sciences, The University of Salford, Salford UK.

Thomson, P. & Walker, M. (2010). *The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion: Getting to grips with research in education and the social sciences.* London, New York: Routledge.

Tinsley, O. E. N. (2008). Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer imaginings of the middle passage. *GLQ: A journal of lesbian and gay studies,* 14(2-3), pp. 191-215.

Tolia-Kelly, D. & Morris, A. (2004). Disruptive Aesthetics? Revisiting the *Burden of Representation* in the Art of Chris Ofili and Yinka Shonibare. *Third Text,* 18(2), pp. 153-167.

Tomaney, J. (2015). Region and place II: Belonging. *progress in human geography,* 39(4), pp. 507-516.

Tulloch, C. (2004). *Black Style.* London: V & A.

University of Oxford (2016). *Creative Multilingualism.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/
[Accessed 3 June 2021].

Virdee, S. & McGeever, B. (2018). Racism, Crisis, Brexit. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 41(10), pp. 1802-1819.

Von Bismark, B. (2011). Curatorial Criticality - On the Role of the Freelance Curators in the Field of Contemporary Art. On*Curating.org* (09), pp. 19-23.

Wagner, B. (2010). *Disturbing the Peace: Black culture and the police power after slavery.* Cambridge, Massachussetts, London: Harvard University Press.

Walker, L. E. (1986). Psychological causes of family violence. *Violence in the home: interdisciplinary perspectives/edited by Mary Lystad.*

Wall, S. (2006). An Autoethnography on Learning About Autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 5(2), pp. 146–60.

Ward, M. R. M., Tarrant, A., Terry, G., Featherstone, B., Robb, M. & Ruxton, S. (2017). Doing gender locally: The importance of 'place' in understanding marginalised masculinities and young men's transitions to 'safe' and successful futures. *The Sociological Review,* 65(4), pp. 797-815.

Warmington, P. (2014). *Black British Intellectuals and Education: Multiculturalism's hidden history.* Oxon: Routledge.

Watkins, D. C., Green, B. L., Goodson, P., Guidry, J. & Stanley, C. A. (2007). Using Focus Groups to Explore the Stressful Life Events of Black College Men. *Journal of College Student Development,* 48(1), pp. 105-118.

Webber, F. (2018). *The Embedding of State Hostility: A background paper on the windrush scandal,* London: Institute of Race Relations.

Whitchurch, C. (2008). Shifting identities and blurring boundaries: The emergence of third space professionals in uk higher education. *Higher education quarterly,* 62(4), pp. 377-396.

White, J. (2020). *Terraformed: Young black lives in the inner city.* London: Repeater Books.

Williams, C. (1993). We are a natural part of many different struggles: Black women organizing. In: Winston, J. & Harris, C. eds. *Inside Babylon: the Caribbean Diaspora in Britain.* London: Verso.

Williams, P., Bath, S., Arday, J. & Lewis, C. (2019). *The Broken Pipeline Barriers to Black PhD students Accessing Research Council Funding,* London: Leading Routes.

Williams, W. (2020). *Windrush Lessons Learned Review,* London: Home Office.

Wilson, M. & Gerber, L. E. (2008). How Generational Theory Can Improve Teaching: Strategies for working with the millenials. *Currents in Teaching and Learning,* 1(1), pp. 29-44.

Wolverhampton Arts & Culture (2016). *Collecting Cultures: Black Art Project.* [Online]
Available at: wolverhamptonart.org.uk/collecting-cultures-black-art-project
[Accessed 28 December 2020].

Wright, M. M. (2004). *Becoming Black: Creating identity in the african diaspora.* Durham, London: Duke University Press.

Wynter, S. (2003). Unsettling the Colonality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the human, after man, its overrepresentation -- an argument. *CR: The New Centennial Review,* 3(3), pp. 257-337.

Yancy, G. & Gilroy, P. (2015). *New York Time: The Opinionator.* [Online]
Available at: https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/01/paul-gilroy-what-black-means-in-britain/
[Accessed 8 March 2021].

Hyperlinks

7th Biennial AfroEuropean Conference:

Black In/Visibilities Contested

(Algo|Afro) Futures

Autoicon

Black Curators Collective

Black Pyramid Film and Video Project

Diaspora Pavilion

Infinity of Traces

International Curators Forum

Museum Detox

Reimaging Donald Rodney

The Place is Here

War Inna Babylon

Visual Representations and Cultural (Re)Constructions
of Black British Masculinities in 21st Century Birmingham

Ian Lloyd Sergeant