Small Axe and the big tree of 2020

Roshi Naidoo

Black stories matter - in mainstream history and in primetime broadcasting

It was the sense of time - intense shots with the camera refusing to pan away; stretched silences interrupted only by repressed sobs; music played on repeat in the foreground. It felt as though there was time to contemplate things that everyday bare survival ill afforded. The rage, frustration and bafflement at the wounds inflicted by the racist state; hard-to-reach internal, visceral pain; subtle emotions that require an expansiveness to unpack and expose to the light of day. This was big picture historical narrative, but told through stories of interpersonal relationships, conflicted identities and individual agency - anger and suffering existing alongside a sense of exuberance and presence in the moment. Here, as in life, joy and pain were given equal billing.

In one sense this is simply the essence of good filmmaking, and Steve McQueen in his *Small Axe* season of films is obviously not the first director to gift these spaces to black audiences. Comparable images that first spring to mind are from feature films, such as the long, languid shots in Isaac Julien's *Young Soul Rebels* (1991), and this is not surprising given the cinematic feel of these small screen offerings. But make no mistake: this is television - the medium which developed in tandem with post-war migration from Britain's former colonies in the Caribbean and elsewhere, and which bore witness to, and shaped, changing attitudes to that presence. It is the fact that this *is* television which has made *Small Axe* an event. In those last weeks of 2020 the five films - *Mangrove*; *Lovers Rock*; *Red, White and Blue*; *Alex Wheatle*; and *Education* - created a rare collective viewing experience that resonated with real-

DOI: 10.3898/SOUN.77.01.2021

world events and shifts in sensibilities. Some of this experience has been easier to reflect on through a socio-political lens, while other aspects have touched a more abstract nerve, but taken together they created a weighted moment, as a perfect storm made these broadcasts more than just a series of interesting films on a 'hidden' (ignored) part of British history. So, what happened?

To answer that I want to focus on the notion of time. Time in the sense I have just described - giving time, voice and attention to people and communities robbed of the luxury of contemplating all the baggage from these experiences. Also, time in relation to historical time and memory, and the conversations that these films have created between deep history, recent history and now, especially between generations as they ask 'what has actually changed and how do we measure progress?' Can it be tracked on an upward trajectory line; is it more like a sine curve; or perhaps it is best represented by the infinity symbol, with people endlessly fighting the same forces in each of its new historical iterations? But I start with what might at first seem like quite a banal way of thinking about time, which is in relation to the scheduling of *Small Axe*.

Timing is everything

'Come quick there's a black person on the telly!' was a familiar cry in households from the 1950s up until probably the 1980s, and a phenomenon well remembered by those who had to drop everything to rush in and squint at the box, usually while being hushed as they talked excitedly about who it was, what else they'd been in, and sometimes who knew someone that knew them. Of course, to do this in 2020 would be utterly futile as this is no longer big news, but in another sense, we are still frozen in that moment. This is because, whereas it might not be exciting to see a black person on *EastEnders* or an advert for online bingo, stories of black activism, depictions of routine police brutality, or the recreation of a blues party, still warrant the twenty-first century equivalent of shouting upstairs to get everyone around the TV.

And shout they did. On Twitter and other social media, and through more prosaic word-of-mouth means, *Small Axe* became appointment viewing. Being broadcast on Sunday night at 9 o'clock, a slot usually reserved for broad-appeal drama of the unthreatening variety, already made this noteworthy - in the history of television, 'minority' programming has rarely been considered peak-time fare.[1] And *Small Axe* was preceded in the schedules by another piece of appointment viewing,

His Dark Materials, an adaptation of the Philip Pullman novels - a drama in itself noteworthy for its actual diverse casting, as opposed to the slightly disappointing sort that leaves the audience saying: 'yes, but he had to be the side-kick rather than the main protagonist'; or 'yes, but the black woman is simply there to provide wisdom, guidance and salvation to the white heroine rather than be a character in her own right'.[2]

