FILMIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BRITISH RAJ IN THE 1980S: CULTURAL IDENTITY, OTHERNESS AND HYBRIDITY

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INTRODUCTION

'All cultures are hybrid […]. To speak of cultural 'mixing' makes sense only from inside a social world' (Werbner in Tate, 2005: 65). This introductory quotation succinctly expresses the main points I wish to explore in this dissertation. Broadly speaking, I propose to base my analysis of 1980's British Raj films on Stuart Hall's theories on identity formation (1997: 5-7) to prove is that identities are, for the most part, culturally and artificially constructed. Although it can be affirmed that 'all cultures are hybrid', from a social and political point of view, identities are built up within the social net of complex power relations. Consequently, no matter how conscious we are of the artificiality of cultural constructs, social relations create hierarchies of power and marginalisation in certain communities and within certain contexts. It is on these political grounds that the concept of 'hybridity' matters, as it can be used as a tool to undermine such oppressive power relations.

In the post-colonial world of the 1980s,[1] hybridity was a concept which cannot be overlooked. As a result of the influx of immigrants from the former British colonies after the Second World War, the United Kingdom, during the later half of the twentieth century, became a multicultural society. It was the presence of foreign cultures and the rise of New Right policies during the 1980s that provoked a reaffirmation of the discourses on national identity based on an imaginary homogeneous 'white' past.

[1] In the book *The Empire Writes Back*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin give several definitions to the term 'post-colonial': 'The semantic basis of the term "post-colonial" might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power. It has occasionally been employed in some earlier work in the area to distinguish between the periods before and after independence […]. We use the term "post-colonial", however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day […]. [It] is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European domination and effects of this on contemporary literatures' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1989:1-2). I share with Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin their last definition of post-coloniality. However, throughout this dissertation I shall be using the term in a broader sense, that is, in cultural rather than specifically literary terms. I will therefore include the coloniser countries and their cultural productions as belonging to the 'post-colonial world'.

During the Thatcher decade, the imperial past was seen as a point of reference in the search for a sense of 'Britishness' (Wollen, 1991: 179). As a consequence, the 1980s were characterised by a general harking back to the past (Bigsby, 1993:31-33), in literature, with historiographic metafictions such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985), or John Fowles' *A Maggot*, (1986); in architecture with the *cottagey* and *neo-Georgian* styles (Samuel, 1999: 65); in the 'heritage industry' with museums and national heritage centres (246); as well as in cinema with 'Nostalgic Screen Fictions' (Wollen, 1991: 179) such as *Chariots of Fire* (Hudson, 1981), *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1985), *Maurice* (Ivory, 1987) or *Howard's End* (Ivory, 1991) among others.

Amongst the many cinematic adaptations of the past that appeared along the 1980s, several, in my opinion, deserve special attention because the particular vision of history they proffer highlights social tensions, especially those concerning ethnic relations, both in the time the stories were set and at the moment the films were released. Screen fictions of the type, set in the British imperial past in India, labelled 'Raj productions' (Hill, 1999: 99) include such films as *Gandhi* (Attenborough, 1982), *Heat and Dust* (Ivory, 1983), *A Passage to India* (Lean, 1984), and *The Deceivers* (Meyer, 1988), the made-for TV film *Kim* (Davies, 1984) and the TV serials *The Far Pavilions* (Duffell, Channel Four, 1984) and *The Jewel in the Crown* (Morahan and O'Brien, ITV, 1982).

Moreover, the 1980s witnessed an increase of interest in these films not only in Britain but also across the Atlantic. In the United States, movies such as *Gandhi* or *A Passage to India* were nominated for a number of Academy Awards, the former being awarded eight Oscars and the later two.[2] Box-office success in the USA proved to be a

[2] *Gandhi* got the 1983 Oscar for best picture, actor in a leading role (Ben Kingsley), directing (Richard Attenborough), screenplay written directly for the screen (John Briley), cinematography (Billy Williams and Ronnie Taylor), art direction (Stuart Craig and Bob Laing for art decoration and Michael Seirton for set decoration), film editing (John Bloom) and Costume design (John Mollo and Bhanu Athaiya). *A Passage to*

boosting influence for the British film industry. Mrs Thatcher's policy of privatisation and free-market economy was fast damaging the arts in general and the film industry in particular. The lack of public subsidies forced cinema directors and producers to rely mostly on funds from television or private companies. In order to profit from the US market, many of the films produced strived to present images of Britain's glorious past that American audiences would find attractive. As Kellner states, media culture in most capitalist countries is, above all, a 'commercial form of culture' (1995: 16), devised to appeal to mass audiences.

This thesis aims to analyse the historically contingent emergence and success of the British Raj productions in the 1980s and the conflicting meanings that can be derived from these cultural texts when studied against the socio-cultural and political background of the time. More concretely, my purpose is to focus on the ambivalent meanings that can be elicited from these screen fictions that invite spectators to embark on an escapist and nostalgic journey back in time to an epoch apparently free from the social and multicultural tensions of the moment, while, at the same time, are highly critical of the injustices committed during the imperial past. This study's target is therefore to unearth and demonstrate how those criticisms of the past in matters concerning ethnicity, gender and class are equally relevant to the society in which these films were produced.

Presenting, as they do, similar ideological struggles in their portrayal of the past, I have decided to include in the corpus not only feature films but also Raj TV serials broadcast in the decade under study. Even so, I shall be concentrating more fully on the screen productions which enjoyed great popularity at the time, in terms of audience and/or award: *Gandhi* (Attenborough, 1982), *Heat and Dust* (Ivory, 1983), *A Passage to India*

India was awarded the 1985 Oscar for best actress in a supporting role (Peggy Ashcroft) and original score (Maurice Jarre).

(Lean, 1984) and the TV serials *The Far Pavilions* (Duffel, Channel Four, 1984) and *The Jewel in the Crown* (Morahan and O'Brien, ITV, 1984).[3]

The methodological approach in this study will be cultural, with special attention to the ideological implications of the texts in relation to their context. As stated before, these films not only reflect the mainstream ideology, they also dramatise the tensions and problems, present in the social background at the time they were produced. For this reason, I would like to briefly mention the relevance of the role of cultural studies when applied to this kind of cinematic production.

Basing his overview of the contemporary field of cultural studies on Raymond Williams's concept of 'culture' as texts and practices of everyday life (1977: 16-20), John Storey admits that in the realm of cultural studies, 'culture' is defined 'politically rather than aesthetically' (2002: 2). Storey explains that British cultural studies are grounded on two Marxist assumptions. The first is the conception that a proper analysis of a cultural text or practice should be inserted in its 'social and historical conditions of production and consumption'. Consequently,

> history and culture are not separate entities […]. History and text/practice are inscribed in each other and are embedded together as part of the same process. Cultural studies insists that culture's importance derives from the fact that it helps constitute the structure and the shape of history (2002: 3).

The second premise taken from Marxism is the fact that capitalist societies present internal and unequal divisions in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class lines. According to this hypothesis, culture becomes the site where all these divisions struggle to be represented and contested. In Storey's words: 'culture is a terrain on which there takes place a continual struggle over meaning, in which subordinate groups attempt to resist the

[3] For the reasons mentioned above, I will not analyse in depth – although I will made reference to – other less successful films made at the time such as *The Deceivers* (Meyer, 1988) and *Kim* (Davies, 1984). Because my study narrows down to Raj Films, that is, productions set in the imperial past in India, nor shall I be including in my analysis, *White Mischief* (Radford, 1988), a film set in colonial Africa.

imposition of meanings which bear the interests of dominant groups. It is what makes culture ideological' (4).

Storey then draws on the concept of ideology as taken from Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a form of consensus between dominating and dominated social groups. The question is thus to interpret and elicit the competing meanings that are articulated in a cultural text or practice (4). In 'Encoding and Decoding', Stuart Hall explains the process of communication in terms of the articulation of meanings in the code and the context within which the message is transmitted:

> The apparatuses, relations and practices of production thus issue, at a certain moment (the moment of 'production/circulation') in the form of symbolic vehicles constituted within the rules of 'language'. It is in this discursive form that the circulation of the 'product' takes place. The process thus requires, at the production end, its material instruments, - its 'means' – as well as its own sets of social (production) relations – the organization and combination of practices within media apparatuses. But it is in the discursive form that the circulation of the product takes place, as well as its distribution to different audiences. Once accomplished, the discourse must be translated – transformed again – into social practices if the circuit is to be completed and effective, If no 'meaning' is taken, there can be no 'consumption' […]. We must recognize that the discursive form of the message has a privileged position in the communicative exchange (from the point of view of circulation), and that the moments of 'encoding' and 'decoding', though only 'relatively autonomous', in relation to the communicative process as a whole, are *determinate* moments (1986: 128-9; italics in original).

Hall therefore highlights the importance of the context in the articulation of meanings in the process of communication of cultural practices. Moreover, he argues that representation of discursive 'knowledge' is never transparent but grounded in consensual codes. These codes can be so widely distributed in a culture or society – and learned at so early an age – that they seem to be 'naturally' given and thus lose their consideration as 'artificial' cultural products. In this case, 'codes have been profoundly *naturalized*' in a process that conceals the ideological effects that the meanings these cultural practices may convey (1986: 132; italics in original).

An important issue Hall adds is that for all this process of 'naturalisation' of the codes, meanings are by no means fixed. On the contrary, they are subject to contextual fluidity, because, at the connotative level of the sign, 'situational ideologies alter and

transform signification' (133). This leads to Hall's insistence on the multiplicity of meanings a sign can confer, a theory he develops out of Volosinov's notion of 'accentuation'. A sign is open to accentuations, that is, the acquisition of different meanings in determinate situational contexts, which provokes a struggle over meanings in language and representation. Hall retakes Volosinov's theory and coins the concept of polysemy in the context of textual representation of cultural practices. According to him, polysemy refers to the different meanings – or 'accents' – a text may convey, yet it does not mean that it entails random plurality. It is at this point that Hall introduces the concepts of dominant, negotiated and oppositional meanings. The *dominant* or *preferred meanings* are those that 'the institutional/political/ideological order imprinted in them and have themselves become institutionalized' (134). The negotiated position 'acknowledges the legitimacy of hegemonic positions to make the grand significations (abstract), while at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules – it operates with exceptions to the rule' (137). Finally, the oppositional code 'detotalized the message in the preferred code to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference' (138).

This polysemy that is present in every cultural text and practice derives from Raymond Williams' analysis of *dominant*, *residual* and *emergent* features to be found in a cultural organisation. The dominant or 'effective' system could be defined as the hegemonic dominance of certain meanings and values that suit the interests of the groups in power at any given historical moment. This concept would correspond to Hall's 'dominant' or 'preferred readings' in the textual representations of the culture under study. Residual practices are, according to Williams, those ideas, attitudes and ideologies formed in the past but 'still active in the cultural process, not only and often not as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present (1988: 122). In contrast, 'emergent'

cultural elements correspond to the 'new meanings and values, the new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships [that] are continually being created' (123). It is difficult, Williams acknowledges, to differentiate between novel elements driven out of an evolution of the dominant culture, and those emergent practices as alternative or oppositional to hegemonic standards. In any case, culture is a site of incessant struggle over cultural practices, meanings and representational strategies, together with their representations in cultural products. In the analysis of both the British socio-cultural context and the selected corpus of films, I shall attempt to draw out those polysemic meanings that once prevailed and those dramatised in the contemporary filmic representations of the imperial past, in terms of gender, class, ethnicity and national identity.

Given that, from a cultural studies perspective, culture is invariably understood in the broad sense of 'the practice of everyday life', such a viewpoint automatically encompasses the notions of 'high' and 'popular'. This perspective does away with the Arnoldian division between 'Culture', with capital letters, referring to 'the best that has been thought and said' and 'anarchy', or 'lack of culture' which was associated with popular culture or with social practices of the working classes (Storey, 1994: 49). This division still prevails when cultural practices that are envisaged as mass-consuming products, and thus closely related to 'popular culture', are disregarded from academic analysis in favour of what is considered to be as 'good' or 'high' art. On this view, the screen productions I propose to study in this dissertation belong to the realm of popular culture or, more concretely, to what Douglas Kellner labels as 'media culture'. Kellner emphasises the importance of including a cultural approach to media studies in the academy since, as he argues, a cultural studies slant enables the exploration of issues of identity construction in society. In his own words:

> Media culture provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality and of 'us' and 'them'. Media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and deepest values: it defines what it is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories and images provide the symbols, myths and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today. Media culture provides the materials to create identities whereby individuals insert themselves into contemporary techno-capitalist societies and which is producing a new form of global culture (1998: 1).

By linking the study of media culture with Hall's notion of polysemy, Kellner concludes that such a study seeks to explore:

> the ways that contemporary media culture provides forms of ideological domination that help to reproduce the current relations of power, while also providing resources for the construction of identities and for empowerment, resistance and struggle. I argue that media culture is a contested terrain across which key social groups and competing political ideologies struggle for dominance and that individuals live these struggles through the images, discourses, myths and spectacle of media culture (2).

In order to elicit the struggle over representation and the competing meanings that media texts provide, Kellner advocates a cultural method that is critical, multicultural and multiperspectival (4), which involves 'border crossings across disciplines from text to context, and thus from texts to culture and society' (28). This approach enables a wider perspective on cultural media texts so that preferred, negotiated and oppositional meanings, to use Hall's terms, can be elicited.

Kellner also points to the fact that culture is being turned into a commodity in most capitalist societies, a development that has important consequences for the study of the media:

> First of all, production for profit means that the executives for the culture industries attempt to produce artifacts that will be popular, that will see or, in the case of radio and television, that will attract mass audiences. In many cases, this means production of lowest common denominator artifacts that will no offend mass audiences and that will attract a maximum of customers. But precisely the need to sell their artifacts means that the products of the culture industries must resonate to social experience, must attract large audiences, and must thus offer attractive products, which may shock, break with conventions, contain social critique, or articulate current ideas that may be the product of progressive social movements.
>
> Thus, while media culture largely advances the interest s of the class that owns and controls large media conglomerates, its products are also involved in social conflict between competing groups and articulate conflicting positions, sometimes advancing forces of resistance and progress. Consequently, media culture cannot be simply dismissed as a banal instrument of the dominant ideology but must be differentially interpreted and contextualized within the matrix of the competing social discourses and forces which constitute it (17).

This is precisely what I intend to demonstrate in this dissertation, through the study of Raj filmic productions in the Thatcherite context of the 1980s. Even though most of the films to be analysed belong to the mainstream branch of cinema and bearing in mind that the producers' ultimate goal was to make profit out of the fashionable heritage industry and the return to the splendorous British imperial past, my aim is to elicit other competing meanings out of the dominant discourses of the 1980s. In other words, my intention is to explore to what extent the struggle for representation in those screen fictions reflects the competing dominant, residual and emergent discourses in a multicultural British society of the 1980s.

In *Reinventing Film Studies*, Christine Gledhill also locates contemporary film studies in an interdisciplinary realm in order to deepen the analysis that can be made of cinematic productions: 'Film studies reinvents itself by intersecting with neighbouring disciplines – media studies, cultural studies, visual culture – in an engagement with film as popular and mass culture' (2000: 1). In Gledhill's book, Bill Nichols underlines the importance of visual culture within the space of media and cultural studies. He bases his theory on Saussure's definition of 'signs' as resulting form an arbitrary association between signified and signifier. According to Saussure, any sign-system of communication is contextually contingent, in other words, signs are parts of apparently stable but ultimately moving sing-systems (Pope, 1998: 126). On these grounds, Nichols states that:

> The concept of visual culture signals the importance of both culture and the visual to contemporary theory. The importance of *visual* culture corresponds to the importance of *multi*culturalism, or identity politics, where the struggle to bring diverse, potentially incompatible, identities into being entails an effort to give visual representation to what had been previously homogeneized, displaced or repressed (2000: 38).

Nichols then draws on the issue of visual representation as crucial in the intersection of cultural and film studies fields. In his own words:

> *Representation* is a term that bears much of the burden of mediating the relationship between symbolic forms of communication and the social or historical context in which they occur or to which they refer […].Representation makes possible fetishism, as we invest in the representation what we would have invested in that for which it stands, and misrepresentation, as the recourse to signs allows deceptions and confusions to occur. Both misrepresentation and misunderstanding inevitably arise when what a representation stands for is itself a social construct, open to

> permutation. Signifiers, the material signs we attend to, do not invariably correspond either to fixed signifieds, the meanings we associate with them, or to precise referents, the things they refer to outside their own code or language. The emphasis on one possible signified may be at the expense of other, suppressed signifieds (43-44).

Nichols concludes that the signifying system in cinema engages with the 'endless chains of discourse that constitute a culture' (44) and points to the fact that this type of film study, carried out within the contextual realm of culture, is not only formal but political:

> The 'remains' of the referent, no matter how tattered or mediated, function to affirm distinctive qualities to the historical world, to anchor signification to beliefs and to orientate subjectivity toward possible action. A multiplicity of referential 'remains' are quite commensurate with different, multicultural ways of seeing: theorizing how such frameworks correspond with one another and with what degree of compatibility, though, calls for a stress on comparative methods that have been slow to arise in relation to an identity politics that emphasizes the autonomy and often the insularity of one group from another (44).

According to Simon During, the field of cultural studies was born as 'an engaged form of analysis' which 'worked in the interests of those who have fewest resources' (1994: 1-2). In the same way, he also considers that:

> Most individuals aspire and struggle the great part of their lives and it is easy to forget this if one is just interpreting texts rather than thinking about reading as a life-practice. Cultural studies insists that one cannot just ignore – or accept – division and struggle (During, 1994: 2).

Similarly, Chantal Cornut-Gentille and Felicity Hand state that:

> Postmodern cultural analysis is more aware than ever of the irreductible diversity of voices and interests, while, at the same time, it also recognizes the increasingly globalized forms which seek to harness, exploit and even curtail – this diversity (1995: 14).

Cultural studies have thus become 'the voice of the other, the marginal in the academy' (During, 1994: 17). This contains within it a double meaning, in that, on the one hand, these marginal voices come from the cultural productions made by people considered to belong to the 'other' group. On the other hand, this marginality may appear in the form of dissenting voices within the mainstream discourse because of the polysemic meanings inherent in all cultural practices. Hence, despite the visual splendour of the past exhibited in the Raj Revival films, the spectator is nevertheless able to perceive the dissenting voices of

marginalized characters. As commented before, in these films, the marginal groups are embodied mainly by female and non-white characters.[4]

Gender and ethnic relations are therefore crucial for the understanding of our society and its cultural productions. The Raj films, when analysed through the perspective of gender and race, not only appear as nostalgic white patriarchal productions, but also as a 'black'[5] and female revisionism of the, until then, dominant historical perspective. In this sense, it is worth taking into account Bhabha's conception of the prefix 'post' when applied to different social discourses in today's society:

> If the jargon of our times –postmodernity, postcoloniality, postfeminism – has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the 'post' to indicate sequentiality – *after*-feminism; or polarity – anti-modernism. These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment (1994: 4).

Cultural studies, is therefore an important tool in the analysis of cultural productions – particularly media culture artefacts – in the post-colonial world, which is constantly challenged by the paradoxical mixture of ideas regarding globalisation, hybridisation and the preservation of national identities. In the study of the political and social implications of media productions, films appear as relevant objects of analysis because they both reflect and construct the dominant and dissenting voices that form part of society. My methodological approach will therefore be interdisciplinary. Hence, all the contextual background will be built out of the theories of post-colonial studies critics such as Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Stuart Hall, as well as the work of political theorists such as Hugo Young, Ian Gilmour, Samuel Brittan and Ivor Crewe among others. For issues of history, historiography and the heritage phenomenon, I shall rely mainly on Frank Ankersmit, Hayden White, Edward Carr, Raphael Samuel and John

[4] According to Stuart Hall, feminism and the questions of race became two real ruptures in the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies because both opened the question of the personal as political and the understanding of power relationships, together with the rewriting of history from different perspectives (1992: 282-283).

[5] I write 'black' between inverted commas because I used it as a culturally constructed category meaning 'non-white'.

Corner and Sylvia Harvey. As regards film studies, I will follow the analysis proposed by Rick Altman, Celestino Deleyto and Steve Neale, as well as Richard Dyer's and Salman Rushdie's own interpretations of the films under study.

In the first chapter of this dissertation my aim is to present an overview of the concept of identity from a psychological, social and political perspective, each approach then serving as theoretical background for the study of ethnicity, gender and class in the contemporary context of globalisation. The first section will explore the issue of globalisation and the emergence of contemporary 'hybrid societies'. The notion of 'hybridity' itself will be shown to be an artificial construct cultural construction that, just like identity, is based on empty categories. However, such categories are necessary for the individual to cohabit in a world based on social structures (Derrida, 1979: 212). Broadly speaking, I will try and contextualise in this chapter the paradoxical nature of post-colonial globalised societies which present a high degree of cultural contact and hence the possibility of the emergence of new hybrid relationships that undermine former power structures in what Homi Bhabha labels 'third space'. Nonetheless, I will also explore the other side of the argument which can be briefly summarised as economic globalisation provoking inequalities and cultural contact through immigration that in turn fuel ethno-nationalist passions. Multiculturalism, in the heat of these ethno-nationalist passions, is regarded by some groups as causing the dissolution of well-founded traditional identities rather than as an opportunity for new enriching inter-cultural exchanges.

The second section of the chapter deals with the actual formation of cultural identities, from a psychological and social point of view. I will focus on aspects of identity related to issues of ethnicity. After a brief outline of the historical formations of 'race and racism' the concepts will then be related to the issue of miscegenation and the intermingling of gender and ethnicity. Class and nationality will also be discussed as

important notions in the cultural portrayal of interethnic relationships, both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. After the general view of the concepts associated with identity and hybridity, a special sub-section will then be devoted to the question of 'Britishness' and how the British Isles can be considered as having been multicultural from their very conception, thus putting to the test any essentialist definition of Britishness. Finally, drawing on the notions of national identity construction, in the third part of the chapter I will analyse British immigration policies in a post-colonial context and demonstrate the extent to which these policies reflect contemporary anxieties on identity construction.

Both the historical and social overviews, as well as the theorisation of notions of identity and hybridity, will provide the background for my contextual analysis of the 1980s in the following chapter, and likewise for the subsequent analysis of the polysemic meanings in the filmic productions to be studied as examples of the competing residual, dominant and emergent discourses at stake in these visual cultural texts. The second chapter, then, focuses more particularly on the period that has come to be called the 'Thatcher era'. After a brief analysis of the main Thatcherite policies and the economic and social changes brought about by the Conservatives to the country, I then concentrate on issues of immigration policies and the economic, social and cultural implications of the breaking up of the Empire.

As a means of revitalising the damaged economy of the nation, Mrs Thatcher advocated the implementation of neo-liberalist measures based mainly on a free-market economy. Bent on bringing about the recovery of Britain's position of 'greatness' in the international sphere, the Prime Minister created a populist discourse by re-fashioning those past values so in vogue when the nation was the mother-country of a powerful empire. This invitation to return to the good old 'Victorian values' had significant implications at the level of multicultural hospitality – or 'conviviality', to use Paul Gilroy's expression (2004:

xi) – in the country, as it spurred certain sectors of the population to manifest new racist views before the increasing presence of immigrants who had arrived from the former colonies. New racism substituted the old biological assumptions that established a hierarchy of human races based on skin colour, by a more subtle form of discrimination which attributed racial tensions to incompatible cultural difference amongst people from different parts of the world. Mrs Thatcher herself spoke of native British people's natural fears of being swamped by waves of foreigners invading the country – a vision of Britain founded on Enoch Powell's apocalyptic speeches on the immigration issue in the 1960s. In order to 'facilitate good race relationships' among the different ethnic and cultural groups living in Britain, the Conservative government enforced stricter immigration controls and launched a campaign of law and order by backing the actions of the police force against criminality. The new powers given to the police, which in theory were to benefit the public at large, were felt by some to be specifically targeted against the poorer ethnic communities. In these communities, which suffered the brunt of poverty and high levels of unemployment, it could be said that criminal activity was rife precisely because of the aggressive implementation of neo-capitalist measures. Tensions amongst the immigrant communities began to rise, which, in the early part of the decade, gave way to waves of race riots.

The Thatcher decade also saw the rise of problems in the ambit of arts and culture, as artists – and intellectuals – believed their interests were being damaged by a free-market economy that was increasingly exposing artistic freedom to commodification. In the last section of the chapter, I intend to explore the implications on the arts of both Thatcherite economic measures and Mrs Thatcher's ideological and moral crusade, and most particularly the effect of conservative policies on the film industry. Apart from its historically weal position vis-à-vis Hollywood, British cinema became even more

vulnerable to the decline of audiences with the increase of the domestic presence of television and VHS. In spite of its difficult situation the British film industry enjoyed a 'renaissance' in the 1980s which transcended national frontiers. Filmmakers, prompted by the climate of the times and often driven to criticise the government, developed a successful branch of social-realist films, not unfrequently with the help of Channel Four. At the same time however, the international success of *Chariots of Fire* opened up a new niche in the film industry of heritage productions that boomed throughout the decade. The return to the past dramatised in these cinematic productions seemed to epitomise the essence of Thatcherite values, as they seemingly converted the nation's cultural heritage into a commodity, while at the same time, they promoted a perception of British identity based purely on an imagined homogenised white, upper-middle class of the past. Related to the issue of the instability of contemporary cultural identities, John Hill points to the relevance of nostalgia, as a tool that provides the 'security of place and tradition' in an increasingly deterritorialised globalised world' (1999: 75). And yet, by drawing on Stuart Hall's theorisation of polysemic meanings I shall be demonstrating that, apart from that 'preferred' interpretation of the films, other 'negotiated' and even 'oppositional' meanings can be elicited from these apparently nostalgic productions.

The third chapter will be entirely devoted to the analysis of the different meanings that may be extracted from the cinematographic productions of the Thatcher decade. Hence, after commenting on the appearance of the heritage industry and relating this boom to its reflection in the filmic productions of the same term, I shall focus more particularly on its main component, namely: history. Because the conception of 'history' is crucial to the understanding of the heritage business, the next section will be dedicated to delineating the different approaches of historiography through time. Given that the representation of the historical past is likewise fundamental in the construction of identities, the analysis of

who speaks about past events and how these events are selected and interpreted will be the main target of analysis in the study of the Raj filmic productions, which re-enact the imperial past 'through the eyes of the present' (Carr, 1983: 24).

In the last part of the third chapter I intend to narrow the focus of analysis and concentrate on history as represented in the British films set in the past. I shall therefore begin by contextualising British cinema and by offering an overview on the issues of film genre, so that both heritage and Raj films may be set within the general background of British national cinema. Interestingly enough, the notions of genre derived from the theories of Derrida and Foucault (among others), point to the paradoxical impossibility of creating fixed categorisations and the unavoidable human compulsion to order the world in terms of generic categories in all realms of social experience. This hypothesis allows me to connect the unstable and hybrid nature of any categorisation, alluded to in the first chapter when deconstructing the notions of ethnicity and identity with the fluctuating nature of cinema genres. To this end, I base this comparison on Rick Altman's thesis on the fluidity of cinema genres and the ever-changing character of nation as a constructed or imagined community, to use Benedict Anderson's definition (1991). What interests me especially is Altman's attention to the struggle between marginal and central categories, which brings about a never-ending dialectical process that facilitates the evolution of both cinema and society (1999: 204-5). The ultimate aim of this section is therefore to demonstrate that, as a cultural practice, cinema does not merely reflect social realities, nor does it construct its ideological discourses but, as part of a wider cultural system of representations, it *refracts* society (Deleyto, 2003: 32-3).

Taking into account the associatios established between cinema and nation, cinematic genres and social contexts, I start the last chapter by exploring the evolution of the 'masculine' 'adventure' empire films of the 1930s and 1940s towards the more

'female-centred' Raj productions of the 1980s. Basing my arguments on the struggle between marginal and central elements and ideological discourses at stake in cinema genres and society proposed by Altman, my aim is to show how those marginal and negatively stereotyped characters that abound in early empire films gradually move centre-stage – their troubled relationships becoming key components of the 1980s narratives. In this respect, attention will focus on those rebellious heroines who try to establish new relationships with Indian men, thus breaking dominant imperial patriarchal structures of the time. Likewise, hitherto invisible or misrepresented 'non-white' colonised characters acquire more relevance in the narratives. Portrayed as potential partners of the British heroines, some Indian characters are given prominent roles in these films. They are therefore endowed with a higher degree of psychological complexity than in previous stereotypical representations or their characterisations offer an ironical distancing from the way Orientals were depicted in earlier empire productions.

On the other hand, critics such as Salman Rushdie and Tana Wollen have questioned such new empire fictions that portrayed a nostalgic vision of the past with a splendorous and glamorous visual depiction of India as reinforcing Eurocentric perspectives on the Eastern 'other' and thus perpetuating what Edward Said called 'orientalist' discourses. According to these critics, the films' visual pleasure would counteract any kind of criticism embodied by those marginal characters who had reached central narratives. My aim here is therefore to explore how these cinematic screen fictions deal with border-crossing, while simultaneously promoting Britain's past 'Greatness' as the main commercial asset.

Although gathered under the same label of Raj fictions, due to their shared topic, setting and time, the screen productions I have chosen for analysis also present conspicuous differences, which is the reason I have decided to analyse them separately by

concentrating on the outstanding features they each present. I start with Attenborough's *Gandhi* as it was the first Raj film to become an international blockbuster and critically acclaimed film. Since it is the only screen production not to be adapted from a fictional novel, but an attempt to represent 'real' history, I concentrate on issues of the subjective re-enactment of the past and on how manipulative the selection and interpretation of events can result, especially when presented in a quasi-documentary style format that leads spectators to view or perceive the screen as a transparent window on to the past.

Next comes a brief introduction on the question of literary adaptations, previous to a close analysis of Ivory's *Heat and Dust* and Lean's *A Passage to India*. Both are films that tackle the question of boundary-crossing in terms of gender and ethnicity. Both likewise ultimately proffer the possibility of a 'third space' in which former dichotomies preventing intercultural friendship and understanding could be erased.

After commenting briefly on the particularities of the television medium as opposed to big screen productions, I end the chapter with the analysis of the two TV Raj serials, *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown*, produced and broadcast during the 1980s. Without leaving aside the evident difference in their format, my examination of the serials is directed at revealing how, for all the 'biscuit-tin' iconography and realistic styles, they are nevertheless vehicles for, or carriers of, conflicting meanings and ideological discourses when set against the social and political background of the time.

To sum up, my chief objective in this dissertation is to explore the competing meanings that texts re-visioning the past may offer to contemporary audiences desperately seeking stability in a globalised world that is fast fomenting instability as the main feature characterising increasingly 'hybrid' societies. In the 1980s, memories of the imperial past haunted identities in multi-ethnic, multicultural Britain, fuelling conflicting ideas and discourses amongst groups and communities that had lived the transformation of a rigid

colonial set-up into an ever-more fluid globalised ‘assemblage’. Against this background, it would seem that the common denominator in these films is their, in general, positive upholding of hybridity, as an emergent possibility which could serve to counteract these discourses that revisit the past solely to maintain or re-create relationships of power that still marginalise certain individuals in certain social contexts. In this respect, my interest in approaching film studies from a cultural perspective is to adhere to the definition of cultural studies as an ‘engaged and committed’ form of analysis (Nelson, 1998: 274). From this perspective, filmic representations are approached as refractions of social realities and hence, their analyses aim to provide a better understanding of the complex associations between centre and margins at work in the interconnected labyrinth of class, gender, race, culture, ethnicity and national identities.

1. COMING TO TERMS WITH IDENTITY AND 'BRITISHNESS': THE INCESSANT CONSTRUCTION AND EROSION OF IDENTITY BOUNDARIES

'Identity' is a complex concept that may refer to psychological, social, cultural, historical issues often interrelated with questions of gender, class, race, ethnicity or nation. That is why coming to terms with one's identity – either individual or collective – is not an easy task. Nonetheless, the matter of 'identity' is crucial for the study and understanding of the intricate set of relationships that connect or isolate, empower or marginalise the individual and the world's social structures. Bearing this in mind, what I propose to do in the present chapter is to delineate those forces that contribute to the (re)shaping of cultural identities, by focusing on colonial Britain and then on the more contemporary post-colonial context, a necessary preamble for the subsequent study of the films to be analysed in this dissertation.

The chapter will begin with a discussion of those aspects that contribute to the creation of contemporary 'hybrid societies', followed by an analysis of the notion of 'hybridity' itself. After this brief contextualisation I shall then focus on the actual formation of cultural identities, from a psychological and social point of view. This section will centre on two aspects of 'identity', firstly on the construction of 'race and racism' at a psychological and historical level and secondly, on the close relationship between race and gender – also interrelated with class issues. In this respect, special attention will have to be paid to the predicament of miscegenation. The analysis will then be narrowed to the particular question of 'British identity'. Finally, the last part of the chapter will be devoted to the analysis of British immigration policies in a post-colonial context and how these policies reflect contemporary anxieties concerning identity construction.

1.1.Globalisation, Migration and Hybrid Societies

Hybridity and conflict are two terms that are usually closely connected in most contemporary societies. Technological and scientific developments, together with important economic and political changes have been fundamental in reshaping the notions of identity between and within different cultures. As a consequence, long-standing identity boundaries – i.e. class, gender and race – are becoming less and less fixed, allowing hybridity to occupy a prominent space in societies all around the world. At the same time, tensions among those social communities may especially appear when they feel their identity threatened by the new state of affairs, appear. In Stephen Castle's words, all the changes propelled by globalisation processes are ambivalent: 'they offer new horizons and possibilities of emancipation, but they can also lead to social and psychological insecurity, and threaten feelings of identity and community' (2000: 180).

As a means of understanding the revolutionary changes that are currently affecting our world I propose to outline the main aspects of the phenomenon generally considered to be responsible for these new developments, namely, globalisation. After delineating the different factors that determine the globalised aspect of contemporary societies, and connecting this phenomenon to that of mass migration, I will explore the impact of these issues on British society, since both globalisation and migration have become such crucial aspects of society that no cultural analysis of any country can ignore them.

Trying to define the concept of globalisation is not an easy task, especially as it does not describe a static social feature. On the contrary, globalisation refers to an unfinished set of social processes which affect the whole world, albeit by no means in an even way. Moreover, globalisation is characterised by its multidimensionality. In other words, it is related to the economic, political, cultural, technological, ideological and

ecological spheres of social life (Steger, 2003: 14). Consequently, several definitions of the concept can be found depending on the emphasis given to the different dimensions comprehended in this phenomenon.[6] In an attempt to summarize the different aspects of globalisation in a comprehensive way, Manfred Steger describes it as:

> A multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant (2003: 13).

'Pro-globalisers' emphasize the irreversibility of the process and argue that the economic, political and cultural convergence will be beneficial for all. Legrain, for instance, admits that globalisation 'has the potential to do immense good' (2002: 11). He refers to the leap in living standards in the North/Western countries since the Second World War and mentions the possibilities of development for poorer nations boosted by international bodies such as the UN, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In political terms he considers that the creation of projects such as the European Union contributes to the economic and political stability of the member-states since EU governments now 'strive to work together rather than against each other. They enhance their power by sharing it, rather than squander it through destructive rivalry' (2002: 12). Being no believer in the homogeneisation of the world through American cultural products, Philippe Legrain also points to the cultural enrichment offered by globalisation. He claims that migratory movements, together with technological developments in communication, facilitate cross-border movements as well as the mutual exchange of cultural goods and information in a world scale.

In contrast, 'anti-globalisers', blame the phenomenon of globalisation for the dramatic growth of poverty and inequality between and within countries and complain that this sweeping force only benefits the upper groups in society. Along this line of

[6] See Steger, 2003: 10; Macarov 2003: 102-119; www.globalisationguide.org/01.html

thought, David Macarov considers that international organisations such as WTO, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the North American Free Trade Agreement or the World Bank, aim to liberalise the economy through free trade and privatisation with the unique ultimate goal of 'profits — profits at all costs and regardless of consequences' (2003: 104). As a result, he argues, governments are becoming less powerful – real, effective power now lying at the hands of transnational corporations (TNC).[7] These corporations usually take advantage of the political instability of less developed countries to gain profit out of cheap labour conditions and inexpensive raw materials.[8] Accordingly, the gap between rich and poverty-striken countries is rising dramatically as is the difference between the wealthiest segments of society and the poorer ones in First World, Western countries due to the depreciation of salaries and wages in Europe and the USA (Macarov, 2003: 109).

Finally, at a cultural level, opponents of globalisation refer to the 'McDonaldization' of the world (Ritzer and Barber in Steger, 2003: 71-2). By means of this term, they are alluding to the homogenisation of popular culture all around the world as a result of the exportation of 'the American principles of fast-food restaurant', that is, 'a soulless consumer capitalism that is rapidly transforming the world's diverse populations into a blandly uniform market' (Steger, 2003: 73). Barber argues that this cultural imperialism is provoking cultural and political resistance at the core of some communities, and that, in some cases, it may even be an indirect cause of the rise of religious fundamentalism and ethnonationalism (in Steger, 2003: 73). In the light of these differing theories it could therefore be argued that the world-wide economic thrust

[7] Macarov states that Multinational corporations 'now account for between a quarter and a third of the world's output, 70% of world trade and 80% of direct international investment' (2003: 103).
[8] Macarov explains that in developing countries national governments do not have the power to regulate or control these global corporations and this situation leads to corruption and bribery among the ruling elites. This lack of normative is reflected in child labour, the ignorance of minimum wage laws and exploitation of the worker as well as in the negative impact on the environment (2003: 110).

that is leading to the disappearance of frontiers through easier and more profitable relationships of trade, is simultaneously stimulating a reinforcement of religious and nationalist ideologies in those regions and communities that are most fearful of losing their traditional identities.

Migratory movements from less developed to richer countries are also instrumental in reinforcing the cross-cultural impact on a world scale. Felicity Hand states that 'the history of humankind has been the history of migrations, enforced and voluntary. If we trace histories back far enough, we are all products of the human diaspora' (1999: 97). Nonetheless, migratory movements seem to have acquired special relevance in the last decades precisely because of the tension between the construction and destruction of frontiers and boundaries in a global age.

According to Ruth Brown, historically speaking, in pre-capitalist societies migratory movements were quite small, involving mainly traders and merchants. She states that the growing phenomenon of 'immigration went hand in hand with the development of the capitalist system and the capitalist state' (Brown, 1995: 1). The slave trade was apparently the first form of forced migration in history. And yet, as Brown explains, after the abolition of the slave trade, migratory movements did not stop, since workers travelled to escape poverty and unemployment in certain areas while simultaneously meeting the demand for wage labour in urban centres of capitalist expansion (1995: 2).

In the last decades, the growth of capitalism in the form of globalisation has intensified the migratory movements around the world. According to Morley and Robins, geographies are constantly being changed and re-shaped as a result of the international restructuring of capitalist economies (2001: 24). Morley and Robins argue that:

> Historical capitalism has, of course, always strained to become a world system. The perpetual quest to maximize accumulation has always compelled geographical expansion in search of new markets, raw materials, sources of cheap labour, and so on. The histories of trade and migration, of missionary and military conquest, of imperialism and neo-imperialism, mark the various strategies and stages that have, by the late twentieth century, made capitalism a truly global force (2001: 25).

This explains why globalisation is such an uneven process, a phenomenon that is bringing even greater amounts of wealth and high levels of benefits to already privileged classes in the North, while other sectors in the Western world and – more acutely – in other parts of the world suffer from increasing poverty and exploitation. In Krishan Kumar's words:

> Globalisation creates or intensifies inequalities at every level of the world system. It is not an even process. Driven as it is by the logic of capital accumulation, it has the well-known effect of concentrating benefits in some parts of the world, largely the already 'developed' regions, at the expense of other parts (1993: 83).

More and more, therefore, capitalist drives are 'operating on an emergent global level which over time are compressing the distances between peoples and places within different societies, and which increase the sense that we live in a single world' (Warde, 2002: 13). Marshall McLuhan puts it more succinctly. He refers to this 'bringing together' of distant cultures as 'the global village' (http://news.bbc.co; 17/2/04).

Morley and Robins explain the contemporary relationships of power among countries by looking back at the colonial experience: 'globalisation, as it dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial centre and colonized periphery immediate and intense' (2001: 25). Although, on some levels, this encounter results in interesting and enriching intercultural exchanges the truth is that this same phenomenon is also provoking confrontation and hatred as a result of the cultural dominance of some communities over others, but more especially because of increasing economic inequalities within these new multicultural societies.[9]

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[9] Unfortunate examples of this economic and cultural implications of globalisation are Al Quaeda's terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and the War on Iraq in 2003 at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Chomsky, 2000: 11-13) – followed by the attacks in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005. As Paul Gilroy explains, 'those events [9/11 and War on Iraq] have been widely interpreted as part of a

Hence, two forces seem to be simultaneously at work in the shaping of cultural identities in the contemporary globalised world. On the one hand, there is a tendency towards the 'conviviality' of different cultures in cities all around the world.[10] The mixing of different races and peoples encourages an enriching multiculturalism in the formation of new, always contingent, societies. On the other hand however, native populations' misgivings or fear of 'other' foreign cultures concurrently leads to the divisions being drawn between communities and, as a consequence, to a new reinforcement of long-standing hierarchical conceptions of different civilizations.

In the analysis of these different forces shaping contemporary cultural identities in the context of multiculturalism and globalisation it is necessary to pay attention to the concept of 'post-colonialism'. In Stuart Hall's words:

> We need to situate the debates about identity within all those historically specific developments and practices which have disturbed the relatively 'settled' character of many populations and cultures, above all with the processes of globalization, which I would argue are coterminous with modernity and the processes of forced and 'free' migration which have become a global phenomenon of the so-called 'post-colonial' world (1997: 4).

The phenomenon of migration from lesser to more developed countries is thus forcing the Western metropole to confront 'its postcolonial history, told by its influx of post-war migrants and refugees, as an indigenous or native narrative *internal to its national identity*' (Bhabha, 1994: 6; italics in original). Following this argument it seems only logical that, in order to understand the contemporary phenomenon of globalisation, neo-imperialism and migration, attention must turn to the historical past:

> The immigrant is now here because Britain, Europe, was once out there; that basic fact of global history is not usually deniable. And yet its grudging recognition provides a stimulus for forms of hostility rooted in the associated realization that today's unwanted settlers carry all the ambivalence of the empire with them. They project it into the unhappy consciousness of their fearful and anxious hosts and neighbours. Indeed, the incomers may be unwanted and feared

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conflict between contending civilizations. Indeed, the Bush administration's 'war on terror' might be thought of as having brought the slumbering civilizational giants of Christendom and Orient back to life' (2004: 21)

[10] Gilroy defines the term 'conviviality' as: 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere' (2004: xi).

> precisely because they are the unwitting bearers of the imperial and colonial past (Gilroy, 2004: 110).

Although Gilroy advocates that the figure of the postcolonial migrant must be recognized within the context of the lost imperial past, he nevertheless advocates that ‘we need to conjure up a future in which black and brown Europeans stop being seen as migrants’ (2004: 165). Even so, in many cases, the presence of immigrants is felt by the host nations as a threat to the stability of the country – a feeling initially reflected in attitudes of hostility and racism towards the newcomers and then towards the second generation of immigrants who belong to a diasporic space between their parents’ country and their own birthplace. As Kumar explains, in our contemporary globalised world, we find both an upsurge of nationalistic feelings and an intensification of social and cultural interconnections and exchanges (1993: 83). At its core, therefore, globalisation or the expansion of the world market is causing a shift in the forms of human contact. Indeed, the crisis in the processes of identity construction is itself becoming globalised.[11]

Clearly, the cross-country – and cross-continental – economic and commercial interconnections boosted by globalisation are also bringing about or generating significant cultural and social permutations. For this reason, issues of *identity* beg consideration. In the following section, therefore, identity will be presented as fomenting both harmony and conflict or exclusion.

1.2.Identity

The question of cultural identity is an important issue of debate in contemporary societies all around the world, and even more so in Great Britain, given the profound changes in the constitution of British society along the last decades. In *Questions on*

[11] For a more detailed account of the paradoxes and contradictions of the phenomenon of globalisation related to post-colonial migratory processes, see Castles, 2000:124-132.

Cultural Identity, Stuart Hall highlights the social and cultural importance of such concept. He argues that a sense of identity entails demarcations of inclusion and exclusion: 'identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to render "outside", abjected' (1997: 5, italics in original).

A sense of identity is therefore dependent on the fluctuations of sameness and difference. Identification with a certain group or community automatically implies the existence of an 'other', someone who is different 'from us' and therefore cast outside the – often imaginary – ambit of our community. Such a demarcation is imaginary because it creates an illusory sense of homogeneity that erases the fragmentary, hybrid and criss-crossing nature of identities. As Benedict Anderson famously noted, identification in terms of i.e. 'nation' is imaginary since community members – those who feel this shared sense of belonging – can never get to know all the other people who make up this group labelled 'nation'. Moreover, a sense of 'national identity' erases the inner differences *within* the nation in terms of class, gender, sexuality or ethnicity, and the varying degrees of 'belongingness', such as those whose identity is more strongly attached to a particular region or locality than to the whole nation (1991: 6-7).

Another example would be the fictitious lines drawn in terms of racial or ethnic identity. Who is included under the label of blackness or whiteness? The infamous 'one drop law', for instance, identified as 'black' a person having inherited 'one drop of black blood' in spite of an apparently Caucasian physique (Gardner, 2000: 4-8). Bearing this in mind, it appears that the concept of identity is also closely linked to issues of power. According to Laclau:

> The constitution of a social identity is an act of power [...]. Derrida has shown how an identity's constitution is always based on excluding something and establishing a violent hierarchy between the two resultant poles — man/woman, etc. What is peculiar of the second term is thus reduced to the function of an accident as opposed to the essentiality of the first. It is the same with the black-white relationship, in which white, of course, is equivalent to 'human being'. 'Woman' and

> 'black' are thus 'marks' (i. e. marked terms) in contrast to the unmarked terms of 'man' and 'white' (in Hall, 1997: 5).

In view of this, identities are no more than contingent artificial constructs based on empty categories such as race, class, culture and nation, which include and exclude people according to the interest of the dominant group (San Juan, 2002: 64). Consequently, the faculty of exclusion in the construction of social identities is in itself an act of power.[12]

Lawrence Grossberg forwards two theories of identity construction: those of *difference* and those of *otherness*. According to Grossberg, theories of *difference* are those deriving strictly from a structuralist and post-structuralist approach; that is, identity in this case is built up in terms of its relation with other identities; on the other hand, theories of *otherness* construct 'difference' in terms of power structures, which are not fixed but historically contingent. In other words, 'difference, as much as identity, is an effect of power' (1997: 93-4). Accordingly, Grossberg agrees with Hall in his conception of cultural identities as 'a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being"'. This means that individuals often try to base a sense of belonging in a certain community in their common roots set in the past. However, at the same time, these individuals must face the ever-changing identities in an unstable present: 'Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power' (1997: 52).

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[12] As Foucault stated, any kind of social association is imbued with relationships of power: 'A society without power relations can only be an abstraction. Which, be it said in passing, makes all the more politically necessary the analysis of power relations in a given society, their historical formation, the source of their strength or fragility, the conditions which are necessary to transform some or to abolish others. For to say that there cannot be a society without power relations is not to say either that those which are established are necessary or, in any case, that power constitutes a fatality at the heart of societies, such that it cannot be undermined' (1982, http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.power.en.html).

Viewed in this light, the paradoxical events that are occurring under the shadow of globalisation could be explained through an understanding of the processes at work in the construction of social identities. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, in the globalised world at the turn of the twenty-first century, two fundamental processes seem to be converging: the gradual emergence of an international economic order and the inexorable spread of multiculturalism. Paradoxically, these phenomena are also provoking two contrasting trends affecting the construction of identities. Firstly, there is a tendency towards the creation of new hybrid identities or rather a liminal space that opens new possibilities for the 'conviviality' of different or fragmented identities hitherto relegated to the marginalised spheres of 'in-betweenness'.[13] This niche that breaks with the rigid either/or dichotomy of identity construction is what Homi Bhabha calls 'third space':

> The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom […]. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha in Rutherford, 1990: 211).

Hall places the concept of hybridity in the realm of 'diaspora identities'. He refers to Afro-Caribbean peoples in particular who, as he explains, have constructed their heterogeneous identities through a process of migration and dislocation that has compelled them to a continual production and reproduction of themselves through incessant transformation and difference (1997: 58). Such a definition of 'diaspora identities' is equally applicable to the hybrid condition of many contemporary cultural identities that may lead to apositive outcome of harmonious co-habitation.

The other trend affecting identity construction derives from the ever more intense ethno-nationalist passions in both developed and developing countries (Kumar, 1993:

[13] Lawrence Grossberg defines hybridity as 'subaltern identities existing between two competing identities' (1997: 91).

82-5). In other words, while some ethnic groups are increasingly exerting their rights to greater private and public recognition of their identities or permitting identities to criss-cross and merge, other sectors, dismayed by the growing pluralising of society, are vindicating the historical exclusivity of their nationhood and culture, basing their claims on an essentialist notion of identity that leaves no room for hybridity.[14]

Crucial to the comprehension of how discourses on race and racism are developed is the understanding of the psychological dimension in the construction of identity and 'otherness'. Lola Young relies on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage to explain the origins of racist attitudes.[15] As she explains, the moment the child becomes aware of the difference between her/himself and the world, s/he experiences anxiety because of her/his loss of control over her/his needs and desires. Automatically, these anxieties are repressed as the child splits the 'self' and the world: 'The "good" self was originally in control of everything and thus free from anxiety; the "bad" self has no control over the infant's environment and is prone to suffering apprehension' (1996: 31). Simultaneously, the world, as the 'not I' and therefore as 'the other' is divided into the absolute categories of good and evil. This division of the self and the other has important implications when applied to notions of race and ethnicity.

In his article on race and psychology, Michael Rustin accounts for the construction of racism as the empty category which is filled by the 'schizoid mechanisms' of the mind. Melanie Klein further defines the schizoid mechanisms of the human mind by presenting it a paranoid and irrational splitting of objects into loved

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[14] Grossberg labels the two current trends in identity construction as the essentialist tenor and the anti-essentialist one, the former pointing to a common origin or structure – which tries to 'discover the "authentic" and "original" content of the identity', and the latter underlying the relational and incomplete nature of identities, thus denying 'the existence of authentic and originary identities based on a universal shared origin or experience' and dependent 'upon its difference from, its negation of, some other term' (1997: 89).

[15] For a detailed account of the construction of the individual's identity in the 'mirror stage' see Lacan, 'Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du "Je" telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'experiénce psychoanalytique' (1966: 89-97)

items and hated ones. As she states, these mechanisms include: 'the suffusion of thinking processes by intense, unrecognized emotion, confusion between self and object due to the splitting of the self and massive projective identification, and hatred of reality and truth'. (Klein in Rustin, 2004: 187). According to Rustin, such mechanisms imply an irrational projection onto 'the other' of the hated - or socially unacceptable - attributes of the self. In this way, 'the effect of getting rid of bad feelings into the other is to allow the self to perceive itself as wholly good' (2004: 189). Rustin concludes that the unconscious mental processes of the mind in the identity formation of the individual interact with social processes to constitute categories of inclusion and exclusion (2004: 193).

Transposing this argument from the self to the group or community, it appears that dominant sectors in society can only assert their superiority and authority by rejecting those who do not belong in their group, on the basis of their bad, negative, 'hated' qualities. As regards the racial question, the identification of a subject as black or white has further implications. If blackness is the excluded 'marked term' in the identification process, then whiteness erects itself as no particular quality or colour, but as the invisible norm. According to Richard Dyer, 'white is no colour because it is all colours'. Consequently, 'white domination is reproduced by the way that white people "colonise the definition of normal"' (1993: 142).

Moreover, traditional Western ideology has attributed very specific connotations to this colour dichotomy. Following the Judeo-Christian use of 'white and black to symbolize good and evil', whiteness is associated with 'order, rationality, rigidity', and blackness with 'disorder, irrationality and looseness' (Dyer, 1993: 145). Seen in this light, 'otherness' is therefore necessary for the dominant identity to exist, and fixed meanings and stereotypes are imposed on these 'others' in order to control them.

Magnifying the argument still further, the East is by logic a Western construction that defines itself against a distinct 'other'. This is what Edward Said called 'Orientalism'. In his own words:

> The Orient is an integral part of the European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles (1985: 2; italics in original.)

According to Said, the West has constructed a discourse regarding the Oriental 'other' that is politically and ideologically at the service of Western various interests. He gives three definitions of the term Orientalism. In the first place, in an academic sense, 'Orientalism' refers to the institutions and scholars that are devoted to the study of the 'Orient'; secondly, Orientalism can be understood, in a more general sense, as 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time "the Occident")'. And thirdly, a historical and material meaning of Orientalism can indicate 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient' (1985: 2-3).

Orientalism is therefore a multi-dimensional concept that constructs and comprises the 'otherness' of Eastern territories and peoples through the Western lens. Accordingly, as Said states:

> …without examining Orientalism as a discourse, one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period (1985: 3).

Over and above all these areas of dominance, there is, Said adds, a conspicuous political dimension that works in the interests of the Western construction of the Orient. As a consequence, the analysis of Orientalism gives more information as to the very creator of such a discourse than about the objectified Orient itself:

> … a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction

> (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also a whole series of 'interests', which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world […]. Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with 'our' world (1985: 12).

In his analysis of power relations and cultural identities in a colonial and post-colonial context, Hall further contends, as Said did, that non-white colonial subjects were not only constructed as 'the other', but were forced to experience themselves as 'other':[16] 'Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet "power/knowledge". But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external' (1997: 52).[17]

Closely related as they are to discourses of power, social constructions of identity and 'otherness' help categorise individuals in a hierarchical order which is always beneficial to the dominant group. With this in mind, it could therefore be argued that 'race' or 'ethnicity' are political categories. In Paul Gilroy's words: '"Race" has to be socially and politically constructed and elaborate ideological work is done to secure and maintain the different forms of "racialization" which have characterise capitalist development' (1998: 38). In this respect, Gilroy argues that there is no single discourse on race and racism but different *racisms*, which may vary depending on the social formation or historical conjuncture (1998: 39).

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[16] To make matters worse, the internalization of otherness also brings about anxiety, which in turn becomes a burden for that already marginalised subject. This is what Frantz Fanon illustrates in his well known explanation of the experience of the black colonial subject when confronted with the white man's gaze: 'Et puis il nous fut donné d'affronter le regard blanc. Une lourdeur inaccoutumée nous oppresse […]. Dans le monde blanc l'homme de couleur rencontre des difficultés dans l'élaboration de son schéma corporel. La conaissance du corps est une activité uniquement négatrice […].

"Tiens, un nègre!" C'était vrai. Je m'amusai.

"Tiens, un nègre!" Le cercle peu à peu se resserrait. Je m'amusai ouvertement.

"Maman, regarde le nègre, j'ai peur!" Peur! Peur! Voilà qu'on se mettait à me craindre. Je voulus m'amuser jusqu'à m'étouffer, mais cela m'était devenu impossible' (Fanon, 1975: 89-90).

[17] On Foucault's theory on power and knowledge, see also: Rabinow, 1991: 51, 61, 258-272.

On this view, racist events in contemporary multicultural British society are imbued with a new perspicacity and at the same time sustained by ongoing cultural beliefs of the past. Accordingly, Gilroy concludes that:

> Though it arises from present rather than past conditions, contemporary British racism bears the imprint of the past in many ways. The especially crude and reductive notions of culture that form the substance of racial politics are clearly associated with an older discourse of racial and ethnic difference which is entangled with the history of the idea of culture in the modern West (1992: 188).

In order to understand the construction of British identity in the present, it is therefore fundamental to take into account those events and ideological discourses that proved of crucial influence in the history of the country. As Hall states:

> The past continues to speak to us. But it no longer addresses us a simple and factual 'past', since our relation to it, like the child's relation to the mother, is already 'after the break'. It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made within the discourses of history and culture (1997: 53).

Taking these views into account, the following section will centre on a brief account of the origins and historical development of the various forms of racism and on the construction of cultural identities in terms of nation and ethnicity.

1.2.1. 'Race' and Racism

In the following sections I will try to demonstrate that the concept of 'race' is an empty category which has historically been used to preserve social privileges and maintain oppressions. Naomi Zack's asserts that 'race if fictive', especially given that 'physical variation among humans is too continuous to support anything like what society poses as racial divisions'. Besides,

> even though human groups are believed to have spent different amounts of time in a given time in distinctive geographical areas, we are a migratory species, and there is no way to determine how much ancestral time in a given place is enough to define racial membership in any a scientific sense. Since there are no races in current biological understanding, there cannot be mixed races. That is why it is not the case that we are all mixed (2004: x, xi).

Following Zack's reasoning, I shall be making use of the word 'race' when referring to specific historical contexts. In other contemporary circumstances I will use the term 'ehtnicity', which has come to replace the unfashionable and 'politically incorrect' term 'race' (Weber, 1997: 17). I consider both expressions, however, equally empty. The current belief in the fictional nature of the terms 'race' or 'ethnicity', though, does not mean that they do not exist as a culturally constructed social categories with pervasive and significant influence in contemporary social relations. Similarly, as mentioned above, the term 'hybridity' could also be regarded as an empty term which has nevertheless the power to undermine the artificial constructs that justify structures of power and subordination.

The terms 'race' and 'racism' are therefore subjected to contingent historical changes as well as to competing views within each epoch. In David Theo Goldberg's words:

> Race, in this formulation, is ironically a *hybrid* concept. It assumes significance (in both senses) in terms of prevailing social and epistemological conditions at the time, yet simultaneously bearing with it sedimentary traces of past significations. Since 1500, then, race has been the subject of intense political and epistemological contestation in and through which it has variously assumed the symbolic power to colonize the prevailing terms of social interpretation, habit and expression – to dominate, without quite silencing competing social discourses (1998: 81; italics in original).

According to Goldberg, the concept of 'race' acquired its importance not only as component of identity, subjectivity, dominance, but also as an object of study, scrutiny and debate in the sixteenth century. This said, the origins of the racial question could be traced as far back as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the advent of modernity (Goldberg, 1998: 3; Fredrickson, 2003: 28). In the ancient Greek and Roman world, and early in early Christian times discriminatory social practices were not based on the grounds of skin colour. The Greeks made the distinction between civilised and barbarous peoples according to their form of government. As Goldberg states, the main distinction established between groups was a political one: 'Hellenic democracy was contrasted

with barbarian despotism and tyranny. The democratic state alone was deemed a free one, the state where political relationships – and so the distinctly human virtues – could flourish' (1998: 21).[18] Hence, although the Greeks coined the term 'xenophobia' to refer to the hatred felt against the foreign 'other', dark-skinned foreigners were not systematically discriminated nor were they marginalised on the basis of their hereditary lineage or biologically unchangeable characteristics.

For their part, the Romans extended their Empire by including citizens from different ethnicities and nationalities. They also used war prisoners as slaves, regardless of their skin colour. In the same way, early Christians extended their religion by looking upon all the converts as God's creatures, no matter whether they were Greek, Roman or African (Fredrickson, 2003: 17). As Christianity spread across Europe, the Jewish community became the first target of collective hatred and discrimination. They were accused of the worst possible crime: the killing of Jesus Christ, and thus associated with the forces of evil. Their sin was therefore hereditary. Even so, individuals could avoid discrimination by converting to Christianity. In the same way, during the Crusades hatred against infidel Muslims was widespread. Religious discrimination was grounded on the Bible, which provided mythical basis to relate Muslims with a collective of inferior lineage (Fredrickson, 2003: 28-31). The word of God also accounted for the origins of dark skinned people by describing them as descendants of Ham, Noah's son, punished by the Lord with black skin after having watched his father naked while sleeping (R. Young, 1996: 41).

According to Goldberg, it was in the late fifteenth century when the concept of 'race' emerged, as a consequence of the voyages of discovery and exploration of 'new' 'unknown' lands which marked the beginnings of the European imperialist expansion.

[18] Women, who were considered to belong to an inferior status in society as slaves and barbarians, were the only social group that could not escape discrimination as it was tied to their biological condition.

The term was used to determine the relationships between the European colonisers and the native populations they encountered (1998: 62). In other words, 'race' came to refer to those peoples different in physical appearance and customs from the Europeans.

The term 'race' was closely linked with the notion of 'root', widely applied in the classification of animals and plants, that is, a categorisation of individuals with common origins and distinctive features. The colonial encounter thus charged the term with both natural and social connotations. In other words, 'race' was used to refer either to a group of living creatures – plants, animals or human beings – with common provenance and/or, to a group with some features in common, which could be physical and/or cultural (Goldberg, 1998: 63).

