A critical evaluation of the underlying factors that cause the portrayal of British Caribbean families on British television to appear stereotypical.

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"When people rely on surface appearances and false racial stereotypes, rather than in-depth knowledge of others at the level of the heart, mind, and spirit, their ability to assess and understand people accurately is compromised."

Clergyman James A. Forbes'² statement echoes the poignant sentiments of the late Martin Luther King, "one day people would not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."³ Why then is it taking technologically enlightened mainstream broadcasters in the UK so long to embrace that sentiment? Professor Karen Ross in her research on 'Ethnic Stereotypes and Popular Television' suggests that television is 'uniquely well placed' to present a positive representation of British Caribbean families because of its power and influence.⁴ This essay will argue that the two underlying factors that contribute to the portrayal of British Caribbean families on British television to appear stereotypical are slavery and social engineering. Both these factors, rooted in history and technology, cause the White majority to continually frame its reference based on the negative racial stereotypes provided by television, in 2017, despite operating in a global village and multicultural societies.⁵

¹ James. A. Forbes http://www.sapiens.org/column/race/people-of-color/[Accessed 02/05/ 2017].

³ http://www.thekingcenter.org/dreams/dream/109036. /[Accessed 02/05/ 2017]

⁴ Ross, Karen, *TELEVISION IN BLACK AND WHITE*. Ethnic Stereotypes and Popular Television. University of Warwick. February 1992. p. 4.

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/crer/research/publications/research_papers/rp_no.19.pdf [Accessed 02 May 2017]

⁵ ibid.

According to Malik,⁶ Black "racial stereotypes on television are portrayed as stand-in mothers, tough Black women, predatory Black females, macho clowns and wayward criminals". While it is acknowledged that everyone, in one form or another, is considered a stereotype, the remit of this essay will focus on stereotypes attached to men and women and their families now domiciled in Britain since the 1950s. The Caribbean is a region of twenty-one sovereign nations,⁷ this detail is emphasized because although each nation is independent and diverse in culture its people is collectively subject to racial stereotyping based solely on the colour of their skin. The Oxford dictionary defines family as all the descendants of a common ancestor.⁸ This essay will argue that the Caribbean family does not fit that definition and will produce evidence that supports the argument that the Caribbean family is a manufactured unit. Furthermore, it will be argued that the parental influence on how families are brought up has been affected as a result of this manufacturing process. 9 This will be evaluated by addressing two underlying factors it is argued dwell at the root of stereotyping British Caribbean families.

Marshall McLuhan wrote 'the medium is the message,' an ideology that relates to the power of the television¹⁰. It is argued in this evaluation that television is an effective visual medium. Therefore, it will be used to support arguments raised in this essay. *Roots* (1977 and 2016) and *Families in Slavery*, the *African Slave Trade*, and *Birth of a Nation (2016)* will be used extensively to demonstrate the underlying effect of slavery on the British Caribbean family as it relates to stereotypes. In addition, the second underlying factor, social engineering will be examined through Black family shows; *One British Family* (1974), *The Fosters* (1976), *Empire Road* (1978), *Desmonds* (1989), *The Crouches* (2003), *Top Boy* (2011), and *Chewing Gum* (2015). Finally, current trends will be evaluated through the work of scriptwriters and producers like Samuell Benta,

⁶ Malik, S. (2002) *Representing Black Britain.* London: Sage p. 99.

⁷ http://lanic.utexas.edu/subject/countries/ [Accessed 14/05/2017].

⁸ https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/family [Accessed 02 May 2017].

⁹ De Gruy J. Dr. (2005) *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. USA: Joy DeGruy Publications Inc. p. 125.

¹⁰ http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf From Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan ©1964 CHAPTER 1 The Medium is the Message MARSHALL McCLUHAN [Accessed 30 March 2015].

'All about the McKenzies' (2014), Brothers with no Game (2014) and media hubs House of Black¹¹ and Traceplay¹² (see Appendix A) who have produced alternative production, marketing and broadcasting strategies that sidestep the Gatekeepers, a decision maker within the television industry,¹³ of mainstream media, Netflix, Amazon, and secure loyal audiences.

It is important to acknowledge the power of words; how words are constructed and how they are used play a significant part in society's socialization¹⁴ when referring to ethnic groups. In the 1950s people coming from the Caribbean were referred to as 'coloureds'. This terminology has evolved through the years from 'Afro-Caribbean,' 'Black, 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)' and now 'people of colour.' To define people of English origin the term 'Caucasian' or 'White' has, for the most part, remained standard. Therefore, to avoid confusion, there will be two ethnic groups, Black and White mentioned in this evaluation. Another example of this power resides in the word stereotype. The act of stereotyping tends to happen when there are 'gross inequalities of power' as found in slavery. 15 Later on in this evaluation it will be shown that the White person did not consider the Black person deserving to be treat as human. In the book, Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices edited by Hall in a chapter by Dyer he cites Brown who states "the application of the norms of one's own culture to that of others which supports Foucault theory that stereotyping is a power/knowledge... game.¹⁶

The first underlying factor is slavery and the slave trade, which started for the British in 1625.¹⁷ The process of manufacturing the Caribbean family was systematic as slave traders considered the slaves as chattel, not human being

¹¹ http://www.houseofBlack.co.uk/ [Accessed 14/05/2017].

¹² https://www.traceplay.tv/landing [Accessed 14/05/2017].

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gatekeeping_(communication)#The_gatekeeping_model [Accessed 10 June 2017].

