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Bramley, R.J. orcid.org/0000-0002-4984-2626 (2022) 'A Community Legacy on Film' : using collaborative documentary filmmaking to go beyond representations of the Windrush Generation as 'victims'. Studies in Documentary Film, 17 (2). pp. 115-132. ISSN 1750-3280

https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2022.2090701

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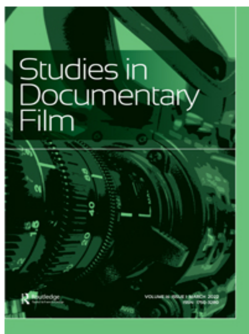

Studies in Documentary Film

Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsdf20

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To cite this article: Ryan Josiah Bramley (2022): ‘A Community Legacy on Film’: using collaborative documentary filmmaking to go beyond representations of the Windrush Generation as ‘victims’, Studies in Documentary Film, DOI: 10.1080/17503280.2022.2090701

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2022.2090701

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STUDIES IN DOCUMENTARY FILM
https://doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2022.2090701

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'A Community Legacy on Film': using collaborative documentary filmmaking to go beyond representations of the Windrush Generation as 'victims'

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ABSTRACT

Recent cultural representations of the Windrush Generation – economic migrants from African Caribbean nations who were invited to live and work in Britain between 1948 and 1972 – and their descendants have overwhelmingly represented British citizens of African Caribbean descent as 'victims'. This is unsurprising; the so-called 'Windrush Scandal' in the late 2010s saw hundreds of members of the Windrush Generation wrongfully lose their British citizenship, many of whom faced detention and, in some cases, even deportation. 'Windrush: The Years After – A Community Legacy on Film', a lottery-funded heritage project in the North of England, represents the attempts of local filmmakers and community activists to instil a renewed sense of belonging for African Caribbean descendants who call Britain their home. The ethical innovation of this documentary filmmaking project lies in its ability to reframe descendants of the Windrush Generation as 'more-than-victims' – and, by extension, its redefinition of the role of the documentary 'subject' as an engaged participant and stakeholder. N.B. this article is an adapted version of a chapter from my PhD thesis, *In Their Own Image: Voluntary Filmmaking at a Non-Profit Community Media Organisation* (Bramley 2021b). The full open access version of this thesis can be found at: https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/29258/.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 17 November 2021
Accepted 13 June 2022

KEYWORDS
Arts practice-as-research; collaborative documentary; fourth cinema; post-colonialism; local storytelling; trauma

Introduction

> I never felt 'inspired' to do it. I felt there was a need to do it.
> – Milton Brown, CEO of Kirklees Local TV and 'Windrush: The Years After' Project Lead, 2019

On the 12th July 2018, *Kirklees Local Television* (also known as *Kirklees Local TV* or *KLTV*), a non-profit 'internet-based TV station and film production company' based in the town of Huddersfield that serves 'the diverse local people' of the Kirklees region in West Yorkshire (KLTV 2020), were awarded a £34,500 'Heritage Grant' by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The funding was for the production of a film

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capturing the personal experiences of local people of African-Caribbean descent; it was entitled 'Windrush: The Years After – A Community Legacy on Film'. The project emerged in the aftermath of a national political scandal, which saw 1,175 people unlawfully deported from the UK between 2014 and 2016 (Jones 2018; Hewitt 2020, 111). This figure does not include 'the locking up of thousands' in detention centres (Harris and Pickles 2018, para 1), nor those who were sent letters from the Home Office during the same period, asking for extensive proof of their right to remain.

Many of those deported or threatened with deportation were of the so-called 'Windrush Generation': economic migrants from British colonies in the Caribbean who were invited to live and work in the UK between 1948 and 1972. Despite Part 1 (Section 1, Subsection 1) of the 1948 British Nationality Act granting 'the status of a British subject' to 'every person who under this Act is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' (Legislation.gov.uk 2020) – and subsequently, indefinite right to remain in the UK – many of the Windrush Generation were never encouraged to obtain formal proof of their immigration status after arrival (Valverde and Letorre 2019, 209). This was further hampered by the Home Office's reported destruction of 'thousands of landing card slips recording Windrush immigrants' arrival dates in the UK, despite staff warnings that the move would make it harder to check the records of older Caribbean-born residents experiencing residency difficulties' (Gentleman 2018, para 1).