Many of us have been used to a degree of struggle in seeking out black British cinema and television - hours spent in university libraries watching slightly worn, jumpy, videos of films such as Menelik Shabazz's *Burning an Illusion* (1981) and Horace Ové's *Pressure* (1976); skipping exhaustedly between independent cinemas during their crowded Black History Month season; or staying up late to watch things on the new Channel 4 in the 1980s. Limited access to titles read about in publications such as Kobena Mercer's influential edited collection, *Black Film British Cinema* (1988), gave them a hallowed status, and seeking them out became a noble quest.[3]

But am I sounding like someone out of touch in suggesting that this novelty of accessibility was important? After all, *Small Axe* was birthed into a world where there is significant, popular, high-quality television made by creative talents from diverse backgrounds, and McQueen himself is a high profile Oscar-winner, rather than an underground, unknown director. And surely in these days of streaming and niche audiences there is no such thing as 'appointment viewing'? - this is not the *Play for Today*.

To understand why its place in the TV schedule was so important you have to rewind several decades to the work of activists and professionals inside and outside the places where the politics of race and representation was being negotiated. Here you will find a recurring conversation between those calling for radical change, and those whose job it was to manage those calls. For example, in the heritage sector, those with power had to be convinced that histories such as the ones in *Small Axe* were both specific to the community experiences they spoke to, and part of mainstream British history, and that this multi-vocality was not only desirable but crucial, to ensure they were not relegated to a special-interest zone, and could therefore help rewire the national psyche. The moment of conflict in these discussions often centred around this question of what could be 'mainstream' - we could argue that such histories needed to be for everyone without ham-fisted translation, but the spectre of an imagined 'average' audience, and what they could

and could not stomach, was always invoked.

The flashpoint of Brexit crystallised the fact that 'mainstream' Britain had not yet come to terms with *any* of its past in a mature or considered way, from the legacies of Powellism, to the longer histories of slavery, colonialism, indenture, migration and Empire (for a stark example, witness the backlash the National Trust has faced for daring to historicise the country house through this fairly obvious context).[4] Perhaps we are partly witnessing the consequences of protecting the 'average' or 'mainstream' audience from these truths - from keeping these realities out of sight, or only on the peripheries of national consciousness. A country lied-to about its origins meets the news of who it really is with a response rooted in shock and trauma. For a significant part of the population these very words are associated only with racial 'others', and mentioning the violence of colonial encounters triggers sneering, eyeballs to the ceiling, for the reactionary and earnest hand-wringing from the well-meaning - but little clear-eyed, well-adjusted discussion about the foundations of Britain. Meanwhile, while these hysterical responses are being acted out, the space to consider the trauma inflicted on black communities is eroded.

But more of this later. I mention it here, in relation to the time slot, because what it enabled were conversations between differing people which would not have happened if the scheduling hadn't made a statement of intent which implied, 'this is for everyone to watch, while still resonating in a particular way for a specific audience' - whether or not you actually watched it at first broadcast, later on iPlayer, or even garnered a sense of it from the peak-time trailers.[5]

The elation and recognition on the hashtag after each episode were wonderful. From: 'only one thing missing from *Lovers Rock* - me as a child asleep under the coats!'; to 'why did Black dads from a certain generation love Jim Reeves so much, please?'; to sharing the delight at how early on people had clocked that the 'Leee' who we hear about being on tour around the world in *Red, White and Blue* was in fact the lead singer of *Imagination* (something those watching with subtitles would have got early on due to the giveaway three 'e' s in Leee John's name). Pleasure was also derived from the wealth of acting talent on display - from newcomers, to established younger actors such as John Boyega, to stalwarts such as Llewella Gideon, Robbie Gee, Josette Simon and Gary Beadle.[6] Like the game of 'there is a black person on telly', a related one has always been spotting black actors in walk-ons, cameos and supporting roles, and lamenting their side-lining - a game

most recently played while watching the *Paddington* films, where it felt like a particularly sad activity considering the geographical setting of Notting Hill and the real and heartfelt embrace of migration in the narrative. But *Small Axe* rewarded the gaze trained to scan the background. What is that feeling when you notice record producer Dennis Bovell dancing in *Lovers Rock*, or see C.L.R James actually represented in a drama, and played by that important figure from childhood Derek Griffiths? These observations may be inconsequential, or perhaps we have not yet found the vocabulary to talk about all the emotions and responses that come into play when things hitherto considered niche, or belonging to one's private political, social or cultural world, are on view on Sunday night on BBC1.