Lastly, in his study of the history of 'race', Goldberg establishes a connection between the term 'race' and 'lineage' (1998: 63). 'Race', therefore, could be closely associated with the notion of a family, and then, by extension, with societies linked by a common political or religious ancestry. Friedickson argues that it is at the time of the Spanish Catholic Kings that certificates of 'purity of blood' began to proliferate. Queen Isabel and King Fernando conquered the Spanish Peninsula back from the Muslims and declared that anyone Muslim or Jew should either convert to Catholicism or leave the country. However the conversion of those Jews and Muslims who stayed in Spain was constantly under suspicion and they were therefore marginalised. Consequently, 'lineage' or 'race' acquired more importance than religious beliefs at the time. The proliferation of Biblical accounts of the origins of Jews and Muslims proliferated, the former being described as Christ-killers, the latter as descendants of Ishmael.[19]

[19] In spite of the long-standing hostilities and conflicts among the different monotheistic faiths, Jews, Christians and Muslims share relevant common origins. As Francis Robinson puts it: 'Twenty-one of the twenty-eight prophets mentioned in the Koran appear in the Christian Bible. Muslims are as familiar with the stories of Jacob, Joseph and Job as any Christian. The Koran specifically recognizes the scriptures of Abraham, the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the gospel of Jesus as books revealed by God. The same angel, Gabriel, who came to Mary to announce her mission came to Muhammad to tell him to recite the

In this sense, Fredrickson comments on the importance of the distinction made between such non-Christian groups and the natives encountered in the new territories. The former, labelled 'infidels', were those who descended from a lineage of non-Christian believers and who rejected the Gospel; the latter were just 'pagans', that is, those who had never been introduced to the word of God and consequently, could not be blamed for their ignorance. Religious beliefs, though, were intermingled with different economic, political, religious and scientific discourses and interests. Such situation gave way to contradictory ways of behaviour as well as heated debates. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the first contacts between Spaniards and the native population of the Canary Islands, opened up the debate on the 'primitive' inhabitants encountered. Natives were at first regarded as 'savages' and therefore enslaved. Yet the Church protested, considering them God's creatures, that is, pagans who could be converted and thus saved. That is why, those Canarians who survived the first incursion were integrated into the Spanish culture through intermarriage, a practice that eventually became a distinctive feature of the Spanish colonising enterprise in the American territories, later on (Fredrickson, 2002: 35-9).

Intense debates were likewise kindled around the subject of the Native-Americans, for they were apprehended as wild, non-rational, subhuman beings, only fit for slavery – in the 'natural' hierarchy of domination of the superior civilisation over the inferior ones. Or the native Americans were seen as pure, innocent, noble savages who could be Christianised and assimilated into the far more 'civilised' Spanish culture

Koran. Muslims, Christians and Jews all look back to Abraham as the first prophet to receive revelation. Muslims trace their lineage back to him, through Ishmael, the child of his servant wife Hagar, while Christians and Jews do so through the son of his legal wife Sarah (1996: xix-xx). For the origins of Muslims as descendants of Abraham – or Ibrahim – through Ishmael, see Newby, 2004: 181; Khouri, Hagemann, Heine and Cannuyer, 1995: 13-5).

(Goldberg, 1998: 25-6).[20] As colonialism advanced and other countries, such as Britain, became more prominent in the imperialist enterprise, the meaning of 'race' gradually became tinged with other discourses. During the Enlightenment, rational and scientific convictions came to replace the importance of religious beliefs. Newton's discoveries of universal laws governing the cosmos urged scientists and philosophers to study Nature and the classification of all living beings into hierarchical groups (Mason, 2000: 6). In the early eighteenth century, Carolus Linnaeus, the founding father of taxonomy, applied his method of classification in botany and zoology to humankind, dividing the human species into different groups: Europeans, Americans, Indians, Asians and Africans (Cashmore and Troyna, 1990: 34). This classification was mostly based on territorial space, although the descriptions included physical appearance (Goldberg, 1998: 206). The varieties of human beings listed were not initially ranked, although Linnaeus' description of the *homo europeus* was more positive than that of the other groups. Subsequently, Johann Blumenbach advanced another classification based on skin colour, thus dividing humans into Caucasian or white, Mongolian or yellow, Malay or brown, Ethiopian or black and American or red. For this part, the French naturalist, Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, explained in his *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (1749-1788) that it was the environment – the climate and geographical particularities of the habitat – that accounted for the existing varieties of human beings, reflected in their different physiology, skin colour and temperament. Even though these scientists favoured the superior qualities of Caucasians, they were all in agreement as to the various groups' common origin that happened to develop in different ways according to their original environment (Friedrickson, 2002: 56-8).

[20] See Sepúlveda's and Las Casas' contrasting views on the topic in Fredrickson, 2002: 36-7; *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1994: 14-17).

Increasing interest in evolutionary lineage compelled more scientists to develop theories that accounted for human variety and classification. Pieter Camper advanced in 1770 the theory of skull measurement or craniology, further developed by Franz Joseph Gall, whose work opened the way for the development of the scientific fields of physiognomy and phrenology at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, all these early investigations postulated that a connection existed between the shape of the brain and facial features, as well as with the character, personality, temperament, mental capacity and even the morality of the subjects under study. By extension, 'samples' or prototypes of the species were codified and assigned a category or variety. Needless to say, such studies were to prove instrumental in the appearance and spread of scientific racism, especially since investigation results invariably found that the Caucasian race was endowed with superior qualities in terms of beauty, mental capacity and moral inclinations.[21]

Very soon, the correlation black skin and incapacity for rational thought was established as the unquestionable objective truth (L. Young, 1996: 41). During the imperialist venture, it was also common belief that 'progress' entailed a steady evolution from primitivism to ever-more advanced civilisation. In fact, already since the Enlightenment, it was believed that 'societies would progress forward by means of a general, secular and unilinear process of social development', thus Europe was viewed as 'far advanced and consequently, as playing a central role in this evolution because of the high standard of civilisation already reached in these nations' (Cornut-Gentille and Hand, 1995: 7).

The status attained by different peoples helped establish a hierarchical division of different social groups, Europe thus featuring as the topmost level of attainable progress.

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[21] See L. Young, 1996: 43; R. Young, 1996: 96, Smith, 1984: 194-201

This scale of classification was also applied *within* Western Europe, where fair skinned, rational Northerers were considered superior to those dark-skinned passionate Southeners. Outside Europe, a hierarchy was also maintained. Oriental peoples were considered to enjoy a certain level of civilisation, language and culture, and were consequently placed above Native Americans and Africans. Within the East, Arabs came out top of the scale, as noble people but with too much imagination, followed by Persians, who were viewed as good poets, while the Japanese decreed to be resolute but stubborn. For their part, Indians and Chinese people were classified as grotesque and monstrous savages due to their polytheism and 'strange' religious practices. Lastly, African 'negroes' were deemed to be primitive, a-cultured peoples with no hint of rationality and thus closer to animals than to rational white Westerners (Goldberg, 1998: 30-3).

Along part of the eighteenth centuries and the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the consolidation of racist theories through science was mainly the result of Western economic and political self-interest, developed out of both the exploitation of slaves in the American plantations and empire building. As Robert Young puts it, 'no one bothered too much about the differences between races until it was to the West's economic advantage to profit from slavery or to defend it against Abolitionists' (1996: 92).

Such an account points to the paradoxical existence of, on the one hand, a pyramidal vision of peoples and, on the other, many Enlightenment philosophers' commintment towards egalitarianism – which culminated in the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity during the French Revolution. Robert Young explains that it was clear to all at the time that the revolutionary ideals on equality only applied to 'fully rational beings', a collective from which the lower ranks of society and women in the

Western world as well as the inhabitants of primitive, 'other' societies were excluded (1996: 42). Jordan and Weedon clarify the paradox by relating it to Liberal Humanist cultural values. They define the Liberal philosophy as 'the belief in the inalienable rights of the individual to realize him- or herself to the full' and Humanism as 'the belief in an essential human nature and the power of reason to bring about human progress' (1995: 23). Glenn Jordan and Chris Weedon connect these ideas with the nineteenth-century Arnoldian notion of 'Culture' as the path to the individual's self-realisation advocated by Liberal Humanism. In other words, 'Culture' enables the realisation of 'human nature to the full by developing their intellectual and moral life' (1995: 25). The key question here is how profoundly ethnocentric the equation established between 'culture' and 'progress', with Western civilization and Liberal Humanist egalitarian ideas proved to be. It is true that, on one level, the insistence on basic human rights and essential human qualities shared by humankind have been very useful tools for the emancipation of formerly excluded social groups. Nevertheless, the construction of a European identity, though based on Liberal Humanist ideals, also brought about the hierarchical division of 'other' groups. As Jordan and Weedon state: 'Europe's self-image has consistently been defined in opposition to a less civilised, non-European "Other"' (1995: 32).[22] In the authors's view, the contradiction between human rights and social divisions was solved by means of certain discourses that justified the exploitation of 'the other' in the name of Western economic and political development:

> Liberal Humanist Culture assumes that whilst human nature is essentially the same everywhere, some cultures are more developed than others. In privileging values that are bourgeois, Western, white and male, it implies that it is cultural difference based on underdevelopment that makes non-white societies different and European culture and intrinsically civilising force (1995: 59).

[22] In Sartre's words: 'High-minded people, liberal or just soft-hearted, protest that they are shocked by this consistency, but they are either mistaken or dishonest, for with us there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man [i.e. a human] through creating slaves and monsters' (in Jordan and Weedon, 1995: 34).

This ideology was backed by the rise of pseudo-scientific discourses that confirmed the natural and social order of the world and accounted for the existence of human diversity. David Mason explains that along the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a tendency to link physical difference and different patterns of social organization with the notion of hierarchy.[23] The 'primitive societies' Europeans ran into in the territories they conquered were seen as inferior when compared with the European superiority especially in the technological and military spheres (2000: 5). Hence, Europeans justified their domination of those supposedly inferior races or even species (1996: 16-18). In the nineteenth century, J. C. Pritchard's theory of racial difference established a close relationship between race and culture: 'The first people had been black and identified the cause of subsequent whiteness as civilization itself. White skin therefore became both a marker of civilization and a product of it' (in Young, 1996: 35).[24]

According to Robert Young, three historical events helped seal scientific theories of racial difference and other popular forms of racism that all supported white superiority: firstly, the Indian Mutiny in 1857, which brought in its train direct rule from Britain on the Indian subcontinent after the defeat of the mutineers; secondly the debates around slavery and abolition that developed before, and at the time of, the American Civil War (1861-5), and finally the bloody Jamaica Insurrection at Morant Bay in 1865 that was mercilessly suppressed by Governor Eyre, and which provoked a political debate in Britain on whether Governor Eyre should be prosecuted or not for exercising

[23] The pervasive influence of such postulates even reached the twentieth century when these 'scientific' theories also served to back Nazism (Mason, 1995:5).

[24] Taking into account how identity and the discourses on race are constructed, it is not difficult to acknowledge the close relationship between culture and race. As Robert Young affirms: 'Culture has always marked cultural difference by producing the other; it has always been comparative, and racism has always been an integral part of it: the two are inextricably clustered together, feeding off and generating each other. Race has always been culturally constructed. Culture has been racially constructed' (1996: 54).

arbitrary power in repressing and executing the leaders of the revolt without a legal process (R. Young, 1996: 92).[25]

Meanwhile, other political issues further confirmed a connection between race and class. In the 1860s the Liberal Party, in its vindication of social equality, was campaigning for the extension of the franchise to the lower classes. Ideas on egalitarianism were soon extended to the notion of racial equality. According to Greta Jones: 'Liberals of the 1860s felt that the question of arbitrary government and political and racial equality was indivisible. Their opinions on the black-white issue were influenced, to a certain extent, by others more directly related to the questions within Britain itself' (1980: 140).

In the last decades of the nineteenth century all these events provoked heated debates in British society while they also contributed to whipping up populist, jingoist views of the civilising mission, economic bonus and political grandeur of the British Empire. The growing interest in scientific inquiry and classification of the natural world, together with profit-making and the political urge to dominate the world, further kindled the debates on the case for and against empire building. The pseudo-scientific theories that supported the creation of the empire and exploitation of other peoples often clashed with religious stances and/or liberal advocators of free trade together with national and individual liberty.

The background debate that had been raging since the turn of the ninettenth century confronted defenders of monogenesis and polygenesis, the former postulating the common origin of all human races, the latter convinced that the different races were in fact different species. Those upholding the monogenic hypothesis based their ideas on the Bible, with Adam and Eve as the founding parents of humankind. Christian groups,

[25]Some politicians and intellectuals such as Mill, Darwin and Huxley were in favour of Eyre's prosecution, while Carlyle and Ruskin, among others, were against it.

especially Evangelicals and low-church faiths worked for the welfare of those considered to belong to other 'races', since from their religious stance, there were just as much 'God's creatures', that is, descendants of Adam and Eve, as white people were.

Convinced that the pure origin of man was exclusively white and male, monogenists tended to view other variations of human beings as deteriorations of this ideal. Following this logic, non-white peoples were regarded as human beings that belonged to inferior categories which, in view of monogenists, explained the physical and psychical differences – features that departed from established canons of beauty and entailed lesser mental faculties and deficient values. Convinced of the full humanity of non-whites, monogenists defended abolitionist positions. However, they also advocated that these peoples should be trained, educated and civilised into the superior Western culture, and yet maintained in posts of servitude (R. Young, 1996: 101-2).

For their part, polygenists were whole heartedly in favour of slavery since, in their view, 'blacks' belonged to a different species, and hence, were sub-human, closer to the 'apes' than to 'white human beings'.[26] In other words, if dark races were not totally human, then slavery, that is, free labour force, was perfectly licit, and so was the usurpation of land from the natives. This was, for instance, the position defended by James Hunt, president of the Anthropological Society in London and fervent advocate of polygenesis (Jones, 1980: 141).

Polygenesis defendants also positioned themselves fiercely against miscegenation. In their belief that different races meant different species, they regarded racial mixing as un-natural as the sexual coupling between a human being and an animal.

[26] The roots of polygenic hypotheses go back to the seventeenth century, 'pre-Adamist' theories put forward by Isaac de la Peyrère (1596-1676). He claimed that the Bible accounted for the origins of the Jewish species with Adam, and later on, Christ's followers were elevated over the Jews as the Chosen People. Prior to Adam, de la Peyrère defended the existence of other people in a Hobbesian state of nature; these people were supposed to be black and inferior, as a species in between the white descendants of Adam and earlier beasts (Fredrickson, 2002: 52). La Peyrère had to renounce these ideas that were considered heretic, yet this theory gave way to the polygenic views of the nineteenth century, when 'science' increasingly gained prominence over Biblical literal explanations of the natural world.

Scientists who supportered this thesis, like the anthropologist Robert Knox, argued that the unions between different races would eventually result in infertile offspring – a living proof that whites and non-whites belonged to clearly separated species. (Goldberg, 1998: 64; R. Young, 1996: 6 -16).

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that the notions of 'hybridity' and 'miscegenation' were soon to become determinant nineteenth-century factors in the theorisation of race and the construction of discourses on racism. In this respect, a crucial figure in the consolidation of modern racism in Europe and its colonial territories was Arthur de Gobineau. In his work: *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853-1855) he postulated that although a variety of races could co-exist within a single species, the intrinsic superiority of the white Indo-European or Aryan race over the rest was beyond doubt.[27] He claimed that racial mixing was inevitable, and that it was precisely the degree of mixture among the distinctive human types that accounted for the unequal stages of civilisation in the world.[28] Racial mixing thus provoked degeneration, as was the case, he argued, of Southern European countries that presented a higher level of racial mixing with inferior peoples. In contrast, those closer to the Aryan race, that is, Germanic and Scandinavian populations had progressed further and achieved higher cultural status. These ideas led de Gobineau to assert that progress – or civilisation – was the result of the activities of the white race:

> All civilisations of the world, including those of Egypt, India and China, have been initiated by Aryans, but for the most part by contracting a 'fertile marriage' with other races. Black people, left on their own, by contrast, have remained inmersed in a profound inertia (in R. Young, 1996: 99).

Debates on the issue of race were that much invigorated with the advent of social Darwinism. The publication of Darwin's *On the Origins of Species* in 1859 marked a watershed in both the natural and the social sciences. Darwin's novel proposal was that

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[27] Later on this essay was to have a great influence on Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.
[28] See Smith, 1984: 193-209

of a single general law that led to the advancement of all organic beings through simply letting 'the strongest live and the weakest die' (Hawkins, 1997: 25). Such a law affecting all living creatures compelled all organisms to mutate into new or different varieties or species so as to better adapt to ever-changing environments and thus succeed in the struggle for survival (Darwin, 1988: 111-127).

The effects of this theory were twofold. In the first place, the hitherto clear-cut taxonomic division between species was suddenly shown to be unfixed and unstable. Accordingly, living beings, and human races among them, were now exposed as subject to change and evolution – the existence of varieties or sub-species being supportive of the monogenic approach (Wade, 1999: 38; Jones, 1980: 141). Secondly, if the evolution of different living creatures depended on their continuous struggle for existence, it was proved that this uphill battle occurred at three levels: between individuals of the same species, between individuals of different species and, finally, between individuals and the environment or the physical conditions of life (Hawkins, 1997: 26; Darwin, 129-139).

If *On the Origins of Species* was a landmark in the study of natural history, Darwin's second major work, *The Descent of Man* (1871) proved to be as conspicuous and controversial an essay. In this book, Darwin came to acknowledge that he had perhaps put too much emphasis on the notion of 'the survival of the fittest' in his intention to overthrow 'the dogma of separate creations' (Hawkins, 1997: 26). Nonetheless, Darwin's claim that human beings had descended from a non-human ancestry shared with apes provoked great controversy in scientific circles. 'Animals' and 'human beings' no longer appeared as two distinct and irreconcilable categories but were both part of a continuum. In this continuum, living creatures had quantitative rather than qualitative differences, not only with respect to physical traits but also to language,

reason, imagination and morality (1997: 28).[29] Darwin included a whole chapter on human races, where he made his stance against polygenesis by arguing that differences between human groups might motivate a classification into sub-species, but not into *distinct species*. He also stated that the traditional label 'races' could be maintained, if used exclusively to refer to sub-species within the same group. He demonstrated his assumption by describing the high degree of amalgamation of races present in the American continent and Pacific isles, as the success in sexual reproduction indicated that the similarities of the subjects under study were greater than the differences (Darwin, 1978: 1972-9).

Darwin's contribution to the natural science instigated new perspectives in the analyses of human social organisation. There were some premises that accounted for the social Darwinist world view. To begin with, it was believed that biological laws governed all organisms in nature, human beings included. Additionally, these organisms struggled for existence, because of the pressure of populations on natural resources. In this fight for survival, physical and mental traits were adapted in terms of sex and inheritance, which led to the natural selection of species, that is, to the emergence of new species or the elimination of others (Hawkins, 1997: 31).

Although the thesis forwarded by Darwin undermined polygenic theories that justified the exploitation of those regarded as sub-humans, it did sustain and even reinforce the hierarchical division established between superior and inferior races, in spite of the new perspectives on evolutionary instability in the classificatory system. As is known, Darwin described evolution as a slow, gradual process in which creatures, (i.e. humans) have evolved from more simplistic ancestors (i.e. apes). As Greta Jones expounds:

[29] See Darwin, (1871) 1978: 19-21

> Regardless the unity of man, Darwinism implied 'primitive' peoples were early and inferior historical forms. Darwin's *Descent of Man* was an attempt to find a graduated series of links – mental, social and moral – as evidence for evolution. To this exigency, a belief in human equality, to which other areas of Darwin's life and work testifies, was sacrificed (1980: 142).

According to Mike Hawkins, although Darwin was an opponent of slavery, he was convinced of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon civilisations over other primitive peoples and was a defender of the intellectual superiority of men over women (1997: 36).[30]

In her analysis of the implications of social Darwinism in the conceptions of race and class in English thought, Greta Jones elucidates four main assumptions (1980: 142-5): In the first place, thinkers found in Darwinism a scientific justification for social hierarchies, generated by 'natural' rather than social laws. In other words, racial and social inequality was the result of natural selection. Secondly, the 'survival of the fittest' legitimised the imperial enterprise, as Mason states:

> 'The survival of the fittest' was the cry that could justify both conquest and war and legitimize as natural a social order that was the outcome of political and military struggles […]. Early discussions of racial difference had found a ready audience in those who wished to justify slavery (1995: 7).

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[30] Even though nowadays these scientific theories on racial inferiority are adamantly rejected, and the concept of race is perceived by most people as a mere cultural construct, there are still scientific attempts to account for racial difference and inferiority of individuals pertaining to certain racial groups. In October 2007 a controversial discussion filled up pages and pages in newspapers. The storm was caused by the Nobel-Prize winner, James Watson, who discovered the DNA structure. In a recent conference Dr Watson argued that Africans were less intelligent than Europeans: 'Dr Watson was quoted as saying he was "inherently gloomy about the prospect of Africa" because "all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same as ours - whereas all the testing says not really". He was further quoted as saying that his hope was that everyone was equal but that "people who have to deal with black employees find this is not true"' (http://news.bbc.co.uk/). His research institution cancelled his contract and he later apologised for these remarks: 'Without referring directly to the subject of racial differences, Dr Watson once more invokes the idea that Darwinian natural selection has led to differences in behavioural ability between people from different geographical regions of the world. "We do not yet adequately understand the way in which the different environments in the world have selected over time the genes which determine our capacity to do different things" […]. "The overwhelming desire of society today is to assume that equal powers of reason are a universal heritage of humanity. It may well be. But simply wanting this to be the case is not enough. This is not science. To question this is not to give in to racism. This is not a discussion about superiority or inferiority, it is about seeking to understand differences, about why some of us are great musicians and others great engineers"'. (http://news.independent.co.uk/). Nonetheless, the fact that these debates are still present and held by scientists in the twenty-first century demonstrates the long-standing influence of past racist discourses (see also http://www.cnn.com/2007 ; http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/).

Fredrickson places social Darwinism in the zenit of Western imperialism in late nineteenth-century, with the 'scramble for Africa' and the acquisition of new possessions in East Asia and the Pacific. Human beings had no option other than participating in the struggle for survival. From this perspective, the success of white Europeans proved their superiority in the evolutionary chain, rendering them responsible for the advancement of other backward societies. Such a paternalistic mission was neatly reflected in Kipling's poem 'The White Man's Burden', written in 1899 and encouraging, as it did, Americans to establish a colonial rule in the Philippines to fulfil their duty as a superior race over the natives (2002: 107).

Connected to this idea of paternalism is the third characteristic of social Darwinism proposed by Jones which she describes as the continuous use in the nineteenth-century of familial imagery to reinforce social hierarchy. The Victorian family was a social set up or organisation where subordination under patriarchal rule was legitimised. Those belonging to the less evolved stages in the chain of being were likewise dependant on the paternal supervision of those above. The paternal guidance of the upper classes over the lower ones, of men over women, of the colonial government over the natives was thus justified.

Finally, the fourth feature of social Darwinism explains this connection between social and racial inequality. The images or discourses used at the time to describe both non-white peoples and the working class were quite similar and often interchangeable. In his analysis of the invisibility of 'whiteness' as the unmarked norm against which everything else automatically becomes 'other', Richard Dyer takes up this connection between race and social order. He explains that whiteness represents purity and a closer relationship with the spiritual sphere, while darker gradations are apprehended as closer to the material and flesh or earthly dimension of the human body. This association of

colour pigmentation, body and social order would explain how and why visual representations of the lower classes generally portray these individuals as darker-skinned people than upper classes members. This case would reinforce the social Darwinist scale that ranged from primitivism – that is, stages closer to the material, bodily and animalistic dimension of human beings – to more evolved and sophisticated individuals and civilisations that succeeded in developing the intellectual and spiritual potential of human beings to the full (Dyer, 1997: 39-57).

While their conviction in their moral worth and virtues of enterprise and diligence provided the white middle classes with a comfortable sense of complacency and self-approbation, it gave them a justification for simultaneously castigating non-whites and lower-class members. Treated as morally depraved, lazy, irrational and child-like beings, these groups did not possess the capacity to appreciate the advantage of a white/upper-middle class rule and its civilising mission. They therefore often rebelled and would not fulfil their social duties of labour unless forced to. Alternatively, from the last quarter of the nineteenth-century onwards, discourses advocating basic rights for the dispossessed proliferated. Here again, race and class can be said to have merged. For instance, the Reform Bills that gradually enfranchised wider and wider sectors of the population until the achievement of Universal Suffrage in 1928, went hand in hand with the rise of independent movements in the colonies demanding their right to self rule, even though independence became effective much later than the reformation towards equality in European societies (i.e. the independence of India did not become a reality until 1947, and only in the 1960s and 1970s did African colonies become independent).

1.2.2. Miscegenation and Cultural Hybridity

All these scientific, ideological and social discourses affected not only the notions of race, class, imperialism and social organisation as a whole. They were also intermingled with the issue of gender. In the initial stages of colonialism, contact with the natives often meant sexual contact, too, with the subsequent birth of 'mix-breed' off-springs, as they came to be called, that is, individuals who did not easily fit in the rigid social and scientific categories of classification. Hybridity was therefore looked upon with awe by those who feared to lose their privileges in a social set-up where hierarchical structures could be seriously destabilised by 'in-betweeners'. The threat of hybridity therefore instigated the constant reworking of pseudo-scientific discourses on race and imperialism.

As Elaine Pinderhughes explains, the fact of categorizing a person with white and non-white lineage within the non-white group was a mechanism that helped maintain identity boundaries and the hierarchical scheme, and hence effective in controlling the threat posed by miscegenation: 'As a result of this categorization, there exist within non-white groups all levels of racial mixture, whereas the White and dominant group remains "pure"' (1995: 76). And yet, particularly in the early stages of colonial contact, the issue of miscegenation often reached a level of phobia, especially when the question of race interposed itself in the terrain of patriarchal ideology.

In terms of the pseudo-scientific discourses that reasoned out the natural organisation of the world, needless to say that the defendants of polygenesis saw inter-racial sexual mixing or miscegenation with abhorrence as 'anti-natural' unions. Conversely, advocates of monogenesis, as well as social Darwinists used the theory of degeneration to justify their prevention of racial mixing. Hence, in one way or another,

hybridity was a focus of constant racial and cultural attention as well as anxiety, as is expressed in Robert Knox's exhortation to safeguard white purity: 'the hybrid is a degradation of humanity and is rejected by nature' (in R. Young: 1996: 15).

In line with these arguments, Gobineau exposed why sexual attraction and repulsion among different races might provoke the generation and degeneration of civilisations:

> It is the white races who are inclined to be sexually attracted towards the other races which is why they mix with them, the yellow and brown races, by contrast, have a stronger tendency to repulsion – which is why they have tended to remain comparatively unmixed. It is thus the power of attraction felt by whites for the yellow and brown races that produces those peoples who raise themselves into the level of civilisation (in R. Young, 1996: 107).

It was believed that after degeneration racial mixing would lead to the disappearance of the human species as a whole. In Gobineau's view, individual degradation would precipitate the degradation of nations, then that of civilisations and, ultimately, degeneration and the end of humanity. This is the apocalyptic conclusion he reaches in his *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*:

> En s'arrêtant même aux temps qui doivent quelque peu précéder le dernier soupir de notre espèce, en se détournant de ces âges envahis par la mort, où le globe, devenu muet, continuera, mais sans nous, à décrire dans l'espace ses orbes impassibles, je ne sais si l'on n'est pas en droit d'appeler la fin du monde cette époque moins lointaine qui verra déjà l'abaissement complet de notre espèce (in Smith, 1984 : 221).

Darwin's theory of evolution could led to the disappearance of miscegenation as a concept since, if the boundaries between varieties and even species had been undermined, the 'mixture' of different individuals no longer should be considered a taboo. However, the outcome of social Darwinism was rather the opposite. As the notion of racial superiority was still maintained, Gobineau's views concerning 'degeneration' proved more powerful than ever. Darwin's emphasis on natural selection by means of genetic inheritance gave major relevance to sexual reproduction. The healthier and stronger the parents, the fitter the offspring would be. That is why whites should only interbreed among themselves, otherwise the degree of development reached by those

descendants of the 'Aryans' would decrease if 'polluted' with the genetic inferiority of those individuals belonging to 'lower' groups.[31]

All the debates prompted by the different theories on human classification within the natural and social world led to a range of different positionings regarding the issue of hybridity or miscegenation.[32] These theories on hybridity added another relevant dimension which was inextricably related to the racial question: the issue of gender. Sexual desire therefore acquired a conspicuous status in the imperial enterprise. In this respect, it is interesting to note that imperialist discourses regarded certain interracial, sexual couplings licit while others were condemned as repulsive. The only union allowed in the imperial 'contact' was the one that brought together a white man and a non-white woman, since the white male, 'belonging to a strong, conquering race, will be in a position of power'. This union required the 'masochistic submission of the subordinated, objectified woman' (R. Young, 1996: 108). As a result of the power question in inter-racial, sexual unions, female sexuality should be very much controlled, that is, while submission was demanded of the non-white woman by the white

[31] This theory would become the basis of 'Eugenics', the scientific study of genetic human improvement, developed by Sir Francis Galton at the end of the nineteenth century and which was adopted by Nazist 'racial cleaning' programmes (Goldberg, 1998: 68). Galton argued that certain groups – mainly those formed by non-white individuals or working-class people – were intellectually inferior, consequently, they were not proper sexual partners, as the resulting offspring would degenerate into inferior stages of the human species. Eugenicists believed that intellectual, physical and moral qualities were not socially constructed but innate and the only way of eliminating 'deviant' social behaviours perpetrated by these 'dysfunctional groups' was through a process of selective breeding (Lola Young, 1996: 51).

[32] In the first place we find the 'straightforward polygenist species argument', which is to say, the rejection of inter-racial mixture and the claim that any offspring resulting from 'undesirable' unions between species would be eventually infertile after one generation or two. Samuel Long, Josiah Nott and Adolf Hitler would be defendants of this posture. Secondly, the 'amalgamation thesis', claimed by James Cowles Pritchard, envisaged the emergence of a new mixed race – a race with different physical traits and moral characteristics. Thirdly, defenders of the 'descomposition thesis' postulated that mixed breeds would eventually die out or revert to one of the parent's permanent type. Matthew Arnold, Josiah Nott and George Gliddon defended this hypothesis thought they later combined it with the fourth proposition together with Paul Broca, Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton. They affirmed that both 'proximate' and 'distant' varieties or sub-species co-existed, and the unions between the former would be procreant, but those among the latter would be infertile or tend to degeneration. Finally, Joseph Arthur, comte de Gobineau, Louis Agassiz and Oskar Vogt upheld that miscegenation and hybridity meant 'raceless chaos', degeneration and degradation, thus threatening the evolution and survival of the superior pure races (see Young, 1996: 18).

conquering male, this same overlord took great care to prevent and protect white women from sexual intercourse with non-white males.

Lola Young explains the rhetoric that accompanied interracial sexuality in colonial times. African women during slavery, and by extension, non-white colonised women, were dehumanised. The degree of dehumanisation would vary according to the hierarchical consideration of the different races and cultures under colonial rule. For instance, African and Australian Aboriginal women were considered sub-human, while the Oriental woman was imbued with the exotic sensuality ascribed to her in Orientalist discourses (Robinson, 1996: xviii). Over and above these different attitudes to non-white women, the fact is that white, middle-class women were idealised and placed in a superior status. Class was also a conspicuous factor in this issue, as lower-class, white women's sexuality was somewhat pathologised and envisaged as a source of illicit sexual pleasure for white men, a consideration that brought them closer to non-white, female groups than to their middle-class counterparts. Accordingly, '[t]his transgressive sexual activity was denied to white women who, burdened with the responsibility for reproducing the "race" were supposed to adhere to a certain moral standard which precluded lesbian relationships and interracial sex' (1996: 47).

Likewise, this idealised construction of the white, middle-class woman as a preserver of morality, together with the pathological consideration of lower-class women promoted the idea that only women with low morals were attracted to non-white men. In Lola Young's words:

> … that a white woman of high morals and 'good breeding' should want to have sexual relations with black men was deemed unthinkable and the regulation of European women's sexual activity in regard to black men was part of the exercise of white male control which set the limits for her sexual freedom (1996: 47).

Hence, the control of female sexuality was – and still is – a relevant issue in the contact between cultures under patriarchal rule, with important consequences during the

age of imperialism, but with pervasive traces long after the colonial enterprise. Mainly because of its association with reproductive roles, the female body has traditionally been closely linked to mother earth and the land.[33] Hence, in patriarchal societies, women come to symbolise the 'nation's spiritual and material vitality […] invoked to safeguard the existing order against the perils of modernity' (Mosse in San Juan, 2002: 81). As a consequence, the female members of the community are conferred the role of transmitting and reproducing national and ethnic categories as well as that of maintaining the boundaries of these ethnic and national groups (San Juan, 2002: 85).

Given this crucial connection between nationalism, ethnicity, gender and sexuality, one can begin to understand why the issue of miscegenation has never been welcome in societies which try to preserve their identity borders against foreign influences. The boundaries of inclusion and inclusion based on ethnic/national categories may be destabilised by members of mixed ethnic or cultural background whose 'in-betweenness' does not conform to any of those pre-established, artificial categories.

Since in patriarchal societies the continuation of the family line is determined by the Law of the Father,[34] couples that bring together an 'acceptable ethnic man' and an 'outsider woman' are tolerated, as it is the woman's cultural background that is sacrificed and not the man's, hence the concern in patriarchal societies in keeping women's choice of partners within the limits of their own community.[35] To a certain extent, this explains why a hierarchy of acceptation of mixed unions is determined by

[33] See Ortner, 1996, Walby, 1994, and Lerner, 1986.

[34] Rutherford affirms that the Law of the Father functions as the guardian against miscegenation in order to propagate and maintain the community's ethnic patrilineality (1997: 149).

[35] Gardner explains the pervasive myths that have always accompanied the inconsistent equation of racial mixing between blacks and whites in Western culture in general and the United States in particular: 'miscegenation, or illicit sexual intercourse, between white males and black females that results in a mixed race progeny upgrades the black race to a higher intellectual capacity and responsiveness to Western culture, and hence is permissible. On the other hand, black male and white female sexual activity can only result in a progeny of lesser intellectual capability' (2000: 13).

which of the two members of the couple – the male or the female partner — is the 'outsider'.[36]

Another possibility of inter-racial mixing is that which occurs between same-sex partners. In imperial times, although not publicly accepted, homosexual male intercourse was nevertheless contemplated. Gobineau goes back in time to explain the view. As he comments, the Aryan race was originally an active male or masculine group. Given that female Aryans were considered to be deviations from, or 'the other' version of the patriarchal norm, non-white races were regarded as female or feminised. As a result, the white male could be attracted to both sexes, with only one type of liaison resulting in the possible birth of mix-breed offspring. Accordingly, if miscegenation was to be avoided, homosexuality could have a higher degree of acceptance as it did not entail the possible consequences of a heterosexual coupling (R. Young, 1996: 109).[37] The obsessive rejection of miscegenation practices in scientific and social discourses proves the degree of rejection of hybridity in the colonial era. As Robert Young states: 'fear of miscegenation can be related to the notion that without such hierarchy, civilization would, in a literal as well as technical sense, collapse' (1996: 95).

The long-standing refusal to accept the possibility of 'physical hybridity' through miscegenation had a parallel articulation in the possible emergence of 'cultural' hybridity or the creation of 'hybrid identities'. As expounded in the first part of this chapter, identity formation depends mainly on the existence of difference and 'otherness'. In the colonial context, Homi Bhabha applies the same principle to argue that the ideological construction of 'otherness' is based on 'fixity' so that the hierarchy

[36] Daileader analyses how women's bodies are historically represented as the boundaries of the nation and how these discourses have created many cultural products in literature and cinema dealing with the concept of 'Othellophillia', that is, the representation of the romantic coupling between a white woman and a black man and the subsequent presentation of legitimate use of racist violence exerted against both members of the interracial couple (see Daileader, 2005).

[37] Homosexuality here refers to male homosexuality because in the patriarchal societies of the nineteenth century the possibility of female homosexuality was not even contemplated.

created between dominant and subject – or colonisers and colonised people – is constantly maintained (1994: 66). In his own words:

> The construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power […]. The epithets racial or sexual come to be seen as modes of differentiation, realized as multiple, cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse, always demanding a specific and strategic calculation of their effects. Such is, I believe, the moment of colonial discourse. It is a form of discourse crucial to the binding of a range of differences and discriminations that inform the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization (1994: 67).

In this sense, the 'other' can simultaneously be both a repository of loathing as well as an unknown or 'dark' object of desire, hence the attraction and repulsion for the 'other'. Because of this attraction, there exists the danger of close contact with the 'other' that trespasses the boundaries of the self physically – in the case of sexual intercourse – or culturally – in the case of the acquisition of certain practices hitherto foreign or unknown to the self. Phobia about 'cultural miscegenation' could be explained in the same terms, that is, cultural interchange as a force or development capable of destabilising a given social order. That is why Homi Bhabha emphasised the importance of fixity in the construction of the colonial 'other'. To illustrate his point he uses the notions of 'mimicry' and 'mockery'.

All along the decades of the Empire, discourses justifying the colonial enterprise as a means of expanding Western civilisation to underdeveloped primitive peoples proliferated. On his reading, the natives, it was believed, would eventually become civilised and thus escalate Darwin's evolutionary chain. By means of more or less violent methods, Western culture was – to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the colony – imposed on the native communities. As a result, the only option for the colonised individual was to make use of the tactic of 'mimicry', that is, the imitation of the over-rulers' ways of being and living as a survival strategy. Although theoretically, the ultimate philanthropic goal of empire-building was the civilisation and eventual

independence of the colonies, in practice, complete and perfect imitation of Western culture was seen as a feasible threat since it could undermine the privileged status of the West over the rest of the world. In Bhabha's words: 'colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*' (1994: 86; italics in original).

The key question for Bhabha in this issue of 'mimicry' is *ambivalence*. On the one hand, mimicry is desirable to the extent that it enables dominant groups to exert their power on those subjects they regard as 'similar but different'. Knowledge of the 'other' facilitates its control. On the other hand, the mimicking of the master can conjointly stand as a menace for the colonial rule since, in adopting imposed ways, the ruled is also coming to know the ruler. It is the same but not quite, the 'other' can be dominated but not fully controlled. Viewed in this light, mimicry is a mask the native places before her/himself that denotes both the presence and absence of an 'other' identity. In this respect, mimicry is like a camouflage or 'mockery':

> Not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically. Its threat […] comes from the prodigious and strategic production of conflictual, fantastic, discriminatory 'identity effects' in the play of a power that is elusive because it hides no essence, no 'itself' (Bhabha, 1994: 90).

The ambivalence thus oscillates between narcissistic pleasure in being imitated and paranoia, caused by uncontrollable – and hence threatening – similarity (1994: 91).

On this reading, it can therefore be said that the age of imperialism was characterised by the ambiguity, inconsistency and contradiction of its ideological discourses. To cite but an example, colonial 'contact' was often used as a euphemism for systematic genocide, at a time when colonisers were promulgating their belief in reason and human rights, and considered themselves as the ultimate example of 'civilisation'.[38] 'Contact' also meant sexual contact, more often than not in the form of rape exerted by

[38] See Rose, 2000: 1-14.

the white man upon native women, at a time when miscegenation was regarded with horror. Finally, 'contact' also implied the cultural imposition of Western norms upon 'less developed' peoples, and yet 'Westernised', 'mimic' natives were perceived with a mixture of pleasure and fear.

In the twentieth century, the advent of post-colonialism was accompanied by conspicuous scientific, ideological and social changes in human relationships around the world. Even so, inconsistencies and paradoxes are still – or even more – present in contemporary societies. The independence of most colonies in the years following the end of the Second World War eventually led to a new world order that had done away with the discourses that justified colonial rule, while movements in defence of marginalised groups gained precedence. The belief in biological superiority in terms of gender, race and class is no longer sustained by the dominant or 'official' cultures of the 'ex-colonising' countries. Nonetheless, there has been an emergence of new or transformed discourses that justify a new kind of hierarchical relationships favourable to the present dominant groups in society.

Cultures are not homogeneous. According to Raymond Williams, the culture of a given society is the sum total of various discourses that reflect complex existing interrelationships. At any given time, there are dominant discourses, that is, discourses that, in an Althussian or Gramscian terms, appear to be so natural and common-sensical that they come to exert a major influence in the cultural structures of society. And yet, however dominant these discourses may be, they can be challenged, contested or reinforced by other ideological trends inherited from the past or emerging as new meanings, values and practices. As mentioned earlier on, Williams labels the former 'residual and the latter 'emergent' (1988: 123).

Williams's theory serves to explain the existence of contradictory discourses in societies. Ex-colonial powers, for instance, may display cultural products that contain 'residual' discourses from the times of colonialism ('residual' because they have not yet been erased from the collective unconscious). At the same time, these nations or communities may have adopted a 'dominant' stand against the colonial oppression of the past and the advocation of equality between different social, national or ethnic groups.

To conclude this section, it must be said that, in post-colonial societies like Britain the notion of hybridity no longer carries the negative connotations of the past. On the contrary, hybridity is now seen more positively as a multicultural enrichment. Even so, although nobody nowadays would openly defend the prohibition of miscegenation, residual phobic discourses on interracial mixing prevent normalisation in the portrayal of relationships of the kind in cultural products. The co-existence of conflicting and sometimes contradictory discourses in a given culture renders crucial an in-depth exploration of these contextual features that make up a particular society.[39]

1.2.3. Historical Multiculturality of the British Isles

The theories of identity construction help establish a connection between race issues and the construction of national identities in colonial and postcolonial times. In the case of Britain, Lola Young compares the child's acquisition of identity and the construction of national identity in post-colonial times in the following terms:

> Like the infant who has to learn to differentiate between itself and the rest of the world, it is as if Britain—as an imperial power—had to discover that its source of comfort, security and warmth did not come from itself but from elsewhere […]. The discovery that the colonies were separate

[39] Similarly, Stephen Castle mentions the existence of 'common-sense' racist practices at a time when 'overt racism' has been publicly rejected. In his opinion, these derive from a set of 'assumptions used by people to understand and cope with the complex social world around them' (2000: 173). Such 'common sense' practices may be viewed as residual cultural constructions that change and adapt to new circumstances and are thus difficult to erase.

> entities with their own demands and needs become linked to frustration, loss and anger. The squalor of the once great capital city of the empire, is associated with a crisis in national identity, anxiety is precipitated by loss—loss of control, loss of empire, loss of status as a world power – and the blame is implicitly located in the chaos and disease with which Blacks have contaminated the landscape (in Rutherford, 1990:202).

As Anne Marie Smith states: ‘Every imperial centre faces an identity crisis after it undergoes the trauma of decolonization’ (1994: 6). Thus, after the independence of India in 1947, which precipitated the whole decolonisation process during the following decades, colonialist theories on race and identity logically altered as they adapted to the new situation and British people came to terms with their loss of world influence and power. Accordingly, although the discourses of Imperial times belong to the past, they still have their influence in the process of identity construction in the present. As Felicity Hand puts it, the remnants of the Empire represent: ‘… what Salman Rushdie referred to as “the phantom twitchings of an amputated limb”, that is the crumbs left over from the Empire which are still relished as our imperial heritage’ (1999: 43).

In less metaphorical terms, Gilroy comments that since the end of the Second World War the United Kingdom has been suffering from what he labels ‘postcolonial melancholia’:

> The life of the nation has been dominated by an inability even to face, never mind actually mourn, the profound change in circumstances and moods that followed the end of the Empire and consequent loss of imperial prestige. That inability has been intertwined with the apprehension of successive political and economic crises, with the gradual break up of the United Kingdom, with the arrival of substantial numbers of postcolonial citizen-migrants and with the shock and anxiety that followed from a loss of any sense that the national collective was bound by a coherent and distinctive culture (2004: 98).

Britain, therefore, still belongs to the Western block of the so called ‘developed countries’. Harking back to a not very distant past, British citizens could proudly affirm that their country had been the greatest imperial power in the world. Just after the First World War, the British Empire covered a fifth of the world’s surface and included a quarter of its population (Kumar, 2003: 35). However, since then, the nation has found

itself relegated to a more humble position and consequently, can no longer be considered a world leader.

As will be seen in more detail along the next chapter, new relationships were established with both the United States and the European Union. These new alliances led in turn to a readjustment of relations within the Commonwealth. Meanwhile, pressures from ethnic communities within the United Kingdom were also building up. Britain's more humble position in the world and its altered inner situation are circumstances that could very well be propitious for the fashioning of a new British identity, strong enough to withstand the influence of traditional views, still ripe in certain sectors of the population. For this very reason, as Hanif Kureishi states, 'it is the British, the white British, who have to learn that being British isn't what it was' (in Morley, 2001: 38).

Gwyn Williams describes the re-shaping of British society in the following way: 'The British nation and the British state are clearly entering a process of dissolution, into Europe, or the mid-Atlantic, or a post-imperial fog. Britain has begun a long march out of history' (in Kumar, 2003: 226) The country's condition as a 'declining' power from the end of Second World War onwards logically affected its foreign policy since it could no longer be able to act independently from allied states (Byrd, 1988: 3).[40]

The perception of Britain as an imperial nation could be a residual discourse – to use Williams' words – which includes those traditional intrinsic qualities of the old generations of Britons who built a grand and lastingly influential imperial country. Such a notion of British identity automatically excludes those British citizens who participated in the Empire venture, not as rulers but as colonised subjects. That is why, despite their

[40] It was the Suez Crisis in 1957 that showed up Britain as an eclipsing power in international affairs, when the invasion of British and French troops of the Suez Canal, after it had been nationalised by the Egyptian ruler, was followed by international condemnation of such an action. British and French troops were forced to withdraw and were replaced by United Nations peace-keeping forces. The United States and other country-members of the U.N had proved to be more influential in solving that international crisis than the country that only a decade before was still a powerful empire (Lowe, 1992: 318; Green, 1996: 5-14)

contemporary settlement in the isles, these 'new British citizens' do not fit in this still prevailing 'white' definition of British identity. As Gilroy comments:

> Britishness […] is seen to emerge as the sum of these cultures [English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish]. Alien (i.e. black) cultures have been introduced into this country with disastrous effect […]. The increased competition for limited resources and the variety for disruptive behaviours introduced by the immigrant population create problems for the national community (1998: 60).

Nevertheless, in spite of attempts in the 1980s towards constructing a British identity based on traditional values of the past, it became more and more evident that times were changing and that a re-definition of what 'Britishness' meant in contemporary times was sorely needed. As David Morley and Kevin Robins explain:

> The grandiose dreams of a 'New World Order', in which it was presumed that all the world would follow America and the West into the 'End of History', characterized by the untroubled hegemony of liberalism and market capitalism are now well and truly exposed for the ethnocentric fantasies they always were. As western culture comes to be recognized as but one particular form of modernity, rather than as some universal template for humankind, and as Britain attempts to adapt to its sense of displacement from the centre of the world stage—and, at the same time, tries to come to terms with its own ethnic and cultural complexity—a whole new scenario begins to emerge (2001: 3).

Drawing on Ernest Gellner's theory of state and nation, Steve Fenton specifies that the basis of nationalist discourse is the correspondence of nation with state. He defines 'nation' as the idea of 'people with a shared destiny, a common past and future, and a store of customs, collective memory and familiar symbols held in common', while the term 'state' refers to 'the form of organisation of citizenship, government and geographical boundaries' (1999: 203). The consequence of the equation nation-state is that all those individuals that are considered to belong to the nation should be included within the legal frontiers of the state. If they do not happen to physically inhabit the limits of the state, they should always be 'welcome back home'. In contrast, those individuals who do not belong to the nation should be encouraged to leave the state (1999: 203-4).[41] Hence the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion implemented by

[41] Layton-Henry explains how immigrants are perceived by the native population: 'while some immigrants are seen as unwelcome outsiders – competitors for jobs, housing and welfare benefits – others are viewed as insiders or as welcome outsiders, either because they are kith and kin or because they are viewed as more

means of immigration restrictions evidence how important identity construction is in the notion of the nation-state. This fact also accounts for the hostility felt towards those actually born in a certain state but with a foreign 'national' origin, such as the younger generations born in the UK but with parents or grand-parents of immigrant origin. The rhetoric used in reference to them in certain exclusionary discourses is that they belong to the state – Britain confers them legal rights thanks to the democratic character of a civilised country – but they are excluded from the cultural attributes of the nation. Gilroy establishes a parallelism between nationalism and racism. He gives the example of Britain as a nation related to a specific 'race', not only in cultural but also in biological terms, with its inhabitants having traditionally been labelled 'the Island Race' or the 'Bulldog Breed' (1998: 45).

Likewise, race and class are closely related. Post-imperial migrant labour, for instance, reflected 'home' class alignment by reproducing 'the categories of colonial superordination and subordination' (1999: 208). However, importing the 'colonial structure' into Britain caused a double anxiety. On the one hand, cheap migrant labour brought further competition and hence frustration to the white native working-class. On the other hand, the enormous and constant changes, caused by social mobility in capitalist societies, block the possibility of a permanent reproduction of the colonial hierarchy. As a consequence, those white individuals pertaining to the 'Island Race' see their traditional privileged positions threatened. It is precisely the 'dynamic and unplanned nature of capitalism', the 'belief that all is changing – for the worse – and is hopelessly out of control', that is promoting nostalgia for the long lost days of the stable national past. This harking back to better times is often associated with the perceptions

assimilable or as bringing essential capital investment and managerial skills. Welcome outsiders, for example, would include Japanese and American executives, while welcome insiders would include people of British descent and the Irish, who are usually regarded as insiders despite the troubles in Ulster (1992: 274).

of a 'pure white society' which was not disturbed or disrupted by non-white communities, usually blamed for social decay (Fenton, 1999: 205-6).

Fenton, on the other hand, notices how the idea of nation can also transcend geographical boundaries in the context of imperialist expansion. Against this background, reference is made to a shared ancestry and culture, hence Winston Churchill's use of phrases such as 'English-speaking peoples' or his references to 'kith and kin' or 'our cousins' in Australia, New Zealand or Canada (1999: 204). This cross-national identification carries with it a racial component, as this 'shared ancestry' is visualised as white skinned, which legitimises hostility or exclusion of the non-white Commonwealth members from the British nation-state and their perception as 'invaders' rather than 'cousins'.[42]

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Britain's Labour government tried to replace the traditional, white, imperial sense of British identity that had predominated during the Conservative 1980s with a new image labelled 'Cool Britannia' (Morley and Robins, 2001: 3). This new notion of Britishness appeared was not exclusively defined in white terms. In the words of Gordon Brown:

> In the 1980s a very narrow view of Britishness was popularised by Margaret Thatcher, a Britain built on self-interested individualism, mistrust of foreigners and an unchanging constitution. I believe this was based on a misreading of our past. Our history shows Britain to be outward-looking and open. It is not true that British history is defined by mistrust of foreigners. The past shows Britain to have been internationalist and engaged (in Kumar, 2003: 254).

Nonetheless, Gilroy argues that in the twenty-first century Britain still continues to look back to the past to define its identity. He comments, for instance, on the obsessive evocation of Britain's victory against Nazi Germany which he sees as based

[42] The words of the Conservative Home Secretary (1962-4), Reginald Maudling, expressed this distinction of affiliation between Britain and Old and New Commonwealth countries and the dilemma of imposing immigration restrictions on 'British subjects' of the former empire: 'While one talked always rightly about the need to avoid discrimination between black and white is a simple fact of human nature that for the British people there is a great difference between Australians and New Zealanders, for instance, who come of British stock, and people from Africa, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent who were equally subjects of the Queen and entitled to total equality before the law when established here, but who in appearance, habits, religion and culture, were totally different from us' (in Joppke, 1999: 101).

on the country's necessity to find a stable point of reference for its identity construction in the ever-changing present times:

> The memory of the country at war against foes who are simply, tidily, and uncomplicatedly evil has recently acquired the status of an ethnic myth. It explains not only how the nation remade itself through war and victory but can also be understood as a rejection or deferral of its present problems. That process is driven by the need to get back to the place or moment before the country lost its moral and cultural bearings. Neither the appeal of homogeneity nor the antipathy toward immigrants and strangers who represent the involution of national culture can be separated from that underlying hunger for reorientation. Turning back in this direction is also a turning away from the perceived dangers of pluralism and from the irreversible fact of multiculture (2004: 97).

Thus, even though the appropriation of past discourses, which was a distinctive feature of the 1980s, was smoothed over and modulated by the Labour government, the past nevertheless has not been completely disregarded in contemporary constructions of cultural or national identities. It could be said that twenty and twenty-first century Britain is *visibly* multicultural, however, if multiculturality is understood as the presence of various cultures within a single territory, then the British Isles have always been multicultural: the Celts, the Romans, the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, the Scandinavians, the Normans, have all been historically integrated in the constructed idea of Britishness.

Certain myths foreground the ancient birth of the 'island race' in the common Celtic origins. For instance, in the writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century and Malory in the fifteenth century, the legendary King Arthur was depicted as the hero who succeeded in uniting Celtic Britons, Saxons and Jutes in a single nation. This myth was used by Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart monarchs as a means of legitimising their hereditary links with early British kings (Young, 1995: 128). However, the pre-Norman society was by no means a homogeneous one. The Roman Emperor Claudius conquered Britain in AD 43, incorporating the territories corresponding to England and Wales to the Roman Empire. Roman rule and culture proved influential on

the native Britons – to a greater or lesser extent depending on the areas.[43] The process of cultural 'conflation' was reflected in the religious cults. Roman rituals did not fully replace the Celtic ones, but some of the gods and supernatural conceptions of the world became mixed-up, with deities such as Mars Cocidius or Sulis Minerva.[44] The largest part of the population in Roman Britain belonged to the native British tribes, yet there are archaeological remains that prove the presence of foreign people in the isles.[45] Hybridity was therefore present in the British Isles from early history, not only reflected in the presence of foreigners but also in the merging of cultural products in both religion and the art.

Another important evidence of the lack of homogeneity in the cultural identity of early Britain comes through historical records of revolts against Roman rule at the time, especially the famous uprising led by Boudicca. In Britain there were un-Romanised parts such as the Iceni kingdom of Norfolk which, together with the Trinovantes of Essex, violently rejected Roman rule (Salway, 1992: 38). To this day, Boadiccea or Boudicca remains a symbol of British identity, representing the figure of the woman warrior, who defends the interests of her Celtic people against foreign invaders (Haigh, 1992: 342). A Celtic woman, thus, comes to represent Britain. However, another woman warrior encarnates the same kind of symbolism, Britannia, the Roman name of the island (O'Driscoll, 1999: 10). These two emblematic figures represent the paradoxical nature of identity construction for a nation. From the early times in history, the territory corresponding to Britain staged both rebellions and the amalgamation of different

[43] Even a century before the Roman invasion, Britons show signs of acceptance of some Roman influence, especially in the realm of gastronomy, with the adoption of Mediterranean wine and the subsequent imports of appropriate vessels to contain it, together with other types of pottery (Blagg, 1992: 44).
[44] Interestingly enough, other cults were also imported from other parts of the Roman empire. This explains the presence of cults to Isis (Egyptian), Baudihilia (Germanic) and Jupiter Dolichenus (Syrian) (Salway, 1992: 33-4).
[45] In this respect, two tombstones at South Shields, at the mouth of the Tyne, are quite significant. One tomb held a free Moorish slave and the other is a memorial to a British born woman who married a merchant from Palmyra, on the frontier of Syria (1992: 36).

peoples and cultures. Another mythical account of the 'island race' that compounds the original and intrinsic British identity is the thesis defending that the continental Germanic tribes that arrived in Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries exterminated the natives or pushed them back to the Celtic fringes of Wales, Scotland and Ireland.[46]

The belief in a pureAnglo-Saxon lineage is of vital importance here, since up to the mid-eighteenth century at least, 'race was thought of in terms of lineage […] in an anxious attempt to evoke the impression of a powerful, even monarchical family genealogy' (Young, 1995: 129). This idea of lineage led to the construction of a British identity based on, or inherited from, the white Anglo-Saxon race. However, those Germanic tribes were not homogeneous either. According to Venerable Bede's description in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (c.731), the invaders came from three powerful Germanic tribes, the Saxons, the Angles and the Jutes (in Bailey, 1992: 104). During the ninth century another invasion brought a distinct people, the Scandinavians, into the northern part of the island. Taking into account all these different peoples that gradually populated the British territory, it can be said that the claim of a homogeneous British identity dating back to pre-Norman Britain is nothing but a myth. Later on, the Norman invasion brought about new changes in society, in the culture and the language, all of which would, in time, become distinct features of a constructed

[46] This myth would reinforce the dominant part that English identity plays within the often metonymic vision of England as standing for the whole of Britain. That is why, in their claims for an intrinsic identity different from English dominance, Scotland, Wales and Ireland have built up their national identities as originally Celtic, in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon and Norman England. However, these claims are also imaginary constructions. For instance, Scotland is continuously represented as culturally distinct from England. However, this Scottish identity presented against 'English otherness' is by no means homogeneous either. An as imaginary nation, Scotland is often represented with images dating from the poems of Robert Burns or the Romantic rural, sublime and mythical landscapes described by Walter Scot. Scottish Gaelic is also presented as a genuine language distinct from the dominance of English, and William Wallace portrayed as the hero who fought against the English yoke, as early as the thirteenth century. However, the reality of Scotland is much more complex and the clear-cut attempted opposition to Britain is more often than not somehow blurred: the Highlands and Lowlands present some differences that may bring closer the Lowlanders with the inhabitants of Northern England, than with the Highlanders. William Wallace himself descended from the Normans, and not from the Celtic world that apparently seem to unify the Scottish land against England. Lastly, Scottish Gaelic is not even the common language spoken by all the people. It has its origins in the Celtic Highlands, while Lowlanders have developed a dialect from English, the Scot (McDowall, 2000: 132-6; Kelly: 2001: 70-3).

British identity already impregnated with Celtic, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian as well as Norman influences – a baggage that shows the hybrid nature of its composition.[47]

It was in the sixteenth century, during the Tudor rule, that England witnessed the birth of the 'nation state'. As Alan Smith explains:

> As a result of the Reformation political and religious dissent became inextricably linked. Catholics and Puritans under Elizabeth and the early Stuarts were usually regarded as political threat to the State as well as a religious threat to the State Church, both of which were now headed by the monarch […]. The changes of the 1530s also led to the formal establishment of an English 'nation state', a realm subject to no outside authority […]. [T]he break with Rome led to a much increased sense of national self-consciousness, an enhanced feeling that England was both very different from and much superior to other European states (1984: 88).

The Tudor age, therefore, brought a sense of national identity based on both the religious and political unity of England under a single monarch. The new dynasty therefore marks a time when the country progressed out of such conflicts as the War of the Roses that had confronted several powerful noblemen in their claim for the English throne.[48] During the Tudor age, settlement of Scottish Highlanders and trade in the northern Irish area were encouraged, sowing the seeds of the long-standing conflict between the different communities in that territory (see McDowall, 2004: 76-7; Smith, 1988: 323-4). It was under the reign of Henry VIII that Wales was united to England and in 1603 the whole island came to be ruled by a Stuart king, James I, although it was not until 1707 that the Act of Union came to formally unify England, Wales and Scotland under a common government.

[47] Bailey argues that the Norman conquest in 1066 brought about important changes to Britain but also a sense of continuity in the social lives of the Anglo-Saxon population, as both societies did not show irreconcilable differences (Bailey, 1992: 119).

[48] Elizabethan drama helped create the myth of the legitimacy of Tudor monarchs as anointed by God for the imperial destiny of the nation. In Andrew Sanders' words, the English Historical plays 'reinvent the myths, memories and constructions of recent history which had so preoccupied Tudor historians. They explored divisions, depositions, usurpations and civil wars, but they also bolstered the concept of secure monarchic government propagated by officially approved apologists of the Tudor dynasty (1996: 151). On the representation of the birth of the nation-state in Renaissance historical plays see Dollimore and Sinfield, 1988; Drakakis, 1990; Wells, 1986.

Most histories of the British Isles include pages or chapters on the different events and causes that led to the drawing out or removal of frontiers between the four nations that compound the Isles. These changing frontiers or boundaries delimit imagined communities that may emphasise certain points in common with, and different from, their neighbours.[49]

In his book *The British Isles. A History of Four Nations*, Hugh Kearney advocates the adoption of a 'Britannic approach' in the study of the history of British Isles. He points to the pervasive use made by historians of the words 'British' and 'English' as equivalent terms. He moreover highlights the use of 'nation' as a practical but also dangerous way of undertaking the study of the past:

> The concept of 'nation' provided modern historians with a convenient framework around which to organise their materials but a price had to be paid. What became later national boundaries were extended backwards into a past where they had little or no relevance, with the consequence that earlier tribal or pre-national societies were lost to sight (1990: 3).

