EASTERN PROMISE?

Race, Innovation and Inequality in the Creative Industries-Driven Regeneration of East London.

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree at the University of East London is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it). Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. I declare that my thesis consists of 66014 words.

Abstract

In post-industrial knowledge-based economies like the UK's, the creative industries are becoming major drivers of urban transformation. However, while this process could potentially be leading to greater diversity and democratisation, industry reports by the Creative Industries Federation, Creative Skillset, the British Film Institute and Directors UK show black, Asian and minority ethnic representation in key sectors of the creative industries has actually decreased. In this context East London's growing number of creative-industries hubs run the risk of re-inscribing existing patterns of racial exclusion onto the urban topography and becoming monoethnic enclaves in an otherwise superdiverse urban setting. This has implications for both racial justice and civic cohesion, and also for creativity and success in an industry where innovation is often based on the hybridisation of cultural forms.

As part of my research project I have produced a one-hour documentary entitled *Multicology?* that examines the work practices of individual BAME (black, Asian and ethnic minority) creative workers based in East London. The film is accompanied by a sixty-nine thousand-word dissertation. In the film and the thesis, I deploy analytical paradigms drawn from the study of the creative industries (Hesmondhalgh 2007, Saha 20017), urban sociology (Sibley 1995, Keith 2005, Cohen 2013), postcolonial cultural studies (Hall 1990, Malik 2008) and urban design (Anderson 2009, Thibaud 2012). I utilise this interdisciplinary approach to examine the processes through which racialised inequality in the creative industries can become spatialised in an urban context, and the strategies BAME creative producers use to navigate those forms of exclusion.

In my research I argue that the cultural regeneration process is largely structured by discourses of institutional diversity (Malik 2008) that have historically failed to deliver greater levels of inclusion in the sphere of cultural production. In this context I point to the need for multicultural creative ecologies, what I term 'multicologies', where BAME practitioners from complementary sectors of the creative industries can be spatially concentrated. These multicultural creative hubs and networks would operate to challenge existing forms of racialised inequality in the urban creative industries, and support BAME creative practitioners working in East London.

Accompanying material

Multicology?, a 60-minute documentary (to be viewed before reading the thesis) is included on accompanying memory stick. A low-resolution version with closed captions is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmAe1jhiyRY

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Personal preamble

It would be misleading not to locate my own positionality in my topic of research. My biography (both professional and personal) and the situated knowledge it has produced has inevitably informed my choice of subject and at least partially conditioned the way I interpret it. It is entirely impossible for me to claim some rarefied 'objective' position from which to observe my area of study, as that area of study is also my professional work environment, and the associated network of interpersonal relationships that extend from it. I do not, however, believe that fact invalidates my observations, only that it must be acknowledged within my work.

This research project largely grew out of my experiences as a practitioner in the media industries, and particularly my employment in East London on community media projects designed to create routes into the creative industries for local young people. Over a decade ago, I directed a series of music videos for grime music crews as part of a publicly funded artists development programme run by the participatory film company Hi8us South who were based in Mile End (and who sadly no longer exist). That project left a lasting impression on me and informs my current research. I undoubtedly learned a great deal more from the young grime artist I was working with than they learned from me, especially with regards to the way new technologies and the emerging online platforms could act as empowering instruments of radical cultural practice. In addition to an increased awareness of the enabling potential of these new technologies my work in Poplar, Bow and Mile End also made me acutely conscious of how access to opportunities and resources remained scarce in these areas, and the need to generate more inclusive production structures, especially for young creatives from BAME backgrounds.

Prior to my involvement with the non-profit community video sector I worked as an independent drama director, as a music video director in the commercial garage, hip hop and dance music sectors, and as a factual TV producer in the BBC's African Caribbean department. Before that, my initial introduction to the moving image industry came through working as a runner and assistant director in the blossoming black independent film sector of the late 1980's and early 90s. This background made me particularly aware of how BAME creative practice has historically been constructed as marginal and risky in relation to the media industries as a whole, but also how particular cultural forms and practitioners have the

power to create vibrant cultural sectors if the resources and structural mechanisms are available to facilitate it.

Prior to that, during my post-graduate studies in film production, I was based in the creative industries quarter (CIQ) in Sheffield. This was a part of the city specifically designated by the council for the creative industries. It included the Workstation managed media workspace, the Showroom independent cinema, Red tape sound recording studios, the Northern media school and the Sheffield Independent Film Collective all of which were located in very close proximity to one another. While being highly conscious of the 'CIQ's' largely mono-ethnic composition I still felt the benefit of being part of a spatially concentrated 'creative ecology'. My years there left me with an awareness of how such structures can facilitate individual creative productivity and activated my interest in the role strategically planned 'creative hubs' of this kind can play in the urban regeneration process.

For the last decade I have lived in Dalston in Hackney and have therefore been at the epicentre of East London's rapid process of regeneration/gentrification. This has brought home to me the double-edged nature of the transformations that have been occurring in East London. As a comparatively recent arrival, and as an ethnically ambiguous looking mixed-race 'creative worker' based in the area, these processes are ones in which I play an ambivalent role. I am positioned by the processes I describe in my research in a variety of ways, sometimes as beneficiary of the gentrification process, sometimes as an excluded racialised subject and sometimes as an activist/creative producer attempting to contest emerging forms of inequality.

I have an ongoing connection to the University of East London both as an hourly lecturer and also as a filmmaker producing films for research centers based there. These films have focused on a range of topics including learning disability, multi-media technology, social exclusion, and immigration policy, and have been used as tools to disseminate academic research, make an intervention in public debates and impact on cultural policy. In this sense I am familiar with the way academic research and film practice can intersect and complement one another.

This research project represents a convergence between my existing areas of analytical concern, my background as a filmmaker, and the release of industry reports that showed expanding patterns of racial exclusion in the creative industries. Out of this interaction some

relevant research has hopefully emerged. However, I leave it to the reader to make that judgment.

Overview

My original contribution to knowledge consists of an interdisciplinary critique of culture and creativity as a mechanism of spatialised racial exclusion in an urban environment, and an expanded understanding of how BAME creativity can operate to contest those processes in an East London setting.

Chapter breakdown

In Chapter 1, I map out the broad parameters of my research, the industry reports that triggered it, and the primary and the often-contested terms (including 'race', and 'the creative industries') that feature prominently in my writing. I also examine the usefulness of an interdisciplinary approach, and the benefits of film as a research and dissemination tool.

In Chapter 2 I examine theoretical work about the creative industries (eg Hesmondhalgh 2007, Saha 20017), urban sociology (eg Sibley1995, Keith 2005, Cohen 2013, Zukin 2010), postcolonial cultural studies (e.g. Hall 1992, Malik 2008,) and urban design (eg Anderson 2009, Thibaud 2012) to understand how processes of risk mitigation, and the attribution of economic value can operate as technologies of racial and spatial regulation within the regeneration process. I suggest these processes in the creative industries serve to shape, not just urban space, but also the subjectivities of the BAME creative producers who inhabit it.

In Chapter 3, I apply the analytical paradigms in my literature review to the individual BAME creative producers who feature in my accompanying one-hour film *Multicology?* These practitioners come from a range of sectors including web design, fashion, film, theatre, creative writing and dance. Under section titles 'Economics and employment', 'Creative practices', 'Training and access', and 'Space and place' I examine how these symbol

producers operate within the political economy of East London's creative industries, and how their creative practice contests existing structures of power and racialised exclusion.

In Chapter 4, the concluding chapter, I argue for a theoretical re-orientation that anchors the analysis of race and culture in spatialised processes of industrial production. I advocate for a strategic response to emerging patterns of racialised exclusion in East London based on the creation of physically concentrated BAME creative ecologies or 'multicologies'. These multicologies would be based on strategic alliances between different ethnic minority groups, intersectoral cross-media collaboration, and partnerships between local government, higher education sectors, community groups and commercial sector.

CHAPTER 1

FRAMING AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The first two decades of this millennium have seen a radical transformation of East London. A part of the city that was, in the Victorian era, home to heavy industry and the docks, has now become home to increasing numbers of film companies, web designers, art galleries and a burgeoning artistic and cultural sector. Some of the city's poorest and most ethnically diverse boroughs have seen major demographic shifts and increasing commercial and public investment in the creative industries.

These changes are not of course restricted to East London. They mirror transformations that have been occurring around the globe in cities as diverse as San Francisco, Sheffield, Ontario, Lagos and Shanghai. There is a broad acknowledgment in business, government and academia that the creative industries constitute a highly significant and expanding sector in post-industrial knowledge economies. As Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) research shows, in 2016 the creative industries contributed almost £250bn to the economy, accounted for 14.2% of the UK's Gross Value Added (GVA), and was the fastest growing economic sector in the UK (DCMS and Bradley 2017). In 2015, the GVA of the creative industries in the capital was estimated at £42bn, accounting for 11.1% of total GVA in London, and for just under half (47.4%) of the UK total for the sector. As the London Mayor's office reports there were 622,600 jobs in London's creative industries in 2016, equivalent to 11.9% of total jobs in the capital (compared to 4.9% in the rest of the UK) (Rocks 2017).

> 'Culture' is now positioned at the centre of many urban policies. It has become a delivery vehicle for all manner of outcomes including social cohesion, sustainability, economic growth, civic pride, mental and physical well-being, social inclusion, and an ever-increasing array of other social, economic and environmental goals (Clifton 2008, p. 64).

Over the past two decades the growth of the creative industries, and the dramatic repurposing of the urban topography, has been greeted with enthusiasm by many academics and city planners, in particular by urban sociologist Richard Florida whose early work characterised creative workers as an energizing force with the power to re-animate ailing urban centres.

> Creative centres provide the integrated ecosystem or habitat where all forms of creativity - artistic and cultural, technological and economic - can take root and flourish (Florida 2003, p. 9).

1.2 The problematics

Significantly, in his most recent work *The New Urban Crisis* (2017) Florida largely recants his uncritical valorisation of the creative class and acknowledges that the processes he describes in his early writing may actually be producing new and unexpected forms of social inequality. This reversal mirrors an increasing awareness of the problematics of the regeneration process among academics and activists, see for example the detailed academic critique of Florida's work by Moretti (2012). Despite this, the notion of creativity as a redemptive force that can transform and improve declining urban centres remains a guiding principle for many governments and policy makers, including the London Mayor's office.[1]

While there are undoubtedly good reasons to promote the value of creative hubs at the local level, there nevertheless needs to be a more rigorous critical interrogation of the assumptions of inclusivity that often underpin these processes of creative regeneration, especially with regards to race and culture, as I will argue in the following chapters.

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[1] https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/creative-enterprise-zones_prospectus-2017.pdf

1.3 An industrial context of racial exclusion

Creative industries such as theatre, music, fine art and film would appear to be flourishing in East London. However, research by industry and government agencies shows racial diversity in these sectors has diminished nationally. University of Leicester research in 2018 showed only 4.4% BAME representation in the film sector (CAMEo 2018) and a report by the film directors' union Directors UK (also in 2018) showed that between 2013 and 2016, only 2.22% of UK television programmes were made by BAME directors (Directors UK 2018). A report by the Department of Culture Media and Sport showed that, while employment in the music, performing and visual arts sectors in the UK increased by 33% between 2011 and 2014 (more than double the rate of the creative industries as a whole), just 6% of jobs were filled by a person of BAME origin in 2014 (DCMS 2017). These reports indicate a continuation of a trend that emerged in an earlier study by Creative Skillset (2012) that showed that representation of BAME people in the creative media industries overall declined from the low figure of 7.4% of the total workforce in 2006 to 6.7% in 2009. It was just 5.4% in 2012. In London only 23.4% of creative economy jobs were filled by people from BAME groups which is a marked under representation compared to 32.9% of jobs outside of the creative economy, and in relation to the overall BAME population of London which was 40.2% at the time of the last census in 2011(Creative Industries Federation 2017; Rocks 2017).

While no specific data for rates of racial diversity in East London's creative sectors exist, the risk is that they reflect these national and city-wide trends. This is especially relevant given that, according to the 2011 census, the BAME population of Newham is 83.3% and Tower Hamlets 68%, while the BAME school population of Hackney and Tower Hamlets is over 80% (Kaye 2012). The expansion of the creative industries sectors in these majority BAME boroughs potentially constitutes a significant source of employment. However, continuing patterns of racialised exclusion in those industrial sectors means those local communities may not benefit from their growth locally.

1.4 Research goals

Given the overall underrepresentation of BAME workers in the creative sectors it was my initial intention to examine how far these forms of racialised inequality risked being physically re-inscribed on the urban topography of East London through the regeneration process. However, my interviews with creative workers in that part of the city reoriented my research slightly. They steered me towards thinking about how their particular forms of creative practice might operate as strategic models for contesting forms of racialised exclusion in the creative industries, and how their location in East London could act as a creative resource in their work.

1.5 Research outputs

In addition to this sixty-thousand-word thesis my PhD project also includes a sixty-minute documentary entitled *Multicology?* (2018). The film focuses on individual case studies of symbol producers working in East London and includes exponents from a number of different BAME backgrounds and various creative sectors including theatre, fashion, film, music, creative writing and web design. The film captures examples of these practitioners' creative practices and situates their work and personal histories within the broader cultural and industrial shifts that are reconfiguring this part of the city. It also contains interviews with two of the academics (Michael Keith and Anamik Saha) whose work features in my literature review and MP Chi Onwurah, the Labour Party shadow minister responsible for the creative industries.

In analysing the case studies who feature in the film I have deployed work produced by academics in the fields of urban sociology (eg Keith 2005, Cohen 2013, Sibley 1995), the study of the creative industries (eg Hesmondhalgh 2007, Saha 20017), cultural studies (eg Malik 2008, Hall 1992) and urban design (eg Anderson 2009, Thibaud 2012). My intention has been to develop an interdisciplinary analytical framework through which to understand the relationship between the creative industries, racial identity, and the urban regeneration process in East London. This, in turn, enables me to analyse how my individual case studies are produced as racialised subjects by this complex web of industrial, spatial and cultural

relationships, and the strategies they have adopted to contest processes of racialised exclusion in the creative industries.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 East London

As with all conceptual categories, analytical boundaries need to be demarcated. Hence my use of the term 'East London' requires clarification. For the purposes of my research this comprises the whole of six London boroughs – Tower Hamlets, Newham, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering – and the greater part of a seventh, Hackney (including Dalston and Hackney Wick). However, while these sections of the city might be, broadly speaking the subject of my study, my analytical gaze is primarily focused on the cultural agglomerations around Bethnal Green, Brick Lane, Shoreditch, Hoxton Square, Dalston, Stratford (including the Olympic Park) Hackney Wick and Old Street ('Silicon Roundabout'). These 'creative hubs' are the points of industrial concentration (or 'ground zeros') for these processes of urban transformation, and it is mainly around these creative focal points that the practitioners I interviewed circulate and work.

1.6.2 'Race'

There can be few more contested concepts than 'race'. My deployment of the term does not signify that I consider its meaning as given or unproblematic. Quite the opposite, I completely acknowledge its status as a historically and culturally constructed system of classification (Hall, 1992) that is loaded with political and ideological meanings. It is for precisely this reason that it is of such analytical significance. However, while 'race' clearly has no biological or intrinsic form outside the social cultural and historical meanings ascribed to it, this in no way erases its social materiality. 'Race' retains a profound weight when it comes to power relations, signifying practices, cultural formations, the distribution of opportunity, and access to material resources. It continues to be the psychic and discursive formation around which difference and processes of 'othering' are structured, and a defining constituent of the social and symbolic boundaries that mark out our collective affiliations and

modes of identification. It has also, as Anamik Saha (2017) suggests, become a delimiting classification that structures key industrial processes in the creative industries, especially the commissioning, marketing and distribution of cultural commodities. To ignore how these processes shape our everyday lived reality would be to deny a crucially important force in the construction of our normative social structures, and would constitute a profound form of political and psychic disavowal. So, in this sense 'race', as a psychosocial-cultural construct, plays a central role, both in my analysis, and the in the cultural, industrial, economic and social formations that I examine.

With regard to linguistic and conceptual categories I must accept that 'black', while it might at one historical moment have been analytically flexible enough to incorporate a variety of 'non-white' ethnic identities (Bourne 2016), is no longer sufficiently discursive or broad to subsume all those differences. In my writing I use the term to refer primarily to people of African-Caribbean heritage, as opposed to any other minority ethnic group. I also sometimes use the term 'mixed-race' which, while sometimes a contested term in the UK (Aspinall 2008) still occupies a discursive space not always afforded to it in the USA and can be useful in describing the position of people who occupy intersecting racial spaces. In this work I mainly use the term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) to describe the broad range of non-white populations in the UK, including African Caribbean, South Asian, East Asian, Latin American and Middle Eastern. While this process of conflating racialized identities on the basis of 'what they are not' can be seen as problematic in that it centres whiteness, it is also an acknowledgment of the fact that is precisely through this process that racialised discourses operate, i.e. by privileging whiteness and 'othering' difference. Attempting to operate outside this understanding could constitute a denial of how these forms of difference structure the social materiality I am examining and would not be analytically useful. Hence my general use of the default acronym BAME. Despite its problematic bureaucratic and managerial associations, the term BAME retains a necessary function as a short catch-all category that can incorporate a plurality of racialised identities (Sandhu 2018). In some ways it might be seen as interchangeable with the term 'people of color' that is prevalent in the USA and is increasingly used in the UK. However, I feel there should be no obligation to adopt a term simply because it has achieved wide usage in the USA. To do so might testify the success of American hegemonic processes more than its applicability in a British context. While the creation of contingent classifying terminology (such as BAME) is always problematic by virtue of who it includes and who it excludes, it is also impossible to operate

discursively without the use of some linguistic classifications. In this sense the way we understand the world is both limited and enabled by the language available to describe it. Either way, despite its problematic nature, and until some equivalent term emerges that does the same (or similar) job, BAME retains a necessary place in the lexicon, and I have used it in my writing to designate the multiplicity of racialized minorities in the UK.

1.6.3 The 'Creative Industries'

The other key term that clearly needs defining is 'the creative industries'. As David Hesmondhalgh points out in his seminal work *The Cultural Industries* (2007) the term 'cultural industries' (as distinct from 'creative industries') can be difficult to define. In its broadest anthropological sense 'culture' has been used to describe the 'whole way of life' of a social group. However, this definition implies that all industries, including for instance the car and drink industries, can be subsumed into the notion of 'cultural industries'. Given this difficulty, Hesmondhalgh highlights the need to establish analytical boundaries. He points to the way the concept of the 'cultural industries' has been deployed in a more focused way, based on the idea of culture as (quoting Raymond Williams, 1981, p. 13) 'the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (Hesmondhalgh 2007). Working from this definition Hesmondhalgh limits the core cultural industries to the following: advertising, broadcasting, film, internet industries, music, print and publishing, video and computer games.

However, Hesmondonhalgh does not include certain sectors which I examine in my research and which fall within a broader conception of the 'creative industries', namely fine art and the performing arts. He excludes these creative forms because they do not use 'industrial methods of reproduction'. For Hesmondhalgh mass reproduction and distribution are defining features of the 'cultural industries. However, for the purposes of my work I use a wider definition of the kind adopted by governmental funding agencies in the UK. Both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the British Council define the creative industries as 'those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property' (Newbigin 2014). It includes thirteen sectors: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market,

crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software (i.e. video games), music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio. While Hesmondhalgh's more restricted definition is completely justified in terms of the parameters he lays down for himself, especially given his emphasis on mechanical mass reproduction, this broader system of classification is the prevailing one in the government funding and regeneration context and one that reasonably (in my mind) embraces the 'live' arts as an integral feature of the creative economy. For this reason, the latter definition is the one I have deployed in my research.

It should be highlighted before concluding this section that my research project not only analyses forms of cultural practice and industrial structures of racialised inequality in the creative sectors. It also explores how strategic models can be deployed to facilitate more equitable forms of industrial practice and develop alternative structures of production in an urban setting. This combination of theoretical analyses and strategic intervention might, for some, seem a problematically partisan exercise. However, it is an approach that has precedents in this field. In some ways my research seeks to emulate the early writing of Charles Landry, who initially coined the term 'creative cities' (Landry 2000). Through a multidisciplinary approach he actively sought to develop concepts that could be used strategically to enact changes in the urban creative regeneration process. In this sense his work was not intended simply as an analytical exercise, but one that could make 'real world' interventions in policy and the shaping of urban space. However while Landry's early work on the 'creative city', like Richard Florida's early work, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), was largely an uncritical valorisation of the role the 'creative worker' plays in an urban context, my approach seeks to identify the potentially problematic and exclusionary way in which some regeneration process and discourses can operate, and examine strategies for contesting the forms of racialised inequality that they can produce.

1.7 Method and approach

1.7.1 An interdisciplinary paradigm

As previously stated, I deploy paradigms from a number of theoretical spheres in my research. These include work by academics in the fields of urban sociology (Keith, Cohen, Sibley), the creative industries (Hesmondhalgh, Saha), and cultural studies (Malik, Hall) and urban design (Berleant, Thibaud). I felt a failure to engage with a broad range of disciplines would leave methodological gaps in my analytical paradigm. My approach was also informed by the sense that it was out of the productive tension between intersecting fields of study that a novel and relevant hybrid analytical model might emerge, one that is sufficiently broad and flexible to begin to map the relationship between a form of historically contingent cultural classification (race), an interlocking network of representational practices and industrial structures (the creative industries) and a spatialised set of social relations and physical formations (the city).

In a broad sense interdisciplinarity has the potential to disrupt the boundaries between of different knowledge-based communities and, through a process of mutual critique, challenge the internal hegemonic logics of those respective disciplines.

> In the diversity and richness of interdisciplinary exchange, it may happen that attention is drawn to new questions that haven't been asked in one's field, and which henceforth inspire one's own research. Answers may even be found which were not sought after in the first place (Wachsmuth, 2016, p. 2).

However, from a more utilitarian perspective interdisciplinary research can also go beyond this productive theoretical interaction, to impact on non-academic communities and configure strategic approaches.

> Interdisciplinarity is not about the cross-fertilization of knowledge, or the breaking of boundaries or productive disruptions to static ways of thinking (all of these being traditional definitions of the value of interdisciplinarity) but rather is about utility. The new interdisciplinarity, as I would call this, is focussed on finding solutions to existing problems – it is, to use the present jargon, policy-relevant, fit to face the current challenges (Willis, 2012, p. 3).

In this sense the value of particular disciplinary paradigms can be seen as relational and conditioned by the degree to which they are useful in addressing specific theoretical and practical problems. Given that the issues I examine traverse the spatial, the cultural, and the industrial, only an analytical lens composited from different disciplines could provide an integrated approach and generate strategies that can be applied across these different dimensions of the regeneration process.

1.7.2 Why film?

In addition to the written component of the thesis, the production of a one hour film (entitled *Multicology?*) enabled me to capture my subjects moving image and performance-based creative practice and visually represent the spatial topography of East London (both historical and modern) that constitutes the physical context for these social processes.

The film aspect of my research project offered the possibility of deploying the visceral aesthetics of video, movement, visual composition, colour, music, and allying them to the analytical processes of social observation; as Tabachnick puts it, of

> grounding macro, abstract theories in the smelly details of everyday life, combining social analysis, engagement with social problems, with the pleasure of orchestrating multiple languages of film art: visual form, color, the dance of movement and meaning within and between the jostle of images, the sound within the scene and the music of a soundtrack (Tabachnick, 2007 p. 1).

However, while *Multicology?* does play off the sensorial pleasures and affective impact of the film medium, its primary function is to critique existing conceptual models of race, urbanism and creativity and platform examples of creative practice in a way that could reach audiences not usually impacted by academic research.

> Representing research in moving pictures and sound can be far more evocative, immediate and detailed than in a written text and can stimulate additional perceptions among people who record them as well as among people who view them (Thieme, 2012, p. 6).

In this way, while my film may operate in a different way to a written text, it can still act as a catalyst through which novel forms of critical understanding and knowledge transfer can

emerge, and which can be used in combination with panel discussions to mobilise critical analysis and debate.

Also implicit in my approach to the film is the videographic concern with decentering and problematising the objectifying gaze of the social sciences, and an acknowledgment of the situated and contextual nature of the knowledge those disciplines produce.

> Videography is positioned within larger ethnographic debates concerning how objectivity and subjectivity are conceptualised, and the call for ethnographies to be formulated as multi-vocal texts and 'reflexive mirrors' rather than objective data (Ruby, 1982). Videography understands and uses video as a tool to re-orientate the power of the researcher gaze and to give voice to research subjects/participants (Jewitt 2012, p. 3).

In this sense the film, and the research project as a whole, must acknowledge its own status as a product, at least partly, of the cultural formations, interpersonal networks and economic context that it observes. It should also be understood as part of a dialogic exchange between the researcher and the research subjects, in which the epistemological autonomy of the subject and the researcher's pre-existing analytical paradigms are engaged in a mutually transforming relationship. In this sense what my interview subjects said inevitably informed and structured the progress of my research, and my research questions and interaction with the subjects inevitably conditioned and facilitated their responses. This process applied to both the creative producers, and also the academics, who feature in my film. Michael Keith and Anamik Saha, who I interviewed for *Multicology?*, are two of the theorists whose work features heavily in my written literature review. This helped generate a productive interaction between the process of writing and process of filmmaking. My initial research informed my choice of interview subjects for the film, while the interview material that I recorded informed the writing of this thesis.

1.7.3 **The 'Theory/Practice' relationship.**

However, despite the use of film in my research it is important to clarify that this PhD is not a 'practice-based' research project in that the film component or 'creative artefact' is not the basis for the 'contribution to knowledge' (Candy 2006). In the case of my research the contribution to knowledge does not reside in my formal film practice approach but in the sociological and cultural analysis contained in the written component and partially

communicated through the film. Equally my research is not 'practice-led' in that it's is not intended to generate new understandings about film practice other than in its broadest sense as party of the creative industries based urban regeneration process.

Typically, as Candy (2006) points out, in 'practice-based' research projects the practice itself represents the subject of the written component and is the focus of analysis. However, while my thesis does contain reflections on the case studies featured in the film, the written component is not intended as reflection on the film practice component or its aesthetic properties. If anything, the film is intended as an adjunct to the written component. The film and writing elements are however linked by a shared set of research questions. In this sense they have the same analytical focus but operate in different but complimentary ways.

In my research film functions as a tool for gathering research, platforming the individual cases studies who feature in the written component and capturing the form their creative practice takes. It also operates as a vehicle for disseminating of some of the research work. In this sense it is secondary to the written component and simply captures interview and ethnographic material that is analysed in greater depth through the writing

The written thesis is the means by which the more substantive theoretical analysis is delivered, hence regarding its marking and assessment it is the greater part of the 60/40 % weighting. In the thesis the research questions are established, the theoretical precedents and literature reviewed, and the cases studies given in-depth analysis. It also proposes a strategic approach intended to partly address the issues and problems identified in the research. In this way my research can be seen as a departure from the practice based/led model in that the practice is secondary rather than central to the research.

However, while being neither 'practice based' or 'practice' led, by incorporating both film practice and a written thesis my research project does inevitably straddle the theory/practice divide with all the associated contradictions and issues. It is worth noting however, that the conventional binary opposition between these two categories (theory and practice) is itself often problematic. Writing can clearly be a form of practice and documentary film 'practice' can also be a method of critical investigation and a 'springboard for theorizing' (Weber 2008, p. 48). It is at the unstable but productive intersection between these two often overly-essentialised classifications that my research project sits. Indeed, part of my intention is to model an alternative to 'practice led' or 'practice based' research. One which might be more

accurately described as a 'combined theory and practice approach' in which both components are focused on a shared set of research question, while also being engaged in a dialogic interaction with one another.

1.7.4 Research Design

Quantitative empirical research studies by Directors UK, Creative Skillset and the Creative Industries Federation identified diminishing rates of racial diversity in the creative sectors. I hypothesised that these forms of racialised inequality were being spatially re-encoded through the regeneration process in East London, and that in this context 'creativity' could itself come to operate as a technology of racialised exclusion.

I identified some key research questions. These were. Firstly, how far are forms of racialised inequality in the creatives sectors materially reproduced through East London's regeneration process? Secondly how are BAME creative practitioners in this part of the city navigating those emerging forms of exclusion?

Having established a hypothesis and identified my key research questions and had to determine what research design best enabled me to test its validity and provide answers. These problems could not be examined purely text-based (or cultural studies) analysis, although this approach did play a part. It also required a sociological analysis that extended to social interactions, economic strategies, industry networks, and individual's relationship to built urban environments.

As Gerring and Cojocaru (2015) suggest the case study approach favours an in-depth study of a particular research problem rather than a sweeping statistical survey or comprehensive comparative inquiry. It can narrow down a very broad field of research into one or a few easily researchable examples and enables an understanding of a complex issue through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

> By way of definition, we stipulate that a case study (a) focuses on one or several cases that are explored in depth, (b) integrates diverse styles of (observational) evidence, and (c) potentially sheds light on a broader population, which it represents in an imperfect manner. (Gerring, Cojocaru 2015 p3)

Adopting a case studies-based research strategy offered the potential for in-depth quantitative assessment and offered an understanding of complex cultural, social and economic processes through the detailed analysis of a limited sample of creative practitioners.

Using this case study-based approach I adopted an interview-based methodology, combined with an observational approach and the analysis of creative texts and works. Film would be used as the medium through which to collect this data through capturing case studies of individual creative practice.

1.7.5 Case study selection

My choice of case-studies was not intended as a random sample. Rather it was indicative in that it was 'intended to represent a broader population of cases in some relevant respect, which may be descriptive or causal.' (Gerring and Cojocaru 2015 p5). In my case the selection process was orientated around finding a sample that was representative of a range of creative sectors, a range of racial/cultural backgrounds (African Caribbean, Asian, East Asian and mixed race) and unified by their concentration in 'East London (as defined in the introduction). It was also intended to draw on an approximately similar number of female and male subjects and include creative practitioners with disabilities

As stated, my goal intention to select individuals from a range of creative industries. These industries are defined in by The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the British Council in my 'creative industries section' as 'those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent with the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property' (Newbigin 2014). According to this definition they include thirteen sectors: advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software (i.e. video games), music, the performing arts, publishing, software, and television and radio.

However, due to time constraints in the film and writing component my selection of case studies was not fully aligned with this definition. Fine art, and antiques were not included. I did however select two representatives from the performing arts (theatre and dance). The creative practitioners who feature in the film and written thesis include fashion designer Wale Adyemi, grime musician MC Nyja, dancer and choreographer Jreena Green, filmmaker Kole Onile-ere, novelist Tessa McWatt, theatre director Dominic Hingorani, and inclusive wiki

web designers Rufaro Asuquo, Paul Christian and Lee Philip. I also thought it important to explore education and access frameworks and chose mentor facilitator Fran Plowright to represent this sector (she also has a background as a radio producer). The idea of 'creative ecologies' and the spatially concentrated/ embodied interaction between individual creative sectors (Howkins, D'video) was central to my overall analysis. Given this was the case I chose managed workspace 'The Workers' Café' owned by Mike Ashley as an example of a contact zone where different creative sectors were given the space to interact.

In addition to selecting from a range of creative industries I also endeavoured to choose subjects who had a range of differing positions with regards funding institutions and broader cultural spheres. In this sense some, like theatre director Dominic Hingorani, inhabited an 'elite' publicly funded cultural sector, while others like Grime MC Nyja occupied a 'subcultural' space and others such as fashion designer Wale Adyemi operated primarily in a commercial sector. Overall this range of case studies enabled a comparative dimension to the research that would not have been possible with individuals from more similar backgrounds and industry sectors.

I had previously worked in the commercial music video, independent drama and Grime music sectors, and as a sessional university lecturer and on community arts projects. I had encountered most of my research subjects during the three decades working in these sectors. In terms of the films academic contributors I had met Dr Anamik Saha at a conference and accessed the Professor Michael Keith through a shared contact (head of the Migrant Rights network Don Flyn) with whom I had worked on a previous film project. I had initially met MP Chi Onwurah (shadow minister for the digital industries) when I worked as an assistant director for her sister film Director Ngozi Onwurah the early 1990s

It should be noted that the selection of case studies subjects was not intended to be exhaustive, but rather should be seen as indicative of certain strategic and aesthetic approaches. It would be wrong to burden my research subjects with the unrealistic expectation that their experiences can embody and/or represent the very diverse experiences of all BAME practitioners working in East London. To expect them to do so would be to unfairly unload the weight of what Kobena Mercer called 'the burden of representation' (1994) squarely onto their shoulders. However, I did make an attempt to select subjects from a range of backgrounds, with the awareness that this would provide a more indicative sample. I would not however want to impose an artificial coherence or imagined unity of experience

on the sample of practitioners. Their experiences and perspectives simply constitute a jumping off point for further exploration rather than a point of analytical closure.

Overall my research entailed a qualitative rather than quantitative focus. My filmed interviews had a primarily an 'emic' and interpretivist orientation, concentrating on the meanings the subjects place on their own social experiences and creative practice. My research did not incorporate extended fieldwork or participant observation so cannot, in formal terms, be defined as an 'ethnographic study', but it did include an ethnographic component in the sense that it was seeking to establish the shared cultural values, life experiences and symbolic practices of a spatially localised social group through qualitative and interpretivist inquiry. Also, my own life experience living and working in East London, and being integrated into the creative networks I examine, means there is an auto-ethnographic dimension to the work that must be acknowledged, and which informed both my focus of enquiry and choice of research subjects.

In general, an interview and case-study based method enabled a personalised, phenomenological approach that captured the subject's individual creative strategies and their reasons for adopting them. Equally, by focusing on case studies from different sectors those individual experiences could be located within specific physical and cultural settings (East London, the Hackney Empire, Brick Lane etc) and then related to broader demographic trends and theoretical discourses as part of the written component. This written component provided me with the opportunity to reflect on my own methods and offer a more detailed theoretical analysis of the different case studies featured in the film.

1.7.6 Analytical focus

As previously stated, my research subjects were chosen to represent a range of creative sectors, ethnicities, genders, and class backgrounds. However, while attempting to make the case studies inclusive from the viewpoint of gender, sexuality, disability and class, the primary focus of my research is race. In this sense, while completely accepting the intersecting influence of those other factors on inclusion and exclusion in the creative sectors, there was not the space to give those mediating differentials equal attention. Similarly, while acknowledging there are interlocking forms of exclusion operating in this sphere, by

conflating their analysis one runs the risk of negating the particularities of each specific form. This can be the case when forms of racial exclusion are reductively understood as simply a by-product of class-based inequality. As Gargi Bhattacharyya observes:

> We have lived through a time when those least interested in social justice have hijacked the language of class, often in order to sideline discussions of racism (Bhattacharyya 2017, p. 21).

A similar process has occurred historically whereby the interests of women of colour have been subsumed within broader struggles around gender, often dominated by white feminists. (Daniels, 2016). These forms of analytical conflation can sometimes serve to obscure the way that middle-class BAME creative practitioners may, despite their class position, be the subjects of distinct forms of racialised exclusion within the creative sectors, and also the way BAME women might encounter obstacles not encountered by white women in those industries. For this reason, race, rather than any other intersecting forms of exclusion, constitutes the analytical focus of this research.

1.7.6 Overall approach

In terms of my general approach I have an interest in seeing how power relations in industrial sectors impact on the formation of physical space and the identities of workers in those sectors. My interest is in seeing how these relations of power and production manufacture, not just cultural texts but also the texts' producers themselves, constituting their subjectivities in relation to the hegemonic logics within those industrial sectors. Beyond that, I wish to examine how these spatialised and racialised subjects are engaged in a dialogic relation with their physical environments, where they both form and are formed by the local industrial structures and 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson, 2009) of the urban spaces they inhabit, and where these structures and atmospheres becomes re-encoded in their creative practice. My analytical approach is temporalised (diachronic) in that it tracks industrial and cultural shifts that have occurred across time, including changes in the dominant discourses of cultural funding. It is also spatialised (synchronic) in that it maps the urban topography and how it spatially embodies forms of racially based exclusion and displacement.

My research is not intended a solely analytical or academic exercise. As an approach it is designed to produce observations and paradigms that can be operationalised in an

administrative, activist and policy setting, in short that can function as a form of praxis. This research, like other case-study based work, has the potential to produce strategic models that can act as templates for forms of cultural practice and organisational structures in the creative industries. It identifies different creative approaches that have been deployed by the subjects in the film, and relates them to particular cultural shifts, occupational structures, economic imperatives and urban transformations that have occurred historically, and examines the possible application of those approaches in a broader creative industries and urban regeneration context. Given that industry reports have identified diminishing rates of diversity across the different creative sectors it asks how those processes of exclusion can be contested and mediated, and what strategies might be useful in challenging those emerging patterns of marginalisation. In this way the film component is designed to make an intervention in settings where conventional academic texts would rarely feature, for instance at public community, political and industry events, and at those specifically structured around film screenings.

In this approach, the value of research is predicated on some degree of practical usability in a general context outside academia. This study is not conceived as some kind of objective or politically neutral analytical exercise, isolated from economic, cultural and political entanglements, rather its intention is to embrace those various entanglements. Its goal is to disrupt the boundaries that sometimes separate academia from local communities, and to argue for an academic engagement with the local regeneration process that is practical and tactical as well as analytical. In this way it is a form of knowledge production that is intimately engaged with the idea of civic engagement, despite the term sometimes being accused of meaning 'so many things to so many people that it clarifies almost nothing' (Berger 2011, p. 2).

The conceptual opposition between academia and 'the local community' that is implicit in the notion of civic engagement may well be a largely fictive construct. It is one that can sometimes operate to ideologically cleanse the types of knowledge produced in universities, and falsely counterpoint it to the everyday common-sense assumptions of the world outside, despite both types of knowledge being historically and culturally constituted. However, given that academic knowledge monopolies (that is to say HE institutions) are increasingly governed by a neo-liberal managerial discourse that puts an emphasis on the universities protecting and monetising their intellectual capital (Holmwood 2014), it may be that the

figurative border between the academy and civil society is becoming ever more concrete, and in greater need of dismantling. In this sense this research should be seen as an active attempt to create routes of engagement and dissemination that connect higher education institutions, and the University of East London in particular, to local government, BAME communities and industrial sectors.

1.8 Chapter conclusion

In the preceding chapter I have highlighted the industry reports that initially activated my interest, and which showed decreasing rates of racial diversity across the creative sectors. My intention was to illustrate how the valorisation of the 'creative city' in regeneration discourses can operate to obscure forms of racialised exclusion within the creative industries driven regeneration process. I also explored the contingent but necessary use of BAME as a catch-all term that can include a number of racialised identities and concluded the chapter by examining the usefulness of an interdisciplinary approach, and the benefits of film as a research and dissemination tool. My position is that this combined film-writing approach offers the most effective method to explore my area of study and disseminate the results in a way that has the broadest possible impact. In the following chapter, I review the academic work that I have deployed to map the relationship between race, creativity and the city, specifically East London.