Through analysing both my own experience of working on 'Windrush: The Years After' – and the experiences of the volunteer filmmaking team who produced it, as expressed in the behind-the-scenes documentary research film 'The 'Windrush: The Years After' Project' (Bramley 2021a) – this article highlights how one community in the post-industrial North of England, with a significant African-Caribbean descent population, used collaborative documentary filmmaking methods to implicitly respond to the Windrush Scandal in its immediate aftermath. By adopting production methods that considered the wants and desires of the film's interviewees before producing the final version of the documentary, *Kirklees Local TV* were able to depict members of the Windrush Generation as they wanted to be represented – as something other than victims. Instead of focusing on the recent plight of British people of African Caribbean descent, 'Windrush: The Years After' emphasised, in the words of the film's director Milton Brown, the 'quiet dignity among the majority who came here' and their 'ability not to quit, even though the odds were stacked against them' (University of Huddersfield 2019, para. 6). As such, this documentary disrupts the mainstream representation of the Windrush Generation through what I refer to as the 'middle voice': a linguistic term used to describe a sentence or phrase – or in this case, a film – where the subject's agency is suppressed altogether; something is done *to* them, rather than the other way around.

Exploring how the use of middle voice techniques in documentary filmmaking might overidentify a film's subjects as victims – thus disempowering them – is an important consideration that is often overlooked by documentarians, who look to tell their own stories about other people rather than allowing them to represent themselves in their own image. It adds to a growing body of literature around the representation of trauma and emotion in documentaries (e.g. Daniels-Yeomans 2017; Melzer 2019), as well as unconventional collaborations in the production of documentary film (e.g. Miño Puga 2018; Schleser 2018).

Documentary representations of the Windrush Scandal

'Windrush: The Years After' – a community-led documentary film which positions members of the community being represented in the film at the helm of the production process, *as well* as occupying the space in front of the camera – was produced in 2019, and is approximately 75 min long. It is arranged as a chronological sequence of local, regional and national events pertaining to the African Caribbean descent community's life in Huddersfield, ranging from the start of the Windrush Generation's arrival in the UK from 1948, to the present day. The film's primary mode of communicating these events is through the testimonies of local people, 80 of which were interviewed for the project (University of Huddersfield 2019). An off-screen voiceover (by the director, Milton Brown) joins these segments together, helping to produce a coherent and cohesive narrative. The interview segments are often complemented by a series of 'b-roll' footage, sections of which are used as visual cutaways whilst the interviewee continues to talk off-screen. This includes drone footage in and around Huddersfield, on-location film and photography of local places of interest (as they are introduced by the interviewee), and family photographs belonging to the interviewee(s) which were often used as an elicitation device. In contrast, many of the documentary films made about the Windrush Scandal – such as the BBC's *The Unwanted: The Secret Windrush Files* (2019) and Channel 4 News' *Britain's Windrush veterans: the battle to be British* (2018) – were produced by national media broadcasters and made by professional film crews.

As of October 2019, it was estimated that '164 of the Windrush generation have been wrongly removed or detained during the [Windrush] scandal', with 'at least 11 people who were wrongly deported to the Caribbean' having since died (*The Guardian* 2019, 25:17). These figures are featured in the final shots of 'I'm part of Windrush and am returning to Jamaica after 50 years', a 26-minute documentary directed by filmmaker and journalist, Irene Baqué, for The Guardian newspaper (as part of their online *G Documentaries* series). The film depicts the return of Paulette Wilson to the country of her birth, Jamaica, in 2019. Two years prior to her journey, Ms Wilson had been held in the Yarl's Wood immigration detention centre near the town of Bedford, East England, with the threat of deportation to a country she had not lived in for almost 50 years. She had been formally categorised as 'an illegal immigrant', and despite being eventually released from the detention centre 'after an intervention from the Refugee and Migrant Centre in Wolverhampton', had 'lost her benefits for the past two years and also lost her flat' as a direct result of the Home Office's wrongful categorisation of her immigration status (Gentleman 2017, para. 5).

The documentary, published by The Guardian two years after her release from Yarl's Wood, juxtaposes Ms Wilson's forced deportation to Jamaica that never happened, with the trip she later took on her own terms. The film's dramatic climax comes when Paulette visits her mother's grave, having not seen her since she was sent to Britain to live with her grandparents at the age of four (18:20–19:00). Paulette lays on the tiled grave, hugs the headstone, and says 'I'm home mummy', before reciting, 'Give thanks and praise to the most high, Jah Rastafari'. This is one of several sequences in the film that features Paulette crying, often along with friends and members of her family who made the trip with her. It is in these moments that the camera (and, by extension, the viewer's

gaze) can feel the most intrusive. Whilst this sequence may 'serve to provide narrative authentication' of Paulette's grief (Daniels 2019, 104), the camera is unrelenting in its attempts to capture Paulette at her most vulnerable. The very presence of a camera in a graveyard is controversial at best (see McEvoy 2020), and the question remains as to whether the dialogue offered during sequences such as this one 'is given freely or is at times forced out' (Piotrowska 2014, 9). According to Piotrowska, to force the subject of a documentary film 'to speak when they would rather keep silent' is to commit 'an act of ethical violence on the other' – particularly when the theme of that dialogue is traumatic (2014, 9).