¹⁴ Malik, S. (2002) Representing Black Britain. London: Sage p. 18 [Accessed 02 May 2017].

 $^{^{15}}$ Hall, S. (ed) (1997) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* London: SAGE p.258-259.

 $^{^{16}}$ Hall, S. (ed) (1997) *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices.* London: SAGE p.258-259.

¹⁷ http://www.crf-usa.org/Black-history-month/the-slave-trade [Accessed 02/05/2017].



Slavery became an industry for the first time in history when millions of African men and women were sold as slaves to Europeans.

Figure 1.

The African Slave Trade¹⁸ http://www.history.com/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/videos/african-slave-trade

The root of today's stereotypical portrayal of the men and women in Caribbean families," the magical negro, Black best friend, thug, brash woman, domestic help,"¹⁹ lie in history's treatment of their ancestors, which is hidden in plain sight²⁰. Michele Mitchell, historian points out that while slavery is not new, African slavery was distinct, because it created for the first time, the industrialization of slavery.²¹ Black people became property, and sub-human. According to Professor S. James Gates Jnr. the White man was not threatened by the Other²², rather he felt that "the Black man did not deserve to be treated the way he, a White man, would be treated"²³ a discussion that is beyond the scope of this essay but indeterminately warranted acknowledgement because of the profound effect of 'vacant esteem'²⁴; DeGruy posits that an individual believes

¹⁸HISTORY CHANNEL (2012) Mankind the Story of all of US. [Online Video] Available from: http://www.history.com/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/videos/african-slave-trade [Accessed 02/05/2017].

¹⁹ Nadra Kareem Nittle. Common Black stereotypes in TV and Film. [Accessed 30/05/2017]. https://www.thoughtco.com/common-Black-stereotypes-in-tv-film-2834653

²⁰ http://www.yourdictionary.com/hidden-in-plain-sight [Accessed 02 /05/2017].

HISTORY CHANNEL (2012) Mankind the Story of all of US. [Online Video] Available from: http://www.history.com/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/videos/african-slave-trade [Accessed 02/05/2017].

²² Dr. Zuleyka Zevallos. What is Otherness? https://othersociologist.com/otherness-resources/ [Accessed 02/05/2017].

HISTORY CHANNEL (2012) Mankind the Story of all of US. [Online Video] Available from: http://www.history.com/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/videos/african-slave-trade [Accessed 02/05/2017].

²⁴ DeGruy J. Dr. (2005) *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome*. USA: Joy DeGruy Publications Inc. p. 123.

they are worthless based on repeated pronouncements of inferiority by society.²⁵

In Britain, the profits made from the slave trade created an upwardly mobile society with enormous economic power, which led to the birth of the Industrial Revolution²⁶ as driven by market mechanisms of supply and demand.²⁷ This, in turn, improved the lives of White families through the creation of employment, housing, self-worth, and geographical infrastructure such as railways, ports, cities, and banks.²⁸ For Black people it meant the displacement of African families and tribes, a loss of homes and dispossession. ²⁹ For slave traders' trading was regarded as simply another form of business.³⁰ However, it must be stated that Black people cannot be exonerated from this process because for the slave trade to thrive a conspiracy fuelled by "the avarice of Europeans and the avarice of the African elite and warlords" would have to have existed.³¹ To both Black and White traders, the privilege and the moral implications of selling Africans into slavery were of secondary importance to the creation of wealth.

It is argued here that what took place 400 years ago is still relevant to today's television viewing because as stated by Ross "negative and stereotypical assumptions amongst the White majority hinder the pursuit of ethnic harmony... in television programmes"³² could as the discussion on social engineering will show be the primary force in changing negative stereotypes. Black actor David

²⁵ ibid. p. 125 – 128.

²⁶ ibid.

²⁷ ibid.

²⁸ Priyamvada Gopal. Much of Britain's wealth is built on slavery. So why shouldn't it pay reparations? 23 April 2014 http://www.newstatesman.com/economics/2014/04/much-britains-wealth-built-slavery-so-why-shouldnt-it-pay-reparations [Accessed 03/05/2017].

²⁹ Priyamvada Gopal. Much of Britain's wealth is built on slavery so why shouldn't it pay reparations? 23 April, 2014 http://www.newstatesman.com/economics/2014/04/much-britains-wealth-built-slavery-so-why-shouldnt-it-pay-reparations [Accessed 03/05/2017].

³⁰http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.103/chapterId/2252/outputForma t/print/London-and-the-transatlantic-slave-trade.html [Accessed 03 /05/2017]. ³¹ HISTORY CHANNEL (2012) Mankind the Story of all of US. [Online Video] Available from:

³¹ HISTORY CHANNEL (2012) Mankind the Story of all of US. [Online Video] Available from: http://www.history.com/shows/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us/videos/african-slave-trade [Accessed 02/05/2017].

³² TELEVISION IN BLACK AND WHITE Ethnic Stereotypes and Popular Television Research Paper in ethnic Relations No. 19 by Professor Karen

 $Ross... \underline{http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/crer/research/publications/research \ papers/rp \ no.19.pdf} \\ p. \ 4 \ [Accessed 31/05/2017].$

Harewood suggests more scripts with middle-class Black people³³ and stable Caribbean families promoting Caribbean values would build self-esteem. Instead 'Roots'³⁴ reinforces the narrative that every attempt made by the slaves to form a family unit was thwarted with far-reaching consequences. DeGruy writes of the Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS):

... the effect of traumas was never addressed...the physical assault on their bodies...and daily assault on their psyches...and the systematic efforts to destroy the bonds of relationships that held them together as well as continuing efforts to have them believe themselves to be less than human.³⁵



"They can put chains on your body but never let them put chains on your mind".