Accordingly, Kearney perceives the British Isles as a fluid and multi-dimensional 'Britannic melting pot' of interacting cultures (1990: 4). From this perspective, he draws a useful distinction between the terms 'culture' and 'nation':

> Cultures change over time, are influenced by other cultures, cross-national boundaries and often contain sub-cultures within themselves. 'Nation', in contrast, is a term of rhetoric used to evoke feelings of unity in response to a particular situation (1990: 4).

Bearing this in mind, Kearney comments on the conflict for supremacy between 'Celts' and 'Anglo-Saxons'. He refuses to consider them as different ethnic groups or 'races', preferring to view them all as of Indo-European origin but having developed over time certain linguistic and cultural differences. His outline of the fluctuating changes in the 'Britannic' history is thus shown to be the result of conflicting and changing cultures or sub-cultures (1990: 5-7).

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[49] The inherent hybridity of the 'English race' was already reflected in Defoe's 'The True-Born Englishman' (1701).

However, when Kearney turns to mention the 'Britannic melting pot' of the post-colonial period, he refers to the immigrants from Commonwealth countries as 'ethnic groups' (1990: 211, 216), a label that he had avoided when dealing with the Celtic and Teutonic communities that originally populated the British Isles. His view of both Celtic and Germanic tribes as having the same 'Indo-European' roots leads him to argue that they were culturally but not 'ethnically' different.[50]

The evidence of an initial linguistic relationship within the Indo-European family of languages that unifies what time and history converted into disassociated communities problematises divisions of human beings into distinct groups. In other words, the line that divides human beings into racially, ethnically or culturally distinct groups appears as completely unstable. This line could thus be considered a mere ideological division that serves the interests of particular groups in certain circumstances. Broadening the argument, the same could be said about the boundary that divides populations into 'national' identities and that equates the nation with a particular myth of 'ethnic' essence in order to reinforce the sameness of that group and its distinctiveness from others. On this view, the idea of 'Britishness' is as imaginary as that of 'Scottishness', or that of 'Westerness' and even of 'whiteness'. Every category created or established fulfils the interests of those identities struggling for recognition or to maintain a dominant status over the rest.

[50] It was in the late eighteenth century when Sir William Jones proposed a linguistic theory whereby a common root could be detected between European and Asian languages, due to the similarities existent between European languages and Sanskrit, the language of ancient India, whose extensive literary production reaches further back in time than other written work in any European language (Baugh and Cable, 1996: 18). Although there is no instance – written record – of the 'Indo-European language' as such, comparisons between European and Asiatic languages show various degrees of similarities that point to a common root. These descendants are divided into eleven groups: Indian ,Iranian, Armenian, Hellenic, Albanian, Italic, Balto-Slavic, Germanic, Celtic, Hittite and Tocharian. Other theories even identify another 'superfamily' that would include the Indo-European with the Afro-Asiatic and Dravidian language families (1996: 21).

In this light, the notion of hybridity is as imaginary a construct as the categories of division that prevent (un)desirable mixtures. However, as long as identity boundaries exist in the collective conscious or unconscious of humanity, hybridity will also be there to destabilise those taxonomic structures that marginalise and/or oppress certain individuals, not only in the 'imaginary', but in very palpable ways.

In the case of Britain, 'Britishness' is a useful construction that describes a certain unity – political, at least – that associates the inhabitants of the corresponding territory. However, when it comes to analysing the 'multicultural' composition of post-colonial Britain, internal divisions amongst those designated as 'Britons' are frequently disregarded and hidden under the homogenised common feature of 'whiteness'. This 'imaginary' unity is thus used to confront those 'visibly' distinct cultures that came to share this territory with those who consider themselves to be 'original' inhabitants.

This fact explains the maintenance of the 'island race' myth, based on the virtues of its inhabitants, who have been homogenised under the whiteness of their skin. The consequences of this equation of nation and 'race' had conspicuous consequences in colonial and post-colonial times. In the colonial period, every inhabitant of the Empire was considered to be a 'British citizen'. However, clear-cut identity boundaries were established between white, Western, civilised and civilising colonisers, and those non-white, supposedly inferior, colonized subjects.[51] Thus, in spite of a long history of migrancy and settlement, when the massive arrival of coloured people from former colonies after the Second World War caused such panic among sectors of the British

[51] Likewise, there were clear-cut differences between the old colonies, which were populated mainly by white settlers (i.e. Australia, Canada and New Zealand) and non-white colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. In Kumar's words: 'All subjects of the Empire might be designated 'British', but that paradoxically served to emphasise the distance separating the British of Great Britain, the colonisers and carriers of 'the white man's burden', from all the other British of the British Empire. The imperial connection promoted the sense not just of difference but of superiority, even of uniqueness' (1993:88).

population, harsher immigration legislation was introduced, aimed at restricting the entry of 'aliens'.

1.3. Immigration Policies in Britain

Notwithstanding the continuous attempts along different historical periods to construct a 'pure' British identity, Britain has always been a multicultural land. For centuries, however, this merging of different peoples in the country has been mostly invisible. Up until 1945, non-white presence in Britain was fairly small. And yet, it was existent.

As mentioned before, the Romans were the first to bring a contingent of black legionaries from the North of Africa whose mission was to guard Hadrian's Wall. In the Middle Ages, black entertainers lived in royal entourages.[52] During the sixteenth century, the Portuguese and Spanish started purchasing slaves from African and Arab merchants and selling them (at a profit) to plantation owners in their colonies. John Hawkins took example and, in 1562, started an equally fruitful trade by selling three hundred West African men to planters in Haiti (http://news.bbc.co.uk.). A few years later, the presence of black slaves in wealthy households in England became fairly common. Wealthy plantation owners sent their children to study in England and sometimes they would send slaves to accompany them (http://news.bbc.co.uk.).

According to Stephen Bourne, the presence of non-white communities was a reality since, at least, the mid-sixteenth century. As he states:

> Some historians may argue that the black presence in Elizabethan England was too small and insignificant to be worth acknowledging. However, by 1601, the black population was large enough for Queen Elizabeth I to have made two attempts to repatriate her black citizens (2000: 52).

[52] African drummers could be found in Edinburgh in 1505. Henry VII and Henry VIII apparently employed a black trumpeter who appears in a scroll under the name of 'John Blanke' (http://news.bbc.co.uk).

For her part, Felicity Hand claims that, from the seventeenth century onwards, 'owing to Britain's open-door policy with regard to immigration and her increasing religious and political tolerance, various migrant groups fleeing persecution in their own countries made their way to Britain' (1995: 137-8). She cites, as examples, the case of the French Huguenots or the Palatines who, since 'they were not visibly different from the indigenous population […] were eventually absorbed into mainstream British life' (1995: 138).[53]

In the early eighteenth century, the presence of Africans increased in Britain as a result of the slave trade. Apparently, by 1770, approximately 14,000 black people lived in England (http://news.bbc.co.uk.). This said, the second half of the eighteenth century also marks the time when the abolitionist anti-slavery movement was launched. Success came first in 1807 when Parliament banned slave-trade, and culminated in 1833, when Parliament definitively banned the practice of slavery in the entire British Empire. With the abolition of slavery, the number of non-white Africans arriving in Britain was small.

During the same period of time, the presence of South Asians in Britain was reduced to servants and ayahs, employed by wealthy families who brought them over to their households.[54] Indian sailors – or lascars –, employed as crew members of British ships, had started to arrive in Britain during the same period. In the eighteenth century, Indian emissaries, visitors, together with Indian wives of some European men and their children started to arrive in Britain. Even so, 'non-white' presence at that time was so

[53] Huguenots and Palatines were Protestants in France and Germany respectively. During the seventeenth century they suffered severe persecutions throughout the wars of religion in Europe. In 1685, Louis XIV of France pronounced the revocation of the Edict of Nantes – which had granted the Huguenots their religious and political freedom in 1598. As a consequence, about 250,000 French Protestants fled to England, Prussia, Holland or America. The Palatines were also severely repressed and also migrated to other European countries. Many of them went to England under Queen Anne' s protection and, from there, some decided to go and settle in America (For further information on Huguenots and Palatines see Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Academic Edition, http://www.search.eb.com)

[54] The first register of an Indian Christened in London goes back to December 1616, and there are other parish registers in 1730 and 1760 (Visram, 2002: 1-2).

rare that it caused no friction. As Ruth Brown comments, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Britain continued with its policy of free entry to the country:

> During the boom years of industrial revolution British capitalism lapped up labour with insatiable thirst, if only to throw workers back into unemployment in times of slump. Britain's bosses showed little interest in the national or ethnic 'character' of the labour power which they sucked into the expanding British economy (1995: 3).

During the French Wars of 1793-1815, some checks on free entry were introduced, but these were based on political reasons, not economical or social ones. In 1826 and 1836, an Aliens Act and an Aliens Registration Act were passed. Their purpose was to curtail any subversive activities related to the war with France and hence they were quickly abandoned after the Napoleonic Wars. The only statute maintained was the 1870 Extradition Act, which allowed the deportation of criminals (Hand, 1995: 139; Smith, 1994: 171).

As is known, the end of the eighteenth century and beginnings of the nineteenth century mark a time of important economic and social changes in Britain. British society became more industrialised and urbanised. These transformations, linked with the development of capitalism, also led to migratory movements from rural to urban areas within the country as a response to both the search for labour and new labour demands (Kumar in Mason, 2000: 19). Apart from internal migrations, new patterns of external migration also developed. The main white immigrant groups which entered into Britain were the Irish and the Jews. According to Mason, the Irish had been the largest group of migrants entering Britain since the eighteenth century:

> A combination of poverty, famine and population growth in Ireland (themselves related directly to the consequences of British colonisation) and labour shortages in the British economy led to the development of a pattern of migration which still persists up to the present days (2000: 20).

Irish migration to Britain was mostly seasonal, as Irish peasants usually came over to Britain to sell their crops to British farmers. However, as a result of the ever-growing demand for semi- and unskilled labour in Britain, a number of these seasonal

migrants opted for the factory jobs on offer. These permanent settlements dramatically increased after 1845 as a consequence of the potato famine.[55] Irish immigrants were by far the most numerous in Britain.[56] However, the governments' policy of non-intervention vis-à-vis this group does not mean that there was no hostility against them in Britain. The fact is that long-standing stereotypes of the Irish as 'lazy, drunk, Catholic and stupid' still persist nowadays (Hand, 1995: 138). Following the pseudo-scientific theories of racial classification, Irish people were even considered as biologically inferior (Solomos, 1993: 42). Hostility against this group was not only manifested in the widespread use of anti-Irish images in popular culture but also in a pervasive violence against these immigrants (Solomos, 1993: 43).[57]

Parallely, in the nineteenth century, some Indians from wealthy families were sent to Britain to be educated at public schools and universities. Being in possession of British qualifications was an essential requirement to apply for a post in the higher levels of public service in British India; since the examination for the Indian Civil Service was only held in London, many Indian families paid for the education of their children abroad, with their own funds or thanks to the government scholarships established in 1868. Some of these students were Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and some members of Rabindranath Tagore's family, to name but a few well-known examples. After finishing their studies, most of them returned back to their

[55] Whereas the 1841 Census indicated that there were more than 400,000 Irish living in Britain, the numbers increased to 727,300 in 1851 and reached a peak in 1861 with 806,000 Irish immigrant population (Hand, 1995: 138).

[56] The continuous flow of Irish migration to Britain along the centuries has resulted in a significant proportion of the population of modern Britain (10 per cent of the total population) that is able to trace back their origins in Ireland (Mason, 2000: 21). By the Act of Union in 1800 the Irish had acquired the status of British subjects, and hence were subjected to no restrictions on their migratory movements to England, Scotland and Wales. With the formation of the Republic of Ireland in 1922, Irish citizens nevertheless retained the right of free entry and settlement in Britain. Even after 1945, when Ireland left the Commonwealth, the British Nationality Act granted Irish citizens the right to enter, settle, work and vote in Britain (Solomos, 1993: 42).

[57] On the Irish question, history and representation see Foster, 2001: 2-6; McDowall, 2000: 122-136; Oakland, 2001: 60-89).

country, although some remained to practice law or medicine in Britain (Hand, 1993: 3). Meanwhile, Indian adventurers, anxious to obtain knowledge on and about the land of the rulers, together with exiled princes and political activists all settled in Britain (Visram, 2002: 2). Simultaneously, Victorian England also witnessed the beginnings of Indian commercial activity, with companies such as Tata Industries, opening UK-based branches. These few and well-to-do Indians 'were often pleasantly surprised with the hospitality of the indigenous population' (Hand, 1993: 102).

Less lucky in their relationships with the native population were the lascars whose community numbers started to grow in Liverpool, London, Cardiff, Bristol and other British ports in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Despite their being British subjects, lascars were generally discriminated in an attempt to discourage their settlement in Britain whenever the passage that they had worked on terminated in the isles (Solomos, 1993: 49). These discriminatory practices were reflected in the successive Acts of Parliament passed throughout the nineteenth century: the Merchant Shipping Act of 1823 denied the status of British citizenship to Indian seamen, and the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 gave the Secretary of State power to repatriate those lascars who attempted to settle in Britain. By this law, ship masters or owners could even be fined if Asian or African seamen were found destitute or convicted of vagrancy in Britain (Paul, 1985: 107). The passing of such laws point to the contradiction existing between the state's legal sanctioning of the employment of lascars as a boost to the shipping industry and the laws which prevented these same people's settlement in Britain.[58]

During the same period of time Britain, also witnessed the arrival of East European Jews fleeing from religious and economic persecution. Some of them were

[58] The living conditions of lascars in Britain is explained in detail in Visram, 2004: 14-33.

simply en route to the United States, but others came over to settle permanently (Hand, 1995: 138). Although smaller in number than the Irish community – this population reached a total of 300,000 in 1914 – the Jewish settlement in the country provoked hostility among the natives. Jews were generally 'regarded with suspicion by the indigenous population, who continued to see them as either Christ-killers or oppressive money-lenders' (Hand, 1995: 138). Because most of them were shopkeepers, merchants and artisans, debates about Jewish immigration centred mostly on 'competition for jobs, houses and amenities' (Solomos, 1993: 45).

At the end of the nineteenth century, British industry was increasingly undermined by cheaper imports from abroad and the country was beset by economic depressions and political crises. All such factors led to the rise of unemployment and poverty. It was within this context of rapidly deteriorating living and working conditions that immigrants alone were institutionally singled out as responsible for the problems suffered by most native workers (Brown, 1995: 3). Against this background of economic crisis and unemployment, the slogan 'England for the English' was once and again heralded not only by Conservatives but also by Trade Union leaders. In 1901, for instance, Major Evans Gordon, a Conservative MP for an East London constituency, formed the British Brothers League which organised a mass protest against Jewish immigration (Solomos, 1993: 44-5). In one of his speeches in Parliament advocating immigration controls, Gordon introduced the 'numbers game' into immigration policy. The idea behind his 'numbers game' proposal was that the main cause of discomfort and ill-feeling in the native population was the sheer number of immigrants rather than their skin colour. (see Hand, 1993: 102-4).[59]

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[59] The relationship established by Gordon between the number and concentration of aliens as a determining factor for the increase of aversion on the part of the native population 'set the tone for the racial propaganda which would have Enoch Powell as its most energetic spokesman during the sixties and seventies' (Hand, 1995: 140).

The debates and demands for immigration controls resulted in the 1905 Aliens Act. It affected all non-United Kingdom subjects defined as 'aliens'. Immigration officers were given power to refuse entry if they considered that applicants were 'undesirable' (Gordon, 1985: 107). The legislation affected these aliens who did not have adequate means of subsistence. Moreover, an alien could be expelled from Britain if s/he continued receiving poor relief a year after entering the country, or if found guilty of vagrancy, or living in unsanitary conditions. Although the Home Secretary had the power to deport immigrants, the law also contemplated the situation of those who requested British citizenship on the basis of political or religious persecution (Solomos, 1993: 46). In a word, the relevance of the Aliens Act of 1905 is that it marked the end of unrestricted free entry to the United Kingdom.

The outbreak of the First World War, and the threat caused by the presence of foreigners and possible enemies in Britain, resulted in Parliament passing another Aliens Restriction Act which further tightened immigration controls. By this Act, 'aliens' were now required to register with the police (Gordon, 1985: 107). The end of the war did not see a return to the traditional 'open-door' policy. Quite the contrary, entry controls became even stricter by means of the Aliens Restriction Amendment Act of 1919. Ruth Brown comments that:

> The Aliens Restriction Act, combined with the Defence of Realm Act, passed some weeks later, created for the first time a clear definition of British nationality in law and laid down strict guidelines for local police and military authorities in their treatment of 'aliens'. The 1919 Aliens Act was introduced against the background of fervent nationalism and anti-German feeling created by the First World War. It formed the basis of all immigration legislation until the introduction of the 1971 Immigration Act, and was renewed every single year between 1919 and 1971 (1995: 4).

In the period between the two World Wars, the level of migration decreased dramatically, not only because of the imposition of even more restrictive measures on the entry of immigrants but also because the economic depression the country was going

through granted no job availability (Mason, 2000: 22).[60] The 1920s and 1930s witnessed the entry of a mere 700 immigrants per year (Brown, 1995: 4). The Aliens Order of 1920 required that 'coloured' seamen should obtain permission from an immigration officer prior to setting foot on land. This meant that they were deprived of their status as British subjects and were therefore made subject to removal from Britain. Although in part engendered by the perceived competition for jobs between the native population and 'aliens', the resulting legislation was also the outcome of racist concerns about inter-breeding between black seamen and white native women (Solomos, 1993: 50).[61] In the early 1930s, evidence of views against settlement of immigrants in Britain is reflected in A. H. Lane's writings on the 'alien menace':

> … immigrants take away housing and employment from settled Britons, draw on social services and benefits without contributing to the national economy, carry diseases and engage in unhygienic practices, foment social unrest and revolutionary plots, exploit British women through prostitution, run gambling dens and, most importantly, infiltrate and seize control of key industries, the financial system, the BBC, the film industry, the educational system […] and the Labour Government (Smith, 1994: 168).[62]

The unwelcome 'aliens' Colonel Lane referred to were mainly Russian Communists, East Europeans, and German Jews. He only cited South Asians as British enemies if they shared Gandhi's ideas on independence for the colonies. In the late 1930s, only those Jewish refugees, fleeing from the rise of Nazism in Germany and Austria were granted entry into the country after promising that they would eventually settle elsewhere. Smith observes that in the 1930s there was a general feeling of anti-Semitism in the British population. Anxieties around labour and the economy resulted in

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[60] During the post-war slump in the shipping industry, competition for jobs led to racist violence against lascars in Cardiff, Liverpool and Glasgow (Solomos, 1993: 49).

[61] As Lola Young explains, in January 1929, the *Daily Herald* reported that 'Hundreds of half-caste children with vicious tendencies were growing up in Cardiff as the result of black men mating with white women, while numerous dockland cafes run by coloured men of a debased and degenerate type are rendez-vous for immoral purposes' (1996: 88). In 1927 the Cardiff Chief Constable, James Wilson, recalling social Darwinist postulates, argued that legislation should prohibit interracial sexual intercourse, as it was believed that it 'would lead to social, moral and physiological decay' (88).

[62] Together with Mayor Evans Gordon, Lane's apocalyptic views also foresee Powell's speeches in the 1960s.

demands for immigration controls and violent attacks against Jewish communities on the part of the hostile host population. Some Jewish refugees were refused entry into Britain and were deported to Canada and Australia (1994: 170-1).

The target of racist abuse thus varied depending on the time and the context, with both the number question and the degree of power acquired by the 'alien' community being key factors in the emergence of xenophobic discourses. Although anti-semitic violence continued during the late 1940s, in the mid-twentieth century, hostility turned to new, non-white settlers. Indirectly, World War II had fomented an increase of black settlements in Britain: soldiers from the colonies enlisted in the British armed forces or workers volunteered to help with the war effort. African-American soldiers, pertaining to the US allied troops, also came over (Solomos, 1993: 53). The presence of these coloured North American soldiers precipitated, according to Lola Young:

> … another moral panic about miscegenation […]. Troops from the U.S.A. were supposedly policed by their own personnel but in areas were there was a concentration of black troops, the local police were required to make reports to Home Intelligence, the Foreign Office's North American department, and the Ministry of Information about their sexual activities (1996: 88-89).

After the Second World War, the British economy was expanding, causing increasing demand for labour.[63] The government therefore launched a recruitment campaign to attract workers from the colonies and ex-colonies as well as from Europe. As a result, between 1945 and 1954 some 100,000 Irish people entered Britain as well as large numbers of immigrants from other European countries (Solomos, 1993: 54). They were known as the European Volunteer Workers (EVWs). Some 29,400 EVWs came from Poland.[64] EVWs were also recruited from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and

[63] During the two world wars, women had entered the labour force to fill the posts the men had left when they enlisted. However, after the war women were encouraged to leave wartime industries and go back to the domestic sphere (Brown, 1995: 5).

[64] These Polish workers were joined by Polish soldiers and their families who had also been encouraged to settle in the U.K. Likewise, in 1946, the Polish Second Corps and their families as well as dependants came over to Britain. In 1949, all these people made up a total of 127,900 (Joppke, 1999: 105; Solomos, 1993: 54).

Yugoslavia. In 1947, 8,397 prisoners of war from Ukrainia were brought to Britain for political reasons and, once in the country, were considered as EVWs (Solomos, 1993: 55). 12,000 German and Austrian women were also recruited by means of temporary, two-year contracts, but, in this case, most returned to their countries after that time. In the same way, 5,000 Italians were enrolled to work in Britain.

Entrance into the country was regulated by a work permit scheme – EVWs were required to sign a contract whereby they accepted a job selected for them by the Ministry of Labour and which could only be changed if the Ministry permitted it. They were admitted initially for one year and the extension of the contract depended upon their behaviour as 'worthy members of the British community' (Tannahill in Solomos, 1993: 55). These workers had to follow health checks, a measure Ruth Brown criticises:

> Within only a few years of closing its doors to the victims of the Holocaust, Britain thus introduced a 'positive' immigration policy […]. Unfortunately, this enthusiasm extended only to healthy able bodied workers. Those brought to Britain under the schemes were liable to deportation if they felt ill—one young boy, who lost an eye at work after falling off a lorry in a farming accident, was actually deported back to Germany. Indeed, Britain's treatment of displaced persons and refugees after the war was so disgraced that even the United States accused Britain of subjecting its newly arrived workers to an official policy of discrimination (1995: 5):

Britain was thus becoming (in) famous for its discriminatory treatment of non-native workers. But, as Rob Witte points out, differences were established within the general display and practice of intolerance for, he argues, there was a clear contrast between the government's enthusiastic recruitment of European workers and its concern to prevent mass immigration of 'coloured' British citizens from the colonies (1996: 26). For all the government's preferential treatment of white Europeans, the truth is that in the period of post-war national reconstruction, the number of EVWs did not cover British economy's demand for labour. Moreover, colonial workers 'constituted a cheap source of labour and were willing to do the "dirty" jobs that the indigenous population were shunning' (Hand, 1995: 141).

During the late 1940s and 1950s, the majority of British subjects from the colonies and dominions retained the right to enter and settle in Britain. As a result of the labour shortage and in response to the independence of India, the British Nationality Act of 1948 was passed. This Act granted the right to enter, settle and work in Britain to citizens from the New Commonwealth countries (Ansell, 1997: 142). According to Christian Joppke, this Act meant 'an emphatic reaffirmation of the unity of the empire' through 'the maintenance of non-national citizenship, defined by allegiance with the Crown' (1999: 106).

In May 1948, 417 Jamaicans arrived on the *Empire Windrush*, and in October of the same year, 180 West Indians arrived on the *Orbita*, followed later by waves of immigrants from India and Pakistan (Witte, 1996: 26). As a result, between 1948 and 1962 – the year when the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was implemented – around 450,000 people from the Commonwealth had settled in Britain (Hand, 1995: 141). Accordingly, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the arrival 'en masse' of 'coloured' immigrants into Britain. Although these people had initially been encouraged to come over, as their numbers grew, so did the hostility of the local population.

Unlike earlier reactions against the presence of Jews, the antagonism felt towards the alien population was aggravated by their 'racial visibility'. The arrival of the *Empire Windrush* thus marked a turning point in the British response to immigration and opened up a new pattern of 'race' or 'ethnic' relations within the frontiers of the British homeland. In Kathleen Paul's words: 'The significance of the *Empire Windrush*, then, lies not in the motivation of the migrants but in the response of the British state, which *panicked* when presented with what it assumed was to be a permanent "coloured" addition to the population' (1997: 112; my italics).[65] Ansell comments on the

[65] Paul analyses the language used in government reports on the arrival of Commonwealth immigrants to the United Kingdom to supply labour shortage and compares it with that used in reports on the EVW. She argues

transformation of racist attitudes from colonial to post-colonial times: 'The racism of the Empire (which previously had justified colonization) was thereby replaced with anti-immigrant racism (which justified the exclusion of the New Commonwealth migrants from entry into the political and economic mainstream of British society)' (1997: 143). The pseudo-scientific theories of race that had prevailed during the colonial period were echoed again in this new context of inter-ethnic contact. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that a study of the Eugenics Society, published in 1958, should claim that racial mixture – which was becoming more and more feasible given the increasing presence of 'coloured' immigrants in Britain – 'runs counter to the great developing pattern of human evolution' (Gilroy, 1998: 81),

In spite of the fact that at that moment white immigrants from Ireland and continental Europe by far outnumbered those coming from the colonies, both the Labour and Conservative governments in the 1940s and 1950s considered various ways of reducing or, at least, limiting the number of non-whites entering the country. Hostility against non-white newcomers was the result of their patently visible physical difference that was closely associated with cultural differences, often perceived as incompatible. At that time, as Amy Ansell states, there was 'a renaissance of the symbolic construction of Britain as a "white man's country", and of the "coloured immigrant" as possessing altogether a "different standard of civilisation"' (1997: 143). Recent settlers were thus presumed to be threats to the identity of the British people, regarded as a 'pure' and outstanding 'island race'. Black immigrants were soon associated with social problems and urban decay,[66] hence the racialised debates about how to reduce, minimise or even

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that, from the very beginning, West Indians were labelled a 'problem': 'Unlike the refugees from Europe or aliens from Ireland, these would-be labourers were not called volunteer workers but "Jamaican Unemployed"'. The direct reference to 'unemployment' automatically associates this group with an economic burden, 'as people in search of financial support' (1997: 116).

[66] Most immigrants lived together in the poor areas of large cities. Already established communities acted as 'magnets' for all newcomers of the same ethnicity. Thus, the old nineteenth-century city centres in which

abolish those legal rights that coloured immigrants possesed as 'British citizens' (Solomos, 1993: 56-7).

This combination of labour shortage and racist fears led to the paradoxical situation of inviting immigrants as a workforce and, once in the country, automatically resenting their presence. 'Coloured' immigrants actually came from the poorest areas of the world. Initially, the largest groups came from the Caribbean islands. Immigrants already settled in Britain encouraged friends and relatives from their country to join them. Employers in Britain exploited this informal network to recruit labour, and they even paid for advertisements in those countries. Then, in the 1950s, Sikhs from the rural areas of the Punjab came over to Britain because the partition between India and Pakistan had created immense pressures on land resources in this area claimed by both countries.[67] In the early 1960s, government ministers and private employers continued recruiting employees from the West Indies and other Commonwealth countries. Even Enoch Powell 'actively encouraged the migration of medical staff from India and the West Indies during his time as Minister for Health' in the 1950s (Brown, 1995: 8; Witte, 1996: 42).

The social fears that associated coloured immigration with racial problems materialised in 1958 with riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham where there were important communities of West Indians. The riots were mainly caused by anti-black attacks on restaurants, hostels and individuals (Witte, 1996: 25). According to Solomos, these race riots consisted, in fact, in attacks by whites on blacks, even though the violent incidents were used by the media and public opinion as examples of the disturbances

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immigrant communities had settled soon became areas with serious physical and economic problems. As unemployment eventually grew, the new immigrants were blamed for disturbances. In fact, the immigrants were those who covered the dirty and most unpopular work in factories, hospitals and other workplaces. Economic slumps affected the coloured inhabitants in poor areas more than the white population. (Witte, 1996: 27-9).

[67] War between India and Pakistan over the control of Kashmir broke out in September 1965 (see Sked and Cook, 1984: 212).

caused by the concentrations of black communities in Britain (1993: 60). In other words, as Cook puts it, the riots were not explained in terms of responses to racist violence but as 'the evidence of the negative and inevitable consequences of black immigration and settlement' (in Witte, 1996: 24). In this way, blacks were quickly associated with crime and decay in the inner city areas, and viewed as a dangerous threat for the native population. This is reflected in an article in *The Times* written right after the riots:

> Here are three main causes of resentment against coloured inhabitants of the district. They are alleged to do no work and to collect a rich sum from the Assistance Board. They are said to find housing when white residents cannot. And they are charged with all kinds of misbehaviour, especially sexual (*The Times*, 3 September 1958, in Solomos, 1993: 61).[68]

Four possible schemes were advanced to solve the problems: increase in law and order, migration control, integration of the immigrants into British 'way of life' and anti-racist policies (Witte, 1996: 33). Migration control was the primary strategy implemented in the subsequent years. The Conservative government of the time passed the Commonwealth Immigrants Act in 1962. This Act is important because for the first time, it introduced a distinction between citizens of Britain and its colonies, and citizens of independent Commonwealth countries. The latter were subject to immigration control unless they were born in Britain, held passports issued by the British government or were persons included in the passports of the two previous groups (Hudson and Williams, 1995: 179; Solomos, 1993: 63). Moreover, in order to enter Britain, other Commonwealth citizens needed a Ministry of Labour employment voucher.

Ironically, although the aim of this act (and later ones, i.e. 1968 and 1971) was to restrict immigration from Commonwealth countries, the total number of immigrants

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[68] Other similar reactions are illustrated in reports by several MPs representing districts involved in the riots: 'Maurice Edelman, MP for Coventry North, stated in the *Daily Mail* (2nd September 1958), that if "blacks" are to continue being attacked, it will be in their own interest to be kept out of Britain. Notting Hill (Labour) MP, George Rogers, argued in the *Manchester Guardian* (4th September 1958) that "the riots were not caused by Teddy Boy hooligans, but had to be viewed as the legitimate reaction of the local community to undesirable sections of the black population. Violence had been provoked by Blacks refusing to adopt the British way of life"' (in Witte, 1996: 32).

continued to grow throughout the 1960s. This was due to the fact that no clause was included in the act restricting the entry of relatives. As Ruth Brown states:

> In the period immediately before and after the Tories introduced the 1962 Act, the entry of dependants into Britain increased almost threefold as families were left with little choice but to attempt to "beat the act", amidst widespread fears that Britain planned to permanently close its doors to its citizens in the New Commonwealth, including the families of those already living in Britain. Total New Commonwealth immigration thus grew from 21,550 entrants in 1959, to 58,300 in 1960. A year later this last figure had more than doubled and a record 125,400 New Commonwealth immigrants entered the UK in 1961 (1995: 9).

The implementation of this law provoked heated reactions on the part of members of the Labour Party who criticised the law's inherent racism, especially in its discriminatory treatment of Commonwealth immigrants, while an 'open door' policy allowed thousands of Irish citizens into Britain. Nevertheless, when Harold Wilson became the Labour Prime Minister in 1964, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was maintained and, in 1968, a restrictive Immigration Act was passed, together with measures to promote the integration of immigrants.[69] This fact represents 'a convergence of the policies of Conservative and Labour Parties in favour of immigration controls' (Solomos, 1993: 64). In this respect, the election campaign that took place in Smethwick in 1964 is of special relevance. Whereas Labour candidate, Patrick Gordon Walker was seen as too lenient or liberal on the question of immigration, the Conservative Peter Griffiths expressed his opposition to the influx of immigrants with the slogan 'If you want a nigger for neighbour, vote Labour'.[70] Griffith's victory in Smethwick thus 'helped to shift political debates and attitudes in both major parties towards a stance which emphasised their support for strict controls on black immigration' (1993: 65). Hudson and Williams also interpret the Smethwick episode as fundamental in bringing about a change policy in the Labour party:

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[69] The government reduced the number of vouchers issued each year to 5,000 and removed the right of entry from British passport holders to those whose parents or grandparents were born outside Britain (Brown, 1995: 13).

[70] Lord Elton, in the House of Lords, also echoed the 'numbers game' that had been advanced at the dawn of the century by Major Evans Gordon: 'the fundamental problem of immigration is not the colour of the immigrants but their numbers' (in Gilroy, 1998: 83).

> After the 1964 general election Labour initially opposed further immigration controls. However, when it lost the safe Smethwick seat in a by-election to Peter Griffiths, a Conservative who had largely campaigned on immigration issues, Labour party strategists lost their nerve (1995: 179).

Labour governments, though, also implemented acts to promote race relations and protect minority groups from racist attacks and discrimination. However, the duality 'immigration - race relations' was closely inter-connected. Labour MP, Roy Hattersley, describes the government's strategy at the time in his famous statement: 'Integration without limitation [of migration] is impossible; limitation without integration is indefensible' (in Witte, 1996: 36).[71]

In 1968 another Act was passed as a response to the 'East African Asians' crisis.[72] The problem began when the African countries where they lived – Kenya and Uganda – acquired independence. In 1967-8, the Africanisation policies implemented by the Kenyan government forced thousands of Asian residents to leave the country. Having little or no connections with India, and having by law (the 1948 Nationality Act) the right to settle in the UK as British subjects, most of them decided to come over – others also opted for migration the United States or Canada. In Britain, fears of a new influx of settlers created a wave of anti-immigration. As a result, the 1968 Act also introduced the concept of patriality by clearly discriminating non-white newcomers: 'This Act specified that immigration controls would not apply to any would-be settler who could claim national membership on the basis that one of their grandparents had been born in the UK' (Gilroy, 1998: 45). David Mason explains that, even though skin

[71] Race Relations Acts were passed by Labour governments in 1965, 1968 and 1976, although the immigration Acts of 1962, 1968, 1971 and 1981 that had dramatically reduced the entrance of Commonwealth immigrants were maintained (Hudson and Williams, 1995: 179, 213).

[72] During the period of colonialism, the British promoted the Asian diaspora for labour purposes in East Africa and the Caribbean. It was mainly due to the emancipation of slavery in 1834. On many occasions, African slaves were unwilling to work for their old masters. As a consequence, and in order to prevent a collapse of the plantation system, Indians were hired as indentured workers in other colonies such as Mauritius, Guyana, Malaysia, Burma and South Africa. These workers of Indian origin – not only Hindus but also Sikhs and Muslims – formed communities where their own cultural and religious practices were maintained (Hiro, 1991: 108; Hand, 1995: 142).

colour was never mentioned in the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, it was implied in its application:

> … a passport holder had to have been born, adopted or naturalized in the UK or to have one parent or grandparent who had been born, adopted or naturalized in the UK. This principle was to become known as patriality. Its practical effect was to retain a right of entry for many citizens of the 'old Commonwealth countries such Australia or Canada […] while removing the right for many UK citizens resident in the New Commonwealth (2000: 27).

The consequence of this Act was the creation of a group of 'stateless' people. In practice, the government established a quota system for the gradual entry of East African Asians.

It was in this context that, in April 1968, the Conservative MP Enoch Powell uttered his famous 'rivers of blood' speech:

> Britons in some areas had been made strangers in their own country by the inflow of immigrants […]. In 15 or 20 years, on present trends, there will be in this country 3,500,000 Commonwealth immigrants and their descendants […]. As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see "the River Tiber foaming with much blood" (In Spittles, 1995: 97).

As a result of this speech, Powell was dismissed from the cabinet by Edward Heath. Nonetheless, he retained many supporters, not only within the Conservative Party, but amongst traditional anti-Tory groups like working-class people who felt directly exposed to the competition of cheaper labour. As Smith reports:

> Commenting on the dockers' and meat porters' pro-Powel march to Parliament, *The Economist* declared: 'Not in living memory have groups of workers across the country gone on strike in favour if a Tory politician, as they did for Enoch Powell'. Other demonstrations in support of Powell took place in Birmingham, Coventry, West Bromwich, Southampton, Southall, Nottingham, Gateshead, Norwich, Preston and Tilbury (1994: 172).

In 1970, the Conservative manifesto continued with a strong emphasis on control to stop large-scale permanent immigration and reduce entry to only 'strictly defined special cases' (Sked and Cook, 1984: 268). In 1971, a new Immigration Act introduced further restrictions on the grounds that those who did not qualify for the right of residence needed a work permit, regardless of the fact that they belonged or not to the Commonwealth. This Act reduced immigration from the New Commonwealth to a

minimum. Henceforth, family reunification was the only source of new settlement (Mason, 2000: 28).

The only exception was the admission of Ugandan Asians refugees. In 1972, General Idi Amin, the dictator of Uganda, who considered the Asian population as enemies of the state, expelled them from the country. Most of them (around 50,000) were British passport holders so, despite objections raised,[73] the Conservative government established the Ugandan Resettlement Board to assist their reception as a question of moral duty. Other countries, such as India and Canada, were persuaded to admit a certain number of immigrants. Finally only 27,000 came over to the United Kingdom (Hand, 1995: 142; Sked and Cook, 1984: 269).In 1974, the newly elected Labour Party tightened controls even further. Ruth Brown criticises the discriminatory measures adopted, such as the refusal to admit 250 Asians who were expelled from Malawi as well as the imposition of strict controls for newcomers in the airports (1995: 13).

Meanwhile, the late 1960s and 1970s witnessed a new phenomenon of racial hostility on the part of white Britons against 'coloured' settlers, called 'Paki-bashing', consisting in violent attacks perpetrated by groups of white youths against people of migrant origin. The infamous incident that gave name to this type of brutality was the murder of an East Pakistani, Tausir Ali, in April 1970 (Witte, 1996: 44).[74] In spite of the different solutions proposed to halt racial confrontations, episodes that demonstrated the uneasy relations between the 'native' British and those of foreign origin continued throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the protagonists now being second or third generation immigrants, that is, British-born citizens. In the context of a deepening

[73] These objections were again spoken out by Powell in Ramsgate, 12 September 1972: 'hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens her in Britain are living in perpetual dread […]. There are those who live in actual physical fear […] as if they were trapped or tied to a stake in the face of an advancing tide' (in Spittles, 1995: 99).
[74] On 'Paki-bashing' and racial disturbances during the 1960s and 1970s see Witte, 1996: 44-5; Hudson and Williams, 1995: 214-7; Hiro, 1991: 114-173)

economic crisis, the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979. As is known, Thatcher's implementation of New Right policies deeply transformed British economy and society. Notorious were the new measures adopted and attitudes towards immigrants and their descendants developed during her stand as Primer Minister.

In the age of post-colonialism and globalisation, both ex-imperial powers and formerly colonised societies have undergone a process of re-definition in their cultural identities. The end of imperialism, the implementation of neo-imperialist policies and the forces of economic and cultural globalisation have activated ever closer contact between different groups and societies, both physical – with new developments in high speed transport – and virtual – thanks to world-wide mass media network and the internet. Increasing 'contact' has developed in two opposite but nevertheless interrelated ways. On the one hand, clear efforts are being made to promote tolerance and harmonious co-habitation. As a result, the old dichotomies of centre and margins are being dismantled, opening up the possibility of hybrid identities. On the other hand, traditionally dominant social groups' fears of losing old privileges have associated 'hybridity' with 'threat'. This view has therefore spurred a return to past notions of identities based on 'pure forms' that seemed to have been overcome by the 1980s.

Without a doubt, the interdependent and relational nature of 'identity' is a core issue in the construction of national, ethnic and/or gender singularities for, in each case, the sense of 'belonging' holds within it the conscious or unconscious principle of exclusion. As regards Britain, the concept of 'Britishness' has undergone various re-definitions, as the nation adapted to new historical and social circumstances. In the attempt to come to terms with new identity formations, Raymond Williams' views on residual, dominant and emergent ideologies help explain conflicting discourses, especially in his

insistence that ideological beliefs originated in the past may still exert a crucial influence in the present. From this perspective, the notion of 'race', constructed mainly in the context of imperialism, cannot be disregarded in the formation of a British cultural identity.

Following Benedict Anderson's account of national identity, all discourses – whether they attempt to re-define British identity as intrinsically white or contemplate Britain as a multicultural society – are, each and everyone, based as an imaginary nation-state. This said, a close analysis of the sense of Britishness proves the lack of stability in such constructions. In this respect, the contingent nature of the notion of identity has been reflected in the different interpretations of the cultural and political boundaries of Britain as a nation-state. Likewise, the changing policies of migration from open-door to restrictive measures during the second part of the twentieth century, can be looked upon as attempts to re-define 'British nationality' precisely at a time when the country was facing an identity crisis brought about by its lose of imperial power and international influence. It is against this background that a close view of contemporary British culture and society would show the heterogeneous and contingent nature of its composition and the conflicting or overlapping discourses that constantly re-define what British identity is or should be.

The decade of the 1980s witnessed important changes in this respect. A new economic policy based on forward-looking neo-liberalist policies, together with attempts to define the nation's identity based on backward-looking essentialist notions, contributed to the re-shaping of British cultural identity. All in all, in order to fully grasp the extent to which the films I shall be analysing take on board and/or reflect current changes and identity formation processes, both the politics and economy of the times should be examined. This is the prime objective of the following chapters which concentrate on the immediate contextual background of the Raj films of the 1980s.

2. BRITAIN IN THE 1980s: THE THATCHER DECADE

The paradoxical nature of contemporary globalising forces – promoting both the permeability of frontiers and hybridity, while fuelling ethno-nationalist passions – had an interesting, indigenous version in Britain throughout the so-called 'Thatcher decade'. From the mid-twentieth century onwards, Britain had to undergo the 'trauma of decolonisation' and its gradual, often painful, adaptation to a new post-colonial and globalised world, which resulted in several economic, political and ideological crises.

When the leader of the Conservative party, Margaret Thatcher, became Prime Minister in 1979, she was determined to recover Britain's outstanding position in the world. Mrs Thatcher firmly believed that the only means to accomplish her aim was to do away with consensus politics, dismantle the welfare state, which had characterised British politics since the end of the Second World War, and implement instead New Right policies. These measures brought about prominent changes in the country that affected all ambits of society.

The present chapter aims at presenting a panoramic view of the decade which will provide relevant clues for the subsequent analysis of the films produced at the time. The first part will explore the definitions of the term 'Thatcherism' and the contextual background against which the said phenomenon emerged and was enforced. The second part will be devoted to issues concerning immigrations and cultural relationships affecting the multicultural, Thatcherite society of the 1980s. The last part will consider how arts and culture were affected under Mrs Thatcher's premiership. Special attention will be paid to the difficult situation the film industry had to face, which ironically resulted in a renaissance of British cinema beyond national frontiers.

2.1. Definitions

When attention is turned to Thatcherism, the immediate question one is confronted with whether it was a fully developed economic and political project or just Mrs Thatcher's style of government, and whether it came as an electoral, ideological and political watershed or as a logical development of the politics implemented on the previous decades (Gamble, 1994: 333-336).[75]

The definition of Thatcherism is rather complex, and there is a lack of agreement in its designation as to whether it was just a style or whether it represented a coherent ideology, whether it was predominantly an economic or a social mode. Some political analysts coincide in finding a coherent ideology in their analysis of the Thatcher phenomenon. This is the case of Martin Holmes, who reached the conclusion that: 'Thatcherism is a full-blown ideology which does depart radically from the post-war consensus […]. Thatcherism is both reactive to the failures of Keynesian political economy, including those of Conservative administration, but also visionary, in aiming at a different economy and society' (1989: 8). He thus explained that 'the essence of Thatcherism is the advocacy of a market economy, where the state fulfils strictly limited functions' (1989: 9). In this respect, Thatcherism can be seen as an ideological rejection of socialism. In Margaret Thatcher's words:

> If people could be sure that we would never have another socialist government, increasing control of the state, increasing control of ownership, then I think the prospects for this country would be really bright. If only we could get rid of socialism as a second force and have two parties which fundamentally believed that political freedom had to be backed by economic freedom and that you get the best of our people when you delegated power down (1986, in Riddell, 1991: 204).

Likewise, Ian Gilmour, who was a member of the first Thacherite government, though he opposed some of the Prime Minister's policies – and was thus classified by her

[75] Even the term 'Thatcherism' has been appropriated by both supporters and detractors, each one adding positive or negative connotations respectively. The expression was coined by the opponents of the Conservative government in the journal *Marxism Today* and was used in a derogatory way to Mrs Thatcher's policies. It was later adopted by Mrs Thatcher's followers to refer to the improvements British society was undergoing thanks to the new policies implemented by the Prime Minister (Fernández: 1999: 20).

as one of the 'wets' – saw Thatcherism as an ideology dogmatically defended by the Conservative government as if it were a religion (in Fernández, 1999: 21). Following the same argument, Dennis Kavanagh isolated eight elements of the Thatcherite belief system: 'minimal government, the importance of individual responsibility, a strong state to provide adequate defence and to uphold the rule of law, the promotion of a market economy, the moral rejection of high borrowing, and the pursuit of lower taxes and sound money' (in Holmes, 1989: 3-7).

On the other hand, other critics consider that the Thatcher phenomenon did not represent a coherent ideological project and prefer to refer to it as 'an instinct, a series of moral values and […] an expression of Mrs Thatcher upbringing in Grantham, her background of hard work and family responsibility, ambition and postponed satisfaction, duty and patriotism' (Riddell, 1991: 7). Robert Skidelsky conceived of Thatcherism as 'the culmination of a period of gestation' after the 'failures of public policy after 1945' (1987: 1-2). For Marxists and socialists Thatcherism represented a repressive structure that resulted from the economic policy implemented, and supported by a type of authoritarian populism which, they perceived, had already started in the late 1960s (Hall, 1990: 19-22). Finally, for Margaret Thatcher herself, Thatcherism was:

> …a political system to bring out all that was best in the British character (…). It is a mixture of fundamentally sound economics (…). You recognise human nature is such that it needs incentives to work harder, so you cut your tax. It is about being worthwhile and honourable. And about the family. And about that something which is really rather unique and enterprising in the British character – it is about how we built an Empire (in Holmes, 1989: 7).

The fact is that the 1979 election marked the beginning of an important change in British politics, which had tremendous effects on British society and culture. Since the end of the Second World War, both the Conservative and Labour Parties had been in agreement, or consensus, over certain basic government policies. Hence, the introduction of fundamental changes in government responsibility, such as the welfare state, the National

Health Service and the nationalisation of industries effectively went unchallenged by either party. Notwithstanding, after the Conservative party's victory in 1979, consensus ended when the new government shifted from Keynesian economics to the application of monetarist and neo-liberal policies.[76]

The implementation of a free market economy was combined with the advocation for a return to the Victorian virtues of hard work and self-reliance, together with centralisation of State power and the authoritarian imposition of law and order. This 'populist' mixture of past values and present-day entrepreneurship was also intrinsically related to the notion of 'being British' (Hall, 1990: 29); in other words, the Thatcherite enterprise came together with a specific discourse on the construction of British identity. Sir Alan Walters explains that the Prime Minister wanted to see Great Britain as a nation: 'based on freedom, liberty, on responsibility […]. The sort of ideal or idealised Victorian society where people did do a great deal of voluntary work for the community, and people were very upright and honest' (in Young, 1986: 85).

All the same, in the context of the globalisation of the economy, the free market approach of the Conservatives meant that Britain was forcibly in constant contact with foreign countries and cultures. Paradoxically, a sector of society developed the feeling that traditional national identities and the unity of the country were under threat. Attempts were made to emphasize certain images of a unified 'Britishness', one of the best known being the idea that Britain had to be 'Great' once more, as it had been during the great days of the Empire (Hall, 1990: 30).

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[76] By 'neo-liberal' policies I mean the revival of classical liberalism in the context of the globalised economy of the late twentieth century. This revival resulted from the high rates of unemployment and inflation that many Western countries experienced in the 1970s and led to the questioning of formerly implemented Keynesian policies. In the field of economy, neo-liberalism thus means the limitation of the role of the State by selling off national industries and the promotion of free trade (see "Political Economy". *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, http://www. Britannica.com/eb/article-255577. 02/05/2008).

The project of shaping a British identity based on the bygone days of the Empire thus served the Prime Minister's political interests, especially given that an imperial-rooted sense of identity implied the automatic exclusion of certain individuals from such understanding of 'Britishness'. In this respect it is interesting to point out the extent to which these old ideological assumptions contradict the contemporary post-colonial context; for example, the idea that 'blackness' has no room in the notion of 'Britishness' recalls the hierarchical social structure at the time of the Empire, which promoted the biological pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference and racist practices. As discussed in chapter one, such discourses were inconsistent with the multicultural, globalised and ever-changing post-colonial and post-modern world, a time when essentialist assumptions have been clearly put into question.

It is precisely the dismantling of traditional social orders and the risks run not only by dominant groups fearing loss of privileges but also by marginalised communities in need of identity formation that prompted the nostalgic return to an often mythical ideal of a solid past. In the case of Britain, the fact of looking back to the time when the country was a world power helped conceal the contemporary fragmentation of the nation.[77] Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the fear of fragmentation and instability was precisely brought about by capitalism itself, or rather by the neo-liberal policies promoted by the Conservative government.

[77] This fragmentation was perceived in the rise of inner nationalisms i.e. Scottish, Welsh or Catholic Northern Irish, or foreign threats to the loss of cultural and political sovereignty, i.e. increasing presence of ethnic minorities, the dominance of the United States or the growing influence of the European Community.

2.2. Britain Before Margaret Thatcher: 'Labour Isn't Working'

After the Second World War, a damaged British economy gradually began to recover, eventually reaching the boom of the 1960s. Keynesian consensus brought social advances along with the implementation of a welfare state and a population which benefited from a rise in its standard of living.[78] However, in the 1970s, the output of other nations was increasing much faster than that of Britain, and Britain found it more and more difficult to compete. The oil crisis of 1973-4 worsened the situation and Keynesian policies started to be questioned. It was the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey, who in 1976 introduced the first monetarist policies in the form of reductions in expenditure, wage restraint and balanced budgets to deal with the crisis (Evans, 1997: 11).[79] 1974 witnessed the defeat of Edward Heath's government, which had been weakened by the miners' strike and the well publicised view of senior civil servants and centrist politicians that Britain was fast becoming ungovernable. The subsequent Wilson-Callaghan governments would also eventually end up in crisis, a crisis which reached its climax in 1978-9 and would be named 'the Winter of Discontent'.[80]

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[78] Mike Dunn and Sandy Smith explain that Keynesianism emphasized: 'the role of spending […] in determining the level of economic activity. By regulating the level of spending, governments controlled the level of unemployment and the rate of inflation; and by maintaining a steady increase in spending, the government stimulated increases in productivity and in standards of living. Furthermore, the theory suggested that, while the supply of money had some influence, the most effective way of regulating spending was by adjusting the relationship between government spending and government revenues […]. Thus government spending, employment and rising standards of living were seen to be closely interconnected' (in Savage, 1990: 23). This economic approach worked well during the first decades. Nevertheless, it led to inflation spirals and growing disillusionment that ended up in 1979 with the advent of Thatcherism.

[79] Mike Dunn and Sandy Smith state that the basis of monetarism was that 'the level of spending depended upon the amount of money in circulation […] and to the extent to which people wanted to hold their wealth in the form of money […] as opposed to property, goods or income-yielding financial assets […]. By controlling the rate of growth of the money supply, the government could control the rate of growth of spending […]… By controlling the money supply and spending, the government could, hence, control inflation' (in Savage, 1990: 28). This new approach, though, could not control inflation and unemployment. Consequently, after the 1983 election, the government had to revise the original monetarist approach, increasing the emphasis in other aspects such as privatisation (1990: 31-2).

[80] Taken from Shakespeare's Richard III, the 'Winter of Discontent' referred to the winter of 1978-9, when the government could not face the demands of the Trade Unions and the series of strikes which 'brought back to the centre of debate claims about the "ungovernability" and the need for firm action' (Evans, 1997: 11-2).

Against this background, Thatcherism should not be seen as a solitary movement or experiment. On the contrary, at the end of the 1970s, Western governments tended towards market-oriented policies in an attempt to counter the negative effects of successive oil crises (with repercussions on a world-wide scale – the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War in 1973, the deposition of the Shah of Iran in 1979-80). In other words, the measures adopted in Britain were not exclusively due to a shift in power towards conservatism. The shift in economic policies was also evident for instance, in Spain, France and Sweden which, at the time, were all under left-wing rule. The difference is that in Britain, the shift to freer markets involved greater tensions because it was associated with a blitz on intermediate sources of authority such as the unions, but local authorities, employers' associations, universities and even the Church. So the peculiarity of Britain was that wider liberalism and free markets policies were ushered in while state power was becaming more and more centralised in order to eliminate corporatism (Brittan, 1991: 3-4).

After the oil crisis of 1973-4, Britain did not recover from stagnation.[81] Although both Labour and Conservative governments agreed that something was really and deeply wrong with the British economy and that fundamental changes were needed, they were totally opposed as to what should be done. The left called for an even stronger interventionist role on the part of the state in order to control society and the economy. But the Tories, in 1979, opposed state intervention and began a frontal attack on the institutions and practices which had been developing since the Second World War. They believed that the only possible course left was to use competition and market forces to break up the existing structure. For this reason, Margaret Thatcher's government embraced the ideas of the 'New Right' on the superiority of the market over state-run or state-regulated processes. In their conviction that the market would ultimately be more productive than any state

[81] Stagnation being understood as the combination of slow growth and high inflation.

system, the Tories, under the influence of think-tanks like the Adam Smith Institute and the IEA (Institute of Economic Affairs), soon came to embrace neo-liberal principles as the basis of their strategy to 'roll back the state' in economic affairs (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 66-8).

The international and national economic crises, the lower classes' dissatisfaction with the Labour Party – its policy of high income tax and pay restraint – and the Conservative promises of tax cuts were important factors that contributed to the Conservative victory in 1979. On this point, Stuart Hall suggests that a major factor in the election victory of 1979 was how the difficulties of the 1970s had brought about a general change of mentality: a concern with individual well-being rather than collective welfare (1990: 31).[82]

2.3. Thatcher's Government: 'Set the People Free'

As a means of revitalising the economy, the Conservative party had as its main creed the defence of a free market economy, the cutting of social services and disappearance of the welfare state, tax reductions, the decrease of Trade Union power and the restoration of law and order.[83] According to Peter Riddell, the Thatcher government made seven moves to encourage enterprise: tax cuts, deregulation, promotion of competition, liberalization, promotion of small business initiatives, increase in funds to back innovation and research in industry and technology, and encouragement in education of the links between industry and

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[82] Saatchi and Saatchi's effective advertising campaign for the Conservative party perfectly reflects the mood of these changing times: It depicted a long dole queue with the caption 'Labour isn't working' (Evans, 1997: 17).

[83] Mrs Thatcher was aware that the economic crisis affected most Western democracies and she firmly believed that her experiment in Britain would have consequences abroad. Therefore, her government and her country needed to grant a good defence against possible foreign enemies, so police and armed forces were strengthened with large pay rises (Evans, 1997: 19).

school (1991: 72-4).[84] Hugo Young summarises all these points in three main commitments on the Prime Minister’s agenda: tax cutting, good housekeeping and privatisation (1989: 147).

The first priority on Mrs Thatcher’s agenda was tax cuts. The aim was, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, to strengthen initiatives by allowing people to keep more of what they earned. However, at the same time, as a counter-measure, indirect taxation was considerably increased. The consequence was rising prices in goods and services, an outcome that hit hardest the lowest incomes. Higher taxes for petrol, for instance, had a wide repercussion since the measure indirectly increased the cost of transporting goods (Evans, 1997: 20).[85]

The second commitment of Mrs Thatcher’s economic programme was good housekeeping, that is, fomenting prudent and balanced budgets. This policy goes hand in hand with the third and central commitment, which was the control of public spending by means of privatisation of the, until then, nationalised public entities (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 75; Young, 1989: 147). Privatisation had three main aspects: the denationalisation of public-owned entities, subcontraction of government-financed goods and services, and the reduction or removal of state monopoly in transport and telecommunications (Evans, 1997: 34-5). Large public-controlled and nationalised industries passed from government control to private owners. In practice, this meant selling these company’s shares to the public at large. During the decade of the 1980s about two-fifths of the state-owned industries were sold to the private sector. The main idea was that everything that could be sold, should be sold, and the result of this was the creation of millions of ‘first time’ shareholders.

[84] The aim was to reduce inflation with measures such as the abolition of ‘all restrictions on private-sector wage level and prices, rents, dividends and exchange controls’ or the cutting of income and capital taxes in order to ‘promote incentives to enterprise’ (Riddell, 1991: 18). However, in spite of the implementation of these measures, inflation continued rising and it was not until the increase of North Sea oil and gas supplies that inflation began to come down in the spring of 1982 (Evans, 1997: 21).
[85] Even though the direct tax burden fell, the increase of indirect taxes meant that the overall tax burden increased during the Thatcher years (Seldon and Collings, 2000: 68).

The first large-scale operation in 1984 was the privatisation of the telephone system that had been previously part of the General Post-Office organisation. Although the Labour party and the trade unions opposed the move, the sale of shares was hugely successful. It was presented to the electorate as a means of making money easily and with very little risk. Success was guaranteed because the shares were put on sale at a deliberately cheap price and people who bought them had the opportunity to sell-on immediately at a very high profit (Evans, 1997: 35). That pattern continued through the period of the 1983-87. The large privatisations that followed were British Gas, as well as the Trustees Savings Bank, British Aerospace, Britoil, Rolls-Royce, British Airports, British Railways, electricity and water, all passing from the public to the private sector.[86]

In Margaret Thatcher's view, the benefits of privatisation were not only economic and political but also moral, as it complied with the anti-statist 'self-help' philosophy she advocated (Seldon and Collings, 2000: 68). According to Mrs Thatcher, nationalisation was a burden for the state and for taxpayers, it was a form of socialism and therefore of enslavement while privatisation meant freedom. As Evans explains: 'Thatcher's dream was of genuine popular capitalism, and she looked forward in her Manichean way to the time when shareholders (good symbols of freedom) would exceed trade unionist (bad symbols of restrictive practice) in number' (1997: 36).

With the privatisation of national entities, and the idea of a property-owning democracy, the Prime Minister wanted to construct an inclusive, populist version of the Tory party, as the government felt that they were actively providing people with the opportunity to participate in the national economy (Riddell, 1991: 113). In the same manner, the sale of council flats to tenants (turning one million families into homeowners) contributed to stir up Mrs Thatcher's populism. An important factor to keep in mind is that

[86] For a more detailed account of the main privatisation sales between 1979 and 1989 see Riddell (1991: 87-88).

Margaret Thatcher never envisioned people's social class position as a historically fixed state but more as a situation that could be overcome and changed. Even so, she was not an egalitarian (in the socialist sense); for example, she opposed redistributive programmes i.e. state aids that aim at reducing the gap between the wealthy and the poor. Neither did she see any need to help or cushion those who failed in the struggle for economic success.

The right to manage company boards was taken up by Government itself in its adoption of private sector managerial models and employment practices in the public sector, including the local authorities, the National Health Service, education, the civil service and other public services. According to Stephen Savage, the guiding principles of the system introduced were:

> the pursuit for efficiency, effectiveness and the value for money: responsibility is decentralised, lower level operatives are made aware of and accountable for the costs of the operations, targets are… established and individuals assessed according to their liability to achieve them (1990: 65).

The way in which the conservatives tackled the whole question of welfare in Britain shows to what extent they aimed at introducing and fomenting a different type of mentality from the one which existed after forty-fifty years of welfare. So, if in the past the policy of successive governments had been to expand the role of the state, both in financing and in providing services, that of the conservatives was clearly to reduce costs in order to render the welfare system more cost-effective. Margaret Thatcher pejoratively named the welfare state 'the nanny state' and condemned it for promoting a dependency culture that went against her belief in the cult of individualism and self-help (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 70-1).