Paulette Wilson has experienced a series of deeply traumatic events in her life – the near-lifelong separation from her mother; the loss of her home in Britain; the questioning of her very right to *be* in Britain – but the filmmaker, as 'the interlocutor of trauma and its victims', presents what Lesley Marx refers to as the 'risks of *over* identification, either with the victim or the perpetrator, inherent in the practice of middle-voicedness' (2006, 27). The middle voice, its relationship with narrative popularised by the work of Barthes, is 'between active and passive'; 'a tense that implies the subject is affected by the action undertaken' (Presutti 2013, 175). Further, it 'denotes an action performed by the subject whose effect is limited to the subject rather than directed outwards to another person or thing (active) or received by another source (passive)' (Barry 2008, 115). Whilst the concept of middle voice has traditionally applied to written narratives that deal with trauma – White has applied it to literary representations of the Holocaust (as cited in Presutti 2013, 176) – it has also been used as a way of understanding the ways in which a filmic text represents trauma, and the effects of that representation on the viewer (see Marx 2006, 27–28).

Racism in Britain 'cannot be understood from a position of simply before or after' (Presutti 2013, 172) because, in Paulette's words, 'it's still happening' ('I'm part of Windrush', 21:09–22:05). Traumatic events, to Presutti, 'exist in a liminal time, between two moments, their sources unclear and their effects often reverberating long afterward' (2013, 172). This description is very similar to the concept of 'social haunting' – 'an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known' (Gordon 2011, 2) – which has been similarly applied as a means of better understanding wider post-industrial communities in the North of England continue to be affected by past traumas (e.g. Bright 2016). In Paulette Wilson's case, referring to racist treatment that she still receives (as of late 2019) demonstrates just one of the ways in which the relatively recent trauma of being detained and threatened with deportation in 2017 can emotionally resurface. Conversely, the 'unlawful' treatment of British citizens of African Caribbean descent during the Windrush Scandal brings to bear the historical and multifaceted racism that has been an ever-present for 'waves of migrations' to the UK, and a 'daily reality for ethnic minorities' who live here (Anwar 1991, 2).

One way of potentially overcoming the dilemma of middle-voicedness in documentary film is to give the so-called 'subjects' of a film greater control over the way in which they are represented. This requires a re-imagining of the relationship between 'filmmaker and subject' as something more 'collaborative' (Coffman 2009, 65). By extension, this precipitates a re-framing of the 'subject' of a documentary film as a 'collaborator' (see Thomas 2012, 341), and demands 'less 'traditional' ways' of making film (Coffman 2009, 63). In this regard, a lot can be learned from the tropes of 'Fourth

Cinema' (also known as 'Indigenous Cinema'), a movement that originates from indigenous (Māori) filmmaking traditions in New Zealand.

Fourth Cinema

Before the analysis, it is necessary to point out that 'Windrush: The Years After' was not produced by Indigenous Peoples, per-se. As a production, it was made with the help of a multi-cultural group of local people. As reported in *The Voice*, a British Afro-Caribbean national newspaper:

> As well as individuals from across the Caribbean, a diverse team of volunteers from different faiths, cultures and backgrounds, including from South Asia, Zimbabwe, China, Ireland and Barnsley[1], have come together to learn how to interview, film and edit under the leadership of Milton Brown, CEO of Kirklees Local Television. (*The Voice* 2019, para. 4)

I am keen not to misappropriate the use of the term 'Fourth Cinema' to describe people who do not form part of the global Indigenous community. However, the term 'Indigenous' takes on a very different meaning when applied to different national contexts. In Aotearoa / New Zealand, for example, Māori are 'othered' (Te Hiwi 2007, 12); the same has been said for Indigenous communities globally, who continue to be 'othered' by 'colonial culture' in a postcolonial world (MacNaughton and Davis 2001, 86). In Britain, however, it is the citizens of former colonies who were invited to live and work in Britain – such as the Windrush Generation – who continue to find themselves 'othered' in society (Ellis 2001, 219). In Barclay's terms, both Māori in New Zealand / Aotearoa and African-Caribbean Descendants in Britain find themselves excluded by each nation's 'majority culture' (Murray 2008, 15).