CHAPTER 2:
RACE, CREATIVE PRODUCTION AND EAST LONDON
A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I map the work of theorists who have explored the relationship between race, urban space and cultural production. My goal is to construct an analytical framework through which to view the practices of a number of individual East London based creative workers. These case studies come from a range of backgrounds including music, theatre, film, fashion and web design. My intention is to explore the way BAME creative practice operates within the economic structures of the creative industries, and also how those creative forms are located within the superdiverse cultural setting of East London. I would argue this an area of study that needs to be understood both temporally and spatially, and requires an analysis drawn partly from a political economy of the creative industries, a sociology of the city and a cultural history of BAME creative practice. Implicit in my choice of academic work is an awareness of an interlocking dialogic relationship between industrial structures, physical space and cultural discourse that shapes both the form that creative practice takes, and also the subjectivities of the cultural workers who produce it. The development of this analytical paradigm enables a critical reflection in later chapters on how structures of racialised exclusion can be contested by alternative models of industrial production, creative practice and self-organisation.

2.2 Cultural quarters as contact zones and the ambivalence of racialised cultural production

In his work 'After the Cosmopolitan? Multicultural Cities and the Future of Racism' (2005) Michael Keith specifically examines the function of creative quarters in the cultural economy. He explores their relations to multicultural diaspora populations and identifies clear patterns of ethnic exclusion in the cultural industries. He also marks out a fundamental analytical disjuncture in the examination of minority cultural production in a cosmopolitan urban context. This takes the form of two contrasting approaches to the topic: one that is characterised by a celebration of the social and cultural potential of inter-cultural production, and the other that views minority cultural practices as thoroughly interpolated into capitalist modes of commodification.

According to Keith the first position holds that:

> Music, performing arts, literature, figurative and abstract representations
> know no synthetic boundaries: they realise an actually existing
> globalisation. They are putatively the vehicles for the precious creolisation,
> hybridity and mixing of cultures that challenges the conventional in
> aesthetics and hegemonics in politics (Keith 2005, p. 113).

As he points out, however, others see these cultural processes as simply part of an 'inauthentic performative cultural dialogue' that 'commodifies ethnic difference' and 'serves as the handmaiden to capital and the process of urban gentrification' (Keith 2005, p. 113).

Crucially for my own research Keith articulates a conviction that the metropolis is the analytical focus par excellence for the understanding of race and culture, and that, increasingly they (race and culture, and by extension the cultural industries) are the very forces that physically configure the conceptual and physical terrain of the city.

> An examination of the growing power of culture (and the cultural industries)
> to shape city form might lend important insights into the manner in which
> we conceptualise not only contemporary patterns of race and multi-culture
> but also the more casually invoked notions of globalisation itself (Keith
> 2005, p. 113)

Another crucial and useful intervention by Keith relates to his critique of the idea that all subcultural or organic cultural forms that emerge spontaneously out of the cities multicultural

mix are inherently valid and should always be positioned in binary opposition to cultural strategies that originate with governmental initiatives and that are mapped onto the city 'from above'. In this sense he interrogates the 'misleading juxtaposition of globalisation from above and globalisation from below'. This crude opposition must, in his mind, be replaced by what he describes as a 'perspectival dance' that addresses the 'ambivalence of "city life" and neither naively celebrates creolisation for its own sake nor reifies the boundary markers of race and ethnicity' (Keith 2005, p. 114). However, while this deconstruction of simplistic binarisms, and celebration of ambivalence is undoubtedly valid, I would also argue that this critique should not act to efface the very real inequality in access to material resources that characterises different modes of cultural production in an urban context.

Keith goes on to interrogate his own implicit assumption that cultural forms have the power to shape the city. Firstly, he highlights the need for greater rigour when it comes to the actual definition of cultural practitioners. He very rightly points out that, in the study of the sector, there is often a 'category error' where 'international multinational corporations and a squatting artists are lumped together as part of the cultural industries' (Keith 2005, p. 114) This is undoubtedly the case and evident from my research. It is of course necessary to distinguish between semi-autonomous, subcultural producers or 'micro producers' (for instance grime music artists) who have emerged out of the local community and multinational media conglomerates which have relocated their production offices to East London. In terms of economic resources, social and political influence, and the power to configure their physical urban environment through commercial investment they inhabit completely different worlds (even though they may be spatially proximitous to each other). An analogous relationship might be between an internationally recognised fine artist who relocates their studio to a renovated warehouse in Hackney Wick and the local graffiti artist who tags the building with some graffiti art. While both are local symbol creators it would be facile not to acknowledge that they are positioned differently in relation to the creative economy.

Keith also points to another possible reason for the increased perception that culture has the power to shape the urban landscape. He asks if this 'emphasis on culture might just be product of being valorised as an academic sphere of study' (2005, p. 114), the implication being that the growth of cultural studies as a theoretical discipline might have imbued culture with a disproportionate weight when it comes to the analysis of the city, especially given the

fact that culture has always, to some extent, acted to configure industrial processes and urban space. While this is of course a valid caution, and an interesting reflection on the way the value attached to academic fields of study can impact on other areas of knowledge production, it should not obscure the particularities of the post-industrial knowledge economies. As other theorists (for instance Hesmondhalgh, who I examine later) point out, the exponential growth of the creative industries as a specific economic sector dedicated to the commodification of cultural texts is intrinsically linked to the emergence of new technologies of mass reproduction and distribution that have developed in late capitalist societies.

In either case, for Keith, these caveats do not erase the significance of the cultural industries they just qualify them. In fact he supports the theoretical value of my own research project's primary goal when he suggests it would be worthwhile 'refocusing the lens through which the city is read' to examine the way the existence of cultural quarters reshapes the way we think about 'multicultural metropolises and the issues of 'commodification, gentrification and globalisation'. As he further states, in the cultural industries sector there is 'clear and pressing evidence of an increasingly complex pattern of both social and economic exclusion and inclusion of ethnic minority communities' (Keith 2005, p.115). It is this identification of clear patterns of ethnic exclusion in the creative industries that my research is intended to examine. Keith's use of the term 'included' in the above quote also invites questions about his meaning. If minority communities are in fact 'included' in the processes he describes, what form does that take? Are they simply interpolated as fetishised or exoticised subjects of an orientalising discourse, or as beneficiaries of institutional benevolence in the form of concessionary training initiatives, or as actual independent cultural producers in their own right.

Keith points to the growth and consolidation of distinct spatially located minority cultural market places as defining characteristics of the metropolis, 'The emergence of Chinatown and other ethnic enclaves as sites of cultural consumption has provoked important debates that have considered the changing cartographies of cultural quarters within the rubric of contemporary urbanism' (Keith 2005, p. 116)

Keith cites Jane M Jacobs work *Edge Of Empire* (1996) which explores the gentrifying potential of the exotic and the authentic and talks about the convergence of local government, private developers and the London Development Agency all of whom acknowledge cultural

industries as a key driver in the economic development of East London. He also references Jacobs to point out how white anti-racist and anti-gentrification activists were perplexed by the readiness of Bengali businesses around Brick Lane to reclaim the term, 'Banglatown', which was coined by right wing popularists, and use it to rebrand the area as an enclave of exotic consumption (Keith 2005, p. 117)

I would argue that, given the need for minority culture not simply to contest monetised paradigms of cultural value but also to deploy them instrumentally for economic survival, this readiness should not really come as a great surprise. Equally this contradiction also characterises other forms of minority cultural enterprise such as underground UK hip hop and grime music, which despite being embraced by cultural critics for contesting dominant hegemonic processes, carry with them not simply a desire to challenge existing economic relations but also to succeed within them.

Crucially however Keith points out that 'culture - once seen within mainstream studies of city development as superstructural effect - has in the last decade come to feature as a significant driver of city change in its own right' (2005 p. 117) He cites three main reasons for this: the commodification of culture, residential preference and a globalised sensibility. He goes on to postulate a series of questions that, while not identical with the research question I am addressing in my PhD, are remarkably similar and which constitute a valuable framework for researching the relationship between race and the cultural industries.

Keith asks the following:

- What impact will major sectoral expansion in the new creative industries have on the employment patterns of ethnic minority communities?
- What is the emergent ethnic and gender composition of the cultural industries labour force?
- What are the processes by which characteristics of ethnic diversity, cultural difference and 'multiculture' become commodities in the new cultural industries to be marketed'?
- What is the institutional form taken by expanding firms in this sector of the economy in terms of labour processes, recruitment practices and supply chains?

- What is the relationship between one particular industrial sector and the attempts to develop redundant capital fixed in land assets through new forms of state intervention to produce new 'cultural quarters' in the contemporary city? (Keith 2005, p. 118)

These questions rightly highlight employment and recruitment as important areas of study. This is especially relevant in a current context given the dramatic decline in participation of minorities in the cultural industries demonstrated by the industry reports I cite in my introduction.

Keith recounts how historically migrant flows of labour in 1950s and 1960s initially were seen as 'substitute or 'replacement' labour to do jobs British workers could not or would not do. Migrant groups were often located in certain employment sectors and consequently in certain areas of the city: for instance the Sikh population tended to settle in Southall near Heathrow airport, Jamaican migrants often worked in transport and the health service (many settled in Brixton) while Bengali migrants mainly settled in East London where many were employed in the clothing and restaurant business. In this way he usefully links employment patterns to physical location in the metropolis and goes further to argue that 'the homogenising force of capitalism has been able to draw on the ostensibly contradictory cultural fictions of gender and ethnic difference to produce specifically racialised divisions of labour.' (Keith 2005, p. 118)

However, this interpretation does seem to posit migrant communities as somewhat passively positioned by racialised narratives imposed on them by the marketplace and white British culture. Is this the case? Might there not be another interpretation that allows a greater degree of agency on the part of these communities. Could it not also be the case that those communities are consciously drawing on cultural resources (i.e. music and food) that they identify as having economic and cultural value within the economic nexus of postcolonial Britain? It may mean that these communities sometimes collude with their own interpolation into fictive racialised tropes, and are effectively 'performing difference', but it also allows for a more nuanced interpretation of how migrant communities are sometimes forced to instrumentalise their own cultural heritage for the purposes of economic survival. This process is one that Keith does acknowledge in his work, especially in his reflections on the way Bengali businesses redeployed the label Banglatown to promote local enterprises. However, I would argue this analysis needs to be broadened to examine how minority symbol

producers in particular choose, or are compelled by circumstances, to instrumentally deploy their multicultural capital in a highly competitive neoliberal creative economy.

According to Keith, patterns of exclusion and civil unrest over last the few decades have created general acceptance that racialized exclusion from social and economic life can create problems in the context of multicultural cities. This fundamental recognition informs research like my own, that highlights inequality and under representation of minority creative practitioners in the cultural industries and looks at its implications for civic integration, social cohesion and cultural conflict.

Keith points out that the focus in academic work has tended to be on the labour market, equal opportunities and social mobility for first and second-generation immigrants. There has been less focus on third and fourth-generation migrants, however Keith asserts these communities are increasingly embedded into cultural quarters and 'there are a few clearly identifiable signs that some of the strongest forms of economic growth seen in growth sectors in post-industrial cities across the world are both conceptually and geographically related to concentrations of ethnic minority settlement' (2005, p. 120). However, I would argue the industry reports cited earlier suggest the opposite, and that the concentration of creative industries sectors in urban locations may be synonymous with the displacement of BAME communities.

Keith raises important and pertinent questions about the relationship between creative cities and future multicultural urbanisms. He rightly highlights the possible 'market advantage of diversity' (Keith 2005, p. 121) in a globalised context where ethnically diverse markets and transcultural literacy are of increasing economic significance. He also acknowledges the historic role of 'multi-cultural promotional strategies of ethnic exoticism' that have attempted to market difference to consumers hungry for novelty and variation. Crucially he also starts to explore the 'associated link between segregated settlement and gentrification' that is at the heart of urban demographic and cultural change. However I would argue there is a fundamental ambivalence in this process given that, while 'conceptually, new cultural industries emphasise diversity as a key strength of urban locales' by 'marketing their ethnic diversity as a key locational strength' (Keith 2005, p.121), there is also the possibility that those industries become increasingly 'risk averse' and ethnically exclusionary in their recruitment process over time. This results in a form of cultural gentrification of the creative industries that mirrors the residential gentrification of the areas of the city where they are located.

Seen this way, 'diversity', along with experimentation and innovation, are seen as necessary for economic growth, developing new products, and accessing new markets but may also be inherently threatening to neoliberal market processes in that they embody 'risk'. Therefore, while there may be a public discourse within the regeneration and creative industries sector that valorises diversity and the desirability of an urban location, this can potentially veil social and economic processes that reproduce exclusionary practices, and which ensure a preponderance of white middle-class workers in the creative industries.

However despite this caveat it is clear that, as Keith states, some urban regeneration programmes 'make an explicit link between the promotion of this particular form of economic growth and the promotion of multiracial economic inclusion to combat problems of social exclusion' (2005, p.122) and it is in this process that Keith invests at least some degree of optimism. It is indeed a possibility that governmental and commercial initiatives can mitigate economic and social exclusion through the creation of cultural quarters. However, the degree to which these publicly funded initiatives can also sometimes unwittingly reproduce forms of racial and class-based stratification requires greater critical interrogation. This is especially the case, given that publicly funded organisations such as the BBC have proved just as lacking as commercial companies when it comes to racial inclusion.[2]

That notwithstanding, Keith asserts governmental agencies have the potential to make an intervention in this sphere as 'facilitators' (through the provision of public infrastructure, planning strategies, site acquisition etc.) and to work to counter 'a straightforwardly free market understanding of the territories of the contemporary city' (2005, p.123).

On the relationship of planning to social equity, Keith argues 'the "new cosmopolitanism" of cultural developments indicates a distinctive response to urban fragmentation. In this sense "cultural policy" and urban planning seek to harmonise economic development with social and aesthetic improvements based on the valorisation of "difference"' (Keith 2005, p. 123). I would argue that, while this can clearly be a progressive strategy, when it comes to developing London's creative industries sectors this has been a highly ambivalent and uneven process under both successive New Labour and Conservative governments. This is at least partly attributable to the absence of city-wide local government in the period between the abolition of the GLC in 1986 and the restoration of the London Mayor's Office in 2000. This

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[2] https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/sep/14/ofcom-criticises-uk-broadcasters-for-woeful-lack-of-diversity

inevitably impeded the development of integrated city-wide creative industries strategies of the type that cities like Sheffield pursued throughout the 1990s, and which resulted in the creation of a dedicated council supported 'cultural quarter' in that city.[3]

Keith does however acknowledge the fundamentally ambivalent nature of the 'cultural quarter', where different economic and cultural structures converge to produce an 'accumulation of slightly different spatial economies i.e. object of marketing promotion, producer network and governance territory. These intersecting forces means that the "narrative spaces" that make the cultural quarter visible might be plural and incommensurable' (2005, p.123).

One of Keith's undeniable strengths is his ability to represent this fundamental ambivalence and 'perspectival' complexity of the city where both relations of difference and sameness are simultaneously inscribed. For him the city 'is an ambivalent space. It is characterised simultaneously by both the fixity of the boundaries of ethnic difference and the flux of cultural hybridisation' (2005, p. 123).

It is partly due to this notion of ambivalence that he goes on to critique what he considers the reductive and binary representations of 'globalisation from above and from below' presented by scholars such as Appadurai (1996). For Keith, the simplicity of the belief that 'what comes from above is bad and from below is good would barely warrant plausibility in a different academic context' (2005, p. 123). However, it may also be true that Keith's apparent political commitment to managed governmental interventions 'from above' to support and facilitate multicultural urban regeneration might also mean he is less likely to identify the problems associated with some of these initiatives.

Overall Keith's book makes a crucial contribution to the theorisation of race, urbanism and the spatial localisation of racially diverse cultural quarters, highlighting both the role of cities as the intersecting points at which global and local culture converge to create new cultural forms, and also as the site within which racial stratification is simultaneously consolidated and contested. He points to the emergence of ethnically multicultural creative centres of production and consumption as a positive effect of the process of cosmopolitan urbanisation

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[3] https://issuu.com/meorung1912/docs/area_action_plan_for_cultural_indus

and highlights the potential for governmental initiatives to support these diverse communities, networks and spaces.

However, Keith does not distinguish enough between sites of consumption and sites of production. While he rightly acknowledges a fundamental interpenetration of both these processes he does not perhaps explore the distinction sufficiently, especially when it comes to high-status, capital-intensive creative sectors, such as television, film and web design, as opposed to more conventionally 'ethnic' spheres of production such as the restaurant sector that predominantly define the ethnic enclaves he talks about (such as Banglatown).

It is also important to analyse the difference between the organic emergence of 'enigmatic' (Vickery, 2011 p. 8) minority consumer-based enclaves such Banglatown and Chinatown and the strategically conceived and planned creation of large-scale regeneration projects by government and development agencies. Unlike the first process, where local demographic factors spontaneously lead to the concentration of business and creative activity in one part of the city, the strategically planned construction of sites of global financial and cultural production, that draw on a mobile transnational workforce (such as Canary Wharf and Here East at the Olympic Village) are often not representative of the local ethnically diverse populations. While Keith is enthusiastic about the potential of governmental interventions to nurture and facilitate multicultural creative industries development, as opposed to purely commercial interventions that are driven by less inclusive economic imperatives, he perhaps misses the way these initiatives can also act to entrench social privilege and exclusionary practices while actually masking this process behind a discourse of public service and social improvement. The analysis of these questions is central to my own research into East London's BAME creative practitioners, as is the question of how far the re-encoding of racial difference has become normalised and invisible in this process of local creative regeneration.

There are also other questions about what drives localisation in ethnically identified consumer-driven sites (i.e. Banglatown) that need to be examined. In some ways it seems counter intuitive to say there should be many businesses selling similar products in the same space. Would it not make sense to market your product in an area where there is less competition? In one sense the model of Chinatown and Banglatown harks back to the medieval practice where workers from the same crafts such as bakers and carpenters etc, were often aggregated on the same street (which was often named after them). There is an established logic to this process that marks out a well-defined destination for consumers

looking for generic products, and which acts to concentrate the consumer and production processes (which in the case of the food service sector necessarily co-exist in the same space) as they did in traditional pre-industrial craft industries where the point of production was also the point of consumption. However, can that same logic be applied to the production of creative commodities in the post-industrial era, where distribution points are more diffuse and increasingly globalised? The argument for concentration of businesses, in this model, is very different. It's not so that consumers can access them in one location. It's also not that labour needs to be highly concentrated around production facilities as was the case with early industrial factory modes of production that required a localised labour force and necessitated their movement out of the countryside into the cities in the first place.

In the case of the post-industrial creative industries there are distinct rationalising discourses that need to be unpacked. In some ways, given methods for the online sharing of work, the decentralisation of the production process and the high costs of commercial rent, there are strong arguments for the dispersal of creative production networks towards the regions or indeed globally and away from a centralised concentration in the metropolis. What justifies their continued presence in urban creative quarters is another imperative altogether, one that places embodied social interaction and cultural exchange at the centre of technical and creative innovation and argues that the creative quarters generate a 'synergistic' relationship between practitioners and cultural forms that facilitates innovation and creativity.[4] In this model these processes act as a network or 'force field' of integrated complementary creative processes configuring and 'cross-collateralising' different modes of production and types of cultural product. This is increasingly the raison d'être of the creative city, which is why the question of how cultural and racial difference intervene to configure and bisect this social and creative connectivity is of such profound significance.

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[4] This is explored in the case-studies chapter in relation to Marianna d'Ovidio, and Serena Vicari Haddock's work on 'Fashion and the city. Social interaction and creativity in London and Milan' 2007

2.3 The creative industries as technologies of risk management

While Keith uses the tools of urban sociology to map out the racialisation of physical urban space David Hesmondhalgh views the production of culture through the lens of the political economist. In 'Change and Continuity, Power and Creativity', the introduction to his highly influential work *The Cultural Industries*, (2002), Hesmondhalgh lays out the primary conceptual framework for the analysis of the creative industries, pinpointing the major thinkers and exploring some of the analytical problematics. He highlights the increased centrality of the cultural industries to national economies: 'cultural industries companies can no longer be seen as secondary to the "real" economy, where durable, "useful" goods are manufactured' (Hesmondhalgh 2002, p. 1). He argues that, given the increased commodity value of 'culture' in the global knowledge economy, there has been a 'recentring' of national economies away from heavy industry and manufacturing towards creativity and the production of cultural artefacts. Transnational creative and information-based corporations such as Disney and News Corp have replaced traditional manufactures as the most wealthy (and arguably powerful) industrial entities on the planet. He points out that these types of companies are in a process of radical transformation and now operate across a number of different creative forms and are integrated into increasingly complex financial structures.

Hesmondhalgh argues that the market for cultural goods is increasingly global and that cultural texts are increasingly intertextual and hybrid. He suggests that due to the explosion of new media technologies and novel creative application of digital technologies there has been a de-bordering or 'de-territorialisation' of creative media flows and argues (I would say rather optimistically) that this might mean that US cultural domination is diminishing. He also questions if these changes represent genuine 'epochal' shifts in the way culture is produced and consumed, and points to important continuities with previous formations such as TV which continue to play a major role.

He asks the fundamental question: 'why do cultural industries matter?' In answering he points to the high degree of cultural and social influence the media have in constituting 'our inner, private lives: our fantasies, emotions and identities' (2002, p. 3). Moreover, the sheer amount of time we spend absorbing cultural texts makes the cultural industries a highly influential factor in our lives. Importantly, as he points, out these texts are generated by powerful corporations which are profit driven and questions how far they act to further the

interests of their owners and their political allies. However, in contrast to a notion of the cultural industries as monolithic and cohesive entities, he argues for a view of them as 'complex, ambivalent and contested' (2002, p. 3). This is exemplified by the way some big corporations produce cultural texts that sometimes appear to contradict their own economic interests, as they cater for audience's appetite for radical and rebellious ideas.

Hesmondhalgh articulates a post-Marxist approach that challenges the notion of the 'artist' as somehow exceptional and privileged and attempts to relocate art practice into everyday economic processes. He defines 'artistic practice' as distinctive mode of human creativity consisting of the manipulation of symbols for entertainment and information. However, he considers the terms 'symbolic creativity' and 'symbol creators' less encumbered with individualistic notions of 'genius' than the terms 'art' and 'artist'. He argues that, as a reaction against the fetishisation of their work, symbol creators have previously been slightly ignored within the study of cultural industries, and that greater emphasis has been placed on the creativity of consumers of cultural texts and non-professional creators. However, as he points out the industry still requires individual creators even if they rely on corporations for reproduction, and distribution.

Crucially for my line of inquiry Hesmondhalgh highlights the way the cultural industries do not exist in some kind of rarefied vacuum but inevitably reflect broader social inequalities and injustices along the lines of class, gender and ethnicity and states there are 'vast inequalities' of access to the cultural industries (2002, p. 5).

He also points out that while symbol creators are pushed to produce certain types of texts by the industry, corporations still have to make concessions to symbol creators by giving them more autonomy than they would to other types of workers. To compensate for the relative autonomy afforded to creators in the production process, companies tend to keep a tighter rein on reproduction and distribution. While this might be true up to a point, and while the industry often promotes the value of high status creative auteurs, I would argue that given that it is a high risk and high cost industry producers also heavily regulate the production process, especially in the more commercial and higher budget sector. This process operates firstly, in terms of which projects and symbol creators are commissioned, funded and employed, and secondly how those projects and producers are micromanaged through the actual process of creation. Like Hesmondhalgh, I would argue that there is a fundamental ambivalence in the operations of the cultural industries whereby they need to support creative

innovation while also seeking to minimise the inherent risks entailed in that process. I would contend, however, that the process of evaluation through which some texts and producers are selected over others for financial support remains rather under-theorised in Hesmondhalgh's work. I would argue these processes are inevitably informed and structured not just by a speculative sense of 'what sells' in the globalised market-place but also what is of personal value to the funders involved, and which in turn reflects their own 'positionality', cultural experience and visceral empathy.

Hesmondhalgh identifies some key features of creative commodities that increasingly define them in the digital age. These are high production costs and low reproduction costs. These factors increasingly push the industry towards a reliance on 'blockbusters' that cost a lot to make but can recoup through wide-scale distribution. They are also types of commodities that do not diminish if someone consumes them as they can be endlessly reproduced (unlike like food materials for instance). This analysis however, understandably given the time he was writing, may not adequately reflect the changes wrought by the advent of digital production technologies that have, in some sectors of the industry, reduced production costs and enabled an explosion in user-generated content. His work also predates the proliferation of online platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime etc. that reflect a 'long tail' rather than 'blockbuster' or 'broadcasting' model of distribution, meaning that they are able more effectively to aggregate niche audiences whom it was not previously cost effective to target.

He argues it is important to examine change and continuity in the cultural industries as they are increasingly significant wealth and employment creators and also offer insight, more broadly, into the relation between culture, society and the economy. Hesmondhalgh also admits his primary focus is on 'social relations of symbolic creativity' (2002, p. 6) in the industry rather than the texts they produce. This emphasis on 'industry' rather than 'text' seems eminently sensible given Hesmondhalgh's focus of study but with regards to the analysis of race and cultural identity in the creative industries I feel it is also necessary to examine how modes of representation within the texts themselves serve to configure their cultural value (or lack of it) in the creative economy, and by extension the market value of the symbol producers who create them.[5]

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[5] I further explore this 'hierarchy' of value, and the way the economic worth of individual creative workers is conflated with the 'genre' and content of the texts they produce, in chapter 3.

Hesmondhalgh explores in some detail how the cultural industries manage risk and maximise audiences through strategies borrowed from other sectors. He cites the following:

- Horizontal integration (buying up other companies in same sector).
- Vertical integration (buying up complementary companies that cover tertiary processes).
- Internationalisation (buying foreign companies to create new international markets).
- Multisector and multimedia integration. (buying related cultural industries to ensure cross promotion).
- Attempt to co-opt or bribe critics in press.

Hesmondhalgh explores how the cultural industries achieve artificial scarcity through vertical integration whereby the ownership of distribution and retail allows companies to control release schedules. Also, how copyright law is important as it limits access to means of reproduction and copying. Other ways the industry minimises risk is through a 'star system' that links established bankable performers to particular types of cultural texts, and the use of 'genre' as a tool in the marketing and distribution of products. These 'genres' signify the type of pleasure audiences might derive from a cultural product and condition their reception in the cultural marketplace. Hesmondhalgh notes that while larger corporations dominate most industrial sectors, this is even more the case in the cultural industries. He also identifies it as a sector has unique cultural power hence the need to study it. However, as I explore later Hesmondhalgh does not adequately explore the way BAME cultural practice can become designated as inherently risky. Equally it does not examine how the strategic appropriation and repurposing of those BAME cultural forms, after they have proved themselves successful with 'minority' audiences, can also act as an effective form of risk mitigation once those forms have been uncoupled from their original context of production.

In his work Hesmondhalgh clearly marks out the parameters for his study of the cultural industries and provides a comprehensive definition of how they are constituted. From his perspective these industries are defined by their use of mechanical reproduction, hence he excludes fine art and live performance. However, as I argued in the introductory chapter for my purposes it is necessary to work with an expanded definition of the 'the creative industries' (as opposed to the 'cultural industries') that includes the performing arts and corresponds to public funding processes, if we are to analyse East London's regeneration

process. Hesmondhalgh's work is valuable in that it highlights the complex and contradictory nature of the cultural industries sector and the role risk mitigation plays in regulating forms of creative production. However, significantly from the perspective of my work, Hesmondhalgh does not seek to address how these industries increasingly govern the construction of physical urban space or how the texts they produce are interpolated into broader racialised hierarchies of cultural value.

2.4 Multicultural creative production and civil unrest

A composite of Keith and Hesmondhalgh's work provides a useful paradigm for understanding East London's cultural industries. However, it is impossible to reflect on the current configuration of East London's multicultural creative economy without some historical analysis of the black, Asian and ethnic minority creative sectors. This applies especially to a 'moment' of particular productivity and visibility in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In her book *Black and White Media* (1996) Karen Ross points to the context of social conflict and tension during this period, out of which new policies of multi-cultural arts funding emerged as strategies for managing Britain's growing cultural fissures.

> The late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed significant policy shifts around 'race' issues and the identification of new priorities on the part of (potential) funders. Identifiably 'black' artistic endeavours began, suddenly, to enjoy institutional respectability' … Such policy reorientations were made at a time when outbreaks of civil disobedience were escalating in scale and volume and it could be argued that the sudden and unprecedented funding of a large number of black projects – cultural, social and economic - was the cynical if timely response of a government eager to provide a sop to an angry and restless black populace (Ross 1996, p. 34).

This concessionary, re-alignment in cultural policy was implemented across a wide range of forms including film, dance, theatre and fine art, and in many ways accounts for the UK's flourishing BAME creative sector in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This cultural shift was exemplified in the work of companies such as the Black Audio Film Collective, Non-Aligned Film Productions, Sankofa Film Productions, Phoenix Dance Company, the Black Theatre Co-op, the African Caribbean and Asian Departments at the BBC and the multicultural department at Channel Four.

2.5 'Diversity' as an institutional strategy for the management difference

As Sarita Malik argues in her work 'Keeping it real': the politics of Channel 4's multiculturalism, mainstreaming and mandates' (2008), this explosion of BAME cultural production was soon followed by a shift away from a 'multicultural' model of arts and media funding, towards a model of 'diversity' within which cultural institutions took the process of managing cultural difference inhouse. I would suggest that this historical shift has contributed towards the current underrepresentation of minority cultural producers in the creative industries overall and is mirrored in regeneration processes that have prioritised processes of inclusion and diversity over BAME cultural autonomy and antiracist cultural practices. Malik writes:

> We can locate the critical turn away from the idea of multiculturalism in the mid 1990s. Essentially this involved a break from a race politics underpinned by a quantitative or so-called 'politically correct' response to a multicultural society to one that positions 'cultural diversity' as a qualitative mindset that depends on 'common sense' ... Discursive shifts within public service broadcasting were symptomatic of this wider change (Malik, 2008 p. 3).

The shifts that occurred in the eighties seem, with hindsight, inextricably linked to the current fragmentation of BAME cultural production sectors. What were constituted as collectivist, communal cultural entities were replaced by individuated systems of recruitment and employment in the mainstream sectors. Individual creative practitioners from the independent black film, dance and theatre companies went on to establish careers in the industry but in doing so they had to effectively check any communal affiliations at the door. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the collective bargaining of the established unions (whose power base was primarily in the traditional manufacturing industries) gave way to greater deregulation and the erosion of union power. Similarly, the creative sector, despite its growth during that period, saw a decline in union membership. Like the service sector, which was characterised by a diminution of collective bargaining power and the growth of 'zero-hours' contracts, the

creative economy saw increasing job instability, short-term project-based contracts and the growth of the creative 'precariat' (de Peuter, 2014).[6]

2.6 The 'rise' of East London's multicultural creative class?

These discursive, industrial and political shifts away from collectivist cultural activity towards an increasingly individualised and 'entrepreneurial' model of cultural production ran in parallel to the process of urban regeneration in East London during the 1990s. Phil Cohen explores this phenomenon in his work 'The Road to Beckton Pier' (2000):

> Through the conversion of warehouses and small factories into offices, studios, flats, galleries, restaurants and shops, many of the traditional areas of manufacture have been transformed into hives of cultural industry where small businesses of every kind, especially those linked to the arts and the mass media, trade off each-others presence and help promote the 'global city (Cohen 2000, p. 32).

Cohen links this process to the emergence of an entrepreneurial multicultural creative class, and by extension the demise of traditionally exclusionary, class bound and mono-ethnic cultural sectors.

> This new wave of fashion designers, graphic artists, TV producers, media consultants, public relations people, copy writers et al tend to be educated at polyversities, not Oxbridge: they have grown up in and through the frenetic individualism of 1980s enterprise culture, not the team spirit instilled by public school. This middle class is no longer dominated, either numerically or ideologically, by white men. Women and members of ethnic and sexual minorities have been in the vanguard (Cohen 2000, p. 33).

However, with the benefit of hindsight it is clear that Cohen, writing at the end of the nineties, very much overestimates the ability of emerging multicultural creative practitioners to find a home in the artisanal middle class, or be seamlessly integrated into the expanding

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[6] de Peuter (2014) explores how the precarious 'self-exploiting' creative worker has been valourised as a role model of contemporary capitalism and also how they have organised to contest this designation.

cultural economy of the regenerated East End. It is clear from the reports I cite in the introduction that BAME creative workers' 'multicultural capital' as Cohen calls it, (p. 33) has not been straightforwardly translated into economic or social capital in the creative industries.

In some ways Cohen's work appears to be writing against some of the academic contemporaries like Stuart Hall (1996), and postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha (1994) who celebrated the emergence of new 'hybrid' cultural forms. In his work Cohen contrasts the growth of this hybrid multicultural creative class, who he somehow sees as beneficiaries of cosmopolitanism and globalisation and who are able to instrumentally deploy their fluid hybrid cultural identities in the marketplace, with the white working class 'Eastenders' who are not. This implicit critique of the cultural benefits and conceptual underpinnings of notions of hybridity are apparent in his work 'From the Other Side of the Tracks: Duel Cities, Third Spaces and the Urban Uncanny in Contemporary Discourses of "Race" and Class' (2003).[7] In the piece Cohen argues that the notions of 'hybridity', fashionable at the time of his writing, often reproduced the other more essentialised notions or classifications on which those new hybrid convergences were based, and re-enforced "its own invented traditions, its own imagined history and geography, its own permeable-but still internally regulated-boundaries of belonging" (Cohen 2003, p. 325) and that:

> Once fluidity and floating signifiers became the aesthetic trademark of a
> new multicultural intelligentsia, then by contrast, fixity and the failure to
> tolerate ambiguous or multiple identities were all too easily associated with
> an older generation stuck in their ways, or with a White and Black
> "underclass" immobilised at the bottom of the social ladder. A new moral
> binarism was established: between a progressive ethnoscape associated
> with the post-colonial city, celebrating a healthy happy hybridity, and a
> reactionary landscape of "old ethnicities" mired in pathological purities or
> religious fundamentalisms belonging to the bad old colonial days.
> Underpinning the rhetoric of "third space" the familiar dualisms began to
> re-emerge (Cohen 2003, p. 325).

Cohen sites Sennett when he argues this bisected imaging of the city reflects a far older Judaeo Christian split between the secular and the spiritual.[8] For Cohen it rearticulates 'a long standing quarrel between those who see the city as primarily a material infrastructure for accommodating a diversity of socially necessary functions, and those for whom it is

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[7] The use of inverted commas around "Race" and not "Class" in the title gives some suggestion of which concept Cohen considers the more questionable construct.
[8] David Sibley (1995) might be more inclined to characterise this as the split between the 'abject' and the 'pure'.

essentially a space of representation for imagining and regulating the body politic and its cultural life' (Cohen 2003, p. 319). He argues that the idea of 'cultural hybridity' (prevalent in the work of Stuart Hall and others) simply reproduces these simplistic binaries by assuming the existence of 'pure' cultural forms out of which these 'hybrids' emerged. However, while they are admittedly problematic, I would argue it is difficult to escape the conceptual binarisms Cohen refers to. This is particularly the case when looking at notions of racial inequality and exclusion given that it is often through a process of binary opposition that these forms of racial 'othering' are articulated.

Cohen's work displays a notable air of suspicion of the emerging multicultural middle class. He cites Appadurai (1997) when he talks of 'multicultural capitalism' based 'on 'the re/production of cultural diversity and the marketing of exotic commodities'. According to Cohen this multicultural elite have:

> constructed a view of the world in their own image, a world in which there is no reality outside its representation, where hybridity is celebrated and the pleasures of consumption are put at the cutting edge of change. En route, gender and race (but not class) have been transformed from topics of personal identity work into resources for consciously directed cultural production. Through the intervention of new rhetorics of entitlement, lifestyle innovation ceases to be merely a site of cultural labour, but a privileged means of accumulating cultural capital' (Cohen 2003, p. 322).

Cohen seems inclined to dismiss both the creative practitioners and academic theorists he describes as socially mobile instrumentalists who are simply reactivating some of the retrogressive essentialisms they at first appear to challenge, and in doing so obscure the class based inequality that actually configures the structures of power. While beautifully written and couched in a language that suggests personal familiarity with the cultural producers and academics he critiques, Cohen seems to be condemning the black and Asian cultural production of the time as simply another form of mercantile capitalist enterprise, albeit one cloaked behind a visually attractive multicoloured 'visage'. Equally, much of the intellectual work that contextualised that practice is dismissed as somehow self-serving and unconsciously re-articulating elitist notions of class based cultural capital (re-encoded as some kind of 'multicultural capital'). While this might be valid in some isolated cases, this analysis fundamentally obscures the institutional racism that often constrained those forms of creative practice, and also the ongoing exclusion of those multicultural producers from the privileged cultural sphere that Cohen seemed convinced, at the time he was writing, they

were destined to inhabit. It also arguably prioritises forms of class-based economic exploitation over other forms of cultural and race-based marginalisation, and the points at which economic and cultural exclusion intersect. In this respect it represents a much broader discursive disjuncture that tracks back to the political battles of the 1970s where black, gay and women's groups had to assert the relative autonomy of their struggles in a political environment dominated by class-based analysis. Cohen's analysis also effaces the way in which cultural workers in post-industrial knowledge economies can still be positioned within globalised networks of economic inequality in the same way that workers in pre 'knowledge economies' could be. In some ways Cohen falls into the trap of valorising creative labour and the production of cultural commodities by treating it as fundamentally different from other forms of productive labour within the global cash nexus. Cultural production, despite its aura of glamour, is still a stratified economic system in which labour is exploited to produce commodities for the global marketplace. While the creative industries can be considered a privileged sphere relative to some other areas of work and is increasingly the favoured destination for people from the most economically well-resourced sectors of society, it is still a form of industrial labour and is bisected by various forms of race, class and gender based inequality. If anything the fact that, as a sector, it is increasingly occupied by a privileged minority (a report by the Commission on Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission in 2014 showed 45% of people in the film, TV and music industry went to private school relative to 7% of the population overall [9]) means it is even harder for minority producers to maintain a foothold in this notoriously unstable and competitive sector. The plight, if that is not too strong a word, of the 'multicultural middle class' elicits little sympathy from Cohen, and other academics, who are perhaps understandably more concerned with class-based inequality in its most brutal forms. Indeed, Cohen tends to view the discursive frameworks constructed by Hall, Bhabha and Mercer *et al* as some kind of conceptual ladder intended to facilitate social mobility rather than a truly radical social and political critique. 'Taken together these three terms (new ethnicities, hybridity, diaspora) thus worked to articulate the experience of those who were climbing out of the ethnic ghetto of "traditionalism" or communalism into the new multicultural middle class.' (Cohen 2003, p. 325). It is apparent however from the industry reports cited earlier that these discursive tools did not (even if that was their intention which is doubtful) enable minority producers to pick the institutional

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[9]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365765/State_of_Nation_2014_Main_Report.pdf

locks that have historically barred them from entering the rarefied realm of the artisanal middle class.