Social media conversations between people with differing relationships to these histories were illuminating. The joy and pain of specific recognition for so many who were deeply moved by what they had just seen; for others, a chance to see dramatised long-heard stories from their parents and grandparents; all mingled with responses of those making common purpose with these dramas. The films were billed on the BBC1 website as: 'Love letters to black resilience and triumph in London's West Indian community, directed by Oscar winner Steve McQueen. Vivid stories of hard-won victories in the face of racism'. They spoke primarily to this, but also to a broader black British experience, as well as to all people of colour, as well as to anti-racist activists, as well as to Londoners, as well as to those who felt kinship with what they had watched, even if this had been a window onto a unique world, as well to people who had no idea that such things happened in Britain.

There were also other things to do with timing that were relevant. One was that *Small Axe* was broadcast as the Covid-19 pandemic raged, a context which could have not been predicted when the films were in production, but which nevertheless impacted on its reception. Historian David Olusoga, in conversation with McQueen, suggests to the director that the pandemic affected this in a very particular way:

> I was talking to one friend and his argument was that it took the volume being turned down on everything else for people to hear the voices of Black people, and I liked that. You heard these pleas and these screams from the corner for the first time.[7]

The other event which could not have been predicted in its specificity, but which was nevertheless sickeningly familiar, was the death of George Floyd at the hands of the

Minneapolis police in the USA, provoking huge Black Lives Matter protests in the USA, here in the UK and globally. John Boyega, who played police officer Leroy Logan in *Red, White and Blue*, was filmed making an impassioned speech to the protestors, his raw emotion capturing the rage and defiance of the moment. The protests may have been sparked by Floyd's killing, but this was a reckoning with the past.

Real-world events created a symmetry between the energy, urgency and sense of 'enough is enough', and the histories of resistance in these films. 'Enough is enough' has long been the mantra of black liberation struggles, but it felt suddenly intensified - rage and despair, yes, but also a rising sense of collective action being the only way forward - a symbolic ending perhaps to the perpetual waiting, waiting, waiting. Black political struggle has historically combined polite representations to the powers that be with grassroots, collective action, and it is always fear of the latter that eventually triggers actual institutional change. Yet in our cultural mythologies, racial enlightenment is understood as simply a product of the unfolding of time. In *Mangrove* Darcus Howe talks to Frank Crichlow (played impressively by Malachi Kirby and Shaun Parkes respectively) of the importance of 'self-movement', noting: 'your strategy of relying on the white establishment will never work Frank …'. So the *Small Axe* films were also multivocal narratives in this way - in the winter of 2020 we were thinking about BLM, the 'Hostile Environment' and the Windrush Scandal, and the long list of people who have died at the hands of the state, such as Joy Gardner, the forty-year-old Jamaican woman who died after police officers came to deport her from her mother's home in London in 1993. She was sat on, bound, gagged and fatally asphyxiated. From the New Cross Massacre to Grenfell Tower it's a short journey.

In an excellent article on the US election, Gary Younge considers the intensified polarisation in US politics and the suggestion that it marks the start of a second civil war.[8] Younge argues that it actually represents the death throes of the first Civil War and the ways in which the fallout of events from Reconstruction onwards are currently being played out. It is not possible to account for the rise of Trump solely through America's racial history, he notes, but it is also certainly not possible to understand it outside of this.

Similarly, the conjuncture in which we find ourselves in Britain requires that we grapple with the racial histories of the last few hundred years if we are to really understand it. The media, though, usually treat each instance of racism as somehow

new, shocking and out of the blue. Politicians respond by taking a knee in protest, or by reaffirming their anti-racist commitments in other ways. However, some try to do this while simultaneously side-stepping history in order to talk reverentially of patriotism, family, tradition or Britishness. If they believe it is possible to do this without invoking loaded languages of race, nation and belonging, they are either very naïve, or actively speaking in coded ways to white-supremacist anxiety, while trying not to look like they are. The public now demands that politicians successfully perform 'authenticity', but this can be a difficult feat when cognitive dissonance is required to reconcile these irreconcilable positions.