Kunte KInte to his daughter Kizzy.

Scenes from 'Roots' 2016

Figure 2 Families in Slavery - http://www.history.com/shows/roots/season-1/episode-1/families-in-slavery

Morgan says, "enslavement is fundamentally the history of commodifying human beings... your value can be reduced to a price." ³⁶ Dr. Yohuru Williams says, "...what we saw in *Roots* was a visual representation that even under the most

³³ <u>https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jul/26/Black-actors-british-television-david-harewood-homeland</u> [Accessed 28/05/2017].

³⁴ HISTORY CHANNEL [2016] Roots [Online Video] Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LwGJWziH44 [Accessed 02/05/2017].

³⁵ DeGruy, J. Dr. (2005) *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome*. USA: Joy DeGruy Publications Inc. p. 115.

³⁶ http://www.history.com/shows/roots/season-1/episode-1/families-in-slavery [Accessed 02/ 05/2017].

extreme circumstances, one had a duty to protect one's, family".³⁷ It is not sufficient to mention the slave trade without showing the systematic process used to emasculate men and debase women and sow the seeds of dysfunction that plays out in stereotypes seen on television; David Harewood, says, "... Black culture was currently portrayed as "the kind of street, ghetto, working class" experience, he added: "It would be nice to try to define us in other ways".³⁸

There are at least six stages of separation. First, individuals are taken from their tribes and their families. Secondly, relationships formed during the middle passage were severed by death caused by sound business decisions.³⁹ Thirdly, on arrival, individuals are split dispersed to different islands. Fourthly, Black men are taken to a breaking yard⁴⁰ where literally their spirit is broken, emasculated until they become passive, fearful, and obedient.⁴¹ Women were raped as a weapon of terror to stifle their will to resist.⁴² Fifthly, on the auction block men, women and children are sold individually to the highest bidder and dispatched to diverse plantations. The sixth occurs on the plantation when they formed new relationships historians call 'fictive kin'; they created new families to replace the family they had lost⁴³.

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³⁷ http://www.history.com/topics/Black-history/nat-turner/videos/families-in-slavery?m=528e394da93ae&s=undefined&f=1&free=false [Accessed 02 /05/2017].

³⁸ http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/10191445/British-TV-drama-makes-Black-viewers-wonder-why-they-pay-their-TV-licence-actor-David-Harewood-says.html [Accessed 31//05/2017].

³⁹ Insurance claims were made for 'cargo' off loaded.

https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Slave Ships and the Middle Passage [Accessed 01/06/2017].

⁴⁰ Bishop Dr. Wayne Malcolm sermon ICAN Community Church/ICAN Global Network [19/03/ 2017].

⁴² DeGruy, J. Dr. (2005) *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*. USA: JoyDeGruy Publications Inc. p. 77.

⁴³ Professor Nell Painter. Families in Slavery. History Channel.com. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PL4XXbVT-K0[Accessed 02 05/2017].

Figure 3 A slave marriage - Birth of Nation (Parker 2016)



Hark and Esther gets married.

Birth of A Nation (Parker 2016)

However, because slaves were considered chattel, landowners used them to barter arrangements, and there is no limit to how many times this may occur as shown in *Birth of a Nation*.⁴⁴

Finally, before leaving the first underlying factor of slavery as a cause in the portrayal of the Caribbean family in stereotypical fashion is the damage caused by *damation memoriae*. Operating simultaneously with the physical abuse is emotional abuse through the destruction of the individual's identity. African tribal names are disregarded, forbidden, and changed to names chosen by the owner. This action is called, *damnatio memoriae*⁴⁵ (condemnation of memory) it involved trying to get rid of all records that the person ever existed. David Olusoga, historian confirms that the absence of direct common ancestors for the 'average' Caribbean family supports the basic tenet that it is a manufactured unit. An evaluation of the surnames of the television programmes cited earlier - Desmond, Foster, Crouch, and McKenzie – all bear the enduring mark of ownership.

⁴⁴ Birth of a Nation. (Parker 2016) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PL4XXbVT-K0 [Accessed 02/05/2017].

⁴⁵ http://www.livius.org/articles/concept/damnatio-memoriae/ [Accessed 19/03/2017].

⁴⁶ Name Identity – Bishop Dr W. Malcolm – ICAN Community Church. Sermon 19/03/2017.

⁴⁷ Olusoga, D. The history of British slave ownership has been buried: now its scale can be revealed.https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/12/british-history-slavery-buried-scale-revealed [Accessed 30/01/2107].

Moving now to the second underlying factor social engineering spearheaded in 1947 by the Tavistock Institute, UK, who by admission, "... work with hidden (sometimes unconscious) factors." Estulin describes its work as "using television to control the minds of the people". 49 Marshall McLuhan best described the power of television in 1964:

Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the "content" of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind. The effect of the medium is made strong and intense just because it is given another medium as "content." ⁵⁰

Idris Elba, Black/British actor speaking on stereotyping recently in his keynote speech to Parliament on Diversity in the Media said...

"TV hasn't caught up with reality...there's a disconnect between the real world & TV world. People in the TV world often aren't the same as people in the real world. And there's an even bigger gap between people who make TV and people who watch TV...the TV world helps SHAPE the real world."51

Based on McLuhan's logic this is a result of centralised planning in an attempt to manage social change and regulate the future development and behaviour of a society."⁵² If it is to be believed that repetition perpetuates belief, then stereotypical images of members of the Caribbean family on the screen will lead society to accept them as representative and accurate even if they have no first-

⁴⁸ http://www.tavinstitute.org/who-we-are/ [Accessed 14/04/ 2017].