Telling a story about a community that will be predominantly shown to people outside of that community – represented in such a way that members within that community are not comfortable with – contravenes the ethics of what Māori (Indigenous Aotearoa / New Zealand) filmmaker Barry Barclay referred to as 'Fourth Cinema':

> … by which I mean Indigenous Cinema — that's Indigenous with a capital 'I'. […] The phrase Fourth Cinema comes as a late addition to the First-Second-Third Cinema framework with which you will be familiar, First Cinema being American cinema; Second Cinema Art House cinema; and Third Cinema the cinema of the so-called Third World. (Barclay 2003, 7)

What separates the first three 'Cinemas' from the Fourth is the notion of invasion; the 'Cinemas of the Modern Nation State' are, 'from the Indigenous place of standing', 'invader cinemas' (Barclay 2003, 10). Underpinning Fourth Cinema, as declared in Te Manu Aute's (the National Organisation of Māori Communicators) constitution, is the belief that 'every culture has a right and a responsibility to present its own culture to its own people'; a responsibility 'so fundamental it cannot be left in the hands of outsiders, nor be usurped by them' (Barclay 2015, 7). Fourth Cinema was, at the point of its conception in the early 2000s (and due, in part, to 'the scarcity of films that qualify as such'), 'more of an ideal than an actuality' (Columpar 2010, xi). However, it is an ideal that has nevertheless inspired a respectable corpus of literature on Indigenous Cinema (e.g. Columpar 2010; Hokowhitu 2013; Turner 2013).

According to Fourth Cinema, the notion of 'what kind of truth' a filmmaker tries to tell seems intrinsically tied up with who is making that film. Barclay believed that the people who knew best what a community needed was the community itself. Moreover, he felt that the primary beneficiaries of the Fourth Cinema should not be the outsider looking in on an unfamiliar culture, but those from within the community itself. These sentiments are exemplified by Barclay's directing of the documentary 'Te Urewera' (1987), 'looking at the unique spiritual relationship between the Tūhoe people, and the birds and the bush of Te Urewera National Park' (NZOnScreen 2020):

> As [Barclay] has documented when outlining the making of the 1987 documentary *Te Urewera* among the Tūhoe, Barclay thought it vital to invite trained Māori technicians onto the crew, to seek Tūhoe permission for the filming and (crucially) to assert that the images made will be returned to the community following the editing process. (Murray 2008, 27)

'To put it another way', Barclay wrote,

> I am not much interested in seeing a film made by Welsh people who want to explain their situation to the British authorities in London. The Welsh will have to make films of that kind from time to time, but I do not think I would go out of my way to view them. On the other hand, I would be very interested in watching a film made by Welsh communicators trying to make a metaphor for their own people, a film they would have made whether other people in the United Kingdom saw it or not. (Barclay 2015, 78)

Participatory Video

Whilst not specifically referring to films made by Indigenous Peoples, 'Participatory Video', defined by Margolin as 'the practice of using video as a participatorily-produced communication tool in social change efforts' (as cited in Miño Puga 2018, 193), shares many traits with Fourth Cinema. Expanding upon Margolin's definition of Participatory Video, Miño Puga (2018) draws upon 'three specific elements':

(1) 'the production process, which relies on the active engagement of members in a particular community';
(2) 'a community's goal, aiming towards the completion of common objectives';
(3) 'the product itself, as a means of communication both within the group and to society as a whole' (Miño Puga 2018, 193–194; emphasis my own)

In a similar vein, the 'collaborative nature' of 'Fourth Cinema' films 'is established long before filming itself starts, with dialogue between film-maker and subjects establishing the ways in which the production will work and the reciprocity that lies at the heart of the film-making process' (Murray 2008, 51). Both the concept of Participatory Video, and the growing Fourth Cinema movement, attempt to destabilise the status quo of conventional documentary filmmaking – a more ethical form of storytelling that prioritises the needs of the participants over the wants of the public.

Challenging the majority culture

Majority culture (or 'dominant culture') – closely aligned with 'dominant ethnicity' (Kaufmann 2004, 6) or 'dominant *ethnie*' (Smith 2004, 19; emphasis in original) – 'refers to the phenomenon whereby *a particular ethnic group exercises dominance within a nation and/or state*', *culturally* (Kaufmann 2004, 3; emphasis in original). Dominance in this context, as well as cultural, can be 'demographic, […] political, and economic'; it typically correlates with whichever ethnicity 'comprise[s] a plurality of the population', but not always (ibid, 3). The concept of dominance is multifaceted: at a time where the British state has pursued a 'project of moral regulation and control' – as reflected by the UK Government's 'increasingly muscular attempts to construct and pin-down Britishness and British cultural values' – 'white, English, middle class culture' has been found to be 'the most prominent' (Morrice 2017, 413). As a white male myself, active in the middle-class business of academia, I could be legitimately seen to form part of that majority culture. That said, the 'Windrush: The Years After' group's insistence on constructing my identity around my post-industrial hometown of 'Barnsley', rather than England or Britain, exemplified the team's recognition of my working-class heritage.