So, we urgently need to assess where we are on the historical continuum of racial justice and equality. *Small Axe* returned us to the question of what progress looks like, and how to respond to the constant ebbing of steps forwards and backwards. From a statue of a slaver being thrown into the water; to the confident rise of fascism and far-right sentiment; to the dramatic fall of an unhinged President; to high-octane anti-immigration political rhetoric; to the racism that deeply underscores Brexit - all of this creates a particularly febrile atmosphere into which the different threads and ropes of black history remind us that race is always the outstanding business of nations.

What can save us now?

Some of the tweets after Small Axe made these historical connections very clear, for example by drawing attention to ongoing deportations to Jamaica and elsewhere and asking people to take action. If one recent event haunted these films more than any other it was the Windrush Scandal, itself the subject of a recent BBC drama, *Sitting in Limbo*.[9] We are a long way off coming to terms with this still unfolding crisis and the lives destroyed. The psychological impact has also been immense in terms of what millions have taken away from this regarding their place in Britain. It sent a chill through us all, and a frisson of fear that made us rummage through dusty suitcases long forgotten on the top of wardrobes, to find dog-eared documents and badly photocopied paperwork to confirm what we already knew - we belong here. An important part of the *Windrush Lessons Learnt Review* by Wendy Williams was the individual stories - more than just dry case-studies, these were heart-rending accounts of lives turned upside down for no discernible reason. She notes: '… I have serious concerns that these failings demonstrate an institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the issue of race and the history of the Windrush generation

within the department, which are consistent with some elements of the definition of institutional racism.'[10] In the details of the individual stories is where we get to the depth of racism in the state apparatus, and the mechanics of how it strips people of their legitimacy, agency and rights.[11]

The crushing of people's humanity *was* the colonial project. Not an unfortunate side-effect of land grabs, stealing resources or exploiting labour, but integral. It was culturally and psychologically, as well as politically, socially and economically, enmeshed into every aspect of British national life - and not something that magically evaporated after the decline of an Empire.[12] Not just left-overs from another era which we of course no longer subscribe to and can fix with liberal good intentions, but something real, ongoing, deeply ingrained, and played out through events such as the Windrush Scandal and the 'Hostile Environment' rhetoric. The odious 'legitimate concerns' riff on the subject of migration, harnessed by both the left and the right, has at its heart this sense of different hierarchies of humanity. And even though I understand the use of the 'hard-working migrant' trope to counter baseless accusations of people 'scrounging' off the state, it still has the effect of defining people by their labour, again eclipsing their full humanity and erasing the blood, sweat and tears of generations who 'contributed' to the British economy, both historically, and more immediately through international webs of exploitation. And, as it turned out for so many caught in the Windrush Scandal, being 'hard-working', paying your taxes, or being a good citizen, actually made no impact on your status in the final analysis.

The emotional impact of the events of the last five years have yet to be fully explored, but the *Small Axe* films reminded black communities of the importance of talking about trauma, rather than burying it behind familiar stoicism.[13] Taking stock at the end of 2020 meant reflecting on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on all the usual people who feel the brunt of cruel and crushing politics; on the fact that great swathes of voters will embrace openly racist politicians; that climate change was actually happening and not a doomsday prediction; that the right can so easily muster a vocal 'culture war' to distract us from their corruption and gleeful looting of public coffers for private wealth. I could go on. The fields that many of us work in necessitate big-picture analysis, and it can be hard in that context to honour the details of people's everyday experiences, and their fight to maintain humanity, dignity and presence. And it can be hard to account for shifts in the zeitgeist, and

to assess whether they are genuine or only a reflection of the echo chambers of our social media activity and our personal feelings. But through the year, through the different upheavals, a deepened sense of 'enough is enough' hung over everything, a sentiment the *Small Axe* season seemed to encapsulate.