⁴⁹ Estulin, D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 123 – 177.

http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf From Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man by Marshall McLuhan ©1964 CHAPTER 1 The Medium is the Message MARSHALL McCLUHAN [Accessed 30 March 2015].

⁵¹ http://www.channel4.com/info/press/news/idris-elba-s-keynote-speech-to-parliament-on-diversity-in-the-media [Accessed 14/04/ 2017]

⁵² https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=what+are+social+engineering+techniques&oq=what+are+social+eng&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j0l5.11171j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8#q=what+is+social+engineering+ [Accessed 14/04/2017].

hand knowledge or they are part of the representative group. Estulin cites that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer both critical theorists support this view.⁵³ They saw:

"...the media as a **cultural industry** that maintained power relations and served to lessen the 'resistance standards' of cultural aesthetics by popularizing certain types of culture". ⁵⁴

Therefore the television industry plays a key role in determining society behaviour and outlook. Without delving into conspiracy theories it is noted that Dr. Webster Griffin Tarpley & James Higham⁵⁵ write that "an oligarchy, [The Committee of 300 and the Tavistock Institute] believe the 'idea that certain families, [whose names can be linked to slavery], are born to rule is based on Aristotle's assertion that slavery is a necessary institution...for killing human creativity...and reducing them [slaves] to animals...constantly stressing racial [sic] characteristics ...for justifying slavery".⁵⁶ Adorno postulated in 1944 "that...television could be used to make people "forcibly retarded"".⁵⁷ If, the Gatekeepers in the television industry are primarily White and, subconsciously operate on the 'hidden factors' orchestrated by organisations like Tavistock then the expectation of a change in the stereotyping assigned to Caribbean families is unlikely.

The concept of the television is initially thought to be creative, but its effect and power lie in the scientific realm. Watching television causes endorphins to operate like opium in the brain, dulling the viewer's ability to differentiate reality from falsehood; therefore the television content is perceived as real.⁵⁸ According to Hal Becker "television creates opinion, then validates it…people have lost their ability to relate [to] the images of their own lives

⁵³ Estulin, D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 123 – 177.

⁵⁴http://www.iep.utm.edu/frankfur/ [Accessed 14/042017]

^{8#}q = the + Frankfurt + School + a + critical + theory + provider + akin + to + the + Tavistock + Institute + interpreting + notions + of + + commodification %E2%80%A6 and + mass + culture. + +

⁵⁵ Baselmans J. The hidden world part 1, Part 1 p. 176

⁵⁶http://www.peerage.org/genealogy/2000_John_Coleman_The_Committee_of_300_A_brief_history of world power.pdf

⁵⁷ Estulin, D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. . p. 165-166.

⁵⁸ ibid. Television. p. 123.

without television intervening ..." ⁵⁹ that if the world outside the TV set contradicts the images, people start trying to change the world to make it like the TV images. This is true of all television content whether it be the news, advertising or drama. It is even more disturbing when it becomes the social construct designed to control a people based solely on race and the British Caribbean family. Significantly, staff trained in techniques of mass alienation at the Frankfurt School pioneered television development. It was a critical theory provider akin to Tavistock Institute, which interprets notions of commodification and mass culture. ⁶⁰ By 1956 Adorno wrote, "Television is a medium of undreamed psychological control." With this in mind, a look at the underlying factors in practice will show the impact the psychological control has had on the appearance of British Caribbean families on British television.



John Pilger interviews the Gill family at their home in Tyneside.

Figure 4 One British Family - John Pilger, 197462

The first Black family on television appeared to the British public through John Pilger's film, *One British Family*⁶³ This was a pioneering film, presenting Black Britons as unthreatening, ordinary people with the same dreams as White people and the same rights to social and political justice However, "by the mid-1970s the absence of authentic Black family

⁵⁹ Ibid. Chapter 5. p. 156.

⁶⁰ Estulin D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 150

⁶¹ ibid p. 165

⁶² ATV [1974] One British Family [Online video] Available from: http://johnpilger.com/videos/one-british-family [Accessed 02/05/2017]

⁶³ ibid.

representation on television drama caused growing resentment. There followed a flurry of sitcoms" culminating with the arrival of the Caribbean family on screen. (See Appendix A) Britain's first all-Black sitcom was *The Fosters*, about a Caribbean couple and their three British-born children living on a South London housing estate. It was not well received primarily because it relied on American scripts from a sitcom, *Good Times*. 64

In the 1980s two major events happened in television that positively impacted how Caribbean families were portrayed for a while. The first happened in the United States when *The Cosby Show* '...offered a rare example of a financially secure and happy Black family, even if the lifestyle it depicted was an unattainable fantasy for most British (or American) Blacks." ⁶⁵ In the UK, the *Desmonds*, a Black British sitcom featuring Norman Beaton's tetchy but warmhearted title character, a barber with his own business and his forgiving wife Shirley and their stable family. ⁶⁶ However, their eldest son Michael could be seen as stereotyped as a victim of internalised racism; which is a Black person taking on a White person's persona in order to succeed. ⁶⁷ Adorno states:

"...all television programming contains overt messages as defined by the plot, characters, etc. and a hidden message... socio-psychological stimuli typical of televised material on both the descriptive and psychodynamic levels." ⁶⁸

The *Desmonds*, written by Black scriptwriter Trix Worrell is arguably the most successful British Caribbean family show to date.⁶⁹ In 2003 Gatekeepers commissioned White scriptwriters to produce a White-authorised representation of Blackness *The Crouches*. ⁷⁰ Their decision reinforces the

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⁶⁴ http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1282944/index.html [Accessed 02/06/2017].

http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1108234/ [Accessed 02/06/2017].

http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1282944/index.html [Accessed 02/06/2017].