'Windrush: The Years After' is clearly not an Indigenous film, but it does form part of the anti-invader documentary tradition consolidated by the Fourth Cinema movement. It demonstrates some of what can be achieved by a community outside of the majority culture that - with the help of fellow activists not necessarily of that cultural group - takes up its 'responsibility' to 'present its own culture to its own people' (Barclay 2015, 7). This is achieved by a collaborative filmmaking model which allows participants in

Figure 1. The 'Windrush: The Years After' project logo. © 2019 Kirklees Local TV.

front of the camera to participate in the pre- and post-production phases of making a documentary film (Figure 1).

Analysis – 'Windrush: The Years After – A Community Legacy on Film'

The production process

'The documentary', according Le Roy and Venderbeeken, 'is supposed to give an 'objective' and 'truthful' representation of reality' (2018, 199). However, the extent to which a documentary can be said to be objective remains up for theoretical dispute (see Carroll 2016, 168–169). In Taihei's view, anything that is 'a human act' must 'pass through human subjectivity'; documentaries are therefore '*always records of human thought, an expression of only those things the mind can know, which is why they are a factual record of human interiority*' (Taihei, translated by Baskett, 2010, 55). The documentary filmmaker must therefore negotiate the paradox of documentary aesthetics: producing an artefact that the viewer expects to be objective, whilst acknowledging that complete objectivity in filmmaking is impossible.

Kirklees Local TV CEO Milton Brown 'oversaw' the project, as earlier stated. However, the project's direction was steered 'by committee' – namely, the production group that met on a weekly basis to discuss the film's progress. This multi-cultural production group brought together locally-based educators, college and university media students, graphic designers, researchers, social entrepreneurs, and community activists – all of whom influenced the project. In this sense, it bore similarity with the workshop-generated documentary, *24Frames 24Hours* – 'an experiment in cinematic communication exploring how participants in various countries […] can explore their world through the lens of mobile devices' (Schleser 2018, 102). Discussion points in the 'Windrush: The Years After' meetings would cover all manner of topics associated with the production of the film and the broader work around it, including (but not limited to) the delegation of production roles (interviewers, camera crew, editors, etc.); the selection of potential interviewees for the film; the documentary's narrative direction; and even what colour the film's logo should be.

For many of the project's team (including myself), this was their first time working on a large-scale, feature-length film project – an opportunity through 'creative involvement' that enabled 'a sense of presence and sociability through the self-representation of local communities while developing digital literacy skills' (Schleser 2018, 109). Leah Conway, who first came to *KLTV* as a second year History undergraduate student on a work placement module, explains how her time working as a videographer and editor on the 'Windrush: The Years After' project has not only taught her how to produce films, but also encouraged her to consider a career in the media industry for the first time:

> Well, before I was here, I didn't really know anything, or have any experience – [I could] take a few pictures on a camera, that's about it. But then I come here, and I now know how to set up cameras, film them; what kind of shots you want; and now I know editing. I didn't know anything about editing before, and now, I'd quite like to maybe go in a career that way? – Leah Conway, *The 'Windrush: The Years After' Project*. (Bramley 2021a, 02:27–02:54)

In contrast, Khatija Lunat, a local primary school teacher who conducted many of the 'Windrush: The Years After' interviews, highlights what she learned from the personal narratives that the interviewees shared with her – including experiences of the Windrush Scandal (Figure 2):

> I really, really enjoyed – and that is one of my highlights of this project – going to interviews, and having that honour of listening to individual stories, and having listened to heartfelt stories of what their parents or themselves, the experiences they went through, and the turmoil of receiving a letter from the Home Office saying, 'You don't belong here, you need to go home' – when they've been living and working here for, twenty, thirty years. – Khatija Lunat, *The 'Windrush: The Years After' Project*. (Bramley 2021a, 04:29–05:01)

One of the most significant parts of the 'Windrush: The Years After' documentary that the community-led production group influenced was the overriding narrative of the film – and subsequently select which extracts (from which interviewees) would make it into the final cut. Prior to the interviews, the production group decided on certain themes that they felt were central to the story of the arrival and settlement of people of African Caribbean descent in the town of Huddersfield, and the contribution they have subsequently made to local society and culture. These themes shaped the types of questions that were asked in the interviews, as well as who should be interviewed in the first place. Indeed, one of the benefits of having a documentary film team embedded in the community being represented by the film, is a rich and situated knowledge of what is going on locally – as well as a ready-made network of contacts to recruit interviewees from. This process is outlined in an article by *Living North* magazine:

> Milton and his team of local volunteers have been interviewing members of the African-Caribbean community over the last month. Each interview took around one to two hours, but the team had to take each one and make it into a case study lasting for around five to ten minutes in length. Although difficult, they are working in themes, so topics such as employment and discrimination are grouped together with input from every interviewee with the aim of creating a single narrative out of multiple individual stories. (Living North 2018, para. 5)

Figure 2. Three still images of Khatija Lunat alongside various 'Windrush: The Years After' participants and volunteers – including this one (Bramley 2021a, 04:37) – are shown whilst Lunat is describing her experiences of working on the project (i.e. 04:28–04:45). Interviews for the 'Windrush' documentary film, such as this one, were often conducted by KLTV in interviewees' homes.