2.7 East London as a 'dark continent'

Cohen does however make a very useful contribution to the debates when he identifies some of the representational strategies that have been deployed to 'imagine' East London historically. For him, these mirror other kinds of orientalising discourse that were employed by the colonial imagination to fix the Far East as 'other'. Using a conceptual framework adopted from Edward Said he talks about the construction of East London as an 'internal orient' in the Victorian era. As he points out, East London was characterised by the Victorians as some kind of threatening 'dark continent'; a den of inequity, vice and working-class corruption that needed to be tamed, and acculturated in the same way as the colonies in Africa and Asia. Victorian commentators established 'a narrative template which sealed the East End off as a site of urban dereliction from the rest of London: it was either a mysterious underworld entirely enclosed within its own densely impenetrable meanings, or else it was surreptitiously infiltrating the underworld through trafficking in drugs, sex and subversive ideas' (Cohen 2013, p. 37).

As Cohen points out this process of 'othering' was often racialised and conflated East London's status as a dangerous unmapped topography with the ethnic 'difference' of its inhabitants.

> The Victorian urban explorers frequently used racial imagery to define the 'natives' of the East End as primitives, or barbarians: with the settlements of colonies of Chinese, Malays and Africans in dockland areas, and then the advent of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, the non-Christian, non-occidental character of the area became a topic of increasing public concern. (Cohen, 2013, p. 39)

Hence in the context of East London there is the possibility that contemporary discourses of urban regeneration, by imagining creative hubs as oases of culture in an otherwise under-developed 'dark continent', unconsciously reproduce 'colonial' ideas of acculturation. These tropes do arguably still underlie the logic of regeneration, in which the bubbling migrant

populations of inner cities are characterised as a disruptive threating internal 'other' that needs to be expunged through a process of 'spatial purification' (Sibley, 1995).

2.8 'Spatial purification' and the urban abject

While seeing this 'other' as a destabilising presence that has to be expelled from the orderly spatial regime that the regeneration process embodies, the modes of representation that I describe often articulate the same contradictions that characterise many 'othering' discourses. At the same time as 'orientalising' their subject (in this case the 'East End') these discourses embody a fundamental ambivalence in which East London (like the 'Far East') becomes a repository for disavowed fascinations and repressed desires. The sex workers, bars and addicts of the Victorian East End held a fascination as well as repulsion for the Victorian middle classes. Similarly, it could be argued, the post-industrial, multi-racial, working class enigmatic appeal (Vickery 2011) of East London still holds a particular fascination for the cultural workers who are migrating there from all over the country. Many would seem to see East London as an excitingly deregulated and 'risky' urban terrain in which their creative imaginations are enabled in a way they would not be in a more managed and spatially sanitised environment. It is this 'edge', or what David Sibley (1995) might characterise as 'impurity', that has now become conflated with the 'other' and is the subject of new forms of racialised regulation or spatial cleansing. Ironically these processes, embodied in large scale residential developments and regeneration projects, seem to be designed to erase precisely the elements of racialised impurity and difference that, along with low rental costs, attracted artists and cultural workers to this part of the city in the first place. Creative workers moving into the areas like Dalston and Hackney Wick are attracted by its 'edge' but it is precisely that edge that is being blunted by the regeneration process:

> people who are anxious and fearful about racialised difference, and concerned about a loss of power, need simplified mappings; they need to locate imagined threats in particular places. So, 'inner city' becomes another country', a convenient depository for anxieties about mixing and merging, about the breaking down of the boundaries of the self and the group. In turn, 'the city' fulfils the same role when opposed to some tranquil English countryside. These imagined geographies, with their echoes of Empire and colonialism, are to some extent realised, however. Anxieties translate into calculations of risks, surveillance

technologies and legislation, which keep people in their place or remove them to the margins (Sibley 1998, p. 127).

2.9 Zukin and the transformation of urban space

In the context of my analysis Sharon Zukin's work on gentrification and the commercialisation of urban space (1995, 2010) also constitutes a useful reference. She examines how patterns of capitalist mass consumption, both symbolic and material, come to shape urban space (Zukin, 1995). Like Michael Keith (2005) Zukin describes the way in which ethnic diversity, or 'local colour' often becomes instrumentalised as a locational resource by cities as they compete for tourist dollars. However, while this characterisation correctly identifies ethnic and racial plurality as an economic asset within a narrow set of capitalist economic operations, it can also underplay the degree through which those pluralities can also be constructed as 'high risk' within creative production sectors and by monoethnic communities based outside the cosmopolitan hubs.

In her early work *The Culture of Cities* (1998) Zukin does acknowledge the way in which the creative industries can reproduce forms inequality and 'othering' processes 'The prominence of culture industries also inspires a new language of dealing with difference (see Ewan 1998). It offers a coded means of discrimination, an undertone to the dominant discourse of democratisation' (Zukin 1995 p9). However, her critique seems primarily targeted at the creative commodities generated by the creative industries, and the hierarchy of 'cool' that they produce, rather than racial composition of the industries themselves.

In terms of the embodied, urban metropoles she seems to see cultural and symbolic hierarchies, i.e. lifestyle choices, patterns of consumption, personal 'style', as being in ascendance over racial and class-based inequalities. At least this is what she appears to be suggesting when she asks 'In what sense are urban populations now divided by lifestyle rather than by, ethnicity and social class'? (Zukin 1995 p826). In this conception cities are nodes for cultural consumption in which minority cultural forms become the subjects of the ethnographic 'gaze,' (Zukin 1995 p14) commoditised in a competitive capitalist marketplace as a locational asset the city uses to 'sell itself' to transnational consumers. This reflects an analytical framing in which patterns of consumption, and lifestyle choices are more central the modes of production. However, a conception of the city as a site of creative production, rather than consumption, may operate differently. Logically if BAME cultural practices have

value within the context of consumption one might imagine that value would also be attributed to the producers of these form. However, other factors clearly intervene to disrupt this simple assumption. Firstly, cultural producers are not always the one 'selling' or profiting from those cultural commodities. Secondly minority/sub-cultural creative practices, such as Graffiti art, urban music, social dance, while they might contribute to the indefinable visceral ambience of the cosmopolitan hub are not necessary be invested with economic value within the cultural economy of the city, certainly not relative to cultural forms and spaces such as advertising, museum, art galleries, the theatre, ballet, film, broadcast TV sectors etc.

Zukin talks about the growth of the urban financial sectors in the 1980s and the resulting emergence of the 'yuppie' class. In her analysis 'mobility into this new workforce was limited by far fewer barriers of social class, ethnic origin, race and gender than ever before'. (Zukin 1998 p831). In addition, the growth of this group heralded 'a generational movement `back to the city' and an endorsement of the city' s social diversity, and a rejection of monoethnic suburban living. (Zukin Urban lifestyles p831). However, the supposed racial plurality of this employment/ lifestyle sector is open to dispute. Despite a possible 'Buppie' (black yuppie) sub sector this 'lifestyle' grouping was predominantly white. In addition, the yuppie class's embrace of urban cultural plurality operated in conjunction with the displacement of urban black communities through the gentrification process, thus erasing precisely those elements of racial diversity this process supposedly championed.

In her early work Zukin doe at points talk about cultural and racial difference in the production of consumer commodities (1995, p 154) and examines the employment of ethnic artist, however strangely she does this by analysing their employment as catering staff in the restaurant sector rather than the arts/creative sectors to which creative skillset actually relate. While restaurants may, as Zukin suggests 'feed the symbolic economy-socially, materially, spiritually' they are not themselves sites of symbolic mass production and may not be particularly representative of those sectors. (1995 p182). Also, her analytical focus is primarily on New York with its own particular historical, demographic and spatial peculiarities, so this may not straightforwardly transferable to an East London setting. In her 1995 book 'The Culture of Cities' she primarily looks at catering, restaurants and food production. In this sector she identifies 'ethnic' (Latino, Asian, African) staff as being disproportionately located in the 'back' i.e. kitchens, food supply etc, rather than 'front' i.e.

management service etc. While she clearly identifies the likelihood of transnational ethnic labour being concentrated in the lower regions of these industries she does not examine how these class and race based differentials might be reproduced in other, higher status, cultural production sectors such as the arts, TV, music, or if indeed this 'transnational' ethnic labour is actually represented at all.

She does however correctly identify cities in the USA as a key site of disjuncture as migrant flows create far greater ethnic diversity wherein 'the future of American political and economic hegemony in the world is at stake' and 'the combination of fusion cultures and economic dependence is highly volatile' (1995 p261) . For Zukin what most modern cities have in common is that they are increasingly the location of a "symbolic economy'-a continual production of symbols and spaces that frames and gives meaning to ethnic competition, racial change, and environmental renewal and decay' (1995 p265). However, as she acknowledges, in an urban setting, 'appreciation of cultural diversity is limited mainly to ethnic "colour" and remains on the level of cultural consumption by eating ethnic dishes' and that 'multiculturalism has not confronted, and cannot confront, the cultural identities created and reinforced by a lack of integration into the legal, mainstream economy' (1995, p283)

The strength of Zukin's early work, through her study of commercial shopping malls, is that it highlights the processes through which acts of cultural consumption come to structure physical urban space. However, while situating racial difference within this process, primarily as an exotic commodity or locational resource that can appeal to cultural consumers, she does little to explore how it structures the cultural production process or how BAME cultural producers are located within it.

However, in her more recent work, Naked City (2010) Zukin does give far greater attention to the way race operates in relation the urban regeneration process. In particular she examines Brooklyn and the way it functions as a cultural resource for African American rappers who celebrated its 'authenticity' and 'grittiness' in their music. She also looks at how it served a similar purpose for black filmmaker Spike Lee who transformed Brooklyn into a cinematic and visual trope that stood in for a broader sense of community and the 'village' and 'brought the boroughs gritty black neighbourhoods into the virtual core of popular culture' (Zukin 2010 p54). These creative strategies shifted cultural representations of majority black urban spaces from the general to the specific and 'like movies by black directors, hip-hop moved during the 1990s from depicting an abstract space called 'the ghetto' to naming specific

streets and landmarks of "the hood" and some of these neighbourhoods were in Brooklyn". (Zukin 2010 P56). This is similar to the way East London's Grime music tracks have come to operate as a geo-positioning technology that links specific locations to particular artists, their collective affiliations and sense of place. As Zukin suggest, in both the case of Brooklyn and East London, these audio-visual tropes become defining components of a generic 'urban' grittiness' (also translatable as working class and ethnically diverse affective atmosphere) that plays into the gentrification process. As has happened with East London, a certain section of the city becomes 'branded' by its inhabitants and visitors as possessing a distinctively 'authentic' quality, and this in turn becomes type of inverted locational cultural capital than can be instrumentally deployed by developers.

However, significantly Zukin does also state that:

> black Brooklyn neighbourhoods do not benefit from the growth machine of cultural production. Though they are the birthplace of rappers they don't have the critical cluster of "clubs, radio stations, cable access tv stations, record labels, and mix tape producers" that supports Manhattan's hip-hop music industry (Zukin 2010 p57).

In this sense while it may operate as a representational trope or 'brand' Brooklyn it does not contain enough actual production infrastructure to truly constitute a multicultural creative hub. This is relevant in that it indicates that access to the actual physical 'means of symbolic production' is critical for BAME creative producers, and that access to a form of locational cultural capital that exist solely on the level of cultural-representational practices is not sufficient in itself.

Zukin also writes about the 'Harlem Renaissance', as a moment when uptown Manhattan served as the "capital of black culture" in the USA (Zukin. 2010 p65). She describes the more recent 'black gentrification' of Harlem, which has seen members of the black middle class, along with white gentrifiers, return to and revive this historic neighbourhood and excavate its 'black cultural capital'. While this process might problematically have displaced the black working class from the neighbourhood, it has also reconstituted the area as a site of black cultural production, and what Zukin calls a 'new urban cosmopolitanism' (2010 p68).

In doing this Zukin highlights an important issue around the class based sub-divisions within BAME populations and the variegated forms of racialised exclusion they may encounter. It also, by extension, raises critical issues around the emergence of a new 'multicultural cultural elite' in regenerated quarters of the city and emphasises the need to construct an

intersectional model of inclusion when it comes to questions of race, creativity and social exclusion in the creative industries driven regeneration process.

2.10 Stuart Hall and the end of the 'essential'

Moving from the 'spatial' to the 'cultural', it is impossible to examine the emergence of black cultural practice in the British context without reference to the work of Stuart Hall. Hall clearly embodies a particular kind of relationship to the cultural sector he describes and contextualises in his work on race and culture. His position as benefactor, protector and cheerleader for black cultural production (especially the black independent film and fine art sectors) has been widely acknowledged (Henriques, Morely and Gablot 2017). In this sense his work did not simply reflect on the emergence of new forms of black cultural production but actually also *facilitated* them. His physical and intellectual presence is almost a leitmotif in the work of Isaac Julien and John Akomfrah, two of the most significant black independent filmmakers from the late 1980s onwards. Hall appeared in Julien's *Looking for Langston* (1989) and *The Attendant* (1993) and was the subject of Akomfrah's *The Stuart Hall Project* (2013). His academic writing helped open up a cultural space for practitioners like Akomfrah and Julien to work, one where racist modes of representation could be contested and also where essentialised monolithic conceptions of black identity could be interrogated. It might also be the case that these forms of creative practice were not always as generally representative, or accessible, as their creators might have hoped. Without wishing to mirror Cohen's somewhat reductionist position cited earlier it may still be fair to say that this type of work resonated primarily with intellectual, cosmopolitan, middle-class audiences and inhabited a very different space to the more commercial, less self-reflective forms of black cultural practice that came later (embodied in the urban, garage and grime music sector and the work of film makers like Noel Clark and Mo Ali). However, it is almost impossible not to recall those twenty or so years of creative and conceptual productivity, especially given today's crisis of under representation, without some degree of nostalgia. Hall, both as a man and as the source of critical reflection, constituted the axis around which a close-knit circle of cultural practitioners and thinkers rotated. He supported their practice and also theorised it, imbuing it with an academic weight and historic significance that still resonates today.

Hall's work 'New Ethnicities' (1992) (first published in 1988 in *ICA Documents 7*) marked a turning point in the exploration of black cultural practice in the UK. It validated and

contextualised it, but also opened it up to critical interrogation, albeit an interrogation tempered by a fundamental empathy and understanding. Hall wanted to delineate the emergence of what he saw as two stages in the critical exploration of black cultural practice. He did not consider them strictly sequential and acknowledged the way they coexisted in time and overlapped but he broadly identified the phases as follows: the first phase entailed the coining of the political term 'black' as unifying framework through which the 'othering' processes of the hegemonic culture could be analysed and critiqued, and which could be used to mobilise struggles to contest the effects of racism. This could lead to numerous strategies of critique and contestation, but the primary focus was 'first the question of access to the rights to representation by black artists and black cultural workers themselves. Secondly, the contestation of the marginality, the stereotypical quality and the fetishized nature of images of blacks, by the counter-position of 'positive' black imagery' (Hall 1992, p. 253). These strategies were principally addressed to changing what he called the 'relations of representation'.

When he was writing in the late 1980s and early 1990s Hall felt we were entering a second phase which entailed a shift 'from a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself', one that entailed 'a very radical displacement of that unproblematic notion of the concept of representation'(1992, p. 253). This approach acknowledged that:

> how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a constitutive, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role. This gives questions of culture and ideology, and the scenarios of representation-subjectivity, identity, politics-a formative, not merely an expressive, place in the constitution of social and political life (Hall 1992, p. 254).

Culture, in this figuring, is not epiphenomenological but causal. Hall's work entailed a rejection of cruder Marxist positions that asserted the primacy of economic structures in determining cultural and ideological relations (Solomos and Back ,1995). In doing so he challenged the dominant Marxist paradigm that had structured the politics of the left up until the 1960s and which had effectively subsumed the struggles of black people and women into the metanarrative of class struggle. He argued that the largely naturalised categories of 'black' cultural identity around which political activity had been organised historically should also be the subject of critical examination. However, he also acknowledged that this fraught encounter between largely uninterrogated and essentialist notions of 'black culture' and the

'discourses of post structuralism, post modernism, psychoanalysis and feminism' entailed certain risks and might have a dramatically destabilising political effect. 'The understanding that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed transcultural or transcendental or racial categories' (1992 p. 254) marked the 'end of innocence' and the 'end of the essential black subject' and the point where black subjectivity became the critical focus of a deconstructing gaze.

Hall also articulated this position in his article Cultural Identity and Diaspora (1990) where he critiques a monolithic, undifferentiated conception of black cultural identity.

> Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power (Hall 1990, p. 4).

Hall offered a necessary acknowledgement of the historically and culturally constituted nature of racial identity, but also foresaw some of the problematic questions thrown up by this process, and its possible implications for political strategies predicated on a unifying discourse of common interest and shared experience. In 'New Ethnicities' (1992) he questioned 'how a politics can be constructed which works with and through difference, which is able to build those forms of solidarity and identification which makes common struggle and resistance possible but without suppressing the real heterogeneity of interests and identities' (1992, p. 255). This approach represents a shift from 'what Gramci called the "war of manoeuvre" to the "war of position" - the struggle around positionalities' (1992, p. 255). However, given the of the current acute underrepresentation of BAME practitioners in the sphere of cultural production is it fair to say this is a war that is still very much being fought (and possibly lost) as I write. It also begs the question of whether it is the more marginal identities that have been engaged in this constant process of repositioning. Has 'whiteness' or the 'centre' really been exposed to the same forces of deconstruction? As Hall acknowledged at the time of writing this de-essentialising critique might have unforeseen political consequences. Given the current contraction of the BAME creative sector, partly precipitated by an institutional shift away from the concept of multiculturalism towards a discourse of integration and internal institutional 'diversity', have 'diaspora identities' undergone an unforeseen form of cultural deconstruction? Has the theoretical 'de-essentialisation' of black identity been mirrored in a worrying fragmentation of the BAME cultural sector? This is not to say that Hall's own work somehow precipitated this process,

only that the discursive processes that he describes might have served to erode the political and conceptual structures that had anchored black cultural practice up to that point.

I would argue that to some degree we are currently inhabiting the political void created the fragmentation and deconstruction of those (admittedly flawed) overarching conceptual categories. Much as it might have been hoped that a new more hybrid and discursive 'Third Space' (Bhabha 2004) of cultural production would emerge out of the critical deconstruction of previously essentialised systems of ethnic classification, this does not seem to have occured. Despite the previously energising and necessary disavowal of naïve discourses of identity have we now simply reached a crisis point at which a conceptually problematised formulation of blackness, stripped of its politically unified 'counter hegemonic' function, is confronted with un-tempered structures of economic and cultural privilege which it has little power to contest?

If Hall previously described two phases, the first that entailed the contestation of racist modes of representation, and the counter appropriation of the means of representation, and a second that entailed the critical self-interrogation of the very notions of identity and representation on which the first phase was based, what then might a third stage look like? Can such a stage even exist, or is it a teleological fallacy to imagine that a third phase need necessarily proceed from the previous two? Phil Cohen, writing at the beginning of the millennium might have somewhat cynically characterised this speculative 'third phase' as the moment at which an emergent multicultural creative class, unfettered by traditional 'essentialised' ethnic affiliations, instrumentally deploys its fluid, interstitial and hybrid multicultural capital to succeed in the cosmopolitan globalised neoliberal cultural economy. Enticing as the prospect might sound, and despite being burdened with the obvious political problematics that Cohen intended, in the current context this does not seem even remotely like an option. If a third stage is going to be of use to the multicultural creative class (whose position in the cultural economy has become considerably more precarious than Cohen ever imagined) then it might entail the reconstitution of some kind of coherent unifying notion of 'black' in its broadest and most discursive sense, as point of reference around which to mobilise cultural, political and economic interventions.

Hall does acknowledge that historically contingent sets of essentialised formulations of 'blackness' have been politically necessary.

> I have the feeling that, historically, nothing could have been done to intervene in the dominated field of mainstream popular culture, to try to win some space there, without the strategies through which those dimensions were condensed into the signifier "black". Where would we be, as Bell Hooks once remarked, without a touch of essentialism? Or, what Gayatri Spivak calls strategic essentialism, a necessary moment? The question is whether we are any longer in that moment, whether that is still a sufficient basis for the strategies of new interventions. (Hall 1993, p.110).

However, the question is how far a return to these admittedly problematic classifications and discursive constructs would be strategically useful and how far their reassertion would simply re-encode conceptually flawed and essentialised taxonomies. There is also an issue as to where these classifications might leave other 'non-white' cultural workers who do not fall within a more essentialised notion of 'blackness'. Is this conception of identity dialogic enough to embrace and represent its own internal diversity? It was this issue that Hall identified when he talked about the way racial classifications can operate to impose an artificial uniformity on a disparate set of constituencies:

> The point is not simply that, since our racial differences do not constitute all of us, we are always different, negotiating different kinds of differences — of gender, of sexuality, of class. It is also that these antagonisms refuse to be neatly aligned; they are simply not reducible to one another; they refuse to coalesce around a single axis of differentiation (Hall 1993, p. 112).

In this context is there any possibility of a return to such primordial systems of belonging, regardless of how politically expedient they might appear? Given the demonstrable tendency of the structures of cultural production and the spaces they inhabit to exclude non-white practitioners, is there actually any alternative but to strategically re-assert the homogenising classifications that Hall critiques?

In a previous moment it did indeed look like those from the 'margins' might be moving to 'the centre' (as Hall suggested in the 1990s) but twenty years down the line, post the Blairite neo-liberalisation of cultural production, post the banking crash and global recession, post austerity, post the 'migration crisis', post-Brexit and post-Trump, the 'marginals' seem to have been very much returned to the peripheries. In this context does the third, unstated phase, in Hall's historical sequence entail a necessary return to the binary classifications rejected in an earlier phase? Does it necessitate the reassertion of 'strategic essentialisms' that might contingently underpin new strategies of inclusion, empowerment and engagement with

institutional structures and dominant modes of production in the cultural sphere? As new cultural initiatives emerge to recontest hegemonic structures of cultural exclusion, spearheaded by black actors like Lenny Henry[10], Idris Elba[11] and David Harewood[12], and institutions like the BBC[13], C4[14], the BFI[15] scramble to reactivate long dormant minority funding initiatives, it appears we might be in that phase.

2.11 The 'cultural' and the 'material'

In some ways these debates need to be seen in the context of a fundamental discursive contest between cultural theorists like Stuart Hall, who see culture as having a semi-autonomous relation to economic structures, and David Harvey, who see the city as fundamentally structured by a capitalist mode of production. These two positions are compactly summarised and explored in Isaac Julian's short film installation Kapital (2013), which consists of a discussion between the two theorists. In their debate Hall argues that Harvey's position does not accommodate the questions of how economic structures of inequality are bisected by questions of race and gender.

Harvey's fairly uncompromising and unreconstructed Marxist position might be broadly characterised as follows:

> The inner logic that governs the laws of motion of capitalism is cold, ruthless and inexorable, responsive only to the law of value. Yet value is a social relation, a product of a particular historical process. Human beings were organizers, creators and participants in that history. We have, Marx asserts, built a vast social enterprise which dominates us, delimits our freedoms and ultimately visits upon us the worst forms of degradation. (Harvey 2006, p. 203)

In a book published to accompany Julien's work Hall reflects on his own participation in the filmed debate, and the broader political and analytical questions it addressed. He reasserts his own critique of Harvey's statement in the film that 'Marx's grasp of "the fundamental laws of the capitalist mode of production" remains essentially correct':

[10] https://inews.co.uk/culture/lenny-henry-diversity-tv-film-tax-breaks/
[11] https://deadline.com/2016/01/idris-elba-posts-full-text-of-powerful-diversity-speech-online-1201686614/
[12] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3424156/David-Harewood-condemns-lack-screen-diversity-amid-Oscars-race-row.html
[13] https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2018/diversity-cop
[14] https://www.channel4.com/corporate/about-4/operating-responsibly/diversity
[15] https://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/diversity-inclusion

I am not persuaded by this defence. Harvey thinks Marx's omissions do not touch the fundamentals. After all, he says, Marx could not anticipate everything: he was a critic of political economy, not a prophet of universal truth. However, I think it is not a question of simply adding more elements (such as race, sexuality, or gender) to the paradigm-the problem flow from the heart of the analysis itself, and thus modify its claims. I had in mind the way racialization fragments the so-called "unity" of the working class; or the unexamined masculinist assumptions underlying the figure of the "worker"- the male breadwinner: or the absence of any conceptualisation of the gendered nature of the reproduction of labour power, a process fundamental to capitalist accumulation but occurring far from "production", in familial and domestic sites where women and sexuality play a critical role. Marx passes over these in silence, and they have been sidelined in subsequent Marxist thought (Hall, 2016, p. 43).

However, how then do you address the structures of power and productivity that configure the creative and cultural industries if not through some reference to inequalities of economic power and class? It seems right to reject the simplistic binary opposition of proletariat and ruling class but how do we locate the position of cultural workers within a more variegated notion of class, and how do we understand the economic processes through which cultural commodities are imbued with value? Also how do we judge the relationship of ethnic minority producers, who are positioned both by the forces of the market and by a cultural process of 'othering', in post-industrial modes of economic production? Does this group have a separate and differentiated class status or are they just a sub-sector of an existing class? What is their economic, as opposed 'cultural,' status?

These questions might be framed within a more general analytical disjuncture between what can be broadly described as a 'cultural studies approach' that emphasises textual meanings and cultural practices, and a post-Marxist sociology/political economy approach that focuses on industrial processes, relations of production and structures of economic power. The latter sociological approach, more than cultural studies, has taken on the spatial formation of the city as an analytical focus (Keith, Harvey etc). However, it is possible both fields would benefit from a 'rapprochement' of sorts, where cultural studies and the associated forces of deconstruction (the 'posts', i.e. poststructuralism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, postfeminism) and the materialism of post-Marxist political economy acknowledge their mutual entanglement and dialectic interdependency, especially when it comes to the analysis of production of cultural commodities in an industrial and urban setting.

This might require a greater acknowledgement of cultural identity as a fluid contextual game of 'positionalities', but one played out not in some kind of 'imagined topography' of 'signifying practices' but in a ball park circumscribed by fairly concrete physical structures and markings (albeit ones that are also going through constant phases of spatial reconfiguration). In this sense the 'BAME creative producer' is a semantic, and relational construct, but one produced out of a material (as well as cultural) terrain, constituted by economic structures of capital investment, and the industrial production and distribution of cultural commodities. These are processes which configure and delimit both forms of 'black' (non-white) cultural production and the spatial topography within which it is produced.

In a contemporary setting there would seem to be a pressing need to understand the relationship of cultural texts to their context of production, and an increased awareness of how different forms of creative practice can become racialised within the political economy of the creative industries. This understanding can illuminate the processes through which systems of industrial creative production can classify and regulate cultural difference in a way that simultaneously commoditises it, while also sometimes negating its potential economic value.

2.12 Anamik Saha and the political economy of 'difference'

In his recent work on race and the creative industries Anamik Saha (2013, 2016, 2017) examines exactly this relationship between industrial processes of production and the racialisation of creative workers and cultural commodities. He argues the British publishing industry operates to both mitigate risk and optimise the commercial value of Asian literature by reducing it to a recognisable consumable genre in which the ethnicity of the author, rather than any thematic or structural features, determines how it will be positioned in the cultural economy and on what shelf it will be found in a book shop:

> within the structural context of the cultural industries, racialization is produced
> through the rationalization techniques that characterize cultural production in
> the corporate era. I call this the 'rationalizing/racializing logic of capital', and I
> argue that it is the form of racialization that characterizes the postcolonial
> cultural economy in this neoliberal conjuncture. (Saha 2016, p. 8)

In this way minority cultural production becomes constructed as a commoditised subgenre that simultaneously monetises its value in a neoliberal cultural market but also limits its capacity to extend beyond a rigidly demarcated set of generic boundaries (In the work cited above Saha's focus is on Asian literature, but the same analysis can be applied to other BAME cultural forms). This process locates cultural commodities, and their producers, very firmly within an economic nexus that identifies cultural artefacts as marketable or un-marketable because of pre-existing structures of meaning and value and where cultural value is inextricably linked to economic value. This perspective entails a rejection of the notion of culture as an autonomous (or even semi-autonomous) web of 'floating signifiers' (Hall, 1997) relatively disconnected from the forces of capital and commodification. After the 'cultural turn' of the late 20th century it arguably heralds a return to the examination of economic and social power structures as determinants in the process of cultural production.

> The purpose of integrating a sociological approach into the study of diasporic cultural production then, is to contextualize the text within the experience of creative labour that has gone into its production, set in turn against the political economic structures of the cultural industries, and the wider postcolonial context. Such an approach brings symbol creators to the centre of its analysis (alongside the text), where the methodological focus is orientated towards how best to access the meanings they attach to their work and the production of the cultural object in question (Saha, 2013, p. 7).

This 'empirically grounded illustration of how capitalism attempts to govern the counter narratives of difference.' (Saha 2013, p. 3) offers a useful lens through which to view the industrial processes that underlie the creative industries commodification and exclusion of racialised minorities in the regeneration process. It also more broadly articulates a cogent model for understanding the way 'race', at least in the sphere of cultural production, is itself produced by economic processes. It reinstates the context and method of production and the experiences of its producers alongside the text, and its associated set of cultural references, as the analytical foci.

In his work (especially *Race and the Cultural Industries* 2017) Saha identifies an awareness of the process of production as a necessary part of understanding how cultural texts emerge and what form they take. He particularly focuses on the way industrial processes racialise and 'produce' creative workers, in terms of distribution, marketing etc, and how these processes are in term determined by the industrial logic of 'risk mitigation'.

I would concur with Saha that the creative industries operate to racialise creative producers, but I would also argue that because of the way these industries are structured, they actually do this more than other sectors of the economy. While workers in other industries can sell their technical skills in the marketplace in such a way that their cultural identity does not intervene in the process, symbolic producers are, in many cases, selling their unique perspectives, fantasies, narratives, experiences and cultural traditions. Moreover, if they are performers, they are effectively marketing their actual embodied selves. In this sense their creative identities often become intertwined with their personal identities, which are constituted in relation to race, class, nationality, gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc, and which in turn become conflated with their economic value in the cultural marketplace. Effectively creative workers themselves, along with the technical expertise that they possess, become the commodities they are selling. In this way individual cultural producers, like the cultural commodities they produce, become the subject of the racialising industrial processes that Saha describes. In an urban setting that is increasingly structured and regulated by the creative industries this means that minority cultural practitioners are increasingly 'spatially racialised' by their physical environment. This might take the form of being physically excluded from the creative hubs that are proliferating in East London or if they are present only performing tertiary roles (as junior assistants, receptionist etc). Equally if they do occupy these spaces as creative workers it may be in such small numbers that they serve a largely symbolic function, one that validates the apparent inclusivity of those spaces without seriously challenging their predominantly white and middle-class composition.

In his work Saha (like Hesmondhalgh) tends to emphasise the way creative production differs from other industries in that it allows creative producers a degree of autonomy often not afforded by other sectors:

> A central observation of the cultural industries approach is how symbol creators are given a relatively large amount of autonomy compared to workers in other industries (Saha, 2017, p. 47)

However, I would argue this conception of the creative industries is somewhat idealised. While a high degree of autonomy may characterise certain types of low budget independent creative labour the above quote fails to account for the highly regulated and monitored form of creative production that is the norm in the commercial sector. Having a group of advertising executives or music video commissioners on a film set to surveil, micro-manage

and often veto a director's shot choice is extremely common. Similarly, TV features are often reedited without a director's involvement to mesh with other features in a TV package. Again, copious notes from development executives on a script that must be adhered to if a director wants to be financed and recuts of a feature film to ensure distribution are completely standard in the commercial moving image industries. In a different sector, musical artists are often told how to dress, and what tracks to release by their record labels and management companies. These processes of regulation are all entailed in both the commercial and publicly funded production process, and this does not even address the crucial forms of selection that precede the actual allocation of funding to creative projects, which functions as another highly significant system of regulation and management. Equally within the art world the individual fine artist might seem to embody the architype of an autonomous cultural producer, however this conception can simply obscure the way the economic and cultural value of their work is defined by gate keepers (agents and gallery owners) at the point of exhibition and consumption. It is also the case that symbol producers often regulate their own cultural production through an internalised conception of what might, or might not be, marketable. This form of internal regulation may, in many ways, be the most pervasive and powerful form of hegemonic control at work in the creative industries. It is also the case that 'minority' forms of cultural production are even more rigorously policed and micro-managed in a commercial setting than other forms, precisely because they are designated as an inherently 'risky' mode of creative practice (Saha, 2016).

For this reason, we should be wary of imbuing the 'creative producer' with forms of autonomy that massively exceed other industries. Some forms of autonomy do exist, and unsigned grime music producers are good example, but these are determined more by the producers' relationship to the means of symbolic production than the fact that they are creative producers per se. Independent grime artists, for instance, are owners of their own musical output and commissioners of the associated music videos, rather than simply employees of a music label. This economic relation, rather than the creative medium they work in, is what allows their degree of independence and this would be much the same in any industrial sector.

However, I would fundamentally concur with Saha when he argues any useful and comprehensive theory of race and cultural production 'involves an analysis that includes the

political economic as well as the cultural and the discursive and seeks to integrate them while recognizing their heuristic separateness' (Saha 2017, p. 52).

Saha's work arguably signifies the 'third phase' of black cultural analysis that comes after the two Hall talks about in his work 'New Ethnicities' (1992), one that acknowledges the concrete social materiality of 'race' without a return to the naïve 'essentialised' discourse of ethnicity and cultural identity that marked an earlier stage of black cultural activism. This third phase also offers the potential for new forms of collective political agency and engagement to emerge, orientated around an acknowledgment of the exclusionary nature of economic and social structures in the creative sector.

However, while Saha's work is empirically and materially grounded and describes industrial processes rather than simply decoding a set of cultural texts, it is not focussed on analysing the way these processes structure urban spatial relations. My analysis seeks to identify how these processes act to configure the urban topography that cultural producers inhabit, and also by extension how those creative practitioners are themselves produced by those physical locations. For this reason, it is also useful to attend to theoretical perspectives that focus on spatial relations and the affective elements contained therein.

2.13 Spatialised 'affect' and the East London 'vibe'

Central to this analysis is the notion that, contained in the history, demographic makeup, architecture and cultural life of urban spaces, distinctive formations exist that can produce identifiable feelings, affinities and visceral responses in their inhabitants and visitors. 'Affective atmospheres' is the term Ben Anderson (2009) uses to describe these, almost by definition, nebulous qualities. For Anderson these atmospheres:

> are indeterminate with regard to the distinction between the subjective and objective. They mix together narrative and signifying elements and non-narrative and asignifying elements. And they are impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal. On this account atmospheres are spatially discharged affective qualities that are autonomous from the bodies that they emerge from, enable and perish with (Anderson, 2009, p. 80).

In this sense, these affective atmospheres suffuse both physical space and the subjects who inhabit it. They blend text, (and meta text) with reader, the spatial with the temporal and the rational with the visceral. They create a third, conjunctural space in which the ephemeral and associative seem to take a near independent and physical mass. As a concept, it does not fit easily into traditionally partitioned disciplines or fields of study and transgresses neat conceptual boundaries.

In his article 'The City through the Senses' (2012), the French theorist Jean-Paul Thibaud talks about an 'ecology of the senses' which seems useful in understanding the relation between urban ambience and visceral affect.

> This approach, in which the body and senses are allowed to exist, scorns strict disciplinary divisions and operates within a very broad scientific spectrum. Whether one wants to study the fit between the sensory and the social, update cultural perception schemata, write a history of sensibilities, take measure of lived space, design architecture for the senses, rethink the place of the senses in philosophical thought or derail common perception through artistic performance, all involve reference to experience and pay particular attention to the sensory register. In brief, a whole collection of paths are open, which intersect and complement each other in the development of a sensory ecology of everyday life in the widest sense of the term (Thibaud 2012, p. 3)

Thibaud's work is primarily concerned with aspects of design and how it can consciously incorporate visceral affect into the shaping and functions of urban space. He asks, 'How does contemporary urban space harness the senses of city dwellers?' (2012 p. 4) but for the benefit of my research I would also ask how city dwellers harness their sense of the city for their own creative means. How does the localised 'affective atmosphere' of East London seep into the work of the producers located there, and how do the spatial and industrial structures of the area both constitute and delimit their practice?

This conceptualisation of urban affective atmospheres acknowledges the way in which individual subject are produced by their physical environment and that the interior self cannot be clearly separated from environmental structures. In this sense, as Berleant (1992) argues:

> There is no external world. There is no outside. There is no internal refuge in which I can protect myself from unfriendly external forces either. ... People and environment are continuous. The environment is not a simple container or an external entity which can be studied independently of the experience it creates. In this perspective, the human being is necessarily

connected with the world of which he or she is a part. (Cited in Thibaud 2012, p. 7).

Conceptually terms such as 'atmosphere' and 'feeling' remain somewhat ambiguous precisely because they denote a set of relationships that coalesce into a particular affect or ambience but extend through an extremely broad range of elements and characteristics. This affect connects the demographic, to the built environment, to the associative (i.e. the personal and cultural meanings a space can have in a broader set of signifying practices) to the meteorological. It is perceived through the acoustic, optical and even olfactory senses. It is spatial, it is temporal. In short it is immersive and as such defies a critical overview. We are inside it, and it is inside us.

> The notion of ambiance is a good example of great heuristic and operative potential that allows questions to be asked, and addresses issues heretofore ignored; yet it nonetheless remains difficult to define theoretically and to understand empirically. This is because ambiance cannot be reduced to a sum of specifically circumscribed factors but rather colours an entire situation by spreading around. Impregnation, radiation and contamination are in this sense key terms which allow us to define the phenomenon of sensory distribution. Like atmosphere or climate, ambiance works like a medium that blends the most diverse components in a situation into a single note and, in doing so, bestows them with an overall physiognomy and unity (Thibaud, 2012, p. 13)

While the subject area might appear somewhat diffuse, a notion of the city space as embodying a feeling remains crucial for understanding the relationship between creative practitioners and the physical urban locations they inhabit. Historical conjunctures, industrial processes and demographic shifts find affective form in physical space. These spaces in turn attract a visceral form of identification on the part of the people who inhabit them. As mixed-race novelist Tessa McWatt, puts it in my film 'East London is one of the places I feel most at home in, because of its multicultural and diverse communities it represents all the different parts of me' (*Multicology?* 00.54.15). She is comfortable there because her multiple racial identities are reflected back to her in the superdiverse setting. There is a correspondence, rather than a disjuncture, between her interior psychic geography and the actual urban physical terrain she inhabits.

In this way, the 'habitus'[16] of East London becomes inscribed in the creative work of the symbol producers who live and work there. This notion of architectural, demographic, industrial and textual confluence, into which embodied subject are interpolated as part of a latticework of affective relationships seems to chime with Kathleen Stewart's assertion that 'Atmospheres do not float free from the bodies that come together and apart to compose situations. Affective qualities emanate from the assembling of the human bodies, discursive bodies, non-human bodies, and all the other bodies that make up everyday situations' (cited in Anderson, 2009, p. 80).