Each film was a testament to what happens to actual, real, living people when they encounter a world that refuses to see them. The biographical and everyday details give flesh and meaning to formal terms such as 'structural and institutionalised racism'. In *Mangrove*, Frank Crichlow, in his prison cell, moves between pained cries to wordless overwhelm, utterly distraught and baffled as to why he should be the victim of such intense and visceral hatred from the police simply for running a restaurant. Kingsley, the boy in *Education* (a sensitive performance from Kenyah Sandy), a bright, funny, sociable lad with some reading difficulties and an interest in outer space, is turned into a statistic of a disruptive, 'educationally sub-normal', black child, to be moved at the will of the state. The experiences of Alex Wheatle (played by Sheyi Cole, who captures his early innocence so wonderfully), in care and prison, similarly expose what institutionalisation actually looks like. Even in *Lovers Rock*, where much of the joy of the narrative comes from being immersed in an all-black space, we watch the young couple, Martha and Franklyn (superbly played by Amarah-Jae St. Aubyn and Micheal Ward), move from that to the intermediate zone of the early-morning cycle ride home, the air infused with the indefinable romance of having stayed up all night, only to be jarred uncomfortably out of the moment by the white garage boss who turns them back from subject to object in his belittling gaze. Dramatising those shifts between spaces of being seen in fullness, and those of uncomfortable visibility, is where *Small Axe* makes some of its most profound interventions.

Recuperating people's subjectivity and agency means confronting the full horror of a past that stripped this away in the first place. History cannot simply be tweaked, with a primary focus on navigating white guilt and anxiety about being decentred. But light the touch paper of beginning to even whisper that British colonial rule had dire consequences for the people and places it impacted, and you trigger a frothing at the mouth for the right-wing culture warriors. Actual historical expertise is scorned, and the conceits of narcissists are elevated as brave and truthful analysis, instead of being recognised as wish fulfilment with sinister motives. Sadly, this can also set off more 'measured' liberal calls to not mess with established historical

norms. But imagining it was possible to nod to egalitarianism while simultaneously maintaining the status quo of racial supremacy built into the DNA of the nation's mythologies has been catastrophic. Even if unwittingly, this approach has been culpable in entrenching the idea that non-white subjects are a different order of humanity and don't really belong here.

If you require an example of the legacies of this dehumanising project, consider the racist social media backlash that Sainsbury's faced recently for daring to suggest in an advert that black families eat gravy too. If there are people for whom the very sight of black people in an ordinary context is interpreted as being part of some 'woke' threat to their existence, we must face that something has gone very wrong somewhere.

The fact that these attitudes persist is not accidental - the heritage narrative must support the immigration narrative. The immigration narrative must support the neoliberal economic narrative. And so on in a loop. Nadine El-Enany notes:

> The abstraction of day-to-day life in Britain from its colonial history means that immigration law and policy, whether in the form of the hostile environment, visa requirements or other external border controls, are not seen as ongoing expressions of empire. Yet this is what they are; part of an attempt to control access to the spoils of empire which are located in Britain.[14]

The psychological consequences of these repressions, fissures and national memory lapses may also help us to understand some of the ideological non-sequiturs of Brexit.

Meanwhile places such as the George Padmore Institute (GPI) in London maintain and honour the records of black struggle.[15] Here are archives relating to the work of John La Rose and Sarah White in establishing New Beacon Books; to the New Cross Massacre Campaign; to black supplementary schools; and to the International Book Fair of Radical, Black and Third World Books (1982-1995). The archives of the Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM) are here too - cultural activists who knew the value of accessible historical information, so each generation would not have to start from scratch when considering their place in the world. After the first programme, I was struck by how many people were unfairly cross with themselves at not knowing the details of the case of the Mangrove Nine beforehand. This is not surprising as the onus has been on us to seek it out ourselves. But this is not alternative, special-interest heritage: it is a story which contains a fuller picture

of British history as a whole, with insights that may just save us. For example, if we could get to the roots of why hierarchies of peoples persist, we may be able to recuperate a genuine sense of our shared humanity. The urgency of this has been made particularly clear through the Covid-19 pandemic, as discourses of whose lives are meaningful and whose are dispensable, and what counts as an acceptable level of death, creep into everyday conversations as 'common sense', rather than as a reflection of deep histories of abjection, a venal political culture and a cavalier disregard for the lives of others.