⁶⁷ Bivens D. What is internalised racism?. Chapter 5.

http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/What is Internalized Racism.pdf. {Accessed 02/06/2017].

⁶⁸ Estulin D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 166.

⁶⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKX7u3srcxk [Accessed 02/06/2017]

⁷⁰ https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/sep/10/broadcasting.race BBC sitcom 'patronising' to Blacks | Media | The Guardian. [Accessed 02/06/2017]

continued presence of the underlying factors presented in this essay. The Crouches, which features an all-Black cast and tells the story of three generations of a family living under the same roof, came under fire because Ian Patterson the writer was White.⁷¹ University tutor, Jim Hill, taught that "...in the end, a show is only as good as its script,"72 a concept missed by the BBC1 controller, Lorraine Heggessey who described *The Crouches* as a "vibrant comedy [that] will showcase the talent of some of Britain's best Black actors and introduce new faces to a mainstream audience." 73 In support of the concept of the manufactured Caribbean family, New Nation Editor Michael Eboda, says, "Pattison had got details of Black family life wrong." 74On the surface, the show claims to showcase Caribbean family life. However, the subliminal message promotes disrespect to elders, disobedience, and *gangsta* stereotypes. Adorno was correct in his prediction that the message 'will be called out later'75 as evidenced in *Top Boy.* Dushane gang leader age 20 says to Ra'Nell age13, whose mother struggles with mental illness while introducing him to the gang culture "We're your family now;" an overt attempt to revisit the systematic destruction of the biological family and replace it with a manufactured of the British Caribbean family unit.76



Dushane 20, and Ra'Nell 13.

A scene from Top Boy.

Figure 5 Top Boy Dushane, 'We are your family now.'

⁷¹ ibid

⁷² De Montfort MA in Television Scriptwriting class. 2015-2016.

⁷³https://www.theguardian.com/media/2003/sep/10/broadcasting.race BBC sitcom 'patronising' to Blacks | Media | The Guardian. [Accessed 02/06/2017]

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⁷⁵ Estulin D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 166

⁷⁶ Top Boy trailer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7M2iZctsXks [Accessed 01 /06/2017]

First and second generation Caribbean individuals who fight to hold on to Caribbean family values together; religious values, discipline, and culture – battle against, losing more often than not to the powerful medium. Noticeably in the representation of British Caribbean values, those long- held moral values are undermined. Caribbean people continually struggle with fictive kin syndrome as the stereotype of the single parent, adulterous male, is repeated on and off screen.

In spite of important diversity policies adopted by all the major networks (See Appendix B) and Black professionals being employed off screen, there remains a resistance to commissioning series work that emulates the positive in the Caribbean family. The reasons given for this as quoted by a current Gatekeeper was "that most of the time the material is not good." When pressed on the definition of 'good' the example of *Chewing Gum* was cited as a good show.

77 Even though Black actress and writer Michaela Coel is British/Ghanaian,
African families hold many of the moral values shared by Caribbean families.

Although not often acknowledged, they too lost their common ancestors, as there are few clear records of the persons forcibly taken from the various tribes during the slave trade. The difference lies in the fact that those who remained in Ghana, or elsewhere on the West Coast, were able to rebuild their lives without the physical displacement, indignity, trauma and fear of chattel slavery.

In *Chewing Gum* the same hidden message is played out as in *Top Boy*, estate living, meaningless lives with minimum responsibility and no plans which are a far cry from the aspirations and pride expressed by Mr. Gill in *'One British Family.'* A clue to the moral compass that determines the Gatekeeper's decision-making process lies in the philosophy behind social engineering - brainwashing. The following comment by Rachel Springett, Commissioning Editor for Channel 4 Comedy, said: "Coel is a force to be reckoned with... I was immediately blown away. Immeasurably talent brimming with energy and ideas, I'm thrilled to work

⁷⁷ De Montfort University, MA Television Scriptwriting class. Guest lecturer. 2017.

alongside her...to bring her unique vision to the E4 audience."⁷⁸ Estulin states "the generation with the strongest set of moral values...fought in World War II".⁷⁹ Many Caribbean people fought alongside their White counterparts and both experienced, if not to the same degree, family displacement. They in turn - were born before the advent of the television, which was introduced to the masses in 1953 for the Coronation - and were the hardest to brainwash. The objective of brainwashing is to make succeeding generations more infantile, more animallike, more amoral, thus easier to control...The TV set became the moralizer, and to a large degree it has succeeded.⁸⁰

Estulin purports that "the average age of professional creatives [Gatekeepers] is 35-45 who were weaned [unwittingly] on television".⁸¹ Again, like during slavery, the process is systematic. Some creative professionals have been heard to suggest that their decisions are often made based on personal taste because they know their audience. This is correct as television content consummation exists as a result of the morals and conscience of television professionals. Referring to the portrayal of the Caribbean family, if commissioners and producers with the power to green light a project have no understanding and knowledge of the Caribbean family, nor the will to find out its structure, they cannot be accused of not accurately portraying the Caribbean family. They can, however, be held accountable for impeding the career opportunities for qualified Black professionals on and off screen who want to engineer change but are blocked; Pat Younge..."formerly the BBC most senior Black executive." claimed British television was run by a "pretty White commissioning and channel elite."⁸²

There are echoes of the construct Professor Gates Jnr. spoke of when the slave master did not think the Black person 'deserved' the same treatment as

⁷⁸ http://www.channel4.com/info/press/news/bursting-with-flavour-e4-announces-tasty-new-comedy-series-for-2015 [Accessed 01/06/2017].