In the case of East London this spatialised affect includes a residue that is historically industrial, working class and multicultural, and has been reconfigured over time by waves of migration from Eastern Europe, Bangladesh, the Caribbean and Africa. The ghostly ephemeral traces of these different histories have seeped into the brick work, and while this feeling of otherness might have evoked anxiety in the Victorian upper-classes it has also always excited other feelings of fascination and ambivalent desire (Cohen, 2013). These 'affective' elements remain part of the appeal that attracts a new wave of creative workers to this sector of the city. Those historic, conjunctural 'structures of feeling' have also found their way into the creative work of my case studies. Dominic Hingorani's production 'Clocks 1888 the Greener' (00.08.05 in *Multicology?*) in particular evokes the multi-ethnic affective atmospheres of Victorian East London.

It is necessary to understand the work of my case studies as both a response to their localised environment and its affective atmosphere (along with other national and transnational cultural and economic influences) and also as a force that serves to shape that space, and its local creative cultures. However, it should be noted that, while a conception of spatialised affect is highly useful in understanding the relationship between spatial location and the creative work of its inhabitants, the visceral affect of these spaces cannot be thought of as uniform, any more than any text can have a uniform affect or reading. While East London may be constituted by a set of embodied meanings that distinguish it from other built environments, individuals may respond differently to these spatialised atmospheres. The urban multiculture of East London may activate either feelings of anxiety and alienation or comfort and

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[16] Bourdieu (1984) attributes 'habitus' to individual social actors and how they embody cultural capital but I would argue the concept can also usefully be applied to the particular attributes, feeling and form of city quarters.

belonging depending on a subject's existing racial affiliations, subjectivity and positionality. In this sense while, as Thibaud (2012) suggests, self and environment might be continuous, there may also be elements that disrupt or create dissonance in that continuum. The affective atmospheres of the spaces that we inhabit might suffuse us, but we might also be repelled by them. This is significant when considering how the multicultural affective atmosphere of East London may be seen as congruous with and re-enforcing of some identities, while negating others. It is also useful in understanding how cultural hubs in East London might become inhospitable to BAME creative producers if they exude a uniformly white and middle-class 'affective atmosphere'.

2.14 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to map out some of the theoretical antecedents to my research. My intention has been to highlight the conceptual links between a school of urban sociology that identifies urban space as the location in which racial difference is navigated and contested (Michael Keith, 2005) and a creative industries perspective that analyses the way the cultural sector operates to regulate and manage risk and creativity (David Hesmondhalgh, 2008). These paradigms provide a complementary and intersecting framework through which to understand the emergence and management of BAME creativity in an urban setting. They also provide a starting point from which to chart the initial growth and later contraction of BAME creative sectors over the last thirty years. In this respect the work of Karen Ross (1996) provides a useful analysis of the multicultural broadcasting sector of the early nineties, situating it as an institutional response to the social movements and civil disturbances of the previous decade. Sarita Malik's (2004) study of Channel 4 tracks the point at which this 'multicultural moment' was superseded by a discourse of 'diversity' that extended across many different mediums, institutions and art forms and marked a contraction and de-collectivisation of the black and Asian independent creative sectors. Writing at the tail end of this moment Phil Cohen (2003) critiqued the emergence of the 'multicultural creative class' which he saw ascending out of the post-industrial East End, enabled (in his mind) by the theoretical discourses of 'hybridity', and 'postcoloniality'. Despite his apparent ambivalence about this phenomenon Cohen's work, along with his reflections on the historic orientalisation and fetishisation of the East End is undoubtedly relevant to my topic. Equally David Sibley's work (1995) provides a useful paradigm to understand the more recent

processes of 'spatial purification' that are now transforming this previously maligned part of the city into an expanded cultural quarter, while Sharon Zuking (1995, 2010) offers a useful understanding of the role cultural consumption plays in the formation of urban space and the gentrification process. Stuart Hall's mapping of the shifts in black cultural production (in his classic 1992 work 'New Ethnicities', first published in 1988) allows an understanding of the current crisis of under representation as a new phase in the historic struggle over representation, while Anamik Saha's work (2017) on the racialising logic of the 'post-colonial creative industries' heralds a shift towards an empirically grounded analysis of BAME cultural production rooted in industrial and economic processes. In combination with the theorisation of 'affective atmospheres' (Anderson 2009) that locates the subject as a product of their physical environment, the work of these academics offers a useful analytical framework through which to understand the experiences and output of the creative practitioners who appear in my film, and also the rapidly changing urban and industrial topography that they inhabit.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDIES OF CREATIVE PRODUCTION IN AN EAST LONDON SETTING

(as featured in *Multicology?* 2018)

3.1 Film form and participants

Multicology? (2018), my accompanying film, is a one-hour documentary featuring interviews with creative practitioners based or working in East London, intercut with examples of their creative practice and interviews with academics and the shadow minister responsible for the digital creative industries. The film also features a voice over by myself that is intended to highlight areas of analysis and interpret elements within the film.

The individual case studies in *Multicology?* include (in order of appearance) theatre director Dominic Hingorani, grime musician MC Nyja, fashion designer Wale Adyemi, dancer/choreographer Jreena Green, inclusive wiki web designers Rufaro Asuquo, Paul Christian and Lee Philip, creative industries youth facilitator Fran Plowright, Filmmaker/trainer Kole Onile-ere, novelist Tessa McWatt and owner/manager of The Workers Café workspace Mike Ashley. Their particular forms of creative practice, economic strategies and location with the cultural economy of East London form the subject of the chapter.

Michael Keith (2005) and Anamik Saha (20017) are also interviewed in *Multicology?*. Both academics feature heavily in my literature review and their presence in the film enabled me to incorporate and expand on some of their work in the previous chapter. Their contribution was invaluable in helping to contextualise and augment the case study subjects who feature in the film. It also enabled an element of inter-university collaboration (Anamik Saha is based at Goldsmiths University and Michael Keith at Oxford University). Equally the participation of Chi Onwurah, Labour Party shadow minister for the digital industries, facilitated a very

useful knowledge exchange between a UEL researcher (myself) and a parliamentary policy representative. Through their participation, the interview subjects made significant contributions to debates relating to racial exclusion, the creative industries and East London's regeneration process. In this way the film operates to platform creative strategies and empirical research, but also forms of theorisation that spontaneously emerged out of the interview process. This research project also works, in a more general sense, to develop links between the University of East London, local cultural production sectors, and national political institutions.

All of the eleven individual cultural producers who feature in the film are intimately engaged with East London's local creative ecology. Some were born there. Some have been based there for many years, others for only a few. Some do not live there but have worked on numerous creative projects with companies or groups that are located there. For all of them the material configuration of this part of the city and local structures of financing and production, are deeply entwined with their individual creative practice and processes of production. The embedded communities, production companies, performance venues and local government agencies have variously constituted participants, partners and platforms for their work. This interdependency of location and modes of production is central to my research and also conceptually key to how we understand the relationship between space and creative practice. I would suggest this is a relationship within which physical context serves to configure modes of creative production, but also where industrial production sectors and creative processes serve to structure the urban environment and physical spaces in which they are located. The individual subjectivities and creative processes of the featured practitioners are produced at the points where urban space and industrial structures intersect. In this sense the embodied creative producers I look at are the conduit, or medium, through which the two spheres (physical space and the creative industries) interact.

I would argue the symbolic order of the city is increasingly predicated on notions of creativity. This process is an embodied and spatialised process but one where symbolic texts play a central role, partly because those symbolic commodities are the units of exchange in the cultural economy of the city, but also because creative workers become semantically conflated with the cultural texts they produce. They become embodied signifiers, who become physically and symbolically interpolated into the industrial relations of the 'creative city'.

> Through their social activities, human bodies demarcate, beacon and sign
> their space, leaving traces (networks, places, boundaries) that are both
> symbolic and material. Social space and the living body are subsequently
> connected in a conception of the spatial body. (Simonsen, 2007, p.174).

In this way my individual case studies become analytical markers in whose movements broader cultural and industrial forces can be traced.

Obviously, my comparatively small number of case studies do not constitute an exhaustive account of all the possible strategies minority artists have adopted to negotiate forms of racialised exclusion in the creative industries. They do, however, offer a range of approaches, and are differentiated by the subjects' positionalities with relation to class, gender, disability and the creative sectors in which they work. In some cases, they are highly individuated approaches, based primarily on personal creative and career objectives, in the others they are more clearly situated as part of strategies for collective advancement of some kind of perceived common cultural interests. Equally, some of the case studies are located in what might broadly be described as the 'commercial' sector while others inhabit the publicly funded 'community' sector. However, as some of the case studies demonstrate, these spaces do intersect at points and can produce interesting and productive conjunctions.

The following chapter offers greater analysis of the case studies contained in my accompanying film *Multicology?* (2018) and is intended to construct a dialogue between the video component and the writing. While my film contains first person accounts by creative practitioners, along with observations by academics and a politician, this chapter offers the possibility of an expanded theoretical reflection that locates the featured case studies of creative practice within broader academic debates around urban regeneration, race and the creative industries. It is intended to further delineate the strategies that the creative practitioners in the film have adopted to navigate East London's shifting terrain, and unpick the relationship between their individual forms of symbolic production and its wider economic and cultural context.

Broadly speaking this reflects an approach in which the production of a film can provide a departure point for a more detailed critical and analytical investigation. Using this methodology, material from the filmed interviews which could not be used due to the limitations of time, can be given greater attention and the work of the featured academics and

creative producers can be analysed in greater depth. However, this chapter is not intended to 'guarantee' the value of the film component by theorising it, rather it expands on and adds detail to research already contained in the film.

3.2 Chapter overview

For the sake of clarity and coherence I have grouped the case studies of individual creative producers under four main sub-headings. These are:

- **Economics and employment**
- **Creative practices**
- **Training and access initiatives**
- **Space and place**

These categories allow me to analyse the ways in which my subjects' different creative strategies compare and contrast with one another, and how they relate to work cited in my earlier literature review. I have included reflections on a number of different individual producers in each subsection. This reflects a desire to develop a dialogic interaction between the case studies that sit under the same heading, as well as with the work in the literature revue. However, it should be pointed out that some of the creative practitioners I examine are more relevant to particular areas of analysis than others, and therefore feature more prominently in those sections.

Overall my intention in this chapter is to demonstrate how the creative strategies of the featured creative workers are 'produced' by their relationship to existing racialised hierarchies of value, which operate simultaneously in economic, cultural and spatial dimensions. I argue these structures of racialised exclusion have emerged out of particular cultural and discursive conjunctures over the last three decades in the UK and become re-inscribed in physical urban space through the creative industries driven regeneration process. These forms of spatial racialisation in the creative sectors serve to delimit and position BAME creative producers in East London. However, as well as constraining their creative practice, their spatial location in a historically multicultural affective environment has also

often operated as a creative resource that they can draw on in their work. This represents a creative strategy whereby racialised creative producers can contest and subvert the hegemonic logic of the creative industries. Equally this chapter's analysis of individual creative producers in different but complementary production spheres allows an understanding of how spatialised intersectoral networks of BAME creative practitioners (or 'multicolgies' as I call them) can potentially operate to challenge forms of racialised exclusion and industrial precarity in East London.

3.3 Economics and employment

3.3.1 Introduction

> With the cultural industries there's plenty of potential for the folk who do well, middle class folk with the most opportunities, to dominate that certain labour market and that reproduce certain forms of old social divisions that we've seen before. At the same time, what is been commodified in the cultural industries may involve minority multicultural demographics, but it doesn't necessarily mean those same demographics are going to be the people that benefit. The folks selling black culture aren't always the black folk who are producing black culture. The thing, the cultures that are at the heart of the industries may be multicultural but that doesn't excuse the scrutiny of the demographics of the labour force or the beneficiaries of the industries more generally. (Keith, 00.31.00 in *Multicology?*)

As the quote above suggests questions of commoditisation, market demand, investment, employment, economic returns, ownership and control are all central to this section. One of these terms, however, might require further clarification. I am using 'economics' in this context to refer to the structures of financing and distribution that enable forms of BAME cultural production to come into existence but might also in some cases preclude their emergence. However, this section is not intended to offer a detailed account of specific funding initiatives, investments strategies or financial operations. Rather it is a more general reflection on my case studies' commercial and funding strategies, their forms of employment and the broader economic terrain they inhabit.

The creative producers whose work I examine come from a range of backgrounds. One of the main distinctions is between those who operate in primarily market-driven sectors of the

cultural economy and those who are funded by government subsidy on the basis of non-commercial imperatives such as 'cultural value' and 'civic engagement'. It should be acknowledged however that there is something of a continuum, rather than strict separation, between these different sectors. Some of my case studies oscillate between the two spaces, with both contributing to their income stream, or operate with something of a 'mixed economy' where they deploy funding from both commercial and public sectors for individual creative projects. My subjects also occupy differing position with regards to economic structures of ownership. In some cases they are owners of companies, in others they are employees of companies working on a freelance precarious basis. This is clearly a very significant factor in how they are positioned in relation to the creative economy, their degree of autonomy, and the extent to which they can maintain control of their intellectual property.

It should also be acknowledged that drawing a hard analytical distinction between 'economics and employment' (this sections heading) and 'creative practices' (the following section in this chapter) can be problematic. This separation can mask the intimate connection between the two spheres. In the cultural economy certain aesthetic strategies can take on a commodity value, and existing cultural hierarchies are deeply implicated in the process through which economic value is attributed to creative forms, and to individual creative workers. The term 'cultural economy' of course refers to the interpenetrating relationship between these two spheres. There is evidently a dialogic interaction between the form cultural commodities take and the economic relations out of which they are produced (Saha 2017), however for the sake of clarity it seems useful to draw some analytical boundaries. This separation enables a clearer delineation of how these producers are located within existing economic structures, with regards to financing production and distribution and also how particular forms of ownership and control characterise different sectors of the creative economy. However, despite this analytical separation between 'economics' and 'aesthetics' it will also be clear from my analysis, that my case studies funding strategies and types of employment are inevitably deeply entwined with the cultural meanings of the commodities they produce.

In this section I reflect on the economic strategies and employment patterns of fashion designer Wale Adeyemi, dance choreographer Jreena Green, theatre director Dominic Hingorani, grime MC Nyja, filmmaker Kole Onile-ere and the Rix Centre, out of which inclusive web designers Rufaro Asuquo, Paul Christian and Lee Philip work. All these

individual cases studies offer something to our understanding of how race interfaces with economic structures, and this configures patterns of ownership, funding, employment, and forms of exclusion from the labour market.

As stated previously these case studies work in a variety of different sub-sectors of the creative industries, with some operating in the 'commercial' sphere and others in the 'arts' and 'community' sectors. There is also a contrast between those who own their own companies and those in precarious freelance employment. Another significant divergence is between those creatives working in what might be loosely described as a 'subcultural' sphere and those operating in an 'high culture' setting. All these mediating factors impact on how the case studies are positioned in relation to the creative economy and offers the opportunity to juxtapose and compare their different strategies.

3.3.2 Wale Adeyemi: Black ownership, and cross-collateral marketing in the East London urban fashion industry

As the owner of a successful fashion label and manufacturing and retail outlets, clothes designer Wale Adeyemi (MBE) (who appears in *Multicology?* at 18.41.00) lies at the more commercial and entrepreneurial end of the economic spectrum. Adeyemi started off as a designer and stylist and his own fashion label B-Side[17], that he set up in 1999, has emerged as a successful brand, manufacturing clothes in China and marketing them, both in the UK and internationally, through a variety of retail outlets including Harvey Nichols, Asos and Lyst.com. At his studio, which has been based in East London for two decades, he employs a team of marketing, design, manufacturing and administrative staff. In 2012 he opened his own B-Side shop in Hanbury Street E1, just off Brick Lane, where he retails directly to the public. Adeyemi's early designs included designer jeans, T-shirts, baseball caps, beanie caps, hoodies and denim jackets, and used distinctive 'urban' graffiti style text to inscribe his words onto the various articles of clothing.

Adeyemi is the first to acknowledge the way urban popular culture influenced his designs, and he references music (especially, RnB and hip hop) as his main inspiration both creatively and in terms of the marketing strategies deployed in that industry. It was these models that he

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[17] https://www.b-sidebywale.com

attempted to utilise in a fashion context, initially targeting a similar market to the musical forms he enjoyed and consumed. In this sense he strategically deployed the creative capital of RnB, Garage and Hip-Hop artists to establish what Americans call a cross-marketing strategy, i.e. one where the cultural and economic collateral of a particular sector, in this case urban music, is redeployed in another sector, in this case fashion.

One of Adeyemi's early success was linking his clothing designs to So Solid Crew, a UK Garage music collective that achieved major exposure in the commercial music sector at the beginning of the millennium. His subsequent employment as a stylist on music videos lead to him supplying clothes to Victoria and David Beckham (or 'Brand Beckham') and gaining a broader exposure outside the urban music sector. Other major musical artist to sport his designs over the years include Estelle, Miss Dynamite, Mos Def and Beyoncé.

Adeyemi's primary economic strategy has been one of creating his own brand, controlling the processes of production and maintaining ownership of his own intellectual property. He has maximised profits by outsourcing the manufacturing process to Chinese subcontractors, thereby minimising labour costs, and has benefited from the ability to sell online thereby reducing retail costs. Adeyemi's approach has tended to be individualised, entrepreneurial and avowedly capitalist. In many ways it mirrors that of aspirational African American entrepreneurs such as Jay Z and P Diddy who recognised the economic viability of Hip Hop, when many major record labels refused to, and set up their own companies to market it to mass audiences (Ren and Skold 2007).

In his filmed interview (*Multicology?* at 00.18.43) Adeyemi asserts an affiliation to 'urban' black street culture, however he was more ambivalent about identifying himself as a 'black' fashion designer. One possible reason for this might be an unwillingness to impede the cross-cultural mobility of his brand and its ability to appeal to white consumers. This reflects one of the perennial contradictions of 'minority' cultural production. Despite recurring political debates about cultural ownership and cultural provenance, black cultural producers must often access white consumers in order to succeed in the cultural economy, particularly in a British context where the BAME demographic is smaller than countries like the USA. This model of 'black capitalism' (Very 2012), predicated not on corralling the black consumer market, but rather on commodifying and monetising black cultural forms and marketing them to predominantly white consumers, is of course not new. This cross-cultural marketing is

intimately bound up with the global commercial success of Hip Hop and also in a preceding moment that of black American soul music (especially Motown Records).

However, Adeyemi's economic strategies do prompt certain questions. To what degree, for instance, does the success of an individual black entrepreneur or company actually disrupt hegemonic structures and contest structural racism? Is it possible their success simply works to validate the dominant economic relations, valorise capitalist free enterprise, and commoditise black culture? These questions link back to Michael Keith's point that ethnic minority cultural practices can inhabit an ambivalent space with regards to the regeneration process. As he suggests they can potentially constitute part of an 'inauthentic performative cultural dialogue' that 'commodifies ethnic difference' and 'serves as the handmaiden to capital' and the process of urban gentrification' (Keith 2005, p.113).

In his work Keith explores the process whereby business owners in Banglatown, just down the road form Adeyemi's shop, seemed to deploy potentially problematic orientalising tropes for marketing purposes (2005 p.113). However, I would argue while it is clearly the case that cultural difference can be commoditised and interpolated into capitalist structures of commerce, the existence of cultural and racial hierarchies can still intervene to distinguish black forms of capitalist free enterprise from their equivalents in the normative 'white' enterprise economy, especially with regards to high status forms of cultural production. This might be considered broadly analogous to gun ownership in the USA. While it may be considered part normative and conservative ideology, when practised by racialised minorities it becomes threatening and a challenge to existing power relations (and the subject historically of increased regulation and control).[18] Equally, capitalist free enterprise and company ownership, when exercised by BAME communities and individuals, can be regarded as potentially radical and disruptive in that it contests racialised forms of economic dominance. This is not to argue that BAME entrepreneurialism is inherently emancipatory or does not reproduce forms of economic exploitation. Only that, within existing economic relations and racialised cultural hierarchies, these forms of enterprise can be considered different to, and sometimes incommensurate with, other forms of normative capitalist free enterprise. This seems especially the case especially given that, as Keith states in the quote at the beginning of this section, 'what is being commodified in the cultural industries may involve minority multicultural demographics but it doesn't necessarily mean those same

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[18] https://www.history.com/news/black-panthers-gun-control-nra-support-mulford-act

demographics are going to be the people that benefit" (Keith 00.31.00 in *Multicology?*).
Therefore, when black entrepreneurs are commoditising and capitalising on black cultural
forms it can be seen as being qualitatively different to when white entrepreneurs do it, in that
it challenges racialised forms of economic expropriation. This is reflected in Adeyemi's
emphasis on the ownership and control of the 'means of symbolic production'. In this sense
Keith's conception of an opposition between enabling forms of cultural hybridity, and forms
of exploitative commoditisation become problematised when mediated by questions of
racialised ownership and control within the cultural economy. Within this framing, BAME
company ownership in East London's cultural sectors can disrupt forms of racialised
exclusion and dominance, and in doing so offers a potentially empowering economic strategy
for BAME cultural producers.

3.3.3 Jreena Green: Precarious employment in the community and global commercial sectors

The freelance employment pattern of Jreena Green (22.28.00 in *Multicology?)* suggests
emerging opportunities for some BAME creative practitioners to migrate between East
London's community arts sector and commercial marketing campaigns targeted at global
markets.

Jreena Green is a professional dancer and choreographer. She also has her own Lindy Hop
dance company 'Jazz Dance Elite', is head of dance at the community-based venue Theatre
Peckham and works regularly with Green Candle, community dance company based in
Bethnal Green.[19] Income from a mix of commercial and publicly funded projects, coupled
with part-time teaching work, enables her to maintain her somewhat precarious existence as a
freelancer. However, in the last couple of years she has started working more regularly as a
dance choreographer on big budget international advertising shoots. These include campaigns
for clients such as Guinness, KFC and Levi's Jeans.[20] Along with her formal training and
specialist choreographic skills Green is increasingly being employed because of the empathic
attributes and skillset she developed working in a participatory multicultural community

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[19] http://www.greencandledance.com
[20] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgcgFP9nGqY

dance setting. This seems to reflect a need by international commercial corporations to adapt to the perceptions of increasingly diverse and globalised markets.[21]

After recent marketing debacles with Pepsi Cola and Dove, which were both roundly condemned for appropriation and deploying racist visual tropes, corporate clients and advertising agencies are increasingly aware of the economic hazards of misunderstanding the sensitivities of a racially plural global market place.[22] The now infamous Pepsi advert deployed the visual signifiers of the Black Lives Matters movement while effectively evacuating them of any political meaning, and the recent add for Dove Soap unwittingly reproduced the idea of soap as a skin lightener (an association with a long and problematic history in the cosmetics industry).[23] The backlash against these high profile big budget campaigns appears to have generated a degree of anxiety on the part of clients and advertising agencies about how to mitigate the risk of alienating BAME viewers and consumers.[24] This shift may also be driven by a growing (sometimes grudging) acceptance that, in a global context, what were previously considered minority or niche markets cannot be ignored if companies want to maintain their competitiveness.[25] In this way a new demographic reality appears to be gradually inserting itself into the industrial logic of global capitalism. 'The global centre of gravity is changing. In 1900 Europe had a quarter of the world's population, and three times that of Africa; by 2050 Europe is predicted to have just 7 % of the world population, and a third that of Africa.' [26]

While these emerging markets have become critically important for multinational corporations social media has also become increasingly significant in providing a platform for audiences to critique the representational strategies employed by these companies in their marketing campaigns.[27] This crisis for the advertising industry has necessitated the informal role of cultural mediators on set, and the employment of directors and producers who are perceived as having a particular sensitivity to cultural difference, and are less likely to unwittingly offend BAME consumers (and in some cases the production's own cast and crew members). Along with her job as dance choreographer, Green performed this mediating role

[21] https://www.ft.com/content/57c516fc-a2b2-11e7-8d56-98a09be71849
[22] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/05/business/kendall-jenner-pepsi-ad.html
[23] https://www.cbsnews.com/news/dove-ad-racist-insensitive-apology-for-facebook-ad/
[24] https://www.businessinsider.com/doves-racist-ad-10-9-2017-10?r=US&IR=T
[25] https://www.inc.com/yuriy-boykiv/multicultural-marketing-no-longer-an-option-but-a-necessity.html
[26] https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/sep/03/race.world
[27] https://www.ranker.com/list/corporate-social-media-fails-2017/jacob-shelton

on the 2017 Levi's 'Circles' campaign.[28] On the shoot she was tasked with co-ordinating a disparate set of cultural groups including Palestinians, Bollywood dancers, Jamaican dance hall performers and orthodox Jews. In this context her mixed heritage (Pakistani and Black Caribbean) and community dance background acted as distinct assets. This emerging emphasis on 'cultural mediators' in a commercial production sector constitutes an interesting reversal of traditional risk mitigation strategies which were historically adopted by corporations wherein a desire not to offend the tastes and sensitivities of white consumers was historically considered of primary significance.[29] This strategy also possibly reflects an emerging disjuncture between the UK's increasingly white and middle class creative industries sectors (as demonstrated by the industry reports cited in my introduction) and more globalised forms of industrial production and employment which are being configured by international markets.

In the context of contracting employment opportunities in the national commercial creative sectors BAME creative workers may also increasingly be getting displaced into the 'community arts sector'. This sector, while less well-resourced and often lower status than the commercial sphere, offers a more ethnically inclusive environment, and one in which forms of structural exclusion from the 'mainstream' industries can be openly acknowledged.

As Sarita Malik observes, this sector:

> functions for many as a counterhegemonic space. Some of this
> marginalisation is discussed unequivocally in terms of race, and at other
> times class is seen as the biggest determinant that has led to exclusion from
> the industry and also in what is actually represented and the perspectives
> that are given access. (Malik *et al* 2014, p. 13).

Equally exclusion from creative sectors on a national level may mean BAME creative workers are increasingly forced to pursue employment in a more international context, and on productions targeted at emerging global markets. This assessment is borne out by the migration of black British acting talent to the USA over the last ten years, followed more recently by the UKs two most established BAME TV drama directors (Alrick Riley and

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[28] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgcgFP9nGqY
[29] In fact, as Mehaffy points out (1997), racial difference was actively deployed in American advertising to centre the primacy of the white female consumer.
https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3175155.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3088812b6b8f29632fe79bab8b4408a8

Menhaj Huda).[30] In many of these cases lack of commercial employment opportunities in the UK were cited as the motivation. [31]

Jreena's Green oscillation between the local community-based dance sector, working with East London based Green Candle Dance company (who feature in *Multicology?* at 00.23.33) and the global commercial sectors seems to reflect this growing disjuncture. While she is employed on a relatively regular basis in both these sectors, she continues to be under-employed in a national broadcast or commercial theatre setting. This seems to demonstrate both the restrictive national context and the potentially enabling hyperlocal and global dimensions to BAME employment in the creative industries.

While Phil Cohen (2000) saw a multicultural creative class emerging out of the 'polyversities' ready to instrumentally deploy their 'multicultural capital' in the creative economy, it would seem to be increasingly clear that this particular form of cultural capital only has economic value in certain contexts. While it may have some (limited) economic value in highly localised community based public sector initiatives, and some emerging value in a global context, as the Creative Skillset, Directors UK and Creative Industries Federation reports cited earlier indicate, it has demonstrably failed to sell in the national commercial, corporate or elite cultural economy. Given that national corporate and cultural institutions, along with transnational ones, are driving the regeneration process in East London this might not bode well for forms of minority inclusion in East London's creative sectors. In a broader sense it could also represent a growing separation between hyper-local, national and transnational modes of production when it comes to the employment of BAME creative workers.

3.3.4 Dominic Hingorani: Establishing value in the public funding economy

The previous case studies focus on, in one case, an entrepreneurial commercial company owner and in the other, a freelance precarious worker who migrates between the local

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[30] https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/news/british-tv-directors-from-ethnic-minorities-moving-to-us-to-further-careers-a6787066.html

[31] https://quartzy.qz.com/1190138/another-black-british-actors-hollywood-success-is-raising-hard-questions-in-the-uk/

community and global commercial production sectors. The third case study I examine in this section inhabits a very different type of funding ecology, being primarily supported by public arts bodies like Arts Council England and working with established theatre venues. Theatre writer/director Dominic Hingorani, along with his partner, production designer Rachana Jadhav, own and run Brolly Productions theatre company. Their multicultural opera *Clocks 1888: the Greener* (2016), which is set in the Victorian East End, features in *Multicology?* at 8.02.00.

Rather than being determined by overtly commercial considerations Brolly's creative output is predicated on cultural and aesthetic priorities and focused around interrogating colonial historic narratives and celebrating both ethnic and formal hybridity. While having a radical aesthetic agenda, in order to be fundable within the public arts sector, Brolly also have to distinguish themselves from both commercial and community forms of creative production and demonstrate their engagement with elite cultural forms that are designated as being of artistic merit by institutions by like Arts Council England. Given their potentially marginal status as a BAME company within the cultural economy, their deployment of institutionally recognised cultural forms such as opera may itself be seen as a way of mitigating the inherent risks entailed in cultural production (Hesmondhalgh 2007), in that it locates their creative output within a cultural hierarchy of values shared by public funding institutions.

In this way Brolly's work embodies an ambivalent process where on the one hand they, deconstruct and 'undermine from within' existing hegemonic cultural forms while also redeploying those forms of cultural capital within the creative economy. This critical, hybrid approach may also be fulfilling a useful function for funders like Arts Council England, who understand the potentially exclusionary and elitist traditions of opera and need to justify its continued public funding by demonstrating its broader appeal to multicultural and working-class audiences.

It is arguable that the previous case studies, especially Wale Adyemi and Dominic Hingorani, embody Keith's observations about the ambivalent nature of cultural hybridity. As he states, it can operate as an emancipatory force that disrupts 'synthetic boundaries' and 'challenges the conventional in aesthetics and hegemonics in politics' (Keith 2005, p.113) but can also sometimes be imbricated into processes of fetishized commodification and economic exploitation. I would go further and suggest it can do both things simultaneously. Within the cultural economy, hybridity can act as more than simply an aesthetic or cultural strategy. It is

also an economic strategy that fuses BAME cultural practices with dominant hegemonic cultural forms to leverage public funding from mainstream institutions and to access majority white markets for black produced commercial cultural commodities. This process arguably both empowers BAME cultural producers within the creative industries while simultaneously interpolating them further into the dominant economic relations and hierarchies of cultural value. It would seem worth noting, however, that these forms of economic and cultural hybridity are rarely predicated on equitable relations of power, and that this asymmetrical distribution of status and economic value can be re-encoded in the cultural commodities that these processes produce. This may be especially the case given that, in a British context, these hybrid creative forms are often produced within a majority white industry, where, despite carrying traces of the dominant cultural traditions, they may still be perceived as 'other' or non-normative.

3.3.5 MC Nyja: *Underground urbanomics and grime as a semi-autonomous black audiovisual production sector*

MC Nyja (00.12.35 in *Multicology?*) is a respected performer/producer in a music sector that has established itself as one of the most credible inheritors of a black British music tradition that dates back to the 1950s. In the early 2000's grime's direct predecessor, garage music (a high tempo offshoot of drum and bass and dancehall music) was driven underground after a widely reported series of shooting at live events and the arrest of several members of the genres most commercially successful musical collective, So Solid Crew.[32] The resultant lack of access to live venues, and explosion of the internet displaced the music into a 'virtual' existence on numerous dedicated web sites, where the music could be downloaded and low budget, self-produced videos viewed. As a cultural form grime music was produced at the conjuncture between highly stringent forms of racialised exclusion and risk management in the commercial music industry and the increased availability of online platforms and low-cost video production technology.

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[32] https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-177646/So-Solid-Crew--man-shot-dead.html

Hebdige celebrates the disruptive power of youth music subcultures as a 'mechanism of semantic disorder' (Hebdige 1979, p. 90). However, while on the surface grime music might seem like the dissident/dissonant youth culture par excellence, its apparently concussive and conflictual signifying practices belie what is in reality a highly structured system of production, distribution and internal regulation (White, 2014). Starting in the early 2000s, grime producers, with the help of digital technology, successfully wrested control of the 'means of symbolic production' (Hall, 1980) from the major record labels and broadcasters to construct a micro creative industries sector of remarkable creativity and cultural autonomy. The degree of artistic control that characterises this sector rarely exists in the more well-resourced commercial industry but is often accompanied by lower profits and a high degree of economic precarity. This means grime music artists often have to augment any income generated through their music careers with additional work, in MC Nyja's case by working in a high-street bank.

Grime music 'crews' tend to be flat, cellular, web-savvy cultural collectives that can mobilise consumer loyalty and skilfully deploy digital technology to monetise their own subcultural capital. However, while grime music collectives might represent and innovative and agile model of creative entrepreneurialism, well-tailored to the online era, they have often been regarded with aprehesnion by the commercial music industry. Despite the success of individual artists like Dizzy Rascal, Kano and Stormzy, grime as a collective cultural sector remains a highly localised underground phenomenon in East London.

> Neoliberal capitalism has destroyed many independent structures of production and distribution during recent years with the relatively frictionless integration of subcultural capital into the cultural industries (Muggleton and Weinzierl 2003, p.14).

Despite reproducing normative structures of entrepreneurial enterprise (and in contradiction to the quote above) the grime music sector has proved stubbornly indigestible for the mainstream commercial music industry. Unlike artists from the UK East London Asian music scene that Anamik Saha refers to in his work (2017), grime collectives have rarely been the subject of an exoticing gaze that rendered them seductively marketable. Because of the media moral panics that have often surrounded them [33] they have more often been viewed with

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[33] https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2006/nov/06/isviolenceholdinggrimegrimeback

anxious trepidation by major record labels. That is not to say they have never been the subject of fetishizing processes, only that they have more often been characterised as just too menacing, destabilising and fundamentally risky to be easily assimilated or commoditised by the mainstream cultural industries. [34]

This lack of 'mainstream' commercial engagement has, by necessity, led to a remarkable level of economic self-sufficiency in the grime music sector. This independence has in turn been facilitated by technological shifts that have occurred over the last two decades. Grime music's initial emergence as a significant cultural phenomenon in East London, and online on various dedicated websites, was inextricable linked to the growing availability of low-cost digital video cameras and non-linear editing software like Final Cut Pro and Premiere Pro that could run on domestic PCs. These technologies enabled the formation of a DIY independent music and music video production sector linked to the subcultural music scene. This process mirrored the impact of an earlier shift in music production technologies where PC based software like Q-base, Session 8 and others heralded the home-recording revolution of the 1980s. The really crucial and transformational shift however came in the form of the distribution platforms provided by the internet. The music videos produced using these newly available inexpensive, high quality digital recording and editing technologies could now be streamed to a global audience numbering hundreds of thousands, and sometimes millions over the internet, and in doing so bypass the need for institutional and economic support from record labels and broadcasters.

However, while grime music artists could access comparatively large audiences, their cultural ascendency coincided with the music industries' growing inability to monetise their cultural products because of internet piracy. This resulted in the contradictory position where underground grime artist could achieve global exposure while simultaneously being unable to monetise their fame as performers. Many music artists in more mainstream commercial sectors responded to the collapse in revenue triggered by unlicensed downloading by effectively repurposing live performance as their primary income generator. This option however was not easily available to grime artist as restrictive practices by the metropolitan police use of the notorious 696 Health and Safety form[35] which prevented grime artists from performing at live venues in London and thereby translating their subcultural cultural into

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[34] https://www.theguardian.com/music/2005/dec/27/popandrock
[35] Form 696: Concern over 'racist' police form to be raised
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-39181672

actual economic capital. Hence these cultural and technological shifts were simultaneously constraining and enabling for grime artist in that they allowed the emergence of a highly productive creative sector, with a broad cultural reach, while also limiting its capacity to generate significant profits.

While this status as an economically under resourced sector, but with an established audience base, has in some ways opened grime up to commercial exploitation by major commercial record labels it remains a highly contradictory process. As I explore later in this section the creative industries desire to mitigate risk entails the creation of processes through which creative talent can be managed and through which creative forms can be uncoupled from their original context of production and the social groups who originally produced them. This places grime artist like MC Nyja (0012.34 in *Multicology?)* in a contradictory position. On the one hand she aspires to commercial success, on the other she has a strong awareness that to pass through the doors of the major labels and into the cultural mainstream would mean surrendering the autonomy which comes from managing and controlling her own career, methods of production and cultural assets. Nyja refers to this in her interview (not included in my film *Multicology?* due to lack of space) when she says, 'you are selling your soul' when you sign with a record label and risk becoming their 'puppet'. She partly attributes this to the standard feature of many recording contracts in which music artist are obliged to return the financial advance given by a label to cover production costs. However, this statement also clearly refers to the loss of creative agency and individual autonomy that goes along with signing to a commercial record label and being interpolated into a pop music setting. As an independent artist in the music video production process Nyja effectively operates as both the featured artist and also the commissioner and executive producer. This gives her more power than many more established signed artists who often have to defer to record label MDs and management companies with regards to how they will be marketed, and how their identities as performers will be shaped in their music videos. (This is not however always the case as some 'mega star' artist can sometimes exert tremendous influence over their own marketing and PR). MC Nyja's level of autonomy, and the economic self-sufficiency of East London's grime music sector as a whole, points to the significance of BAME control of the means of symbolic production, and the potential of entrepreneurial cultural collectives to operate effectively in the local cultural economy.

3.3.6 Kole Onile-ere: Displacement and racialisation in the film industry

A British Film Institute (BFI) report *Screen Business* (Olsberg 2018) shows the UK film and TV industry generated a record £7.9bn in 2016, helped by government tax relief. This represents a 63% increase in production investment over the previous four years. These tax breaks have incentivised producers to shoot in UK and domestic production in the film sector has seen dramatic growth and at £298m in 2016 reached its highest recorded total, up 34% since 2013. The BFI claims tax breaks generated 137,000 jobs in 2016 alone.

However, a BFI commissioned report published a year earlier (Carey *et al,* 2017) shows only 3% BAME employment in the film industry. Similarly, the 2018 Directors UK report *Adjusting the Colour Balance* showed between 2013 and 2016 only 2.22% of British broadcast television programmes had a BAME director. This extremely low figure is thrown into even starker relief when you consider the fact that most of those directing jobs are concentrated in London where the BAME population is 41%.

It is in this context that the career trajectory of my case study filmmaker Kole Onile-ere (37.58.00 in *Multicology?*) must be mapped. His experience gives an indication of how black directors can be excluded from commercial or state broadcasting sectors and redirected into the community sector, training and assisting roles. Despite directing award-winning short dramas, employment directing mainstream television drama has eluded him. His directing work has tended to be supported by publicly funded organisations and centred around social issues such as knife crime and black criminality. As Saha suggests (2017) creative practitioners become racialised and constrained by industrial processes in the creative industries that designate black creativity as a genre in itself with associated tropes and formal characteristics. In this way, Onile-ere's creative identity as a filmmaker has been produced as much by institutional funding structures and political imperatives around black criminality and youth engagement as it has by his own areas of creative concern. That is not to say they don't intersect, and like many black filmmakers he is concerned with issues of representation, racism and inequality and the impact of violent crime on the black community. However,

these are not exclusively his areas of interest. Despite that, within the current broadcasting and publicly funded film ecology, it is those areas that are often earmarked for funding.[36]

Due to a lack of commercial directing contracts Onile-ere had to move into working as a 1st assistant director on commercials and feature films. An AD's job is to plan the shootings schedule and organise the crew on set and is considered a logistical rather than a creative role. Significantly this role, unlike that of a director, is not commonly considered reliant on, or conflated with, an individual creative vision or understanding of particular cultural or personal themes. However, despite that, race and cultural identity still appear to play a significant role in Onile-ere's employment history as an assistant director. He is conscious of being the only black director on the roster at his booking agency and is often told by the directors on advertising shoots that 'I'm the first person who looks like me who has ever been a 1st AD for them' (00:48:15 in *Multicology?*)*.* He also often finds himself to be the only black person working on set. Onile-ere also believes his employment pattern may be further complicated by the fact that when BAME directors do get work in the commercial sectors there is a tendency to employ white assistant directors as a way of mitigating, in the eyes of clients, funder and broadcasters, the risk of employing a non-white director. Onile-ere's experience might have conceivably been different in the USA where there is a discrete self-supporting black production sector[37] into which he might have been more easily integrated and where majority black film crews are the norm.