Taking these views into account, it is not surprising that Mrs Thatcher found her main political enemy in the trade unions, whose commitment to collective rights and worker protection stood in direct conflict with her belief in the unrestricted play of free markets. For the implementation of a free market economy the Prime Minister needed to rid labour of obstructions, although that meant restricting the rights of the workers. Basing her

actions on the belief in personal responsibility and self-help, the reduction of Trade Unions' political power was a clear aim on Mrs Thatcher's agenda. The unpopularity of Trade Unions, after the destructive strikes during the Callaghan years which ended up with the 'winter of discontent', was a key factor that aided the Prime Minister to accomplish her objective. Building upon the Conservative Party's recent landslide victory, she succeeded in passing a series of anti-union laws.[87] With the final collapse of the coal miners' strike of 1984-5, the power of the unions was profoundly reduced. Strikes became rare and, when attempted, were usually unsuccessful. Freedom of action, it was believed, would enable managers to react more quickly to changing market forces and to have more control over workforce productivity. As a consequence, companies would become more efficient and more competitive in the marketplace and this in turn would boost the economy and lead to economic growth (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 74).

Nonetheless, by 1990, the boom of the 1980s had ended in trade deficit, huge inflation and continuing unemployment. Likewise, the government faced declining manufacturing output, poor labour productivity, and petering business investment. The Prime Minister compounded these unfavourable economic statistics by passing an extremely unpopular 'community charge' or poll tax whereby the long-standing rates system paid by all property-owners according to the value of their homes was replaced by a fixed payment for all adults to their local authority. Introduced in Scotland in April 1st 1989, it went into effect in England and Wales in 1990. However, millions of people refused to pay. A massive London protest demonstration against what was perceived as an unfair system of taxation turned into a tremendously violent riot. The extremely unpopular poll

[87] Employment Acts in 1980 and 1982 outlawed secondary picketing and severely constrained the closed shop arrangement between employers and unions. Secret ballot replaced appointment of union leaders by committees and specific protections were provided for non-union members (they could not be refused engagement on the ground of non-membership of a trade union). The Trade Unions Act of 1984 (amended in 1988) provided that all members of union executive committees were to be elected by postal ballot at least every five years (Seldon and Collings, 2000: 69).

tax rapidly helped diminish the political support that Margaret Thatcher had enjoyed up until then (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 76).[88]

These economic measures came hand in hand with a set of moral values inherited from the Victorian times that Mrs Thatcher believed represented the 'cultural essence' of Britain when the nation was nor only a pioneer industrial country but a powerful empire as well. It is not by chance that the slogan for the Conservatives in the 1987 election was: 'Britain is Great Again. Don't Let Labour Wreck it'. By means of this maxim, the Thatcher government justified the implementation of its economic policies as essential to the improvement of the standard of living of Britons and the recovery of a relevant position of the country on the international stage. The market creed was accompanied by a return to these Victorian moral values based on Christian-Protestant individualism and self-help – 'God helps those who help themselves'. In Crewe's view, 'the core principle of Thatcherism is the "Victorian" value of individual self-reliance' (1991: 243). Mrs Thatcher thus fomented the popular use of the term 'Victorian values', namely order, restraint, discipline and submission (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 77). In Margaret Thatcher's words:

> I was brought up by a Victorian Grandmother. We were taught to… prove yourself. We were taught self-reliance. We were taught to live within our incomes. We were taught that cleanliness is next to Godliness. We were taught self-respect. You were taught tremendous pride in your country. All these things are Victorian values. They are perennial values (in Blake and John, 2003: 12).[89]

In this respect, as Skildesky states:

> Thatcherism as an economic and social philosophy – as a basis for the long-term government of Britain – is seriously one-sided. In this sense it resembles the Manchester Liberalism of the early nineteenth century which energised the economy but had to be tamed, moralised and intellectually refined before it was fit to establish a new social order (1987: 23).

With respect to law and order, this emphasis on individualism, self-reliance and self-responsibility had further implications. If the individual was ultimately responsible for

[88] The unpopularity of this measure, together with other conflicts within her own party, contributed to ending the decade with her unwilling resignation in November 1990.

[89] The Thatcher government was also influenced by the neo-liberalist theories of the Adam Smith Institute and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) which had their roots in the liberalist principles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

her or his actions, a criminal action should therefore be severely punished. Since individuals had freedom of choice, social background, unemployment, alienation or poverty were no justification for criminal action. Margaret Thatcher herself stated:

> If children have a problem, it is [said to be] society that is at fault. There is not such thing as society. There is living tapestry of men and women and people and the beauty of that tapestry and the quality of our lives will depend upon how much each of us is prepared to take responsibility for ourselves (in Blake and John, 2003: 14).

In order to prevent crime, the government should invest in law and order rather than in welfare. In this sense, Slikdesky describes Thatcherite culture as

> one rid of the 'bourgeois guilt' which makes the rich and successful highly susceptible to moral blackmail by the poor and unsuccessful. The overthrow of the 'guilt culture' is a necessary condition of an enterprise society and reassertion of 'individual responsibility'. [Consequently], individualism and political authoritarianism appear as complements, not opposites (1987: 22). [90]

The 'law and order' campaign carried out by Mrs Thatcher contributed to the creation of an image of a strong and rather authoritarian government. These policies needed to be defended within and outside the frontiers of the country, which implied not only giving greater powers to police and armed forces, but also controlling apparatuses such as the arts, the academy and the mass media, or foreign blocks such as the European Union which could oppose the government's interests.

Mrs Thatcher's 'moral crusade' included the defence of the traditional nuclear family as against all those lifestyles: 'homosexuals, single mothers, trades union activists, ravers and demonstrators' that had been promoted during the years of permissiveness (Lay, 2002: 79-80). In Stuart Hall's view, in combining 'the resonant themes of organic Toryism, that is the idea of nation, nuclear family, duty, authority, standards, traditionalism – with the aggressive themes of self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism' Thatcherism created a new uncaring society (Hall, 1990: 29). The new ethos thus boiled down to a

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[90] The liberation of the 'guilt culture' makes reference to the ideology of the New Right which frees the middle classes from their feeling of guilt as a privileged class against other marginalised groups such as the unemployed, women, ethnic minorities, etc. It was in the 1960s when these groups claimed themselves to be victims of the unjust system and asked for compensations. In the 1980s, the New Right's emphasis on individual self-responsibility disparaged the demands of those groups as blackmail and proclaimed that those who had achieved a privileged economic and social status as a result of their own work and effort should not feel guilty for the less advantaged situation of others (Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy, 2006: 67).

mixture of progressive, forward-looking economy with a set of backward-looking moralist values based on Victorian ideals. In the 1980s, this mixture of past values and present-day entrepreneurship was therefore intrinsically related to the notion of 'being British' (Hall, 1990: 29), a notion that had significant implications in Britain's relation with the world.

2.4. Britain's Unique Position in the World

Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars and until the outbreak of the First World War, Britain had been a crucial and dominant player on the international stage. During that time, British politicians regarded foreign policy in terms of Britain's responsibility in maintaining world order. In this sense, British policy was aimed at keeping a balance of power in Europe so that no state would dominate over the rest (George, 1990: 12). Nevertheless, especially after the Second World War, Britain's international influence was reduced and shadowed under the growing importance of blocks such as the United States, the Soviet Union and the European Community. Yet still Britain's statesmen and diplomats believed that the country was influential enough to continue playing the role of keeping balance in international affairs, which leads Stephen George to conclude that the country was suffering from an 'illusion of grandeur' (1990: 14).[91]

Mrs Thatcher's government, however, wanted this illusion to become a reality again and she fought to recover Britain's leadership in the world. Nevertheless, in spite of some flag-waving occasions such as the victory at the Falklands war, the recovery of Britain's grandeur was not an easy task. The capitalist expansion Mrs Thatcher promoted in Britain went hand in hand with the progressive phenomenon of globalisation, which, as said before, has tended to increase the inequalities within and between countries. On a world scale, this

[91] Britain's economic decline in the 1970s forced the country to ask the International Monetary Fund for financial help. Britain was labelled as the 'sick man of Europe', a clear phrase that confirms the country decline in inner and foreign affairs after the Second World War (Seldon and Collings, 2000: 72-73).

implies an increase in the rate of immigration from the poverty-stricken people of the Third World in the search of a better life in the Developed nations. This effect of globalisation leaves the hosting countries vulnerable to 'undesirable cultural invasion'. As Nabeel Zuberi puts it:

> Britain is still convulsed by its postwar, post-colonial identity crisis. Most of Britain's dominions have been liberated from colonial rule since 1945. The end of empire and the need for cheap labor brought many immigrants from the former colonies to the 'mother country'. This settlement ha unsettled older conceptions of the white body politic (2002: 539).

The implantation of New Right policies created further important paradoxes. Margaret Thatcher's fervent defence of capitalism, free trade and individualism prompted continuous contact with foreign countries and cultures. Britain's association with 'outsiders' came mainly through three different kinds of political and social relationships, with the United States, with the European Community and with the Commonwealth. In the past, the relationship with these three blocks was crucial for the maintenance of Britain as a world power. Churchill identified Britain's unique position in the world as 'the junction of three distinct geopolitical formations: the north Atlantic world; the Empire in its transition toward being a commonwealth; and Europe' (Gilroy, 2004: 106). However, such a position proved to be problematic for Britain, because as a 'declining' power, it was no longer able to act independently from allied states (Byrd, 1988: 3).

When Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United Stated in 1981, the relationships between the two countries became closer and closer since both leaders shared the political and economic views of the New Right. This Atlantic association was labelled a 'special relationship' between the two countries.[92] Moreover, as Anna Marie Smith puts it, Mrs Thatcher's anti-Communist sentiment and particular views on the international scene

[92] When Reagan came to power, Mrs Thatcher had been in government for eighteen months, proving that her conservative views were very similar to that of the US Republican party. As Young states: 'Washington greeted her as a heroine of pan-Atlantic conservatism (1989: 250). On her part, in one of her visits to the United States, Mrs Thatcher herself declared: 'We see so many things in the same way and you can speak of a real meeting of minds. I feel no inhibitions about describing the relationship as very, very special' (*Financial Times*, 23, March 1985; in Smith, 1988: 9).

'emphasised the threat of freedom from Soviet expansionism', therefore: '[i]t was almost axiomatic in Mrs Thatcher's foreign policy stance that security for the West could not be ensured without strong leadership from the United States' (1988: 11). Besides, the Reagan and Thatcher regimes 'were unequivocally for the maximum possible freedom of trade, and for the liberation of market forces on a world scale so that poor countries could help themselves to achieve Western-style development' (Smith, 1988: 27).[93]

The easy relationship between the Prime Minister and the leaders of the two superpowers, Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev led to Britain playing an important role in bringing an end to the Cold War. As Anthony Seldon and Daniel Collings put it: 'Not since Churchill's premiership in the early 1950s had Britain enjoyed so much respect in Washington and Moscow' (2000: 73). Mrs Thatcher, however, was not considered so highly in the European Community.

In the EEC, Britain was considered an 'awkward member'. Mrs Thatcher defended external economic policies and political co-operation of the Community in the international system (Allen, 1988: 36); however, she did not like the idea of a future European Union with greater internal political and economic unity.[94] Mrs Thatcher's neo-liberalist ideology led her to agree with the idea of a genuine economic common market with the addition of co-operation on foreign policy, but she rejected the idea of a federalist union of nations (George, 1990: 152). In her speech at Bruges, in 1988, Mrs Thatcher spoke against Britain's national identity being diluted under a single European identity, while she advocated for the protection of different national cultures, warning of the danger of falling under the dominance of a single power (Solomos, 1993: 221). Thus, Mrs Thatcher's efforts

[93] As Mrs Thatcher said: 'We take the same view in the United States and Britain that our first duty to freedom is to defend our own, and our second duty is to try somehow to enlarge the frontiers of freedom so that other nations might have the right to choose it' (in Young, 1989: 251).

[94] That is why Britain enthusiastically supported the inclusion of Greece, Spain and Portugal in the European Community: with these three southern countries the Community would become 'a much more diverse and less cohesive body than it was when Britain first joined of when Mrs Thatcher was first elected' (Allen, 1988: 37).

were focused on keeping Britain apart from the European Union on certain aspects in order to preserve the country's intrinsic cultural identity – i.e. the refusal to adhere to the common European monetary system.

One of the most relevant confrontations between Britain and the European Community was the country's budgetary contribution to the Union. And yet, the heated debates in meetings where Mrs Thatcher defended fiercely the interests of her country, served to popularise among the electorate both the Prime Minister and her vision of the country.[95] In a way, her confrontation with the European Union served, as the Falklands War did, to create the figure of a foreign enemy against whom the Prime Minister was battling in the nation's interests, deflecting attention from the problems and increasing divisions within the country (George, 1990: 163).

Throughout the 1980s, as plans for greater integration for member states progressed, Mrs Thatcher increasingly presented herself as confronting Europe in defence of British interests. However, not everyone in her party shared her approach, and there was a real danger of a split within the Conservative party, which sprang, 1987 and 1992 over the issue of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM).[96] Mrs Thatcher's adamant refusal to join the ERM in 1989, against the wishes of her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, is seen as the first step in her downfall.

Britain's relation with the Commonwealth was not an easy one either. As Seldom and Collings explain:

> Although she [Mrs Thatcher] helped pilot through a successful Rhodesian agreement, giving the former colony independence in 1980, she was renowned as being unsympathetic to the aspirations of black nations, while her contempt and refusal to support Commonwealth actions against South Africa excited widespread hostility among Commonwealth leaders. As with Europe, Britain was continually on the defensive instead of leading the offensive (2000: 74).

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[95] In Mrs Thatcher's words: 'I cannot play Sister Bountiful to the Community while my own electorate are being asked to forego improvements in the field of health, education, welfare and the rest (in George, 1990: 162).

[96] The ERM was a system of controlling currency fluctuations so that member states could benefit from greater stability in exchange rates.

The relationship with the former colonies proved to be a burden rather than a beneficit for the country. Even though tighter controls on immigration were implemented after the labour shortage at the end of the 1940s, Commonwealth citizens had been moving freely to Britain after their countries acquired independence. Reluctant to welcome increasing numbers of foreigners to the British Isles, the traditional ties with Commonwealth countries represented a problem for successive British governments, especially when in the 1970s Britain was forced to provide asylum for the Asian population expelled from Uganda and Kenya. In the 1980s Mrs Thatcher had to intervene in the independence of Rhodesia where right-wing white groups and black leaders were fighting for the control of government after independence. Caught between two poles, Mrs Thatcher had also to face another dilemma when the powerful country with which she held a 'special relationship' invaded Grenada, an old dependency of the British Empire.[97] Yet the greatest tensions between the Commonwealth and Mrs Thatcher came with her refusal to apply economic sanctions to South Africa as a measure against apartheid. She argued that although she loathed apartheid, the sanctions would not help to put an end to it. On the contrary, it would worsen the conditions of black people in the country as they would lose their jobs. She finally supported the EC import ban on South African coal, iron and steel, but demands for sanctions of Commonwealth countries were greater (Seldon and Collings, 2000: 38).

As regards relationships with other former colonies in Asia, Gerald Segal explains that, in the 1980s:

> Britain is back in Asia, not as an imperialist power but as an active leader of the international capitalist economy and a supporter of its multilateral security arrangements. Britain's interest is not always with all its former colonies, but with those that prosper. Its main interest is in the international market economy (1988: 133).

[97] For a detailed account of the events see Young, 1989: 484-487; Seldon and Collings, 200: 13, 27-39; George, 1990: 141-143 and Sprittles, 1995: 110-113.

Segal does not describe Britain's new relationship with Asia as imperialistic. Nevertheless, he complains about the fact that the United Kingdom only looked for its own economic interests, based not on equal cooperation but on capitalistic drives. This is better understood when the situation of South Asia is taken into account. India, which had been considered 'the jewel in the crown' in imperial times, suffered a series of terrible civil wars after its partition, following independence, into three new states, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. On this, Segal comments that:

> It is perhaps unfair to blame Britain for the fact that Hindu and Muslim hated each other so intensely, but some blame must be attached to the colonial authorities for allowing the outcome to be quite so horrific […]. Britain watched the wars of 1965 and 1971 from the sidelines (1988: 125).

The difficult economic and political situation of these countries has stimulated waves of immigration to Britain, and the creation of a new multi-cultural society in the ex-mother-country. In Segal's words,

> Britain lives more with the bitter legacy of its colonial past than, remarkably, with the benefits of its fruits […]. The debates over what kind of multi-ethnic society to create in a country not used to seeing itself as a melting pot, has led to the internalisation of south Asian problems in Britain. It is now less an issue of foreign policy, and more one primarily of domestic character of modern Britain (1988: 125-126).

On the other hand, Britain's relationship with its remaining colonies have never really been easy either, as most of them have proven to be a 'burden' rather than beneficial for the mother-country. A conspicuous example is the Falklands conflict, which took place in the early stages of Mrs Thatcher's mandate.

2.4.1. The Falklands War

The Falkland Islands/Malvinas are situated in the South Atlantic, about four hundred miles from Argentina. A colony of the British Empire since 1833, this cluster of islands is inhabited by people of 'British stock' (Sprittles, 1995: 113). In the nineteenth century, the islands had been considered of strategic importance but their relevance diminished after the World Wars

and the dismemberment of the British Empire. Since then, the islands have become a reminiscence of imperial time, and a burden on the economy of the mother country. Long claimed by Argentina, the Island's inhabitants, loyal to the British crown, constantly refused to accede to Argentina's petitions. Since the 1970s, the Argentinian claims on the islands became more insistent, until 2nd April 1982 when the country invaded the British colony.

According to Hugo Young, Argentina's conflict was the result of British negligence in dealing with the situation during the previous decades: 'Britain's indifference, indecision and lack of foresight were accessories before the fact of Argentinian aggression, which produced between 2nd April and 14th June 1982 the loss of 255 British and over 650 Argentinian lives'. However, 'because it ended in a great victory eight thousand miles from home, it made her [Mrs Thatcher's] position unassailable, both in the party and in the country. It guaranteed her what was not previously assured: a second term in office' (1989: 258).

Mrs Thatcher certainly needed to reassert her authority after her government's humiliation caused by its lack of foresight during the events that led up to the invasion. She looked for support amongst her party, the country and foreign leaders in the Commonwealth, the United States and the European Community. The fact that Argentina at that time was ruled by a dictator contributed to the international support for the British cause. In domestic terms, Britain's defence of her colony was interpreted as echoing the civilising mission of the Empire and the role of the UK to bring and maintain democracy and freedom against other oppressive regimes.[98]

The victory, though, was not free from controversy. The Argentinian cruiser *General Belgrano* was sunk in waters that were beyond the exclusion zone as it was returning to Argentina. 368 crew members were killed in the action (Sprittles, 1995: 116). Two days later the British HMS *Sheffield* was hit by a missile causing the loss of 21 lives and many

[98] Even the Labour leader, Michael Foot, agreed that Britain had 'a moral duty, a political duty and every other sort of duty' to win back the islands' (in Seldon and Collings, 2000: 21).

casualties. The question whether such a war with the cost of so many lives could have been avoided laid on Mrs Thatcher's shoulders.

Nonetheless, the consequences of the war proved to be very positive for the Prime Minister. The issue helped reinforce the proud notions of British identity. Confronting the foreign Argentinian enemy, people could forget the country's inner differences, and the problems that assailed them, such as the dramatic rise in unemployment.[99] Sprittles gives a revelatory example of how an outside enemy can mask the difficulties at home:

> In early April a survey of public opinion showed '39 per cent … thought the Falklands war the most important issue facing the country, exactly the same percentage chose unemployment'. However, the passing of a month at war 'saw the Falklands as by far the most important [issue] (61 per cent) with unemployment now well behind (25 per cent) (1995: 114).

Thus, as Tana Wollen states: 'An "enemy" thousands of miles away served the powerful symbolic purpose of rallying hearts, minds and troops behind a Britain some were desperate to believe "Great" again' (1991: 179), as made clear in Mrs Thatcher's speech in Cheltenham on 3rd July 1981:

> We have ceased to be a nation in retreat. We have instead a new found confidence – born in the economic battles at home and tested and found true eight thousand miles away… And so today we can rejoice at our success in the Falklands and take pride in the achievements of the men and women of our task force. But we do so not at some flickering of a flame which must seen be dead: no, we rejoice that Britain has rekindled that spirit which has fired her for generations past, and which today has begun to burn as brightly as before (in Blake and John, 2003: 69).

Furthermore, the Prime Minister made the most of the event to revive the discourses of British identity based of whiteness and blood ties. In Mrs Thatcher's words:

> The people of the Falkland Islands, like people of the United Kingdom, are an island race… They are few in number, but they have the right to live in peace, to choose their own way of life and to determine their own allegiance. Their way of life is British: their allegiance is to the crown. It is the wish of the British people and the duty of Her Majesty's government to do everything that we can to uphold that right (in Blake and John, 2003: 64).

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[99] Street explains that these problems were: 'explosive industrial relations, unemployment and poverty, racial conflict and law and order. There was however some evidence of upwards mobility, particularly amongst the much publicised working-class and lower-middle-class yuppies who made quick profits from buying property and shares, gaining an entrée into the hitherto middle- and upper-class dominated world of business and finance. For the unemployed and the sick, however, the Thatcher years offered increased impoverishment and insecurity' (1997: 102-3). In the period 1979-82 unemployment more than doubled and remained over 3 million from 1982 to 1986 (Hill, 1999:6).

The Prime Minister's statement follows the Churchillian sense of 'kith and kin'. While Mrs Thatcher fought against the 'enemy without' that threatened the way of life of 'brothers and sisters' of the remote Falklands, she was also holding a battle against the 'enemy within' who, under an alien coloured skin was rioting and disrupting the life of the native-rooted inhabitants of the British Isles. In this sense, Gilroy argues that Mrs Thatcher linked the two kinds of enemies that were attacking Britain's revived greatness.[100] Gilroy adds that the defence of the distant British 'kith and kin' in the South Atlantic was inevitably connected with the conflicts at home:

> Images of the nation at war were also used to draw attention to problems inherent in 'multi-racialism' at home. There was a rich irony discovered in the contrast between the intimacy of the 'natural' if long-distance relationship with the Falklanders and the more difficult task of relating to alien intruders who persisted in disrupting life in Britain and were not seen to be laying down their lives for the greater good (1998: 51-52).

The Falklands conflict therefore revealed Mrs Thatcher's vision of British national identity as one rooted in the country's imperial past – a notion that entails the drawing of specific lines of inclusion and exclusion between certain communities. This position was made patent in the way the government dealt with ethnic minorities at home.

[100] Gilroy defines the 'Falklands Factor' expressed in the Cheltenham speech as the link between the struggle against the 'Argies' and the battle against the Trade Unions, 'whose industrial actions were to be undone by the fact that such activities did not 'match the spirit' of the reborn Britain (1998: 51).

2.5. Multicultural Britain in the 1980s

2.5.1. New Right, New Racism

Following the trend developed by the Falklands factor – unifying the nation thanks to the confrontation of a common enemy – the Prime Minister created a political language which defined 'all those who challenge the dominant order as a common, natural enemy'. In this sense, 'miners and blacks discover that they share being labelled "the enemy within"' (Gilroy, 1998: 34).

Paradoxically, despite the attempt to project inner unity through discourses on national identity, Mrs Thatcher's aggressive economic policy instigated unavoidable divisions within the country. As John Hill suggests:

> … the politico-legal aspects of Thatcherism, and the ideological rhetoric was often at odds with its economic effects. Thus, despite the Mrs Thatcher regime's appeal to order, unity and social cohesion, it was evident that Thatcherite economic policies were contributing to an increase in social divisions and conflicts (1999: 10).

Likewise, Hugo Young states: 'Inequality increased, as it was always intended to. The Thatcher government believed more clearly than any of its post-war predecessors in the virtue of inequality both as a motor for getting the economy moving and as a measure by which its fruits should be distributed' (1989: 535).[101]

As a consequence of the rationalisation of industry (e. g. the closing down of a number of non-productive coal pits) a growing section of the population came to suffer unemployment and poverty. One of the problems derived from these circumstances was closely related, not only to class division, but also to race:

> The hard-core of the poor and unemployed black youngsters in the big cities form an emerging under-class alienated from the successful majority and their values. The result has not only been increases in violent crime and drug-taking, but also a greater feeling of social malaise (Riddell:1991: 166).

[101] For a more detailed account of the economic, social and geographic division of the electorate and the unequal effects of the Thatcherite project on the British population, see Riddell, 1991: 166-7, 171- 183.

Non-white citizens also had to face aversive racism, implicit in the discourses in which Britishness was associated with whiteness, and which, therefore, always excluded them. Accordingly, this new racism was no longer based on racial superiority but on the threat a destabilizing 'other' caused to white national unity. Gilroy notices that: 'This new racism was produced in part, by the move towards a political discourse which aligns "race" closely with the idea of national belonging and stresses cultural difference rather than biological hierarchy'. It is from this perspective, he adds, that 'blackness and Englishness appear as mutually exclusive attributes' (1992: 190). In Gilroy's words, 'the novelty of new racism is its capacity to combine different kinds of discourses – patriotism, nationalism, xenophobia, Englishness, Britishness, militarism and gender difference – in a complex system that defines "race" in terms of culture and identity' (1998: 43).

Simultaneously, however, concepts such as 'the Island Race' and 'the Bulldog Breed', still in vogue, linked the representation of the nation in both biological and cultural terms, an attitude that was to have important repercussions on immigration controls and the treatment of ethnic minorities in the country. Accordingly, Anna Marie Smith concludes that 'the new racism preserved the intolerance of the imperial racism, but re-cast in suitable "tolerant" post-colonial terms' (1994: 56). In other words, while on the one hand, the discourse on 'race' was gradually replaced by the term 'culture', on the other hand, the new network of relationships among identity groups, in what has since then been regarded as a 'multi-cultural society' (i.e. Britain), was not completely emptied of the residual discourses of 'biological racism', inherited from eighteenth and nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific theories on natural order and racial taxonomy.

Mitchell and Russell establish a connection between the ideology of the New Right and the development of new racist thought. In their view, the New Right is not a coherent project but an amalgam of ideas that unify both the complementary and contradictory trends

of social authoritarianism and neo-liberalism (1990: 175)[102]. Elizabeth Ansell agrees with this view of the British New Right, which, she believes, derives from both the Conservative Party and more extreme right-wing groups.[103] She concludes that the New Right is more united on what it opposes than on what it proposes, especially concerning racial issues:

> Whether the New Right's anti-antiracism is expressed in the form of neo-liberal attack on the 'new class' of anti-racists, or the social authoritarian charge that the presence of coloured immigrants is threatening the survival of the distinctive British cultural heritage, the New Right arguably shares a common project of mobilizing popular and elite opinion in opposition to social democratic values associated with the pursuit of racial equality (1997: 164).

Ansell therefore argues that what is distinctive about the new racism of the New Right is 'the degree to which it combines the neo-liberal concept of freedom from unwarranted state regulations and the social conservative concern with defending established cultural mores and maintaining social cohesion' (1997: 164). It is precisely this combination of different ideas, hidden inside a set of common-sense assumptions that renders new racism more pervasive and dangerous (1997: 165).

There is general agreement among historians and critics in identifying Enoch Powell as the founding father of the new racist discourse in the United Kingdom (Mitchell and Russell, 1990: 176; Ansell, 1997: 144). Mitchell and Russell identify three main sources for the new racism:

Firstly, Enoch Powell's 1968 speeches gave voice to the fears and racist reaction of a population that rejected the increasing presence of non-whites on British territory. He anticipated a series of events that would take place in the country if immigration were not halted. He stated:

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[102] In terms of politics, some sectors of the New Right developed authoritarian views on the form of government adopted as far as they defend the principle of blind submission to authority. As seen before, Thatcher's government advocated for centralised power. On the other hand, in terms of economy, after the mentioned crises of the 1970s with the failure of interventionist measures, neo-liberalist claimed for a return to classic market liberalism on the part of conservative parties as a means to revitalise the economy. These measures were aimed at emphasising individual autonomy, self-development and freedom (http://www.search.eb.com/eb/article-9117288; http://www.search.eb.com/eb/ article-9003154).

[103] New Right organisations include the Monday Club, the Freedom Association, Conservative 2000, Conservative Way Forward, the Social Affairs Unit, the Centre for Policy Studies, the Salisbury Group as well as right-wing media commentators in both quality and tabloid press (see Ansell, 1997: 145-164).

> In this country, in fifteen or twenty years' time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man.
>
> … Those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad. We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant-descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.
>
> … But while, to the immigrant, entry to this country was admission to privileges and opportunities eagerly sought, the impact upon the existing population was very different. For reasons which they could not comprehend, and in pursuance of a decision by default, on which they were never consulted, they found themselves made strangers in their own country.
>
> They found their wives unable to obtain hospital beds in childbirth, their children unable to obtain school places, their homes and neighbourhoods changed beyond recognition, their plans and prospects for the future defeated; at work they found that employers hesitated to apply to the immigrant worker the standards of discipline and competence required of the native-born worker; they began to hear, as time went by, more and more voices which told them that they were now the unwanted. They now learn that a one way privilege is to be established by act of parliament; a law which cannot, and is not intended to, operate to protect them or redress their grievances is to be enacted to give the stranger, the disgruntled and the agent-provocateur the power to pillory them for their private actions (in Utley, 1968: 180-186).

Although inn the aftermath of his radical and alarmist speeches, Powell was forced to give up his parliamentary seat, 'his message arguably remained popular, leading many to conclude that although Powell had lost his political battle, he had won the ideological war' (Ansell, 1997: 144).

The second source mentioned by Mitchell and Russell is the journal *Salisbury Review*, launched in 1982. This publication exposed the views of New Right writers on the topics of race and racism in Britain and the importance of the preservation of British national identity, rooted in a nostalgic and imaginary 'pure' white past. Thirdly, the 1980s witnessed a vast amount of journalistic writing in both the quality and tabloid sections of the British press that disseminated neo-conservative, racialist views of the incompatibility of native and foreign populations regarding their distinctive culture and way of life (Mitchell and Russell, 1990: 177).

Out of these sources, Ansell identifies three key categories of meaning that determine the development of the new racist discourses of the British New Right. The first and foremost category is the assumption of an immutable human nature which is hostile to those who are different. Accordingly, it is not a question of white prejudice against blacks, but just a

'natural' inclination of people who generally prefer to be with their own ethnic and cultural group. This tendency is apparent in all communities, not only whites, but also blacks, Asians, Muslims, Jews, Indians or Bangladeshis. On this view:

> The new racist teaches the racist that she has never been a racist, that the racial minorities themselves would pursue exactly the same policies in their own 'homelands', and that the preservation of racial-cultural-national purity is the best defence against racial tensions (Smith, 1994: 57).

Such a conception of identity construction is thus imbued with an essentialist assumption backed by biological notions. As Bhabha argues (1994: 66), this way of envisaging identity renders the dichotomy 'self-otherness' fixed and immutable and thus invalidates any prospect for a possible amelioration of 'race' relations. From this angle therefore, the political solution proposed would result in immigration controls and/or deportation instead of the implementation of 'useless' 'race relations' laws.

The key question of the new racist discourse is that its main exponents, like Powell himself, do not consider themselves to have racist opinions or attitudes. In Powell's view, a 'racist' is a person who considers members belonging to other races to be inferior. Following this argument, Powell is not a 'racist', since he believed that no human being is inferior to another, only different, both in terms of physical appearance and in terms of culture. Yet it is precisely this cultural difference that provokes the incompatibility and hence hostility between native and foreign populations.

Nationhood and national identity are thus perceived as natural, rather than socio-political constructs. For that reason, 'intolerance' is re-coded as a legitimate expression of natural beliefs (Smith, 1994: 56). The justification of hostile reactions against foreigners as natural has further implications. On the one hand, it depoliticises the question of racism and exonerates the government from implementing race relations measures because, if racial prejudice is innate and immutable in human nature, it will never be eradicated by any kind of social measure. On the other hand, it justifies repatriation: just as that native populations prefer to live amidst their own kin, so to do foreigners apprehend their original countries as

their 'natural' homes. Consequently, the only solution for racial problems is to limit contact between different groups by means of immigration controls on entry and repatriation (Ansell, 1997: 165-7).

The second category of meaning is the notion of the 'British way of life', which raises identity boundaries between 'we', based on an imaginary, homogeneous, British white past, and 'other' alien cultures. This indigenous culture is based on Victorian values such as 'work, respectability, the need for social discipline, and respect for the law' (Ansell, 1997: 168). New Rightists conclude that the 'British way of life' concept was fast being diluted by alien cultures whose increasing presence in the isles coincided with national decline. In Ansell's words:

> It is precisely the struggle to link genuine fears with a particular phenomenon such as black immigration – as opposed to, for example, complex sources of structural change lack of community resources, or inadequate job training programs – which constitutes the New Right's ideological work (1997: 169).

This idea links in with the notion of 'the enemy within', that is, all those communities living in Britain that do not blend into the genuine British 'way of life'. Their 'otherness' poses threats and problems to the country, and this difference is maintained through subsequent generations of immigrants, because, according to Powell: 'The West Indian or Indian does not, by being born in England, become an Englishman. In law, he becomes a UK citizen by birth; in fact, he is a West Indian or Asian' (Powell, in Hand, 1990: 254). In another speech given in 1974, Powell continued arguing that:

> The nation has been and is still being eroded and hollowed out from within by implantation of unassimilated and unassimilable populations… alien wedges in the heartland of the state… It is… truly when he looks into the eyes of Asia that the Englishman comes face to face with those who would dispute with him the possession of his native land (in Ansell, 1997: 175).

Powell's military metaphors of 'invasion', 'war' and 'conquest' in his speeches serve to highlight the mental fashioning of national boundaries that defines the construction of the

native population in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Accordingly, the limits of 'race' are made to coincide with national frontiers (Gilroy, 1998: 46). As Anne Marie Smith explains,

> it is taken for granted that the status of 'being here first' establishes a privileging of the white British population *vis-à-vis* the black immigrant, while the 'being here first' status of the colonials and indigenous peoples counted for absolutely nothing in the imperial tradition (1994: 84).

Such discourses therefore eschew sense of imperial guilt. However, as Gilroy states:

> The immigrant is here because Britain, Europe, was once there; […] today's unwanted settlers carry all the ambivalence of empire with them. They project it into the unhappy consciousness of their fearful, anxious hosts and neighbours. Indeed, the incomers may be unwanted and feared precisely because they are the unwitting bearers of the imperial and colonial past (2004: 110).

The third category of meaning inherent in New Right discourses is the 'new class enemy', that is, those groups of bureaucrats whose job is to attend 'black' communities and who tend to inscribe non-white groups into two categories: 'blacks as a problem' and 'blacks as victims'. As a result, 'blacks' are therefore not regarded as individuals but as inferior communities in need of special attention. This reasoning is used by the New Right to attack what they see as the backfire effect of the anti-racist measures, proposed by the 'the loony left' which only serve to further marginalise whites (Ansell, 1997: 176).

These key categories of new racism have opened up a political debate between social authoritarians and neo-liberals, the two competing tendencies of New Right discourse and have often been used by Mrs Thatcher's government to combine apparently contradictory trends, and thus appeal to a wider electorate. Mitchell and Russell detect three different combinations of such ideas:

To begin with, neo-conservatives defend an exclusive form of British nationhood, which excludes all those groups considered to be 'different' from the traditional white concept of the British population, while neo-liberalists defend the idea of individual liberty in a colour-blind approach. This is why, in the 1980s, the government could advocate for the return to the idea of the 'island race', which brought the white inhabitants of the distant Falklands and the white British population closer to each other than whites and non-whites

living in the UK. Simultaneously, the Tories could present an electoral campaign for the 1983 election defending the Conservative views on black people as 'persons' and citizens with equal rights and opportunities as the white population. The advertisement is worth analysing: it showed a young black man in a suit with the caption: 'Labour says he's black. Tories say he's British'. The campaign propaganda continued:

> With the Conservatives, there are no 'blacks', no 'whites', just people.
> Conservatives believe that treating minorities as equals encourages the majority to treat them as equals.
> Yet the Labour Party aim to treat you as a 'special case', as a group all on your own.
> The question is, should we really divide the British people instead of uniting them (in Sewell, 1993: 67).

In spite of the colour-blind approach, the interpellation proffered in this advert, to use an Althusserian concept, is an invitation to 'assimilate'. In other words, a black man will be accepted as a 'British' person so long as he is clad in a suit, the signifier of British civilisation and 'way of life', i.e. 'the wolf is transformed by his sheep's clothing' (Gilroy, 1998: 59). Besides, the image presents a solitary figure, which could be seen as indirectly reinforcing both Mrs Thatcher's championing of individualism and her government fimr backing of immigration control. What is more, the absence of any female figure obliterates the threat of excessive fertility usually associated with the stereotype of the black woman (1998: 59). This advertising campaign represents a New Right's ideal vision of society, which, according to Smith, 'only includes elements of othernesses, such as certain blacknesses and certain homosexuality, insofar as their alterity has been domesticated' (1994: 116).

On a different line, the second difference between these two trends is that, while social authoritarians are strong advocates of assimilationist policies or repatriation laws for those who do not adapt to the way of life of the host population, neo-liberalist prefer a Darwinian view of society exposed to the laws of the market – in other words, a society in

which the survival of different competing cultures depends on the free choice of single individuals.[104]

Finally, the neo-conservatives present racial hostility as the expression of the 'natural fears' of a group whose culture and values are threatened by the increasing presence of foreigners, whose different and often incompatible views on life cannot but result in violent confrontation with the native population. In contrast, from their 'laissez-faire' stance, neo-liberalists believe that the market forces will eventually erase racial prejudices and discrimination. In their view, *individuals* will succeed according to their effort and self-responsibility, regardless of their race, cultural background, class or gender, (Mitchell and Russell, 1990: 179-180).

2.5.2. Immigration Controls for the Sake of Good Race Relations

As seen in the previous chapter, all these views on race and immigration were reflected in the measures adopted by different governments to control immigration or to promote race relations within the country, as a means of appeasing disturbances between different communities that regularly flared up since the 1950s. Along the 1980s, conflicts around the issues of race and immigration were manifest. For this reason, it is worth analysing the political strategy of the Conservative government during the period.

Already in 1978, in an interview on television's *World in Action* programme, Mrs Thatcher made clear her own position regarding racial issues. She declared that immigrants themselves could become victims of a liberal immigration policy, since not only whites but also early immigrants could resent the increasing numbers of foreign people, a fact that could

[104] In the field of education, neo-conservatives champion an assimilationist type of education, while neo-liberals defend the education voucher scheme which enables parents to decide for themselves which school their children are to attend, even though these practices tend to create a ghettoisation of single-ethnic schools. In any case, both groups coincide in the rejection of interventionist anti-racist measures, which may eventually marginalise white individuals in favour of black positive discrimination.

provoke racist reactions among different ethnic groups (Blake and John, 2003: 34). In line with New Right, new racist discourses, she echoed Powell's apocalyptic views in her so-called 'swamping speeches' which evidenced her view of immigration as a threat:

> I think [the present rate of immigration] means that people are really afraid that this country may be swamped by people of a different culture. The British character has done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, then people are going to be rather hostile to those coming in (1978, in Hand, 1990: 264).

Non-white presence in the British Isles was still seen by the Conservative government as a problem in the 1980s. And yet, the only solution proposed to maintain peaceful race relations in the country was further limitation on the entry of immigrants. First, in 1981, the government passed the Nationality Act, which saw the *jus soli* policy, until then in force, surpassed by the policy of *jus sanguinis*.[105] This act prevented the UK-born children of immigrant parents from acquiring the automatic right to citizenship.[106] The Act split the category of Citizen of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth into three sub-divisions: British Citizens, British Dependent Territories Citizens and British Overseas Citizens. The last category excluded British citizens – mostly of Asian origin – from the right of abode in Britain (Solomos, 1993: 71). Immigration controls were justified for the sake of good race relations for all those communities already settled in Britain. Thus, a government document, prepared for the OCDE conference, explains the policy of immigration control implanted in Britain:

> In recent decades, the basis of policy in the United Kingdom has been the need to control primary immigration – that is, new heads of households who are most likely to enter the job market. The United Kingdom is one of the most densely populated countries in Europe. In terms of housing, education, social services and, of course, jobs, the country could not support all those who would like to come here. Firm immigration control is therefore essential in order to provide conditions necessary for developing and maintaining good community relations (in Solomos, 1993: 71).

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[105] Fenton explains that '*Jus soli*' refers to right according to the 'soil', that is, a person acquires citizenship principally in accordance to the place of birth, in contrast to *jus sanguinis* ('right according to blood') whereby a person acquires citizenship principally by way of descent (1999: 206).

[106] The 1981 Nationality Act establishes that: 'A person born in the United Kingdom after commencement shall be a British citizen if at the time of the birth his father or mother is a British citizen or settled in the United Kingdom' (1981 c. 61:1).

The 1971 Immigration Act, which had already restricted immigration to dependants of immigrant men settled in Britain, was modified by another Act in 1987, which removed the right to bring dependants from men of marriageable age.

In part, it was the difficult situation of unemployment and poverty that affected marginal groups most particularly, as well as the racist attitudes towards black people, that provoked violent riots in those poor areas, often inhabited by immigrant communities. The first wave of disturbances occurring in 1981: St. Paul's, Bristol (1980), Brixton (April 1981) and Toxteth (July 1981).[107] Apart from labour discrimination and racial tensions,[108] these riots also showed up the poor relationships existent between the police and black youth in particular. As Savage remarks, these events 'were to an extent the result of bad policy and an element of racism in the [police] force' (1990: 92). After the Second World War, the increasing presence of immigrants led to riots in Notting Hill in 1958, and to the 'Paki-bashing' practices of the 1960s and 1970s. The wave of racist violence was intensified in the 1980s, with an estimate of 7,000 attacks in 1981 (Hudson and Williams, 1995: 214). As a consequence, instead of finding support in the police forces, there was a growing sense of mistrust and disillusion on the part of non-white communities.

The image of the criminalised black youth involved in mugging and other criminal activities in problematic inner-city areas promoted disproportionate acts of surveillance and provocative policing on non-white communities. As Hudson and Williams explain, the police used the power granted by the Section 4 of the Vagrancy Act, to stop and search

[107] Later on more riots took place in St. Paul's (January 1982), Notting Hill Gate (April 1982), Toxteth (April 1982 and July 1982), St. Paul's (June 1983), Handsworth, Birmingham (9-10 September 1985), Brixton (23 September 1985) and Tottenham (October 1985) (Taylor in Hill, 1999: 10-11).

[108] Young relates the riots to the high rate of unemployment within the black community: 'By the date of its second anniversary, the Government had presided over the biggest fall in the total output in one year since 1931 […]. Unemployment, up by a million in the past twelve months, was rising towards the once unimaginable total of three million […]. In April 1981, serious disturbances occurred in Brixton, south London, a multiracial area with a long history of poor police-community relations and high unemployment, especially among young blacks' (1989: 233).

people, especially black people, in public places: 'This heavy-handed and sometimes racialist approach to policing has contributed to the alienation of young black people from the police, and to breeding a sense of profound distrust' (1995: 214-215).

In fact, the riots that broke out in Bristol, in April 1980, flared up after a police raid on suspected drug dealers in a pub, which was one of the few meeting places in town for black youths (Witte, 1996: 56). In March 1981, there was a mass demonstration in London to protest against both the handling of the investigation into the deaths of thirteen young blacks in a fire in Deptford and the disinterest of the press in reporting the events. A police intervention precipitated the violent conflict, which resulted in riots (Gilroy, 1998: 102-103).[109] Although the events profoundly shocked British society, such actions continued in the following months in different parts of the country (Sprittles, 1995: 84-85).

The way the media dealt with these riotous situations also has its importance, especially in its tendency to portray the riots as a confrontation of a disordered mass of black youths against the police forces.[110] In this sense, the media activated a sense of menace that recalled Mrs Thatcher's 'swamping' speeches by presenting the white population as growingly victimised by threatening black groups. As Ansell observes:

> The political reaction to these events, not the events themselves, reinforced the New Right belief that black people, whether British-born or not, are incapable of sharing a civilized social life in common with the (white) indigenous majority. In this way, law and order, like immigration, became a condensation symbol for the racial and status anxieties of part of the public (1997: 244).

On the other hand, the Scarman Report, published in November 1981, pointed to the high levels of youth unemployment, deficient housing conditions, inadequate provision of remedial education for deprived families and lack of social, cultural and welfare amenities

[109] For a detailed explanation on the causes and origins of the particular riots see Witte, 1996: 58-60, Solomos, 1993: 147-177 and Gilroy, 1998: 102.

[110] Sprittles remarks on the warfare vocabulary used in the media coverage of the events, such as 'Battlefront', 'The whole nation was appalled by scenes of mindless violence and looting at Brixton' 'This place is at war', 'Brixton explodes again!' (see Sprittles, 1995: 85-86). Solomos observes the racialisation of the report of the events in the newspapers headlines: 'Riot Mob Stone Police', 'Bristol: a multiracial riot against the police', 'The Bristol confrontation: racial but not racist', 'When the Black Tide Met the Thin Blue Line', 'Black War on the Police', 'army of rioting black youths', 'Flames of Hate' (see Solomos, 1993:152-4).

as the main causes for the violent protest (Solomos, 1993: 157).[111] Even so, the Prime Minister did not accept unemployment as the justification for rioting: 'If you consider that unemployment was the only cause –or the main cause—of the riots I would disagree with you. Nothing that has happened would justify these riots' (in Solomos, 1993: 158). In response to the Scarman report, the Prime Minister said: 'Until law and order and public confidence have been restored, we cannot set about improving the economic or social conditions of this country' (in Ansell, 1997: 245).

What is more, as reasoning went, 'blacks' were blamend for the problems of unemployment and social decay in the cities rather than the other way round. As a consequence, the discourse of the New Right identifying social problems as the cause of alien disruption to the British 'way of life' was justified, thus: 'Complex changes in post-war Britain were contrasted with a nostalgic portrait of Britain before the arrival of black immigrants as a safe and peaceful haven' (Ansell, 1997: 244). It seems, therefore, that far from trying to solve the problem of youth unemployment and harsh living conditions of the marginalised groups, the government's concern was bent on law and order (Solomos, 1993: 160). And yet, 'despite the commitment to fighting crime, the amount of recorded crime actually rose by 60 per cent during the Thatcher years' (Hill, 1999: 10).

It could therefore be said that the economic change and political measures implemented by Mrs Thatcher's government increased the differences in living conditions between different sectors of the population. Indeed, while some groups benefited from popular capitalism, others saw their economic and social difficulties exacerbated, difficulties that hit a vast majority of ethnic minority groups which were relegated to the

[111] A survey published in 1984 by the Policy Studies Institute showed that the job conditions of black people were far worse than those of their white counterparts – they were employed below their qualification level and often earned less that white workers in comparable job levels – while they had a higher unemployment rate (Solomos, 1993: 91).

status of underclass. This was, according to Hudson and Williams, the 'bitter harvest of Two Nations politics' (1995: 216).[112]

Regarding ethnic issues, the decade ended with an important event that created a controversial debate on the question of cultural diversity within the country: the Rushdie Affair. The Rushdie Affair put to the test the compatibility of Islamic beliefs with citizenship in a European country (Teitelbaum, 1998: 55). Accused of blasphemy, the novelist Salman Rushdie was condemned to death by the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. Many volumes of his novel, *The Satanic Verses*, were publicly burnt in several countries all over the world, including in Britain. Thousands of Muslims in Britain demonstrated against Rushdie and against the fact that British laws on blasphemy did not contemplate Islam. Michael Teitelbaum explains the complex situation in the following terms:

> Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher, who disliked Rushdie and stood for everything he despised, provided police protection for him. A death sentence for publishing a novel was simply unthinkable in Britain. But it was not unthinkable to many British Muslims. Here the vulnerability of their community may have played a part. Faced by the temptations of Western culture, British Muslims from South Asia feared losing their children to secularism […]. Since Islam is a total ideology, linking all behaviour in a seamless whole, many Muslims agreed that life should be denied to a blasphemer (1993: 55-56).

As a consequence, the viability of an ethnically plural society was once again questioned in the media (Solomos, 1993: 224). New racists saw the Rushdie affair as confirming their views on cultural incompatibility. The issue here was that Muslim extremists had taken up and were applying the very same new racist discourses to show hostility against Western culture, while extremist neo-conservatives confirmed Powell's apocalyptic views of unavoidable violent confrontations and the incompatibility between being 'black' or non-white' and calling oneself British (Ansell, 1997: 252).[113] Nevertheless, the vast majority of

[112] Sewell summarises this situation in which the very victims of the system were regarded as victimisers: 'In theory, the whole society should benefit from greater prosperity and economic efficiency, but in reality a form of social Darwinism takes over and only the 'fittest' in society are able to survive. The 'unacceptable' face of Thatcherism was that the burden of blame for this distributive problem was placed on the victims of poverty, not on the system which impoverished them' (1993: 60).

[113] In this debate Norman Tebbit proposed the 'cricket test' of loyalty for ethnic minorities living in Britain to prove the difficulties in a good conviviality of cultures: 'Which side do they cheer for? … It is an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you come from or where you are. I think we've got real problems in

the population remained caught between these two poles, Rushdie himself being a conspicuous example of 'a non-Muslim Muslim, a British Asian, a non-European European' (Teitelbaum, 1993: 52).[114]

2.6. Thatcherism and Cinema

The policies implemented by Thatcher's government also had important implications in the realm of art and culture, particularly in the area concerning the film industry. Taking into account the fact that 'films do not exist in a vacuum: they are conceived, produced, distributed and consumed within specific economic and social contexts' (Kochberg, 2001: 4), it is therefore crucial to consider the processes at work in the creation of cinematographic products, as well as the contextual background, which proved so influential in the development of British cinema along the 1980s. Mrs Thatcher's conception of a society based exclusively on market-oriented axioms clashed with the interests of intellectuals and artists. According to John Hill: 'In the case of film, the new Conservative government was reluctant to conceive of it in artistic and cultural terms at all with the result that government policies were almost entirely concerned with the commercial aspects of the industry' (1999: 33).

Accordingly, educational and artistic institutions were not given a special status by the Thatcher government. They were simply regarded as profit-making industries and were therefore to be regulated by the laws of the market. Government investments and public subsidies were so dramatically reduced that over 3,000 academic posts were eliminated

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that regard… Well, you can't have two homes. Where you have a clash of history, a clash of religion, a clash of race, then it's all too easy for there to be an actual clash of violence' (in Ansell, 1997: 253).

[114] The affair also showed that different voices and opinions were raised within the Muslim community, as not all its members shared the condemning statements against Rushdie. For instance, groups such as Women Against Fundamentalism publicly supported the writer while they sought to challenge stereotypes about Asian and Muslim women (Solomos, 1993: 223).

while the film industry found itself forced to look for private investors in order to survive. As a consequence, the war against Thatcher was declared by intellectuals and artists (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 80).

Invariably in competition with the powerful Hollywood industry, British filmmaking has never succeeded in acquiring a prominent international status.[115] Nick Roddick distinguishes two broad modes for the making of feature films: the American model and the subsidised one. The former is 'a paradigm of capitalist organisation: a factory system, integrating large-scale production, distribution and exhibition, with a massive number of domestic outlets for its products, and a highly developed penetration of the export market' (1985: 3). The latter corresponds to the European model, which conceives of cinema as an art form and, as such, should not be left out to the forces of the market but protected by a system of subvention.[116] The British film industry found itself situated in between these two models. According to Roddick: 'Neither Hollywood-style, nor state-supported, the British film industry has fallen more or less disastrously between these two stools' (1985: 4).

Competition from Hollywood has always been a problem for British filmmakers. The easy penetration of U.S.A. films that share a common language and cultural background has made it very difficult for indigenous productions to compete with American commercial movies and blockbusters. Leonard Quart also points to Hollywood's success in attracting British top directors (Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean, Carol Reed, Ridley Scott, Alan Parker, Stephen Frears, Mike Figgis) who found in America a well-financed industry and the prospect of making more lucrative careers (2003: 226).

[115] Nick Roddick analyses the crucial factor of Hollywood competition with the British film industry in his article: 'If the United States spoke Spanish, we would have a film industry…' (1985: 3-18)

[116] These two modes of cinema production reflect the competing views on the issue of 'cultural exception'. The notion of 'cultural exception' refers to the conception of cinema and audiovisual products as cultural goods and that culture should not be merchandised but protected from G.A.A.T. rules. For a more detailed analysis on cinema and 'cultural exception' (see Azcona, Oliete and Seco, 2005: 269-83).

In former decades, British governments implemented several protective measures as a means of preventing British cinema from sinking before the Hollywood invasion. For instance, as early as 1927, the first Cinematograph Films Act imposed a compulsory quota of British films; in 1938, a new Films Act upped the quotas and regulated labour conditions, in 1948, the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC) was funded in order to support independent productions, and in 1947, the Eady Levy imposed a tax to ticket sales and used the revenues to subsidise British-made films (Friedman, 1993: 1; Quart, 1993: 23; Hill, 1999: 34).

From the mid-twentieth century onwards, British cinema also came up against major competitors from television and video. As a consequence, film audiences dramatically decreased. As Paul Giles reports: ‘74 per cent of the British population never visit a cinema, but every adult in 1988 watched on average over 25 hours of television each week’ (1993: 72). Leonard Quart also points to the fact that:

> Films in Britain also confronted the generally pro-theatre, anti-cinematic bias of the arts establishment and faced competition for an audience with some very striking and original television programming […] and home video – Britain having one of the highest ownership and rental rates in the world (1993: 226).

The British film industry also came up against Mrs Thatcher’s policies, which materialised in the abolishment of the Eady Levy and the 25 per cent tax for investment in film production, and the privatisation of the NFFC (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 82). Commenting on the uneasy situation between government and film industry, Samantha Lay states that:

> The film industry in Britain certainly did not find a friend in Thatcher administrations. John Hill sums up the Conservative government’s policy as ‘aggressive non-intervention’ and it is clear Thatcher’s governments saw cinema as a commercial enterprise which would need to sink or swim on its own (Lay, 2002: 82-3).

Initially, these measures were bound to aggravate the problems of a film industry already in crisis. Paradoxically, however, the 1980s witnessed a renaissance in British cinema with more British films produced during that time than in any previous decade

(Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 83), many of them attracting international awards or coverage (Elsaesser, 1993:53). The changes brought about by the Conservative government not only meant a re-organisation in the mode of filmmaking, they also provided filmmakers with new themes and ideas. The result was the production of a large number of films critical of a system that aimed at converting art into commodity. As Sarah Street puts it, 'ironically, the years of Thatcherism provided the political-cultural background to the revival of British cinema in the 1980s' (1997: 102).

At the level of production, filmmakers found themselves forced to rely on private – often foreign – sponsors. In other words, in order to survive within the context of an aggressive market-oriented society, cinema had to establish a new kind of relationship fiercest with its competitors: television and Hollywood (Quart in Friedman, 1993: 24). Channel Four, which began broadcasting in 1982, was a pioneer in helping the development of British cinema. The new channel was no mere extension of BBC and ITV. On the contrary, it aimed at encouraging creations that departed from mainstream productions. It thus offered a space for independent producers or minority audiences (Hill, 1999: 54). Samantha Lay comments that the main aim of Channel Four was to 'provide viewing for minorities and to represent hitherto underrepresented groups in society' (2002: 78).[117] The channel therefore acted as a platform for low-budget, independent films. Although both national and international films were displayed, the Channel's main commitment was to British cinema. Many of these productions, which proved to be very successful, were social-realist, politically engaged dramas, such as *The Ploughman's Lunch* (Richard Eyre, 1983), *My Beautiful Launderette* (Stephen Frears, 1985), *Letter to Brezhnev* (Chris Bernard, 1985), *High Hopes* (Mike Leigh, 1988) or *Riff-Raff* (Ken Loach, 1990). Several of the directors who made a career out of contracts with Channel Four –

[117] Channel Four's policy was subsequently followed by other companies, such as Granada or the BBC (Giles, 1993: 75).

Stephen Frears, Ken Loach or Mike Leigh among others – are clear exponents of the social realist mode of filmmaking. As Samantha Lay states:

> From the 1960s to the present, social realist texts have been a staple of television schedules, but it is notable that a rebirth of social realist film and television occurred in response to the harsh economic and materialist conditions of Thatcherism (2002: 36).

Channel Four also supported other types of films which did not belong to that contemporary social-realist trend but to the costume drama or 'heritage' genre, as was the case of *Heat and Dust* (James Ivory, 1982), *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1985), *A Month in the Country* (Pat O'Connor, 1987) or *Caravaggio* (Derek Jarman, 1986). In opposition to the social-realist films' direct challenge to contemporary British society, the films set in the past were often perceived as 'conservative productions' that reflected the traditional sense of British identity promoted by the Thatcher government (Giles, 1993: 82). This type of film, however, did not always present a straight-forward alignment with the Conservative government's ideology, but a more complex interrelation of competing ideologies.[118]

In many cases, the British cinema industry also had to look for funding in foreign investment companies, more often than not from the United States. These companies were interested in profit-making movies and thus exploited the British style of filmmaking that could appeal to a sector of national and international audiences who were tired of commercial Hollywood productions. One of the reasons for the success of the British films made in the 1980s was the result of their triumph as winners of a number of academy awards. Critics agree that the so-called 'renaissance' of British cinema started with Hudson's *Chariots of Fire*, a film that won four Oscars in 1982. The international success of this film as well as that of subsequent productions was very often equated with notions of national identity as a reaction against cultural Americanisation. It is from this frame of mind that Colin Welland, the Oscar-winner scriptwriter for *Chariots*, triumphantly

[118] The debates on the heritage question will be further developed in the next chapter.

announced that ‘the British are coming!’, in reference to the British film’s success in Hollywood (Higson, 2003: 6). Nonetheless, British cinema owed by much its success to U.S. financial support and promotion at the Oscar ceremonies (Higson, 2003: 6-8).[119]

On this view, the cinematic productions of the 1980s may be seen as reflecting the situation of both Britain in the general context of globalisation and in the particular implementation of Mrs Thatcher’s policies at home. As a result, most ‘British’ movies were, in fact, international co-productions, with money invested by American, Japanese and/or European corporations. The paradoxical nature of globalisation is thus reflected in the films made at the time: in order to compete with the powerful Hollywood industry, British cinema had to offer films with a British style that distinguished them from American mainstream movies and that, at the same time, could appeal to spectators both at home and abroad. Accordingly, the distinctive themes and styles of the British cinematic output contributed to the construction and exportation of an indigenous British identity set against cultural Americanisation. In other words, British films were simultaneously international – and thus multicultural – at the level of production, and intrinsically national in their thematic and formal contents.

The fact that filmmakers were forced to use market strategies to finance their productions converted most of them into anti-Thatcherites. That is why, much of their anger, discontent and criticism of Mrs Thatcher’s society was visually expressed through or by means of their films. The consequences of the dismantling of the welfare state, the emphasis on law and order, the stress on individualism and the construction of a market-oriented society that rewarded the winners but provided no ‘cushion’ for the losers, together with the often conflictive reality of a multicultural society, were some of the

[119] Welland made a play on words with the well-known cry that the ‘lone rider’ gave as he rode across America, warning the colonialist rebels that the British troops had arrived. This event marked the start of the American War of Independence.

topics once and again portrayed in social-realist films such as Leigh's *High Hopes*, Frear's *My Beautiful Launderette* or Loach's *Riff-Raff*.

But as already discussed at length in previous sections, besides the implementation of New Right economic policies, Mrs Thatcher's government also championed the construction of a British identity based on its imperial past and 'good, old' Victorian values – an attitude that was made patent during the months of the Falkland crisis. A particular response to this ideological Thatcherite stance was developed in another trend of British filmmaking, namely, in the so-called heritage film genre. As tremendously successful productions in the international market, heritage films therefore proved to be 'the fittest' in Mrs Thatcher's Darwinist society.

To all eyes apparent, these cinematic productions epitomised the essence of Thatcherite values: they turned the country's cultural heritage into commodities while at the same time promoting a nationalist perception of British identity based almost exclusively on an imagined, homogenised, white, upper-middle class past. Nonetheless, as I hope to demonstrate in the following chapters, these films also highlight many of the conflicts and contradictions that reigned in both the past and in contemporary British society.

3. HISTORY, IDENTITY AND THE HERITAGE BUSINNESS

The proliferation of heritage films in the decade of the 1980s in Britain is closely linked to the Thatcherite project that combined forward-looking economic policies with a backward-looking ideology. According to Kevin Robins, the revival of interest in the past is not an exclusive feature of British society but something which has to do with the nature of globalisation itself. As the world is slowly converting itself into a borderless space where the links between culture and territory are gradually being lost, the feeling of anxiety in the postmodern individual increases, as s/he realises that reality is unstable and her/his identity is a fragmentary pastiche of ever-changing elements. Against this background, the past becomes the only stable point of reference that enables one to safely cling unto a secure cultural identity (2001: 29).[120]

Kevin Robins indicates how the globalising spread of 'late capitalism' and market societies is fast converting indigenous cultural products into, on the one hand, standardised commodities that appeal to a world-wide consumer while, on the other hand, the same economic trends are activating the exploitation of local differences and particularities as ways of breaking out of the homogeneisation and fomenting cultural enterprise (2001: 31). This circumstance would explain the urge to recover and revive autochtonous traditions that could then be commodified on a global scale.