⁷⁹ Estulin D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 160. ⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Estulin, D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 161.

⁸² http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/who-needs-the-bbc-Black-comedy-stars-take-the-youtube-route-to-fame-9223710.html [Accessed 02/06/ 2017].

himself and the root of the stereotyping of British Caribbean family members. The belief that the Caucasian race is superior ⁸³to any other race is a result of subtle brainwashing. Hall cites Dyer's point that "closure and exclusion symbolically fixes boundaries and excludes everything that does not belong". ⁸⁴It is argued that that this underlying factor presents itself in casting practices, in commissioning decisions, in off screen recruitment strategies. In short, any avenue British Caribbean people pursue, wishing to change the ubiquitous behaviour of Gatekeepers, is blocked. Broadcasters present the counterargument that wide-ranging diversity policies now make it possible for other races to compete in all areas of the television industry. In doing so this confirms Plato's Meno dialogue, "Socrates brings out the innate genius in a slave boy, by encouraging him to solve the problem of doubling the square. ⁸⁵He thus proved that slavery is unjust, by showing the creative nature of the human species". ⁸⁶

Fortuitously, it is with that positive attitude that the third and fourth generation Caribbean people has proved Plato's theory correct; increasingly members of Caribbean families have demonstrated that there are viable alternatives to facing risk-averse Gatekeepers. Samuell Benta⁸⁷ created and self-funded his Caribbean family show called 'All about the McKenzies' online which was commissioned by Jane Mote, programme director at London Live:

"... [I] was "shocked" by the barriers that young Black comedy talent has faced in breaking into modern television. "They have made a lot of effort to get into the mainstream broadcasters, and had lots of meetings, but every time they get knocked back. Television has become more and more risk-averse," she said. "But the talent is bursting out of YouTube."88"

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⁸³ What is racism - ARIP - Google Sites [Accessed 02/06/ 2017].

https://sites.google.com/site/aripafhighschool/what-is-racism [Accessed 26 /03/2017].

⁸⁴ Hall, S. (ed.) (1997) Representation Cultural Representations of Signifying Practices. P257 -259 ⁸⁵ http://www.larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2008/2008_1-9/2008-7/pdf/42-55_3507.pdf [Accessed 02/06/ 2017].

⁸⁶ https://www.thoughtco.com/slave-boy-experiment-in-platos-meno-2670668 [Accessed 02/06/2017].

⁸⁷ http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2197593/ [Accessed 02/06/ 2017].

Who needs the BBC? Black comedy stars take the YouTube

^{...}http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/who-needs-the-bbc-Black-comedy-stars-take-the-youtube-route-to-fame-9223710.html [Accessed 02/06/ 2017].

Figure 6 All About The McKenzies⁸⁹



Watson to Samuel:

"All you gonna get is the role of our old man, slave or gangsta or drug dealer number two."

All about the McKenzies
https://www.youtube.com/w
atch?v=Bd5sPs8Vnb0&t=944s

Timestamp: 5.34 -6.08

All things considered, it seems reasonable to assume that the evidence presented demonstrates that underlying facts do exist and have a direct bearing on the 90 stereotypical portrayal of British /Caribbean families on television. However, it is encouraging that current evidence signals a dynamic attempt by a new generation of Caribbean men and women to reject the critical theorists' narrative by thinking outside of the box. Instead, their modus operandi is to play to their strengths. Banta writes, directs, and acts in *All about the McKenzies* and his on screen British Caribbean family does not perpetuate the stereotypes but instead addresses life from a British Caribbean perspective. He has demonstrated the strength of the Caribbean family, which is not reliant on bloodlines but on unity in adversity by teaming up with professionals, Black and White, in the industry who are available and not risk averse; Pat Younge, who is now Managing Director of Sugar Productions.

Brothers with No Game is another successful web series rejected by the BBC. Jay Marsh, a Black actor, says "it was told the series was too mature for the

⁸⁹ ITV [2016] *All about the McKenzies* [Online Video] Available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bd5sPs8Vnb0&t=944s [Accessed 02/05/2017].

⁹⁰ The Dual Higgs Mechanism and the Origin of Mass in the Universe. http://cds.cern.ch/record/474083/files/0010340.pdf [Accessed 31/05/2017].

audience the broadcaster wanted to reach.⁹¹ Nevertheless, it too was commissioned by London Live another indication that Gatekeepers that are representative of the broadcaster's demographics are not risk adverse in supporting new initiatives.⁹² It could be argued that this echoes the 'fictive kin' behaviour discussed earlier being used in a different arena to avert the negative effects of rejection to achieve a unifying result. Like the *Desmonds*' also re-run on London Live, humour cuts across ethnic divides allowing the audience to engage with positive characters and the situations without demeaning the values of Caribbean families. Trix Worrell talking to the BFI Screenonline said: "Unlike so much 'Black representation' that had preceded it, *Desmond's* was not problemled, managing instead to portray the ups and downs experienced by any ordinary, hard-working family in an affectionate, familiar and comedic way."⁹³