A historical understanding of the momentary explosion of the black British independent film production in the early 1990s makes clear that a conducive funding ecology is central to the emergence of a BAME film industry (Ross 1996). Key individuals, such as Ngozi Onwurah, Isaac Julien and John Akomfrah and film collectives such as Black Audio, Ceddo and Sankofa were clearly instrumental to the emergence of a vibrant (if small) independent black film sector during this period. That moment was part of a broader historical conjuncture and the political and cultural shifts linked to black and Asian political movements and demographic changes over the preceding two decades, as argued in Chapter 1. However, it

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[36] As the Arts Council states 'That the full value of arts and culture is recognised and taken into account as a key factor in reducing offending and re-offending rates and improving rehabilitation outcomes, including for young people at risk and adults and young people in the criminal justice system from BAME backgrounds', https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE_response_to_the_Lammy_Review_June_2016.pdf

[37] While less well-resourced than their white counterpart African American TV Networks such as Bounce TV, Own TV, Aspire TV and BET regularly reach audiences of millions, with budgets far larger than equivalent production in the UK.

seems fair to say that these individuals and groups would not have been able to survive, flourish and be productive without access to revenue from particular broadcasters and commissioners. Channel 4, and particularly commissioning editor Alan Fountain in the Independent Film and Video Department, were instrumental in this regard. Fountain was responsible for instituting the Channel 4 'workshop agreement' that supported minority-based production companies around the UK.[38]

Since then the historic shift to a discourse of diversity, the associated contraction of the black independent film sector, and the growth of predominately white owned 'super indie' TV production companies during the last two decades has led to diminished employment opportunities for black film makers and technical crew like Onile-ere.[39] In this context Onile-ere continues to occupy an economically precarious existence as a freelance assistant director and film trainer, who uses his income in these roles to subsidise the often frustrating development process entailed in trying to get financing for his own directorial projects.

Interestingly since being interviewed for *Multicology?* Onile-ere's career has taken an upturn, and he has been employed on several multi-million-pound budgeted feature films as a production co-ordinator. Ironically this has been exclusively on Bollywood films targeted at Indian audiences, of which a large number are produced in the UK. This sector has grown considerably over the last two decades and has at points has shot more feature films in the Britain than the local UK film industry.[40] Typically Onile-ere is the only black crew member working on these films, but he has become something of a fixture in this sector and it provides an increasingly important source of employment.

Onile-ere's position indicates both the precarious nature of black directors in the UK film-industry, and the role BAME owned film production companies can play in contesting and mitigating forms of racialised exclusion in the moving image industries.

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[38] https://www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room/television-will-be-revolutionised-channel-4-and-the-1982-workshop-declaration.
[39] A (2017) Skills Audit of the UK Film and Screen Industries. Report for the British Film Institute. http://www.theworkfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/420_A-Skills-Audit-of-the-UK-Film-and-Screen-Industries.pdf Showed only 3% of people working in the film industry were from BAME backgrounds.
[40] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1526807/Bollywood-is-more-successful-in-UK-than-British-made-films.html

3.3.7 The Rix Centre: A mixed economy for a supported work environment

The final case study in this section offers an interesting counterpoint to the funding of those described earlier. Rufaro Asuquo, Paul Christian and Lee Philip, who featured in my film, were the producers of 'Manor House, My House', an accessible Wiki website which included documentary films and music videos exploring the experiences of people with learning disability in long-stay psychiatric hospitals. The project was produced and funded through RIX Research & Media.[41] Named after its founder, the late Lord Brian Rix, the company explores and develops ways of using new technologies to transform the lives of people with learning disabilities. Their mission is to 'enable people with learning disabilities to participate in the research to challenge their social exclusion, to have a voice and tell their stories.'[42] They occupy office space in the Knowledge Dock[43], a managed office building extending off the UEL Docklands campus that houses various independent private companies, NGOs and social enterprises. The Rix is partly subsidised by UEL and their permanent staff are technically employees of the university. The director Andy Minnion was recently made a professor by the university and was previously awarded an MBE for his work. The projects RIX Research & Media run are funded by a mixed economy of professional commissions, corporate sponsorship and academic research funding from the government and other public entities. Previous projects have been commissioned and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, Arts and Humanities Research Council, the NHS, Tech Dis, Tower Hamlets Council and a range of other government, private and university sector organisations. Significantly the Rix has established a strategy where it sits into an academic research setting while still maintaining a high degree of autonomy and ability to generate funding independently of the university, through commercial commissions which include video productions, software design, and a range of research and innovation programmes. The Rix employs the skills of workers with learning disability, valuing their particular abilities to understand the experiences and needs of that client group. Hence, people with learning disabilities have recently worked as consultants on projects to produce accessible museum exhibits with established cultural institutions like the British Museum [44] and also produced

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[41] Rix research centre website https://rixresearchandmedia.org
[42] https://rixresearchandmedia.org/rix/home-research/
[43] https://www.uel.ac.uk/business/knowledge-dock
[44] https://sensoryobjects.como

accessible Wiki websites for local government. This is in marked contrast to many employment programmes for people with learning disability that tend to focus on sectors outside the creative industries such as gardening, craft manufacture and the retail sectors. The Rix centre has been remarkably successful, working across a range of mediums including software design, factual films, music videos and accessible websites. In this sense they offer a broadly applicable strategic framework for how, using a mix of commercial and public funding, organisations which are dedicated to social justice and the inclusion of minorities can orient online creative production around specific communities of interest.

The success of the Rix in funding projects suggest the usefulness of a hybrid economic strategy that sits between commercial private enterprise and government subsidised forms of funding. Also key to its success is an approach that seeks to redefine the economic value of the skill sets and experience possessed by their learning-disabled employees in the cultural economy. Institutions like museums and local government seeking to make their operations and exhibits more socially inclusive see the value of the user insight provided by the Rix team and are prepared to pay for it.

3.3.8 Section conclusion

The case studies I have examined in this section represent markedly different economic strategies. Wale Adeyemi embodies a highly individualised and entrepreneurial approach and locates himself primarily within a commercial market driven sector of the cultural economy. Jreena Green oscillates between publicly funded, often badly resourced community projects, and big budget advertising campaigns targeted at global audiences, while Dominic Hingorani, deploys cultural forms with an established value in the publicly funded cultural economy. MC Nyja represents a semi-autonomous, self-funded approach, located in an underground cultural economy where ownership of the means of symbolic production allows levels of autonomy and control not afforded by the major record labels and broader cultural economy. In contrast Kole Onile-ere inhabits a precarious economic position as a freelancer, using his work as a trainer and assistant director to fund his own drama development projects. The Rix, meanwhile, deploys a mix of public funding, academic research awards, commercial commissions and corporate donations to do their work.

Among my case studies the Rix centre can be seen as offering one of the most radical models, in that they actively seek to redefine the economic value attributed to their employees' experiences and skillsets within the cultural economy, viewing them as commercial assets rather than as deficits. However, Nyja, and the grime music sector in general, is notable for establishing proprietorial relations that undermine and disrupt hegemonic, predominantly white and middle-class dominated patterns of ownership in the music and film industry. These two economic strategies can both be viewed as direct challenges to patterns of racialised precarity and under-employment in the cultural economy.

It should be noted that, while the patterns of racialised economic exclusion I describe may have been generated out of a powerful confluence of institutional racism and economic risk management, they were also exacerbated by the 2008 global financial crisis (ISER 2015). [45] While less impacted than some other industrial sectors, the creative industries still suffered during this economic crash (Donald, Gertler & Tyler 2013) and this led to the shedding of workers, and the consolidation of risk mitigating strategies. Within this context the position of BAME workers and minority cultural forms, already comparatively marginal within the creative economy, became even more precarious.

Equally it is important to understand how the discourse of diversity (well described by Malik 2008) that emerged in the 1990s as the dominant paradigm of cultural funding may have had a significant long-term economic impact. This process shifted public resources and broadcast commissions away from the BAME-owned and controlled production companies that had up until that point constituted a vibrant, albeit small and under-resourced, independent cultural sector. This emerging multicultural creative sector was superseded by the (limited) assimilation of individual BAME creative workers into majority white-owned and controlled corporations and cultural sectors. This process eventually resulted in the winding down of ethnic minority-owned companies such as Non-Aligned Communications, Sankofa Film, and prevented the consolidation of economically autonomous BAME production sectors. Coming more than a decade after that cultural and economic shift grime can be understood partly as a response to these forms of economic marginalisation. In the context of acute class and race-

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[45] A report commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree foundation showed how the BAME workforce was disproportionately impacted by the 2008 financial crisis, https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/2015/05/07/the-impact-of-the-recession-on-the-uk-s-ethnic-minority-groups.

based exclusion in the moving image industries there was arguably little choice but for an emerging generation of grime artist to deploy the newly available digital technologies to create their own independently owned and controlled audio-visual production sector.

In his work Michael Keith (2005) talks about how minority communities like Banglatown commoditise their own racial difference, while Phil Cohen talks optimistically about the emergence of a multicultural creative class freely able to deploy its multi-cultural capital in East London's creative economy (1999). It would seem clear that minority symbol producers, like all precarious cultural workers, have been compelled by circumstances to instrumentally deploy whatever cultural assets they might possess in a highly competitive neoliberal creative economy. However, in contradiction to Cohen's assertion, this appears to have been a problematic and uneven process when it comes to BAME creative workers in particular. This would seem to be because, as Saha argues (2017), ethnic minority cultural forms and their producers, have often been considered intrinsically economically risky by commercial production sectors. In this respect Saha takes his cue from David Hesmondhalgh (2005) who identifies the cultural industries as capital-intensive high-risk sectors that utilise existing genres and acknowledged stars as devices to reduce the intrinsic financial hazards entailed in these forms of industrial production. It is within this framework that BAME genres, producers and performers might typically be characterised as comparatively high risk in that they embody minority cultural interests and may not appeal to mass markets. However, neither Hesmondhalgh nor Saha adequately explore the well-established strategy through which the creative sectors minimise the risk of developing new creative practices by appropriating and mass-producing cultural forms that originate with, and have already been 'field tested' in, subcultural or BAME communities. Historically this strategy was adopted with musical forms like jazz and the blues. Unfortunately for many BAME creative innovators these forms were often seen as most commercially exploitable when they were uncoupled from their original context of production, and now in the case of grime music, the economic structures and collectivist affiliations that generated them in the first place. Within this framework the construction of semi-autonomous cultural sectors like the grime music scene, that maintain ownership and control of the means of symbolic production, present a potentially disruptive obstacle to this top-down form of economic expropriation.

As Saha suggest in his work (2017), an analysis of race and the creative industries requires a theoretical shift away from the idea of cultural texts as floating signifiers disconnected from

structures of ownership and control, and a return to seeing symbolic practices and the production of cultural commodities as inextricably bound up with industrial processes, economic relations and existing hierarchies of power. It is within these structures that economic value is attributed by the market to BAME cultural commodities. I would argue that the process through which economic value is attributed to creative commodities is in no sense culturally neutral or value free, but is deeply imbricated into existing cultural hierarchies, communal affiliations and visceral forms of identification. This means that BAME cultural products are often undervalued within the creative economy, and as a result their producers become excluded from employment in those sectors.

In response to being designated as economically risky, BAME cultural producers may strategically adopt or adapt cultural forms that have existing cultural capital in the creative economy. This process can validate BAME creative producers within hegemonic industrial economic structures, but it can also reinforce the dominant economic relations and cultural hierarchies within which value is attributed to cultural commodities. Equally this process may lead BAME practitioners to involuntarily reproduce existing racialised stereotypes. Keith describes these in relation to Banglatown (2005, p. 113) and Saha explores these in regard to how Asian novelists often reproduce and cater to recurring Eurocentric narrative tropes about Asian culture such as arranged marriages and honour killings (2016). In the case of Wale Adeyemi's commercial enterprise this may also entail strategically co-opting the creative collateral that resides in other cultural sectors such as the music industry, and in other national contexts, e.g. the USA's urban music scene. In this way BAME producers have to compensate for their heightened industrial precarity and work harder to minimize the risk of their own creative practice relative to their white counterparts. This might mean being guaranteed by elite cultural forms, the reproduction of formulaic narrative conventions and by employing majority white crews and cast members in a theatrical or film setting. This need however is potentially diminished in sectors, such as the relatively autonomous grime music scene, where low production costs reduce economic risk and enable forms of creative production that might contest hegemonic cultural practices and mitigate forms of industrial exclusion.

However, even the grime music sector artist may adopt techniques to minimize the perennial risk of creative production. In Nyja's case this meant employing a music video director who was attached to a web caster therefore ensuring a built-in distribution for her music video.

For the grime sector overall, it might include music artists collaborating with other artists who have an established fan base and therefore aggregating their audiences. More problematically it might sometimes also entail the reproduction of generic visual tropes such as expensive cars, hyper-masculine posturing, territorial conflicts and hyper-sexualised and reductive representations of women, all of which can have currency in the urban music genre (Morris 2014). In this sense, as Hesmondhalgh (2007), suggests economic risk mitigation is often at the heart of creative industrial process whatever the race of the practitioner.

In contrast to the typical risk mitigation strategies that operate to exclude racialised minorities in a local British context, the Jreena Green case study suggests that there might also be a new kind of crisis emerging around the management of difference in a global creative-industries setting. Multinational corporations such as Coke, Levi's and Guinness are increasingly being forced to contend with the profound economic risks of ignoring demographic shifts in their global consumer base.[46] It is may be this economic imperative, rather than any cultural or political shift, that promises transformations in representational practices in the international creative sectors. However, this does not necessarily ensure the participation of a BAME workforces in the creation of these alternative cultural products. That would appear to be contingent on developing alternative economic strategies orientated around BAME ownership and control, and which more effectively connect East London-based creative producers to emerging global markets.

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[46] https://www.forbes.com/sites/ilyapozin/2015/11/09/how-to-engage-an-increasingly-diverse-consumer-market/#261a0fc91e36

3.4 Creative practices

3.4.1 Introduction

As noted earlier it is not easy to separate creative practices from how creative commodities operate in the cultural economy. Choices of genre and form are often dictated by sources of funding and revenue. However, within that nexus it is still possible to identify and define certain key creative strategies that characterise my case studies approach. These aesthetic forms can also be linked in some cases to the emergence of particular types of technology, as is the case with grime music/video, and in others to existing cultural forms that are being re-purposed for a multicultural audience (see Dominic Hingorani's work at 00.08.03 in *Multicology?*). Clearly, like all cultural and aesthetic strategies, they are often interwoven into a history, both national and international, of existing forms of creative practice that they reference and redeploy (Baron 2013). The evolution of grime music, for instance, is intimately bound up with its precursor, garage music, and with American hip hop (White 2014). There is also sometimes a relation between the aesthetic and formal strategies the cases studies have adopted and broader processes of cultural critique and political contestation. This is explicitly the case for Dominic Hingorani (00.08.03 *Multicology?*) who deliberately deploys aesthetic conventions and techniques from both South Asian cultural traditions and European cultural forms such as opera, in order to produce stylistic hybrids that can challenge hegemonic notions of cultural purity. In Jreena Green's case (00. 22. 35 in *Multicology?*) it consists of a desire to recoup a historically black cultural form, Lindy Hop, that she feels has been 'appropriated' by white middle-class practitioners. For novelist Tessa McWatt certain creative strategies may operate to subvert industrial processes which seek to dictate how she is positioned in the culturally economy. In my film she argues her work consciously contests the publishing industries attempt to pigeon-hole her as a black writer by exercising the hyper mobility of her 'multicultural literary imagination' (00.50.00 in *Multicology?*). This creative strategy enables her to move between multiple racial positionalities in her stories and therefore defy and disrupt a unitary identity that might be imposed on her creative practice, even if, as she says herself, this can be something of a 'literary trick'.

In the case studies, as in all forms of creative practice, there is a dynamic interplay between individual creative strategies and existing cultural traditions that frame and discursively produce those personal acts of creativity. There is no way in which these individual aesthetic strategies can be completely extricated from the broader cultural formations and structures of power with which they are dialogically engaged. However, for the sake of analytical focus I have attempted to isolate key elements form their various approaches and locate these under a series of sub-headings.

3.4.2 Dominic Hingorani: A hybrid aesthetic

> The idea was to create a new opera that made a bridge between musical theatre and opera but in opera form and try and attract new and diverse audience members to opera and to performance in general. Dominic Hingorani (in *Multicolgy?* 00.08.11).

In his opera *Clocks 1888: the Greener* (2016), Dominic Hingorani explicitly explores questions of race, national identity, class and colonialism in a Victorian East London setting. He inserts these critical themes into a hybridised multimedia musical form that deploys the conventions of a classical theatrical form (opera) and fuses them with elements of popular commercial musical theatre. In doing so he strategically redeploys elite formal conventions to redefine what might constitute BAME cultural practice. In this way, the work constitutes a conscious form of 'counter appropriation' whereby a dominant cultural form (opera) with elite cultural associations can be deliberately reinterpreted and reclaimed for previously excluded audiences.

> Brolly created and produced the new opera work *Clocks 1888: the Greener* at the Hackney Empire in spring 2016 supported by the Arts Council England (ACE) with the clear brief to engage new and diverse audiences and thereby challenge the perception of opera as an elitist art form and re-root it within communities. (Hingorani, 2017 p. 43)

Through the narrative of a fraught interracial love affair the opera explores the relation between race and class-based oppression in 19th century East London. The opera's lead character is a 'greener', Victorian slang for a recently arrived immigrant. In the play she literally inhabits a temporal device (an enormous clock known as 'the regulator') which she

is responsible for maintaining. It controls the workforce of the East End, but she comes under pressure from her overseer to alter the speed at which it runs in order to increase their productivity. The narrative firmly locates its female protagonist within the temporal relations of early industrial capitalism, while the lead male's exploratory mission into the *terra incognita* of East London identifies him with the spatialised explorative dimension of English colonialism.

Clocks deliberately inserts black and Asian characters into a historical moment (and a theatrical form) where they are typically absent. As an aesthetic and political strategy, it in some ways mirrors that of British film director Amma Asante (*Belle* 2014 and *A United Kingdom* 2017) where the typically monoethnic British historical drama (arguably a genre in itself) is transformed and implicitly critiqued through the atypical presence of a black character. As Hingorani says 'The stories we are telling, which are the hidden histories of Britain, are something different'. [47]

As Hingorani also states, 'of course it is an opera, so there has to be a love story',[48] however, it is a problematic ambivalent form of love predicated on the male protagonist's ethnographic exploration of London's 'dark continent', that 'city of dreadful night' as he describes it (drawing on Walkowitz 1992), and his desire to find out what makes these 'other' populations 'tick' in that 'foreign land'. His aim is to determine the cause of the growing industrial unrest that is affecting his family's business investments and find out if it is indeed attributable to the disruptive 'heathen foreign' element in that part of the city, as his uncle claims. As this 'London Livingstone' sets out on his neo-colonial mission to penetrate the 'hidden world below', his exploratory fetishizing gaze falls on the character of the greener.

> The show is indeed visually stunning, re-creating the complex world and mechanism of the clock through intricate animated drawings, film projections and ingenuous stage design. With the addition of mesmerizing music, originally composed by Martin Ward and beautifully performed, the show feels heartfelt and passionate, touching our senses and emotions (Perret 2016).

Brolly utilise a mixed media approach to their production; using back projections especially produced graphics, video footage and elaborate three-dimensional mechanical staging. In the

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[47] http://www.newhamrecorder.co.uk/news/uel-lecturer-directs-innovative-new-opera-1-4497473 *Newham Recorder* 16 April 2016
[48] Quoted in the 'Story of Time' blog http://blog.ahsoc.org/?p=3121

opera a back projection of a clock conjures up associations of mechanistic order against which the human characters appear as disruptive asymmetrical silhouettes. Performers traverse the vertical scaffolding of the stage, suggesting a complex spatialised power dynamic between those 'above' and those 'below,' which shifts and changes as the show progresses. In this sense the company's aesthetic, technical and formal strategies, like their broadly cultural and political ones, problematise the idea of clear-cut boundaries between different genres, ethnicities, classes and musical conventions. It constitutes, like the transgressive interracial relationships in the narrative, a form of disruptive aesthetic miscegenation.

Brolly's *Clocks* consciously attempts to construct a dialogic interaction between musical theatre and opera, between the popular and the elite, and between different racialised identities. It deliberately adopts a strategy of stylistic and racial hybridisation as a creative approach, and in doing so implicitly references the work of postcolonial theorists who explored the idea of a 'third space' (Bhabha 2004) as a space of cultural translation and hybridity (see also Hall 1992). *Clocks* fuses this approach, which is focussed on the syncretic convergence and mediation of cultural difference, with postmodernist ideas around the effacement of the boundary between 'high art' and 'popular culture', in order to critique class and race-based structures of power.

Dominic Hingorani's theatrical strategies are informed by his view that Asian creative practice can contest structural forms of racism and entrenched inequality in the creative sectors (Hingorani 2009). He cites the influence of Tara Arts, especially with regards to their approach to casting which, rather than aspiring to 'colour-blindness', acknowledged racial difference and its cultural and political significance. In this he concurs with the findings of the influential Naseem Khan report into the role of black and Asian performers and producers in theatre and the arts that 'concluded, these groups are still "part of" British theatre and, therefore, their difference, as well as "sameness', should be inscribed within it.' (Hingorani 2009, p.166). Hingorani's own creative strategies seem informed by this fundamental precept: that difference and sameness can and should cohabit within an inclusive and multi-faceted conception of Britishness. In this sense his work is very much produced inside a British national identity but is also critically interrogates it as a historical construct.

Formally Hingorani sees this awareness as being translated into a performance and teaching methodology which connects actors with their own cultural and personal identity, and their relationship to the world and the characters they portray. For Hingorani acting and

performance strategies should contest hegemonic conceptions of culture and also a notion of cultural diversity (rather than the hybridisation of cultural forms) predicated on what Bhabha calls a 'totalizing' monolithic, mythological essentialised and generalised notion of culture (cited in Hingorani 2009 p.166). This suggests that the 'peculiar mix' of cultures and subjectivities Hingorani cites in Verma's work (Hingorani 2009, p.166) can be a site of productive creative labour out of which formal innovation can emerge and which can contest the dominant hegemonic conventions of western theatre.

Brolly's work is consciously produced out of the contradictory relationship between a critical contestatory form of counter narrative and the social institutions and cultural traditions that it critiques. Rather than a rejection of dominant cultural forms, it entails a redeployment of formalistic conventions that both challenges and transforms the genre and its dramatic conventions. However, from Hingorani's position this process can be seen as a way of inserting radical, multicultural narratives into form that has traditionally excluded them. In some sense, it is a 'viral' strategy that assumes characteristics or mimics aspects of the 'host' body (the dominant culture) in order to survive within it. As an aesthetic strategy it also acknowledges that the postcolonial identity is never pure (if indeed such a thing as 'cultural purit'y can ever exist) but is inevitably produced out of a relationship with existing British/European structures of identity, governance and culture.

Hingorani's theatre practice points to the tension between the desire of politically critical ethnic minority artists to reject of hegemonic norms and cultural values, and their need to deploy those cultural forms, and their associated value, in the cultural economy. This tension can produce a creative space that is sometimes constraining and contradictory, but also one out of which new hybrid and novel cultural forms can emerge. This process does also however raise the question of how far minority producers can effectively 'hack', or engage in the '*Détournement*'[49] of, dominant hegemonic cultural forms to serve their own more plural and multicultural ends. It also raises an issue in relationship to the concept of hybridity (which is central to much of Hingorani's analysis and aesthetic strategy) and whether it is adequate to describe the differing levels of power and cultural capital contained in the formal strategies that are being hybridised. If one cultural form is a postcolonial, critical counter

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[49] In general, it can be defined as a variation on previous work, in which the newly created work has a meaning that is antagonistic or antithetical to the original.

narrative and the other a hegemonic dominant one there is always going to be a fraught and problematic power relation, one that risks being re-encoded in the creative offspring of this aesthetic liaison.

However, within Hingorani's practice there would appear to be an implicit acknowledgment of the historic weight and hegemonic dominance of traditional British cultural forms like opera. Brolly's strategies of hybridisation are specifically deployed to disrupt and contest those structures of power, and the historic value and meaning attributed to those creative forms, in short, to 'contaminate' the alleged formal 'purity' on which their cultural dominance is predicated.

> *Clocks 1888: the Greener* engages with cultural diversity as a
> methodological tool to create an innovative hybrid form that aims to engage
> with community audiences, address issues of representation and articulate a
> performative 'counter-narrative' to challenge exclusionary and racist
> constructions of the nation (Hingorani, 2018, p. 43).

Hingorani's creative practices entail a complex and sometimes problematic balancing act between subaltern and dominant cultural forms, but as can be seen from his work, this can result in powerful theatrical interventions. As a creative strategy, it can operate as a 'Trojan' horse' whereby dissident textual messaging can be inserted in hegemonic cultural forms in a way that problematises and interrogates those dominant creative practices. However, it can also sometimes be a process through which the cultural value and inclusivity of those forms can be reasserted and guaranteed, thereby strengthening their hegemonic function. Despite these potentially contradictory operations, to leave elite cultural forms as solely the domain of white middle class producers and consumers would be even more problematic, and Hingorani by producing work in this genre challenges the notion that opera is somehow exclusively the cultural property of that particular group.

In some ways Hingorani's artistic strategy can be seen as being in dialogue with Audre Lorde's assertion that 'the masters tools will never dismantle the masters house' (Hingorani 2007, p, 110). There is an implicit logic in Lourdes statement that resonates, however it seems equally true that if the metaphorical 'master' (in this case an elitist Eurocentric cultural form) is figuratively dismembered with an implement from their own (cultural) tool shed, they are equally deceased regardless of the instrument's provenance. As Lorde herself stated, there exists a 'fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a

dialectic' (Lorde 2007). In this sense there is possibly a productive creative dialectic that can exist between dominant cultural forms and the strategies that contest the meanings and cultural ownership of those forms. Hingorani's production strategy demonstrates the effectiveness of redeploying these elite cultural forms to produce innovative hybrid cultural forms that platform diaspora identities. In this way it provides a useful formal counterpoint to a 'grime aesthetic' that has emerged out of vernacular, subcultural forms of creative practice.

3.4.3 MC Nyja: The power of black vernacular youth culture

Like Dominic Hingorani's work MC Nyja's creative practice also reflects on and extends existing cultural forms. However, in her case it is the transnational, diasporic popular musical form of American hip hop, UK genres such as garage and drum & bass, and, to a lesser degree, older British-Caribbean forms such as 'toasting' and reggae sound system collectives (White 2014). Nyja re-encodes these formal practices in a musical iteration that unashamedly announces its origins in the streets and estates of Bow, Poplar, and Mile End. Musically grime is typically characterised by sparse stripped-down production and often territorial and confrontational lyrics, all delivered with a defiantly British accent. It has been described as 'Black Punk Rock'[50] music because of its avowedly 'do it yourself' ethos, and anarchic energy.

In the music video 'Ready' (2016) which features in my documentary, a drone camera captures Nyja performance as it flies over industrial containers and the distinctive gas works on Levan Road in Poplar, E14 (in front of which I interviewed Nyja and which have since been demolished, presumably in order to build luxury apartments). As Nyja raps 'My mind's fucked but I'm still aware', the hyper mobile camera frames her in relation to both East London's current - and also its Victorian - industrial landscape. Another vocal performance in the video is deliberately (and ironically) located in front of a street sign for 'British Street E3' in Bow, East London. There is a striking semantic tension in her video as postcolonial black bodies insert themselves in the industrial Victorian terrain and disrupt both hegemonic representations of 'Britishness' and normative notions of femininity. Nyja, as one of the few female grime MCs, almost by definition decentres the 'hyper-masculine' focus often

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[50] https://theconversation.com/grime-is-the-new-punk-heres-why-85544

associated with the milieu. As a result, she often has to contend with aggressive forms of gender policing and criticism in the comments section beneath her music videos on YouTube.

While the concept of a subculture remains problematic, replete as it is with its implicit spatial associations of 'above and below' and assumptions of monolithic cultural formations, it retains some uses when understanding the grime phenomenon. Sarah Thornton offers a repurposing of Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, as subcultural capital (1995) to understand the meanings and values that subcultural groups afford to their own cultural and creative practices. This conceptualisation of subcultural capital imbues value and collateral into the cultural production of otherwise marginal social groups and aids in the understanding of how value (both economic and cultural) is attributed through a highly localised framework of meanings. In the case of grime music this subcultural value system started off as hyper-local and East London based, but has subsequently expanded to impact UK and global culture more broadly.

> Thornton argues that various forms of media, through promoting (flyers), reviewing (music papers) and sensationalizing (tabloids), actually aid what are initially diverse and diffuse cultural fragments to cohere as recognizably defined subcultures, effectively emphasizing their rebellious status and prolonging their existence. (Gelder, 1997, p. 8)

In this sense it is precisely these practitioners command of media production that constituted and consolidated grime as a coherent and identifiable cultural formation. In this way, I would argue the creation of a multimedia (music, webcasting, music video, web distribution) micro-creative industry sector is, along with the racialisation of its producers, the defining characteristic of grime as a subculture. Other subcultures have of course been defined by distinctive patterns of consumption and been identified with particular musical genres -- Teddy Boys with rock and roll, skinheads with ska, etc -- but it is rare that the mechanical production and distribution of the music forms have been so central to a subculture, and even more exceptional that the production of moving image texts (music videos) should be such an identifying feature of that milieu.

Within grime, the creation of underground stars is central to the emerging sector, and as in any other cultural sector these stars are deployed as an asset in the subcultural creative economy. In some cases, grime artists' subcultural capital has been enhanced by mainstream

media moral panics that imbue them with an aura of danger and rebellious criminality (Fatsis, 2018). The narrative tropes associated with this, of gangsterism and insurgent paramilitary power, sometimes (but not always) become incorporated into the representational strategies and interior cultural economy of grime, thereby becoming an additional source of cultural status and semantic power. As Thornton put it:

> communications media create subcultures in the process of naming them and draw boundaries around them in the act of describing them. (Thornton 1995, p. 162)

In this way grime was simultaneously configured by forms of media representation from within that deployed media technologies on semi-autonomous forms of multimedia production to create stars, establish visual aesthetics, distribute cultural texts, monetise cultural production and valorise visual narrative tropes (the street, the crew, the estate) and also from 'outside' by the 'mainstream media' who represented it as dangerously gang oriented, and made it the subject of a racially coded moral panic.

Despite heavy policing, and negative media reporting grime retains a unique role as an instrument of ethnographic enunciation that articulates a black working-class cultural experience in many cases deeply rooted in East London. As Barron puts it: 'it is a music that presents documents of urban spaces that are marked by deprivation, but also characterized by ethnic perspectives and standpoints'. (Barron 2013, p.16)

Along with the subcultural capital of the grime artist themselves, grime music videos also deploy their geographic location as a creative resource. A particular type of spatial cartography, wherein the performer is visibly linked to an identifiable geographic locale, has become central to the visual aesthetic of these music videos. This along with the use of DSLR cameras, available lighting, handheld camera work, and easily accessible locations (housing estates, underpasses, basketball cages) has contributed to the creation of a distinctively recognisable, some might say overly generic, 'grime aesthetic'. This stylistic approach is partly a pragmatic response to not having the resources for elaborate studio or special effects-based video shoots and the relative accessibility urban exterior locations. However, beyond this it also operates as a process of 'counter-mapping' or 'auto-ethno-cartography' that lays

claim to urban space and marks the out the 'endz' (or geographic location) from which the artist hails.[51]

This 'grime aesthetic' is noticeably different to the big budget 'bling' aspirational feel of American hip hop videos[52] and brings a distinctly British and localised feeling to the UK grime music video production. While hip hop music videos have historically balanced the need for 'authenticity' (the visible marking of local communal affiliations, and territorialism's through using the artist neighbourhoods as locations) with aspirational props (expensive cars, luxury houses) grime music videos have largely eschewed materialistic excess in favour of a more 'realist' approach rooted in a semi-documentary approach to the artists lives and locations.

> They are artists within a capitalist-organised cultural industry, but they are also articulators of inner-city spaces and inner-city lives, which, marketable as they may be, nevertheless illuminate the social conditions from which the performers hail from. And, even when commercial success signifies a lyrical shift, the various grime back-catalogues of recorded material represents a documentary legacy of urban commentary (Barron 2013, p. 6).

Hence Nyja's music video for 'No One' (featured in *Multicology?* at 00.14.40) consists of Nyja's performance intercut with an observational sequence of her walking around her neighbourhood, shopping in her local corner-shop, in short 'inhabiting' her localised terrain, and narrativising her everyday lived 'ethnographic' experience.

Grime as a black youth-subculture has defined itself through its deployment of digital technologies and the construction of a micro creative-industries sector, a sector for whom both East London's affective atmospheres, and the mainstream media's demonising portrayal of black youth, constitute the material out of which it fashions its own media texts. Its creative practices, embodied in MC Nyja's music and music videos, fuse existing diaspora forms such as garage and hip hop to construct an aesthetic that operates as both a system of radical ethno-cartography that maps and claims urban space, and auto-ethnography that archives and celebrates the everyday lived experience of its exponents. Within this context

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[51] I expand on this in the later sub-section of this chapter entitled 'Space & Place'.

[52] Krista Thompson (2009) offers an interesting perspective on the sparklingly hyper-reflective optics of American hip hop's 'bling' visual culture. These can be usefully counterpointed to the often deliberately shadowy and rough textured visual aesthetics of British grime.

grime music video's formal emphasis on shadows and the Victorian textures of a local East London topography acts as a deliberate aesthetic counterpoint to the often-sparkling hyper-reflective tropes of American hip hop visual culture (Thompson 2009). Equally MC Nyja uses her music videos to insert black postcolonial bodies into privileged Victorian spaces and in doing so punctures elitist and racially exclusionary notions of 'English heritage'. In this sense her video aesthetic operates as both an act of spatial reclamation and social critique.

3.4.4 Jreena Green: Cultural recoupment as an aesthetic and political strategy in diaspora dance.

For Jreena Green her creative practice is intimately bound up with questions of race and cultural identity. While she has trained in a number of dance styles including ballet and contemporary (and competed in ballroom dancing when a child) her primary focus as a professional performer and choreographer is jazz dance and Lindy hop. Tied to this stylistic and creative commitment is an avowed intention to recoup what was historically an African American dance form (Lindy hop) that she believes has been 'ethnically cleansed' through a historic process of commercialisation and 'appropriation'. Combined with this is a desire to build an awareness of African American dancers, such as Norma Miller, Franky Manning and Al Mins, with whom the Lindy dance form originated, and also to restore some of the more Africanistic dance techniques that characterised the dance style in its earliest manifestations, but have subsequently been attenuated or lost. These include aligning the body closer to the ground, the use of polyrhythms and syncopation, highly explosive movement and expanded improvisation.

Jreena Green was able to uses her historic knowledge and specialist Lindy hop dance skills as joint choreographer (with jazz dance specialist Gary Nurse) on a recent big budget commercial campaign for Guinness. Titled 'Intolerant Champion' (2016) the advert (featured in *Multicology?* at 00.23.06) recounts the story of John Hammond, an early white advocate of jazz music in a mainstream radio setting in Manhattan in the 1930s. While the advert can be critiqued for centring a white male character in the historical narrative focussed around African American cultural forms it does attempt to explore an important moment of black creativity in an American setting and provides a rare platform for Lindy hop to be performed by black dancers.

Green was tasked with casting and training the dancers who appeared in the advertisement and ensuring that they appeared 'authentic'. Her desire to recapture the explosive performance style of early Lindy hop companies like the famous Whitey's Lindy Hopper led her to recruit mainly black break-dancers for the Guinness commercial. She found that hip-hop dancers had the acrobatic ability, physical fearlessness and technical attack to best perform the perilous air-steps that are the signature of this dance style.

Stuart Hall in his seminal work 'New Ethnicities' (1992 [1988])) critiqued naive essentialist notions of culture purity and by extension a return to an unproblematic site of cultural origin. In this theoretical context Jreena's assertion that Lindy hop has been appropriated by white dance companies and performers might be seen to be problematic as it is predicated on an idea that cultural forms can be owned by one cultural group in the first place. From this cultural studies perspective, 'culture' is often, almost by definition, considered as a process in which signifiers circulate, if not freely, at least as part of a dynamic field in which it is often hard to identify their exact origins. Within this paradigm the concept of 'cultural appropriation' might simply reinforce essentialist notions of the cultural forms that are being 'appropriated' and ignore their often hybrid nature. It assumes a cultural purity in the original form which is problematic given that dance styles like the Lindy hop were initially produced out of a complex interplay of cultural and stylistic influences. Movements from other dance vocabularies and cultural traditions were often eclectically incorporated by African American innovators and, in the case of tap dancing for instance, elements of Irish clog dancing played a significant role (Valis Hill, 2002). This fact combined with Jreena Green's location as a British dancer of mixed black Caribbean and Pakistani heritage in 21st century, rather than African American dancer the from the 1930s, can make claims of 'cultural ownership' difficult to assert.

However, also equally implicated in the concept of culture is the idea that these forms do not develop in a vacuum but are produced out of distinct social, historical and geographical contexts. As Stuart Hall himself states 'By culture, here I mean the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific society' (Hall, 1996, p. 439). In this sense it would constitute an acute act of historical erasure not to recognise that Lindy hop originated with urban African American practitioners, and was born out of a particular historical, cultural and geographical context (Harlem in the 1930s). In this sense it

can therefore be considered historically a 'black dance form'. While this does necessarily equate to a proprietorial relationship it can be linked to the historic provenance of the style. In this way Jreena Green's aesthetic strategies are inextricably linked to a broader cultural objective: to contest historic processes of cultural erasure and recoup an existing dance lexicon for contemporary BAME audiences and practitioners.