In the case of 'Windrush: The Years After', Brown relinquishes the traditional role of film author or 'auteur', and acts more as a facilitator than a director. The rule of thumb at *Kirklees Local TV* is that film and video productions are generally attributed to the organisation, rather than to a sole director. This defies the convention of 'film director as original copyright holder' that is enshrined in European Union law; 'largely as a result of the influence of auteur theory' that grew from the French New Wave movement during the 1950s (Chaudhuri 2013, 80). It does, however, explicitly foreground the 'infusion of subjective visions' – the 'multiplicity of voices that we are accustomed to sum up as "the author"' – that auteur theory often refuses to recognise (Hongisto 2016, 200–201).

What I witnessed during my time working on the 'Windrush: The Years After' project was a film made not by a director, but by a diverse local community. Having a culturally diverse team behind the camera, according to Heather Norris Nicholson – an academic who was involved with 'Windrush: The Years After' as a project co-ordinator – was 'entirely appropriate':

> The diversity just doesn't have to be in front of the camera … it's also entirely appropriate that there should be diversity in the team who are involved in recording that history and making that history. – Heather Norris Nicholson, *The 'Windrush: The Years After' Project*. (Bramley 2021a, 02:08–02:22)

Inevitably, the high level of collaboration led to a greater degree of creative conflict (Hodge 2009, 18). However, the 'quality' of such a project can be judged by its ability 'to establish common ground where those involved can pursue different sets of interests and negotiate, combine, and materialize them in a collective fashion' (Flores 2004, 40). *Kirklees Local TV*'s ability to premiere the 75-minute-long 'Windrush: The Years After' documentary to the public at the University of Huddersfield in July 2019 – just 12 months after the National Lottery Heritage Grant was awarded – is a testament to the production group's capacity for negotiating these conflicts in an efficient and effective way (Figure 3).

A community's goal

Unlike *The Guardian*'s 'I'm part of Windrush' (2019), 'Windrush: The Years After – A Community Legacy on Film' was not intended for mass national viewership. At the time of writing, it has only been shown at several small-scale, non-profit screenings, predominantly in the Yorkshire area; it has not been made available for the public to view online. The film is

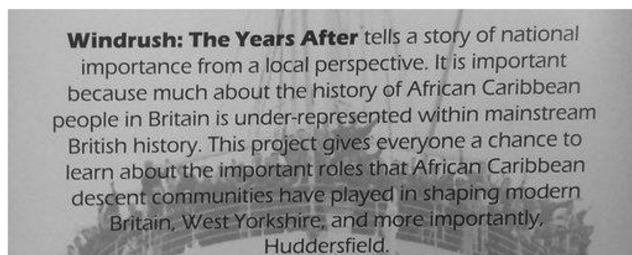

Figure 3. An extract from a promotional poster for the 'Windrush: The Years After' film. © 2019 Kirklees Local TV.

described by Norris Nicholson as a documentary that 'tells a story of national and international significance from a local perspective' (University of Huddersfield 2019, para. 13). The film was subsequently made with the intention of presenting a local community with an image of itself – the community's goal – rather than showing images of a local community to the (outside) majority culture. Milton Brown – who has been producing videos and films on a regular basis for *KLTV* since 2011 – speaks of the 'privilege' of being able to 'talk to my elders' and 'fill in the gaps' of his own cultural knowledge:

> I think for me, the experience was huge, and also a privileged one. To talk to my elders, for them to fill in the gaps, it was a massive emotional journey of what they experienced when they came here, to then how it interconnected to my journey when I was born in 1961. It just seems seamless, this whole journey's been a perennial struggle of navigating race and identity. So for me, it was an emotional journey, but one that I relished, and one that I'm very grateful for. – Milton Brown, *The 'Windrush: The Years After' Project*. (Bramley 2021a, 03:25–04:02)

The expectations of the majority culture often conflict with the wants of a community that finds itself excluded from that culture. Making a film for the insider, it seems, does not correlate well with making a film for the majority culture; conducting a cultural project to be viewed by the community does not necessarily align with the undertaking of a profitable project for the general public. 'Windrush: The Years After' challenges the mainstream narrative of the Windrush Generation *as victims* – as reinforced by mass media narratives of the Windrush Scandal – by juxtaposing the 'constant theme of struggle' with what Milton Brown refers to as the 'quiet dignity among the majority who came here' (University of Huddersfield 2019, paras. 5–6).