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[120] Zygmunt Bauman makes an interesting connection between the rise of individuality in the concept of identity and contemporary socio-economic changes (see Baugman, 2000: 53-90). He argues that there has been a change from a 'heavy, Fordist-style capitalism' to a 'light, consumer-friendly capitalism'. This evolution has implied a new background for individuals who see themselves as living in a world of opportunities where they believe to have complete freedom to construct their own identity. However, this situation entails a sense of incompleteness, as all the possibilities that appear to be at hand cannot be fulfilled. This sense of undeterminacy provokes risk and anxiety. In Bauman's own words, 'The world full of possibilities is like a buffet table set with mouth-watering dishes, too numerous for the keenest of eaters to hope to taste them all. The dinners are consumers, and the most taxing and irritating of the challenges consumers confront is the need to establish priorities: the necessity to forsake some unexplored options and to leave them unexplored. The consumers' misery derives from the surfeit, not the dearth of choices' (Bauman, 2000: 63). The past, therefore, becomes one more choice in the construction of the individual's identity.

John Hill also focuses on the growing relevance of nostalgic renderings of the past in contemporary societies. He affirms that *nostalgia* 'is both promoted by globalisation and directed against it in so far as the break-up of bounded social systems and the deterritorialization of culture characteristic of globalization also encourages a longing for the "security" of place and tradition' (1999: 75). Basing his argumentation on the theories by Roland Robertson and Fredric Jamenson, Hill comments on how what he calls 'twentieth-century nostalgia' is characterised by 'nostalgic simulacra or pastiches of the past' (75). In other words, for all its evocation and invocation, the 'reality' of the past will never be fully grasped. In this sense, nostalgic returns to the past prompted by late capitalism are, in Jameson's words, no more than 'nostalgia-deco' (1992: xvii). Hence, as David Lowenthal argues, if it is true that 'the past is a foreign country', nostalgia has made of it a foreign country with the more profit-making tourist market ever (1998: 29).[121]

The instability of cultural identities and the commodification of cultures are thus provoking the general harking back to the past that characterises contemporary globalised societies. This interest in the past re-appears in times of crisis, as has occurred in post-colonial Britain. The invocation of historical traditions brings comforts and continuities that help replace the overwhelming anxieties of contemporary fragmentations. The past, Barry Richards explains, provides individuals or communities with 'protective illusions' of an imaginary and cohesive past identity that attempts to unify the fragmented present-day community or nation (in Robins, 2001: 22). Robins remarks on the importance of Homi Bhabha's notion of 'cultural translation' in Britain's post-colonial context. In his own words:

[121] Lowenthal finds the origins of the term 'nostalgia' in 1688, when it was coined by Johannes Hofer to name an illness with concrete physical and psychological symptoms that could be lethal for the patient. The term came from the Greek *nosos*, meaning to return to one's birth country, and *algos*, which means to suffer. Until the mid-twentieth century, it was perceived as potentially contagious, especially the variant that affected the mind (1998: 36-7).

> Empire has long been at the heart of British culture and imagination, manifesting itself in more or less virulent forms, through insular nationalism and through racist paranoia. The relation of Britain to its 'Other' is one profoundly important context in which to consider the emergence of both enterprise and heritage cultures. The question is whether, in these supposedly post-imperial times, it is possible to meet the challenge of Translation; whether it is now possible for Britain to accept the world as a sufficiently benign place for its weakness not to be catastrophic (2001: 23).

In this context, Robins continues, there is always the danger of mis-translation and confusion, yet even more tragic is the danger 'of a fearful refusal to translate: the threat of a retreat in cultural autism and of a rearguard reinforcement of imperial illusions' (23). In this sense, the heritage industry's fixation with the past does have, or present, the dangerous potential of overemphasising British imperial roots while negating the country's present-day multicultural reality. As Raphael Samuel states,

> Heritage is the mark of a sick society, one which, despairing of the future, had become 'besotted' or 'obsessed' with an idealised version of the past. The historicist turn in British culture […] corresponded to the onset of economic recession, the contraction of manufacturing industry and the return to mass unemployment. It testified the collapse of British power. Heritage prepared the way to […] a recrudescence of 'Little Englandism', and the revival of nationalism as a force in political life. It anticipated and gave expression to the triumph of Thatcherism in the sphere of high politics. Heritage, in short, was a symbol of national decadence (1999: 261).

Although Samuel does not establish a cause-and-effect connection between the advent of Thatcherism and the rise of the heritage industry, he does acknowledge a mutual reinforcement of both phenomena. In their book *Enterprise and Heritage*, John Corner and Sylvia Harvey assert that the visions of 'identity' and 'belonging' projected by heritage are compensate for the 'fragmentation and destabilisation carried by the enterprise imperative' (2001: 46). Hence, in their opposition, the couplet heritage/enterprise represents the interdependency of the apparent contradictory or paradoxical nature of the Tory discourse at the time.[122]

[122] In his analysis of the heritage films of the 1980s and 1990s, Andrew Higson points to the fact that the heritage phenomenon is not exclusive of the Thatcherite project but also a feature of Tony Blair's government. In spite of the fact that the leader of the Labour Party wanted to re-brand the nation as young or 'cool', he retained the vision of the UK as 'a forward-looking, enterprising nation without wanting to discard altogether established traditions, images and identities' (2003: 49). The proliferation of heritage films in the 1990s may be due to Blair's maintenance of some of these Conservative principles that had characterised the previous decade in his implementation of the 'Third Way' in the New Labour government. Admittedly, an evolution and change of the heritage cinema in its different situational contexts could certainly be an interesting subject of analysis, but one beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The following sections of this chapter will therefore be devoted to the analysis of the heritage industry and its interrelation with the revival of British cinema in the 1980s. Hence, after discussing the concept of history and delineating the different approaches to historiography through time, as a means of elucidating the particular portrayals of the past offered in the period films, I shall then concentrate on the heritage industry itself, and, finally on heritage films as part of this industry.

3.1. History: The Ever-Present Past

The world is constantly in flux. Consequently, perceptions of the past will depend on the different perspectives on the changing present. Even the understanding or discernment of historiography, that is, of the narration of the past, its methods, functions and the very concept of 'history' has evolved through time. According to John Arnold: 'History is a process, an argument, and is composed of true stories about the past' (2000: 14). Arnold's view of history as 'true stories' points to the fact that the reliance on master-narratives has waned and, with it, the belief in an objective approach to the past transmitted in the words and authoritative voice of the historian.

History is thus envisaged as a mere 'story', or rather as just *one* interpretation among many other possible apprehensions of the past on the part of a particular historian working on her/his selected evidences to achieve certain conclusions. History thus becomes 'stories' in the plural, since versions may differ according to the sources, methods, approaches and the very context in which the historian is working. And yet, each and every narration is 'true' so long as it subscribes to the primary-source evidences provided.

Because any narration of the past, though based on objective data, automatically goes through a process of selection and interpretation on the part of the historian, it will always be subjected to possible argumentation from other perspectives. As Arnold states:

> History is above all else an argument. It is an argument between different historians and perhaps an argument between the past and the present, an argument between what actually happened, and what is going to happen next. Arguments are important, they create the possibility of changing things (2000: 13).

History is, therefore, a contested terrain which is perceived in different ways depending on the individual, group or competing ideologies that approach it. The importance of history lies in the fact that it provides both societies and individuals with a sense of longitudinal meaning in the past and an understanding of root-causes for working processes in the present. Furthermore, the past is people's heritage, so it endows societies with not only a sense of stability but also of identity (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 5-6).

Frank Ankersmit foregrounds how important it is for any society to know its historical past and background. He draws a parallelism between history and the psychoanalytical processes of the individual who comes to terms with her/his own present identity through the knowledge and understanding of her/his past:

> As the psychoanalyst may understand people's personalities on the basis of how they describe their past, so may we expect to be able to discern a culture's fears, expectations, desires and repressed elements by taking into account how it gave form to its past (2001: 1).

Benedict Anderson goes further in comparing the biography of the individual and the historical account of a nation by stating:

> All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives. After experiencing the physiological and emotional changes produced in puberty, it is impossible to 'remember' the consciousness of childhood (1994: 204).

Logically, as he asserts, documentary evidence is needed (photographs, birth certificates, letters, diaries, etc.) to account for that past we cannot properly recall. These documents provide an illusion of continuity while, at the same time, they accentuate amnesias. Yet, 'out of this estrangement comes a conception of personhood, identity […]

which, because it cannot be 'remembered', it must be narrated' (1994: 204). The same thing occurs with nations: 'Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet of 'forgetting' the experience of this continuity […] engenders the need for a narrative of 'identity'' (1994: 205). This is why and how the nation is somehow 'narrated' and how. To a certain extent, a sense of identity is 'created' among its people. Yet it is also important to bear in mind that the idea of nation or community is, in Anderson's words, 'imagined', not only because of the perceived common past, usually framed and interpreted in accordance with the interests of the dominant group, but above all, as the critic has famously argued: 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or ever hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion' (1994: 6). In this respect, history can be looked upon as a crucial site of struggle between different groups claiming their shared heritage and thus a sense of common identity versus other groups which do not partake of similar roots and traditions grounded in that past.

Taking into account that historiography is influenced by the perspective of the historian as an individual who cannot escape certain ideological beliefs and is never immune to the cultural context of her/his time, it is important to note that the narration of the past has generally emanated from elite, dominant groups – precisely from those who had access to education, knowledge and power (Guha, 2002: 18). Broadly speaking, it is no exaggeration to state that, overall, right up to present times, most historical accounts of the past in the Western world and its colonies have been those narrated from a white male perspective. This is why, with the arrival of the equal rights struggles in terms of class, gender and race, as well as post-colonialism – and the inclusion of cultural studies in the academy – a whole array of previously silenced 'voices' emerged, each faction claiming to recount its own idiosyncratic interpretation of the past. Hence, traditional 'History'

fragmented, or multiplied into, 'histories' in the plural. The most evident consequence of hitherto marginalised groups having gained a 'voice' is a wide proliferation of both non-fictional and fictional historiographic accounts.

Although it might be argued that the power elite of the past (white men belonging to the aristocracy or to the bourgeoisie; those in charge of the law, finance, business, etc.) is not much different from those who hold power today, it is also true that this privileged 'beau monde' has seen its grip on society weakened by formerly ostracised groups' success in wedging a place and voice for themselves in the 'centre' of society. As a result, those pertaining to the upper crust of society also need to come to terms with their new position in the world. No wonder therefore that these groups should look back to the past with nostalgia, longing for those times when those of their status did not have to negotiate their position in society with other groups or communities. Nor is it surprising that, in an attempt to come to terms with their present situation, they should tend to provide versions of the past which justify that prominence in the past and the lack of it in the present. As Black and MacRaild explain in reference to the British question:

> The violence and problematical nature of recent discontinuities, not least the loss of empire and of relative power, renders the universally felt need to claim continuity with the past even more compelling for many. Thus, as Britain's world role diminished, the desire of many to cling to images of the past has become more acute. A society in the grips of technological change is surprisingly reverential of and referential to the past (2000: 7).

Viewed in this light, the past is therefore a heterogeneous area of contestation where dominant central and peripheral groups struggle for their respective rights of representation. The importance of this struggle lies in the fact that the past and the present are inseparable. The past can never be ignored, repressed or forgotten, since it is the major source of explanation for present situations and relationships among groups. Such a reasoning brings us back to square one: that is, as argued above, to the idea that group identity depends mostly on the notion of a *shared* heritage. For this reason, people's

approach to the past is often an emotive one and thus tinged with subjectivity (White, 2003: 10).

In this sense, the past may only be understood 'through the eyes of the present' (Carr, 1983: 24), or in Croce's words: 'All history is contemporary history' (in Carr, 1983: 20-1). Edward Carr explains that the historian is an individual who cannot be detached from her/his social background because of her/his *selection* of facts and *interpretation* of them through the lens of her/his own contemporary historical context. Carr therefore concludes that history is 'a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past' (1983: 30).

3.2. Different Perspectives on Historiography through Time

The concept of history, the approach to the past and the way history has been written and narrated has varied through time, dependent as it is on the beliefs and purposes of particular societies and certain groups within changing societies. In the Western world these changes have brought about conceptions and methods that have refuted previous ones. This said, it is interesting to notice that former theses and beliefs still retain an influence in contemporary historiography. In this respect, past conceptions of history can be very telling disclosures of a particular group's *present* ideology. As Arnold states:

> History is to society what memory is to the individual. People write about the past because of the specific circumstances and needs of their own time. History served to give people an identity. In this sense, it is like memory. But whose memories? And which things to remember? (2000: 33).

A brief overlook of the evolution of historiography through time points to the importance of contemporary values, beliefs and power relationships in the elaboration of uncountable, biased accounts of the past.

Historians have always tried to explain the process of historical change. Classical Greece contemplated history as a cyclical process determined by the wheel of fate which accounted for the rise and fall of civilizations. Later on, the Judeo-Christian conception of time and history as a linear process was imposed in the Western world. Historical change was explained in terms of God's will – the 'Providence' which guided mankind from the Creation to the Apocalypse or the end of history (Arnold, 2000: 20). In the Middle Ages, with the imposition of the Christian faith all over Europe, no clear division between fictional and non-fictional accounts of the past existed, the mixture of religion, myths and past events simply serving as ideological justifications for the legitimization of current monarchic dynasties (Arnold, 2000: 24-5).

During the Renaissance, the function of historiography continued to be the same, although two competing views started to co-habit. On the one hand, the faith in God's Providence diminished in favour of the power of human agency. On the other hand, the return to Classical thought emphasised the importance of fate again in the development of events. Later on, as a result of the religious divisions in the sixteenth century, history became a tool at the service of faith, both Catholics and Protestants justifying the truthfulness of their beliefs through linear histories that connected each religious slant with the New and Old Testaments. In other words, historical 'truth' at the time was related to understanding God's divine plan on Earth (Arnold, 2000: 29).

The Enlightenment provided a change of perspective from God to human agency and the belief in reason, science and progress. In order to explain causality in history, God's divine plan was gradually replaced by the belief in human's ability to effect their own fate, but also by the concept of chance or the agency of 'great men' (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 30). History started to acquire the status of science with historians aiming to portray 'objective truth' in their accounts of the past based on archival sources and data. Moreover,

following the spirit of universal knowledge, proposed by philosophers of the Enlightenment, history contributed to the study of the transhistorical universality of human nature. It was at that time that history started moving from the, until then, prominence of ideology and politics to the study of economy and society (Arnold, 2000: 53).

The nineteenth century saw the continuity of the belief in progress and in the scientific methods for history writing. Leopold von Ranke gave history the status of academic discipline in his striving to show how the past 'actually was' (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 40). To this end, von Ranke emphasised the importance of past documents and insisted on the necessity of objective and truthful accounts of events that had occurred in former times. The nineteenth century was very much influenced by positivist and empiricist theories. Using the scientific methods of natural sciences, that is, through a deep reliance on empiricist data, history and sociology were perceived as capable of explaining the relationship between past, present and future. What is more, it was believed that these disciplines had the potential to draw laws concerning human development and social change. (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 43).

Post-Rankean historians thus considered the past as a completely different reality from the historian's present. They were convinced that the past could be approached in a truly objective way and hence, that all the interpretations could be compared, criticised and judged in a scientific way. They therefore believed in the cumulative character of research. In their view, the work of successive historians would gradually fill the gaps left unresolved by previous colleagues (Ankersmit, 2001: 150-1).

The nineteenth century witnessed the development of two contradictory trends: on the one hand, the influence of Romantic individualism with the intrusion of the self in historical writings and the importance given to individual deeds and, on the other, the new scientific trends claiming for objectivity and an impersonal approach to the past.

Ankesrmit thus makes a distinction between the historians that he considers as very much influenced by the romantic emphasis on the self and individual approaches to the past, and those historians who defended the conception of history as an academic (and thus 'objective') discipline. Both the great French Romantic historians such as Augustin Thierry, Alexis de Tocqueville and Jules Michelet and British historians such as Edward Gibbon, Thomas Carlyle and Thomas Babington Macaulay are described as 'me-first' historians by Linda Orr, since, as she explains, they wrote history for a personal purposes, foregrounding their personal view on the past (in Ankersmit, 2001: 152). In contrast, Ranke advocated the invisibility of the historian as a scientist analysing the past, when he said: 'I would like to wipe myself out' (in Ankersmit, 2001: 152).

Raymond Williams describes the period of the Industrial Revolution in Britain as a time of contrasts (1983: 3).[123] Massive changes were occurring in people's way of life and in the organisation of society – changes that were perceived in a different manner according to the social and economic position of the analyst (Jenks, 1993: 7). That is why, the new industrial society could be seen as the culmination of a history of progress and civilization or, on the contrary, as the result of the evil forces at work in a new economic system that alienated the individual and oppressed a wide section of the population. Against this background, new beliefs and practices in historiography emerged.

Having first welcomed the French Revolution, British historians began to appreciate the stability of their own country when events turned bloody in France. Consequently, they developed a view of historical progress as brought about not by radical change but by stable continuity. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Edmund Burke compared the chaos provoked by the French Revolution with the stable

[123] The last decades of the eighteenth century already witnessed the turmoil of political, economic and social changes. Intellectuals and artists of the time provided contrastive approaches in their interpretation of the events occurring at the turn of the century and during the following years that. Williams provides an insightful analysis of these 'contrasts' in his comparison of the works of Edmund Burke and William Cobbet on the one hand and Robert Southey and Robert Owen on the other (see Williams, 1983: 3-29).

parliamentary government established in Britain after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Burke's arguments are associated with the Whig tradition in historical writing in Britain, which would be further developed during the nineteenth century.[124] The Whig tradition legitimised the Revolution of 1688 and its nationalistic, myth-making tendency served to justify Britain's prominence in the world in the Victorian Era (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 34-5).

The beginning of the nineteenth century, especially the post-Napoleonic war period witnessed a major crisis that hit the country up until 1828-9. It was the time of the Corn Laws and the Peterloo Massacre.[125] However, the second half of the century was a period of general optimism for those whose economic well-being improved as a result of the industrial revolution and the expansion of the Empire. These changes in the economy brought about changes in the social system as well, with the establishment of a powerful middle class, a new factory-owning bourgeoisie, which benefited from the capitalist order. In 1832, with the First Reform Bill, the vote was granted to the middle classes. Society was no longer a rigid hierarchical order based on rights of birth and particular social status. Certain mobility was now feasible thanks to the new money-making possibilities offered by the capitalist industrial society.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 showed London as the vibrant centre and the workshop of the world. The technological innovations were shown to improve people's

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[124] Burke provided a Conservative and chauvinistic view of the stable political situation in Britain in comparison with the revolutionary period in France which was contested by more radical writers, historians and thinkers such as Thomas Paine or William Godwin who wrote in favour of the Revolution. Nonetheless, the advent of the Reign of Terror with Robespierre and the rise of Napoleon and the wars held against Britain provoked general disillusionment in thinkers formerly in favour of the Revolution who turned closer to Burke's Conservative views.

[125] The 1815 Corn Laws were passed to protect the price of the corn against foreign imports. This measure benefited landowners but hit dramatically the peasants and middle and working classes. In 1819 a peaceful gathering of workers in St Peter, Manchester, was dispersed by troops, causing thousands of injuries and deaths. This example of government repression to prevent revolutions as the one in France was known as the Peterloo Massacre, recalling the Battle of Waterloo. At the same time, some workers in industrial towns – Luddites – started destroying the machines they saw as the cause of their unemployment. Repressive measures against such acts included capital punishment.

way of living. As a consequence, the concept of 'change' was linked to the idea of progress achieved. And yet, as Chris Jenks indicates, the country's pride in its industrial and technological supremacy was also criticised by other dissenting voices of the time:

> This conspicuous celebration of self-appointed cultural superiority manifested itself through an array of artefacts ranging from architecture, design and textiles, through steam engines and factory machines to the level of aspidistras and bathroom china […]. Henry Mayhew described it as 'the highest kind of school in which the highest knowledge is designed to be conveyed in the best possible manner, in combination with the highest amusement'. Whereas John Ruskin considered the Exhibition to be made up of the ugly, the transitory and the banal (1993: 20-1).

The display of artefacts that stood for the progress and superiority of the nation reinforced the conception of culture as a synonym for civilization, which specified the pinnacle of human achievement (Jenks, 1993: 9). On the other hand, Romantic artists and intellectuals reacted against what they saw as an increasingly alienating urban society and harked back to a nostalgic rural past which was more propitious for the development of the individual's creative powers of the mind.

The Romantic-Idealist tradition defended art and culture as a means to help the individual cope with an increasingly dehumanised urban society. The idea of hierarchy was also present in this more 'humanist' notion of culture, as 'culture' came to specify 'what is remarkable in human creative achievement' (Jenks, 1993: 9). Hence, this approach also contemplated the possibility of the 'cultivation of the mind' in the aggressive industrial society as well as the 'cultivation of the native' in the process of colonisation (Jenks, 1993: 7-9). Culture was, therefore, associated with the productive progress of industrial civilisation as opposed to other 'primitive societies'. Consequently, the expansion of the Empire also meant the spread of civilization to those colonised countries which were considered as culturally inferior. At the same time, 'culture' was also set in opposition to these very changes in the structure of society and thus associated with the creative rather than with the productive.

All these changes influenced the perspectives on history and historiography in the nineteenth century. The new concept of history was reflected in three main approaches to the discipline: the reliance on facts, the optimistic faith in progress and the relevance of the figure of the individual. The influence of positivist and empiricist thought, faith in the scientific discoveries and technological developments led historians to rely on facts, sources, data and documents in an objective and impartial way, as their colleagues of the natural science disciplines were doing (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 12).

The early Victorians analysed the past in terms of the prominent position Britain held in the world. Consequently, progress in Britain was explained in terms of the superiority of British culture that had evolved over time to the point of converting the country into the workshop of the world. Progress in Britain was seen as the result of a Protestant identity, respect for private property and the rule of law after the parliamentary system was reformed at the end of the seventeenth century. Britons saw themselves as unique in the qualities of their identity, culture and heritage, and thus developed a patriotic sense of nationalist pride and self-confidence. These ideas were reflected in the writings of Lord Acton as well asin those of T. B. Macaulay and other Whig historians.[126]

Several factors contributed to the development of the figures of 'great men' in historical accounts: Firstly, faith in the individual brought about by the new capitalist order was believed to benefit hard workers; secondly, the Romantic ideal of the unique characteristics of individuals as well as the emphasis on the figure of the hero; and finally the Protestant notion that God helps those who help themselves. Historical progress was the result of the deeds of great men such as monarchs, Prime Ministers or leaders in important wars or battles, who occupied a prominent position in the study of the past and in Victorian historical writing. A conspicuous example is Thomas Carlyle's series of

[126] See T. B. Macaulay's *The History of England* (1845-55), and Henry Hallam's *The Constitutional History of England* (1827).

conferences published under the title of *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History* (1840), in which he states that universal history is, in fact, the history of great men’s deeds (1966: 31). In his writings, Carlyle analyses what he viewed as the different types of heroes that could be found in the past. Interestingly, he relies on the assumption of historical progress in the sense that he sees a clear evolution and improvement in the historical consideration of the figure of the hero. Thus he starts with the hero perceived as a divinity in times of paganism, and ends with the hero as a king or ruler of society.

According to Carr, it was capitalist ideology from its very early stages that boosted the role of individual initiative in the social order. The French revolution claimed the rights of the individual. Individualism was the basis of the Utilitarian doctrine in the nineteenth century and, in Victorian liberalism, individualism was ‘the keynote of human progress’ (Carr, 1985: 33-34). The nineteenth century philosophy of liberal historians, therefore, treated history as ‘something written by individuals about individuals’ (Carr, 1985: 35).

This optimistic study of history of the early Victorians who viewed it as a scientific discipline that showed the progress of mankind through or by means of the deeds of outstanding men was questioned by other theories and perspectives that started to gain prominence in the last part of the century. These ‘rival’ schools emerged as the initial faith in scientific, political, social and historical progress started to diminish when the darker side of the industrial revolution became more apparent. Urban over-population, hard living conditions, the displacement of workers by ever-more sophisticated machines laid bare the fact that the boom in improvement and wealth was also having a negative impact on a wide proportion of the population. After the 1860s, the country suffered another great depression. Those who held pessimistic views on the industrial revolution denounced the growing gap between the rich and the poor, as well as the terrible sanitary conditions of the increasingly polluted cities and rivers.

In his *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution* (1884), Arnold Toynbee analysed the negative impact of the industrial revolution, especially in the working classes. During that same period, other experts on history and economics also expressed their concern for this situation.[127] This was the case, for example, of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree, as well as writers such as A. Mearns, Thomas Hardy or Jack London (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 59).

The criticism of the negative side of the industrial revolution had been accompanied by movements, like Chartism and Trade Unionism, which, already in the 1830s, had started to fight for the rights of the new working classes. Towards the end of the century, the writings of Karl Marx provided a new perspective on history and the class struggle. In contrast to the idealist notion of history, the approach advanced by Marx and Engels was more materialistic. In their view, improvements in the modes of productions were what ultimately contributed to the development of societies. In other words, material conditions were a fundamental influence on the social, political and intellectual life – the superstructure – and not vice versa. Following Hegel's dialectical model of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, Marx developed the dialectical or historical materialist schema in which conflict, that is, the motor of change, was provoked by class struggle (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 134-6).

The turn of the century witnessed yet another economic depression which was accompanied by the fin-de-siècle crisis in values and the advent of Modernism. The questioning of the positive outcome of the industrial revolution, together with the appearance of scientific and philosophical theories that were suspicious of the stability and control of mankind over its own fate contributed to diminishing earlier optimistic accounts respecting change as improvement and history as progress. Scientific discoveries

[127] Economics had developed into a science and discipline since the publication in 1776 of *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith and since the writings of various Utilitarians, namely Jeremy Bentham, David Ricardo and James Mill.

contradicted the until then unquestionable Biblical Truth, with theories such as Charles Darwin's and Charles Lyell's; ´Thomas Huxley's agnosticism and Ludwig Feuerbach's eternal doubt distanced human beings from the security of God and religion; Freud questioned the control of individuals over their own self and, later on, Albert Einstein's theory of relativity prevented people from relying on the stability of matter itself. Over and above all these theories that queried the control of human beings over nature, their identity and progress came the pessimism and despair caused by the First (and later on the Second) World War, events that questioned even further the goodness of technological developments and of Western civilisation itself. Considering these crises at all levels of human knowledge, the old approach to history also changed, especially the absolute faith in facts and the notion of historical progress as amelioration.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the scope of history has broadened with the integration of new disciplines such as psychology, sociology, politics or economics. Moreover, new technologies allowed new computer-based methodologies in the analysis of historical data as well as wider availability of documents, sources and information. The interest in the knowledge of cultural history and 'history from below' also broadened perspectives with the inclusion of previously silenced or marginalised groups in terms of class, gender or ethnicity. Cultural historians, influenced by the Marxist conception of history, began to focus on how people's way of life affected their social and economic customs (Arnold, 2000: 87). In his book *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Matthew Arnold had defined culture as 'the best that has been thought and said', thus promoting an elitist notion of the concept which equated 'culture' exclusively with 'high culture'.[128] Following this definition, the literary critic Frank Raymond Leavis defended the existence of a restricted

[128] Arnold defended the conception of 'Culture' with a capital C, which should be extended by means of education in order to 'enlighten' the individuals in a way that would transcend social or class divisions. Culture would therefore be the path to Enlightenment and Self- realization (Jordan and Weedon, 1995: 25). In this sense, the function of 'Culture' was to produce a hegemonic cultured middle class in opposition with the working class' lack of culture, which was placed on the side of 'anarchy' (Storey, 1994: 49).

literary canon which comprised a selection of certain authors that belonged to the 'Great Tradition'. His aim was to use the educational system to distribute literary knowledge more widely and expand 'high culture' as against 'mass culture', which was by no means contemplated in the canon or considered as 'culture' as such (During, 1994: 2). It has been argued that cultural studies emerged out of Leavisim with the works of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart in the 1960s. These forefathers of the field reacted against the restrictions of the canon and argued that 'culture' was not an 'abbreviation of "high culture"' (During, 1994: 1). In *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), Hoggart described the history and culture of the working-class in post-war Britain through his personal experiences, thus opening the field of history to a previously invisible group in the discipline, the working-class. This text was followed by William's *Culture and Society: 1789-1950* (1958), which explored this wider concept of culture as 'a way of life' (Turner, 1996: 48). E.P. Thompson continued with this trend in his work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968), another founding text of cultural studies.

This new trend was consolidated with the establishment of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies in 1964, which gathered the above mentioned cultural theorists plus Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel. The field of study extended to the analysis of what was considered as 'popular culture'.[129] In 1971, the translation into English of Antonio Gramsci's *Selections from Prison Notebooks* provided cultural studies theorists with a new line of analysis based on the conception of hegemony. The novelty was the description of relations of domination between dominant and subaltern groups in society involving 'not coercion but consent on the part of the dominated' (During, 1994: 5).[130]

[129] Three other influential texts were Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977), a collection of essays by scholars of the CCCS: *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (1976) and David Morley's *The 'Nationwide' Audience* (1980).

[130] In the 1970s the study of the relationships of power and domination in society was also influenced by the theories of structuralists and post-structuralists (see During, 1994: 5-7; Grossberg, 1992: 6-13; Munns, 1995: 97-196; Turner, 1996: 60-62; Jenkins, 1994: 141-149).

These new approaches thus focused on the study of the different ideological trends present at a given moment in cultural manifestations of any society and tried to understand the mechanisms used to secure 'the assent of the oppressed, the exploited, the underclass, the needy and those dispossessed of cultural capital' (Jenks, 993: 74).

Critical highlighting of the workings of 'hegemony' was complemented by Pierre's Bourdieu's approach to the study of what he labelled 'cultural fields' of society and the 'habitus'. Bourdieu argued that hegemonic consensus served to maintain the interests of the powerful in society who constructed a determinate sense of reality that favoured them. Society was therefore oppressive for the individual and these mechanisms of repression and distortion of reality were understood as 'symbolic violence'. Consequently, the analysis of cultural productions could reveal the hidden mechanisms of distortion regarded by many as 'common sense' but which were no more than cultural constructions, developed to maintain the interests of the powerful (Jenks, 1993: 128-132).

In the 1980s, the field of study extended from class to gender and ethnicity and the dialogic relationships between the different communities that were part of what was now viewed as a de-centred society (During, 1994: 13-14). In this respect, Stuart Hall points to the fractures or 'significant breaks' that appeared in the uneven development of the history of cultural studies (1981: 19). Previously marginalised or 'subaltern' groups struggled for their right of representation in the fields of history and culture. According to Jordan and Weedon:

> History and culture are fundamental aspects of the fabric of everyday life. They help to give us our sense of identity, telling us who we are, where we are from and where we are going. In any society, the denial or marginalization of histories and cultures other than those of the dominant group has profound implications for subjectivity and identity. Markers of history are all around us – in the monuments that adorn our cities, in street names, in museums, in educational syllabuses (1995: 3-4).

Hence, from then on, studies on gender and sexuality as well as race, ethnicity and post-colonialism became more and more visible and added new forms of re-presenting the past with *histories* that until then had remained almost invisible.

The advent of postmodernism has questioned the foundations of history as a discipline. The fact that the authoritarian voice of master-narratives is no longer trusted has provoked a fragmented account of the past, tinged with the inevitable subjectivity of the individual who provides her/his *own* perspective of the past events (Rabinow, 1991: 5). Traditional historians' ambition to achieve the knowledge of a *total history* has been replaced, according to Michel Foucault, by the emergence of what he calls a general history, that is, not a totalizing, unquestionable view of the past but fragmented accounts approached from different perspectives that can endlessly be criticised and reworked (1972: 9). In Foucault's words:

> For many years now historians have preferred to turn their attention to long periods, as if, beneath the shifts and changes of political events, they were trying to reveal the stable, almost indestructible system of checks and balances, the irreversible processes, the constant readjustments, the underlying tendencies that gather force, and are then suddenly reversed after centuries of continuity, the movements of accumulation and slow saturation, the great silent, motionless bases that traditional history has covered with a thick layer of events […]. The old questions of the traditional analysis (what link should be made between disparate events? How can a causal succession be established between them? What continuity or overall significance do they possess? Is it possible to define a totality, or must one be content with reconstituting connexions?) are now being replaced by questions of another type: which strata should be isolated from others? What type of series should be established? What criteria of periodization should be adopted for each of them? What system of relations (hierarchy, dominance, stratification, univocal determination, circular causality) may be established between them? What series of events may be established? And in what large-scale chronological table may distinct series of series be determined? (1972: 3-4).

'Beneath the great continuities of thought' – he continues – 'one is now trying to detect the incidence of interruptions' (1972: 4). The postmodern historian, therefore, now focuses her/his studies precisely on the discontinuities that previous historians had tried to avoid.

On the other hand, another key term to be taken into account in postmodern thought is 'relativism'. Foucault and Derrida veered their attention to texts themselves and their inner contradictions in terms of form and content and evidenced the lack of transparency of language itself (Black and MacRaild, 2000: 116) or, as Ankersmit puts it, fostered awareness of the limitations of 'the linguistic turn' (2001: 160). In Derrida's words:

> There is nothing outside the text […]. There has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the 'real' supervening and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. And thus to infinity, for we have read, in the text, that the absolute present, Nature […] have never existed (1974: 158-9).

On this reading, texts do not have a fixed meaning. For this reason, historical documents may change their meaning depending on the different perspectives and readings of historians. Ultimately, therefore, reality – and by extension history – is not recoverable (Ankersmit, 2000: 162).

Foucault, moreover, emphasised the importance of 'power' in the construction of historical and cultural discourses. He argued that the field of culture is constituted through a symbolic system, which 'is a construction of meaning through the exercise of power' (Jenks, 1993: 144). Power is manifested through competing discourses, which are 'forms of knowledge, ways of constituting the meaning of the world, which take a material form, have an institutional location and play a key role in the constitution of individuals as subjects' (Jordan and Weedon, 1995: 14). In reference to the connection between culture, discourse and power, Jordan and Weedon conclude that:

> *All signifying practices – that is, all practices that have meaning – involve relations of power.* They *subject* us in the sense that they offer us particular subject positions and modes of subjectivity. But these subject positions are not all the same […]. We are either active subjects who take up positions from which we can exercise power within a particular social practice, or we are subjected to the definitions of others (1993: 11; italics in original). [131]

Given the intricate relationship between the question of power and knowledge, or more concretely, in the case of historiography, the power of imposing certain versions of the past according to the interests of dominant groups in society, postmodernist writers no longer believe in the clear separation between the present and the past. In Ankersmit's words:

> The past has become a huge and formless mass in which each historian may dig his own little hole without ever encountering colleagues (either from the present or the past) and without knowing how the results of individual labor relate to 'history as a whole' (insofar as it is still considered a meaningful notion at all) (201: 151-2).

[131] Questions of power in the field of history and culture include practices such as the power to name, to represent common sense, to create 'official versions' and to represent the legitimate social world. For a more detailed explanation and analysis of this issue see Jordan and Weedon, 1995: 12-14.

According to Ankersmit, postmodernism has brought about a de-disciplination of history which makes the individual historian visible in her/his active reconstruction of the past. However this fact does not imply a return to the romantic conception of history since the postmodern historian is not only aware of the 'self' in her/his (re)construction of the past but also accepts other competing views as plausible interpretations of the same past events. What is no longer valid is the belief that collective research or research made by different colleagues will one day provide universal truths about the past. This repudiation of the possibility of ever reaching true knowledge of the past or of its narrative representation, which is mediated by language and tropes, points to a relativist perception of history. In order to understand the difficult position of the postmodern historian, Ankersmit draws an illuminating parallelism between the institutional disciplinary status of history and political democracy:

> Just as in a properly functioning democracy the only justification for central institutions is to guarantee the safety and the freedom of the citizen, so the postmodern historian still recognizes the institutional functions of disciplinary historical writing only insofar as they serve the freedom of movement of the individual historian. And only to that extent is the individual historian prepared to acknowledge their indispensability (2001: 153).

In this way, Ankersmit concludes that postmodernism has implied a 'privatisation of the past', since both the figure of the individual historian and the context in which s/he is writing must be taken into account. For this reason, the understanding of the past automatically goes through two main filters. The first one concerns the approach to past events and the second relates to the actual portrayal or narration of documentary results. With respect to the first of these purifications, Carr provides an interesting point in his analysis of the way the historian works with the sources. In his view: 'History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on […]. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him' (1983: 9). In other words, any historical

account of the past is subjected to a process of selection and interpretation on the part of the narrator of the events. In this way, Carr claims that:

> [E]very journalist knows today that the most effective way to influence opinion is by the selection and arrangement of the appropriate facts. It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides to which facts to give to the floor, and in what order or context (1983: 11).

Besides, the historian needs to take into account not only what is stated but also what is not said, that is, equally important for the historian are the gaps that s/he may find in her/his inquiry on the past. As Arnold explains: ‘At a certain point, the sources fall silent, and the historian must begin to make some guesses – that is, to *interpret* the documents’ (2000: 75; italics in original).

Thus, although objectivity may be the main aim of most historians, available sources from the past will necessarily be mediated by a *modus operandi* of selection and interpretation. What is more, this process will be affected by the personal and cultural context of the historian as an individual. Depending on the historian’s reasons for choosing her/his object of study, the methods and approaches s/he clinches to, the technological support available and her/his cultural and ideological background, the outcome may be different and consciously or unconsciously biased. On this view, not only texts, but also historians are constructs, since their authoritative voice can always be challenged, as Roland Barthes argued in his famous essay ‘Death of the Author’ (1967) (in Black and MacRaild, 2000: 162).

The second filter that affects the access to the past is the historian’s reproduction of her/his selection and interpretation of events. The historian has to *re*-present the past because by-gone events no longer exist. Ankersmit stresses how important it is to be aware of the fact that *any* visual or narrated form of representation, although accurate and believable, can never reproduce the past as it actually happened: ‘A representation is a

substitute or replacement of something else that is absent. Obviously, precisely because of the latter's absence, we may be in need of the substitute "re-presenting" it' (2001: 80).

A representation of reality can therefore, never replace reality itself. Even so, for any understanding of past realities we cannot escape its representation or narration. In order to give shape to a record, narration is needed. In his study of the relationship between narrative and life, H. Porter Abbott explains that the appearance of narrative capability in children,

> … coincides, roughly, with the first memories that are retained by adults of their infancy, a conjunction that has led some to propose that memory itself is dependent on the capacity for narrative […]. If this is so, then, 'our very definition as human beings, as Peter Brooks has written, is very much bound up with the stories we tell about our own lives and the world in which we live' (1995: 2-3).

In this respect, in 1973, Hayden White made a relevant contribution to the conception of history as narratives of the past. He highlighted the fact that historical accounts cannot escape what he calls the 'poetic mechanisms' that determine narrative texts. Hence, any portrayal of historical events will logically be mediated by the same 'tropes' or mechanisms of representation used in fictional writing, no matter how 'objective' the historian claims to be (1990: 47-8).

In Black and MacRaild's view, contemporary approaches to history and historiography, influenced as they are by postmodern thought, may fall into hyper-relativism. They conclude that there is no external reality, only texts to be read and interpreted (2000: 166). However, the past *did* exist and, as such, it should not be forgotten, since it continues to have an important influence in the present. Even though it is true that any recovery of the past will be inevitably mediated by texts, i.e. documents, sources or narrations, these are often the only sources available. With this in mind, the postmodern distrust of narrations as true portrayals of the past does not mean that these texts should be disregarded. On the contrary, they should be read, studied, analysed and, if necessary, contested with new texts that will equally be subject to challenge. The point is

to be aware of the lack of transparency in any representation, and particularly wary of those narrations which flaunt a supposedly manifest objectivity.

Ankersmit analyses the relationships between the disciplines of history, linguistics and literary theory. He explains that the three central notions of these theories – reference, meaning and truth – need to be redefined for a better understanding of the current notion of representation. In this view, 'reference' should be replaced by 'aboutness', as representations do not present the represented thing *as it was* but are simply written or visual manifestations *about* it. For its part, 'meaning' ought to be replaced by 'intertextuality' because representations of the past only acquire meaning by means of comparison between different texts about the same event. Hence, representations of the past can never be either 'true' or 'false' but simply more or less 'plausible evocations' (2001: 284).

This said, texts dealing with the past need not only be the object of study of historiography and academic historians. As stated before, one of the main functions of the historical recovery of the past is to provide individuals, communities, groups or nations with a sense of identity and location in the temporal conception of the world. In this respect it could be argued that history has a social function. As Raphael Samuel states: 'History is not the prerogative of the historian, nor even, as postmodernism contends, a historian's 'invention'. It is rather a social form of knowledge; the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands' (1999: 8).

In his book *Theatres of Memory*, Rapahel Samuel analyses the importance of 'popular forms of history' which have often been rejected by social historians. Samuel defends the relevance of popular culture as highly illuminating in the understanding of the social mechanisms of identity and knowledge at work in certain societies. In building his

argument in pro of popular culture, he begins with a study of the distinction between ‘history’ and ‘memory’.

After a brief historical overview of the relevance of the concept of memory through time, starting with the Greeks who equated the concept of memory with that of wisdom in the figure of the goddess Mnemosyne, the mother of muses, Samuel moves to Aristotle’s writings on memory, which the philosopher divided in conscious and unconscious memory – or mneme and anamnesis. Then, Samuel recounts, memory was considered as the ‘mother of pedagogies’, not only by Cicero, but also by St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas and by other important philosophers and thinkers in the Renaissance (1999: viii).

It was apparently in the Romantic period when the notions of history and memory were clearly separated into two distinct realms: the primitive and instinctual on the one hand, and the self-conscious on the other:

> Memory was subjective, a plaything of the emotions, indulging its caprices, wallowing in its own warmth; history, in principle at least, was objective, taking abstract reason as its guide and submitting its findings to empirical proof. Where memory can only work in terms of concrete images, history has the power of abstraction. Where memory is time-warped, history is linear and progressive. History began when memory faded (1999: ix).

Romantic artists always attributed great importance to the unconscious powers of the mind. In their view, childhood memories were crucial to reach the Absolute Spirit and the true self of human existence as – following Rousseau’s philosophy – children were born innocent of the corruption and the negative influence of dehumanising civilization. For this reason, the distinction established between history and memory indirectly enhanced the importance of the latter. However, as indicated earlier on, this romantic disassociation between history and memory came up against the growing emphasis on historical objectivity and its equation with scientific forms of analysis.

Ankersmit argues that memory has once again attained an important status in contemporary historical consciousness. He also draws the same division posed by Samuel

between the conception of history as a collective study of the past carried out by a transindividual subject and memory, and the recordings of a personal past experienced by an individual. The 'privatisation of the past' by the postmodern historian points at the relevance of the notion of memory in the study of history nowadays (2001: 154).

As said before, the belief in any objective form of knowledge was dismantled by postmodernist thought, and history as an academic discipline suffered from constant questioning of its views and methods. It is in this context that Samuel argues that the Romantic separation between history and memory tends to be blurred nowadays. In Samuel's words, memory 'is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some kind of negative other to it' (1999: x).

An important function of memory in its relation to the historical study of the past is that it provides alternative views of the past, precisely those 'variations' that had been previously rejected by 'official' history. As Patrick Hutton states:

> One could argue that postmodern historians are not rejecting the traditions of modern history, but are only appealing to others that have been too long rejected or forgotten. In opposition to the official memories enshrined in modern historiography, they contend, postmodern historiography poses new lines of historical inquiry in the guise of counter-memories (in Ankersmit, 2001: 154).

On the one hand, memory is not a passive storage of the past but and active force which meaningfully selects elements that are to be forgotten and/or remembered. Besides, memory is historically conditioned and not only makes a selection of the items to be remembered but revises and reshapes the information of the past according to the emergencies of the present. On the other hand, history, in its abstraction and re-ordering of the past, also revises and constructs the past according to the demands of the present. Samuel therefore concludes that history is an 'organic form of knowledge': 'One whose sources are promiscuous, drawing not only on real-life experience but also memory and myth, fantasy and desire; not only the chronological past of the documentary record but also the timeless one of 'tradition'' (1999: x).

For his part, Ankersmit studies the importance of collective memory. Basing his analysis on Freud's conception of dreams as those memories that give access to a remote and forgotten past, he points to the importance of the social environment in giving shape to the memories of the individual and influencing their repression, remembrance or distortion. Ankersmit concludes that memory is not a simple description of what is remembered about the past, but a social construction: 'for the construction of memory we will inevitably make use of the social and collective categories that structure our world and our communication' (2001: 157).

Hence the importance of analysing the past by taking different perspectives into account and including those cultural practices previously relegated to the realm of 'popular memory'. In a society where visual cultural products acquire a prominent status, cinematic representations of the past are crucial in the transference of such knowledge to the population. However, Samuel remarks, the association of the visual with the popular often disqualify films as 'historical sources' for academic historians (1999: 38). Thus, entertaining recollections of the past, such as ballads, documentaries, screen fictions and heritage centres and museums, which are usually addressed to a wide variety of public, have sometimes been accused by traditional academic historians of being mere, money-making distortions. And yet, from a cultural studies stance, this commodification of the past, as I shall be arguing, can also be seen as a practice that reveals much information about the present.

3.3. Heritage Industry: the National Identity Business

In his book *The Past is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal draws attention to the omnipresence of the past. He affirms that, whether celebrated, rejected or even ignored, 'the past is everywhere' (1998: 5). Nonetheless, whatever approach to the past, it is contingent upon every country or every historical period. Raphael Samuel identifies different trends in contemporary British society's relationship with the past. He notices that in the 1950s the emphasis was laid on modernisation, and while the present and future were positively characterised as 'new' and 'clean', the past was associated with 'oldness' and 'dirtiness'. Likewise, Tana Wollen identifies a celebration of the present in the 'swinging sixties' (1991: 180). In the 1970s, there was a growing awareness of some negative aspects of modernisation, such as its harmful impact on the environment or on people's health. Consequently, in contrast to previous decades, practices such as 'home-made', 'home-grown', 'natural' or 'organic' were now filled with positive connotations. At the same time, naturalists' and ecologists' vindications for the preservation of wildlife – endangered by damaging modernising practices (i.e. agriculture and/or industry) – gave way to other claims of the type in the field of culture, namely the vindications for the preservation of the national heritage. In this sense, Samuel argues that 'heritage' came to be defined as 'relics under threat' (1999: 221). 'Threat' appears again as a conspicuous term. As with the threat of extinction of some species, a community's cultural heritage was now seen in danger of disappearance unless it was protected from the erasing forces of globalisation.

Preservation initiatives continued in the 1980s. However, Samuel identifies an interesting particularity in this revival of the past. He describes the movement as a combination of the 1950s and 1960s praise of modernity, together with the 1970s

appreciation of past traditions. He calls it the 'retrochic', which he defines as a double-coded or Janus-faced aesthetic, one that looks backwards and forwards at the same time:

> It plays with the idea of the period look, while remaining determinedly of the here-and-now – as with the fitted carpets and soft lighting of the newly re-Victorianized pubs, or the air-conditioned modern offices which hide themselves behind supposedly classical or neo-classical façades […] using the most up-to-date technologies to age or 'distress' what could otherwise appear brand new (1999: 83).

On this view, the 'retrochic' tendency of the 1980s could be linked with the parodic nature of postmodernity, that is, the creation of something new through the pastiche of elements recovered from the past. In her book *A Theory of Parody*, Linda Hutcheon gives a definition of the term which includes three key words: 'repetition', 'difference', and 'distance':

> Parody, then, in its ironic 'trans-contextualization' and inversion, is repetition with difference. A critical distance is implied between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signaled by irony. But this irony can be playful as well as belittling; it can be critically constructive as well as destructive' (1985: 32).

Hutcheon analyses the etymology of the term 'parody', *parodia* in Greek: *Oda* means song and *para* may have two senses, that of 'counter' or 'against' and that of 'beside'. In this way, Hutcheon concludes that parody can mean one of two things, either 'parody becomes an opposition or contrast between texts', or 'there is a suggestion of accord or intimacy instead of a contrast' (1985: 32). The ambivalent nature of parodic texts must therefore be taken into account when analysing the different meanings at stake in the reproductions of past, their attitude towards the historical events alluded (either 'homage', 'criticism' or both) and the differences included in these repetitions.

In this sense, according to Patricia Waugh, parody could be interpreted in a negative way and considered as 'inward-looking and decadent', since nothing new is created when cultural productions seem to be paralysed in the constant recalling of the past through pastiche reproductions. Even so, parody could also be analysed in a more positive

way, especially if viewed as opening up new possibilities by critically undermining past conventions (1984: 64-5).

Samuel takes a slightly different stand, arguing that for postmodern theorists, the ultimate aim of these 'retrochic', 'parodic' practices is aesthetic rather than conservationist (1999: 95). Moreover, this aestheticism is accompanied by a business activity. Thus, although 'retrochic' appeared in the 1960s as an alternative practice for counter-culture consumerism, in turn, it became largely commodified in the following decades:

> Retrochic in the 1970s and 1980s was one of those fields where enterprise culture came into its own, ministering not only to the tourist trade but also to the 'alternative' consumerism of counter-culture [...]. The retrochic prepares the way for big business, pioneering the advent of smoothing the passage of new classes of commodity and new forms of trade. It moves by degrees from the world of the flee markets to that of franchises and contracts (1999: 100-2).

In this line, Margaret Rose comments on Jameson's theory of the crisis of historicity and its implications in the nostalgic return to the past in postmodern art:

> … It [postmodernist art] means that one of its essential messages will involve the necessary failure of the new, the imprisonment in the past. Here, too, and on the basis of his own late-modernist post-structuralist and Marxist presuppositions [...] Jameson criticizes the post-modern as being both 'nostalgic' about the past and as 'schizophrenic', as well as being part of a capitalistic 'consumer society' (Rose, 1993: 223).

Robert Hewinson also connects this particular attitude to the past with the enterprise culture. He points to the change museums underwent in the 1980s. From displays in glass cases, museums began to offer room-settings and interactive reconstructions, converting the past into a leisure activity in order to appeal to a wider range of the population. The result is a portrayal, not of a past 'reality' but, using Baudrillard's words, of a 'living history', 'hyperreality' or 'simulacra' – a reconstruction of bygone times in which images have replaced reality by 'displaying perfect copies of originals that never existed' or by improving the original (Samuel, 1999: 195; Hewinson, 2001: 173-4).

In displaying this 'Janus-faced' combination of antique relics and ultimate modern technology, museums and heritage centres thus offer a sweetened or 'Disneyfied' vision of history that tends to sacrifice 'authenticity' for the sake of aestheticism (Lowenthal, 1998: 567). This aestheticism, moreover, has the further function of being a pleasurable experience for the public, hence its economically profitable potential. In a word, the enterprise culture is fast converting the past into a commodity in (Hewinson, 2001: 163-6). As a consequence, these 'living history' practices often appear offensive to the professional historian. As Samuel remarks,

> It treats the past as though it was an immediately accessible present, as series of exhibits which can be seen, and felt and touched. It blurs the distinction between fact and fiction, using the laser-beam technology and animatronics to authenticate its inventions and produce a variety of reality effects (1999: 197).

Even so, if it is believed that accounts of the past reveal more features of the present than they do of the past, then the 1980s conception of heritage and its practices in museums and centres or its portrayal in screen fictions should logically be conspicuous tools in the analysis of the said decade. Raphael Samuel dates the origins of the 'heritage phenomenon' in Europe back in the 1970s, more concretely to 1975, the year when several European countries, including Britain, participated in the *European Architectural Heritage Year*. It was at that moment when the term 'heritage' entered into general circulation (1999: 244).

Andrew Higson admits that the cult of the past is not purely British but a European phenomenon related to postmodern culture:

> Of course, the heritage impulse […] is not confined to Thatcherite Britain, but is a characteristic feature of postmodern culture. The heritage industry may transform the past into a series of commodities for the leisure and entertainment market, but in most cases the commodity on offer is an image, a spectacle, something to be gazed at […]. The past is reproduced as flat, depthless pastiche, where the reference point is not the past itself, but other images, other texts. The past as referent is effaced, and all that remains is a self-referential intertextuality (Higson, 1993: 112).

Nonetheless, the rise of the heritage industry in Britain was closely related to both the ideological and economic aspects of Thatcherism. As I explained in the previous

section, the government's measures of privatization provoked important changes in the industrial base of Britain. As a means of reducing taxes, Thatcher's aim was to minimize state intervention and welfare state dependency and thus avoid huge governmental expenses in public services (Quart in Friedman, 1993: 17). When many heavy industries were closed down in an effort to modernise and retionalise production many ex-factory workers were re-directed to the services, hence the subsequent growth in the tourist industry. At the same time, lacking public funding, museums and heritage sites, now funded by private sponsorship, altered their museum policy in their struggle to attract a wider audience (Weedon, 1999: 181-3).[132]

Following the Thatcherite economic policy of making the most of anything marketable, the heritage industry thus converted the past into 'an attractively packaged consumer item' (Hewinson in Monk, 2002: 179). In this respect, the heritage industry worked in the same ideological line as the government: heritage offering a stable image of the past, one which provided a sense of continuity, security and national identity in a time of difficulties and identity crisis brought about by shifts in gender, race and class perspectives (Hill, 1999: 73-75). Similarly Samuel observes that the diffusion of the heritage industry in Europe coincides with the hybridisation of contemporary social identities in terms of class, gender, ethnicity and nationality (246). In this sense, some critics have argued that the harking back to the past served as an escapist illusion – one that highlighted a period of luxuries, splendour and the powerful position Britain once enjoyed (Hewison, 2001: 173; Corner and Harvey, 2001: 48-58).

[132] In 'Marketing History: Museums and Heritage in South Wales' Chris Weedon gives the example of the coal mines in South Wales which were converted into museums: 'Whereas in the 1980s the region had a large number of working mines together with substantial steel industry, there is now only one privatised pit, Tower Colliery, rescued by a workers' buy and prospering despite the odds […]. If we take the example of coal mining, while the working mines have closed, there are now three substantial museums, staffed by redundant miners, within 25 miles of Cardiff. Economic shifts have been accompanied by social shifts in family life and leisure. Visiting museums and heritage sites have increasingly become part of family leisure time pursuits and heritage sites work hard to market themselves as all-around family entertainment' (Weedon, 1999: 182).

This said, according to Samuel, the counter argument may be just as plausible: a negative vision of the past as a 'horror chamber' may also serve to reassure the comforts of the present (1999: 196). In other words, the depiction of the hard living conditions of people in the past, the lack of liberties for certain sectors of the population – women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities – invited people to more readily accept present-day difficulties, rendered much more bearable when compared to the oppression and injustices suffered in the past. This negative vision of the past may, on the other hand, be perceived nostalgically as a point of reference for those who see in past struggles against injustices the stability lacking in the relativist and fluid views of the present.[133]

Raphael Samuel argues that the heritage industry has often been disparaged by left-wing critics as 'Thatcherism in period dress', since 'it represents a posthumous victory of the aristocratic tendency over the levelling tendency, and egalitarian potential, of the post-war settlement (1999: 290).[134] The heritage enterprise, however, also brings to the fore the contradictory nature of Thatcherism and the New Right, as embodiments of the two competing tendencies of social authoritarianism and neo-liberalism. As argued in the previous chapter, neo-conservatives foreground identity and tradition – that is, the defence of an exclusive form of British identity based in the common roots of a splendorous past. For their part, neo-liberalists emphasise the importance of individual liberty in a neo-capitalist world where social status is not acquired through inheritance but through entrepreneurship. Accordingly, in rescuing the shared traditions of a country and presenting them as a common inheritance, the heritage industry satisfies the arguments of social authoritarians. On the other hand, the commodification of the past not only works in

[133] Lowenthal mentions how even nightmarish memories of Second World War bombings are recalled with nostalgia by those who lived through them (1998: 33).

[134] Thatcher's government officially backed the heritage enterprise through the National Heritage Acts of 1980 and 1983, which brought into existence organisations such as the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the English Heritage. As a result, the number of listed 'heritage buildings' doubled during that decade (Higson, 2003: 52).

line with neo-liberalist profit-making schemes but also in the popularisation and democratisation of history through its wider accessibility to the public. In a word, the more people 'consume' the past, the more profits can be made out of it.

A further paradox emerges out of this last stance. Even though the ultimate aim of the heritage industry is the commodification of the past as a profit-making venture, the fact is that its popularisation blows to pieces the former elitist conceptions of history as a prerogative of academics. What is more, in order to render the past more appealing, museums and heritage centres tend to display 'living history' not only as pertaining to public figures – or 'great men' – but also as the domestic spaces where the common or 'ordinary' people of the past lived. In other words, the interest in discovering how people experienced the past has somehow rescued 'alternative histories' from 'heroic accounts' – to use Carlyle's concept. In this way, new perspectives were proffered mainly not only on the 'histories' of the working-classes but also on that of women, non-white people and homosexuals. As Samuel remarks, humble origins were celebrated through attention being directed at life 'below stairs'. Besides, 'this version of the national past is not only more democratic than earlier ones but also more feminine and domestic. It privileges the private over the public sphere' (1999: 160-1).

Pam Cook likewise notices this ambivalence between public and private spheres in the search for a national identity. She comments on how contemporary cultural crises, provoked by incessant social changes, have spurred the resurgence of ethnonationalisms, which she sees as invariably dependent on a retreat to 'cultural purity', where the past is imagined as a 'refuge from social change'. In her view, there is therefore a strong desire to find a 'home',

> an imagined place where unified, stable identities nurtured by common interests can flourish. This conception, inevitably shared infantile longing, often relies on traditional gender roles of patriarchal authority overseeing maternal sacrifice. Yet it is never, of course, that simple. The heroic, patriotic version of national identity frequently conflicts with the intimate, domestic variety, rupturing the

> home culture and its sustaining fantasy of community, which is often conflated with family (1996: 2).

In the same way as the family is a complex set of different relations with evident fissures in their associations, so does the 'imagined nation' contain internal divisions that threaten the purity of the 'united nation' or 'family':

> 'Home', in the sense of a tranquil, safe place, becomes an ever-receding object, swiftly turning into its opposite, the locus of uncertainty and anomie. Freud's notion of the uncanny, the twining between the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, is revelatory here, for the safety of home (*heim*) is inseparable from its strangeness. The place to which we belong is also foreign to us (1992: 3).[135]

For this reason, I agree with Samuel's conclusion that the 'heritage' issue cannot be assigned to either the Left or the Right. It may be appropriated by both political trends, depending on the contingent interests of a given time and its circumstances (1999: 303). For this reason, although the heritage industry – and by extension, heritage cinema – is often regarded as a product or reflection of a Thatcherite society, its many different portrayals of the past in the 1980s contain competing views that may favour or criticise certain conceptions of the social realities of the time. For instance, as will be argued in the following sections, the screened portrayals of the historical period known as the 'Raj' could be seen as favouring a nostalgic conservative version of British identity as an imperial country, yet, those very same visual depictions of Britain's glorious past can simultaneously be viewed as giving voice to previously silenced colonised people in their portrayal of conflictive relationships between white and non-white communities. In the same manner, space is also granted for female and homosexual identities in cinematic productions such as *A Room with a View*, *Heat and Dust*, *Another Country* or *Maurice*.

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[135] In the light of how this search for identity roots in a common heritage has veered from the public to the private, Cook notices the importance of recent 'feminine' approaches to history in the heritage phenomenon and costume dramas in particular. Although she centres on early costume dramas prior to the 1980s, it is important to notice here that the heritage films of the Thatcher decade also reflect this 'privatisation' of history which, in general, is more concerned with the portrayal of domestic affairs than with the epics of public heroes. Although heritage films of the 1980s centre on the portrayal of characters who belong to the upper classes, their 'privatisation' of history is clearly 'gendered' while issues of class and ethnicity are also dealt with conspicuously.