3.4.5 Wale Adeyemi: An intertextual approach to urban fashion design

Wale Adyemi acknowledges the influence of urban popular culture on his designs, saying 'the street not the catwalk was my inspiration'. The recurring inscription of the words 'Be Your Own Future' onto his designs operates as both a branding exercise, and as an indicator of the individualistic and aspirational ethos that infuses his design approach. Graffiti style renderings of DJ, MCs, pitbull dogs and other signifiers of hip hop culture, further emphasised the urban identity of his design label. More recent designs, however, have also referenced stereotypical signifiers of Britishness such as the use of tweed, tartan and bow ties. The company blog describes the label as inhabiting a space 'somewhere between the kerb and the boutique'.[53]

Adeyemi's strategy opens up a way of seeing his cultural production as actively engaged in an intertextual strategy. His designs consciously appropriate and rework cultural signifiers (the baseball cap, tweed, bow ties) to produced hybrid forms that play with ideas of cultural ownership, race and national identity, while the brand (a signifier in itself) rides on an interconnected web of cultural texts across a variety of platforms and media including short films, club promotions, photographic art works, music videos and live music events. This strategy, however, entails a commercial instrumentalisation of the notions of hybridity and intertextuality that uncouples them from the radical, self-reflexive or critical function often associated with these formal techniques. This makes it necessary to acknowledge how these creative strategies, increasingly a feature of advertising and marketing campaigns, can complement as much as contest the operations of capital.

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[53] https://bsidebywale.wordpress.com/tag/wale-adeyemi/page/3/

On the one hand Adeyemi's brand is imbricated into a network of meanings that are highly loaded and associated with black popular culture, on the other it benefits from being a 'floating signifier' that can be disconnected from its referent and born through space by non-black bodies. In one sense this might be seen as a subversive symbolic strategy that disrupts embodied urban space by adorning the white bodies that inhabit it with signifiers of 'blackness'. However, at the same time, it can be seen as a process that effectively uncouples those signifiers from the communities which produced them, negates any idea of black cultural provenance and evacuates them of radical political potential. Hence, Adeyemi's designs can become part of a fetishizing process through which white consumers can cloak themselves in signifiers of difference and the 'black experience', while being exempt from any of the associated economic or cultural disadvantages. This fundamental ambivalence suffuses Adeyemi's aesthetic strategies and formally encodes what Keith sees as the duel possible functions of hybridity: one as a 'mixing of cultures that challenges the conventional in aesthetics', the other as embodying an 'inauthentic performative cultural dialogue' (Keith 2005, p.113).

Keith's approach suggests a fundamental disjuncture between these two operations. However, as Adeyemi's designs demonstrate, out of this fraught but potentially productive tension hybrid cultural forms can emerge that operate to contest mono-ethnic conceptions of Britishness, and centre black creative practice. Equally B-Side's innovative creative and intertextual marketing strategies enable the reproduction of the brand across multiple platforms and encoded in numerous creative forms. This suggests a potentially enabling dimension to the ambivalent processes Keith describes.

3.4.6 Tessa McWatt: The hypermobility of the multicultural literary imagination

Tessa McWatt has written six novels including *Dragons Cry, This Body, Step Closer*, and most recently *Higher Ed* (2016). As she states in my film, her writing 'revolves around belonging, diaspora, change and people who are in the process of re-inventing their lives' (00.49.59 in *Multicology?*). McWatt's novels, often lazily compared to those of Zadie

Smith,[54] deal with multiracial characters living in the urban metropolis and navigating professional and academic precarity while exploring questions of personal identity and multiculture. McWatt reads from *Higher Ed* (2016) in *Multicology?* at 01.08.23. In the novel, an ethnically mixed cast of contemporary Londoners, navigate higher education, precarious employment and the pitfalls of personal relationships. Film theory lecturer Robin is expecting a baby with a woman he no longer loves and lusts after Katrin, the Polish waitress in his local coffee shop. American administrator Francine navigates the trauma of witnessing a fatal traffic accident. Robin's student Olivier searches for a dissertation subject, while Ed from Guyana oversees burials for the council. Like her previous novels set in Canada, personal racial and cultural identity and how it is located in the flux of the modern metropolis becomes the topic of exploration. The book contains multiple story strands that were written separately and then woven together in the editing process. For McWatt the superdiverse urban context becomes a resource for her literary imaginings. As McWatt states in my film, her lack of a singular cultural identity, or sense of cultural belonging 'started out looking like a disadvantage' (00.52.53 *Multicology?*) but gradually became an advantage in a literary setting.

As she states in *Multicology?* (at 00.53.30) McWatt regards her mixed-race identity a creative tool because it allows her to identify across racial and cultural boundaries by engaging the facet of her own multiple cultural heritages that corresponds most closely to the identity of the character about whom she is writing. As she states this is something of an artificial process, and it's debatable whether she really has a greater claim to write about those characters. However, for her it does feel enabling, as it can operate as a strategy for critically unpicking or deconstructing existing systems of racial classification (00.51.01 *Multicology?*).

McWatt's mixed-race identity (and its associated empathic mobility) may constitute a form of privilege relative to that of other black writers who are to a greater extent immobilised by rigid racialised taxonomies and industrial processes. However, these delimiting forms of racialised classification are not processes with which McWatt is unfamiliar or feels she has escaped. As she points out in her interview 'black writers have the weight of writing about 'race' in a way white writers don't' (00.51.53 in *Multicology?*). This is the 'burden of

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[54] *Higher Ed* review in 'Quills & Quire' https://quillandquire.com/review/higher-ed/

representation' that Kobena Mercer speaks of in his work 'Black Art and the Burden of Representation' (1994).

In some ways McWatt's 'mobility of the multiracial imagination' has become a creative strategy to resist and navigate forms of othering that she has encountered in a publishing industry, however it has also become the topic of a literary self-interrogation. While race and difference might have constituted the context for much of her fictional work, in her next project it will become the explicit subject of a non-fiction autobiographical account. In it she aims to examine both the way she has become racialised and also the relative privilege that a multiracial 'mixed' identity can provide within existing racial hierarchies. She has been awarded one of only two 2018 Eccles British Library Writer's Award for which she will receive £20,000 to research her upcoming project: a memoir entitled 'Porous: A Memoir of Race and Stories'. Announcing the award, the Eccles Centre says that McWatt:

> will set out to explore the hybridity of her racial and cultural heritage, and
> to try to understand the social whiteness, political blackness and cultural
> duality of the privilege she has. The book will trace the history of her
> ancestry by embracing and undermining race at the same time, by tracing
> her heritage through investigating the factual context for the mythical
> family tales in a trail of DNA from Britain, Europe, Africa, India, China
> and the indigenous people of British Guiana, (British Library, 2018).

McWatt's proposed work suggests a conception of race as a cultural and historical construct, but also a recognition that it continues to exert a very real influence over her life and literary work. It also acknowledges how particular privileges, as well as disadvantages, have accrued to her as a result of her mixed-race identity. However, as well being a source of psychic and cultural dislocation, and occasionally social privilege, McWatt's creative practice demonstrates a multiracial identity can also operate as an effective literary tool, one that provides the empathic mobility to speak through a multiplicity of characters and cultural experiences.

3.4.7 Section conclusion

In conclusion my case studies' aesthetic and formal strategies should not be understood as autonomous acts of individual creative expression, rather as transactional processes that are

profoundly imbricated into existing structures of power and forms of ethnic identification. This is not to suggest a crude materialist or deterministic causality. The individual creative producer has agency as the site of symbolic synthesis through which these elements are mediated and woven together, and which reflects his or her situated knowledge and cultural location. However, this viewpoint does clearly mobilise against seeing symbolic production as operating solely, or even predominantly, at the level of the individual symbol creator and identifies it as being structured by broader cultural and industrial formations. In this sense it chimes with Saha's position (2017) in which the cultural worker is produced as a racialised subject by the industrial structures of the creative industries, and where an understanding of the processes and context of production is crucial for understanding how a cultural text comes into existence.

In line with Hesmondhalgh's work (2005) the case studies also show how creative and aesthetic strategies can be deployed to mitigate economic risk by incorporating proven elements from other existing creative practices, but, in addition, it suggests ways those formal approaches can also operate to disrupt and contest industrial processes that seek to fix BAME cultural producers themselves as other and risky (as is the case with the work of Tessa McWatt). In this sense creative practice is never innocent, it is profoundly interpolated into structures of power and identity. It becomes part of the 'game of positionalities' (that Hall talks about in 'New Ethnicities' 1992 [1988]) in which representational strategies are used to locate their producers within the creative economy, to establish value, coral existing cultural capital (both hegemonic and subcultural), and also sometimes challenge essentialised notions of Britishness and racial identity.

Despite being produced by the relations of symbolic production, the subjects of my case studies do still exercise individual autonomy in order to make radical creative interventions. In this context their aesthetic approaches operate to critique or re-appropriate 'dominant' hegemonic cultural forms, redeploy existing subcultural capital, and/or attempt to recoup lost cultural capital that has appropriated through historic processes of cultural dominance, expropriation and erasure.

These creative strategies clearly often include process of aesthetic hybridisation. In the case of Dominic Hingorani it is to critique the social dominance of some of the hegemonic cultural forms it deploys, while in Wale Adeyemi's case it means incorporating elements of

'Englishness' into an African American urban design aesthetic. Tessa McWatt promotes a multiracial mobility of the imagination, which while not necessarily a strategy of hybridisation or synthesis, employs her indeterminate, multiple identities as a productive literary resource. In contrast, Jreena Green actually seeks to re-assert ideas of cultural provenance to recoup a 'black' cultural form (Lindy hop) from what she sees as a process of historic ethnic cleansing, commodification and disavowal. However, she does also sometimes adopt a hybrid aesthetic strategy by fusing elements of Lindy hop and hip hop together. Nyja's creative practice arguably occupies a space somewhere between those previously mentioned, which, while syncretic, still asserts a vernacular black aesthetic identity that disrupts and contest white middle-class cultural norms.

In this way formal hybridisation remains a significant aesthetic strategy for many of my case studies, one that opens up a space for contesting monolithic or homogeneous notions of culture. However, I would argue despite this process many of these hybrid cultural forms are located within economic structures that are not as dialogic or syncretic as the aesthetic strategies themselves. In this context the processes of hybridity can sometimes veil the unequal structures of economic and cultural power that precede these forms of stylistic miscegenation, and that can potentially be re-inscribed in the aesthetic strategies themselves. This is a process Keith refers to when he talks about the ambivalent operations of cultural hybridisation, which can be enabling and emancipatory, but also (like some of Wale Adeyemi's strategies) can be commoditised for economic exploitation in the cultural economy. This conception also links back to Saha's (20017) notions of creative practice, which while contested and dialogic, can still deeply inscribed by capitalist forms of commodification.

In conclusion therefore, it should be acknowledged that hybrid formal strategies can often re-inscribe existing unequal relations of power through guaranteeing the cultural value of the dominant forms that they incorporate. In this way they can embody profoundly contradictory functions, being as Keith (2005) points out, sometimes enabling and at other times neoliberal. However, as my case studies show, the deployment of these aesthetics strategies can, when controlled by BAME creative producers themselves, be culturally empowering.

3.5 Training and access

3.5.1 Introduction

In response to the industry reports I cite in chapter 1, publicly funded institutions such as BBC and the British Film Institute have established diversity targets and training initiatives intended to increase levels of ethnic representation.[55] However, as has often been the case in the past, these institutional responses primarily revolve around identifying a perceived deficit on the part of the underrepresented group and initiating training programmes intended to compensate for it. These initiatives may be primarily orientated around the provision of the technical skills required to succeed, or in the case of some mentoring schemes the connections and cultural assets required to operate successfully in the commercial industries. Clearly this strategy in many ways reproduces the notions of diversity in the creative industries that Malik (2008) writes about in that their intention is to construct systems and access routes through which individuals from racial minorities can be incorporated into what are majority white and middle-class sectors of the industry, rather than transforming the industries themselves. While there are significant differences between the BFI Film Academy[56] and Meet a Mentor[57] case studies explored in *Multicoloy*? (2018), both initiatives largely fall into this category.

It is very rare for training initiatives to identify structural racism as playing a role in the forms of industrial exclusion that they are intended to address. Interrogating the value systems that attribute worth to certain cultural commodities in the creative economy, challenging the structures of those industries or advocating for the construction of independent BAME creative sectors would in most cases run counter to the deficit model that informs the majority of training initiatives. However a couple of the initiatives I looked at (The Rix Centre and Hackney Live in particular) do seem to contest this deficit model and suggest ways in which skills provision can be linked to radical political practices, critique structures

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[55] http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/diversity/pdf/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2016.pdf
[56] http://mouththatroars.com/bfi-film-academy-2017-18/
[57] https://meetamentor.co.uk/

of social exclusion and redefine how value is attributed to learner's cultural experiences and skillsets in the cultural economy.

The following cases studies allow a comparative assessment of how these differing strategies operate, and also links them to broader debates in the higher education sector.

3.5.2 Fran Plowright: Constructing routes into the mainstream

Fran Plowright has a background as a radio producer and brings her professional experience and co-ordinating skills to her work, organising and running mentoring schemes. Her initiative *Meet a Mentor* is intended to generate a structured mentoring process where young entrants to the media industries can receive personal support from industry professionals. The event I filmed (at 00.32.26 in *Multicology?*) was hosted by USTWO digital marketing agency at their offices in the Tea Building, a managed media and design workspace in the heart of Shoreditch. The USTWO website states they 'work with businesses and organisations of all shapes and sizes, from early-stage start-ups to the world's leading brands, to create digital products and services that solve the problems of today as well as define the opportunities of the future.'[58] The event I filmed entailed one-to-one time for mentors and mentees plus a skills slot run by Piers Bradford (managing director of Project Everyone) on 'Thinking Big' and a guest talk from Ronojoy Dam (creative director at Dazed Media Group) about the circuitous route that took him to his current employment.

Plowright states in her interview that in some cases mentors and media organisation are engaging with her and her projects because they now have an economic imperative to connect with BAME communities (at 00.35.51 in *Multicology?*). As she suggests, this may be because they are under political pressure to appear diverse in their recruitment strategies or because the see the economic benefits of accessing more ethnically plural markets. She is aware of some organisations potentially dubious motives but also prioritises achieving the best employment outcomes for her mentees even if that means engaging with commercial organisation which might have ulterior or instrumental motives for working with her.

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[58] USTWO website https://www.ustwo.com

However, while Plowright's projects offer the possibility of entrance to the creative industries for young people from BAME backgrounds, mentoring projects of these kind are not without their problematic dynamics, especially when it comes to the concept of inclusion and the question of into whose normative cultural framework the subject is being incorporated.

> Those who express concern about cross-race matches speak to the potential for white mentors to distort the protege's racial/ethnic identity, whether consciously or unconsciously (Rhodes et al. 2002). For example, a white mentor may promote their own racial views and encourage their mentee to assimilate into the white mainstream (Rainer 2013, p. 10).

There are significant questions about how far employing white mentors from the creative industries will inspire BAME mentees. There is the risk that it can sometimes confirm a perception, on the part of mentees, that the creative industries are exclusively white and that they will not be able to find a place in them:

> there are concerns that community solidarity is compromised when mentees of color are matched with white mentors … More specifically, there is uncertainty about the message this promotes to the minority protege. For example, this might be interpreted as an indication that positive role models are unavailable from communities of color (Santos and Reigadas 2002. p, 11).

Research around the impact of mentoring suggest the value of targeting mentors that share cultural experiences and ethnic identity with their mentees:

> students in ethnically matched mentorships enrolled and completed more credit units, achieved higher GPAs, increased in graduation rates, and were more likely to enrol in graduate programs at the same university than students in cross-ethnic mentorships (Campbell and Campbell 2007, p. 12).

This suggests the significance of selecting mentors who reflect the ethnic backgrounds of mentees, and who affirm, rather than challenge, the potential of those mentees to achieve what their mentors have done in the industry. This was the priority of the Mouth That Roars BFI film academy (that features in *Multicology?* at 00.37.41) which employed BAME mentors from specialist film backgrounds. However, while Fran Plowright's mentoring schemes may mix and match mentors and mentees form different racial backgrounds, they do also clearly include some mentors and speakers from BAME backgrounds (such as creative director at *Dazed and Confused* magazine Ronajoy Dam who gave a talk at the event I filmed) and Ade Rawcliffe, head of diversity at ITV (previously at C4).

In contrast, however some research suggest that white mentors actually provide minority mentees with greater work opportunities precisely because they come from more privileged backgrounds in the first place and have greater access to resources and industrial networks than their BAME counterparts (Dreher and Cox, 2000). So, in this sense, from an instrumental rather than psychosocial or 'role model' perspective, mentors from white middle class backgrounds might deliver better 'returns' to BAME mentees than mentors who are more racially and culturally similar. This is despite the fact that mentors from the same ethnic group as the mentees are more likely to stay in contact over a longer period of time and provide greater psychological support (Thomas and Alderfer 1989). There are, however, other possibly more fundamental issues around these types of mentoring projects that need to be addressed. Like other more conventional educational strategies based on the top-down model of knowledge transfer, these mentoring projects tend to be predicated on a deficit model where the mentees are identified as possessing a 'lack' when it comes to the social skills, cultural capital and the contacts required to operate successfully in the industry. While this might possibly be the case, especially if you accept there may be a contact monopoly exerted by the predominantly white and middle-class practitioners who occupy the more dominant positions in the creative economy, this still has a tendency to diminish the value of any cultural capital that the mentees might already possess. It also establishes the predominantly white-middle and class cultural spaces into which the mentees are entering as 'normative' and underestimates the difficulty white middle class entrants would encounter adapting to other cultural frameworks if the situation was reversed.

Equally if these schemes do open up work opportunities for some of the young mentees it is of course at least partially because they have been identified as possessing attributes that makes them employable within the cultural economy. However, problematically one of these employable attributes may simply be the ability of those young people to assimilate into the dominant value system of that industrial sector -- a strength that will inevitably reinforce rather than transform or challenge the hegemonic structures into which they are being interpolated.

In this sense mentoring is often 'conceptualized as a one-way process that requires non-European, non-English speaking groups to change to fit the dominant culture' (Nkomo, 1992, p. 496). For this reason mentoring schemes, like all forms of institutional education and

pedagogic practice, can be subject to the types of political critiques that currently feature in academic debates about decolonisation. That is to say, these training and mentoring schemes should be understood in terms of the way they reproduce or contest existing hegemonic structures of knowledge and power. From this perspective, the ideas of exclusion and inclusion, admittedly so prevalent in my analysis of the creative industries, may also be problematic in that they are predicated on a hegemonic normalised structure into which the excluded subject is 'interpolated' leaving that hegemonic 'container', in this case an educational system or industrial sector, intact and uninterrogated.

> The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but
> to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings' for themselves.
> (Freire 2005 p. 73).

It would seem clear that inclusion into a normative (in this case industrial) framework can simply be a form of interpolation or conformity that neutralises dissent and reasserts the hegemonic operations of the institution into which the previously othered subject is now being incorporated. However, one should possibly be cautious of throwing the figurative baby out with the bathwater. The concept of exclusion remains useful in that it presupposes a centre where power and resources are concentrated and which racialised minorities are prevented from accessing. The role of inclusion in this conception might still be a problematic but if, as a process, it genuinely entails the redistribution of power and resources and the transformation of the hegemonic structures, then it retains some use. The risk remains however, that inclusion will more often entail the transformation of the 'included' subject rather than the structure into which they have been integrated.

In this sense Fran Plowright's work might be enabling, in that it opens a hybrid, intersectional space where she instrumentally deploys her empathic mobility to mediate between disconnected cultural spheres and initiate creative relationships. However, at the same time, it might also work to reproduce value systems and structures of power that locate predominantly white and middle-class media institutions at the top of a cultural hierarchy, and that selects and recruits BAME entrants on the basis of how far they can be assimilated into these mainstream structures. This process potentially leaves these structures unchallenged by semi-autonomous forms of cultural production, or oppositional forms of political discourse. Despite this, and given that the goal of the school of logical progression is to generate routes into existing creative sectors rather than facilitate the creation of alternative

BAME cultural sectors, the strategies adopted are an effective way of facilitating points of contact and developing relationships that can extend beyond the duration of the course itself. It also offers mentees the opportunity to understand the requirements of the professional creative industries by exposing them to the cultural expectations, value systems, and priorities of those sectors. In this way it opens pathways into the creative industries for people from under-represented groups that would not exist otherwise, even if it does not challenge the dominant work practices, power structures or values systems of those industrial sectors. Purely from an employment perspective this offers considerable benefits to young mentees, but these to need to be balanced against the risk that these processes leave broader structures of racialised inequality intact.

3.5.3 Kole Onile-ere: The significance of BAME mentors in the moving image industries

Some of my observations about the ambivalent operations of access and mentoring schemes that I describe with regards to the previous case also apply to the BFI Film Academy (which features in *Multicology?* at 00.37.59). However, in the case of this initiative the technical skill set acquired through the mentoring and training process, such as camerawork, editing, producing and scriptwriting, could also be deployed in an independent or semi-autonomous production sphere. As Sarita Malik (2008) explores, the broadcasting sector went through a major discursive shift in the early nineties away from the notion of multiculturalism which had informed the funding of independent black and Asian TV companies by commissioning editors and TV departments, to a discourse of 'creative diversity' in which broadcasters were no longer responsible for funding the work of BAME independent production companies and only needed to recruit 'diverse' staff internally. Two decades down the line and it is clear from industry reports (Directors UK in particular) that the latter strategies have not resulted in anything resembling proportionate levels of BAME representation in the film industry. Directors UK's 2018 report showed that only 1.5% of TV output in 2014 was directed by someone from a BAME background. This is even more notable when you consider that most directing jobs are located in London where the BAME population is 41%.

The BFI Film Academy was partly designed in response to the awareness that diversity was a weakness in BFI film strategies. In fact, the BFI's own New Horizons for UK Film

consultation exercise highlighted an increased need to promote a more inclusive and diverse UK film culture:

> Respondents want to see a greater commitment to diversity across all three strategic priorities... Mindful of the weight of the response on diversity, BFI Governors have decided to set up a Diversity Fund to build capacity in this area; diversity and equality principles will also be embedded and monitored across all BFI funding schemes and activities, including the Film Fund (BFI 2012). [59]

However, while the BFI's production and training strategies have been highlighted by their own research as insufficiently diverse, the BFI Film Academy (an initiative specifically directed at 16-19-year olds that preceded this last consultation) was specifically set up to promote inclusion. Indeed, a still from the Mouth That Roars BFI Film Academy[60] of black documentary film director George Amponsah mentoring a young black student, was used in BFI promotional material for the whole scheme.

Kole Onile-ere, the freelance filmmaker who features in my film was (along with Denise Rose who runs A Mouth That Roars community video organisation) one of the main facilitators on the BFI film academy[61]. He has a background directing short dramas, documentaries and music videos, and also works as a freelance 1st assistant director on feature films and commercials. Onile-ere has a long track record working as a facilitator on youth targeted training schemes (including at the Roundhouse in Camden)[62] and Hackney Live. He also previously delivered video production projects, taught on the MTV sponsored Boom Nation teaching tours of the UK and ran video production courses at WAC Arts in Camden [63]

Onile-ere worked on a freelance basis with Mouth That Roars between 2013 and 2017. Mouth That Roars (or MTR) is an established participatory media company which has run training and engagement projects for young people out of a studio space in Hackney since 2005. The company was one of several nationally that were franchised by the British Film Institute to offer training to young people as part of their BFI Film Academy scheme. [64]

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[59] http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-film-forever-2012-17.pdf
[60] http://mouththatroars.com/bfi-film-academy-2017-18/
[61] http://mouththatroars.com/mtr-bfi-academy-so-far
[62] http://www.roundhouse.org.uk/young-creatives/
[63] http://www.wacarts.co.uk.
[64] http://www.bfi.org.uk/education-research/5-19-film-education-scheme-2013-2017/bfi-film-academy-scheme

The company's founder Denise Rose understood the need, given the very ethnically mixed groups of young people she was working with, to provide industry mentors from a plurality of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. She was conscious of the risk that only presenting her students with white middle-class film professionals (though clearly the dominant demographic in this sector) would reinforce the young people's perceptions that people who looked like them could not succeed in the industry. With this awareness, she employed Onile-ere to access and recruit diverse trainers and mentor and run many of the sessions (alongside herself). This represented an acknowledgment on Rose's part that, while she knew how important it was to find BAME industry mentors, she (unlike Onile-ere) did not have the personal or professional networks through which to access them. Her decision also reflected the fact that she did not accept the prevailing industry common sense deficit model assumption that the BAME industry talent was simply not 'out there'. She believed that it was, and if there was a deficit it probably lay with her limited familiarity with it, rather than the BAME film sector itself. This degree of self-awareness would not seem to be shared by many employers and institutions in the creative sectors. The mentors who were found for the project included Palme Dior winners and Oscar Nominees and came from a variety of technical roles that included directors of photography, sound recordists, feature film directors, producers, stunt choreographers, grading artists, scriptwriters and documentary filmmakers. The Mouth That Roars BFI Film Academy has now been running annually since 2014 and during that time, with two exceptions, all the mentor-trainers have been African Caribbean, East Asian or mixed race.

Running in parallel to the BFI Film Academy Onile-ere worked as a director on two live multicamera music programmes for Hackney Live (in 2015)[65]. Pioneered by Hackney Council cultural programme officer Petra Roberts, Hackney Live offers a highly relevant model for cultural practice and access. The initiative deployed a mixed community and commercial model of creative enterprise, combined with web-based broadcasting strategies, to engage young audiences and employ early entrants in the industry. The channel produced and broadcast several live webcasts music programmes.

> Hackney Live is a new, place-based, streaming and on-demand platform for
> ground-breaking, hyper-local artistic content. Led by Hackney Council with

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[65] http://hackneylive.co.uk/shows/thebigmusicproject/

support from Arts Council England, the platform empowers artists and creative organisations to build their digital capacity, deepen relationships with audiences and extend their reach through performance and streaming emerging work online... Interactivity will be key, as live stream events will encourage co-creation and debate between artists and audiences through social media.[66]

The Hackney Live programming largely revolves around young music producers and is formatted along similar lines to the competitive 'X factor' style programming so familiar to audiences of terrestrial TV.[67] The Council's culture team worked in partnership with a number of organizations across the arts and digital sector including Arcola Theatre, Mimbre and East London Dance, with funding from Arts Council England and Hackney Council. Tactically it was able to deploy council contacts and venues to optimise its operations, which helped generate high production values while minimising production costs. This model identified the potentially complementary relationship between different sectors in the creative industries and strategically deployed it for maximum effect.

As well as producing original content and accessing local (and sometimes international) audiences, Hackney Live operates with the intention of offering training and access to emerging young talent, technicians and cultural producers from the local area. This training provision operates on a number of levels, including vocational production-based training for new learners who are not in training or education; intermediate-level training for recent graduates including access into the media industries through placements and internships; and experience for more seasoned professionals who want to move into mentoring and teaching, or shift into slightly different sectors of the industry (for instance single camera directors who want to get experience in a multi-camera live streaming environment).

From a training perspective Hackney Live[68] is developing into a platform that gives media graduates professional experience making a range of content including factual, fiction, news and music-based programmes. Equally, it links local government, the university sector, corporations and community groups together through a project-based training initiative that provides real- world production experience. Hackney Live acknowledges the differential rates of employment between white and BAME graduates from similar creative-based courses and works to provide a bridge for new media graduates from ethnically diverse

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[66] https://app.hiive.co.uk/companies/hackney-live/1465/#/
[67] http://hackneylive.co.uk.
[68] http://hackneylive.org/shows/

backgrounds to enter into professional roles in the industry. On its productions it employed recent graduates from Ravensbourne College,[69] Central Film School,[70] and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.[71]

Young people working on the Hackney Live productions acquired skills in a number of technical areas ranging from camera operating (including both multi camera, live shooting and single camera documentary shooting), live video mixing, sound recording, editing, lighting, scriptwriting, production co-ordinating, art direction, and performance for camera. Much of this training was provided with the awareness that technical knowledge acquisition is not sufficient in itself to develop successful careers in the media industries. The acquisition of professional work contacts and the development of a showreel of work with high production values that has demonstrably reached large audiences was deemed equally (if not more) important, than just getting training and work experience. This approach rightly acknowledges the importance of acquiring industry contacts (as well as skills acquisition) in the maintenance of a career in the creative sector.

The Hackney Live model differs from the from Meet a Mentor and BFI Film Academy approaches because it is not solely based on creating access routes into predominantly white industrial sectors. Rather its emphasis is on creating training and production structures that are themselves majority BAME and producing content that reflects the interests of a young racially diverse audience.

3.5.6 Jreena Green: Diaspora dance, a direct link between community education and employment

Choreographer-dancer Jreena Green has had a broad dance education having trained in ballet and contemporary dance at the London Contemporary Dance School. Despite that background Green says she felt alienated from these forms in a professional setting and was more drawn to diaspora dance styles. However when she designed a black dance module as third-year project on her second dance degree (BA in Dance Studies that she enrolled on after

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[69] http://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk
[70] http://centralfilmschool.com
[71] https://www.cssd.ac.uk

a long professional career as a dancer) she felt very conscious that the institution she was studying at did not acknowledge its value or a possible need for it in a British academic dance setting. Her feeling is that dance study in a university context is still dominated by a European contemporary dance tradition, and often ignores the historical contribution of black dance practitioners. This perception is not without foundation. There are numerous validated undergraduate and post graduate courses in contemporary dance, at many dance schools including the London Contemporary Dance School and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Ballet seems equally well served in a dance school setting. However very few universities and dance schools have modules examining the historic significance of diaspora dance styles. Leicester's De Montfort University (largely due to the work of Professor Ramsey Burt and the British dance and the African diaspora research group[72]) and the University of East London, through its Urban Dance BA, are notable exceptions.

This 'absence from the academy'[73] has led Jreena Green to develop a teaching module that explores the African roots of popular American dance styles like the Lindy hop and the Charleston. The history of these dance styles and the individual black practitioners with whom they originated, among them Norma Miller, Franky Manning and Al Mins, is rarely explored in a dance education setting and as head of dance at Theatre Peckham[74] Green incorporated the work into her teaching. She has focused on demonstrating the historical and stylistic links between Lindy hop and breakdancing (both began as competitive social dances in the adjacent boroughs of the Bronx and Harlem in New York City). She has also trained young dancers in East London to perform with her Lindy hop dance company Jazz Dance Elite. Because most professional and amateur Lindy hop companies are predominantly white, she has prioritised training and employing young black dancers in an attempt to mitigate their under-representation in the sector as a whole.

It is also worth noting, however, that Green's teaching programmes are not completely altruistic. In addition to providing her with a regular income, it is largely through this process that she trains and recruits dancers (mainly 'street' or hip-hop dancers) for her own dance company. This is necessary given the paucity of professionally trained black Lindy hop dancers. Hence her strategy, like that of Hackney Live, suggests a process whereby

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[72] https://www.dmu.ac.uk/research/research-faculties-and-institutes/art-design-humanities/centre-for-interdisciplinary-research-in-dance/projects/british-dance-and-the-african-diaspora/people.aspx
[73] https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2013/11/06/absent-from-the-academy/
[74] https://www.theatrepeckham.co.uk

educational and training structures for BAME students can feed directly in to commercialised forms of industrial cultural production, and which could be applied more generally.

3.5.7 The Rix Centre: Challenging the 'deficit model'

Historically significantly parallels can be drawn in terms of the management of disability and race when it comes to training and access to work initiatives intended to combat social exclusion. Projects targeted at both groups have typically been predicated on a 'deficit model', that is to say a sense that it is a lack or deficiency internal to the racialised or pathologised subject that produces their marginalisation, rather than prejudice. As Fox states, 'This deficit model does not necessarily reflect a lack of cultural assets possessed by marginalised groups but rather a lack of recognition and legitimisation of those assets by the dominant culture.' (Fox 2016, p. 640).

However, Rix Research and Media[75] has pioneered a different approach. They have attempted to produce structures of production which acknowledge inequalities of power and a systemic devaluing of its subjects' lives and social attributes within existing normative structures.

> Through our unique Multimedia Advocacy approach, people can take control of their own lives and challenge their social exclusion.[76]

In this context the participants lived experience of learning disability is understood as an asset that non learning-disabled subjects lack and that can be deployed in the production process. Hence people with learning disability are employed through Rix Research and Media as consultants for major institutions like the British Museum, as beta testers for technologies targeted at users with learning disability and producers who can use their personal experience to create cultural texts that resonate with the experiences of learning disabled viewers. This is a structured and supported process, but not one where the people with learning disability are expected to conform to hegemonic normative values. Rather it is one where those structures are adapted (or have to make 'reasonable adjustments' to use a

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[75] https://rixresearchandmedia.org
[76] Rix website https://rixresearchandmedia.org

common term in the field) to fit their requirements and within which their personal lived experience is considered valuable.

This strategy is a conceptual inversion of the knowledge hierarchies that identify 'deficits' with 'non-normative' individuals and in which:

> the capital possessed by such individuals fails to be deemed valid, not because it is necessarily deficient, but because it is different. This failure to grant validity and its resultant symbolic capital, secures the hierarchically superior position of the dominant culture. (Fox 2016, p. 640).

This critical model can be applied to forms of racial justice as well as the rights of the disabled, in that it highlights the exclusionary nature of existing normative social structures rather than the supposed deficits possessed by the subjects who are being excluded. It also acknowledges the potentially empowering capacity of new media technologies to disrupt and contest those forms of exclusion, by enabling the articulation of experiences and positionalities that would be otherwise unrepresented.

3.5.8 Section conclusion

Any analysis of training would be fundamentally lacking if it did not acknowledge both the acute under-representation of BAME students on higher education creative courses and an equally (if not more acute) under-representation of BAME staff on those courses. The absence of BAME staff on these courses is possibly unsurprising given their under-representation across the board.[77] Alberts and Atherton's 2016 Access HE report shows that learners from BAME backgrounds are significantly underrepresented in arts subjects in higher education and BAME students see arts programmes as lacking in diversity:

> If you come to an open day, where the majority of the students are white, and you are a black student, you are like 'this is not my place. This is not a place for me'. And then straight away your mind goes 'I don't need to apply for this, I don't need to do this, I need to go somewhere else' (Alberts and Atherton 2016, p.17).

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[77] https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/jan/19/british-universities-employ-no-black-academics-in-top-roles-figures-show

The report also points to the detrimental effects of an absence of BAME professionals in the industry and HE institutions:

> The lack of cultural representation in the sector was identified as a key challenge by one third of organisations. There are very few BAME role models for young people to identify with. This leads to a lack of young BAME people being inspired to work in the creative industries, because 'You can't be what you can't see'. The lack of diversity also means that BAME learners that follow a creative pathway need to be more confident and resilient than their white counterparts (Alberts and Atherton 2016, p.19).

The lack of diversity on higher education creative courses mirrors that on the creative industries as a whole and the absence of BAME lectures as 'role' models and low BAME student numbers can increase the experience of 'minoritisation' for the non-white cohort (Alberts and Atherton 2016). It can also more broadly preclude the exploration of certain cultural experiences, creative texts and learning resources in the teaching process. This suggests the struggle to redress structures of under-representation on creativity-based higher education courses is as urgent as it is in the creative industries overall. However, while there are corresponding forms of racial under-representation between HE staff on creative courses and the creative industries as a whole, there may not be a straightforward causal relationship; it should not be assumed that the unrepresentative training and education environment somehow produces BAME underperformance in the creative sectors. The disparity in rates of employment among graduates may simply be due to forms of racialised exclusion operating outside the HE setting. While there is a large attainment gap between BAME and white students on many HE courses (Busby 2018) after exiting higher education distinct differences in career attainment and employment levels also emerge. These are not necessarily related to educational attainment and BAME graduates with the same level degrees as their white peers are still considerably less likely to find employment in their chosen fields and be paid less well when they do (Zwysen & Longhi, 2016).

When it comes to BAME employment and the allocation of project funding, a common institutional response is to focus on training in order to remedy the perceived skills deficit rather than on institutional exclusion. Indeed, the concessionary provision of entry level training may simply operate as a form of institutional cover that provides the illusion of positive action while directing attention away from systemic inequalities and the need for structural change. Despite allocating this section of the chapter to training, it should be

acknowledged that education, however effectively delivered, cannot substitute for more equitable employment and funding processes.

Equally, mentoring and training initiatives that focus on the acquisition of social capital (i.e. networks and work contacts, Farchy 2017) can sometimes obscure the hegemonic nature of that 'social capital' and how its acquisition can operate as a subtle but pressing form of ideological interpolation whereby success is contingent on the acquisition, and reproduction, of dominant norms and practices.

However, while not automatically improving graduate's ability to traverse structural inequalities in the creative industries overall, greater levels of BAME staff and student representation on creative courses would still seem urgently required to counter the forms of racialised exclusion that exists within higher education. Even in HE institutions which have a very large BAME student cohort (71% in the case of the University of East London) a lack of diversity in lecturing staff continues to mirror the racialised inequalities prevalent in the creative industries as a whole. The University of East London's Arts and Digital Industries department, for example, has been identified by the Universities own race equality charter group as having the fewest BAME staff, and the largest BAME attainment gap in the whole university.

Summary School Pipeline and Attainment
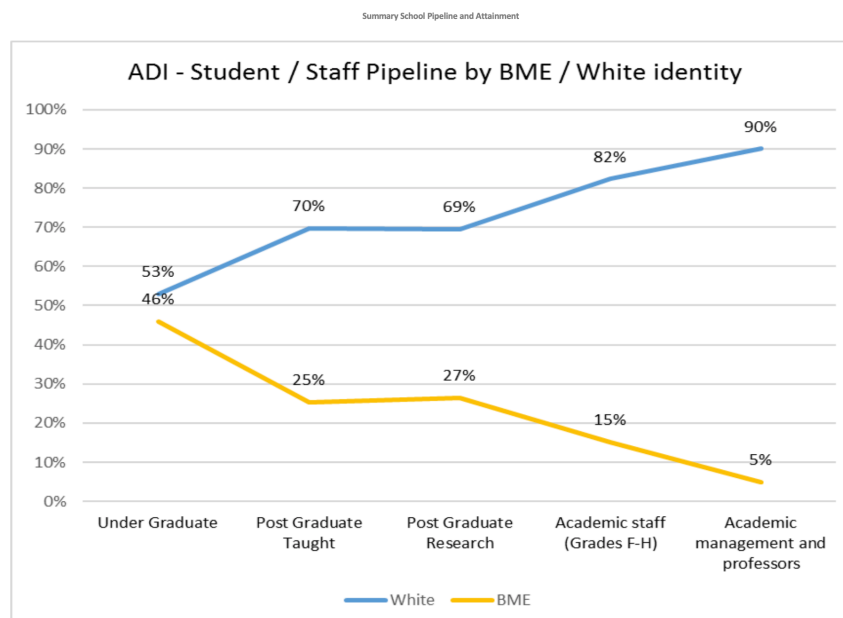
Source: UEL Race equality charter group

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The existence of a racialised attainment gap in higher education has been attributed to a number of causes including a higher percentage of BAME students coming from poorly performing schools and from lower socioeconomic groups (Stokes *et al*, 2015), the impact of differing cultural learning styles (Manikutty, Anuradha & Hansen, 2007) and the existence of university policies, teaching and assessment practices that are not inclusive and fair (Howkins, 2010). However, the under representation of BAME staff [78] may also be a significant factor. A 2018 Advance HE report on the impact of staff diversity on student outcomes noted a lack of research into the links between the under-representation of BAME staff and student attainment (Advance HE 2018 p. 6). This is surprising given the amount of research that has been conducted into the attainment gap in general. However, the 2018 Advance HE report does point to personal accounts (p. 21) that suggest a relationship between the absence of BAME staff and the under-attainment of BAME students. This highlights the need to recruit more racially diverse staff in HE creative departments.