As I watched footage of the statue of the slaver Edward Colston being thrown into the water at Bristol harbour, I couldn't help thinking about the many events I had attended - sipping wine, trying to not betray my interest in the passing tray of nibbles, unconsciously softening out the more marked edges of my North London accent, aware of the excessive sweating that these situations provoke - and the polite conversations I had engaged in with well-meaning grandees about how this (insert excellent project on black British history here) was the start and they (insert institution here) were just learning to come to terms with all this new diversity, and change would take time and patience. Enough is enough …

How *can* you mend a broken heart?

Pearl Connor-Mogotsi, who started her own actors' agency, talks in the documentary *Black and White in Colour* (1992) about dealing with stereotypes in the early days of television:

> it hurt us because we had nothing comparative on the other side - real drama - to show who we really were - our personas were being hurt - we were being damaged in this community.[16]

I want to return to the theme of the *Small Axe* films giving time to reflect on the more complex aspects of who people really are. But before that, respect needs to be paid to people such as Connor-Mogotsi, and campaigns for a more representative media in Britain. Without past interventions from, for example, the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, to more recent initiatives such as *Access All Areas*, the spaces to tell fully rounded stories of black lives would have been severely limited.[17] It has been a long and difficult road.

Historically, writing on race and representation has engaged with the question

of how black visual cultures navigate competing and multi-layered subjectivities in the glare of a dominant white gaze that could, and did, interpret such things to perpetuate racial myths. The oft-employed metaphor was whether or not the 'washing of dirty linen in public' was advisable. There was also the policing of representations for racism by those who had good intentions, but limited expertise in the politics of this. Such people could be prone to misidentifying creative spaces of candour and exploration as reinforcing stereotypes, often because they had unwittingly filtered things through their own limited repertoire and knowledge of non-white subjects. This history informs *Small Axe*, and it is important to know it, so we can in fact park it, and focus instead on how these films, and the moment of confident resistance we find ourselves in, have created capacity to free us from concerns about hostile misinterpretation - something very liberating, especially in relation to a programme on at peak time. *Lovers Rock* therefore could, for example, show Martha stopping a sexual assault in the garden, and could honestly depict the routine harassment of girls at the party and their confident ways of dealing with it.

This freedom was palpable in the exploration of the hard-to-reach edges of pain. There were many scenes which gave voice, often through images and the silent bearing of witness, to personal and collective suffering. In *Mangrove*, after the umpteenth raid by police and the arrest of people in the restaurant, the camera lingers on the colander that has been dashed to the floor in the violence and stays on it as it completes its momentum back and forth, giving the viewer time to contemplate what has just happened. The adrenaline shock of the attack is replaced by the more difficult to articulate after-shock - we need time to digest this moment in the same way that we need time to digest what this history of police brutality has done to communities. In *Red, White and Blue*, the tension between father and son, as Kenneth (Steve Toussaint, bristling with repressed anger) drops Leroy at police college in Hendon, is witnessed from the back of the car, while Al Green's 'How can you mend a broken heart' plays poignantly in the foreground - we watch but can't hear, and intimate from the body language what is going on. In *Education* we feel Kingsley's despair and his building tension, culminating in the moment when his mother (played with subtlety by Sharlene Whyte) smacks him in her exhausted rage - we stay watching him weep in the aftermath, thinking about the routine violence done to children in the name of discipline and the silent scars this carries into adulthood.[18] These are the personal and communal agonies which need to be metabolised. Creative expression can help this process, which is why access to the means of *being* creative is so vital. *Small Axe*

therefore was an intervention, something that illustrated the kaleidoscope of ways in which black lives matter and how they can be healed.