3.4. Cinema and Heritage

3.4.1. British Cinema, Genre and Society

As popular entertainment, cinema appears to be particularly suited as an outlet for the contemporary urge to dig into the past for those roots and/or stable identites lacking in the present. This said, although the idea of a 'national cinema' is often heralded as a means of eliciting the cultural identity of a nation, the present-day, collaborative nature of film production, and attendant drive to reach international audiences for money-making purposes make it difficult to limit the scope of any so-called 'national cinema' (Choi, 2006: 310). Even so, as cultural products, movies can nevertheless be looked upon as telling documents of how certain ideological discourses cohabited and/or competed in a nation or society at a given historical time.

As signalled in the previous chapter, British cinema has a long history of 'reaffirmation attempts' against Hollywood's prominence over the world.[136] Against this background, a frequent feature of those books devoted to the study of British cinema is the inclusion of critical comments on the '*un-cinematic* nature of British cinema'. (Barr, 1992: 1; Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 35; Landy, 1991: 3). Hence, many books on British cinema include François Truffaut's famous and much quoted assertion that there exists a certain incompatibility between the words 'cinema' and 'Britain' (1983: 124).[137] To these words,

[136] Even though it is true that the world-wide influence of U.S. American cinema has made it difficult for other indigenous cinemas to compete, it has not prevented the establishment of an extremely successful Indian film industry in the East – namely Bollywood – which has proved to be no less prolific and influential, not only in Eastern markets but also in the West – consumed mainly by immigrants from the Indian sub-continent.

[137] In an interview with Alfred Hitchcock, Truffaut claimed that there was something about England that was uncinematic: 'isn't there a certain incompatibility between the terms "cinema" and "Britain". This may sound far-fetched, but I get the feeling that there are national characteristics – among them the English countryside, the subdued way of life, the stolid routine – that are antidramatic in a sense. Even British humour […] is somehow a deterrent to strong emotions' (1983: 124). Ironically enough, it seems that these characteristics Truffaut determines as 'uncinematic' are precisely the ones used to successfully sell out the heritage films of the 1980s to the American audience and that helped sustain the fame of actors whose careers transcend the boundaries of heritage movies, as occurred with Hugh Grant (among others), whose 'British humour' and 'subdued emotions' shot him to fame with *Maurice* (Ivory, 1987), *Sense and Sensibility* (Lee, 1995) or *Notting Hill* (Michell, 1999).

Charles Barr adds other similarly denigrating remarks, such as Satyajit Ray's :'I do not think the British are temperamentally equipped to make the best use of the movie camera'; or Pauline Kael's: 'Compared with the motion picture art of Sweden or Italy or Japan or France or pre-Nazi Germany, English films have always been a sad joke'; as well as Gilbert Adair's: 'the history of the British cinema is that of an inferiority complex' (in Barr, 1992: 1-2).

The 'historical' fate of British cinema is that it has always stood 'in-between' Hollywood mainstream and European art cinemas. Disregarded as neither one thing nor the other, it was therefore ignored by academic criticism until the mid-1960s (Barr, 1992: 4-9). In her book on British Genres, Marcia Landy remarks that there has been:

> a long-standing critical neglect of British film production, which has been stigmatized as being uncinematic and tied too closely to the theatre and to the novel. In contrast to Hollywood films, the British cinema has been labelled 'amorphous' and 'uninteresting', and lacking in social relevance [...]. The [British] films were accused of being unpopular with British audiences, while popular and successful films such as the Gainsborough melodramas and the Hammer horror films were accused of being sensationalist and escapist – familiar labels often applied to texts that are heavily dependent on a formulaic construction (1991: 3).

And yet, from its very beginnings and most particularly during the Thatcher decade, British cinema has made relevant contributions to the so-called 'seventh art' in terms of filmmakers, filmic productions, and actors/actresses of international renown. Several features have come to characterise the idiosyncracies of British filmmaking, such as the importance of the documentary tradition, social-realist films, comedies and costume dramas. As a result, certain *genres* have wedged a conspicuous place for themselves in British cinema.[138] For instance, if costume dramas have enjoyed a great preponderance in the history of British cinema, the success of the heritage films of the 1980s should not be looked upon as a novelty but rather as an off-shoot of an already well-known genre in British filmmaking. Hence, the question at hand here is whether the heritage films of the 1980s were merely up-dated versions of earlier costume dramas, or whether they were a

[138] See Murphy, 2001, Landy, 1991.

new type of film which included a number of conventions, typical of preceding genres. This matter has been the object of debate and study of critics such as Andrew Higson (2003) and Claire Monk (2002) among others. However, before centring on the particular question of the heritage cinema, I would like to consider broader issues concerning film genre in general so as to better understand the relationship between this type of film and its relation with the 1980s context.

The classification of films into genres is related to human beings' urge to box or categorise knowledge in an attempt to order the world, name it and ultimately control it. In *The Order of Things* (1966: 7-8), Foucault links this phenomenon with the theories on taxonomy that proliferated throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and that aimed at providing deeper knowledge of the natural world. As seen before, these scientific classifications also served to create a fixed hierarchy of beings, differentiating those with outstanding capacities form other groups susceptible of subjugation and control. These divisions that were now justified in terms of their 'scientific' basis came to replace previous classifications which had been based on religious grounds. This fact points to the artificiality or cultural constructions of such categorisations, referred to by Foucault in the following terms:

> Il paraît que certains aphasiques n'arrivent pas a classer de façon cohérente les écheveaux de laines multicolores qu'on leur présente sur la surface d'une table […]. Ils forment, en cet espace uni où les choses normalement se distribuent et se nomment, une multiplicité de petits domaines grumeleux et fragmentaires où des ressemblances sans nom agglutinent les choses en îlots discontinus ; dans un coin, ils placent les écheveaux les plus clairs, dans un autre les rouges, ailleurs ceux qui ont une consistance plus laineuse, ailleurs encore les plus longs, ou ceux qui tirent sur le violet ou ceux qui ont été noués en boule. Mais à peine esquissés, tous ces groupements se défont car la plage d'identité qui les soutient, aussi étroite qu'elle soit, est encore trop étendue pour n'être pas instable; et à l'infini, le malade rassemble et sépare, entasse les similitudes diverses, ruine les plus évidentes, disperse les identités, superpose les critères différents, s'agite, recommence, s'inquiète et arrive finalement au bord de l'angoisse (1966 : 10).

Foucault therefore points out the utopian dimension of any category: it is something necessary for individuals to understand the world, yet any taxonomy entails a certain degree of instability. This instability provokes anxiety; that is why, as argued before, the

outstanding presence of mixed or hybrid identities provokes anxiety in those who long for the fixity of things.

In the realm of cinema, the diverse theories on film genres exemplify this urge for ordering what otherwise is a chaotic system. Following Foucault's thesis, films may simultaneously belong to one group or another depending on the criteria followed at a particular moment. Derrida also signalled the fact that the law of genre is a 'law of impurity':

> In the code of set theories […], I would speak of a sort of participation without belonging – a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set. The trait that marks membership inevitably divides, the boundary of the set comes to form, by invagination, an internal pocket larger than the whole; and the outcome of this division and of this abounding remains as singular as it is limitless (1979: 206).

In spite of that, he drew attention to the omnipresence of the notion of *genre*:

> A text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant overflowing of a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the *trait* of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and of the generic mark. Making genre its mark, a text demarcates itself (1979: 212; italics in original).

In other words, a text cannot escape its inclusion or participation in a generic system. Nevertheless, one should be aware of the intrinsic instability of taxonomies and the fluidity or unavoidable hybridity of genres.

In the field of film studies there are many theories that provide different approaches to the generic system. Basing his arguments on Todorov's theory of literary genres, Tom Ryall, for instance, offers a twofold division of film genre criticism: theoretical and historical genres.[139] The former is an 'a priori category' that relies upon certain assumptions concering artistic activity and grounded on the general feature of 'representation'. Theoretical genres can thus be divided into the *fictional*, the *documentary* or the *abstract*. Ryall, however, points to the fact that most critical writing has been

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[139] See Todorov, 1982: 22-32.

devoted to the notion of historical genres, genres which are, or have been, constructed on the basis of common themes, styles and iconography (1998: 329). Within the notion of historical genres, Ryall distinguishes three levels of analysis, the first concerns the definition of the generic system – that is, the 'broad shared principles' which relate individual genres to each other –, the second corresponds to the study of individual genres – 'defining their internal logics and conventions' – and the third specifies how individual films tie in with one or several genres (329). Taking these critical levels into consideration, both the generic system and the study of individual genres cannot be but abstractions. According to Chantal Cornut-Gentille:

> Un género, como abstracción, llegará a ser tal como resultado de algún tipo de proceso general (inconsciente o consciente) por el que determinadas películas se asocian mentalmente con otras mediante un sistema de elementos y expectativas compartidas, habiendo sido todas ellas interiorizadas por la audiencia tras haber visto varias películas similares. Por este motivo, el nacimiento de un género particular será el resultado o la consecuencia de un acuerdo (tácito) tanto por parte de la audiencia como de los cineastas: los cineastas buscan rentabilidad en la repetición y las audiencias buscan placer con la anticipación y la expectación de elementos coincidentes que aparecen en las diferentes películas (2006: 104).

Even though the system of expectations that characterises film genres replicates the anticipation created by/in literary genres, in the case of cinema, the role of the audience is that much patent, and therefore crucial in determining the success of a film and, hence, the possibility of regaining the money invested in its production. Film genres thus depend on an agreement between filmmakers, audiences and the industry itself,[140] a fact that accounts for its 'multi-dimensional' nature (Neale, 2000: 25). As Graeme Turner states, there are three forces that shape the notion of film genre: 'the industry and its production practices; the audience and their expectations and competencies; and the text in its contribution to the genre as a whole (1988: 86). Likewise, Marcia Landy points to the complexity of the generic system resulting from the interplay between industry, auteur, narrative and

[140] For a deeper analysis of the influence of the industry in the construction of genres exemplified in the Hollywood Studio system see Schatz (1981: 3-6).

audience. She gives special relevance to the last element for the perpetuation, evolution, death or revival of certain genres within the film industry:

> The spectator not only plays a role in the production of meaning but also plays an economic role in the perpetuation and decline of various genres, and if the texts do not speak to the spectator's needs and aspirations, they are consigned to oblivion. Positive audience response results in further reproduction, or modification, of genres to suit contemporary realities (1991: 9).

For a film to succeed in the market, it has to be generic and original at the same time. For this reason, genres function as 'horizons of expectation' where new original ingredients can be added but never exceeded, otherwise audiences could feel betrayed by a lack or excess of innovation (Neale, 2000: 42). In Thomas Schatz's words, 'the audience demands creativity or variation but only within the context of a familiar narrative experience' (1981: 6). Conversely, Duncan Petrie draws attention to generic transformations that results from innovation within the frames of the generic conventions – a process he calls 'internal subversion of conventions'. Petrie also notices the increasing presence of genre combinations and self-reflexive comic elements. He therefore concludes that: 'genre film-making need not therefore be characterised by bland repetition and formula. It can allow filmmakers to be creative and to self-consciously relate their own cinematic concerns to convention and established forms' (1991: 137).

Steve Neale also draws attention to the different contexts in which the concept of *genre* has been valorised. He quotes Kress and Threadgold who compared the positive connotations of genre in Renaissance or Neo-Classical literature – good literary works were those that imitated the classics and therefore followed generic conventions – to the pejorative dimension the term genre acquired in the Romantic period. From that moment on, to be generic meant to be *clichéd*. Hence, originality and innovation, rather than conventions, were the main criteria followed to value any literary work (2000: 22).[141] This

[141] For a detailed account of the history of genre theory in literature and cinema see Altman, 1999: 1-28.

notion was later related to the Arnoldian concepts of high and popular culture, the latter being marked out (negatively) as ‘generic’:

> Repetitive patterns, ingredients and formulae are now perceived by many cultural commentators not as the law of Culture, but as the law of the market. It is therefore hardly surprising that genre was – and still is – principally associated with an industrial, commercial and mechanically based art like the cinema (23).

To sum up, it is important to take into account the different issues that compound the notion of genre in order to understand the analysis of particular films. On the one hand, at the level of abstraction the generic system is as artificial a construct as any categorisation attempt, yet it cannot be avoided. On the other hand, texts participate in the generic system and are valorised differently according to the particular context in which they are inserted. These notions will be very helpful in the analysis of the particularities attached to British heritage and Raj films, which are often envisaged as ‘middle-brow’ productions, somewhere in-between the mainstream generic system and more ‘original’ author-based works of art; hence the importance of inserting the analysis of any film or cycle of films within its particular historical context.

In his book *Film as Social Practice*, Graeme Turner explains the evolution of film studies criticism, from its main focus on *auteurism*, which equated certain films with the Seventh Art while disregarding others as mere entertainment, to the new interest in mainstream or ‘popular products’ as legitimate objects of study (1988: 35-40). He notices an evolution of film studies from author and text-based analysis to new approaches taken from other disciplines that have helped broaden perspectives, and thus have enriched the analyses of films as social production. He concludes that:

> In such instances, film is not even the final target of enquiry, but part of a wider argument about representation – the social process of making images, sounds, sings, stand for something – in film or television. Odd as this might sound, what emerges is a body of approaches to film that is rich when applied to film but which is not confined to the analysis of film. In effect, film theory becomes part of the wider field of disciplines and approaches called cultural studies (1988: 38).

Celestino Deleyto also draws attention to the different ways critics have approached *auteur* and mainstream productions throughout the history of film studies (2003: 21-27). At a first stage, those considered mainstream or popular films were accused of transmitting dominant ideology. Later on, some of these films were 'rescued' from these condemning and disparaging verdicts whenever an ingredient of 'subversion' could be found in their narrative or mise-en-scène. Notions of hegemony and consensus posed by neo-gramscian critics and Foucault's concept of power relations as something fluid enriched the otherwise simplistic and deterministic view of former filmic productions. In this sense, Stuart Hall's contribution to the conception of cultural products as containers of an 'articulation' of different meanings and practices – which recalls Bakhtin's notion of dialogism and polyphony[142] – is quite significant.

Films, or rather film genres, both reflect the different ideologies present in a society – with more or less emphasis on, or agreement with, the dominant one – and act as rituals of socialisation for the audiences (Schatz, 1981: 11). At this point, that is, the moment when the relationship between text and context becomes essential in any analysis, the question of whether films are a mere reflection of ideological social forces, or contribute to the construction of these very ideologies is contemplated. On this point, Deleyto mentions Ryan and Kellner's notion of 'discursive transcodification', which refers to the fact that films do not reflect reality as such but form part of the wider cultural system of representations through which social reality is constructed. In this sense, cinematic productions do not simply reflect or construct the reality but *refract* social discourses and transform them into a cinematographic form in which the spectator becomes an active agent in the construction of the meanings represented in the films (2003: 32-3).

[142] See Bakhtin, 1987: 236-366.

Turner also points to the cinematographic *re-presentation* of reality by means of 'the codes, conventions, myths and ideologies of its culture as well as by way of the specific signifying practices of the medium'. In this sense, 'the filmmaker uses the representational conventions and repertoires available within the culture in order to make something fresh but familiar, new but generic, individual but representative (1988: 129). Accordingly, Deleyto proposes the study of filmic productions from both a cultural and textual perspective – a double approach that allows the critic to analyse the different historical and social discourses *presented* and *represented* in the films through cinematographic mechanisms (34).

Rick Altman also advances a multifaceted perception of genres which, in his view, are not fixed categories but processes which serve to simultaneously benefit multiple users. This would explain the presence of different and often competing or contradictory meanings in genres or particular films belonging to or participating in generic categories (1999: 208). In Altman's words:

> Every generic system is made up of an interconnected network of user groups and their corresponding institutions, each using genre to satisfy its own needs and desires. While at any given point a generic system may appear perfectly balanced and thus at rest, the look of stability is actually produced only by a momentary equilibrium of countervening concerns. Because a genre is not one thing serving one purpose, but multiple things serving for multiple purposes for multiple groups, it remains a permanently contested site. In fact, it is precisely the continued contestation among producers, exhibitors, viewers, critics, politicians, moralists, and their diverse interests, that keeps genres ever in process, constantly subject to reconfiguration, recombination and reformulation (1999: 195).

Following Foucault's notion of 'categorisation' as an instable construct, Altman foregrounds the process of generic transformation. Based on the notion of 'genre' as a complex term that serves the interests of a multiplicity of users, Altman defends the conception of 'genres' as *processes* in constant evolution which give way to the *re-genrification* of texts in contingent contexts. This prolific process results from the incessant hybrid association of marginal and central categories. He refers to this struggle

between centre and margins in the sphere of cinema genres as a process of 'creolisation'. Through this practice, a new genre results from the combination of:

> gypsy adjectives with established land owning generic substantives. Only when those previously marginalised adjectives plant their flag in the centre of the world are they transmuted into substantival genres, thus putting them on the map, as it were, while simultaneously opening them up to new adjectival settlements and eventual squatter take over (1999: 199).

Altman therefore postulates that the emergence of a new film genre results from the nominalisation of an adjective that pervasively came to accompany a previous genre. For instance, taking the term 'comedy' as a dominant generic category recognised by author, industry and audience, a marginal element might appear to renew the said genre and thus prevent comedy from becoming a worn out cycle and commercial flops. This marginal element can appear in the form of an 'adjective' – as happened with the word 'romantic'. The outcome was a cycle of films known as 'romantic comedies'. In time, this cycle became an independent genre in itself, and developed into 'romance'. In other worlds, the 'marginal adjective' *romantic*, became 'dominant' and nominalised as *romance*. This process continues with the emergence of new cycles and genres such as the 'musical romance', the 'musical', the 'martial musical', the martial', and so on (Altman, 1999: 62-8).

An interesting point Altman adds is the importance of communication among marginal items as a means of gaining strength and thus finding a place in the centre: 'Alone, no single point on the periphery can possibly stand up to the powerful centre, but through lateral communication the margins can eventually muster the strength necessary for a takeover, only eventually to be displaced by a new set of laterally connected margins' (199). A dialectical process is therefore at work, not only between margins and centre but within the periphery. As Altman suggests, this development taking place in the realm of cinema genres has a parallel situation in the national sphere, and/or in social/ethnic communities.

He thus draws a very interesting parallelism between the concepts of film genre and nation. As with film genres, nations – or 'imagined communities', to use Anderson's definition – are sites of continuous struggles between competing marginal and central discourses that may evolve dialectically towards new hybrid orders. Altman notices that there is a tendency towards the rejection of hybridity in discourses related to both genre and nation. A 'purist' vision of genres and nations that does not accept the growing presence of marginal 'others' tends to regard their hybrid associations with dominant structures as dangerous and threatening. Likewise, it appears that whenever former 'marginal groups' succeeded in wedging a place for themselves in the centre, they identify their own 'otherness' as a 'pure-breed' particularity and and reject new hybrid associations with 'other' groups.[143]

Altman further compares genre criticism and nations by arguing that, since both groups are concerned with the stability of their respective categories (a particular genre or nation/community), it is equally important for one and the other to highlight myths of 'distant origin, continued coherence and permanent inviolability':

> Satisfied with the current situation, users of generic and national terminology alike have a desire to slow the process of regenrification, while margin dwellers have every reason to speed it up. Those at the centre thus regularly exaggerate the age, rootedness and importance of current practice, openly resisting otherness, hyphenation and creolization, while those on the margins must use resistant reading practices, secondary discursivity and lateral communication to reinforce always frail constellated communities (1999: 204-5).

The link thus established between the constructed categories of genre and nation acquires a further dimension when the film genre analysed is formally and thematically associated with the intrinsic characteristics of the nation in which it is produced. Heritage

[143] Altman offers some examples on this issue and warns on the danger of trying to find similarities among rival groups by the creation of a common 'other': 'In the Catholic region that brought them together, Irish Americans and Italian Americans also found justification for the bloody anti-abortion battles that have increasingly divided the United States. Even such groups as feminists, who successfully moved form marginal protests to institutional recognition by playing up common concerns of an apparently sex-linked nature, have now in many universities been contested and even supplanted by new alliances among lesbian, gay and bisexual groups. For every feminist protest against established practices, there is always a lesbigay protest in the wings, waiting for feminist practices to become sufficiently established to make them a worthwhile target' (1999: 204).

films, vinculated as they were to the heritage industry, exemplify this struggle between margins and centre and the process of constant change intrinsic in both genres and nations. Altman therefore concludes that genres are social devices which facilitate the integration of competing discourses within a single fabric. That is why there is a relevant connection between film genres and nations, cinema and society.

3.4.2. British Cinema in the 1980s: The Heritage Film

By considering 'cinema' in general as a *refraction* of cultural realities at a given time, this section centres on British cinema in particular and its capacity to reflect, construct or refract the contingent ideologies at stake in a specific historical period. On this point, Marcia Landy remarks that, in spite of the critics' negative evaluation of British cinema as ineffective in addressing the cultural conflicts of the nation, she is convinced that, as part of the history they represent, British films do, in fact, reflect cultural and political events. More importantly, British films 'offer significant clues to tensions and contradictions in relation to such issues as historicism, notions of community, gender, social class, and sexuality' (1991: 13).

In his book *Waving the Nation. Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*, Andrew Higson tackles the complex issue of 'national cinema' which, as he argues, does not apply only to the films produced by and within a particular nation-state (1997: 278). All films are the result of team work – even those with the *auteur* label attached to them, and more often than not, this 'team' crosses the frontiers of nationality. This is the reason why it is very difficult to label a film 'British'.[144] The director may be British, but what

[144] This issue is even more complicated if one takes into consideration Hollywood produced, 'British' films. According to H. Mark Glancy, the years of the Second World War witnessed the production of a huge number of Hollywood films dealing with British characters, settings or topics, many of which were literary adaptations of British 'classics' or were 'propaganda' war films. In terms of defining a British 'national' cinema, these

about the actors, producers, scriptwriters and the money invested? Often the sense of Britishness is present only in the setting, the themes or the literary work the film is based on. Trying to establish the characteristics of a 'national cinema' is therefore a difficult task, especially respecting contemporary cinema, inserted as it is within the context of globalisation. Claire Monk highlights the contradictory nature of a supposed 'British national cinema':

> The desire for cultural self-affirmation and the dream of a viable British 'national' cinema ensure that the production and reproduction of British period films take place under the signs of national product differentiation, exportability and the projection of 'national' identity. Yet 'British' period films' successes are repeatedly made by non-British personnel, with non-British money, and measured in terms of their reception and commercial performance abroad (2002: 177).

Even so, the issue of 'national cinema' is still important precisely because, as discussed earlier, one of the paradoxes of globalisation is its triggering of both the blurring *and* the reinforcement of cultural boundaries. As a result, the more transnational ideological discourses on an about the British nation become, the more efforts are directed at rescuing 'indigenous' features of the country's traditional past. From this perspective, Andrew Higson explores the extent to which cinema is used as an apparatus to represent an image of a cohesive nation. He argues that diametrically opposed discourses are put together in national cinematic productions to 'articulate a contradictory unity, to play part in the hegemonic process of achieving consensus and containing difference and contradiction'. In so doing, national cinema naturalises the only 'legitimate positions of the national subject' (1997: 275).

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productions will not be included as 'British films', as they were Hollywood products. It is important, though, to bear in mind that the 'anglophilia' developed by U.S. American audiences did not start with the success of *Chariots of Fire* in the early 1980s but can be traced back to the late 1930s. At the time, Hollywood 'British' movies differed considerably from the films made in Britain. In fact, as Glancy notices, 'actual British films were seldom popular in the USA, so Hollywood had to find its own unique approach to British stories' (1999: 72). MGM studios, for example, developed a formula that proved very successful in both U.S. and U.K. markets. Against his background, British heritage films of the 1980s can be seen as a very autoctonous formula sold as well on both sides of the Atlantic.

Similarly, Graeme Turner highlights the importance of the relationship between cinema and national culture. Recalling Anderson's definition of nations as 'imagined communities', he argues that cinema is yet another cultural tool that helps construct these imagined ties of unity. Turner relates this imagined cohesion, which serves the interests of the dominant sectors in society, to Gramci's notion of hegemony.[145] According to Turner:

> Hegemony is the process by which members of society are persuaded to acquiesce in their own subordination, to abdicate cultural leadership in favour of sets of interests which are represented as identical. But may actually be antithetical to their own […]. Hegemony's aim is to resist social change and maintain the status quo.
> The regulation and control of definitions of art, of literature, and of the national film industry are also hegemonic in that the imperative is always to restrict and limit the proliferation of representations of the nation. (This is because the proliferation of representations also proliferates different definitions). (1988: 134).

Turner foregrounds the importance of the different representations of the nation in cinema through examples of heritage films and social realist productions of the 1980s, such as *Chariots of Fire* and *The Long Good Friday* (Mackenzie, 1980). He argues that a multiplicity of diverse representations might be threatening because in proffering contradictory views, they foreground the artificiality of these constructions and hence destabilise the cohesion of that 'imagined community'. I would add that this instability could also be the result, not only of the clash between diverse representations of the nation in different films, but also of the competing and often contradictory views of the nation within a single film.

What it is true is that there is a tendency to find distinctive features in national cinema, supposedly characteristic of national production that set them apart from 'other' cinemas. As Higson remarks: 'Nationalism is about drawing boundaries, about making an inside and an outside. The process of constructing national identity is thus a continual process of negotiating these limits. Film culture also seeks to identify and define others in

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[145] Gramsci defined hegemony as consensus between dominant and subordinated groups. Dominance comes not from coercion but by consent: 'L'esercizio "normale" dell'egemonia nel terreno divenuto classico del regime parlamentare, è caratterizzato dalla combinazione della forza e del consenso che si equilibrano variamente, senza che la forza soverchi di troppo il consenso, anzi cercando di ottenere che la forza appaia appoggiata sul consenso della maggioranza, espresso dai cosí detti organi dell'opinione publica – giornali e associazioni – i quali, perciò, in certe situazioni, vengono moltiplicati artificiosamente' (1975: 1638)

relation to the ideal national cinema' (1997: 277). Accordingly, Higson identifies three main stylistic characteristics, namely the modes of narration, types of focalisation and uses of space, which set British cinema apart from Hollywood. In his view, British cinema therefore distinguishes itself through its championning of the episodic mode of narration with multiple, interweaving plots which depart from the rigours of classical narrative integration. The point of view is distanced and objective, held by an outsider, in opposition to the subjective focalisation in classical cinema narratives.[146] Equally significant is the construction of space in British films:

> The particular excessive diegesis of these films, coterminous with the episodic and multiple narratives, is precisely a perspective on public space, on social space and of course on national space, rather than the private space of the classical romantic hero. It is the limits of the diegesis which mark the boundaries of the national community (1997: 277).

Of course these characteristics cannot be applied to *all* British movies; however, it appears that many representative British films have conformed to these rules, as it is precisely this distinction from the Hollywood mode of filmmaking that opens up a place for them in the American-dominated market.

In his historical overview of British cinema, John Caughie also refers to the opposition established between British and Hollywood cinema. He states that from its very beginnings, but especially from the time of World War II onwards, contraposition was set up between a 'quality' British cinema, 'based on the supposedly "English" characteristics of reality and restraint, and the frivolities and melodramas of the Hollywood dream factory' – an opposition between 'realism and tinsel' (1996: 3). 'Realism' and 'emotional restraint' were therefore set up as key notions characterising 'official' British cinema. The connection with 'realism' originated in the Documentary tradition and its influence on

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[146] Higson proposes that this distanced look 'is more decorous, more restrained than the engaged look of the classical film, and it relates more easily to a diegesis which is filled with detail, which foregrounds characterisation and atmosphere over action (1997: 277).

other British modes of production.[147] Caughie argues that the Documentary Movement, launched by John Grierson in the 1930s, is what sets British cinema apart from other European art cinemas, closer to the avant-garde tradition of European modernism: 'This lack of sustained engagement with modernism makes Britain's art cinema almost unique in Europe, and provides the distinction between an art cinema and a "quality" cinema' (1996: 8). The Documentary style as a typical British generic convention influenced the perception of the British mode of filmmaking in general. As Satyajit Ray wrote: 'One possible reason why the British took to documentaries was that it involved a legitimate process of dehumanisation' (in Barr, 1992: 10). In other words, the documentary style highlighted the social use of cinema, with a strong emphasis on realism serving to portray a community through emotional restraint rather than individual sentimentalism (10).

If the history of British cinema is studied in depth, a great variety of different filmic genres and independent productions can be found, but more importantly, many movies can be seen to depart from those 'intrinsic' characteristics of British cinema.[148] Even so, it is true that realism has always had a pervasive influence on British cinematic productions and the term 'quality' is a conspicuous and very useful label for many British films which could not otherwise be classified as fully mainstream in the Hollywood manner or independent 'art' productions. Besides, not only does the term 'quality' help distinguish British from U.S. American productions, it also functions as a marketing tool for the

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[147] For a contextualisation and study of the British Documentary Film movement see Caughie, 1996: 7-8; Aitken, 2001: 60-7; Higson, 1998: 502-3.

[148] The notion of a 'national cinema' is therefore a complex one. Although several common and recurring characteristics can be identified, an in-depth analysis of British cinema history may reveal a wide diversity of genres that offer different views of the nation. Andrew Higson identifies the screen fictions of the 1910s and 1920s as representative of a national cinema, with the adaptations of canonic literature such as the films of Cecil Hepworth's company which offered a picturesque version of the English rural landscape (1998: 502). The early 1930s witnessed the birth of what Higson calls 'Britain's outstanding contribution to the cinema': the documentary movement, with John Griegson as its major exponent. The British commitment to realism persisted into the 1940s with films that depicted the lives of ordinary people, such as *In Which We Serve* (Coward and Lean, 1942) and *This Happy Breed* (Lean, 1944). In these decades, British cinema was characterised by the realist aesthetic or 'documentary style' which was praised as 'quality cinema' in contrast to Hollywood fantasy. Although realism seemed to prevail, other films more similar to U.S. American melodramas were also produced in British studios, such as the Gainsborough costume dramas and the Hammer horror films.

distribution and consumption of 'British-made' films within the frontiers of the U.K and abroad.[149]

In his study of British cinema as national cinema, John Hill concludes that 'while British cinema may depend upon international finance and audiences for its viability, this may actually strengthen its ability to probe national questions' (2001: 212). Hill points out that whereas early British films, and especially those made during the Second World War, clearly reinforced the myths of a unified nation, contemporary national cinema no longer works as straight-forward nationalistic propaganda nor does it represent those old myths so confidently. Nonetheless, present-day British cinema may be 'more fully representative of national complexities than ever before' (212).

Regarding the diverse genres that have predominated throughout the history of British filmmaking, Marcia Landy identifies the dominance of certain genres in specific historical contexts. She notices that in the 1930s, there was a preponderance of genre films such as melodramas, historical films, musicals, comedies and what she calls 'films of empire'. The Second World War, Landy argues, precipitated a rise in the popularity of the war film, a genre which continued to work well at the box-office during the post-war period. The 1950s witnessed the success of the Ealing comedies, together with a completely different genre: the 'social problem' films. Finally, Landy mentions the popularity of the Hammer horror films in the late 1950s and 1960s.[150] The 1970s were characterised by crisis and decadence in the British film industry which, as mentioned before, recovered in the 1980s with the international success of many heritage films and the production of other widely acclaimed social-realist texts (Hill, 2001: 314-5). Very

[149] The association of British national cinema with 'quality' cinema is very often alluded to in analyses of British productions. For instance, in his article on Powell and Pressburger films, Andrew Moor acknowledges that these productions 'do not fit into the understated "quality realist" cinema which has been taken to represent our authentic national cinematic style' (2001: 109).

[150] In her book, Landy also studies in detail other genres which she considers relevant: espionage films, the woman's film, tragic melodramas and science fiction films (see Landy, 1991).

often, social realist productions have been preferred by the critics because of their social commitment, while historical dramas have been accused of escapism. In any case, productions set in the past or in the present which showed a generic ingredient of melodrama or escapist fantasy were placed in lower consideration in critical ranking. This has been the case of films set in the past such as costume drama, or heritage films.

The first issue when tackling the analysis of historical cinema would be its consideration as a *genre*. In my opinion, the work that best maps out the space wedged for themselves by the so-called heritage films is Andrew Higson's 2003 *English Heritage, English Cinema. Costume drama since 1980*, which culminates his long, in-depth study of this particular kind of film.[151] In this work, Higson comments on the wide range of labels attached to these kinds of productions (e.g. historical films, heritage films, literary adaptations, costume dramas, period films, or biopics). The problem he finds with the term 'genre' is where to draw the boundaries, since genres and cycles are, as Derrida and Foucault pointed out, hybrid, overlapping categories. If dividing lines are set in order to facilitate questions of analysis for academics or film critics, or the film industry, one should be aware of the flexibility, permeability and, in a word, the artificiality of these boundaries, 'if we construct limits, we must be prepared to deconstruct them' (Neale in Higson, 2003: 12). Higson therefore insists on the importance of considering the context in which a film is inserted before reaching any conclusions as to its classification in a particular genre or cycle: 'Each film is the product of its particular historical conditions of existence, each cycle or genre emerges as it evolves, constructing its own terms of reference, its own intertexts' (2003: 10).

[151] See Andrew Higson's "Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film", (1993: 109-129); "The Heritage Film and the British Cinema" (1996: 232-248); *Waving the Flag. Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (1997).

The term *heritage film*, was in fact coined by Charles Barr in 1985. He was referring, though, not to the films that were being released at the time *All Our Yesterdays* was published, but to the films made in the 1940s, after the First World War, which dealt with the historical and cultural material of the country. Barr argued that in the 1940s, the British cinema industry experienced a renaissance with the production of films such as Lawrence Olivier's *Henry V* (1944), *This England* (MacDonald, 1941), *The Young Mr Pitt* (Reed, 1943), *Lady Hamilton* (Korda, 1941), *A Canterbury Tale* (Powell and Pressburger, 1944) or Carol Reed's *Kipps* (1941) (1992: 12). At that time, British cinema was said to embrace its true vocation: realism, restraint, stoicism, as well as the commercial exploitation of the nation's historical and cultural heritage (Barr, 1992: 10-2). Both the celebrity attained by films in the 1940s and the parallel situation in the 1980s prove the fact that heritage productions appear – or reappear – in the particular historical moments in which they have a valid cultural and economic role to perform (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 100).

Traditionally, film critics have distinguished between the historical film which deals with public historical events, and the costume drama which pictures the past by means of fictional characters who deal with problems related to the private sphere. Even so, films such as *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Korda, 1933), *The Madness of King George* (Hytner, 1995) or *Mrs Brown* (Madden, 1997) tend to blur this distinction and could therefore be placed in-between these two labels (Higson, 2003: 12). Landy considers the term 'historical film' as a genre in which convention tend to overlap from costume dramas to adventure films, to national epics, and/or literary adaptations and allegories. She mentions the threefold distinction made by Jean Gili with respect to the historical film: films featuring the lives of famous individuals, films which link a fictional protagonist to a

specific historical context, and costume dramas with fictional protagonists in often indeterminate historical settings.

In her study on the predominance of certain types of films within particular contexts, for instance, Landy highlights the proliferation of historical films in the 1930s devoted to the life of monarchs, national heroes, artists and composers. On the other hand, during the Second World War, it appears that there was a predominance of biographical films that centred on religious and political figures. In the post-war period, these personages were replaced by poets, explorers and public servants.[152]

The heritage films of the 1980s differ from those historical films and costume dramas of previous decades precisely because they reflect the particularities of their own context. Steve Neale makes an interesting distinction between the notions of 'genre', sub-genre' and 'cycle', which could help in the analysis of the heritage films in particular:

> 'Genre' is a French word meaning 'type' or 'kind' […]. It has occupied an important place in the study of the cinema for over thirty years, and it is normally exemplified (either singly or in various combinations) by the western, the gangster film, the musical, the horror film, melodrama, comedy and the like. On occasion, the term sub-genre has also been used, generally to refer to specific traditions or groupings within these genres (as in 'romantic comedy', 'slapstick comedy', 'the gothic horror film' and so on). And sometimes the term 'cycle' is used as well, usually to refer to groups of films made within a specific time-span, and founded, for the most part, on the characteristics of individual commercial successes (Neale, 2000: 9).

The heritage films of the 1980s make up a sub-genre, a cycle or an autonomous genre different from the e.g. historical biopics of the 1930s (i.e. Korda's *The Private Life of Henry VIII*) or costume dramas of the 1940s (i.e. *The Wicked Lady*, Arliss, 1945). Whether a genre or subgenre, I find the term *heritage* adequate as a signifier for films set in the past but made in the 1980s, especially as they are so closely related to the heritage industry at the time. According to Steve Neale's definition, the heritage productions of the 1980s would constitute a cycle, as they are inserted in a specific time-span, within the generic label, I dare to say, 'cinematic productions set in the past'. The heritage films of

[152] See Landy's chapter on the historical film, 1991: 53-96.

the 1980s and 1990s, though, have also been considered as a genre with its own sub-genres and cycles. For instance, Higson makes two main distinctions: those films adapting literature – and once more several cycles could be identified, as the 1980s adaptations of Forster and the *Austenmania* of the 1990s – and those adapting history –with real historical figures or folk heroes of legendary status (2003: 16-21). On the other hand, Sheldon Hall establishes more groups (2001: 192-3):

1. Adaptations of works of classic literature (mainly Austen, Dickens, Forster, James and Waugh), with films such as *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1984), *Maurice* (Ivory, 1987), *Little Dorrit* (Edzard, 1987), *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (Sturridge, 1991), *Howards End* (Ivory, 1991), *Brideshead Revisited* (Granada, 1981), *Pride and Prejudice* (BBC, 1995).

2. Costume dramas adapted from modern literary works or made directly for the screen, for instance *Chariots of Fire* (Hudson, 1981), *Another Country* (Kanievska, 1984), *The Bridge* (MacCartney, 1990), *The Remains of the Day* (Ivory, 1993), *Shadowlands* (Attenborough, 1993).

3. The 'Raj Revival' films, set in colonial India: *Gandhi*, *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India*, *The Far Pavilions*, *The Jewel in the Crown*, *The Deceivers* (Meyer, 1988) and the Kenyan-set *White Mischief* (Radford, 1987).

4. Historical dramas, which are representations of real events and figures from documented history, such as *Gandhi*, *Lady Jane* (Nunn, 1985), *Mrs Brown* (Madden, 1997), *Shadowlands* and *Wilde* (Gilbert, 1997).

5. Shakespeare adaptations, e.g. Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* (1989), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Hamlet* (1996), *Othello* (Parker, 1995), *A midsummer Night's Dream* (Noble, 1996) and *Twelfth Night* (Nunn, 1996).

In Hall's classification, certain films appear in more than one category, as is the case of *Shadowlands* (both a biopic and a modern literary adaptation) or *Gandhi*, which is both a Raj film and a biopic, as well as a historical and a literary adaptation (Fischer's biography, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, 1951, was Attenborough's main source).

In fact, Claire Monk affirms that the term *heritage film* is a critical construct, the result of an academic debate taking place in the late 1980s and 1990s which reflected on the nature of the films produced during the Thatcher decade and afterwards (2002: 177). Ian Goode historicises the critical label by referring to Barr's coinage of the term in his analysis of 1940 productions and Higson's subsequent appropriation of the tag in his overview of period films released in the 1980s. In contrast to Richard Dyer's broader vision of historical or heritage cinema as a transnational phenomenon, Higson prefers to interpret such cinematic productions as 'symptomatic of cultural developments in Margaret Thatcher's Britain in the 1980s' (2003: 295).[153]

Claire Monk identifies an evolution in heritage films criticism. She observes that debates were first polarised between right and left-wing critics, who praised or despised the screen fictions on the grounds of the ideological interpretations attached to them. The professor of modern history at Oxford, Norman Stone, wrote an article in the *Sunday Times* (10/01/1988) in which he praised the heritage productions of the time such as *A Passage to India*, *A Room with a View*, and *Hope and Glory* (Boorman, 1987) because of their portrayal of traditional British values, while condemning the social realist films of the 1980s, which he considered 'a worthless insulting farrago […] of six tawdry, ragged, rancidly provincial films' (in Fuller, 1988: 62).[154] These conservative views found a rapid response from left-wing critics who reversed the issue: they praised the social-realist films

[153] In Hill's words, 'The British film industry underwent unpleasant shock therapy under Thatcherism' (2001: 315).
[154] Among the films he despised were Jarman's *The Last of England* (1988), Richardson's *Eat the Rich* (1987), and Frears' *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987).

which condemned present-day Thatcherite politics while dismissing the conservative visions of heritage films.[155] According to Claire Monk, critics acclaimed this trend of social realist films because they were perceived as ‘realist, socially critical and/or politically engaged’ (2002: 178). On the one hand, these same critics disapproved of films such as *Chariots of Fire* (Hudson, 1981), *Another Country* (Kanievska, 1984), *A Passage to India* (Lean, 1984), *A Handful of Dust* (Sturridge, 1988) because they saw them as working in line with the heritage industry in their commodification of the past and in their nostalgic and conservative celebration of English upper class values that ignored the heterogeneity of contemporary Britain. Likewise, early writings by Andrew Higson, and especially critics such as Cairns Craig[156] and Tana Wollen (1991: 178-193) adamantly criticised what they called ‘white-flannel films’ or ‘nostalgic screen fictions’, which they perceived as ideologically complicit with Thatcherite Conservatism (Monk, 2002: 177).

As the debate continued into the late 1980s and 1990s, critics gradually abandoned the left-right stance and moved towards more complex approaches to the films, discovering different levels of analysis and unravelling the various discourses present in these productions. More recently, Andrew Higson has developed his views on the heritage film. He mentions how feminist and gay criticism has revised their views of heritage productions. As these films concentrate on the private, feminine spheres where female and gay characters are portrayed, it seems that their long-standing silence has found a space to be voiced (2003: 47). Pam Cook, for instance, highlights the importance of the feminine space in costume dramas in general – she mentions Gainsborough’s melodramas of the 1940s. She identifies a renewed interest in the women’s picture in the 1980s thanks to

[155] Other examples of those films are: *Fatherland* (Loach, 1986), *Saigon: The Year of the Cat* (Frears, 1987), *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (Greenaway, 1989).

[156] Cairns affirms that: ‘The [heritage] films also reflect the conflict of a nation committed to an international market place that diminishes the significance of Englishness and at the same time seeking to compensate by asserting “traditional” English values, whether Victorian or provincial. If for an international audience, the England these films validate and advertise is a park theme of the past, then for an English audience they gratify the need to find points of certainty within English culture’ (1991: 10).

heritage productions which, in her view, provided audiences with ‘a feminisation of history’ (1996: 67-77).

The identification of heritage productions as ‘quality films’, standing somewhere in-between mainstream cinema and the art-house, has also proved problematic. As ‘in-betweeners’, these movies have been despised by both extremes as ‘too middle-brow’. To put it differently, these productions may be disparaged by ‘art’ critics who consider them ‘too commercial’ in their commodification of British culture to reach the status of ‘art cinema’. Such criticism recalls the distinction made by Matthew Arnold between high and popular culture, and his clear favouring of high culture as against mass consumption. After the tremendous success of *Chariots of Fire* at the beginning of the decade, a vast number of similar films appeared in the 1980s which contributed to the labelling of these productions as ‘genre films’ in their formulaic repetition of certain patterns aimed exclusively at profit-making. Drawing their arguments from the Romantic concept of art as original individuality and the disparagement of popular culture in Arnoldian terms, critics defending a more elitist conception of art could not speak in favour of these filmic productions. On the other hand, it is precisely these films’ elitist portrayal an extinct upper classes that is also a source of disapproving criticism for those who regard art or cultural products as socially committed tools.

The debate provoked by the heritage films as representations of the past can also be inserted in the general background of postmodern culture and its parodic nature. This obsession for the return to the past at all levels of society, as described by Raphael Samuel and David Lowenthal, has provoked the re-enactment of visions of the past in cinema as well. The past is very frequently represented on screen with new versions of classical literary texts, some of which have been adapted into films on more than one occasion.[157]

[157] So far, Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, for instance, counts with no less than twenty-four adaptations for cinema and television (www.imdb.com).

This is yet another reason that attaches a negative meaning to heritage productions: that of endless repetition of past events – a fact that points at the impossibility of creating something new. This is what Linda Hutcheon would call the 'decadent' vision of the parody or what Jameson labels 'nostalgia-deco', i.e. the emotionless aesthetic pastiche of the past. Nonetheless, if envisaged as re-visions of history, heritage films could also be considered as forward-looking parodic repetitions with differences, to use Hutcheon's expression.

Admittedly, as was the case with historical films and costume dramas in previous decades, heritage films make constant allusions to the past with tinges of nostalgia. On the one hand, heritage films are accused of reinforcing old-fashioned myths of common origin for the nation, while complying with the formal characteristics of a 'truly British' national cinema. On the other hand, marginal elements try to make room for themselves in the centre, both in terms of their social struggle for their right of representation as in more textual and commercial premises of genre renewal.

Considering the social and political background against which these films were produced, it is important to recall that heritage film producers had no financial support from the government; they therefore had to look for financial funding in television and/or abroad. As a consequence, heritage filmmakers shared, with the rest of British artists, resentment against the government which gave no economic support to intellectual or artistic life, considering it merely another type of business or industry. The truth is that films like *Chariots of Fire* (Hudson, 1981), *Gandhi* (Attenborough, 1982), *Another Country* (Kanievska, 1984), *A Room with a View* (Ivory, 1985), *Maurice* (Ivory, 1987), or *Howards End* (Ivory, 1992), use the past as a commodity. They sell a particular version of the British identity that international audiences, particularly US audiences, want to see.

Thus, despite the fact that this kind of film did not rely on Hollywood-type action, violence or sex sensationalism, they were successful in the American market precisely because of their distinctive features. As Hipsky notices, the heritage films are an ‘affordable luxury’ that allows the American spectator to spend her/his leisure time in a ‘quality manner’, travelling to a distant past and exotic places with a ‘guilt-free nostagia’, since ‘American audiences do not generally feel implicated in the past sins of British imperialism’ (Hipsky, 1994: 102-106).

Paradoxically, the so-called ‘uncinematic characteristics of British cinema’ – restraint, unemotional realism, ‘quality’ middle-brow cultural products – are precisely the features that contributed to the international success of heritage films. Complying with audiences’ horizon of expectations in the combination of originality within the limits of familiar generic forms, heritage filmmakers knew how to adapt their productions, based on previous historical and costume dramas, to the new flavour of the heritage industry. The sense of Britishness was therefore present not only in the thematic content of these productions but in their formal mode of filmmaking.

Due to that success at home and abroad, the particular modes of representing the national identity on screen are worth analysing. As Robert A. Rosentone states, the portrayal of the past in film becomes a relevant issue especially as present-day societies are developed in a media world where the image is the main means of culture transmission: ‘[we] live in a world deluged with images, in which people increasingly receive their ideas about the past from motion pictures and television’ (1996: 22). Rosentone goes on to foreground the ‘cinematic realism’ of these films that leads the spectator to believe that the screen is a transparent ‘window to the past’, and that the pictures display true facts rather than fictional events (54). Nevertheless, as stated before, heritage films can be looked upon as offering a vision, or rather a ‘re-vision’ of the past from the perspective of the present

(Higson, 1993: 126-8). Hence, in the same manner that, as Croce argued, 'all history is contemporary history', the heritage films provide more information of how their contemporary society faces its own present and past identity than of the past times actually portrayed. As the present is often perceived as a chaotic and unstable place where the construction of one's own identity seems impossible, the nostalgic element in the heritage films is a useful tool that serves to reaffirm damaged, present-day identities (Lowenthal, 1998: 41).

It would be interesting, though, to mention here the distinction Fred Davis makes between 'simple' and 'reflexive' nostalgia. As he explains, '"simple nostalgia" involves a straightforward belief in the superiority of the past over the present', while '"reflexive nostalgia" acknowledges that the past was not perfect and that, despite its many attractions, it also contained its faults' (in Hill, 1999: 84). Davis concludes that the nostalgia present in heritage films is a 'reflexive' one. However visually attractive the past is portrayed in these productions, it is shown to be socially imperfect. What is interesting about these films is how historic flaws are echoed in the present. John Hill gives some concrete examples:

> *Maurice* and *Another Country* both deal with the intolerance shown to homosexuals and many of the films more generally are preoccupied with the social constraints imposed upon the expression of the characters' desires (e.g. *Heat and Dust*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *The Bridge*) (1999: 84).

Taking all these different views and approaches into account, what recent criticism seems to agree on is the fact that different interpretations are possible, and all of them should be considered in order to have a wider and richer vision of the heritage films. Monk has complained that, very often, the critics' conception of the heritage films as a 'genre' or 'cycle' has often disregarded the differences between concrete screen productions. For this reason she recommends a close reading of the particular texts to draw out similarities, differences and tensions between and within them (Monk, 2002: 181).[158]

[158] Monk also highlights the importance of the historical context in differentiating the films made in the 1980s against the political background of Thatcherism, and those produced in the mid-1990s with Blair's

And yet, for all the conspicuous differences that could be elicited between the particular texts, heritage films have many characteristics in common regarding form and content. The concrete generic themes in the productions of the 1980s are mostly social dramas, close to the women's fiction and that thus privilege a female point of view (or male homosexual), rather than epics of great heroes or the re-enactment of crucial historical events. This characteristic implies a character-study rather than action-oriented narrative. That is why, the casting and performance are very important features in these films. There are a group of actors that repeat the same kind of role in different films, a fact that confers them intertextual significances. These actors are of two kinds. On the one hand, there are well-known British stars, like Anthony Hopkins, Judy Dench or Maggie Smith, who add a prestigious dimension to the films and put them in line with the British theatrical tradition, linking, once more, these cinematographic productions with an indigenous element of British national identity. On the other hand, there are young actors that made a name for themselves in their frequent appearances in such films. This is the case of, for example, Helena Bonham Carter, Nigel Harvers or Hugh Grant (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 106-7; Higson, 2003: 29-32).

The emphasis on characters rather than on action is accompanied by a 'de-dramaticised' filmic style which is slow-moving, episodic and centred on an aesthetic display of the landscape or heritage properties. The narrative thus becomes a spectacle of the national heritage. As such, it has been qualified as 'museum aesthetic', 'pictorialist' and hence 'uncinematic' (Higson, 2003: 37-9, Monk, 2002: 178). If this style could be said to exemplify Jameson's notion of 'nostalgia-deco' in the emphasis it makes on an aestheticist lack of emotion in the representation of the past, Higson argues that the

New Labour and his discourses on 'Cool Britannia' on the one hand, and, on the other, the 'boom' of the heritage industry and heritage films becoming already 'worn-out' and audiences demanding something new to consume. In other words, the generic horizon of expectations was requiring innovation. That is why a new label was created for these late productions as 'post-heritage' film (Monk, 2002: 181-2).

melodramatic displacement of emotion over the mise-en-scène could also be understood as 'a return of the repressed', or what Davis called a 'revisionist nostalgia' (2003: 40).[159] Nonetheless, this feature has tended to provoke negative critical assessments, as this spectacular display is often associated with the English – rather than British – upper-classes of the rural South.

Taking into account the artificial, overlapping and hybrid nature of any classification, I would avoid labelling the heritage films of the 1980s as belonging to a genre, sub-genre or cycle. And yet, within these filmic representations of the past that emerged in the decade of the 1980s, a significant branch of nostalgic productions might be distinguished in those films located in India. They share many of the characteristics attached to the heritage films, although they overlap with other genres or categories which provide them with particular meanings.

To sum up, the main feature in the analysis of heritage productions are the tensions that can be perceived at different levels. Firstly, the tension related to the representation of a national identity in productions that, more often than not, are made by international teams. Secondly, and following this first notion, the tension in constructing an authentic, historic portrayal of Britishness but rendering it internationally saleable and economically viable (Monk, 2002: 1). Thirdly, the clash or tension between the critics who view heritage films as 'quality films', set between mainstream cinema and the art-house, and those who dismiss heritage films as middle-brow cinematic versions of high-brow literary sources (Higson, 2003: 89-92). Finally, the films' ambivalence as regards old-fashioned conservative versions of Britishness as against their revision of the past which includes previously marginalised voices.

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[159] Dyer disagrees with the label 'unemotional' attached to English cinema and argues that in spite of the 'emotionally inexpressive' characters, 'unemphatic acting' and 'unobtrusive direction', films such as *Shadowlands*, 'make you cry' because, he argues, 'feeling is expressed in what is not said or done, and/or in the suggestiveness of settings, music and situation' (1994:17).

An in depth analysis of the 1980s Raj films will show that the voices of these marginalized groups are, precisely, the ones that are given prominence in these accounts of the imperial past in India. The next section will centre on the Raj Revival films and most particularly on how the racial problems of contemporary Britain are explored, albeit in an implicit way.

4. THE RAJ REVIVAL FILMS IN THE 1980s

As seen in the previous chapter, an outstanding feature of British cinema in the 1980s is the emergence and success of the heritage films. The so-called Raj films share similar characteristics of style and narrative with the heritage productions, although this particular group of films includes the particularity of the setting: colonial India. Hence, it could be argued that the Raj films constitute a branch within the all-embracing category of the heritage film. The label attached to this group of screen fictions was coined in a disparaging way, as a result of the critical controversy over the ambivalent nature of heritage films. Salman Rushdie called the Indian-set films 'Raj Revival fictions'. By means of this expression, he was criticising the nostalgic return to the times when Britain was a powerful Empire. In his view, Raj Revival fictions helped audiences forget the traumatic post-colonial present reality (1992: 87).[160] In her article on heritage films, or rather 'nostalgic screen fictions', Tana Wollen uses Rushdie's labelling to refer to these 'imperial' productions with the same pejorative connotations (2001: 183). Andrew Higson also distinguishes the Raj films as a 'cycle of films and TV programmes about the Raj' and he refers to them as 'imperial fantasies' within his broader analysis of heritage films (1993: 123).

I agree with Higson in the consideration of these filmic and television productions as a cycle within the group of the heritage films made in the 1980s. I prefer to call them *Raj films* or *productions* because this label reflects both the temporal and spatial dimension of the cinematic representations without adding the negative connotations of the term 'revival' employed by Rushdie. It is also necessary to notice that this categorisation comprises not only movies made for the screen but also TV series that were released

[160] The article 'Outside the Whale' was originally published in *Granta* in 1984.

during the same time-span. Significantly enough, while heritage films were produced throughout the Thatcher decade and actually increased in number during the 1990s, and into the 2000s (now referred to by some critics as 'post-heritage films'), the British Raj productions converge in the first half of the 1980s: *Gandhi* was released in 1982, *Heat and Dust* in 1983, *A Passage to India* and *Kim*[161] in 1984 – the very year the mini series *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* were broadcast on Channel Four and ITV, respectively.[162]

4.1. Cinematographic Representations of the Empire

4.1.1. Adventure and Male Enterprise

In the same way that the heritage films of the 1980s did not come out of a vacuum,[163] the cinematic roots of Raj productions can be found in what Marcia Landy calls 'the films of empire' (1991: 97). In the case of Britain, the transformation of the 'empire film' genre is quite significant. As an impure category, the so-called 'empire film' (Landy, 1991: 10; Chowdhry, 2000: 1; Richards, 1986: 140) actually presents conventions typical of other cinematic genres such as the adventure film, the western, the war film, the historical film, the biopic, the melodrama, the heritage film and the women's picture. Significantly enough, the degree in which these ingredients appear varies depending on the period the film was released. According to Altman's theory, marginal elements have been

[161] John Davis Howard's version of *Kim* was a made-for-TV film which was distributed by the U.S. American company CBS and first released in the United States.

[162] It is true that 1988 witnessed the release of another film set in the Indian past, *The Deceivers* (Meyer). However, it was not as successful as the previous productions and is not strictly a Raj film, since it is set in India in the years previous to British rule in the country. It is also important to notice that amidst all the films which recall Britain's imperial past, only one of them is set in Africa, rather than in India, *White Mischief* (Radford, 1988); this film should therefore be called an *Empire*, not a *Raj* film. Hence, although it shares some of the characteristics of the heritage and Raj films, it will not be part of the present analysis.

[163] As seen in the previous chapter, heritage films had their antecedents in the historical films and costume dramas.

incorporated into the centre thus provoking an evolution from masculine action-adventure plots to more feminine melodramatic pictures, which coincide with pre- and post- colonial eras. Critics have labelled these cycles of cinematographic productions set in the empire with different names. The ones produced in colonial times – mostly during the 1930s and 1940s – were called 'empire films', while the post-colonial ones, produced mainly in the 1980s, were called Raj revival productions (Rushdie, 1992: 87; Wollen, 2001: 183; Hill, 1999: 99).

The empire films were very successful, box-office hitting productions in the 1930s and 1940s, both in Britain and abroad. Set in the late nineteenth century, their plots centred mostly on defence of the colonies. The evil character corresponded more often than not to an ambitious tribal chief whose malevolent plans were instigated and/or buttressed by outsiders such as Afghans, Russians or Germans. The films invariably presented a happy ending with the British portrayed as good protectors of the natives.

The films of empire thus celebrated 'the triumph of British law, order and civilization over barbarism' (97). Examples of these empire screen fictions range from Alexander Korda's productions such as *Sanders of the River* (1935), *The Drum* (1938), *The Four Feathers* (1939), to other films such as *Rhodes of Africa* (Viertel, 1936), *The Great Barrier* (Barkas and Roswer, 1936), *King Solomon's Mines* (Stevenson, 1937), *Elephant Boy* (Flaherty and Korda, 1937), *The Thief of Bagdag* (Powell, 1940), *Men of Two Worlds* (Dickinson, 1946), *The Seekers* (Annakin, 1954), *Simba* (Hurst, 1955), *North West Frontier* (Thompson, 1959), *Karthoum* (Dearden, 1966) and *The Long Duel* (Annakin, 1967).

Ella Shohat and Robert Stam foreground the significant role of these screen fictions in shaping the imperial imaginary. They point to the fact that the beginnings of cinema coincided with the heights of imperialism. Shohat and Stam argue that the leading

imperialist countries – Britain, France, the U.S. and Germany – were also the leading film-producing countries in the silent period. Accordingly, there was a clear aim to portray on screen not only a positive but also a popular image of the imperial enterprise that would spread beyond the ruling elites. These popular images, it was believed, would transform class solidarity into national solidarity, and thus divert inner social divisions abroad (2003: 100). Basing their argument on Anderson's theory on how national imagery is constructed through collective reading of novels and the written press, Shohat and Stam highlight the social function of cinema in shaping collective identities in the first quarter of the twentieth century. In their view, the very act of cinema-going was quite significant:

> The cinema's institutional ritual of gathering a community – spectators who share a region, language and culture – homologizes, in a sense, the symbolic gathering of the nation […]. While the novel is consumed in solitude, the film is enjoyed in a gregarious space, where the ephemeral communitas of spectatorship can take on a national or imperial thrust. Thus the cinema can play a more assertive role in fostering group identities (2003: 103).

Another important point is the fact that cinema does not require literacy. Thus, unlike the novel, it was more accessible to a wide range of the population as popular entertainment. Finally, empire screen fictions reinforced the exotic 'otherness' of distant cultures, converting them into objectified spectacle for the Western spectator:

> The 'spatially-mobilized visuality' of the I/eye of empire spiralled outward around the globe, creating a visceral, kinetic sense of imperial travel and conquest, transforming European spectators into armchair conquistadors, affirming their sense of power while turning the colonies into spectacle for the metropole's voyeuristic gaze (104).

The cinematic portrayal of colonised 'primitive' peoples as objects of the Westerner's gaze went hand in hand with the scientific improvements and classification theories that aimed at ordering – and thus controlling – those regarded as inferior groups. In this respect, both fiction films and documentaries offered moving picture versions of the static museum displays.

James Chapman notices that the heyday of the empire film was the 1930s, a time when the empire was not a relic of the past but a present-day reality. Accordingly, the

empire films were not nostalgic but propagandistic of an ideology that was also disseminated through other cultural products such as books, postcards or stamps (2001: 218). Conversely, Shohat and Stam remark that, already in the 1930s and 1940s, some of the empire filmmakers preferred to portray a 'nostalgic look back at the "pioneering" days of "exploration" rather than tackling a frontal examination of the quotidian brutality of latter-day imperialism'. However, for all their temporal displacement, the films' propagandistic overtone remained firmly in place (2003: 110). In any case, these films became successful productions not only in Britain but also abroad. They were appropriated by Hollywood studios, which made productions that shared with their British counterparts the pro-imperialist ideology with the triumph of civilisation over savagery.[164] Apart from the ideological resonance of these films, their popularity was also the result of the narratives of adventure and the exotic flavour and spectacle – visual and musical – these productions offered.[165]

[164] Examples of empire films made in Hollywood are *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (Hathaway, 1935), *Clive of India* (Boleslawski, 1935), *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (Curtiz, 1936), *Wee Willie Winkie* (Ford, 1937), *Storm over Bengal* (Salkow, 1938), *Four Men and a Prayer* (Ford, 1938), *The Sun Never Sets* (Lee, 1939), *Gunga Din* (Stevens, 1939) and *The Rains Came* (Brown, 1939). Chowdhry points at the ambivalent ideological position of these U.S: films. On the one hand, they shared with the British productions the Eurocentric imperialist ideology, on the other hand, the United States sympathised with the colonies' drives for independence, the nation having itself been a colony that had fought a successful war against the metropolis. It could be said that 'the United States identified with Britain on racial grounds but was uncertain in relation to the political situation'. As a result, 'Hollywood emphasised the unique imperial status, cultural and racial superiority and patriotic pride not only of the British but of the entire white Western world' (2000: 38). Shohat and Stam also identify a great number of French feature films that dealt with the imperialist enterprise. They argue that, although Britain was the master of the imperial epic, the fact that these films were produced by different Western countries reinforced the bond between white Western countries as against the 'savage', 'other' colonised peoples, thus spreading the Eurocentric notion of imperial, civilising enterprise (2003: 110-113).