In addition to the under-representation of BAME lecturers on HE creative courses the existence of cultural hierarchies that condition how creative forms are valued differently in an academic setting may also impact on BAME learners. In this way vernacular BAME cultural forms may not be invested with the same status as either fine art or experimental art forms on creative HE courses, and be excluded from the curriculum on this basis (Burke & McManus 2009).[79] This was Jreena Green's experience when she tried to elevate the legacy of African American heritage dance forms on a BA Dance Studies course heavily orientated around contemporary dance practice, only to have its relevance to dance history dismissed by senior lecturers. This is despite the fact African diaspora dance styles, and individual dancers such as Katherine Dunham, had a significant impact historically on the evolution of contemporary dance (Osumare, 2010).

As the Jreena Green, Mouth That Roars and Hackney Live case studies demonstrate, creative skills provision need not be regarded as solely the domain of higher education institutions, or necessarily removed from industrial production processes. A liberal, sometimes elitist, conception of higher education as ideally unconstrained by economic imperatives can sometimes obscure the value of training that emerges out of everyday industrial environments

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[78] Figures published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency record no black academics in the elite staff category of 'managers, directors and senior officials' in 2015-16 – https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/19-01-2017/sfr243-staff.

[79] Research by Burke and McManus (2009) illustrates the dismissal of vernacular black cultural forms such as hip hop as legitimate style references during the admission process for a fashion school.

outside the university or college setting.

This tension between 'on the job' industry training and higher education is becoming more pronounced as higher education institutions themselves become increasingly governed by a neoliberal demand to monetise the knowledge they disseminate (Radice, 2013) and deliver practical training that ensures future employment to their graduates (Association of Colleges, 2014). This, along with increasingly prohibitive fees, could mean that universities increasingly struggle to distinguish the courses they offer from industry-based skills provision.

A lack of recognition for the learning processes that exist outside HE and formal training sectors can also obscure the way these learning environments can sometimes operate to mitigate racially exclusionary practices in universities themselves. In this sense the grime music scene effectively functioned as a film school for black filmmakers at a time when BAME students where acutely under-represented on BA and MA film courses. The availability of low-cost digital camera and non-linear editing software allowed for the emergence of technical and creative 'autodidacts' in the grime music scene. Grime music video producers often trained themselves in the skills of editing, camera work, visual effects and grading (colour correction) and also passed those skills on to aspiring young filmmakers entering the sector. This is not to say that music video directors and technicians in this sector did not attend formal educational institutions. Many of them did, but they also acquired invaluable 'on the job' training on grime music video that was often more industry relevant than the training they were receiving at HE institutions. In this sense HE institutions cannot necessarily regard themselves as either more inclusive or better equipped to provide affordable training for BAME students than outside industry sectors. This would seem to strengthen the argument for greater partnership and integration between BAME communities, local government, industry and HE and the relevance of the Hackney Live, Mouth That Roars and Jreena Green case studies.

As stated earlier, Sarita's Malik's work (2008) on 'diversity' (as distinct from multi-culturalism) pointed to the way this discourse was historically deployed by cultural institutions to take the management of difference inhouse. In doing so it also arguably strengthened the power of those institutions to define who and how people from BAME communities would be assimilated, and into what normative structures they would be incorporated. This analytical model chimes with Freire's assertion cited earlier that

conventional teaching practice is designed to integrate the subject into the 'structure of oppression' (Freire 1970, p. 73). While the term 'oppression' may seem somewhat over-dramatic when applied to what might be consider a relatively privileged cultural sphere, training in the creative sectors can still work to reproduce hegemonic structures of knowledge, existing power relations, and dominant cultural values. In this sense a critical interrogation of these pedagogic processes, akin to the processes of 'decolonisation' (Gopal 2017) currently being applied to other educational and curatorial spheres, would seem appropriate.

However, this conception of stratified structures of cultural power, hegemonic interpolation and decolonisation might possibly be somewhat at odds with some of Michael Keith's work. As cited earlier he is critical of the idea that all subcultural or organic cultural forms that emerge spontaneously out of the cities multicultural mix are inherently valid and should always be positioned in binary opposition to cultural strategies (in this case educational ones) that originate with governmental initiatives and that are mapped onto the city's inhabitants 'from above'. In this sense he critiques the 'misleading juxtaposition of globalisation from above and globalisation from below'(Keith 2005, p. 114) This crude opposition must, in his mind, be replaced by what he describes as a 'perspectival dance' that addresses the 'ambivalence of city life' and neither 'naively celebrates creolisation for its own sake nor reifies the boundary markers of race and ethnicity' (Keith 2005, p. 114). In other words, he would probably refute the idea of racial and cultural dominance imposed from 'above' that sometimes characterises my description of the creative industries, and also the structures of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' that I argue are associated with it. Keith's deconstruction of simplistic binarisms, and celebration of 'ambivalence' is undoubtedly valid, and reflects the complexity and often fragmented and dialogic nature of the creative industries and the cultural and economic strategies they pursue. It also refutes naïve, idealised conceptions of vernacular or non-commercial 'underground' forms of creative practice as intrinsically oppositional or enabling, especially given that they sometimes embody exploitative or discriminatory practices. However, this understandably nuanced conception of cultural forms and the creative city can also sometimes operate to obscure the profound economic inequalities of power and the normative cultural values that also characterise the creative industries. Within this context 'ambivalence' is not an oscillation between forces that exert equal gravitational pull, rather it is an asymmetric tug of war between sectors or spaces which are imbued with vastly different degrees of economic and cultural power. In this context

training and education initiatives designed to mediate these spaces and create points of entry into industrial sectors will also inevitably privilege certain skillsets and normative cultural values and embody existing structures of inequality. These processes may not be as rigid as my descriptions sometimes imply but a certain intrinsic degree of flexibility and permeability does not entirely negate their existence either. In this context the emergence of independent training and production sectors that challenge the dominant deficit training models (such as Rix Research and Media and, up to a point, Hackney Council) can be empowering and enabling because they redefine the value of learners existing cultural knowledge and reduce their need to assimilate into normative hegemonic structures.

3.6 Space and place

3.6.1 Introduction

East London can be understood as a site of struggle where powerful forces, both cultural and economic, converge to shape the physical terrain. It has been subject to the forces of spatial regulation and racial displacement that Sibley (1995) describes in his work, and fetishised as a 'dark continent' ripe for colonisation and cultural elevation (Cohen, 2013). For some of the symbol producers I write about, East London, and the 'affective atmosphere' with which it is imbued (Thibaud, 2010) is a creative resource that can be re-encoded in their work. For MC Nyja and her fellow grime music video producers, symbolic production operates as a technology through which they can map and lay claim to East London's urban topography. For all of my case studies the 'space and place' they inhabit is inextricably tied up with their creative practice. The physical terrain of East London shapes and is shaped by the processes of industrial creative production that are based there, and within that process individual creative producers become both conduit and agent, enabled and constrained, by the spatial environment they inhabit. As local symbol producers they themselves become constituent parts of East London's spatial 'habitus'. As Anderson (2009) suggest, the affective atmosphere of East London both surrounds and infuses them, and the boundary between their subjectivities and the space they inhabit becomes permeable, and sometimes difficult to demarcate.

For novelist Tessa McWatt, as highlighted in her interview in *Multicology?* (00.54.17), spatial location plays a significant role in both her writing and sense of self. As a child, she states, she used to feel completely 'out of sync' with everyone else because they seemed to belong 'in one place' that was 'racially homogenous'. However, in East London she has found a physical location that is as racially heterogeneous as herself. The racial superdiversity of this part of the city spatially embodies her multiple cultural and racial identities, and 'accommodates' her internal difference, her 'mixedness'. In this sense the multicultural 'spatialised affect' of East London creates a sense of belonging because (as she says in *Multicology?* at 00.54.30) it 'represents all the different parts of me'. This raises an idea of the relationship between cultural producers like McWatt and their physical environment that closely mirrors Berleant's perspective that 'People and environment are continuous' (cited in Anderson 2009, p. 7). It also suggests that spatialised affective environments will become encoded in the creative work of symbol producers because those spaces correspond to their internal psychosocial structures. These psycho-social structures may be pre-existent and determine why those practitioners choose to inhabit particular environments in the first place, or they may actually be 'produced' by those spaces and locations. The relations of causality are hard to determine. It would seem incorrect to say one factor straightforwardly precedes the other as environment, internal psychic terrain and externalised creative output are, as Anderson (2009) suggests, mutually constituting and continuous with each other. However, this continuity can equally shift or reconfigure itself if one component changes. In this sense a more monoethnic or spatially 'purified' environment (Sibley 1995) might create internal dissonance and disjuncture for the multiracial creative producer. In short, the habitat will take on a more inhospitable form. Equally the creation of multiracial spaces may arguably create a sense of belonging and psycho-geographic coherence for BAME cultural producers. I address this in greater depth later in this section when talking about the Workers Café case study.

Space and place are central to the representational strategies of many grime music producers. As I explore in the following section the grime aesthetic form can operate as a locational device that situates its producers in the urban topography, but it can also be a system of semantic resistance that disrupts normative symbolic regimes. In my interview with her, Nyja describes the grime music as 'gutter' (00.13.35 in *Multicology?*), a description that seems to consciously celebrate the symbolic dissonance of its grimey visual and musical tropes. It is a conception of grime as functioning in profound semantic opposition to any sanitising systems

of control that might be imposed on it by the dominant culture or the commercial music industry. This also suggests an intersection with Sibley's work (1995) mentioned in Chapter 2 which explores the processes of 'spatial purification' through which urban space is managed and which positions racialised others as 'contaminants' that need to be expunged. MC Nyja actively deploys the disruptive abject power of grime to contest these symbolic (and spatialised) processes of regulation.

3.6.2 MC Nyja: Ethnocartography and online heterotopias

In East London the grime music scene remains a disruptive and challenging presence. Historically it has been the subject of various moral panics that link it to gang culture, positing a causal relationship between the music and a number of fatal, stabbings and shooting in the capital in the last decade (Morris 2006). During that period the metropolitan police engaged in unprecedented forms of regulation and cultural censorship through their policy of 'red flagging' -- an informal, unlegislated policy of closing down any live urban music event where artists on the bill have been associated with any kind of criminal activity. The notorious 696 Risk Assessment Form was instrumently deployed to enact these prescriptive measures (Olutayo 2017).

This indiscriminate, scatter-gun approach often meant artists were prevented from performing simply by virtue of the fact that a violent incident took place at a previous music event where they performed, therefore linking them by association rather than by any personal involvement to a criminal action (Fatsis, 2018). For many years this largely arbitrary policy effectively closed down, criminalised and pushed the grime scene further underground, and into virtual online enclaves. On these dedicated websites[80] and cable channels, grime's disruptive power could be corralled and reduced to an abstracted set of representations which, while still abject and threatening, were as not as unsettling as their material manifestations in urban space. These online spaces were both enabling and delimiting for grime artists in that allowed them to access global audiences without the participation of major record labels and broadcasters while simultaneously testifying to their spatialised displacement from the city, and live music venues in particular. This process created what Foucault (1984) described as a

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[80] http://grmdaily.com

'heterotopia': a strictly demarcated virtual (or physical) space which the subject can inhabit or in which they can see themselves reflected, but which powerfully and symbolically marks their enforced absence from everyday society. Foucault also perceived these spaces as having a potentially counter hegemonic function in that they reflect and yet disrupt the normative values of the worlds that exist outside them 'As a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live' (Foucault 1984, p. 4).

> In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy (Foucault 1984, p. 4).

Heterotopias in this sense operate to spatially displace the abject (the disruptive and the untenable) out of everyday life. After a decade of opposition from the grime community the 696 Risk Assessment Form's grip over grime collective's opportunities to perform live in non-heterotopic spaces seems to be ending,[81]. However, their heterotopic online world of grime music videos remains a site of moral censure and anxiety.[82]

Some might argue (possibly with good cause) that the heavy policing and spatial regulation and displacement of grime collectives out of physical space int the virtual was not solely the result of institutional racism or a visceral aversion to black people and working class culture, though this was undoubtedly the motivation in many cases, but was also due to the inter and intra-crew rivalries and conflicts that characterised the grime music scene that sometimes escalated into violent confrontation.

However, it also necessary to understand how these forms of rivalries are central to some forms of creative practice. Like hip hop, grime often operates as a form of musical 'deixis' in which grime MCs spatially position themselves and mark out collective affiliations and micro territorialisms. In this sense it can serve an indexical function for racialised subjects to fix their location within an urban topography where their position is intrinsically precarious and unstable. I would argue that in some ways this is where grime's imperative urgency originated.

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[81] http://metro.co.uk/2017/11/10/met-police-scrap-racist-form-that-allowed-them-to-shut-down-grime-gigs-7070953/
[82] https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/3470727/youtube-rap-videos-hidden-gang-threats-google/

> Marking the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences, the connection between youth, style and space has increasingly been theorized in the more recent literature on youth cultures. Andy Bennett, for example, refers to music and style as the principal sites of young people's 'struggle to win and mark out urban spaces'. The 'local' is further understood as a 'space that is crossed by a variety of different collective sensibilities each of which imposes a different set of expectations and cultural needs upon that space' (Bennett 2000, p. 66; cited in Böse 2003, p.187).

At points it is this territorialisation and spatialised affiliation that has led to grime being linked to youth gang culture (which is often identified as serving a similar function), especially with regards to the notorious 'postcode wars'[83] that allegedly saw people lose their lives in gang fights on the basis of which post code they lived in. However, that notorious term 'postcode wars' also represented an attempt to spatially simplify and delimit forms of conflict that were more nuanced and complex than simply geographic location and which also involved questions of class, masculinity, economics, race and policing. However, while this conflation of grime music with gang culture may be highly reductive there may be some parallels in that both can entail the signalling of geographically localised affiliations through symbolic practices because, as Robyn Travis, former member of E8's Holly Street Boys gang says, 'where you come from is a representation of who you are' (Bryant 2012). However, it is equally possible to view grime as the medium through which those territorial and spatial affiliations are sublimated into a form of non-destructive symbolic production. In this conception grime music is a creative form through which these processes are aestheticised and dramatised but also dispersed and played with.

> My Name's Wiley. I come from E3 ('Bow E3' grime music track, Wiley, 2007)

In his work Andy Bennet (2002) validly cautions against an overly deterministic notion of music as a transparent reflection of its producers' everyday lives and experiences. For Bennnet 'an urban mythscape' is constituted by discourse, representation and the perception of consumers, and often misleadingly links musicians and performers to the geographic space out of which they emerged. It is a view of 'musical space' as constructed, consumed and understood through other fictive and romantic systems of representations, discourses and forms of symbolic production. 'Decontextualized images and information are

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[83] https://www.itv.com/news/london/2018-04-04/charity-boss-gang-postcode-wars-have-spread-across-the-capital/

recontextualized by audiences into new ways of thinking about and imagining places – the result of which is a mythscape '(Bennet 2002, p. 89). However, while this analysis is valid, especially with regards to the way grime might be fetishised by consumers from very different cultural backgrounds to that of its producers, it can also elide the particular instrumentality of grime for the artists who manufacture it. This is particularly the case with regards to the way grime music has a material, spatially localised, industrial dimension outside its existence as a set of signifying practices. While clearly not solely a 'local' musical form in the sense that its evolution was profoundly influenced by hip hop and is connected to a broader transnational diaspora musical culture, grime has always performed a powerful local function and drawn on local cultural resources for its creation. In this conception grime operates as an acoustic and visual, rather than physical, strategy for mapping and semantically claiming the urban space out of which it emerged. The estates, the underpasses, the 'roadz', risky and otherwise, of East London, all became features and markers in the musical and visual culture of the grime scene. In this way, the aesthetic conventions of grime music are inextricably linked to its spatialised location.

As McKinnon notes: 'grime is a music that was born in East London, lives in East London…and maybe only makes sense in East London' (2005, p. 1). In this context, despite the validity of Bennet's position it seems fair to see grime as at least partly produced by the spatial and demographic relations of East London, albeit while also inhabiting a discursive and representational space (as any cultural form does) that is intertextual and 'mythological'. I would argue grime artists are constructing their own musical 'mythscape', but it is one deliberately operationalised to enable them to mark out and symbolically occupy real physical urban space and contest existing racialised hierarchies, institutional structures and urban power relations. This process operates both in contradistinction to hegemonic space and also in relation to competitive micro-territorialisations vis-a-vis other grime crews. This idea that you can symbolically occupy, rather than physically occupy, actual physical space may seem contradictory. However, it entails the idea that certain forms of symbolic production are a compensatory response (in the form of both auto-ethnography and fantasy) to forms of spatialised exclusion, and a problematised sense of 'ownership' when it comes to physical urban space. Hence representational practices can contest those processes by symbolically laying claim to key features of the urban topography. Within this paradigm, the material urban terrain becomes a site of struggle for semantic ownership: one in which grime music, and grime music videos in particular, operate as instruments of a kind of symbolic

counter-appropriation; one that uses processes of visual and acoustic signification to project the identities of its young, predominantly black, creators onto the walls, streets and physical structure of the urban space they inhabit -- a territorialised multimedia version of graffiti 'tagging' if you like. It is of course not coincidental that it is the urban spaces, mapped out by those representational claims, from which grime artists have been consistently excluded by the metropolitan police's application of the 696 'risk assessment' form.

Nyja's video shoot for 'No One' (featured in *Multicology?* at 00.14.00) clearly demonstrated the dialogic relationship of artistic identity to urban location as it interweaves her performance with observational footage of her navigating her neighbourhood, shopping in her local corner-shop and walking down her street. It semantically 'fixes' her in her spatial locale, a function that I would argue is a defining feature of the grime music video aesthetic.

The way 'East London' functions as a locational resource, a set of signifying practices, and a physical context of production for grime music and music videos mirrors the role Brooklyn plays in relation to American Hip Hop. In her work *Naked City* (2010) Zukin examines Brooklyn and the way it has operated as a symbolic reservoir for African American rappers who celebrated its authenticity and 'grittiness' through their music. She also looks at how it served a similar purpose for black filmmaker Spike Lee who transformed it into a cinematic trope that stood in for a broader sense of the African American community and 'brought the boroughs gritty black neighbourhoods into the virtual core of popular culture' (Zukin 2010 p54). Zukin's view of Hip Hop and the films of Spike Lee is similar to my understanding of grime music tracks and music videos. In this framing these creative forms utilise urban space as a 'symbolic' resource, and function as geo-positioning technologies that link specific physical locations to particular artists, and more generally to a generic sense of 'place' and communal identity.

3.6.3 Dominic Hingorani: Location as an affective creative resource

Dominic Hingorani's production of *Clocks 1888: the greener* is very much produced out of the industrial history and psychogeography of its East London's setting. It was scripted and designed with a knowledge it would be staged at the Hackney Empire theatre, in the heart of

what Hackney council designated as a superdiverse setting in their 2011 census,[84] and it consciously locates a subaltern mixed-race East Londoner at the centre of the story. The area's racial mixing and class antagonisms are the actual material out of which the narrative is formed. In this sense, the show's multicultural East London location acts as a spatial and temporal resource that becomes re-inscribed as creative practice. As Hingorani says himself:

> Projects such as *Clocks 1888: the greener* draw on local histories, diasporas and the heterogeneous cultural location of geographies, such as those of the East End of London, as a catalyst for performance works that are rooted in 'difference' to create innovative hybrid forms (Hingorani 2018, p. 43).

Hingorani explicitly identifies his creative work as responding to the environment in which it is located and links it to a broader strategy of radical engagement with the local. For him, it is this process that has the potential to shift notions of national identity through a creative practice that reflects, or rearticulates, the multiracial space out of which it is produced.

> It is to these particular, local, lived and shifting environments or sites of 'hyper-diversity' to which the arts must meaningfully respond if we are to achieve a radical new engagement with diverse audiences and artists and a potential re-conceptualisation of the nation (Hingorani 2018, p. 46).

Michael Keith states, 'conceptually, new cultural industries emphasise diversity as a key strength of urban locales' by 'marketing their ethnic diversity as a key locational strength' (Keith 2005, p.121). In doing so he points to the way the superdiversity of a city can be treated as a locational asset that can be capitalised on by the commercial creative industries. His description frames that process as a somewhat instrumental and exploitative process, whereby the ethnic plurality of the city can be harnessed by commercial interests as a fetishised exotic selling point to entice cultural consumers. While I would not dispute that process is often characteristic of the commercial industries, I would suggest there can also be a less mercenary, more ambiguous and visceral relationship between the cultural producer and the space that they inhabit, one where the affective atmospheres, the spatial terrain, the textures and the mood of a place are injected into those creative workers' symbolic practices. In this way Hingorani's theatre work embodies the spatial 'habitus' of East London, not simply as some kind of cynical exploitation of its locational capital but as an empathic affective affiliation.

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[84] https://hackney.gov.uk/census-2011

3.6.4 The Workers' Café: The value of a spatially concentrated multicultural creative hub

My last case study in this section actively works to attenuate that sense of affective spatialised exclusion BAME creative producers can experience in the regenerated urban setting. The Workers' Café opened on Kingsland Road in Dalston in 2016 and is owned and managed by brothers Mike and Dave Ashley. Its success is directly linked to shifts in the creative economy and the expansion of online work that have produced a new kind of cultural worker: autonomous and self-governing but also socially isolated. The café has responded to creative freelancers' increasingly precarious and privatised existence by offering them a place to work at a lower cost than conventional managed workspaces. This business model builds on and monetises the existing informal tendency of these workers to locate themselves in cafes by offering unlimited access to coffee, a printer and hot-desks at a day rate of £5 and a monthly rate of £70. However, the Workers' Café is clearly more than simply a place to sit and work at your computer. Its co-owner Mike Ashley also identifies the creation of embodied social networks as central to how it operates (*Multicology?* 01.00.15). In this way its role aligns with the dominant paradigm in the study of the creative industries that views creativity as inseparable from embodied processes of social exchange and interaction.

> Multidimensional communication is held by many to be essential to the transmission of complex, uncodifiable, tacit knowledge. The rise of the cultural industries, which rely to an enormous extent on this kind of knowledge, has renewed the focus on face-to-face interaction and its functions in the coordination of the economy (d'Ovidio and Haddock 2007, p. 114).

However, as more work exchanges in the creative economy are conducted, online embodied interaction may be diminishing. This increasing privatisation of creative work runs in opposition to what some consider the governing logic of the 'creative city' and creative hubs. This perspective suggests that creativity emerges out of the cross-pollination of ideas, the intersection of different creative forms and cultural groupings, and the work bonds and personal affiliations that are formed through direct social interaction and spatial proximity.

> For many of these industries there is empirical evidence that face-to-face interaction remains a crucial means of communication for their highly skilled workers, despite the development of new communication

> technologies and the low cost of their use. The reliance on direct
> interaction, and the requirement of physical proximity that this entails, are
> part of the explanation of the clustering of these industries in cities and in
> specific quarters of cities (d'Ovidio & Haddock 2007, p. 114)

It is precisely these processes of embodied face-to-face interaction and creative collaboration that the Workers' Café aims to facilitate through its creation of a conducive 'micro-creative ecology'. The concept of a creative ecology, with its implicit associations of an organic, interconnected, mutually supporting, self-regulating system, has become eponymous in debates about the creative industries.

Arts Council England chief executive, Alan Davey, has defined the cultural ecology as 'the living, evolving network of artists, cultural organisations and venues co-operating in many fruitful partnerships – artistic, structural and financial'. He has also said, 'The metaphor of an ecology, of a living, balanced environment, expresses how nothing happens within this system without its impact being felt widely.' (quoted in Holden 2015, p. 5).

The term ecology carries with it the linguistic capital of the natural sciences and like other metaphors derived from chemistry and computing it is one theorists of the city have been happy to deploy, knowing it lends their arguments rhetorical weight, despite sometimes problematically appearing to 'naturalise' what is discursive or constructed.[85] However, while the term, when applied to forms of social organisation may sometimes have a tendency to veil inorganic structures, such as economic inequality, social antagonism and the operations of capital, it can be still be useful in understanding an interconnected and spatially-localised web of relationships in the creative economy. If nothing else, it can suggest the fundamental co-dependence of different but complimentary creative sectors which work to augment and sustain each other. It is this concept that Mike Harvey refers to when he talks about the Workers' Café as an 'eco-system' in which its occupants 'survive better when they are all with each other' (*Multicology?* 00.59.4). In saying this he is, consciously or unconsciously, reiterating the prevailing discourse deployed by government agencies involved in large scale creative industries-driven regeneration projects, and which is in turn derived from the work of theorists like Howkins (2010). These initiatives and discourses promote the creation of

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[85] Taylor and Dewsbury (2018) make some useful observations on this topic
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5969428/

vibrant creative ecologies as central to the success of the creative city. Harvey is simply applying this logic on a micro-level to his own enterprise.

> A creative ecology is a niche where diverse individuals express themselves in a systemic and adaptive way, using ideas to produce new ideas; and where others support this endeavour even if they don't understand it. These energy-expressive relationships are found in both physical places and intangible communities; it is the relationships and actions that count, not the infrastructure. The strength of a creative ecology can be measured by these flows of energy and the continual learning and creation of meaning. The quartet of diversity, change, learning and adaptation mutually enhance each other (Howkins 2010, p. 11).

However, while much attention has been given to the concept of a 'creative ecology' and the significant role local 'creative hubs' play within it (for instance Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi 2016) little consideration has been given to how cultural identity and race might operate within these systems. What is significant and different about the Workers' Café in the context of Dalston is the demographic composition of its clientele. While many other cafés and workspaces in the area are predominantly inhabited by white creative workers the Workers' Café is very notably a more multiracial space. A brief informal survey of its inhabitants reveals a mix of writers, filmmakers, academics, web designers and social media marketing professionals, so, probably a very similar clientele to many other cafes in the area, however what is unusual is that on average half or more tend to be BAME. One can infer that this is related to the fact that the venue is black owned and therefore appears more 'minority friendly'.

Some work has been done on what makes a built environment 'minority friendly'[86] or social and culturally inclusive but one of the key determining factors must be the ethnic composition of the people in that space. The work of Anderson (2009) and Thibaud (2010) on 'spatialized affect' cited in my literature review is especially relevant to understanding the appeal of the Workers' Café and how it produces its own internal ambience. Like any space, it possesses affective qualities, and like any built or designed environment, those qualities are actively managed, and corralled. There is an intentionality behind the atmosphere, but it is also a product of the presence of the people who occupy it and co-create its intangible 'vibe'. Given that the affective atmosphere is at least partly constituted by the embodied creative workers who inhabit the space, the café's affective atmosphere may vary depending on who

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[86] https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/inclusion-by-design.pdf

is there on any given day. Equally the effect the space has on visitors will inevitably vary from person to person, depending on their own ethnicity and how they are psychically and culturally positioned. It is not necessarily the case that people will seek out spaces where their self-defined ethnic group is in the majority. However, it may often be the case that they seek out spaces where they do not feel actively 'minoritised' either. Given that is the case, and despite the varying composition of the clientele, the almost permanent presence of Mike or his brother Dave serves as visible signifiers of the café's black/ multicultural 'corporate identity' and marks it out from the other predominantly white hipster cafes in the area.

Mike Ashley also identifies a particular cultural characteristic the café works to counteract. As he says. 'Part of English culture is to be not too interactive with people'. It is partly this privatised culture that he works to disrupt by actively matchmaking and forming links between different workers based on what he believes to be their commonality of interest or complimentary skillset. As he states in *Multicology?* (00.58.55) 'Bringing creative people together is creative'.

3.6.5 'Multicologies'

The Workers' Cafe case study opens up the idea that multicultural creative hubs might be central to the creation of truly plural and diverse creativity-based regeneration strategies. Even in areas that are residentially diverse, an absence of multicultural creative spaces means creative workers from BAME backgrounds run the risk of being spatially excluded and less able to benefit from the forms of creative interaction and working relationships that facilitate innovation and the emergence of new cultural forms. In short, the creation of racially inclusive creative hubs (or 'multicologies' as I call them) rather than hermetically sealed ethnically exclusive ecosystems, may be necessary in order for BAME creative workers to harvest the benefits of a creative industries-based urban regeneration.

The term 'multicology' suggest a racially plural self-supporting interdependent network of relationships and processes focussed around creative production. In many senses this reflects the prevailing logic of 'creative ecologies' (Howkins 2010) which identifies the complementary interaction of different creative forms as the process out of which new forms of creative practice emerge. In this sense a multicology consists not just of a set of creative

practices, but also an interconnected web of social and economic relationships that can potentially sit across a number of different institutions and communities and which are spatialised and embodied. Equally it suggests a network that is self-generating and self-regulating, rather than 'imposed from above' through formal policy driven regulatory processes. Such a system might be permeable and inclusive rather than bounded by hard borders and imbued with the potential to disrupt 'normative' hegemonic structures of power in the cultural industries. Such a system might have a form that is affective and visceral as much it is structured and rational, and that operates as both a matrix of interpersonal relationships and a structure of industrial production. It could be spatially concentrated in physical hubs or nodes but could also operate 'remotely' in a more spatially dispersed form through the use of web-based technology. Its organisational structure might be flat and cellular rather than vertical and hierarchical, and could be constituted primarily, but by no means exclusively, by BAME cultural producers. In this respect The Workers' Café offers a valuable, if partial, model for how such a spatially concentrated BAME creative ecology might look and feel.

3.6.6 Section conclusion

This last section was intended to illustrate the link between forms of creative practice and the physical context out of which they emerge. Within this relationship, processes of symbolic production can operate as both systems of spatial regulation and also as forms of cultural contestation. As the MC Nyja case study suggests, dissident forms of creative practice can operate as an instrument of radical ethnocartography that challenges hegemonic systems of spatial regulation and the displacement of BAME creative cultures into online 'heterotopias'. Dominic Hingorani's theatre work illustrates how East London's affective atmosphere can operate as a resource in the creative production process, and the Workers' Café demonstrates the significance of concentrated spatialised multicultural creative hubs or 'multicologies' as contact zones where different creative forms intersect, and which can support BAME creative producers.

Overall this section points to the significance of embodied location in the process of symbolic production and the navigation of 'difference'. In my film *Multicology?* Anamik Saha states

'Even in a big cosmopolitan multicultural city like London I think most people's encounter with difference happens through the media and cultural products' (00.03.33). However, while this may be true of large parts of the UK non-urban population, I would dispute that this is the case in East London. I would argue the spatial and psychosocial navigation of the embodied other is deeply woven into the everyday lived experience of East London's inhabitants. In fact, this spatial cohabitation with difference may indeed be one of the defining features of East London's affective atmosphere.

However, that affective atmosphere, while it might make difference an almost normative feature of the East London landscape, is still clearly bisected by invisible boundaries. I would argue these borders and markers of difference, and the processes through which they are contested, do not primarily reside in media texts or the sphere of 'representation' as Saha suggests. Rather they are physically embodied in the spatial relations of the city and are manifest in relations of power, ownership of economic capital, and access to the physical spaces allocated to work, consumption and leisure. The streets of East London are clearly racially superdiverse. However, whether people are driving, walking or cycling down them, the shops they enter, the homes in which they live, the buildings in which they work and the jobs they do, mark out the invisible borders that separate one individual and group from another, often along racial lines. In this sense the spaces of cultural production and consumption that exist within this urban context have a material dimension that is separate from the cultural texts that are manufactured and disseminated in those spaces. The existence of these venues (edit suites, design studios, art galleries, managed workspaces, theatres, cinemas etc.) represent the way 'culture' can become spatially embodied in an urban setting, and by extension the way those cultural spaces can become physically 'racialised'. In this context, who does, and who does not, occupy these physical spaces is just as significant as how people are represented in cultural texts, even if those texts do often operate to condition their readers' perception of the other and the city they inhabit. Hence the creation of spatialised hubs that contest these processes of exclusion and disrupt invisible bordering processes becomes central to contesting forms of racialised exclusion in the creative industries.

3.7 Chapter conclusion

To briefly recap on the previous chapter, it is clear that work cited in the literature review is useful in contextualising and locating the creative practice of my case studies. To refer back to and spatialise Sarita Malik's work (2008) in an urban-regeneration context, the discourse of diversity, when mapped onto the creative city, can potentially operate to fragment BAME creative sectors and spaces by interpolating individual workers, on a highly restrictive basis, into hegemonic predominantly white and middle-class managed workspaces. Concurrent with this, in an urban-regeneration context, 'culture' in its broadest normative sense can be strategically co-opted as an instrument of what Sibley (1998) calls 'spatial purification' through which minority cultural forms and their creators become designated as a threatening dissonant 'other' that needs to be regulated and expunged. This process is especially clear in relation to 'high risk' (Hesmondhalgh 2007) racialised forms of cultural production such as grime music. MC Nyja celebrates the abject nature of grime (she describes it as 'gutter') and highlights the way it can operate as a semantic contestation of this hegemonic 'sanitising' spatial regime. However, despite its potential use as a tool of radical counter-mapping and ethnocartography, grime subculture still runs the risk of being erased through processes of spatial regulation and economic expropriation. In the contemporary regeneration-context these processes can echo what Cohen (2013) identifies as the Victorian 'orientalisation' of East London as a 'dark continent' in need of benevolent acculturation and social cleansing, the 'cleansing agent' in this case being culture and creativity.

The various case studies examined in this chapter demonstrate a variety of creative strategies for navigating increased forms of racialised exclusion in the creative industries sectors. They also represent the way distinct forms of multi-cultural creative practice have emerged out of the localised spatial, cultural and industrial terrain of East London. The industry reports cited in Chapter 1 of this thesis suggest that there is the risk that new racialised boundaries might be erected through a regeneration process powered by the creative industries. The analysis in this chapter has been intended to provide the beginnings of an 'industrial toolkit', both practical and theoretical, that can be used to understood and mitigate those spatialised forms of exclusion.

3.7.1 Case studies: Indicative or representative?

Given that the case studies in this chapter have been drawn from a variety of creative forms and sectors we should be cautious of overly generalising. Moreover, they constitute only a small percentage of the total number of BAME creative producers working in East London and in this sense are intended to be indicative of particular creative strategies rather than broadly representative of the whole workforce. Equally the sectors in which these case-study producers work are all constituted differently in terms of their industrial process, cultural histories, formal conventions, uses of technology and funding structures. This being the case there needs to be further analysis of how the different creative sectors vary in terms of the way they operate to racialise their particular workforces, and whether strategies to contest these processes can be deployed equally effectively in the various sectors.

One of the intentions of my film *Multicology?* was to suggest a relationship between the different creative producers who feature in it by virtue of the fact that they inhabit the same sector of the city. Yet, it is important to be cautious about implying an imagined unity. Unlike the companies and individual practitioners who were part of the black independent film sector in the 1990s for instance, the individual case studies in my film are not linked through any close personal association or a unified set of thematic concerns or formal strategies. While they may be spatially proximitous to one another, they are in many was relatively distant when it comes to stylistic approaches, the mediums in which they work, their individual ethnic backgrounds and their political affiliations.

3.7.2 Intersectoral connectivity

The inclusion of practitioners from differing creative sectors in *Multicology?* was primarily intended to mirror the way these various cultural forms have traditionally been analytically grouped together in the study of the creative industries (Hesmondhalgh 2007, Howkins 2010). In this paradigm practitioners, even if they come from very different creative backgrounds, tend to be viewed collectively as subsets of one overall industrial sector. Beyond that however, as the concept of a 'cultural ecology' (Holden 2015) implies, the study of the creative industries entails an understanding of the forms of interdependency that bind the different subsectors together. In this sense, the relationships between different creative

forms can be seen as more significant (and productive) than those between individual practitioners working in the same field. The relationship of fashion designer Wale's Adeyemi's to music, music video and photography is a good example of this. In this paradigm, theatre, music, dance, design and film do not simply sit next to each other, rather they interact to organically complement and support one another. These relationships of co-dependency extend across the creative sectors: dance and theatre need to be archived on film for funders; filmmakers need actors (who often come from the theatre) to act in their dramas; record labels need filmmakers to make music videos for their artists; filmmakers need composers to produce their soundtracks; dancers need musicians to produce the music that accompanies their performance; filmmakers and theatre producers both need writers to produce the scripts on which to base their work; and broadcasters need creative content to platform. An understanding of these different sectors' interdependence is central, both to analysing the creative industries as a whole, and also to identifying the importance of managed workspaces as spatially concentrated sites of creative labour.

It this set of interdependent relationships that my film *Multicology?* (2018) attempts to convey, by featuring practitioners from a range of different backgrounds and creative disciplines. In this way the film and the case studies in it posit a connection between sectors and modes of creative practice in a spatial setting. As pointed out earlier this may be conditional as the practitioners in the film have no unmediated personal relationship to each other beyond their spatial location and the fact that they all appear in the film. They are not currently working together as part of an integrated network of creative practitioners and it would be idealistic, in both a philosophical and political sense, to think a form of visual representation could create an actual physical reality. However, as with other forms of imaginary work and creative conceptualisation, it is fair to say that the 'imaginary' often precedes the 'real'. Not in a directly causal sense but rather in the way it opens up spaces for 'strategic modelling' or making associative links that can condition and inform real-world forms of political action and social policy. In this sense the film may 'suggest', as much as it reflects, a set of complementary relationships between the different creative sectors, one that opens up a dialogue between those different sectors, and the institutional, commercial, cultural and physical spaces that they inhabit. This dialogic interaction between creative forms and sectors is after all part of the logic of the creative industries. When I say this, I'm not referring to 'the creative industries' as an analytical paradigm or field of academic study and but rather as part of a governing regeneration discourse that acts as a strategic template

for the management of physical space and the construction of urban creative hubs. It is a logic that needs to be applied equally to the BAME communities who face increasing exclusion from those processes and networks.

3.7.3 A common experience of racialisation?

There is of course another reason for grouping these subjects together. This is that they may have a common experience in terms of the creative industries' tendency to racialise them, to conflate their creative practice with their ethnic identities and to displace them out of physical space through the regeneration process. This suggests that they may have not just a common experience of exclusion but also a common strategic interest in contesting it, in both the economic and political sense. However, given my subjects come from a range of different 'non-white' racial backgrounds, further analysis might be required to identify the ways forms of racialised exclusion impact on different ethnic groups within the creative industries. There might, for instance, be a significant difference between the exoticising processes of commodification that historically characterised the commercial music industry's 'orientalising' embrace of British South Asian music, and its more fearful engagement with black grime music. Equally as I have suggested there might be cases in which the relative ambiguity of mixed-race positionality has allowed a form of cultural mobility not allowed to more racially fixed BAME identities. However, despite those sectoral and racial differentiations, given the highly precarious, isolated and individuated nature of creative labour among not just BAME workers but the creative labour force as a whole, there would seem to be an argument for greater collective mobilisation of that workforce around commonalities of interest.