Mainstream broadcasters' shortsightedness is captured by Simone Pennant, a producer at the TV Collective "their audiences see their work as great shows, which happen to have a Black cast rather than Black shows loses them audiences". He Tiemo Talk of the Town's review in November 2016 in response to ITV2's commissioning 'All about the McKenzies' for a pilot series..." the show was the victim of poor scheduling and non-existent screen or social media promotion". The press release mentioned the show amongst others as a single, which contradicted Benta's dream of a continuing the television series. It suggests that the broadcaster had pre-determined not to commission the series another example of 'closure' and 'exclusion." 95 96

The most compelling challenge facing Gatekeepers lies in their inability or unwillingness to embrace the changes that are taking place in the industry and in

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⁹¹ http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/who-needs-the-bbc-Black-comedy-stars-take-the-youtube-route-to-fame-9223710.html [Accessed 31/ 05/ 2017].

http://www.londoncommunications.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/llb_final_14.03.21.pdf BFI Screenonline: Worrell, Trix (1960-) Biography.

http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/559692/ [Accessed 31/05/2017].

⁹⁴ http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/who-needs-the-bbc-Black-comedy-stars-take-the-youtube-route-to-fame-9223710.html [Accessed 31/05/2017].

⁹⁵ https://tiemotalkofthetown.wordpress.com/2016/11/21/all-about-the-mckenzies-pilot-2016-tv-review/ [Accessed 31/05/2017].

⁹⁶ Hall, S. (ed) (1997) Representation Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices. London: Sage.

society. Gatekeepers would argue that the audience response to shows like Chewing Gum and Top Boy, in which Coel says she is rejecting the stereotypes about life on a council estate, 97 justifies their assumptions as correct. The position taken in this essay⁹⁸ is that it is a repetition of the same narrative, the promiscuous Black woman, the Black clown mentioned by Malik. 99 Again, the question could be posed why this is so within the Caribbean arena and not, for example, the African television industry. A case in point would be *Meet the Adebanjos* (2012) a sitcom about a British-Nigerian family. When Debra Odutuyo, scriptwriter/producer failed to get support from all of the major British channels, she joined forces with Andrew Osavemo, her cousin and took it online. The overwhelming audience response piqued the interest of African television networks and now three series in, it broadcasts on several networks across Africa. What they had working in their favour was Nollywood. 100 British Caribbean nationals operate at a disadvantage, as there is no regional film and television industry in the UK or in the Caribbean providing support;¹⁰¹ "Each country's filmmaking industry or scene is separate from the rest," said Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival programmer and editorial director Jonathan Ali.

This brings the narrative back to the underlying factors addressed in this essay. In particular Miller¹⁰² and De Gruy both speak of 'Crab in a barrel Syndrome (CBS). Caribbean people have a tendency to 'hold each other back' from opportunities for advancement even when presented with an incentive. As demonstrated earlier, Black people were socialised to believe that they were inhuman, lazy, untrustworthy, and criminal. Therefore, now the promotion of one Black person over another leaves a feeling of a sense of inferiority and

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⁹⁷ http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/tv-radio/2015/11/chewing-gum-new-comedy-rejecting-stereotypes-about-life-council-estate [Accessed 01/06/2017].

⁹⁸ Assessing the ethical weight of cultural, religious and spiritual claims in the clinical context.. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.126.2341&rep=rep1&type=pdf[Accessed 01/06/2017].

⁹⁹ Malik, S. (2002) *Representing Black Britain*. London: Sage P. 99.

¹⁰⁰ http://nollywoodmovies.tv/ [Accessed 30/05/2017].

¹⁰¹ http://cms2.caricom.org/documents/10221-presentation by mahmood patel - developing the caribbean film industry.pdf [Accessed 3 June 2017].

¹⁰² Carliss Miller. A Phenomenological Analysis of the Crabs in the Barrel Syndrome http://proceedings.aom.org/content/2014/1/15556.short [Accessed 30/05/2017].

betrayal and abandoned by individuals considered to be an equal.¹⁰³ Sigmund Freud, as cited by Estulin believes that the key to brainwashing is to create a systematic environment of stress and tension to disrupt morally informed judgment and more susceptible to suggestion.¹⁰⁴ Susceptibility allows Adorno's theory of the socio-psychological stimuli to operate based on mistrust fueled by the stereotypes on our screen. ¹⁰⁵For example, Black men are portrayed as uneducated thugs, philanderers, or scammers like Dushane in Top Boy, and Black women who are promiscuous, loud; foul-mouthed Tracey in Chewing Gum con artists without any stable family support. This distrust is subtly planted in the scheduling and content of television programmes and imitated in society.

The British television industry, while setting a framework for society, has for economic reason been bought out by US networks. (See Appendix B) This can have both a positive and a negative effect on the way British Caribbean families are represented, as US gate-keepers as not as adverse to content that promotes positive Black families.

Alternatively, more British Caribbean family images can create a positive response like the following stated about a scene in *Undercover* (BBC 2016):

"...Much less dramatic but unforgettable nonetheless is a scene in which Maya, her husband, and children eat a meal in their home. Yep, that's it. In 2016, it is an outrage that it's a big deal to see a successful, affluent, complicated Black family sit at a dinner table eating pasta. But the sad truth is, it's a milestone. As is the way race is handled *in Undercover:* central to its plot and themes but not the sole defining feature of its characters. Just like real life." 106

In 2014, David Abraham Channel 4 chief executive "warned that the UK independent production sector is 'being snapped up almost wholesale... by US media moguls" for evidence of their success see Appendix B. The hidden messages that want the next generation to replicate the negativity of the previous generation will continue to inform society if British broadcasters fail to

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¹⁰³ DeGruy J. Dr. (2005) *Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome*. USA: Joy DeGruy Publications Inc P.161.