More than anything, though, what made these films so important during those last grim months of 2020 was the time given to pleasure, presence and collective joy. This was perhaps best summed up in *Lovers Rock*, in the long, slow build-up to the party, culminating in that extraordinary scene of indefinable ecstasy, as people danced to and sang Janet Kay's beloved hit of 1979, 'Silly Games'. In this moment lay the means of reigniting people's hope, their creativity and their agency, which is why I think this episode in particular provoked such an outpouring of praise and had such a profound impact.[19] It was not only about the recognition of the scene, but about becoming hopeful again, about feeling all parts of oneself simultaneously - a wholeness. As people across the country took a deep breath and tried to hit and sustain that impossibly high note, the communal moment escaped the confines of the screen to wash over and revitalise its audience. As Steve McQueen, reflecting on all the films, says; 'it's brought things back, things which never got looked at before on that scale, to reflect back on you that I am, I exist. This did happen. I am real.'[20]

Sincere thanks to Hannah Hamad for reading and commenting on this piece.

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Notes

1. Recently, however, there has been a small shift away from reserving the Sunday night slot for comfort viewing; and they can also sometimes be slots where a velvet glove hides a more hard-hitting message.

2. The American legal drama *The Good Fight* is another example of a mainstream programme which manages to have a genuinely diverse cast and also doesn't shy away from the politics of race and racism.

3. K. Mercer (guest ed), *ICA Document 7 - Black Film British Cinema*, Institute of Contemporary Arts 1988. See also C. Nwonka and A. Saha (eds), *Black Film British Cinema II*, Goldsmiths Press 2021.

4. https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/press-release/national-trust-publishes-new-survey-report-on-links-between-historic-places-colonialism-and-slavery-.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/nov/12/national-trust-history-slavery. Thanks to Hannah Hamad for drawing my attention to C. Fowler, *Green Unpleasant*

Land: Creative Responses to Rural England's Colonial Connections, Peepal Tree Press 2020.

5. And in parenthesis here is the question of the future role of public service broadcasting in relation to this.

6. The BBC has made the 1990s comedy show *The Real McCoy* available on iPlayer - check out Llewella Gideon's still hilarious turn as Pauline Fowler from *EastEnders*.

7. https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/interviews/steve-mcqueen-small-axe-black-britain-david-olusoga.

8. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/nov/17/trump-desperate-fight-stop-minority-vote-republicans-racism.

9. https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p08g29ff/sitting-in-limbo.

10. W. Williams, *Windrush Lessons Learned Review*, House of Commons, 2020, p7.

11. A. Gentleman, *The Windrush Betrayal - Exposing the Hostile Environment*, Guardian Faber 2019.

12. B. Schwarz, *Memories of Empire, Volume I: The White Man's World*, Oxford University Press 2011.

13. For another example, hear actor and musician Riz Ahmed talking about his album *The Long Goodbye*, and why he wanted to explore the difficult terrain of how you feel emotionally when the country you call home wants to - in the metaphor he employs - break up with you (BBC Radio 4 *Grounded with Louis Theroux*): https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p091pg19.

14. N. El-Enany, *(B)ordering Britain - Law, Race and Empire*, Manchester University Press 2020, p2.

15. https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org.

16. *Black and White in Colour: television, memory, race 1936-1968* (BBC2, June 1992). The second part of this covered the years 1968-1992.

17. See *It Ain't Half Racist Mum* (1979), a programme made in association with the Campaign Against Racism in the Media; and L. Henry and M. Ryder, *Access All Areas - the diversity manifesto for TV and Beyond*, Faber and Faber 2021.

18. And in *Mangrove* are we asked, too, to consider the pain of Constable Pulley and the origins of his embittered racism?

19. R. Naidoo, 'Imagining the Next Day: Music, Heritage, and Hope', in G. Hooper (ed), *Heritage at the Interface - Interpretation and Identity*, University Press of Florida 2018.

20. https://www.bfi.org.uk/sight-and-sound/interviews/steve-mcqueen-small-axe-black-britain-david-olusoga.