[165] As Bertolt Brecht explained: In the film *Gunga Din* […] I saw the British occupation forces fighting a native population. An Indian tribe […] attacked a body of British troops stationed in India. The Indians were primitive creatures, either comic or wicked: comic when loyal to the British and wicked when hostile. The British soldiers were honest, good-humoured chaps and when they used they fists on the mob and 'knocked some sense' into them the audience laughed. One of the Indians betrayed his compatriots to the British, sacrificed his life so that his fellow country-men should be defeated, and earned the audience's heart-felt applause. My heart was touched too: I felt like applauding and laughed at the right places. Despite the fact that I knew all the time that there was something wrong, that the Indians are not primitive and uncultured people but have a magnificent age-old culture, and that this Gunga Din could also be seen in a different light e.g. as a traitor to his people, I was amused and touched because this utterly distorted account was an artistic success (in Richards, 1986: 144).

Apart from the ideological resonance of these films, their popularity was also the result of the narratives of adventure and the exotic flavour and spectacle – visual and musical – these productions offered. In Marcia Landy's view, the empire films' narrative structure and visual style bring them close to the western. She argues that these films celebrate patriotism and myths of national identity in the same manner as the American western and the Japanese samurai film. Besides, they could be labelled as 'genres of order', because they proclaim the establishment of law and order in the community. Landy includes Schatz's definition of the 'genres of order' to prove that the empire film fits perfectly within this category:

> [These films] are characterized by the presence of an individual male protagonist, generally a redeemer figure, who is the focus of dramatic conflicts within a setting of contested space. As such, the hero mediates conflicts inherent with his milieu. Conflicts within these genres are externalized, translated into violence, and usually resolved through the elimination of some threat to social order' (Schatz in Landy, 1991: 97).

Similar to the western as they may be, the empire films show some differences attributed to British culture. According to Landy, the British hero appears as an example of the values of his class and British culture, an agent of his community. He distances himself from the rugged Western individual who often appears at odds with his own society. Rather than a self-made man, he is often a member of the upper classes, educated at the best British public schools. That is why, in the treatment of violence, the contrast between civilisation and the savagery of the natives is magnified: while in the Western the source of violence comes from both the hero and his antagonists, in the Empire film violence is attributed primarily to the 'barbarous Africans' or 'treacherous Asians' (Landy, 1991: 98). On the other hand, the representation of the natives and of female characters in the Empire film is more similar to the Western. Portrayed in simple and often stereotyped traits, they usually have the exclusive function of impersonating the antagonists or the supporters of the hero, (Pines, 2001: 177).

According to Landy, in the films of Empire, indigenous people could be classified into three types: the childlike natives, who are often misled by false promises of power, the faithful servants who remain loyal to their British masters and thus to the Empire, and the 'unscrupulous native leaders' who try to establish their own tyrannical power against the benevolent, paternal and civilising British administration (1991: 98). These types correspond to the cultural stereotypes of non-white people, often conceived of as either childish or irrational, evil people. Under the first category we would find the 'noble savage' or faithful servant always guided by the European/Western/white paternal figure, while the second type would correspond to the threatening, selfish antagonist whom the British hero has to defeat for order, reason and peace to be restored to the community of natives oppressed by their own peoples.

In the Empire films, female characters are either absent or are relegated to a secondary status. If white, they are the wives, brides or daughters of the commander or explorer, whose presence is required to either help the hero, be rescued by him or just to ensure his heterosexuality in an almost all-male cast film. According to Chowdhry, female characters in the films are often 'colonial wives' that 'were indeed looked upon as bearers of a special civilising mission to both the colonised and their own men (2000: 76). Similarly, Jeffrey Richards points out that female characters in these films are

> mother-substitutes incarnating the imperial ethic, as stand-ins for the Great White Mother, Victoria herself […]. The central relationships of the Empire in reality, in literature and on film are between men, with the whole presided over by an almost deified Mother. If Kim is perhaps the archetypal hero of this world of boys and overgrown boys, it is surely Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up, who mythically expresses the whole psychological orientation (1986: 148).

A significant trait of these films that will change in the Raj productions of the 1980s is the identification of white women with the white sphere, either in Britain or in the British headquarters in the colony: 'The British women are identified, if not overidentified, with the aims of the protagonist, but they are not associated in any way with the indigenous community. Rather they are associated either with home or with their temporary quarters in

the garrison' (Landy, 1991: 99). On the other hand, the native woman is rarely individuated but presented in a group, as an exotic element of the landscape because of her physical appearance or because she occasionally performs indigenous dances. Sometimes she is allied with the antagonist and presented as a troublemaker doomed to die as the *femme fatale* or the tragic mulatta.[166]

The Second World War marked a change in the empire film genre, which presented a shift in the treatment of characters and plots. During the war and immediately after it, there was an attempt to portray a more positive image of Indians, especially the Indian army, which had contributed to the efforts of the war. The post-war years were tense as the subcontinent's independence was approaching, so that the parochial and paternalist feeling of superiority of British over Indian characters in films was becoming more and more problematic for audiences, especially in the colony. As a result, the empire films of that epoch presented more complexity in the portrayal of British and Indian characters.[167] Prem Chowdhry also highlights the fact that female characters start to gain preponderance in some of the post-war empire films:

> The substitution of the white female in place of the white male as the imperial protagonist had a range of ideological consequences, such as adding to the essence of 'whiteness' the emphasis of the non-threatening white woman and therefore feminine nature of imperialism opened up new possibilities for negotiating a different agenda within the colonial setting (2000: 10).

India's independence in 1947 and the Suez crisis in 1956 demonstrated the diminishing power of Britain's imperial enterprise in the world. As a consequence, films made in the late 1950s and 1960s started to add a flavour of nostalgia together with a more ambivalent and complex conception of the relationship between Britain and its colonies.

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[166] In the case of empire films set in Africa, native women often appeared naked, reinforcing the 'scopophilic display of aliens as spectacle', while white actresses had to adjust to the codes of nudity censorship (Shohat and Stam, 2003: 108).

[167] *The Drum* and *Gunga Din*, for instance, had to be banned in India, as their parochial portrayal of British colonial power was no longer welcomed by increasing nationalist Indian audiences. Prem Chowdhry mentions the film *The Rains that Came*, released in 1940, as an example of this cinematic shift, as it altered old stereotypes in order to reconcile the political and cultural tensions of the time (2000: 3).

North West Frontier (Thompson, 1959) is a film that contains many of the elements of the Western, as the words ‘West’ and ‘Frontier’ in its very title indicate (Figure 1). The action takes place on a train that is crossing the wild desert and that is frequently attacked by rebel Indians. The only difference this films and the U.S. American Western seems to lie in the fact that instead of Native-American ‘Indians’, the ‘baddies’ are ‘Asian Indians’. There is a British hero, Captain Scott (Kenneth More), whose mission consists in rescuing a Hindu prince from rebellious Muslim tribes and taking him to a safe place. Even though the British hero is clearly favoured, the imperialist enterprise is criticised throughout the narrative. In his analysis of the film, James Chapman argues that:

> Captain Scott (Kenneth More) distances himself from the gung-ho attitude of the British warrior caste imagined in imperial fiction (‘A soldier’s job, Mr Peters, is not primarily to kill’, he tells an arms salesman who is one of the party. ‘We have to keep order, to prevent your customers from tearing each other into pieces’), while traditional British character and customs are mocked by Lauren Bacall’s forthright American governess (‘The British never seem to do anything until they’ve had a cup of tea, and by that time it’s too late’). In response to Scott’s paternalistic statement that the rebels are ‘only children’, the villain Van Leyden (Herbert Lom) points out that they are ‘fighting for freedom – for the freedom of their country’ (2001: 220).

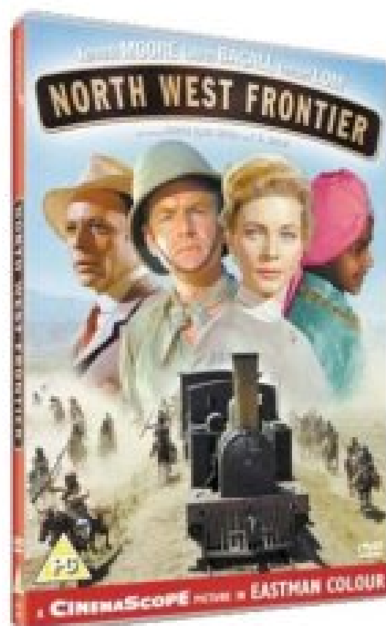

Figure 1
(Downloaded from Google)

In spite of this criticism, the British presence in India is justified by presenting the savagery of the natives who fight among themselves and will go as far as killing a five-year old boy because of his princely position. The British, therefore, are needed to keep order in that otherwise chaotic country. Chapman adds that: 'The British supremacy is assured, moreover, through the inspired use of the "Eton Boating Song" on the soundtrack as the party are carried to safety by an old train symbolically named "Empress of India"' (220). The ending is even more symbolic. In their adventure journey, the female character (Lauren Bacall), who has a more prominent role in this movie than in previous Empire fictions, rescues an Indian baby from a terrible massacre perpetrated by rival communities of Indians.

The film's ending, with the hero and heroine walking together with the baby as a family, suggests that the relationship initiated in the narrative has turned to love, and that the new Anglo-American couple is going to adopt the Indian baby. In 1959, three years after the Suez Canal crisis, it seems that Britain needed America's help to look after the East in a paternal relationship. The English-American family is thus presented as an imperial allegory. In such films, American characters often play a role of mediators, reflecting the historical in-betweenners of the United Stated 'as at once an anticolonial revolutionary power and a colonizing hegemonic power in relation to Native American and African peoples' (Shohat and Stam, 2003: 113).[168]

The villain in the film is a character that stands in-between Eastern and Western cultures. Van Leyden – played by the white actor Herbert Lom – is an apparently westernised journalist who, in fact, is a Muslim who has infiltrated himself in the train

[168] A similar situation occurs in *Simba*, (Hurst, 1955), the film ending with a white couple taking care of a native baby. For a detailed analysis of this movie see Landy (1991: 115-7). Shohat and Stam mention the American film *Wee Willie Winkie* as another example for the portrayal of the symbolic English-American family (2003: 112-3).

party to boycott the rescue of the child-prince. The enemy, in this case, is literally ‘within’, a ‘mimic’ man who tries to destroy the benevolent Western colonising enterprise.

Characters caught between two cultures start to make more frequent appearances in the post-war empire films. In other movies, it is not the villain but the hero who develops a more complex relationship with the antagonist. This is the case of films such as *The Long Duel* (Annakin, 1967) (Figure 2) and *Khartoum* (Dearden, 1967) (Figure 3). In the former, the British protagonist, Freddy Young, (Trevor Howard) identifies totally with the Indian antagonist, Sultan, (Yul Brynner) to the extent that they look like two sides of the same coin and admire each other profoundly. But social circumstances lead them to confrontation and eventually to the final defeat of the Indian.[169] Young is loyal to the British Empire and to his duty as a police officer; and yet he loves India deeply and appreciates the country and its people. He therefore stands in-between two cultures and he even refuses to begin a love relationship with an attractive British woman if it entails abandoning his beloved India. He ends up adopting the Sultan’s son as the ‘antagonist’ requested him to do before he died. Cultures seem to merge in this close relationship between the two main characters. Even so, presented as a father and son relationship, this bond tends to reinforce the paternal mission of the West over the East. The portrayal of the hero’s individual sacrifice in favour of his civilising mission in the colonies is a recurrent topic in these films which justifies the relationships of power and domination of the West over the East (Pines, 2001: 177).

[169] There is such a mutual attraction between these two characters that the presence of women is needed in order to avoid any kind of homoerotic hint in this relationship.

Figure 2
(Downloaded from Google)

The hero in *Khartoum*, the brave General Charles Gordon (Charlton Heston), also sacrifices his life for the land he loves most, Sudan. Even though he knows he can never win, he prefers to die in that land rather than return alive to Britain. He knows the language and the customs of the people and regards himself as a father who has to protect his offspring from a Muslim fanatic. The Muslim leader, the *Mahdi* (Lawrence Olivier), whose aim is to conquer the territory, is presented as an intelligent and attractive character. Far from the simplistic stereotypes of villains in earlier empire films, he represents, in a sense, the General's alter ego. Although not as alluring as the character impersonated by Yul Brynner in *The Long Duel*, Olivier's role presents a higher complexity than the treacherous, childish or greedy villains of the 1930s Empire films. Hence, even though it is important to notice that these attractive villains are played by white actors rather than by any native Indian or Sudanese artist, it could be said that, in all these films, formerly marginal elements of the empire films were acquiring more visibility at the centre of the narratives.

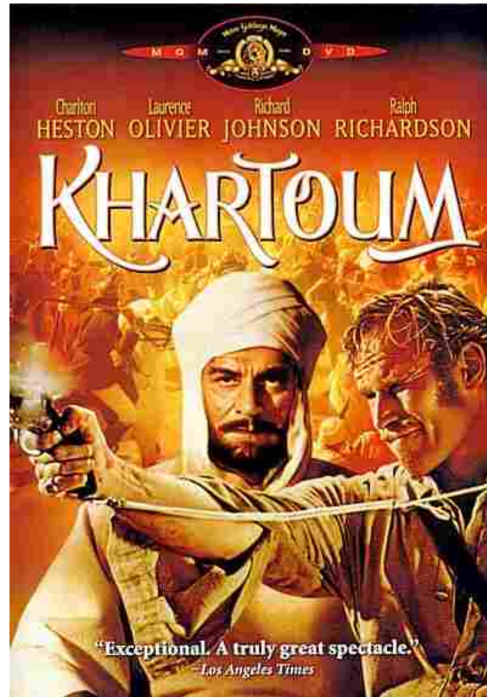

Figure 3
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4.1.2. Feminising the Empire

As just discussed, empire films prior to the 1980s display more conventions of the Western and adventure films than from any other genre. As a consequence, they could be said to belong to the category of 'masculine genres', since their narratives rely on action and on male enterprise aiming at the conquest of 'virgin' or 'primitive' territories. As Shohat and Stam expound: 'adventure films and the "adventure" of going to the cinema provided a vicarious experience of passionate fraternity, a playing field for the self-realization of European masculinity' (2003: 101).

Jeffey Richards postulates that the films of empire were adaptations of a tradition of adventure fiction in British literature:

> Martin Green's admirable pioneering work on the literature of adventure, Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire, is illuminating for adventure films. Green rescues a vital part of British literary heritage from the neglect into which it had been thrust by left-wing Little Englander 'Engl. Lit.' intellectuals, by establishing a 'great tradition of adventure', robust, masculine and direct, as

> opposed to the essentially feminie, delicate and refined 'Great Tradition' of F.R. Leavis. Counter-pointing Leavis' choice of Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James and D.H. Lawrence, Green selects Daniel Defoe, Walter Scott, Rudyard Kipling and Joseph Conrad [...]. Put it simply, it is the primacy of action as opposed to the primacy of feelings, and moreover action which is frequently imperially-based as opposed to specifically England-based, and the exaltation of the warrior-explorer-engineer-administrator-imperial paladin at the expense of the wilting provincial spinster (1986: 147).

Richards, therefore, points at this separation between masculine and feminine literary traditions which have been reflected in the cinematographic adaptations of the fictional texts at different periods. It is quite significant, then, that early empire films chose to adapt Green's 'masculine canon' in a time of colonial propaganda, while the nostalgic and revisionist mood of post-colonial Britain gave more preponderance to the 'effeminate' version of the literary canon in the adaptations on screen.

Historical films based on great epics, war films, on important battles or biopics of great men could also be regarded as 'masculine' films. These productions contrast with what has been called 'costume drama', a type of film often envisaged as a 'period branch' of the women's picture. This is the case of the British Gainsborough costume dramas which, instead of portraying publicly outstanding historical events, tend to focus on women's troubles in the days of yore. The past is just an excuse to add an exotic and glamorous touch to the setting, with great emphasis on the attractive visual display of women's clothes. On some occasions, historical accuracy is sacrificed for the sake of the visual display of the *atrezzo* in the *mise-en scène*.[170] In this respect, these kinds of filmic representations can be apprehended as somewhat at odds with the traditional 'quality', authenticity and realism of British cinema.

In the 1940s, there was a debate that concentrated on the attempt to establish a consensus on how British national cinema should be constituted. The views advanced focused mainly on 'officially sanctioned, realist "quality" films'. Nonetheless, Pam Cook argues that 'anti-consensual' films, such as the costume dramas of Powel and Pressburger

[170] See Cook, 1996: 74-5.

and Gainsborough, should not be disregarded in the study of a British national cinema because they became very popular, in box-office terms, at the time of their release (Cook, 1996: 5). To recapitulate, it could be said that both their focus on domestic, private, ‘female’ issues and their tendency to sacrifice ‘objective’ historical accuracy for the sake of aestheticism and fantasy, resulted in the dismissal of costume dramas by the academy in spite of their popular success with audiences. This popularity – especially among female audiences – could also be seen as reinforcing, once more, the Arnoldian dichotomy between high-low culture which, in terms of film analysis, established a ‘canon’ of ‘good’ ‘artistic’ productions and ‘popular’ ‘entertainment’ movies.

At a time in when national or an individual identities are considered to be fluid and unstable, it is precisely terms such as ‘masquerade’, ‘pastiche’, ‘parody’ and ‘exaggeration’ that are beginning to attract more critical attention. Pam Cook defends the relevance of the 1940s costume dramas in their exploration of the female identity at an epoch when gender, ethnic and class boundaries were starting to crack. Cook asserts that Gainsborough costume dramas put:

> Identity itself in crisis through narratives of schizophrenia and amnesia and cross-cultural love affairs […]. Some of these films included a ‘who am I, where am I?’ scenario in which characters caught in identity crisis and memory loss provided a mirror for audience members experiencing an analogous loss of identity in the darkness of cinema. It is no coincidence that it was costume drama in which such adventures of hybridity took place. Costume drama, with its emphasis on masquerade, is a prime vehicle for exploration of identity, encouraging cross-dressing not only between characters, but metaphorically between characters and spectators, in the sense that the latter can be seen as trying on a variety of roles in the course of the film […]. Despite extensive and meticulous period research, anachronisms and geographical transgressions abound – indeed, they are endemic to the genre. This element of travesty is closely related to pastiche in mixing of styles, and it militates against fixed identities in a similar way (1996: 6-7).

Cook points out contemporary critics’ dismissal of 1940s costume dramas. In her analysis, she includes reviews of films like Arliss’s *The Wicked Lady* (1945), in which critics wrote of the disgust provoked in them by the film; Simon Harcout-Smith, for instance, stated that this film aroused in him ‘a nausea out of proportion to the subject’ (in Cook, 1996: 64). Cook argues that this excessive repulsion caused by such films is closely

related to the issue of feminophobia as well as to the bourgeois preference for a utilitarian rather than a romantic aesthetic (64-6). She reaches the conclusion that:

> This tension between truthfulness and infidelity, and the heterogeneous characteristic of the historical film's encounters with the past, are a constant irritation for critics and official agencies concerned with the role of history in national culture […]. Clearly, what is at stake is the status of history itself as truth, a vital issue when it comes to represent the national past. The contradictory nature of the historical film, the tendency of costume and period display to appear as masquerade, brings it uncomfortably close to presenting history as fabrication (1996: 67-8).

The representation of history as 'masquerade', or the questioning of master-narratives and 'official' accounts of the past is acquiring more visibility through contemporary portrayals of former times by previously silenced minorities, in both written and visual media. More often than not, these 'alternative' accounts of the past contradict, subvert or question what until then had been regarded as unquestionable truths. It is important to notice that, eventually, and often as a result of steady struggle, peripheral voices have come to be heard in the centre. In his study on the representation of colonised people, Edward Said speculated that:

> It was only when subaltern figures like women, Orientals, blacks and other 'natives' made enough noise that they were paid attention to, and asked in so to speak. Before that they were more or less ignored, like the servants in the nineteenth-century English novels, *there*, but unaccounted for except as useful parts of the setting (1989: 210; italics in original).

Nevertheless, the voicing of former silenced groups may result from other social factors. Because of the 'fluid' nature of the ever-changing postmodern world – to use Bauman's words – constant renewal of every field in society (cultural, scientific, technological, commercial) is demanded. In capitalist societies, where every material, intellectual or cultural product can be turned into a commodity, 'fashionable' trends very quickly become obsolete. This circumstance may facilitate the intrusion of the margins in former central practices precisely because of their capacity to renew worn out structures. Thus, the emergence and gradual visibility in the representation of hitherto under- or mis-represented groups could be the outcome of a combination of two contemporary phenomena: on the one hand, the struggle for extending the liberal-humanist rights of

equality and liberty to *all* individuals, regardless of their social and cultural circumstances, through the legitimisation of every choice in identity construction; and, on the other hand, the capitalist need of innovative forms of commodification for profit-making practices. On this reading, the previously mentioned interest of the heritage enterprise in rescuing from 'official' historical oblivion the histories of the working classes, of women or of ethnic minorities could correspond to these groups' struggle for representation as well as to the profit-making pursuit in the commodification of products demanded by consumers who are already tired of 'great men's epics'.

In this respect, already in 1947, an internationally successful British film set in colonial India broke away from the set generic conventions of previous Empire films. *Black Narcissus* was a Powell and Pressburger melodrama centred on women's troubles, rather than a masculine war or conquering adventure in the exotic lands of the Empire (Figure 4). This 'woman's picture' depicted the adversity a group of Western nuns had to face when they were called to set up a convent in a remote village near the Himalayas. Interestingly enough, this movie introduces some topics that will be repeated in forthcoming Raj productions of the 1980s. Following the conventions of the melodrama, the main issue developed in the film is the hysterical crisis some of the nuns suffer in their unconscious attempts to release their repressed sexuality. This conflict is exacerbated by their exposure to the Indian weather, the overwhelming landscape and the impossibility to fully grasp the 'otherness' of the Indian peoples' culture. All these ingredients, together with the appearance of an attractive British agent, Mr Dean (David Farrar), provoke the return of repressed memories and fantasies in the nuns. The film makes use of long shots that portray the *sublime* landscape of the Indian high mountains and deep ravines with the incessant and adverse howling of the wind.[171]

[171] I use the term 'sublime' with the meaning of 'beautiful and threatening' that the Romantic artists employed. This notion was based on Burke's distinction between three types of landscape, 'picturesque', 'beautiful' and

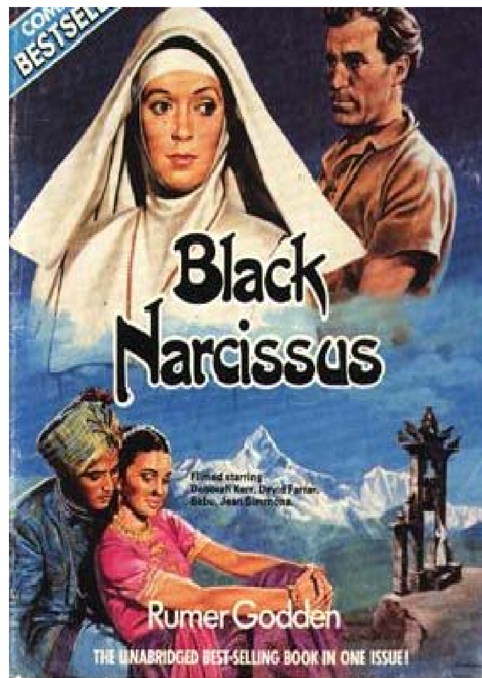

Figure 4
(Downloaded from Google)

In its combination of the women's picture narrative with the exotic setting of the British Empire in India,[172] *Black Narcissus* could therefore be considered a hallmark in the subsequent development of Raj productions. Produced precisely in the year India celebrated its independence, Powell and Pressburger's film abandons the masculine epic of adventure and centres on the female experience in the Empire. The feminisation of the topic and the date of the film are no mere coincidence. In an article on the film star Deborah Kerr, Celestino Deleyto carries out an insightful analysis in his comparison of the issues of femininity and empire comprised in the film through the character of Sister Clodagh played by this actress. In his own words:

'sublime', defining the latter as 'The passions which concern self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful when we have an idea of pain and danger, without being actually in such circumstances…Whatever excites this delight, I call *sublime*'. (1990: 36).

[172] Celestino Deleyto affirms that *Black Narcissus* is a forerunner of the Hollywood melodramas of the 1950s by Douglas Sirk, Vincente Minelli and Nicholas Ray 'both in its use of the Technicolor and its hysterical displacement of repressed meaning on to the surface of the text' (2001: 126).

> Deborah Kerr, as Hollywood's prime embodiments of white spirituality in the 1950s, carries these theoretical contradictions in her persona at a time in which the imperial project is moving on to a new phase and, simultaneously, a time in which Victorian images of submissive femininity, a crucial component of the imperial project, are being replaced by a different type of female submissiveness, one which is more literally embodied and more openly sexualised (2001: 124).

Deleyto argues that Kerr, on the one hand, represents 'a modernised version of the stereotype of the Victorian lady' at a time when women had acquired a more independent status after their implication in the war effort' (2001: 120). This stereotype was thus revived as an attempt to make women return to their traditional feminine roles in the private sphere. On the other hand, the character played by Kerr often surrender real or metaphorically to their repressed desires, a fact that was more closely related to the new post-war woman.

Basing his theoretical framework on Richard Dyer's study on race in *White* (2005), Deleyto connects Kerr's ambivalent notions of femininity with the colonial enterprise and the white supremacy over darker bodies. According to Dyer, whiteness is not only associated with the 'invisible norm', but also with spirituality, which is opposed to the material body, carnality, and thus, sexuality. This link makes it paradoxical for whites to perpetuate whiteness, because 'having sex, and sexual desire, are not very white' (Dyer in Deleyto, 2001: 123). This contradiction is even more outstanding in the white woman, generally more closely associated with spirituality than the white man.[173] This ambivalence is clearly expressed in *Black Narcissus*, which depicts spiritually pure women (nuns) having to come to terms with the 'unwhite' and 'unfeminine' sexual desire when confronting the exoticism of colonial 'otherness'. The female characters in the film accomplish the aims of the colonial discourse in the 'sacrifice' of their own lives in favour of the 'civilisation' of the childish native. In other words, these nuns exemplify what Kipling called the 'white man's burden'. Notwithstanding, these nuns fail, and the blame is put on their gender. The colonial enterprise is therefore the 'white *man*'s burden', not the

[173] See Dyer 2005: 127-142.

'white *woman*'s burden'. When the nuns arrive in the village, Mr Dean bets that they will be leaving before the rain season starts, and his predictions become true at the end of the film. Interestingly enough, a similar comment will later be repeated in Lean's *A Passage to India*, when two Indian characters joke about the difficulties the British come up against when trying to adapt to Indian customs, and comment that sahibs do not stay in India for longer than two years. 'The memsahibs are even worse, I do not give them more than two months' is the concluding witticism.[174]

The discourse that ascribes the end of imperialism to the 'feminine' is cinematographically inaugurated in *Black Narcissus*, and will be the most recurrent topic in the subsequent Raj films of the 1980s. As Deleyto remarks: 'In *Black Narcissus*, the white nuns' inability to keep the convent open symbolically marks India's imminent independence and, quite fantastically, blames it on women, or, to be more precise, on the feminisation of empire' (2001: 125).

In Orientalist discourses, the East is symbolically feminised and eroticised. In the film this is represented through the Indian general's (Sabu) clothes and perfume, the young Indian woman's (Jean Simmons) open sexuality and through the picturing of the convent as the former Raja's harem. With this in mind, Deleyto concludes that:

> Even Mr Dean, the representative of traditional (and traditionally unproblematic) male colonial power, seems to have fallen prey to the attraction of the Orient: his decadence, his passivity, his role as an object of the nun's desire, even his external appearance and his visual objectification, all point to the loss of the empire through the feminisation of male imperial power. Victorian femininity and colonial power are, therefore, finally defeated by the association of female desire and the exotic (2001: 126).

The final scene of the film portrays the defeated nuns leaving the place under the heavy rains, as if overwhelmed by the excesses of the weather and of the Indian landscape. The forces of Oriental nature destabilising the social order through female weakness will be a recurrent topic in subsequent Raj films. Adela in *A Passage to India*, Olivia in *Heat*

[174] 'Memsahib' was the name the Indians gave to the European ladies who accompanied the 'Sahibs', that is, the European men (Hand, 1993: 153).

and Dust, Daphne in *The Jewel in the Crown*, are all female characters who surrender to the allures of India and who destabilise the relationships of power between the British and Indian communities.

Nonetheless, in spite of the systematic blaming of women for the collapse of the imperial enterprise, recent Raj productions offer a wider range of complex interpretations. To begin with, even if the ultimate aim of contemporary empire films is to portray them as responsible for the end of colonialism, they give more preponderance to female characters than their action-adventure predecessors. In this sense, filmic narrations of the empire have become feminised. To continue, this feminisation opened up new possibilities for the portrayal of intercultural relationships outside the rigid patriarchal colonial hierarchy. In the post-colonial world of the 1980s, colonial discourses were not only questioned but also rejected in favour of new possibilities of multicultural relationships.[175]

Tana Wollen observes that in the Raj fictions of the 1980s 'it is women who have access to a keener conscience and because they have less to lose are made less anxious by historical inevitability' (2001: 183), Accordingly, the filmic portrayal of women as responsible for the end of the empire should not be entirely taken as a negative trait. These female characters rebel against the old patriarchal and colonial order and although they are punished with death or isolation, their attempts to erase the frontier that separated 'norm' and 'otherness' could be interpreted as a brave and positive task.

The drift towards feminisation was not an exclusive feature of cinema. It was, in fact, a general trend in society which provoked controversial debates and struggles between different feminist and anti-feminist movements. In his book *Forever England. Reflections on Masculinity and Empire*, Jonathan Rutherford delineates the changing social

[175] Interestingly enough, Shohat and Stam identify various films made by female directors in France in the 1990s – Claire Denis' *Chocolat*, Marie-France Pisier's *Bal du Governeur* and Brigitte Rouan's *Outremer* –, which 'shift their focus from male aggressivity to female domesticity, and to the glimmerings of a feminist/anticolonialist consciousness provoked by transgression of the taboo on inter-racial desire' (2003: 123).

trends concerning issues of gender and race within the imperial and post-imperial context. He mentions the loss of male power in society at the expense of female independence and the subsequent anti-feminist backlash that started in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s.[176] Feminism was not only blamed for promoting antagonism between men and women but also as the cause of male fragility before divorce laws and child custody. According to anti-feminists, the declining authority of the father and the prevalence of female-led, one-parent families resulted in a feminisation of society, which was the cause of most social troubles. Later on, these fatherless families were closely associated with the figure of the rioter 'black youth' of Afro-Caribbean origin who, in most cases, came from 'dislocated' family backgrounds, characterised by the absence of a masculine figure of authority.

On the one hand, the 1980s witnessed the emergence of a 'caring and sharing' New Man; on the other, this image gradually came under attack from those who defended the return to man's inherent virility and power in society (Rutherford, 1997: 142-4). These two tendencies were both present in what Robert Bly called the 'naïve man' who, 'beneath his nice exterior is a man full of misogynistic anger (in Rutherford, 1997: 145). The reaction against this 'naïve man' results in the polarisation of men as victims and women as persecutors. Interestingly enough, those who launchered such attacks against feminism were white middle-class men who had lived through the social movements of the New Left in the 1960s. Rutherford mentions Neil Lyndon's writings on the topic, in which he argued that white, middle-class students fell into a political masochism that revealed black people as revolutionary agents and white people as the enemy. The conclusion reached by Lyndon was that social movements such as Black Power, but also Marxism and feminism were anti-rational and socially destructive. Rutherford links this argument to the origins of the

[176] See Whelehan, 2000: 20-22

New Right perspective on race expoinded by Enoch Powell, in his 1970s speech 'The Enemy Within':

> Powell described the enemies of society as multifaceted and potentially everywhere. But he was quite clear in their social origin: they began with the influx of 'Negroes' into the Northern states of America, which flung them into the 'furnace of anarchy' and created 'Black Power'. Powell described 'race' as the common factor linking the operations of 'the enemy' on several fronts. 'Race' was the signifier of difference or 'otherness' subsuming the social antagonisms of the youth revolt, women's protest and class conflict under its rubric […]. The themes of race, the undermining of fatherhood and the family, and the racial and gendered treachery of the liberal intelligentsia have been the key preoccupations of the new right discourse since the 1980s (1997: 147-8).

The loss of power of the white middle-class man therefore provoked a reaction against the social movements that defended the rights of formerly marginalised groups. Henceforth, the destabilisation of social order brought about by these movements was seen to cause social malaise. That is why the main cause for inner city violence and decay was identified in the anti-social behaviour of black youth. These black, West Indians came mostly from dislocated families with a high percentage of paternal absenteeism. For many, this explained their violence and their lack of ethics and morality, since they were unaware of the 'Law of the Father' which could have acted as a vehicle for socialisation.

This discourse, articulated by the New Right in the 1980s, carefully established a causal relation between 'absent fathers, social disorder and the ties of national-racial identity':

> The Law of the Father is seen to protect the racial continuity and homogeneity of the family and of the nation. Anxieties aroused by the imagined failure of white patrimony create a desire for reassertion of the symbolic function of the White Father, to guard against miscegenation and to propagate a white ethnic patrilineality. This Law of the Father is expressed by politicians and political commentators in that ubiquitous and ambiguous phrase, family values. As long as it remains predominant, white men can aspire to dream of a patriarchal authority (Rutherford, 1997: 149-50).

The defence of white patriarchal power becomes more complicated when associated to issues of identity construction. As explained before, every process of identity construction needs the presence of the 'other' for the 'Self' to be consolidated. This 'other' also becomes the target unto which the unaccepted pulses of the self are projected.

Perceived as it is as a potential threat for national white patriarchal order, the 'other' therefore represents a source of fear and loathing.

An important point to be signalled here is how the contingency of self and 'otherness' varies according to the interests of the self defended in a particular moment in time. For instance, in the 1980s, social decay was ascribed to West-Indian blacks, whose lack of family structure relegated them onto the furthest extreme of 'otherness'. South Asian families, especially those of Muslim origin, were regarded as 'other' in terms of their religion. However, their emphasis on family unit and hard work in the small businesses brought them closer to the spirit of Thatcherism than to the anti-social black youngster. This scale of 'otherness' dramatically changed after the Rushdie affair, which automatically exacerbated the fanatic facet attributed to Islam.[177]

These changing social trends were accompanied by other discourses which tried to unveil the mechanisms that naturalise the relationships of power in construction between self and 'otherness'. That is why, both feminism and anti-feminism, racism and anti-racism were questioned in their competing struggle to attain a prominent and authoritative status. In this sense, the feminisation of the empire films, the inclusion of nostalgic elements, together with formerly marginalised voices and narratives make of the Raj films of the 1980s a complex arena of competing discourses which aroused heated debates and interpretations.

In terms of ethnic representation, Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer argue that the 1980s was an important decade for the reconfiguration of discourses on 'race' in cinema. They pinpoint the noticeable process of de-marginalisation that took place at the time in the following words:

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[177] Needless to say, the 9/11, 3/11 and 7/7 Islamic terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London contributed to place Muslims on the extreme of otherness and threat against Western civilisation, while non-Muslim non-whites, such as people of West Indian origin, stand somewhere in-between.

> One issue at stake, we suggest, is the potential break up or deconstruction of structures that determine what is regarded as culturally marginal. Ethnicity has emerged as a key issue as various 'marginal' practices (black British film, for instance) are becoming de-marginalised at a time when 'centred' discourses of cultural authority and legitimation (such as notions of trans-historical artistic 'canon') are becoming increasingly de-centred and destabilized, called into question from within (1996: 451).[178]

To sum up, following Altman's theory on the connection between generic and social hybridisation of margins and genres, it is interesting to notice that in the 1980s, the resurgence of the 'historical' genre in the form of the heritage film, came accompanied with a combination of ingredients from both the 'accuracy' and 'quality' of the historical film, but with a great emphasis on female issues which brought them closer to the women's picture, costume drama or melodrama than to the historical epics of national heroes or great events. With the exception of Attenborough's *Gandhi*, which focuses on the political activities of the Indian – male – leader, without much room for his personal life, the other Raj films concentrate on the domestic side of the Empire, thus giving a prominent role to female characters and their troubling relationships with non-white men in the narratives. The result of this feminisation of the genre is a combination, on the one hand, of a nostalgic return to the past that blames the loss of power on women, and, on the other hand, of forward-looking discourses evoking new possibilities for intercultural relations.

[178] It is interesting to notice that Julien and Mercer's article was first published in the introduction to *Screen* 29 (4), in 1988, and the issue was entitled 'The Last "Special Issue" on Race?' They explain that the very existence of 'special issues' calls attention to a particular subject yet, by the same stroke of hand it reinforces the 'otherness' and marginality of the topic. The inclusion of 'last' reveals their belief that, at the end of the 80s, the subject of 'ethnicity' starts to reach a status of centrality or normalisation, in other words, of de-marginalisation.

4.2. The 1980s Raj Films Debate

In 1984, one of the harshest critiques against the Raj films was expressed by Salman Rushdie in his article 'Outside the Whale'. He complained about the omnipresence of the British Raj in literature, cinema and television and the lack of accuracy in its portrayal. At a time when non-white minorities claimed for their rights of representation, Rushdie lamented that these Raj revival fictions clung to the old orientalist visions of the Empire which invariably entailed denigrating and stereotyped portrayals of South Asians. Rushdie condemned the perpetuation of false ideas of the Orient in 1980s productions and connected this matter with the context of Thatcher's Britain:

> The continuing decline, the growing poverty and the meanness of spirit of much of Thatcherite Britain encourages many Britons to turn their eyes nostalgically to the lost hour of their precedence. The recrudescence of imperialist ideology and the popularity of Raj fictions put one in mind of the phantom twitchings of an amputated limb. Britain is in danger of entering a condition of cultural psychosis, in which it begins once again to strut and to posture like a great power while, in fact, its power diminishes every year […]. The rise of Raj revisionism, exemplified by the huge success of these fictions, is the artistic counterpart of the rise of conservative ideologies in modern Britain (1992: 92).

Rushdie left no room for ambiguity and attacked the fictions' revision of the past from a Eurocentric point of view which granted psychological depth to British characters while perpetuating simple stereotypes of non-white 'natives'. For him, the ultimate aim was to diminish the negative repercussions of the Empire over the East. He concluded that these representations of the past portrayed a series of notions that should be contested, such as:

> The idea that non-violence makes successful revolutions; the peculiar notion that Kasturba Gandhi could have confided the secrets of her sex-life to Margaret Bourke-White; the bizarre implication that any Indians could look like or speak like Amy Irving or Christopher Lee; the view (which underlies many of these works) that the British and Indians actually understood each other jolly well, and that the end of the Empire was a sort of gentleman's agreement between old pals at the club; the revisionist theory – see David Lean's interviews – that *we, the British, weren't as bad as people make out*; the calumny, to which the use of rape-plots lends credence, that frail English roses were in constant sexual danger from lust-crazed wogs (just such a fear lay behind General Dyer's Amritsar massacre); and, above all, the fantasy that the British Empire represented something 'noble' or 'great' about Britain; that it was, in spite all its flaws and meanness and bigotries, fundamentally glamorous (1992: 101).

'Glamour' is a word once and again repeated in the critiques against the Raj productions. In his analysis of the heritage films, Andrew Higson included a section on what he named as 'imperialist fantasies of national identity', which he identified as 'conservative responses to a collective, postimperialist anxiety' (1993: 123). Initially, Higson argued that two opposite conclusions could be elicited from these films. On the one hand, these screen fictions recovered a nostalgic image of a pure, complete and stable national identity which helped the audience flee from the social, political and economic uncertainties of the present. Alternatively, Higson noticed that these narratives of the past were not set in a moment of complete stability but rather at a turning point when British power and cultural identity were beginning to crumble. They deal, for instance, with the last days of the Empire or with the decadence of the English upper classes: 'the idea of heritage implies a sense of inheritance, but it is precisely that which is on the wane in these films' (1993: 123).[179] Higson concluded that 'nostalgia is then both a narrative of loss, charting an imaginary historical trajectory from stability to instability, and at the same time a narrative of recovery, projecting the subject back into a comfortably closed past' (124).

Accordingly, these films do not offer an exclusively escapist portrayal of the past but rather a troubled revision of British history and identity. And yet, Higson manifested that the visual pleasure provided by heritage films – and more particularly, Raj productions – counteracted any intention to criticise the ills of the past in the narrative. As an example, he mentioned Lean's film *A Passage to India*, which, based on Forster's critical novel of the Empire, actually foregrounds the spectacle of British power: 'The theatricality of the Raj, and the epic sweep of the camera over an equally epic landscape and social class is utterly seductive, destroying all sense of critical distance and restoring the pomp of

[179] Higson remarked that however aligned with the Thatcherite call for a return to 'Victorian values', few of the Heritage and Raj films were, actually, set in the Victorian period (1993: 127).

Englishness felt to be lacking in the present' (1993: 124). Higson mentioned Patrick Wright's words which clearly reinforce this point: 'the national past is capable of finding splendour in old styles of political domination and of making an alluring romance out of atrocious colonial exploitation' (1993: 125).

Tana Wollen also points to this 'double standard movie making' which tends to surrender to the glamorous spectacle of the past in spite of its initial intention of acknowledging the shadier past of British history by adding 'occasional hints of something rotten' (2001: 182). Wollen mentions Rushdie's criticism of the portrayal in Raj fiction of a restricted white point of view which excludes other narratives and perspectives, together with Simon Hoggart's remarks on the 'severe reproaches to British history' provided in these films. She finally adds Harlan Kennedy's commentary on these ambiguous approaches to the imperial past:

> There is a love-hate relationship with the Empire in British cinema that's totally unresolved. Intellectually, we agree to eat humble pie about our imperial past. Emotionally, the impact of the India movies is to make us fall head over heels in love with the dear dead old days, when even Britain's villainies were Big; when even its blunders and failures had tragic status; and when, if we had nothing else, goddammit, at least we had glamour (2001: 185-5).

'Glamour' – namely the aesthetic predominance of what Jameson called 'nostalgia deco' – is once again what seems to ellude the revisionist criticism of the past. Wollen links this 'glamorous' and attractive formal portrayal of the British past with the modern practices of cinematographic production. She calls attention to the way in which screen fictions democratise and popularise historical knowledge through over-embellished images of past events. As she argues, it is as 'quality cultural products' that these productions gain respectability and thus legitimise the high degree of 'authenticity' in their reproduction of the past. On that account, Wollen condemns the fact that ideologically, this commodification of the past works in line with both Mrs Thatcher's championning of old values and her launching of the enterprise culture:

> Screen fictions, like other paraphernalia about the past, are acquirable consumer commodities. It is not just that audiences can witness other lives, other times and elsewheres at the screen's remove, it is also that the screen can present the past in such an intense and plausible way that audiences can almost partake of it […]. In showing a bourgeois past replete with objects and leisure, these fictions both declare those times and inequalities as dead and buried yet display them as presently available. Times are different now, they say, the gaps more easily bridged between rich and poor, black and white. The bridging, however, is partly a consequence of the increased purchasing power audiences have, their growing capacity to acquire commodities (2001: 192).

Although it is true that visual spectacle and commodification practices gave Raj films of the 1980s the authoritative value of accurate, quality portrayals of the past, this cycle of films also represents a step forward in the revision of the past relationships between East and West and their continuity in the present. From this perspective, John Hill proposes a complex approach to the competing meanings of the Raj revival filmic phenomenon by considering previous literature on the topic.

Hill mentions the influential writings of Salman Rushdie, Harlan Kennedy, Arthur Lindley and Michael Sragow who all agree that the visual attraction of the films undermines any critical reconsideration of Britain's troubled past. This said, Hill draws attention to two important issues at stake in these productions: the theme of 'Orientalism' and the 'metaphors of sexual encounter'. With respect to 'Orientalism', Hill shows how these films both perpetuate the Western fascination with the Eastern 'other' while simultaneously introducing sympathetic characters determined to overcome the East and West dichotomy: the clash of cultures and social barriers (Hill, 1999: 104). In a word, a tension may be perceived in these fictions between the wish to break out of cultural barriers and the perpetuation of orientalist discourses.

The second significant issue that Hill devotes attention to is the question of the East-West encounter symbolised by metaphors of sexual attraction. This figurative relationship he sees as represented in three variants. The first involves a Western man and an Eastern woman, a type of relation which stands for the European, patriarchal colonial dominance over the feminised Orient. This would be the case of *The Far Pavilions*, where

the Indian princess Anjuli (Amy Irving) obediently follows the white Anglo-Indian hero (Ben Cross) whom she refers to as ‘her lord and her life’. The second represents the East and the West in terms of male friendship, which points to the increasing equality between the two cultures, as made clear in *A Passage to India*’s highlighting of the relationship between Richard Fielding (James Fox) and Dr. Aziz (Victor Banerjee). The counterpart is a homoeroticised encounter that brings to the fore homosexual intercourse developing into sadistic relationships of power, as occurs with Captain Ronald Merrick (Tim Pigott-Smith) in *The Jewel in the Crown*. The third variant is a reversal of the first one, involving a Western woman and an Eastern man. Although recurrent in the Raj productions of the 1980s, this type of relationship is quite problematic since it portrays a difficult combination of power relationships in terms of gender and ethnicity, e.g. *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India* and *The Jewel in the Crown* (Hill, 1999: 106-112).

Hill concludes that the criticism of colonialism contained in Raj revival productions is embodied in characters who want to transcend cultural barriers. This wish is metaphorically represented by ‘the transgression of the taboo on interracial desire’ (Shohat in Hill, 1999: 117). The characters’ failure, however, can be interpreted as questioning the viability of such relations and, hence, as indirectly reinforcing the very barriers they intended to overcome. In any case, whether these films are read as critiques or reinforcements of imperial structures, Hill foregrounds their Eurocentric perspective and surmises that ‘the rather more difficult task of reimagining that experience in a more self-reflective and dialogistic form has […] barely begun’ (117). Taking Rick Altman’s definition of ‘genre’, it could be argued that the slight change of perspective results from some marginal elements that have been included. The issue at stake is the fact that more

marginal elements of the kind would subsequently be included in future productions, hoping that more dialogic screen fictions will be made.[180]

Narrowing down the matter to the concrete movies, object of my analysis, it could be said that they all share a *re*-vision of the British Empire in the colony regarded as 'the jewel in the crown', with the inclusion of characters that rebel against the imperial structures and the social order of their time. Closer analytical focus on each of these cinematographic productions will however reveal significant differences between the components of this filmic cycle. To begin with, two of them are not films but TV series, a feature that implies a variant in the formal structure of the text. Additionally, the treatment of generic conventions varies in every fictional portrayal of the Empire. As explained in the previous chapter, no film could be considered to belong to one particular genre in its 'pure' form. Although one genre may predominate, ingredients from other generic conventions may be present as well. The Raj films of the 1980s could be regarded as having evolved from former empire films to fusion with the conventions of the heritage film genre that mixes up elements of the historical film and costume drama. This blend has resulted in a 'privatisation' or 'feminisation' of the original action and adventure empire films. Notwithstanding this genre amalgamation, each and every film displays a different reshuffling of generic conventions, which leads to different perspectives on the imperial past.

A quick overview on the genres predominating in each Raj fiction would therefore prompt a reading of *Gandhi* as a bio-pic, *Heat and Dust* as an independent melodrama, *A Passage to India* as a melodrama with tinges of comedy, *The Deceivers* as adventure-

[180] The Raj revival cycle has not enjoyed a successful continuity after the late 1980s. Inter-cultural relationships, however, are being portrayed in films made mainly by Anglo-Indian directors or teams, who describe the experiences of non-white communities in contemporary Britain, as in Gurinder Chadha's *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002) or they go back to the recent past of the 1960s and 1970s, as portrayed in *Anita and Me* (Huseyin, 2002), *East is East* (O'Donnell, 1999). Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) is based on an English literary classic but set in India, yet it does not go back in time to revise the imperial past.

drama, *The Far Pavilions* as televised adventure-romance, and *The Jewel in the Crown* as a TV drama. While *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India* and *The Jewel in the Crown* clearly endorse many of the conventions of the heritage film, *Gandhi*, *The Far Pavilions* and *The Deceivers* and *Kim* are closer to the traditional empire film, historical epic or bio-pic of a great hero. More importantly, the most salient, formal features in each film will also be significant in the treatment of ideological premises at stake.

4.3. Re-construction of British History and Identity through a Historical Film. The Case of Attenborough's Gandhi

4.3.1. Re-Presenting History in a 1982 Film

Released on 30th November in India and 3rd December in the U.K., it could be said that Attenborough's *Gandhi* inaugurated the 1980s Raj revival cycle. Although it shares some formal and narrative characteristics with subsequent Raj films of the decade, *Gandhi* presents significant variants. The most obvious feature that distinguishes Attenborough's film from the other Raj productions is that it is based on actual historical events, not on literary fictions. Thus, the major difference that singles out this movie from the rest of Raj films is its treatment of history. While, as discussed before, *Black Narcissus* inaugurated a tendency towards the feminisation of the empire film, *Gandhi* still relies in the bio-pic formula, with the portrayal of the public deeds of a great man as the driving force in a linear conception of history.

In his analysis of the historical film, Robert Rosenstone stresses the fact that history 'is no more than a convention, or a series of conventions, by which we make meanings from the remains of the past'. He adds that, 'just as written history is not a solid and unproblematic object but a mode of thought, so is the historical film' (1995: 4). Because

the representation of history in cinema is just one more way to come to terms with the past, Rosenstone draws attention to the proliferation of this kind of film in communities 'in desperate need of historical connections'. As examples, he mentions 'post-colonial nations; long-established countries where political systems are in upheaval; societies recovering from totalitarian regimes or the horrors of war; ethnic, political, social or sexual minorities involved in the search to recapture or create viable heritages' (5). Accordingly, Britain, in its readjustment to a new position in the international sphere and the proliferation of new identities at home, reconstructs the past in order to find stable historical roots which may explain the instability of the present. This would explain the references not only to the times of the empire but also to the end of Britain's supra-power over the Indian continent in screen productions such as *Gandhi* and *The Jewel in the Crown*.

At first sight, the fact that an Englishman made a film on the person who played a key role in the independence of the colony seems to be a laudable feat (Sharma, 1995: 61). Nonetheless, a close cultural analysis of the film reveals that Attenborough's *Gandhi* reasserts the Conservative ideology of the times in Britain, which makes for the tremendous success of the film in the Anglo-Saxon world, both in terms of box-office and Academy awards.[181]

As seen before, it was in 1983, the year after *Gandhi* was released, that the Conservative Party gained a land-slide electoral victory in the wake of Argentinean defeat in the Falklands War. As Shailjia Sharma explains:

> Within three days, a disproportionately large naval force set off for the Falklands, including a small force of Gurkhas, a tribal people from India whom the British had organized militarily during the imperialist era and who were still fighting 'for the Crown' thirty years after decolonization. For many people, this was a chance to prove that Britannia still ruled the waves. The media and the government both encouraged this imperial revival (1995: 63).

[181] The film was awarded with of 8 Oscar prizes including best picture.

The jingoistic feeling of Britain being ‘Great again’ in protecting the democratic interest of the colonies contributed to reinforcing the re-construction of British identity as a powerful country by looking back to the nation’s glorious Imperial past (Wollen, 1991: 179). But this was also pictured as a time when ‘Britain was a racially “pure” and therefore a “united” nation, a time when problems of immigration and race tensions had not intruded’ (Sharma, 1995: 63).

In this context of nostalgic jingoism, the release of Gandhi’s biopic in the year of the Falklands War, portraying not the splendour of the Empire but the end of it, could have been a source of conflict. Nonetheless, far from causing any polemical debate or controversy, Attenborough’s film became a profit-making production. How is it possible that a film recalling such painful memories for the British should become such a tremendous success? A feasible answer could be the film’s functioning as a mechanism of catharsis, thanks to which a repressed trauma is released and, consequently, cured. Attenborough’s narration of the past may have helped British society confront historical memories and thus reach a stage of maturity that facilitated coming to terms with the new present-day British identity.

It could also be affirmed that Attenborough’s film is likewise a product of its time, especially in its commodification of the past and the nostalgic approach to it. This movie on the Indian leader leaves less room for ambivalence than other Raj productions of the time. All the criticism of the British Empire that can be perceived through the portrayal of Gandhi’s words and deeds is completely undermined by the visual splendour of the scenes. History is therefore turned into visual spectacle. Moreover, the filmic tools of editing and framing, together with the narrative devices of focalisation and character construction, contribute to a depiction of the British and the Western world in straight-forward positive terms, in spite of the fact that they were the target of Gandhi’s pacific fight.

Attenborough's production thus proved to be a commodification of the Orient, to the point that it has been regarded as a neo-imperial enterprise on the part of the West over the East: 'It was like the return of the Raj to the Indians, watching from the sidelines the arrival of Sir Richard Attenborough's film unit to make Gandhi had all the earmarks of an invading army' (Goodman, 1983: 30). In this respect, contentious debates were held on the question of the money invested in it.[182] While independent Indian filmmakers had always been fighting for more government subsidies, Attenborough, a non-Indian director, raised one-third of the film's budget from Indira Gandhi's government. Joan Goodman argues that Attenborough's film was granted the money denied to Indian directors because this film was designed as a profit-making production. Attenborough justifies himself by stating that he was, in fact, investing money in India's film industry:

> I did not ask for government money. It was offered to me and not as a grant or a loan, but as an investment which it was hoped would eventually accrue to the favour of Indian filmmakers. The Minister of Information, Vasant Sathe, suggested it be done through the NFDC (National Film Development Corporation), which would invite private finance as well. I agreed to this on condition that it would not take any money away from indigenous productions. I was assured it wouldn't, and therefore accepted most gracefully. What is more, the money was invested as it would be in a normal commercial enterprise, and the recoupment from profits is to remain with the NFDC and go forward financing other indigenous productions. If Gandhi is successful, it will help people like Ray, whom I adore and whose understanding I have sought (in Goodman, 1983: 31).[183]

Attenborough's statement echoes the paternalist attitude of the imperialist discourse Gandhi so adamantly rejected. Once again a white Westerner/Briton was using India's raw material – history – to make profit, with the excuse that it will benefit the development of the country.

Apart from the controversial issue of the commodification of Indian history by the British, *Gandhi* highlights the problem of screened representation of historical events. The

[182] Neither the Indian film industry in Bollywood, nor independent Indian filmmakers had made a film on Gandhi before Attenborough's production. Only a five-hour documentary on the life of the Mahatma had been released in India in 1968, *Mahatma: Life of Gandhi, 1869-1948* (V. Jhaveri). It was not until 1996 that Shyam Benegal made an intimate version of Gandhi's early years with *The Making of the Mahatma*. More recently, the Indian film industry released a movie tat focuses on Gandhi's private problems with his elder son Harilal in Feroz Abbas Khan's *Gandhi, My Father* (2007).

[183] Goodman also comments on the fact that Indian extras were paid 100 rupees a day while Europeans took 300. Although it was argued that this inequality of salary was due to the European's travelling expenses, the fact is that this kind discrimination is a pervasive practice at work in developing and developed countries (1983: 31).

narration of the past is never an objective task. In the case of motion pictures, events need to be rearranged in a classical cause-and-effect plot-line structure in order to fit into a 188-minute time-span. In three hours, *Gandhi* had to make sense for an international, mainly Western spectator who is not deeply familiarised with Indian culture or with the life of the Mahatma. As a consequence, a more or less intended or unconscious manipulation of history becomes unavoidable. As Attenborough himself acknowledges in the quotation included at the beginning of the film:

> No man's life can be encompassed in one telling. There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape a lifetime. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record and try to find one's way to the heart of the man…

Attenborough confesses that a selection of events has to be made in order to condense an entire life in three hours. The problematic part of the quotation is the inclusion of his intentions to be 'faithful in spirit to the record' and finding 'one's way to the heart of the man'. In other words, the audience is made to believe that they are going to find objectivity in the film as well as a study of Gandhi's 'heart', inner feelings and thoughts. As Robert Brown puts it:

> The question is whether a twenty-million-dollar epic made by a British producer-director and Western principal cast and crew, and with largely Western finance, can be faithful to both the heart and the record of someone who believed deeply in the separate cultural identity of the East, the simple life of a peasant and, above all, actions that should be judged in their own light regardless of history and posterity (1982: 285).

Attenborough's quotation is a mode of self-justification for the selection of the events he was forced to make, but his claims about remaining faithful to Gandhi's spirit ring false. According to Carr, the historian not only selects facts, but draws on particular cause-and-effect structures that elicit specific meanings from the events analysed: 'The hierarchy of causes, the relative significance of one cause or set of causes or of another, is the essence of his interpretation' (1983: 103). By stating that he is being 'faithful to the man', Attenborough

legitimised his own work as an objective truth, reinforced by the 'transparent' mode of filmmaking.[184]

In an interview on the making of the film Attenborough acknowledges that he remained faithful to the British mode of filmmaking in the tradition of realism and documentary style:

> very much in the tradition of British movies. There may be those who criticise it as being old fashioned, in that it is, I suppose, in the genre of people – and I don't put myself in the same class for a second – like David Lean, Carol Reed and so on […]. I want suspension of disbelief in movies to be absolute […]. I like disguising the camera movement, not taking it evident, as it were. Gandhi is very narrative in its form. There are no cinematic pyrotechnics […]. This *particular* subject, with its extraordinary simple and still image, placed in the foreground against a constantly moving mass of humanity – given the scale of it – it seems to me that the camera and the techniques should be almost unobtrusive' (1982: 10).

The implications are twofold. Firstly, the use of an indigenous form of filmmaking implies that the values of the British national cinema are reasserted. However 'exotic' the characters and the setting may be, the formal aspects of the motion picture work in line with the British film tradition. Its subsequent international success in terms of box-office and Academy awards allowed this British production to outstand Hollywood's Americanisation. The second implication is related to the issues of historical representation. Many of the scenes dealing with the public life of the Mahatma are portrayed in such a way as to invite spectators to believe they are watching a real historical record. Such would be the case of Gandhi's spectacular burial procession reported by an American journalist, or Gandhi's visit to London, presented in black-and-white images as if they were archive records. As Udayan Gupta remarks:

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[184] In his justification against the attack of those who did not agree with the fact that an Englishman could make a movie on Gandhi, Attenborough appealed to the objective perspective a non-Indian director could offer to the historical facts: 'The Indians are unable to separate the man historically due to what they have been taught emotionally. I wanted to tell the story of Gandhi the man, and all the connotations and premises and peripheral matters don't matter to me. A national army doesn't matter to me, political rivalries don't matter to me, the history of the Congress Party is not relevant. It is the man I care about and, if I am obsessive, it is as nothing compared to the Indians' (in Goodman, 1983: 31). With his patronising attitude, Attenborough seems to be unaware of the fact that, as a Briton, he is not completely foreign to that historical period, since the British may be as emotionally attached to those events as the Indians. In fact, as this analysis aims to prove, Attenborough did care about the role the British played in the events and how they are represented on screen.

> So believable is the funeral sequence that it is hard to distinguish it from documentary footage. Indeed, if there is one major achievement of Gandhi, it is presenting an aspect of Third World history, more specifically Indian, in a real context and in a manner that Western audiences are prepared to accept (1983: 46).