¹⁰⁴ Estulin D. (2015) *Tavistock Institute Social Engineering the Masses*. USA: Trine Day. p. 135.

¹⁰⁵ ibid p. 166.

¹⁰⁶ Undercover review – a tangled drama of deceit and betrayal ...

https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/apr/04/undercover-review-tangled-drama-deceit-betrayal-the-durrells [Accessed 01/06/2017].

change how they portray British Caribbean family stereotypes.¹⁰⁷ For example, if, as Black actor David Oleyelo suggests, Black scriptwriters start to write historical material that is not driven by the slave narrative a positive outcome could be achieved. In the light of this essay the positive contribution that the British Caribbean family has made to society would challenge the hidden message creating a demand for better quality programming ¹⁰⁸

To conclude, the portrayal of British Caribbean families on British television appearing stereotypical is as a result of two underlying factors, slavery, and social engineering. Evidence presented demonstrates the key role critical theorists and organisations engaged in social engineering play in manipulating the culture industry through television and their control of the creative industry Gatekeepers. Estulin's research on the Tavistock Institute and De Gruy' studies on Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome provides the historical, technical and psychological framework for the argument that the Caribbean family is a manufactured unit. This is supported by historical and visual data of the methodology in the industrialization of slavery. The behaviour patterns and characters created from slavery translate into the stereotypes portrayed in British Caribbean family shows. An awareness of the presence of CBS in Caribbean people accounts for the lack of regional support for the British Caribbean Television industry in the UK and a general mistrust amongst and between Black people. Finally, evidence was presented to demonstrate advances in the third and fourth British Caribbean generation's resistance to the two underlying factors. In closing, the evaluation suggests that in spite of hidden messages, racial overtones and the devastating imprint left by slavery, British Caribbean people have rejected the negatives. They are working together and successfully producing alternative non-stereotypical programmes that by-pass risk-averse, controlled Gatekeepers. The two underlying factors have been identified as the root cause for the significant and sustained effect on decisionmaking and the perpetuation of the stereotypical portrayal of British Caribbean families on British television.

 $[\]frac{107}{\text{https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/oct/27/the-great-british-tv-sell-off-who-owns-the-uks-favourite-shows} \text{ [Accessed 05/06/17].}$

 $^{^{108}\,}https://www.theguardian.com/film/2016/oct/06/david-oyelowo-a-united-kingdom-people-of-colour-film [Accessed 01/06/2017].$

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+Nate+Parker+Movie&source=Inms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=OahUKEwjh0Ka307PUAhWQF8AK HUF0BqgQ AUIDCgD&biw=1416&bih=752#imgrc=BnJ7Aq4S

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APPENDIX A.

BLACK BRITISH TELEVISION FAMILY SHOWS

Caribbean family shows are marked with **

Blouse and Skirt	2000	BBC 3	
Chef	1993-1996	BBC 1	
**The Crouches	2003 -2005	BBC1	
**Desmond's	1989-1994	Channel 4	
**The Fosters	1976-1977	ITV	
Kerching!	2006	BBC 1	
Meet the Adebanjos	2012 -	Nigerian	
Mixed Blessings	1978-1980	ITV	
**Porkpie	1995-1996	Channel 4	
UGetMe	BBC1	CBBC	
Curry and Chips	1969		
Love thy Neighbour	1972-76	ITV	
Babyfather	2001-2002	BBC 2	
Dubplate Drama	2005-2009		
Little Miss Jocelyn	2006-2008	Channel 4 BBC 3 and BBC 2	
,			
The Real McCoy	1991-1996	BBC 2	
Top Boy	2011, 2013	Channel 4	
West 10 LDN	2008	BBC 3	
Chewing gum	2015 -	E4	
**Sonny D	2017	BBC III online	
Undercover	2016	BBC 1	
**Empire Road	1978 -1979	BBC, BBC2	
** All about the	2012 -	Online	
McKenzies		London Live & ITV	
Brothers with No Game	2014 -	Online & London Live	

 ${\it Chart compiled by Beverley Cooper-Chambers from You Tube or production websites.}$

APPENDIX B.

OWNERSHIP OF BRITISH TELEVISION & CABLE NETWORKS & DIVERSITY POLICIES

	TELEVISION NETWORK OR CABLE NETWORK	Owner	COUNTRY
BBC	http://www.bbc.co.uk/diversity	Public Corporation	UK
ITV	http://www.itv.com/documents/pdf/1411 28 Social Partnership.pdf	ITV Network	UK
CHANNEL 4	http://www.channel4.com/info/corporate/about/c4-diversity	A public corporation of the Department for Culture, Media & Sport,	UK
CHANNEL 5	http://www.channel5.com/wp- content/uploads/2017/02/Diversity Inclus ion_Strategy.pdf	Viacom International Media	USA
SKY	https://corporate.sky.com/bigger-picture- 2015/responsible- business/people/diversity	Sky plc	USA
VIRGIN	http://www.virginmedia.com/corporate/s ustainability/goals-and- performance/more-inclusive.html	Liberty Global	USA
UK TV	https://corporate.uktv.co.uk/working-at-uktv/article/our-benefits/	Scripps Network Interactive/BBC Worldwide	USA

Chart compiled by Beverley Cooper-Chambers using information from Wikipedia.