Barclay believed that 'in Fourth Cinema – at its best – something else is being asserted which is not easy to access' (Barclay 2003, 7). 'Windrush: The Years After' enables 'a complex truth' that cannot be obtained through the majority culture's 'over identification' of the Windrush Generation as victims, which has been particularly reinforced following the Windrush Scandal (Marx 2006, 27–28). The well-known 'economic and social pressures, including day-to-day racism' (both before and after the 'Scandal') are included, but documented alongside this, according to Brown, is the story of how the Windrush Generation 'retreated from the mainstream of society and started to build social and economic dependence within their own community'; how they 'showed an ability not to quit, even though the odds were stacked against them' (University of Huddersfield 2019, paras. 5–6). This is the way in which the film's participants, through their collaboration with the interviewers, chose to represent themselves. It is, to paraphrase one of Barclay's book titles (2015), a representation of a community '*in their* own image' – as summarised in Brown's voiceover narration for the film's trailer:

> It's about the tears, laughter, hopes, aspiration and fears, bringing to light the challenges of navigating race and defining multiple identities in the celebration of their heritage, tradition, rituals, faith and culture. (KLTV 2019a, 'Windrush: The Years After – Official Trailer', 00:43–01:02)

The product itself

The interview participants in 'Windrush: The Years After' do not legally 'co-own' the final recording, as has been the case with some collaborative documentary projects

dealing with trauma; this model was adopted, for example, by the *Unheard Voices* project in post-conflict Northern Ireland (see Dyer 2019, 1–2). However, the participants of the project were the first to see the film in its entirety: a 'private screening' was held at the University of Huddersfield in June 2019, one month prior to its first public viewing. Only people who took part in the project, both in-front-of and behind the camera, were invited to attend (Figures 4 and 5).

True to the participatory video mantra of including documentary interviewees as 'collaborators' rather than passive 'subjects' (see Thomas 2012, 341), at the private screening, the people who gave *Kirklees Local TV* access to their image and their personal narrative were given the opportunity to influence what the final version of the film would look like. As well as providing a chance for *Kirklees Local TV* to document some of the first reactions to 'Windrush: The Years After' for promotional purposes (KLTV 2019b), this preliminary viewing process allowed the team to gather written and verbal feedback from the participants on how the film could be improved, and what alterations they believed should be made, before it would be shown to the broader community (i.e. people from outside of the project). In the field diary I kept during my time volunteering with *Kirklees Local TV*, I wrote in my own words how the film had been received at the private screening:

> It was a powerful watch. From a technical point of view, there were a few mistakes – including some spelling errors on the interviewee titles […] and a few points where I felt I would have edited the film very differently. Nevertheless, it brought about in me an emotional response, and I could tell it was doing that for many in the audience as well. – Field Diary Entry 65, 7th June 2019. (Bramley 2021b, 285)

Again, this echoes the collaborative method of the *24Frames 24Hours* documentary workshops, whereby 'editing becomes a negotiation and open dialogue with the participants, rather than a linear construction' (Schleser 2018, 109). Suggestions on changes to the film ranged from formalities, such as the rewording of onscreen speaker titles, to more subjective elements, such as stylistic choices (e.g. film editing, use of certain cutaways, soundtrack selection, etc.). Of course, it was up to *Kirklees Local TV*'s discretion

Figure 4. Milton Brown introduces the 'Windrush: The Years After' private screening in June 2019, hosted by the University of Huddersfield. © 2019 Kirklees Local TV.

Figure 5. At the end of the private screening of the film, the audience – which included members of the local community who had participated as interviewees – were invited to feedback on what they thought to the film, and share their ideas on how it might be improved ahead of the public release. © 2019 Kirklees Local TV.

whether to act upon each individual point or not, but the result was an end product that reflected the general consensus of its on-camera participants, whilst also respecting the production team's editorial prerogative.

In addition to constructive criticism, the positive feedback that 'Windrush: The Years After' received from the private screening's attendees reinforced the film's narrative as an ethical one, further validating the purposes of the project as a whole. To exemplify this point, the following is a quote from one of those attendees, Claude Hendrickson, which was included in *Kirklees Local TV*'s video 'review' of the private screening:

> It's all important to show our children and our grandchildren what their grandparents did. And what I saw today was the foundation, the laying of the foundation. Our parents, and that generation of young people that came across here, laid the foundation for us. And we're now celebrating their foundation, which is [their] legacy.
>
> (*KLTV*, 'Windrush: The Years After – A Community Legacy on Film | Review', 2019b, 02:16–02:42)