3.7.4 Individual vs collective affiliations

One significant contrast between my case studies seems to be between those practitioners who are happy to be identified as 'black' or 'Asian' practitioners affiliated to a 'BAME cultural sector', and those who see this classification a constraining labelling process that unfairly collapses them together with all other practitioners of a similar ethnicity regardless

of what aesthetic strategies, genres and formal approaches they might be pursuing. The former position is reflected in Brolly's self-identification as an 'Asian theatre company' (Hingorani 2018) and the Rix groups avowedly political assertion of a black identity (*Multicology?* 00.29.25) while the latter position is exemplified by Wale Adeyemi's reluctance to be identified as a 'black fashion designer', and Tessa McWatt's ambivalence about being defined as a 'black writer' (*Multicology?* 0051.10.). This distinction between one political and creative position that embraces collective racialised affiliations, and another that seeks to defy its homogenising effects, tracks back to the early days of diaspora cultural practice.

There appears to be a certain amount of ambivalence on the part of some practitioners who wish to 'own' their BAME identity in a creative setting but also resent being solely defined by that identity. This ambivalence is understandable, and indeed there seems to be no reason why practitioners should not be able to acknowledge their cultural background while not being solely defined or constrained by it. White practitioners rarely seem to have to make this choice and it would seem to be industrial processes, as much as personal affiliation or political commitment, that forces practitioners to choose.

There is also, in some of my case studies, a tension between a desire for a multicultural mobility of the imagination (exemplified by novelist Tessa McWatt) that can move between different racialised positionalities and a more politically fixed and immobile location as simply a 'BAME creative producer'. This, in turn, raises the question of whether it can constitute a problematic form of political disavowal to attempt to move outside existing racial taxonomies and inhabit a position of privileged indeterminacy? Or whether this strategy can in fact challenge and disrupt the way non-white subjectivities are fixed and constrained by white dominated industrial structures.

These dilemmas and contradiction inevitably intrude into debates around BAME cultural practice and produce something of a double bind for minority producers. How far should BAME creative practitioners feel the need to operate in a non-white discursive space and be obliged to represent a, far from unified and coherent, 'BAME experience'? How do you contest industrial processes of racialisation without yourself falling into an essentialised form of cultural practice? Equally, if collective BAME networks in the cultural sphere can contest hegemonic structures and forms of racialised exclusion, does individuated BAME entrepreneurial creative practice undermine and subvert those forms of collective

organisation? These perennial issues around cultural practice become re-activated when discussing the degree to which BAME cultural practitioners might be constrained or enabled by being spatially concentrated in the speculative 'multicologies' or multicultural creative hubs I describe.

3.7.5 The problematics of 'multicologies'

A dominant conceptual paradigm of the creative industries is that the different sectors exist in a mutually complementary relationship (ecology) that can generate innovation and new forms of creative production (Holden 2015). These cultural connexions are manifest spatially through embodied interaction, but that process benefits from being spatially concentrated and facilitated (d'Ovidio & Haddock 2007). This strategy, already prevalent in creative industries policies nationally, can, and arguably should, be applied to BAME production sectors to create multicultural creative hubs or 'multicologies'. The potential benefits of this strategy are most evident in the Workers' Café case study, where the owner Mike Harvey consciously works towards creating an ethnically plural micro-ecology. I would argue this a useful template for the construction of more affectively inclusive and racially diverse creative hubs in East London.

This is not to advocate for discrete ethnically closed BAME cultural spaces, only for spaces that are multi-ethnic rather than predominantly white and middle class, and also for forms of production that are less constrained by dominant hegemonic norms, and industrial practices. This links to broader questions around the need for BAME cultural space, and creative sectors. The possibility that creating self-contained BAME cultural sectors might simply result in the construction of a cultural 'ghettoes' remains a vexing concern. In some senses, it was this model of BAME cultural autonomy that facilitated the existence of the black and Asian cultural sectors of the 1980s (and also the entry into parliament for a generation of Black and Asian MPs through the black sections). It is arguable that these strategies helped create the cultural ghettos from which many BAME creative practitioners subsequently strove to escape throughout the 1990s, in the hope of accessing the 'centre' or mainstream cultural sectors, and all the associated access to resources and audiences that went with it. However, with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear the levelling of those cultural ghettoes left

many minority practitioners at the mercy of institutions which, while they claimed to be pursuing 'diversity strategies', very notably failed to deliver greater levels of inclusion.

Overall my research suggests the potential usefulness of spaces, both physical and virtual, which incubate and house interdisciplinary networks of BAME creative practitioners, and in doing so can facilitate knowledge exchange, support innovation, nurture talent and platform creativity. In short, that offer everything that the regeneration process and creative hubs have promised to everyone, but which seem to have been disproportionately delivered to white middle-class creative workers, rather than those from ethnic minorities.

However while the creation of BAME creative spaces in an urban setting may seem desirable, the construction of minority enclaves with 'hard borders' that prevent the emergence of syncretic cultural forms or preclude a creative interface with 'white' populations and industrial sectors seems highly problematic, even if it were attainable, which is doubtful. It would seem predicated on a fixed essentialised impermeable conception of racial difference and an unproblematised notion of 'whiteness' that is reductive and ahistorical and which needs to be deconstructed with the same critical acuity that Stuart Hall applied to the challenging naïve conceptions of an essential black subject (Hall 1996).

What might be more useful is an acknowledgment of the dialogic relation between BAME and white creative spaces and industrial networks, one that sees both as socially and industrially-produced constructs rather than organic or essential formations, while at the same time acknowledging the very real social and economic power those formations exert in an industrial urban setting. This understanding in turn opens up space for interaction and exchange between those different cultural spaces from a position of relative equity. In this framing BAME independent creative sectors could and should occupy real physical space in regenerated cities, in the form of industrial networks, creative hubs and vibrant creative multicologies.

CHAPTER 4

MAPPING THE MOMENT

4.1 Introduction

My intention in the previous chapters has been to explore how the creative industries produce workers as racialised subjects, and how those processes risk being spatially re-encoded in the creative industries-driven regeneration of East London. I have done this by examining case studies of individual BAME creative workers from a number of different sectors and looking at how their individual economic and aesthetic approaches can provide strategies for negotiating and mitigating these forms of spatial and cultural exclusion. In this chapter it is my intention to sum up some of the main points from the previous chapters and offer a broad strategic overview.

4.2 Conceptual shifts

Stuart Hall's work critiquing 'essentialised' notions of cultural identity (1998) was analytically and politically necessary in that it opened up space for a more dialogic, discursive notion of a black identity as culturally and historically constructed rather than innate. However, it may also have had potentially problematic implications for black political agency, especially when confronted with forms of 'whiteness' that have not been subject to the same processes of critical interrogation (Guess, 2006). In this context, Saha's (2017) political economy-based conception of how race is produced through economic forms of regulation in a creative industries context, offers up a useful way of understanding 'race' as constituted by industrial, rather than cultural or genetic processes of differentiation. An acknowledgment of these processes produces an understanding of race in a creative production context that is dialogic and constructed but also deeply rooted in material and industrial processes. I would argue that these processes have also become increasingly

spatialised in an urban setting and given that they are constituted on an industrial and spatialised plane, they must also be understood in that dimension. Contained in this assertion is an awareness that those industrial, racialised dynamics have become manifest in East London's increasingly mono-ethnic creative hubs. The construction of affectively inclusive creative hubs is one strategy for contesting this process. This entails an acknowledgement of how individual creative producers are themselves produced by physical urban relations and the spatialised affect that they embody. These affective relations can be both a creative resource that can be drawn on in the production process, and also something that delimits and constrains forms of creative practice.

4.3 The re-racialisation of 'hybridity'

> The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (Hall 1990, p. 235).

In this context Hall and Bhabha's conceptualisation of cultural hybridity (Bhabha 2004, Hall 1994), despite its sometimes problematic and contested status (Cohen 2003), remains a useful concept in understanding the emergence of new cultural forms in an urban context. As Kraidy says of the concept, there is no 'credible substitute [for hybridity] to characterize the dual forces of globalization and localization, cohesion and dispersal, disjuncture and mixture, that capture transnational and transcultural dialectics' (Kraidy 2002, p. 332).

In this sense hybridity retains its analytical centrality in understanding how creative forms emerge out of the collision and syncretic fusion of different cultural traditions and positions in the urban terrain of East London. However, implicit in this understanding is an awareness that the components of these hybridised cultures can be imbued with differing amounts of cultural capital, and that this unequal power relation can be re-inscribed in the creative offspring of these aesthetic liaisons.

Keith (2005) describes cultural quarters in metropolises as ambivalent 'contact zones', in which existing cultural forms converge to produce hybrid syncretic creative practices.

According to Keith these emergent cultural forms can be emancipatory and radical, but they can also sometimes 'reinforce ossified notions of cultural form, drained of political charge and freighted with conservative forms of ostensibly discrete ethnicities.' (Keith 2005, p. 117). I would agree with Keith that these processes of cultural hybridisation can be a highly ambivalent process. While novel hybrid cultural forms can emerge out of these urban 'contact zones' and 'creative hubs' these processes of cultural miscegenation are still imbricated into unequal and racialised power structures. Thus, hybrid cultural forms, like hybrid people themselves, can become subsumed in a process of semantic (rather than genetic) 'hypodescent'[87] that conflates them with other 'non-white' cultural practices and subjects them to racialised forms of fetishisation, exclusion and expropriation. This is the process Saha is describing when he refers to the 'ideological dimension of commodification that transforms the potentially disruptive hybrid entity into absolute racial difference for the purpose of sustaining racial hierarchies and affirming the status quo' (Saha 2009, p. 19).

In this way Hybrid creative practices (like Tessa McWatt's mobile multiracial imagination) may seek a form of hypermobility, unshackled by essentialised notions of racial identity, but they often become weighed down by industrial processes that attempt to fix them, regardless of their relative mobility, privilege and racial indeterminacy, as 'other' cultural forms that must be 'flat-packed' for industrial consumption. History has shown that Stuart Hall's (1992) de-essentialising critique and celebration of hybridity was not, as Cohen (2003) suggested, a tool that could enable socio-economic mobility on the part of those who were produced by those processes. Instead the hybrid 'multicultural creative class' (Cohen 2003) has also been rendered relatively immobile by the delimiting and racialising operations of the creative industries (described by Saha, 2017). In this way, despite it its potential to disrupt boundaries and defy normative classification, the cultural hybrid has been re-racialised, and subsumed into the 'other' within the political economy of the creative industries.

4.4 Re-centring the margins in the creative city

In his work Keith talks about racial ghettoes in urban settings as the space through which the relation of race to urban space becomes analytically 'visible' (Keith 2005, p. 17) He does not,

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[87] In societies that regard some 'races' as dominant or superior and others as subordinate or inferior, 'hypodescent' refers to process by which the dominant culture automatically assigns children of mixed heritage to the subordinate racial grouping.

however, extend his analysis to assess the status of the more figurative 'cultural ghettos' that BAME creative workers sometimes inhabit. As Malik (2008) suggests, BAME creative workers were relocated out of the multicultural ghettos they inhabited in the early 1990s but they were clearly not 'rehoused' into the mainstream as the arts government funders and national broadcasters claimed they would be. At the risk of over-extending this housing metaphor, it seems fair to say those workers would now seem to need new 'accommodation' within the regenerated city. Not in the form of exclusive 'gated' enclaves of the kind that exist in more privileged communities, but rather in cultural production hubs that are made accessible through extended civic networks, participatory processes and training initiatives, and which are connected to a national and transnational 'energy supply grid' in the form of funding, production and distribution networks.

4.5 Temporal shifts

The focus of this study has been the spatial manifestations of cultural difference, and industrial creative production in an urban context. However, these processes cannot be understood without a temporal analysis as well as a spatial one. In this way the historical contest between the competing discourses of 'multiculturalism' and 'diversity' (Malik 2008) can, over time, be viewed as having a structuring effect on the formation of creative hubs and urban space. It should also be acknowledged that, from a temporal point of view, minority cultural enterprises may play different roles at different moments in the shaping of urban environments. The acid jazz and Asian alternative music scene was intimately entwined with the emergence of Shoreditch's night-time cultural economy through the Blue Note night club in the 1990s. Equally, the grime music scene, as it emerged out of the estates of Mile End and Bow at the beginning of the millennium, played a significant role in the formation of East London's cultural habitus, and street artists are a potent constituent in the creative mix that is currently transforming Hackney wick. However, these cultural forms, while they might be initially enabling and innovative, can also act to open up these urban spaces to neoliberal process of cultural and economic exploitation. While it would be ungenerous to characterise the innovative creative practitioners who pioneered these forms of symbolic production as somehow responsible for later processes of gentrification, it would also be naive to disavow the often-unwitting role they played in softening up the urban terrain for property developers.

In many ways these artist and cultural forms were responsible for reconfiguring and redefining the cultural and economic value of the physical spaces that they occupied in East London and imbuing them with a locational capital that could be monetised through the regeneration process. In this sense there is clearly a temporal and sequential dimension to the gentrification and regeneration process wherein ethnic minority producers can operate initially as innovators, but then later as excluded subjects who become uncoupled from the cultural forms they conceived and expelled from the physical spaces they helped shape. These processes are not new. As Hancock (2013) explores with regards to the Lindy hop, there is a long history of minorities innovating and initiating cultural forms that are then commercialised and repackaged for mass consumption. In this way, from the blues came Rock and Roll, from the Cake Walk came the Charleston, and in the current commercial pop of Lilly Allen and Ed Sheeran, traces of an earlier grime antecedents are still faintly audible. As Hesmondhalgh (2007), asserts, the creative industries attempt to manage risk by resorting to recognised genres and recognisable stars. The appropriation of novel cultural forms, that have proved their audience appeal in the minority cultural sectors, is also a well-worn and successful strategy in the creative sectors for managing the risk of the new. However this awareness should be extended to the temporal and spatial to understand how these processes can operate over time in an urban setting, and entail the transformation of physical space and the expulsion of embodied populations of creative workers, and their replacement by creative producers from very different racial, class and cultural backgrounds.

4.6 'Creativity' as a driver of neoliberal exploitation

In my film *Multicology* (2018) Saha states that he is optimistic about radical forms of BAME cultural practice bubbling up through and around more exclusionary forms of industrial practice. Like Keith he sees the city and the creative industries as simultaneously enabling and delimiting. However, I would argue that forms of radical collectivised BAME creative practice tend to be precisely the ones that are most marginalised within commercial forms of industrial production (and the historic dismantling of the black independent film sector and the stringent regulation of the grime scene seem to bear this out). Given it is primarily the commercial creative industries that are powering the physical transformation of East London, vernacular subcultural forms of BAME cultural practice such as the grime scene and street art risk becoming even more marginal in the regenerated East End. Development corporations

consciously deploy 'creativity' as an instrument for the commercialised exploitation of urban space, however, while their promotional videos[88] might trumpet their multicultural and creative credentials these processes risk erasing less commercial creative communities.

4.7 Inclusion vs transformation

The dominant conception of 'creative diversity' in the regeneration process is predicated on notions of individualised BAME inclusion in majority white institutions and creative networks. This operates to spatialise the discourse of creative diversity that replaced multiculturalism as the dominant institutional strategy for the management of cultural difference in the broadcasting sector in the early nineteen nineties. It was this process, so effectively explored by Sarita Malik (2008, 2015), that effectively dismantled collective forms of BAME cultural production in that industry, and which in an urban regeneration context might also preclude the emergence of spatialised BAME creative hubs and multicultural ecologies. This 'diversity' paradigm has dominated the creative sectors over the last two decades and has demonstrably failed to deliver the forms of BAME representation that it promised. It is this consideration that points to the need for the creative 'multicologies' discussed in chapter 3.

In some ways this critical approach to diversity can be seen as mirroring current debates around decolonisation in a cultural and educational context. In this framing, truly radical strategies should not simply work toward the racialised subject being included in Eurocentric knowledge hierarchies, but actually operate to transform those structures and the hegemonic assumptions that underpin them (Bhambra, Gebrial, Nişancıoğlu 2018).

4.8 Reconfiguring the multicultural precariat

In the current context there is a particular need to contest the dominant conception of BAME practice as inherently economically risky, and the industries' tendency to construct ethnic

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[88] The highly contested Fish Island development in Hackney Wick, which demolished a Victorian building housing a community of artists to make way for luxury flats and 'artists studios' is a prime example of this
https://www.fishislandvillage.co.uk/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwnfLVBRCxARIsAPvl82FDk_kBU8uZbXvYZWVwi7hop-rlnCCBIN6Zsu62kGKUBsg6caYEzu0aAo08EALw_wcB

minority creative production sectors as necessarily decollectivised and precarious. This conception constrains all forms of creative labour, but, consciously or unconsciously, it can be used to dismantle collective BAME cultural movements that might otherwise be seen as threatening or disruptive. More broadly this analysis demonstrates the need to understand how current structures of industrial production inevitably produce an insecure and atomised creative labour force, including a decollectivised 'precariat of colour,' that can be more easily exploited and managed by the commercial creative industries.

The individuated, entrepreneurial model of creative enterprise celebrated under neoliberalism (de Peuter 2014) is in noted contrast to forms of organised labour from a previous industrial moment. As de Peuter suggests, the 'self-exploiting' creative worker has now become an ideal that neatly conforms to the needs of post-industrial capital.

> The thrust of the role model proposition is that priorities of post-Fordist, neoliberal capitalism are exemplified by the conditions and propensities of those in nonstandard employment navigating the liquid labour markets of the vaunted 'creative economy': habituated to self-reliance; accepting a high level of risk; allergic to bureaucracy; juggling multiple short-term 'projects'; blurring the boundaries of work and non-work time; preternaturally adaptable; striving to be innovative and unique; producing monetary value from knowledge, symbols, or other-wise intangible resources; carefully branding the self; personally funding perpetual education upgrades; vigorously managing social networks within highly informal labour markets; performing work without a guarantee of compensation; assuming responsibility for maintaining a steady flow of paid work and, hence, on a job search without end; and willingness to put the passion for the work ahead of the size of the pay (de Peuter 2014, p. 2).

As de Peuter suggests, the assumption that this configuration of creative labour is an automatic by-product of post-Fordist knowledge-based economies requires both greater critical interrogation, and also the emergence of political movements that can challenge it. For him this idealised and instrumental conception of the creative worker 'provides an insufficient perspective on labour and the so-called creative economy to the extent that it occludes the capacity to contest among the workforces it represents. Glossing over countervailing possibilities is potentially debilitating politically' (de Peuter 2014, p. 3).

In this context, and in accord with de Peuter's analysis, the current precarious and de-collectivised nature of cultural labour seems to invite new forms of economic, social and

political organisation. Multicultural creative spaces where creative practitioners can organise, collaborate, network and co-create are one possible form this might take. Rather than a strategy of 'diversity' and individual 'inclusion', the creation of these multicultural creative ecologies or 'multicologies' offers the potential for semi-autonomous creative production, the collectivisation of the post-industrial multicultural 'creative class' and the development of innovative syncretic cultural forms.

4.9 Linking the local to the global

The concretisation of racialised inequality and cultural gentrification in East London continues apace, however ironically this coincides with a moment when the globalisation of markets means the managerial discourses, economic forces and demographic process that produced this effect are seemingly coming into crisis. The predominantly white and middle-class composition of East London's creative sectors seems increasingly at odds, not only with East London's extremely mixed residential population, but also with the global population who are now configuring international markets and vocally critiquing cultural products that fail to acknowledge their positionalities. This can be seen in the international responses (Rose 2017), to Hollywood feature films such as *Gods of Egypt* (2016), *Ghost in The Shell* (2017) *The Great Wall* (2016) and *Mulan* (2020) and the advertising campaigns for Pepsi and Dove cited in the Jreena Green case study. This critical moment of transition is producing a disjuncture between the local and the global when it comes to the creative industries, and the sites of tension are cosmopolitan cities such as London, especially East London, where creative hubs are increasingly being concentrated. At the same time that groups previously designated as 'minority/BAME' are becoming acknowledged as the global majority sites of national cultural production would seem to be becoming more exclusionary and monoethnic. However, as demonstrated by the Jreena Green case study, this crisis might also facilitate opportunities for BAME producers. New roles seem to be emerging in the commercial sector for cultural mediators. Equally, online aggregators pursuing a 'long-tail'[89] model of global distribution are able to cater to niche audiences in a way broadcasters were not previously incentivised to. This model is arguably activating novel forms of production and distribution

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[89] Long tail marketing refers to the strategy of targeting a large number of niche markets which, while individually small, in aggregate and over time, can constitute a substantial consumer base.

and creates openings for local BAME producers in an international context. It also suggests the possibility of local East London based creative consortiums operating as conduits between the hyperlocal and the global. In this framing, East London based BAME symbol producers can potentially reach beyond increasingly exclusionary national production sectors to connect with emerging globalised distribution and funding networks. One recent convergence between London based BAME production networks and global distribution platforms is the record-breaking sale of the independent feature film *Been So Long* (2018), produced by Sankofa Productions alumna Nadine Marsh Edwards, for Netflix (Wiseman 2017). Another is *The Hard Stop* (2015), a feature length documentary about the police shooting of Mark Duggan that the director George Amponsah could not sell to Channel 4 or the BBC but which was eventually acquired by Netflix and subsequently nominated for a BAFTA. Earlier precedents include the international online distribution of underground grime music videos that, without the involvement of record labels, managed to access global audiences at a time when grime artists were physically prohibited from performing in London's live venues.

4.10 City governance

As indicated by the Hackney Council *Hackney Live* web platform explored in the Kole Onile-ere case study (00.40.38 in *Multicology?*), local government can make effective interventions to develop racially inclusive media-based regeneration strategies. However, while Hackney council may be a positive exemplar, it remains less clear how well the London Mayor Sadiq Khan and his administration understands the risks of exclusion that may accompany some of their regeneration strategies. This seems particularly the case with regards to the highly controversial Fish Island regeneration project[90] cited earlier which the Mayor supported against considerable local opposition, and which entailed the demolition of a Victorian building housing an existing artist community.

London's Creative Industries Working Paper (Rocks, 2017) produced by the Mayor's office does however acknowledge the growing significance of the creative industries to London's

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[90] https://www.timeout.com/london/blog/hackney-wick-artists-are-protesting-to-save-their-studios-081216

economy. It cites how their contribution to London's total GVA[91] rose from 10.5% of total GVA in 2009, to 11.1% in 2015, and also that London's contribution constituted just under half (47.4 %) of the creative industries added to the UK's GVA as a whole.

The report also points out that the estimated 882,900 jobs in the creative economy in London, accounted for 16.9% of employment in the capital, compared to just 7.9% of jobs in the rest of the UK. The creative industries alone accounted for 622,600 or 11.9% of jobs in London, 7.0 percentage points higher than the employment share in the rest of the UK (4.9%).

These figures clearly demonstrate the importance of the creative industries to London's economy. The Mayor's office's awareness of this significance is demonstrated by their championing the creation of 'creative enterprise zones'.[92] These creative clusters will (according to the report) 'provide long-term affordable workspace for artists and creative businesses, support for start-ups, and will unlock new jobs and training for local people.' (Rocks, 2017, p. 1).

In response to the Mayor's cultural strategy the independent cross-party London Assembly Regeneration Committee produced a review document entitled *Creative Tensions* (2017). Significantly this review reflects an acknowledgment of two factors. Firstly, the centrality of the creative industries to economic growth in the capital (something that is not entirely surprising given the broadening awareness of this nationally and locally) and secondly the growing acknowledgment that, despite their economic significance, these industries can also act to re-entrench forms of social inequality. This awareness has taken some time to insert itself into the minds of city planners previously in the thrall of Richard Florida's early writing (work that Florida himself renounced in his recent book *The New Urban Crisis*, 2017). In this report the cross party regeneration committee, composed of MPs from the different major parties, expressed their support for the piloting of Hackney Wick (home to the biggest concentration of artists in Europe) as a 'creative enterprise zone' but recommended the mayor's office mitigate the demolition of Vittoria Wharf and Fish Island's cultural infrastructure (cited earlier). It also supported the provision of affordable creative workspaces.

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[91] GVA measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry or sector. It represents the value added generated from activity in the economy and is an important measure for assessing the impact and value of any industry.

[92] https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/creative-enterprise-zones_prospectus-2017.pdf

The *Creative Tensions* report (2017) demonstrates a growing understanding of the links between creative industries regeneration and the gentrification process, an understanding that is not reductively predicated on costs of residential property but on questions of cultural and industrial exclusion as well. However, this growing awareness needs to be extended to incorporate the issues around the racial exclusion evidenced by the Creative Industries Federation and Creative Skillset reports I cite in chapter 1.

While Hackney Wick has been designated as a 'creative enterprise zone' with a high number of resident artists, the Hackney Council ward profile, based on information culled from the 2011 National Census, (Hackney Council 2018) also shows that over 50% of Hackney Wick's residents are 'non-white', with black people making up the majority of that group. This constitutes very substantial percentage of the local population, and it remains to be seen how far they will be included in the new creative zone. Despite its recent creative-zone designation, Hackney Wick's highly contentious Fish Island development demonstrates the degree to which developers' interests can sometimes trump those of the local community (Hackney Citizen 2017), hence ongoing attention needs to be given to how patterns of racial inequality are reproduced or contested within in these dedicated creative zones.

4.11 Ongoing industry reporting

It should be noted that one recent industry report does indicate much improved rates of BAME employment in the creative sectors. A 2017 Creative Industries Federation report shows the number of people from BAME backgrounds in the creative industries increased by 14.9% between 2015 and 2016, an improvement two and a half times greater than that of the UK workforce. It also shows BAME employees now make up 12.6% of the creative industries workforce and representation has improved by 40% in film and television, and almost 50% in design and fashion (Creative Industries Federation 2017).

However, while that report suggest improvement it appears very much at odds with the 2017 Work Foundation skills audit of the UK film and screen industries (Carey *et al* 2017). Commissioned by the British Film Institute the report shows that only 3% of the film sector's production workforce is from a BAME background. Given the creative industries' London

weighting and the city's ethnic makeup, that figure should be closer to 18%.

Equally Directors UK followed up their 2015 report (cited in chapter 1) with another published in 2018. This showed that between 2013 and 2016, just 2.22% of UK television programmes were made by BAME directors. This is only fractionally more than in their 2015 report and certainly does not show the anything resembling the rise that the Creative Industries Federation report suggests. This very dramatic inconsistency requires further research to assess the contradictory outcomes and how they might have been produced by differing research methodologies.

4.12 Building 'multicologies'

With regards to the 'regeneration process' my research suggests the benefit of conceptualising BAME creative sectors in the way scholars of the creative industries such as Howkins (2010) and Holden (2015) viewed other sectors of the creative economy. They saw city-based creative networks as spatially concentrated ecologies composed of interdependent sectors that could support each other and generate innovation and growth over time.

Over the last two decades, funding initiatives guided by principles of 'diversity' rather than the acknowledgment of 'difference' (Malik 2008) have been wary of creating BAME 'cultural ghettoes' and have therefore shied away from supporting concentrated centres of BAME creative production. The logic behind this might have been, in a previous moment, that consigning 'minority' cultural producers to these spatialised 'ghettoes' would further marginalise and devalue both them and their cultural practices. However, in the context of creative industries that are increasingly spatialised in an urban setting the absence of BAME creative hubs and networks means that regeneration process can unwittingly become a technology of racialised exclusion. The creation of dedicated BAME cultural spaces and creative networks may appear problematic in that it reasserts contested and essentialised forms of racial governance and may simply reproduce the sense of containment and constraint that a previous generation of practitioners felt the desire to escape. However, in the current context there seem to be marked benefits to reconstituting, at least temporarily, a 'BAME creative sector', not just on the level of 'textual representation' but on the level of

physical space and industrial processes, and through the construction of spatially concentrated BAME creative hubs or what I term 'multicologies'.

However, at the same time as advocating for BAME cultural hubs ('Multicologies') it is worth referring back to the work of Sharon Zukin that I cite in my literature review. In her 2010 work *Naked City* she describes the 'black gentrification' of Harlem, which has seen members of the black middle class, along with white gentrifiers, return to and revive this historic neighbourhood and excavate its 'black cultural capital'. While this process has reconstituted this area of the city as a focus for black cultural production, or what Zukin calls a site of 'new urban cosmopolitanism' (2010 p68), it has also more problematically displaced working-class black residents from the neighbourhood

For this reason, it is critical that any emphasis on the construction of 'Multicologies' in an East London context actively engage with issues around class-based forms of exclusion, and that strategies are developed to construct entrance routes into the creative industries for members of local working-class BAME communities. This is necessary to ensure that otherwise positive processes of racial inclusion in the creative sectors do not simply end up facilitating the emergence of a 'multicultural creative elite'.

4.13 Seeding biodiversity into the creative ecology

I would argue that, beyond simply initiating production and training schemes, national and local government (in partnership with commercial industry and community organizations) need to intervene to build diversity into the physical structure of the regeneration process. A non-interventionist neoliberal model of cultural enterprise, of the kind promoted under New Labour and consecutive conservative governments, can simply act to reproduce and re-entrench structures of exclusion and inequality. An integrated and coordinated approach to creative industries-based regeneration, founded on principles of social justice and civic cohesion, as well those of commercial gain has proved its value in cities like Sheffield (Sheffield City Council 2013). Concentrating complementary creative industries in spatial proximity to each other can act to facilitate creative innovation, activate cross-sectoral collaboration, and incubate novel cultural forms and commodities. However, if this strategy is to be applied in East London it has to be as part of a structured process that incorporates

existing communities rather than entrenching spatialised forms of exclusion and social stratification. One analogy might be that of an 'artificial reef', whereby a prefabricated infrastructure is put in place that provides a habitus for an organic ecology of semi-autonomous life forms. However, in a regeneration context these structures need to be seeded with a plurality of diverse organisations to ensure true cultural 'biodiversity'. In addition, there needs to be a cultural and discursive shift within the creative sector to acknowledge the fact that ignoring the economic and creative benefits of diversity in a context of urban demographic change and the globalization of markets constitutes a greater risk than embracing it. The argument also needs to go beyond the purely commercial, to re-engage with ideas of social justice, cultural activism and antiracism when it comes to the way creativity operates to configure urban space.

4.14 Higher Education Partnerships

Universities as incubators for technological innovation, creative practice, and cultural analysis, can interface with local communities to facilitate inclusive regeneration processes. The University of East London, in particular, is well situated to forge effective partnerships between research centres, local creative industries sectors, local government, and East London's BAME communities. The university can aggregate relevant research, map local creative industries sectors, and model urban regeneration strategies. These forms of research and partnership have the potential to impact on government policy and ensure that the benefits of regeneration are more equally distributed among East London's BAME communities. These interventions might possibly be modelled on existing enterprises such as the UEL Knowledge Dock [93] where the Rix Research and Media centre is currently based. However, rather than a central hub with closely proximitous satellite hub (the model for how the Knowledge Dock now operates in relationship to the University of East London), a more dispersed network of satellite hubs located in a number of different cultural sectors and communities could possibly be developed. Using this model, greater UEL involvement with the Silver Building[94] creative industries-managed workspace development in E16 might be a useful strategy to support the emergence of multicultural creative ecologies.

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[93] https://www.uel.ac.uk/connect/knowledge-dock
[94] http://thesilverbuilding.com

However, universities, as the neoliberal commercialised entities they are fast becoming, can also potentially reproduce the type of regeneration strategies that have proved problematic when it comes to racial exclusion. The University of the Arts, for instance, have become implicated in a process of racialised social cleansing through the expulsion of the Columbian community markets from the Elephant and Castle shopping mall that they are currently redeveloping (James 2018). The University of East London has also been interpolated into these types of problematic regeneration processes through its involvement with the Olympic Legacy Organisation who, despite a grass roots campaign, recently displaced an informal artist community in Hackney Wick and demolished the Victorian warehouse where they were based (Wills and Moore 2018).

As explored earlier, Hackney council are initiating crucial models of engagement and production through 'Hackney Live'[95]. This offers the possibility of a partnership between Hackney Council, and UEL's school of Arts and Digital Industries to produce content and develop online platforms designed to enable access into the media industries for under-represented groups. The participation of MP Chi Onwurah (Shadow Minister for the Digital Industries) in *Multicology?* (2018) also suggests a possible link between the University of East London and a future Labour administration if they are elected.

There is a logic for arguing that the University of East London should be even more invested in the forms of intervention I describe than most other HE institutions. This is due firstly to its location in East London (ground zero for these processes of gentrification and regeneration) and secondly because it has one of the highest percentages of BAME students of any UK university (71%). These students are of course not exclusively concentrated in the school of Arts and Digital Industries but a large number of them are and, as the industry reports I cite in Chapter 1 indicate, when they graduate, they will be entering industries where employment for BAME creatives is scarce. This factor alone might make the case for increased University of East London involvement in economic sectors in order to ensure greater levels of post graduate success and employment. Academics based at the University of East London may also be well positioned to produce theoretical work that contextualises and augments the BAME cultural production sectors. Academic 'defenders' (such as Stuart Hall, Kobena Mercer and Coco Fusco) were highly significant in supporting and theoretically

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[95] http://hackneylive.co.uk

contextualising the work of the black independent film sector of the 1990s and academics can still play an important role in revising the way cultural value is attributed to cultural texts and sectors in the cultural economy. As I have suggested, scholarly work by creative practitioners, of the kind produced by Dominic Hingorani (2018) about his own theatre practice for instance, often serves to further authorise and cement the cultural value of their work. This academic writing may circulate primarily in a higher education context, but it can also carry cultural capital in the creative economy more broadly, and also within a political and policy context. Universities can also go beyond defending creative practice to look at the way academic theory can actually interface with the creative process. An interesting example of this is Stuart Hall's collaboration with Isaac Julien on the art film installation piece *Playtime* (2016) that I cite in chapter 2. This productive collaboration could operate as a useful model for a more developed dialogic interaction between academic work and creative practice. This relationship could be incubated in a university setting but could also extend into broader creative partnerships with arts organisations and other creative industries sectors.

4.15 Chapter conclusion

BAME representation in key sectors of the creative industries has substantially decreased over the last decade. In this context East London's growing number of creative industries hubs, run the risk of re-inscribing existing patterns of racial exclusion onto the urban topography. This process represents an extension of broader cultural and industrial shifts that have seen independent black and Asian creative sectors dismantled by the dual effects of institutional diversity initiatives, and the theoretical deconstruction of an essentialised notion of a black identity. This 'de-essentialising' critique (pioneered by cultural theorist Stuart Hall) was crucially important in challenging simplistic notions of cultural identity as fixed or innate. However, when combined with institutional resistance, a shift to a post-industrial knowledge-based economy and the ascension of neoliberal economic policies, it may have had problematic implications for BAME creative agency. Capital-driven regeneration and the commodification of cultural products have become structuring forces in cosmopolitan urban locales such as East London. In this context, minority cultural products and the BAME creatives who produce them are often designated as economically 'risky' and become spatially 'racialised' and constrained within the cultural and industrial processes that are shaping urban space.

However, I would suggest that this rationalising discourse for the management of BAME cultural production represents an increasingly redundant paradigm inherited from a previous pre-globalization moment. New technologies of production and distribution, coupled with demographic shifts and the effects of globalisation, mean these forms of economic and corporate bias, while always illegitimate from a social justice or antiracist perspective, are now becoming increasingly economically risky in themselves. This is producing a disjuncture between entrenched forms of economic and cultural exclusion in the creative sectors and an emerging disruption of those regulatory processes. This dynamic is being played out on a local level in East London where shifting patterns of production and consumption, combined with rapid demographic change, is producing tensions between BAME cultural practices and hegemonic, predominantly white and middle-class controlled forms of industrial cultural production. In this sense, we are entering a moment of crisis and transition in which forms of BAME creative practice become increasingly significant in a global context, while being simultaneously suppressed and marginalised on a local and national level. In some ways, I would argue, this process mirrors the more general re-emergence of nationalist political movements at a time of increasing globalisation. In this sense East London constitutes an important spatial conjuncture and site of struggle where these conflicting forces intersect.

It is in this urban-contact zone, where hyperlocal, national and global processes of creative production converge, that novel multicultural creative ecologies (or 'multicologies') can potentially emerge to contest forms of racialised exclusion and neoliberal marketisation in the creative sectors. These networks, constituted out of strategic partnerships between different sub-sectors within the creative industries, BAME communities, higher education institutions, local government and private companies, have the potential to connect localised forms of creative production to emerging global markets and bypass exclusionary national creative industries sectors. The case studies I have examined in this research provide useful strategic models for how these processes might operate.

The previous chapters have been intended to offer up both conceptual and practical strategies for engaging with forms of spatialised and racialised exclusion in the creative-industries regeneration process. However, they constitute only an initial stage in an ongoing theoretical and strategic approach. Hence these words should not be seen as some kind of conclusion but rather as a punctuation, to be followed by further practical and conceptual work that combines interdisciplinary research, creative practice and inter-institutional collaboration to

produce more racially inclusive forms of creative industries-based regeneration in East London.

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Orson Nava 2019

18 February 2016

Dear Orson

Project Title:	**Eastern Promise? Race and Innovation in the Creative Industries Regeneration of East London**
Principal Investigator:	**Dr David Chapman**
Researcher:	**Orson Nava**
Reference Number:	**UREC 1516 18**

I am writing to confirm the outcome of your application to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), which was considered by UREC **on Wednesday 18th November 2015.**

The decision made by members of the Committee is **Approved**. The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation. Your study has received ethical approval from the date of this letter.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with your research project, this must be reported immediately to UREC. A Notification of Amendment form should be submitted for approval, accompanied by any additional or amended documents: http://www.uel.ac.uk/wwwmedia/schools/graduate/documents/Notification-of-Amendment-to-Approved-Ethics-App-150115.doc

Any adverse events that occur in connection with this research project must be reported immediately to UREC.

Approved Research Site

I am pleased to confirm that the approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research Site	Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator
Locations in East London to be agreed with participants	Dr David Chapman

Approved Documents

The final list of documents reviewed and approved by the Committee is as follows:

Document	Version	Date
UREC application form	2.0	21 January 2016
Participant information sheet	3.0	18 February 2016
Participant information sheet - parents	2.0	18 February 2016
Consent form - parents	1.0	09 February 2016
Participant consent/release form	2.0	21 January 2016
Interview questions	2.0	21 January 2016

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Practice in Research is adhered to.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research study is conducted in compliance with the consent given by the ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of this project.

Yours sincerely,

Rosalind Eccles
University Research Ethics Committee (UREC)
UREC Servicing Officer
Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

University of East London

Dear Orson

Application ID: ETH1920-0024

Original application ID: UREC 1516 18

Project title: Race, Innovation and Inequality in the Creative Industries-Driven Regeneration of East London

Lead researcher: Mr Orson Nava

Your application to Arts and Creative Industries School Research Ethics Committee was considered on the 26th of September 2019.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 2 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the secretary for the Arts and Creative Industries School Research Ethics Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research project you must complete 'An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application'.

Approval is given on the understanding that the UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics is adhered to.☐☐

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research project should be reported using the University's form for Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction.

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Research Ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project

Yours sincerely

Fernanda Silva

Research,

Research Degrees Ethics Sub-Committee