Whilst the process of collecting, processing and acting upon viewer feedback delayed the public release of the film by a matter of weeks, it enabled a sense of community ownership of 'Windrush: The Years After' that is rarely seen in documentary projects that deal with trauma. This broadly fits in line with the 'Fourth Cinema principle' of making films 'available to communities engaged in the kinds of struggles similar to those that took place' in the documentary (Murray 2008, 90). It is unlikely that mainstream documentary projects that are predominantly driven by profit will take up this collaborative approach to filmmaking any time soon, given the additional time and resources required. However, it is a model that may be of interest to fellow non-profit initiatives akin to 'Windrush: The Years After', where the quality of a film's narrative is the primary goal. To the National Lottery Heritage Fund's credit, they understood *KLTV*'s desire to limit (rather than maximise) the number of viewers of the film in its first screening, and representatives from the

NLHF were present at both the public and private screening of the documentary to offer their support.

'After Windrush'

> As with any traumatic incident, consequences clearly outlast the event itself, and it can take years before finally conceptualizing a definitive conclusion. (Miño Puga 2018, 200)

The full impact of the Windrush Scandal, 'another chapter in the continuing inequality and structural racism faced by black communities in the UK', is yet to be realised (Vernon 2019, para. 1). In this context, the 'Windrush: The Years After' film, like other collaborative documentary projects that deal with the immediate aftermath of trauma, has offered a much-needed 'glimpse of early empowerment' and enabled members of the community to bring 'attention to their specific needs' (Miño Puga 2018, 201). It is, at the time of writing, impossible to conceptualise the contribution that the 'Windrush: The Years After' project has made – and will continue to make – to the African Caribbean descent community of Huddersfield. In an interview with the National Lottery Heritage Fund in October 2019, *Kirklees Local TV* CEO Milton Brown said, 'we have more than 70 interviews that we haven't been able to use, I've got some big plans to share those stories and learnings' (National Lottery Heritage Fund, 'What's next for you?', 2019, para. 1).

My time with the 'Windrush: The Years After' project came to an end in September 2019, at the end of my doctoral fieldwork. Based on my experiences during that twenty-month volunteer placement, the continued work of *Kirklees Local TV* production company – including its long-term engagement with the African Caribbean descent community of Huddersfield – is worthy of further attention from academics and filmmakers alike. The same can be said for the practice of collaborative filmmaking as a whole; despite the qualitative wealth of associated literature reviewed by this article, this topic has received limited scholarly attention to-date. To those engaged in and/or researching such practices, the collaborative documentary filmmaking model adopted by 'Windrush: The Years After' – where contributors to the film's narrative are invited to actively participate in the pre- and post- production stages, rather than being limited to the role of the camera's 'subject' – may well be of interest.

When a community outside of the majority culture is empowered to speak for itself and on its own terms, as was seen to be the case through the 'Windrush: The Years After' project, the middle voice of the outsider – the interlocutor between that community and the majority culture it finds itself excluded from – is rendered as an unnecessary device. Participants, when included at all stages of the documentary filmmaking process, become agents of the narrative they helped to generate. These narratives may not neatly align with the dichotomy of 'victim and perpetrator' that the majority culture endeavours to perpetuate – particularly when representing those within communities that are excluded or 'othered' by that majority culture. As such, they may fall short of destabilising the status quo: the construction of 'Britishness' that places whiteness, as well as patriarchal and middle-class values, at its core – and consequently marginalising anything demographically, socially, politically or economically 'other' than that norm. The 'hostile environment' that led to the threat of (and in some cases, literal) deportation of British citizens of African Caribbean descent – the Windrush Scandal itself – is a

poignant reminder of how powerfully that dominant culture can question the legitimacy of minority ethnic citizens' right to remain; their 'Britishness'. In reaction, collaborative documentary filmmaking serves as a reconstruction tool; a force of agency in the face of structural institutional adversity that allows minority communities – such as the African Caribbean diaspora in Huddersfield, England – to relocate their sense of belonging in a nation state that continues to relentlessly challenge their identity.

Note

1. For those unfamiliar with the social and cultural geography of the UK, Barnsley is another post-industrial town in the North of England (South Yorkshire), approximately 20 miles away from Huddersfield. It is also my hometown. The suggestion here – made lightly – is that to be from Barnsley is to be from another culture; an 'outsider'.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership (formerly the White Rose Doctoral Training Centre) for funding my collaborative PhD studentship, without which this research would not have been possible. I would also like to thank *Kirklees Local TV* for allowing me a privileged space within their organisation during my doctoral fieldwork placement (between 2018 and 2019), during which I was able to observe the 'Windrush: The Years After' project as it progressed from an idea into a reality.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Economic and Social Research Council [grant number ES/J500215/1].

Data access statement

The data supporting the findings reported in this paper are openly available from the White Rose eTheses Online repository at https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/29258/.

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