Notwithstanding, Rosentone argues that neither the documentary nor the historical film are 'a direct reflection of an outside reality, but a work consciously shaped into a narrative which […] creates the meaning of the material being conveyed' (1996: 33). A realistic aesthetic provokes an illusion of transparent access to the historical past. Since *Gandhi* is not based on a fictional literary text but a portrayal of events as experienced by a real flesh-and-blood person, the manipulation of history becomes quite dangerous: the film's documentary style makes the spectators believe that they are watching something that actually occurred rather than a piece of fiction. As a consequence, audiences tend to forget that, in spite of those efforts towards objectivity, what they are confronted with is not a transparent reproduction of the past but *a* version of the events. As Rosentone explains:

> History does not exist until it is created. And we create it in terms of our underlying values. Our kind of rigorous, 'scientific' history is in fact a product of history, our special history which includes a particular relationship to the written word, a rationalized economy, notions of individual rights, and the nation state, and many cultures have done quite well without it. Which is only to say that there are, as we all know but rarely acknowledge, many ways to represent and relate to the past (1996: 43).

Attenborough's film is thus just *one*, specifically British, interpretation of those historical events that culminated in India's independence. Through his 'transparent' mode of filmmaking and his claims of faithfulness to Gandhi's life, Attenborough joins in the nostalgic mood of the 1980s not only in portraying British Imperial past in India but in making claims at the beginning of the film of obtaining objective truths through historical documents. He relies on the nineteenth-century fetishism of facts and documents and seems to disregard the unavoidable process of interpretation. Nonetheless, as Carr explains:

> No document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought—what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought. None of this means anything until the historian has got to work on it and deciphered it. The facts, whether found in documents or

> not, have still to be processed by the historian before he can make any use of them: the use he makes of them is, if I may put it that way, the processing process (1983: 16).

The 1980s fascination with the past is thus reflected in Attenborough's way of approaching history. He seems to love the past and harks back to the stability of 'pre-postmodern' times. Yet, as said before, the past can only be revisited through the eyes of the present. In contrast to Professor Trevor-Roper's statement that 'a historian ought to love the past', Carr states: 'To love the past may easily be an expression of the nostalgic romanticism of old men and old societies, a symptom of loss of faith and interest in the present or future' (1983: 25). In this sense, Attenborough seems to look nostalgically to the past in order to bring it back to the present. And yet, we need to be aware of his particular vision of the history of India through a contemporary Western lens.

John Briley, the film's scriptwriter and winner of the 'Best Screenplay', Oscar Award, confessed in an article how difficult it had been to select those events in Gandhi's life that would make a good film. He stated that many fascinating deeds concerning Gandhi's personal life had to be sacrificed, as well as many of the Mahatma's philosophical and religious teachings in order highlight the *political* story and most particularly, Gandhi's use of non-violence: 'Twice in the course of writing I stopped because I didn't feel I could do justice to the man and make a commercial movie' (1996: 4).[185]

[185] Andrew Robinson focuses on the film's main elisions: 'Omitted influences and episodes include Gandhi's youth in a small princely state and his three years training as a barrister in London, where he abandoned an attempt to become an English gentleman and converted to vegetarianism. In South Africa his first-hand acquaintance with British brutality to the Zulus is left unrecorded, as the unpopular recruiting for the British in 1918. So is his fraught relationship with his dissolute eldest son throughout his life, and the attitudes of the rest of his children. His part in the growth of the Nationalist Movement and the manoeuvring of leaders in the 1930s, followed by his crisis of conscience over Indian involvement in the Second World War, are barely implied' (1983: 64).

The movie was therefore conceived as commercial and profit-making from the very beginning, and the filmmakers already had in mind the kind of spectatorship the film was going to address:

> I took the course of emphasizing Gandhi's political history and at the same time trying to make the man real and the drama exciting […]. At the same time I had to make the political context accessible to an audience that was largely uninformed about it. People in America did not know much about British rule in India, the political parties in India, or the nature of India's involvement in World War I and World War II. All these elements were critical to the story I wanted to tell and had to be incorporated in the film in such a way that made them seem an inevitably and necessary part of the story […]. Before I wrote *Gandhi* I travelled in America, speaking to a number of people about Gandhi, and the ignorance about him was massive […]. It was necessary to show Gandhi's greatness and Gandhi's impact not only on Indian society, but on British world and society (1996: 5).

The aims of the film were, therefore, to show Gandhi's greatness, to exhibit and dramatise his politics of non-violence and to convert these aspects of his life into an international hit. In order to achieve these goals, the complexity of India, the imperial relations with Britain and many facets of Gandhi's life and beliefs were very much simplified. Taking into account both the filmmaker's intentions and the context in which the film was made, I find it relevant to analyse some significant presences and absences that made the film not only more marketable for box-office purposes but also favourable to Conservative Western ideology.

4.3.2. History and the Individual: Gandhi becomes a God

In narrating Gandhi's life as the epic of a great man, Attenborough seems to have followed the nineteenth century philosophy of liberal historians who viewed history as 'something written by individuals about individuals' (Carr, 1983: 35). The film concentrates on the Mahatma as a crucial figure in the achievement of independence of India, and disregards many other historical processes that were working in the same direction at other levels of society. According to Carr, the ideology of the capitalist society, from its very early stages, emphasizes the role of individual initiative in the social order. Nevertheless, any past event

is 'a social process representing a specific stage in historical development, and cannot be explained in terms of a revolt of individuals against society or of an emancipation of individuals from social restraints' (1983: 34). Carr therefore warns readers that history should not be portrayed as the result of the action of a single individual, because:

> Human beings do not always, or perhaps even habitually, act from motives of which they are fully conscious or which they are willing to avow; and to exclude insight into unconscious or unavowed motives is surely a way of going about one's work with one eye wilfully shut (1983: 48).

Every nation or society at any point in history contains an arena of conflicting ideologies and cultural contestations. Consequently, individuals who act for, or rebel against, society are a reflection of these very conflicts already latent in the social sphere. History, then, can be understood as a process in which individuals act as social beings, and hence: 'the imaginary antithesis between society and the individual is no more than a red herring drawn across our path to confuse our thinking' (Carr, 1983: 55).

On this reading, the individuation of a historical event results from the romantic view of the individual hero, reinforced by the capitalist ideology of individualism. Clearly, Attenborough made use of one and another concept in the making of the film. This said, it is true that, in 1932, after many petitions, Gandhi decided to write an autobiography. Even so, he stated in the introduction how difficult it was for him to do so, as the biography was an alien genre for him, since it was a Western and not an Indian mode of writing:

> Writing an autobiography is a practice peculiar to the West. I know nobody in the East having written one, except amongst those who have come under Western influence [...]. But it is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will take the shape of an autobiography. But I shall not mind, if every page of it speaks only of my experiments. I believe, or at any rate flatter myself with the belief, that a connected account of all these experiments will not be without benefit to the reader (1982: 14).

For this reason, the book is entitled *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, as the Mahatma's main aim was to explain how his spiritual, religious, personal and political experiences gave shape to his way of thinking and acting right up until the 1930s. In many

ways, his reflections on his search for Truth resemble more the writings of an Indian spiritual master than the autobiography of a lawyer or politician.

In a recent book on Gandhi and his global legacy, David Hardiman carries out a very interesting analysis of the Mahatma's ideas and writings. One of the main points in Hardiman's study is his interpretation of Gandhi's texts as 'dialogic', to use Bakhtinian terminology. Influenced, in part, by Socrates' readings, but most importantly, by the dialogic nature of the *Bhagavad Gita*,[186] 'Gandhi presented both sides of the case, but in a manner which might lead both himself and his adversary towards a resolution, which he considers the "truth"' (2003: 6). As a profoundly spiritual and religious person, Gandhi believed in the existence of an eternal 'Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle' he equated with 'God', which could never be fully comprehended by human beings (Gandhi, 1982: 15). Consequently, in the earthly world, only imperfect human 'truths' can be ascertained. Imperfect and human as they may be, these truths are contingent and contextual, hence, always subject to contestation and revision. This is the reason why, in his political and philosophical writings and speeches, Gandhi always contemplated the ideas of his opponents and urged his followers to open their minds to the voice of the adversary or 'the other' (2003: 8-9).

In his autobiography, Gandhi shows himself to be torn between his personal ideas and his beliefs, his rational and his spiritual thoughts. As a consequence, he was constantly revising and reworking his convictions. His incessant experiments with truth led him to realise that his life was full of inconsistencies. On this view, it is not surprising to find statements in which Gandhi, the political and spiritual leader, rejected any kind of consistent ideology or systematised theory:

> I love to hear the words: 'Down with Gandhism'. An 'ism' deserves to be destroyed. It is a useless thing. The real thing is non-violence. It is immortal. It is enough for me if it remains alive. I am

[186] This sacred Indian text is written in the form of a dialogue between Krishna and the hero Arjuna. (see Martín, 2002: 9-32)

> eager to see Gandhism wiped out at an earlier date […]. In truth, I myself do not know what Gandhism means. I have not given anything new to the country. I have only given a new form to the traditional [wisdom] of India. It would therefore be wrong to call it Gandhism (in Hardiman, 2003: 9-10).

It was precisely his openness to the 'other' that made of him a controversial figure who had many enemies and opponents. First of all, the British governing classes feared that Gandhi's campaign would make them lose their privileges. They were therefore frequently infuriated by Gandhi's speeches attacking imperialism. They became particularly angry with Gandhi's answer, when asked about his opinion on Western civilisation, that 'it would be a good idea'. Before a such statement, Churchill reacted by calling Gandhi a 'fanatic' and 'a half-naked fakir' (in Hardiman, 2003: 238).

Gandhi was a devote Hindu but respected other religions which he regarded as variants with a common objective: the spiritual knowledge or fusion with the ultimate Truth or God. He was therefore resented by those Hindus who disapproved of Gandhi's defence of the Muslim cause in India and his friendship with Muslims. He also indirectly provoked negative reactions amongst Islamic separatists, who profoundly disagreed with Gandhi's conception of a unified India. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Islamic movement and first Prime Minister of Pakistan, was one of Gandhi's most vehement political rivals. On the other hand, orthodox Hindus did not agree either with Gandhi's attempted reform of the caste system and his insistence on removing the practice of untouchability. For their part, some 'Untouchables' resented Gandhi's paternalism in their cause (Metcalf, 2002: 176-7).

Marxists and socialists also criticised the way in which Gandhi defended the traditional peasant system and his focus on moral issues; they saw him as the leader of an emerging bourgeoisie. Social-liberal politicians, such as Nehru, refused to accept Gandhi's defence of rural India and objected to the Mahatma's dislike of Western industrialisation and technological progress, and their dehumanising urban societies. To sum up,

> [Gandhi] was accused, variously, of being an irresponsible trouble-maker by his colonial masters, a destroyer of social harmony by Indian traditionalists, a backward-looking crank by modernisers and progressives, an authoritarian leader by those within the movement who resented his style of leadership, a Hindu chauvinist by many Muslims, and a defender of high-caste elitism by lower-caste activists (Hardiman, 2003: 4).

The contradictory nature of Gandhi's own ideas is even more evident in his private life and personal relationships with his parents, friends, wife and children. Torn between his family and his duty as the leader of the country, his public demands for pacifism, understanding, humility and openness often reverted into patriarchal authoritarianism within his own family.[187]

Trying to find one's way to the heart of the man is therefore a very difficult task unless the intricacy of Gandhi's philosophy and the inconsistencies of his practices are acknowledged, as Gandhi himself tried to do. In the attempt to summarise the Mahatma's message in a blockbuster film addressed mainly to Western audiences, Gandhi's complex 'heart' and thoughts become simplified to the extreme. The problem in representing the life of a person and his historical context in a simplified way, with profit-making purposes and, on top of that, in a realistic style that offers the illusion of transparent access to the past events is that not only Gandhi's heart but history itself becomes manipulated. At this point, it is interesting to examine Gandhi's own concept of 'history' and how it is set in opposition to the film's portrayal of the past. Similarly to the metaphysical-driven structure of Gandhi's life and ideas, his conception of history departs from the cause-and-effect line towards progress rooted in the European Enlightenment stream of thought and gets closer to the ancient idea of 'myth'. In his own words: 'whereas generally history is a chronicle of kings and their wars, the future history will be the history of man' (Gandhi in Hardiman, 2003: 126).

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[187] Episodes on Gandhi as an authoritarian patriarch can be found in Fischer, 1997: 118-122, 261-270 and in the film *Gandhi, My Father*.

Hardiman argues that Gandhi was deeply influenced by Tolstoy's concept of history as produced by *many* people, that is, not only by great men but also common people, all acting in a range of different ways with unpredictable outcomes. Human beings do not really have full control in their writing of history. On the contrary, they are driven by an 'unknown substance of life', or as Gandhi would have it, by God (2003: 34). Suspicious of human truths, Gandhi rejected the claims of objectivity by academic historians and argued that mythical narrations of the past gave access to spiritual truths. In other words, Gandhi refused to be limited by the determinism of a lineal conception of history and preferred the openness of myth:[188]

> In Gandhi's view, human betterment thus lay in the realm of ethics (his 'truth') rather than in the working out of an illusory historical progress. Action dictated by an abstract historical need could never achieve the desired results. It was by defining an ethical life, and living according to that ideal in a very direct way, that one could do good in the world. Gandhi thus refused to try to justify his beliefs through an appeal to any historical meta-narrative (Hardiman, 2003: 35).

Two important features in the study of myth may prove useful in clarifying Gandhi's philosophy. To begin with, in his analysis of the concept of 'myth', Laurence Coupe considers that one relevant aspect that characterises mythical narrations is that of 'possibility'. On the one hand, myth may imply a verticality of hierarchy towards perfection, full development or what Aristotle called 'entelechy'. On the other hand, myth may also entail horizontality in its openness to other possible realities beyond the limits of the actual world: 'While myth may be paradigmatic, and while it may imply a social and cosmic order, or perfection, it also carries with it a promise of another mode of existence entirely, to be realised just beyond the present time and place' (1997: 8).

The second conspicuous aspect of myth is that it is set between 'ideology' and 'utopia'. On the one hand, the ideological function of myth is to serve as a socialising process of integration for the individuals of a community. In this sense, myth operates as a

[188] In contrast to the rational thought development in Europe from the Enlightenment, which provoked a process of demythologisation, Gandhi preferred *mythos* to *logos* (Coupe, 1997: 10).

form of preservation of social order and conservation of tradition. On the other hand, the utopian characteristic of myth comes as a disruptive force that may undermine the oppressive function of the ideology. Utopia opens up the possibility for change, transformation and hence liberation from the repressive structures of tradition. In Coupe's words: 'Utopia prevents ideology becoming a claustrophobic system; ideology prevents utopia becoming an empty fantasy. Myth, or the social imagination, involves both' (1997: 97).

This tension between ideology and utopia is probably what best explains Gandhi's experiments with 'truth' in the earthly matters of life and politics. Instead of being constrained by the limiting forces of history conceived as linear and static, Gandhi struggled towards the utopian possibilities of a mythical conception of past, present and future. Aware, though, of the ideological forces present in any human social formation, Gandhi's utopian desires were not 'empty fantasies' but incessantly reworked experiments. More importantly, as against the 'Enlightened' conception of linear, academic history, Gandhi's mythical perception of the world allowed him to open his mind to ever-present subaltern 'histories' and 'communities' suppressed in official versions. As Hardiman remarks, Gandhi adopted a

> 'traditional' Indian stance towards the past. He distinguishes this from a 'Judeo-Christian cosmology' that sees history as developing dialectically and materially in a way which limits the possibilities for the future, as people cannot, in this view, transcend the dialectic of a given time and period (2003: 35).

The relevant aspect of Gandhi's ideas is his mistrust of meta-narratives. Despite his spiritual belief in the single transcendental 'Truth' of God, he was perfectly aware that this 'Truth' could never be fully comprehended by human understanding. Consequently, human beings should not cling to totalitarian, ever-lasting narratives that do not assume the feasibility of their imperfection when confronting the 'other''s point of view. Attenborough, in contrast, offers a narrative of the past that leaves no room for dialogism.

He presents the past as if objectively attainable, disregarding the fact that any text is mediated by tropes or poetic mechanisms – to use Hayden White's terminology – that make of any attempted 'presentation' of the past a mediated '*re*-presentation'.

In the first place, Attenborough – following Louis Fischer's narrative structure – has the film begin with Gandhi's death. These very powerful scenes enhance the expectations of the audience. Who was that man whose last words after being murdered were 'Oh God'? Why was his funeral followed by so many people in that huge and solemn procession that had such a worldwide impact? Who was the assassin and what led him to shoot such an extraordinary man? The rest of the film comes as a series flashbacks starting with Gandhi as a young man travelling to South Africa. From that moment on, the spectators believe that the film will provide answers to those questions posed in its disturbing first scenes.

Hence, by using Gandhi's murder and state funeral as an introduction to the film, one of the effects is to provoke suspense and, in this way, to invite viewers to satisfy the expectations created.[189] Even so, the imposing, opening vista of the funeral has further ideological implications that will be reinforced at the end of the film, when the very same scene will be repeated. And yet, the spectators will find as they watch the film that all the questions raised by Gandhi's murder are left without answers. As said before, the screenwriter lamented that he had to skip many relevant aspects of Gandhi's life to 'package' his biography into a three-hour film. Curiously enough, a filmmaker who tries to

[189] Comparing the beginning of *Gandhi* with Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, Attenborough explains that his aim was quite different from Lean's: 'The memorial service at the beginning of Lawrence was done in order to set out the potential examination of the complexities of that particular character […]. Gandhi was to all intents and purposes, not the antithesis, but very, very dissimilar in his youth to the figure who eventually emerges in the early 1900s, and then, of course, comes into full blossom as the first part of the century goes by' (1982: 4). Bearing in mind that the potential Western audience of the film had little knowledge of Gandhi, it was necessary to start the film with the funeral scene which made them be aware of the fact that the man they are seeing was considered by 350 million people almost a deity. '[W]ithout that knowledge, your anticipation of, and excitement and interest in the way in which he reaches a point of decision, a moral judgement, is not as enhanced as it could be the other way. I accept that there is inevitably a loss at the end of the film, on one level—of surprise in relation to the assassination. But on the other hand, I mean you either trip on the banana skin or you see the banana skin then you trip (1982: 6).

compress the deeds of such a world-famous figure in the usual filmic time-slot devotes no less than eight minutes in presenting the same scene twice over.[190] My argument is that the film's introduction is crucial to appropriate the figure of Gandhi within Western ideological discourses and as a means of justifying the supremacy of the West in the present through a particular vision of the past.

Attenborough was aware of the fact that Nehru wanted to preserve the figure of the Mahatma as a human being and thus avoid any kind of supernatural dimension. Although Attenborough insisted on the fact that he wanted to portray Gandhi as a human being, the outcome in the film is quite questionable:

> Nehru said: 'Don't deify him; he was too great a man to be deified'. And Gandhi, when pressed for what his credo was, for what meant something to him, ended up by saying, if there is ever 'Gandhism', I hope I am wiped off the slate. Whatever value there is, it is my life. My *life* is my message […]. I felt for the first time deeply touched by what a man had to say, and what a man was prepared to do, and what a man believed was possible, as far as all human beings were concerned. Not as a deity, in any sense whatsoever: an ordinary human being (1982: 4).

It is true that, in India, Gandhi was already very much admired and worshipped by the people who called him 'Mahatma' – the great soul – yet this name had no value whatsoever for him: 'Often the title has deeply pained me […]. The more I reflect and look back on the past, the more vividly do I feel my limitations' (1982: 14).

In a review of the film in *The Times*, Salman Rushdie stated that:

> deification is an Indian disease and in India Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, great soul, little father, has been raised higher than anyone in the pantheon of latter-day gods. 'But why', I was asked more than once in India recently, 'why should an Englishman want to deify Gandhi?' (1983: 10).

Rushdie explains that one of the reasons might be the perpetuation of orientalist discourses that portray India as an exotic, mystical place. Although Attenborough contributes to the depiction of Gandhi as a superhuman, mythical character, the great man is not assimilated to a sadhu – saintly Indian men who look for union with the deity – nor is there any attempt to compare him to a Hindu god. The English filmmaker carefully

[190] Each scene picturing the murder takes two minutes and is followed, in the first case, by the funeral and, in the second, by the cremation, each lasting two minutes.

reinforces the presentation of Gandhi as a Christ-like figure: someone who is murdered by his own people and whose last words are dedicated to God. In the same way as Christ said 'Abba' just before dying, Gandhi utters 'Oh God' when he is shot. Even the murderer's, Nathuram Godse, respectful reverence before the killing reminds of Judas's kiss. Olivier Curchod finds even more parallelisms between *Gandhi* and the life of Christ:

> … pour la référence inconsciente permette une meilleure perception du message par une conscience occidentale: l'humilité du Mahatma, l'opposition Jinnah/Gandhi (Pharisiens/Jésus), le miracle des chevaux en Afrique du Sud, les foules qui suivent Gandhi vers la mer (et un petit garçon monte à un arbre pour voir passer le sage, comme Zachée, Jésus), tout cela rappelle singulièrement l'esprit des Evangiles (1983 : 57).

In Rushdie's words, Gandhi impersonates the Christian leader 'dedicated to ideals of poverty and simplicity, a man who is too good for this world and is therefore sacrificed in the altars of history' (1983: 10). The following sequence – Gandhi's funeral – contributes to deify his image in the spectators' minds, especially after Einstein's words are quoted by the American journalist: 'Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a man as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth'. The film carefully shows how people from different social and cultural backgrounds attended the funeral, yet the absence of Harilal, Gandhi's eldest son, in the cremation is never mentioned.

Neither is Gandhi's personal life, except for a few references to his relationship with his wife ever developed. At the beginning of the film, he is shown to be a perfect example of a middle-class family man – the type defended by the Conservative Party in Britain in the 1980s – portrayed as the perfect husband and father of small children. There is a scene depicting the happiness of family unity in which Gandhi is still dressed in Western clothes. Later on, he will tell the American journalist how he was married when he was a child, but still he embodies the values of a loving husband when he is shown crying at his wife's deathbed. Nothing is insinuated concerning his problems with one of his sons, nor about his endless doubts on the education of his children or the traditional health cures that he imposed on them, preventing them many times from taking 'Western'

medicine. Except for a scene at the beginning of the film that shows him forcing his wife to do some chores supposedly destined to the untouchables, no allusion is made to the constant arguments between the couple. Kasturbai is portrayed as a submissive woman, deeply in love with her husband, a shadow next to him in all his deeds all along the film.

The relevance given to the figure of Gandhi in the film is likewise devoid of any indication as to his own inner doubts that questioned his own religious beliefs in his eternal search for Truth. Gandhi is simply characterised as a nationalist individual fighting for the right of his country to be free and independent from colonial exploiters and unified in order to become a strong nation. The film does not include events of Gandhi's childhood or his experiences as a youth in England, related in both *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* and in Fischer's biography. Such personalised details would have helped transmit Gandhi as a man trying to come to terms with the world rather than a god-like figure.

In the film, the earliest image of Gandhi that is presented to the spectator is that of a young man travelling to South Africa to start his career as a lawyer. It is the famous scene in which Gandhi is expelled from a train. We see Gandhi dressed in Western clothes, speaking with a British accent and reading a book written by a Christian.[191] The ticket inspector on the train, a white South African orders Gandhi to go to the third class carriage reserved for 'coloured' people or to get off the train. It is a racist episode and Gandhi suffers the consequences of being left alone in a train station at night. This episode can nevertheless also be interpreted as a kind of class-based, 'snobbish' discrimination. Gandhi could travel by train, but, at the end of the nineteenth century, first class carriages were the exclusive premise of rich white people. He is ejected from the train on to the station platform because of his stubborn refusal to obey the law. In this sense, we are not made to

[191] In his autobiography, though, Gandhi confesses that in England he tried to undertake the 'all too impossible task of becoming and English gentleman', yet he failed and finally gave up (1982: 32).

feel extremely sorry for him. The film, of course, omits to show the horrible conditions coloured travellers suffered in third class wagons (Figure 5).[192]

Figure 5
(Still)

A further implication of this sequence is that Gandhi's astonishment when confronted with the situation leads the spectators to belief that this must have been the first time in his entire life that he had suffered a racist episode.[193] The inference is therefore, that there are no racist people in Britain. Later on, his fellow Indians in South Africa explain how their community is marginalised, and that things in South Africa are not the same as in Britain. It is from that moment on that Gandhi starts developing his campaign in the fight for the rights of Indians as citizens of the Empire.

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[192] Later on, Gandhi is shown travelling by train in India. However, no hint is forwarded concerning his decision the fact that he had already decided not to travel first class again, as he was developing his philosophy of living a simple life, devoid of superfluous luxuries. In omitting this information, the poverty and chaos of Indian transport is emphasised, since we do not know whether the wagons are first or third class or if the situation portrayed is just the reigning poverty in India.

[193] In his autobiography, Gandhi reveals that an event of the kind had occurred before in India when he was treated roughly by a British official. He was shocked to learn that this was a common practice in India and he was advised to 'pocket the insult'. He found the episode humiliating and he stated that 'this shock changed the course of my life' (1982: 100-102). He subsequently relates more episodes of racial abuse and discrimination in South Africa and how he gradually became deluded about British imperialism. Another shocking experience was his participation as volunteer in an ambulance corps during the Boer War and the Zulu revolt. He was then moved by a feeling of loyalty to the British Empire he believed existed for the welfare of the world. At war, though, he witnessed the cruelty of British soldiers against civilians and the systematic racism inflicted upon black Africans (Hardiman, 2003: 14).

From then on, therefore the situation depicted recalls the New Racism of the 1980s which justified 'natural' racist attitudes of British people when confronted with great numbers of alien cultures who were perceived as 'invaders' of their land and thus as a threat that would eventually 'swamp' the native culture, to use Thatcher's words (Hand, 1990: 264). According to Sharma, this racist discourse:

> … asserts that some essential British society is being threatened by alien cultures, sexualities, morals and ways of life. Second, these aliens, euphemistically called 'immigrants', are thought to be in Britain either illegally or on sufferance and they are exploiting Britain in some way. Lastly, all Britain's problems will vanish if the black presence is somehow removed from the island (1995: 64).

Racism is therefore justified in the film as a question of uneven numbers. In this sense, the Indian's determination to expel the British from their country is paralleled (and thus justified) in Britain's will to get rid of their 'alien invaders', even though the differing contexts of colonial rule and workforce immigration are not taken into account.

4.3.3. Filming India's Independence through a Western Lense: Bapu Goes West

In his autobiography, Gandhi devoted the first part of the book to write his experiences in England and the clash of cultures he could not properly understand. His wide readings turned him into an admirer of Tolstoy and Ruskin. He was well-read in the Bible, although there were many aspects of Christianity he could not understand or did not agree with. Rather than deciphering these obscure aspects of Western religion, he became more and more interested in his own religion, and started studying Hinduism in depth. He befriended many Christians in both Britain and South Africa and came to respect their religion, although it often clashed with his own ideas and he often found himseld in trouble with Christian fundamentalists who stubbornly tried to convert him (Gandhi, 1982: 134-7). From Gandhi's complex life and experiences during that period, the film only brings to the

fore his friendship with the open-minded Christian, Charlie Andrews (Ian Charleson), with whom Gandhi shared his preoccupation for others. Andrews is a British character who confronts his own community in defence of the idea of freedom for marginalised groups he shared with Gandhi. All he gets in return for his loyalty to the cause is Gandhi's suggestion that he ought to leave the country because India was for the Indians. Having been led to sympathise with Charlie, the audience cannot but feel betrayed by Gandhi's attachment to his own community after his previous defence of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural brotherhood. In other words, one cannot help thinking that not only whites, but all communities naturally seek the company of their own people, as Thatcher herself advocated.

In the film, Gandhi is constantly surrounded by white friends. As Sharma observes, 'all shots of Gandhi are mediated through a voice-over narration or the gaze of either a white person or dedicated Anglophiles like Nehru and Patel' (1995: 65). The only non-Anglicised Indian who provides a subjective camera look on Gandhi is Godse, his murderer, and it is a 'malevolent, fanatical and fatal [gaze] since it leads to Gandhi's death' (Sharma, 1995: 65). In this way, a clear contrast is established in terms of the gaze between Western or Westernised and Eastern characters.

It could therefore be argued that the film invites a view of Gandhi's exceptional behaviour as resulting from the fact that he was in constant contact with Westerners; that is, not only Charlie Andrews, but also Herman Kallenbach (Günther-Maria Halmer) in South Africa; the American journalist, Walker (Martin Sheen), who interviews Gandhi and is the recipient of some of his confessions, such as that of his child marriage; the photographer Margaret Bourke-White (Candice Bergen), who is prominent at the end of the film.[194]

[194] She is the person to whom Kasturbai confesses her husband's vow of Brahmacharya (ending up of sexual relationships within marriage).

Perhaps the most outstanding presence is that of Mirabehn (Geraldine James). She was the daughter of an English Admiral who became Gandhi's disciple. She is the ultimate open-minded British character who abandons her home and possessions to follow Gandhi's steps. She wears Indian garments and her bright white clothes and her elegant figure out shadow Gandhi's grand-nieces, Abha (Neena Gupta) and Manu (Supriya Pathak), whom he called his 'crutches', as they helped him walk in the last years of his deteriorating health, after fasting. In the funeral scene, a close-up of Mirabehn shows her watching the procession in a sad but dignified way, as if she had reached the holy peace Gandhi advocated. Meanwhile, Gandhi's great grand-daughters are so distraught that they have to lean for support on Mirabehn's shoulders (Figure 6). Characterised as stereotypical Indian women, they are so overwhelmed by emotions that they need a European white rational helping hand.

Figure 6
(Still)

All these Western, white characters provide the film's subjective approach to Gandhi's life. We see him through the eyes of these characters, we hear various events through their ears and voices while the rest of the Indian characters are silenced. For

instance, during Gandhi's last fast in Calcutta, although a female Indian doctor was in charge of controlling the effects of the lack of food in Gandhi's old body, it is Mirabehn who informs one of the characters, and hence to the audience, of Gandhi's health problems.[195] The spectators surely will not be able to remember Abha and Manu's faces – not even the names – or that of the doctor, yet they will recall Geraldine James's presence in the film.

Hence, although it cannot be denied that the film criticises racist attitudes and favours Gandhi's voice against the oppression of British rule, it seems that, by the same stroke of hand, the out-and-out, favourable portrayal of white – British and U.S. American – characters somehow undermines the otherwise harsh condemnation of British racist attitudes in colonial times. Just as Gandhi, an Indian character, is portrayed positively in the film *because* he is an exception – an exception that indirectly confirms Western stereotyping of Indians as fanatic, irrational and violent – the racist British characters are exceptions too.[196]

While the film seems to take on board both Gandhi's fight for freedom and condemnation of British rule in colonial times, it simultaneously keeps the sense of paternalism that was also present in the Imperialist ideology. Gandhi is hardly ever shown alone with his Indian compatriots, but always in the company of Westerners. The relevant presence of these characters seen under a positive light undermines the portrayal of both minor negative British characters and the unfair legislation that marginalised Indians in South Africa and in their own country. These laws are thus presented as obsolete imperial issues of the past that a Briton would never defend nowadays.

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[195] Gandhi defended the right of women to education and access to public life and that is why he chose a woman doctor to take care of him (Lapierre and Collins, 1977: 375).
[196] He is such an exceptional Indian character that he is not played by and Indian actor but by an 'Anglicised half-Indian one who had never been to India before' (Goodman, 1983: 31).

With respect to the manufacture of clothes, the British in the film are very much redeemed in their imperialist exploitation of the natives. Gandhi denounced how English textile factories monopolised production and sold at high prices the clothes that the Indians were prevented from manufacturing. Advocating non-violence but also non-cooperation, he encouraged people to set fire to British clothes and make their own Indian ‘dhotis’ as he himself did. This is the reason why Gandhi became, from then on, associated with the spinning wheel, the symbol that figures on the nation’s flag since the independence of India. Attenborough depicts this famous campaign in the film, but he adds some sequences showing Gandhi’s visit to England or, more concretely, to those industrial areas where factory workers were now out of work ‘thanks’ to him. Far from showing any kind of hostility against him, these working-class Britons welcomed him. These images, presented as if they were documentary news-reels, portray a very positive image of the British people acclaiming the defender of justice, even in detriment of themselves (Figure 7).

Figure 7
(Still)

So far, all white characters except the officer in the train, and the British commissioner who orders the army out at the saltworks, are presented in a positive way. There is however another important exception: General Dyer. A conspicuous event on the long road towards India's independence was the Amritsar Massacre in 1920. During the Great War, India had faithfully cooperated with the British. Indians therefore, thought that they would be rewarded with independence. Far from that, the issue of independence was not even considered. Instead, the British applied more restrictive and repressive laws to maintain order. The Rowlatt Laws legitimised the use of repression against any Indian suspected of taking part in nationalist pro-independence campaigns. Disappointed, Gandhi advocated a new campaign of general *satyagraha* or non-cooperation and non-violent acts of protest. In Delhi, a demonstration brought together Hindus and Muslims against British rule. As this demonstration had not been authorised, General Dyer decided to give the Indians a lesson of law and order under British rule and ordered the troops to open fire against the crowd at Jallianwalabagh. Given that it was a closed place with no possible escape route, many people were killed, including women and small children; there were 379 dead and 1500 injured people (Mattazzi, 2002: 54-55). The result was a massive outburst of violent riots against the British despite Gandhi's efforts to promote peaceful actions.

By means of a series of close-ups of the soldiers, the sequence of the massacre shows how the killers were, in fact, Indians obeying the white master. These bloody scenes are followed by Dyer being Court-martialled. During the trial, the British judges are evidently much disturbed by Dyer's cold attitude and his justification of the actions taken. The General is therefore found guilty of charges. English justice is thus presented as fair, and the massacre simply as the result of a madman's decision. On that account, Dyer is excluded from being a representative character of the British people. In this sense, events

are clearly manipulated in the film in favour of the British in an attempt to ease guilty consciences respecting some past events. As Ranahit Gupta states:

> In the film, colonialism never seems to cast an ugly shadow. Even the issues surrounding the massacre of thousand of Indians at Jallianwalabagh, in the state of Punjab, are conveniently sidestepped. Attenborough refuses to acknowledge the massacre as part of a systematic attempt to intimidate civilian populations. Indeed, he fails to mention that General Dyer, the British officer who ordered the massacre, was later rewarded by the British (1983: 46).

As depicted in the film, General Dyer was forced to resign. However, the significant omissions here are, first, that he retained his right to receive a life allowance and, secondly, that there were many sympathisers of Dyer, both in India and in Britain. Many members of English Clubs in India collected money to help Dyer in his retirement; the sum they amassed amounted to £ 26.000 (Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 60).

While white Westerners – exception apart – are portrayed in the film as honest, civilised people, Indian characters are characterised as mere shadows or puppets surrounding Gandhi's exceptional figure:

> Nehru comes across as a fop, a somewhat naïve and spineless politician. Zinnah, who led the Muslims' fight for Pakistan, is presented in strangely villainous terms. Other important characters are mere shadows. Their chracterization does little justice to the role they played in reality (Gupta, 1993: 46).

Rushdie argues that the film presents false portraits of most of the leaders of the independence of India. This is the case of Patel, who, according to Rushdie, is presented as a clown, or Jinnah, characterised as a 'Count Dracula figure'. Even so, the most striking distortion for him concerns the complete erasure of Bose from the historical account:

> Bose the guerrilla, who fought with the Japanese against the British in the war. Bose whose views could have provided another sort of counter weight to Gandhi's and so improved the film. But Bose was violent, and the film, if it means anything, seeks to mean that non-violence works, and that it could work anywhere, in any revolution. All counter arguments are therefore rigorously excluded (1983: 10).

Nehru also provided a conflicting counter-view to Gandhi's in his conception of India as a new industrial society, but he is presented as a mere acolyte. Here again, therefore, a gross simplification may be appreciated concerning different conflicting ideologies in Indian society at the time of the independence (Rushdie, 1983: 10).

On the other hand, the Indian people, the villagers Gandhi was so fond of, are presented as just nameless masses, crowds that provoke violent riots and are not able to control themselves unless guided by a powerful paternal figure. They not only fight against the British oppressors but also amongst themselves. In Sharma's words:

> The only identity that the Indian 'masses' have in the film is either a passive one which consists in obeying Gandhi's tenet of non-violence (the Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre) or a violent, animal-like mob when they transgress this principle (the burning of the police station at Chauri Chaura, the violence in the aftermath of the partition of India). There is no reference to the peasant reform movements that were taking place in Awadh and Bengal or any other kind of popular movement. In fact, the scenes of communal violence at the end of the film serve rather to emphasize the sad face of Britain's colonies when left to fend for themselves with national leaders who are too busy bickering to administer the country properly (1995: 66).

As the internal complexities of the Indian nation go unexplained in the film, the audience cannot but think that Indians are fanatic and violent by nature. A quick overview of the history of the Indian subcontinent would show that ever since the first tribes that settled in the Valley of Indo river (3000 BC), this territory has been populated by peoples of different origins, who brought with them their own cultures and religions – i.e. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsees and Christians, among others.

The rivalry between Hindus and Muslims goes back in time to the eighth century, when the first Mughal Muslim emperors invaded the subcontinent and settled there. After the eighteenth century, conflicts between Hindu and Muslim communities grew as a consequence of not only religious but also economic, cultural and social differences. The British had exerted their power over all these communities distributed in several princely states ruled by Muslim or Hindu princes. Confrontations between the different states were instigated in many ways by the British themselves; their 'divide and rule' policies had led them to 'grant franchise to Indians on the basis of religious communities, thereby playing the communal card in the course of their conquest and administration of India' (Sharma, 1995: 67). That is why independence and the subsequent partition of the country in 1947 implied not just the simple replacement of foreign rulers by native ones, but a new concept of imagined nation which tried to unify the country under a new democratic state.

Gandhi was against partition. He argued that all these different communities had lived for centuries together and that there was no reason to divide the country in the moment of independence from the imperial power. Any division would result so artificial, he predicted, that War would be unavoidable. To prevent that, Gandhi even asked Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, to become the Prime Minister of the new independent Nation. However, Nehru and other members of the Indian National Congress would not accept that proposal. Jinnah fought for the creation of a free Pakistan, as he feared the oppression of Muslim communities in a country ruled by a Hindu majority.

The person in charge of dividing the country was the British lawyer Sir Cyril Radcliffe. He drew a line by taking into account where the majority of Hindus or Muslims lived. However, his knowledge of the different communities was quite limited and the imposed division proved to be a failure.[197] Fearing violent revenges, many Muslims had started to escape from Hindu territories towards what was to become Pakistan. Meanwhile, Hindus living in that area, afraid of Muslim violence, had come to occupy former Muslim districts in places such as Calcutta. Nevertheless, violence had already dramatically hit that

[197] Partition resulted in many inconsistencies. Hyderabad, in the centre of India, was a state with a majority of Muslims, who found themselves forced to make a difficult choice between their land or their religion. Yet the most conflictive states were Bengal and Punjab. Bengal was handed over to Pakistan even though the result was geographically absurd. On the other hand, the Punjab was a rich region with an intrinsic cultural identity. Two important cities belonged to that area, Lahore and Amritsar. Lahore was a rich, aristocratic city, a favourite with Englishmen and the Indian elite. It had also been a tolerant city where people of different creeds lived peacefully, yet the cruellest violence started in 1947 between Sikhs and the Muslim League. Amritsar is the cradle of Sikhism, where one can find the Golden Temple, the most important place of worship for Sikhs – the creed founded by Nanak at the end of the fifteenth century which tried to reconcile Hinduism and Islam under the belief in a single god (Smart, 2000:49). However, in the Punjab, there was a majority of Muslims, with only a 13% of Sikhs. Sikhs, though, owned 40% of the land and held an important monopoly of industry and transport. As a consequence, the division of Punjab proved extremely complicated. Lahore was given to Pakistan while Amritsar remained in India, and most of the lands of the Sikhs were cut in two (Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 192-199). The fight for Kashmir had its origins in the partition. A very rich area, with a majority of Muslims, it was handed over to India. Kashmir had been, until then, ruled by Hari Singh, a Hindu Maharaja who refused to give the state to Pakistan, even though 77% of the population were Muslims. He preferred to create an independent State, free from both India and Pakistan, yet he finally signed the adhesion of the State to India (Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 212). The division had further inconsistencies which led to economic crisis in many of those areas. For instance, the Bengali area, which belonged to Pakistan, included the land where jute plant was grown, yet all the industries and the port of Calcutta belonging to India had no jute for manufacture or export (279). The distribution of wealth, materials and army men as well as civil servants was not an easy task either (see Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 177-201; Metcalf, 2002: 214-17).

city. Gandhi, horrified before that situation, decided to carry out a final fast until the riots stopped. He demanded that houses now occupied by Hindus should be returned to Muslims.

The Mahatma wanted peace even if that meant favouring Muslim communities at the expense of the Hindu community. During his fasting, he forced out the Indian government a promise that the 550 million rupees owned to Pakistan would be returned to the Muslim state which was bankrupt by that time. Gandhi believed that the payment of the debt would be considered as an act of fraternity. He also fasted in order to make leaders from the different communities sign a letter in which they agreed to keep their communities in peace. Both Hindus and Muslims – leaders from extremist groups included – signed the peace treaty and Gandhi stopped fasting on January 18th 1948.

In the film, the confrontation between Hindus and Muslims is dramatised by having a desperate man (Om Puri) approach Gandhi during his fasting begging for counsel as to what to do after the death of his little son at the hands of Muslims. Gandhi suggests he should adopt an orphan Muslim child and raise him as his own while respecting his religious education. By omitting the cultural and historical background of the country, in this scene, the film depicts Gandhi again as an ever-forgiving Christ-like figure. In contrast the Indian mob in the background is shown to be brutal and fanatic.[198]

In this sequence, a voice from the crowd can be heard shouting 'death to Gandhi'. The camera focuses on Nehru's shocked reaction. And yet, this voice from the crowd was not a solitary one. The outrage of violence both Hindu and Muslim communities had suffered made it very difficult for them to stop revenge and live again as brothers, as

[198] Nevertheless, their fanaticism is not so different from that of other nations and communities, fighting for their own rights against the possible oppression of others. The events depicted in the film occurred in India in 1947, just two years after the II World War which provoked a nightmare of cultural fanaticism and xenophobia exerted by white communities in the heart of Europe. Hitler used the swastika, a Hindu symbol, for his own discourses on the 'purity' of the Aryan race (see 'Origins of the swastika' BBC News; Tuesday, 18 January 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4183467.stm.

Gandhi advocated. On the other hand, the film also omits how many Muslim women went to the Mosques to pray for Gandhi, a Hindu, and how many Hindus offered their homes to Muslim refugees (Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 385). Many individuals would have their own stories to tell, those who took revenge on the ones who had killed their beloved, those who were forced into exodus, those who remained in the new born, culturally hostile country, and those who promoted peace in their villages, neighbourhoods or families. By concentrating on Gandhi as a god-like hero, the film disregards the fact that 'History' is full of 'histories' which contribute to the outcome of certain events.

As said before, one of the important omissions in the film is the murderer's story. Gandhi's last fast demanding an entente between Hindus and Muslims further enraged a certain sector of Hindu right-wing extremists who defended a Hindu country, free from the British and Muslim oppressors. As against Gandhi's vision of India as a multicultural country, for them, India was exclusively for Hindus. Nathuram Godse, the person who eventually shot Gandhi, was a member of Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (R.S.S.S.), an extremist Hindu group. During the first campaigns against the British, Godse had been a follower of the Mahatma and had even been imprisoned for participating in the non-cooperation movement. He was also a fervent Hinduist from an orthodox Brahmin Hindu family. He would not eat meat, nor drink alcohol and he had also taken the brahmacharya vow at the age of 28 (Lapierre and Collins, 1975: 356). He loved his country and wanted it to be free from the colonial oppressors. Nathuram Godse and Gandhi were not so different after all. However, they differed in their imagined independent nation. Godse felt betrayed by Gandhi's all-inclusive view of India. The R.S.S.S. wanted to get rid of the British in order to rule their own country, not to find themselves restricted by the inclusion in their government of the Muslims.[199]

[199] Nathuram Godse's perspective is revealed in a recent interview to his brother who shared the same views on Gandhi as a traitor to the Hindu cause. See '"His Principle of Peace Was Bogus". 'Gopal Godse, co-

In the film, the lack of explanation for the murder also contributes to the association of Gandhi with Christ. Gandhi's murder at the hands of his own people establishes a parallelism with Christ's crucifixion, which needs no explanation. In this way, the killing would be interpreted as a mystical, and not as a political act. The close-up of the murderer's nameless face shooting Gandhi appears to be representative of the religious extremism and violence inherent to Eastern people (Figure 8). His anonymous presence could also mean in the film that the killer was a 'lone nut' under the influence of 'a sinister-looking sadhu in a rickshaw' (Rushdie, 1983:10).

Figure 8
(Still)

The repetition of the murder scene at the end of the film contributes to create a sense of both completeness and circularity. As said before, the Jewish-Christian tradition presented a teleological perception of time and human experience. However, the two World Wars in the twentieth century wiped out the optimism which characterised Western civilisation with the idea of history as 'progress'. 'Change' started to be regarded with suspicion and progress started to be replaced with the concept of 'decline' (Carr, 1983:

conspirator in Gandhi's assassination and brother of the assassin, looks back in anger--and without regret'. *Time Asia.* February 14, 2000 VOL. 155 No. 6
http://www.time.com/time/asia/magazine/2000/0214/india.godse.html.

112). India's independence marked the first major step towards the consideration of Britain's decline from its powerful position in the world, which provoked, in Carr's words, a sinking back 'into a paralysing nostalgia for the past' (1983: 148). In this sense, 'the significant thing is that change is no longer thought of as achievement, as opportunity, as progress, but as an object of fear' (1983: 155).[200] This fear is reflected in the film's circularity and foregrounding of the Mahatma's assassination. A man, an individual, tried to bring some light to the ex-colony, yet India's independence left the country in a violent civil war. At the end of the film, Mirabehn and Bourke-White comment on Gandhi's sense of defeat and sadness at the end of his life. This dialogue emphasises a sense of pessimism and questions the effectiveness Gandhi's deeds.

On the one hand, the film presents Gandhi as a hero who achieved the independence of his country. Rushdie criticises this portrayal Gandhi as 'the saint who vanquished an Empire', and the film's simplification of the complex political situation: 'The message of *Gandhi* is that the best way to gain your freedom is to line up, unarmed, and march towards your oppressors and permit them to club you to the ground, if you do this for long enough, you will embarrass them into going away […] This is a fiction' (1983: 10). On the other hand, the repetition of the father of the nation's murder by a Hindu could be metaphorically interpreted as a parricide that leaves the new nation as an unprotected orphan. As a result, Gandhi's achievement is reduced to a sense of defeat.

The future is therefore uncertain and the violent death of the hero imbues the ending with feelings of uncertainty and fear. What is more, the close up of the nameless face of the person who murdered Gandhi offers a perception of India – or the East – as a

[200] Carr concludes that: 'At a moment when the world is changing its shape more rapidly and more radically than at any time in the last 400 years, this seems to me a singular blindness, which gives ground for apprehension not that the world-wide movement will be stayed, but that this country – and perhaps other English-speaking countries – may lie behind the general advance, and relapse helplessly and uncomplainingly into some nostalgic backwater' (1983: 156).

place where fanaticism and violence are inbred characteristics of Eastern people. In this manner, Attenborough's biopic discretely maintains the long-standing stereotypes which associate Western culture with civilization, reason and order and Eastern people with primitivism, irrationality and chaos. By focusing on those white characters who admired Gandhi, and by highlighting the Mahatma's non-violent methods as almost the exclusive means that expelled the British out of India, the film elevates the British to a civilised sphere of superiority. In contrast, Indians are too fanatic to fully grasp their leader's message and are thus left in chaos, hence, the film's veiled justification of British fears of being 'swamped' by those violent Orientals.

A last relevant point to be made about the film is that, by portraying Gandhi as an exception in Indian culture, the director of the film appropriates the figure of Bapu, the father of the Indian nation, to portray a leader embodying Western values. As Sharma states: 'The saintly figure of Gandhi […] becomes a signifier for the liberalism of Britain's colonial policies, rather than for the strengths of India's freedom movement' (1995: 62). In other words, Gandhi is shown as an individual who struggled for the right of his country to be free and independent from colonial exploiters and whose long-term ideal was for India to become a unified and strong nation. Seen in this light, Attenborough's construction of Gandhi does not appear to be so very different from Thatcher's nationalist beliefs in the greatness of her own nation, in Britain's right to defend its own interests against foreign menaces, and the importance of maintaining the unity of the country. In his article 'Gandhiana and Gandhiology', Ashish Rajadhyaska comments on the Indian government's promotion of *Gandhi* in India and the film's subsequent success in the country. He argues that Attenborough's film has depoliticised the historical events by universalising the nationalist values impersonated by the individual epic hero. The film was granted tax exemption by the government and all the theatres in Bombay had block-reserved seats for

primary-school children. Rajadhyaska argues that this forms part of a nationalist-driven interest of the Indian upper-classes to maintain the unity of the country, which was materialised in a nostalgic feeling for the nationalist movement impersonated by the Father of the Nation. The epic tradition in which the film *Gandhi* is inserted, 'does not distort history, it rewrites history. It rewrites in the context of the present for it cannot succeed unless it becomes relevant to contemporary ideological positions' (1983: 63). Interestingly enough, the ideological concern for both India and Britain in the 1980s was to promote an unambiguous nationalist feeling that promoted the idea of unity and the honour of dying for one's nation.

The relevance of *Gandhi* as a filmic portrayal of the past lies in the crucial relationship established between history, culture and identity. The dominant view of British identity in the 1980s, advocated by the Conservative party in power, was rooted in the Imperial past, together with the moral values associated with Victorian times. Gandhi was an important actor in the historical events that led to the crumbling of the Empire. Nonetheless, if the Empire came to an end, the values that sustained it remained and could be revived at any moment, especially if these values are shown to be morally superior to those belonging to the 'other'.

With this in mind, not only does the film portray a certain version of the past, it also clings to an idea of history that is rooted in that very past: the notion of history as something objectively attainable through the study of documents and records, and the idea that it is the deeds of great men that determine history's path. Based on these premises, *Gandhi* appears to be a realist document which offers a transparent view of the past to audiences willing to explore the bygone times of Britain's imperial supremacy. Presented as *history* – an entertaining, appealing history – the film's ideological construction and re-arrangement of that past is less likely to be questioned. Nonetheless, any window giving

access to the past has a pane which is never completely transparent. It is always somehow tinged with the colour of interpretation.

4.4. History in Literary Adaptations. The Case of Ivory's Heat **and Dust** *and Lean's* **A Passage to India**

4.4.1. Adapting History and Literature on Screen

As signalled in the previous sections, written and visual histories are different modes of approaching the past. Robert Rosenstone points to a significant difference between the retelling of the past through what he calls the academic written word and by means of the cinematic image:

> Rendering the past usually means telling stories, and the meaning of stories is shaped by the medium of the telling […]. Film may be history as vision, but it is not vision alone, for it provides a layered experience of moving images enhanced by language and sound. Consider its many techniques – the different kinds of shots, the movement of the camera, the ability to juxtapose divergent sorts of footage – back and white, colour or tinted, sharp or grainy, documentary or staged. Consider the aural elements – music, dialogue, narration and sound – how they can underscore, question, contradict, intensify, or lead away from the image (1995: 9-10).

Rosenstone maintains that the main difference lies in the fact that academic history makes abstractions and labels certain events or periods – e.g. 'The Renaissance', 'the French Revolution'. Such tags and categorisations, he argues, tend to conceal as much as they reveal about the past. Unlike the word, the filmic image cannot abstract or generalize' (8). Accordingly, 'in this large gap between the abstract idea and the specific instance, the historical film finds the space to *contest* history, to interrogate either the metanaratives that structure historical knowledge, or smaller historical truths, received notions, conventional images' (8; italics in original).

As discussed earlier, in the case of the film *Gandhi*, the past was 'manipulated' so as to convey specific images and representations that favoured certain ideological

interpretations. As against this moulding of the past, other Raj productions, such as *Heat and Dust*, offer 'smaller historical truths' through the personal experiences of fictional characters. If the visual portrayal of the past is subject to the laws of cinematic conventions, adaptations from literary sources are also bound to be transformed. In Peter Reynolds's view:

> Animated images of literature in performance are seldom produced by accident or chance, nor are they natural and ideologically neutral. They have been designed and built (consciously or unconsciously) by their author(s) in order to project a specific agenda and to encourage a particular set of responses (in Whelehan, 1999: 12).

In the case of literary adaptations, what is at stake is both the 'selection' and 'interpretation' of past events narrated in the literary work, and the way the fictional written word is transferred into visual moving images. It is therefore not only a question of 'reality' versus 'fiction' but the transference of a fictional piece of work from one medium to another. The result is that, more often than not, the literary work is privileged and the analysis of the filmic adaptation is reduced to evaluating how faithful the visual rendering is to the literary source. From a cultural perspective, this kind of films provides other interesting levels of analysis. In his study on film adaptation, James Naremore mentions the anecdote protagonised by Hitchcock and Truffaut on this issue, which serves as a point of departure for discussion on the question of adaptation:

> Unfortunately, most discussions of adaptation in film can be summarized by a *New Yorker* cartoon that Alfred Hitchcock once described to François Truffaut: two goats are eating a pile of film cans, and one goat says to the other 'Personally, I liked the film better'. Even when academic writing on the topic is not directly concerned with a given film's artistic adequacy or fidelity to a beloved source, it tends to be narrow in range, inherently respectful to the 'precursor text', and constitutive of a series of binary oppositions that poststructuralist theory has taught us to deconstruct: literature versus cinema, high culture versus mass culture, original versus copy (2000: 2).

The main reason for the pervasiveness of these binary oppositions is, in Naremore's view, the prevalence in the academy of 'a mixture of Kantian aesthetics and Arnoldian ideas about society' (2). Arnold's idea of 'high' versus 'low' culture still has resonance when comparing literature with cinema, especially if the book in question is a 'classic' and

the movie has been made for mass consumption. By the same token, Erica Sheen highlights the institutional value of 'classic' literary texts in society and quotes Bourdieu's association of the classic text's 'widespread durable market' with its consideration as such in the academy or educational system (2000: 4). As Imelda Whelehan states:

> Many commentators have focused on the process of transference from novel to film, where often a well-known work of great literature is adapted for cinema and the expectations about the 'fidelity' of the screen version come to the fore. For many people, the comparison of a novel and its film version results in an almost unconscious prioritizing of the fictional origin over the resulting film, and so the main purpose of comparison becomes the measurement of the success of the film and its capacity to realize what are held to be the core meanings and values of the originary text (1999: 3).

On the other hand, it is precisely the prestige of the literary texts that bestow a status of 'quality' on the filmic adaptations. According to Dudley Andrew, 'the adapter hopes to win an audience for the adaptation by the prestige of its borrowed title or subject. But, at the same time, it seeks to gain certain respectability, if not aesthetic value, as a dividend in the transaction' (2000: 30).

In this sense, the question of authorship is also relevant in the discussion of cinematic adaptations. Prior to the late eighteenth century, there was not an individualistic conception of the 'author' and 'the work'. As André Bazin puts it, in the Middle Ages, for instance, the importance of a text lied in the content and the effectiveness in the transmission of the message (2000: 24). Notwithstanding, with the advent of Romanticism, the work's aesthetic value together with the relevance of the artist as an individual genius, used to provide the literary work with an authoritative status, now absent in the contemporary visual medium. Indeed, as against the solitary work of a great mind, filmmaking is by nature collaborative. In the same manner, the ultimate aim of film is to reach wide audiences to recover the comparatively higher amount of money invested in the movie.

In other words, literary classics are considered as works of art, the products of individual genius minds, masters of language in terms of both content originality and

aesthetic formal presentation. As a consequence, films resulting from the transposition of these artistic written texts into a collaborative work, conceived to make box-office profits that, at least, cover expenses, and which often results in a condensed and simplified product, will be evaluated as works of less artistic quality and judged by making reference to the high standards of the precursor.[201]

The question of fidelity, though, has recently been contested.[202] Robert Stam argues that cinema is both a synesthetic and synthetic art, 'synesthetic in its capacity to engage various senses (sight and hearing) and synthetic in its anthropophagic capacity to absorb and synthesize antecedent arts' (2000: 61). A film should therefore be evaluated by taking into account the intrinsic qualities of the medium, that is, by paying attention to the complex 'synesthetic' levels of analysis it presents, more than to the loss of connotation of the written word transformed into images. Stam puts into question what 'fidelity' means in the context of postmodernity:

> Fidelity to what? Is the filmmaker to be faithful to the plot in its very detail? […]. Should one be faithful to the physical descriptions of characters? […]. Or is one to be faithful to the author's intentions? But what might they be, and how they are to be inferred? […]. Authors are some times not even aware of their own deepest intentions. How, then, can filmmakers be faithful to them? And to what authorial instance is one to be faithful? To the biographical author? To the textual implied author? To the narrator? Or is it the adapter-filmmaker to be true to the style of a work? To its narrative point of view? Or to its artistic devices? (2000: 57-8).

He proposes that an 'adaptation' should be regarded as a process of 'translation', that is, a semiotic transposition that entails both loses and gains. The significance of this process lies in the intertextual dialogism that can be established, and in the wide range of possibilities that the discursive practices of a cultural approach may generate (64). Similarly, Deborah Cartmell proposes a multilayered cultural strategy to analyse the

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[201] Robert Stam criticises the systematic assumption that privileges a superiority of literature over film and esteems that this general belief is rooted in a number of prejudices: '*seniority*, the assumption that older arts are necessarily better arts; *iconophobia*, the culturally rooted prejudice (traceable to the Judaic-Muslim-Protestant prohibitions on "graven images" and to the Platonic and Neoplatonic depreciation of the world of phenomenal appearance) that visual arts are necessarily inferior to the verbal arts; and *logophilia*, the converse valorization, characteristic of the "religions of the book", of the "sacred word" of holy texts' (2000: 58).
[202] See Cartmell and Whelehan (1999), McFarlarne (1996), Chatman (1980), Stam (2000).

process of adaptation. She argues that the question of fidelity no longer has sense in a postmodern world where ideas such as the death of the author, the rejection of master-narratives, of single meanings for texts and cultural practices undermine any approach of the kind. Adaptations should therefore be analysed in terms of 'readings' of the literary source, which may generate a plurality of meanings in its reproduction through a different semiotic code and cultural context (1999: 28).

Literature and cinema have always had a fruitful relationship; Whelehan mentions Tolstoy's awareness of the relevance of cinema in its very origins, and how it would represent a 'revolution in the life of writers' (1999: 5). The truth is that there are more films based on novels than based on a script originally written for the screen. The Academy Awards has historically privileged literary adaptations (Cartmell, 1999: 24). Cinema owes much to literature in terms of content and genre borrowings, but also in terms of shared narratological tools, but literature has also acquired 'cinematic' strategies, so their influence and enrichment have been mutual.

Several critics have distinguished various types of adaptations. Cartmell mentions two of them, one drawn up by Geoffrey Wagner and the other by Dudley Andrew. Wagner establishes three categories: *transposition*, which is an accurate adaptation of the text to the movie, *commentary*, which alters the original text, and *analogy*, which uses the original text as a point of departure for the making of a new film. Andrew also proposes three types, based on similar premises: *borrowing*, a category that makes no claims to fidelity to the original text, *intersecting*, which introduces variations and *transforming*, which reproduces the 'essential' text.

The filmic productions I propose to study in this section belong to the categories of *transposition* and *transforming*, since the screened literary texts reflect as far as possible the form and content of the original novels. The main variations to be found in the

cinematic texts are those concerning the semiotic transposition and the synthetic nature of cinema. Some conspicuous modifications, though, are related to the different cultural contexts of both the literary texts and filmic productions. Of all the films I analyse, David Lean's *A Passage to India* was probably the most controversial in terms of its adaptation. Questions of accuracy, fidelity and quality were once and again criticised in the endless comparison of the film with E. M Forster's literary 'classic', with a clear preference for the latter. Less critical attention was paid to the other productions, which are based on novels written in the 1960s and 1970s. The particularity of *Heat and Dust* was that Ruth Prawer Jhabvala was both author of the novel and screenwriter for the film. As a consequence, issues regarding the reproduction on screen of the literary author's intentions were out of question. Moreover, the novel is particularly interesting from its formal the point of view, as it presents a number of cinematic devices, easily translatable into film. *Heat and Dust* can be described as a clear case of fruitful intertextuality between a cinematic novel and a literary film. As far as the TV series *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* are concerned, the original novels or source texts have never been regarded as 'classics'. In their case, therefore, questions of accuracy and fidelity are less relevant. In fact, the series have often been regarded as 'quality' products for the TV medium.

4.4.2. Heat and Dust

Heat and Dust was released one year after the worldwide success of Attenborough's *Gandhi*. This new Raj picture shared with the Mahatma biopic the same setting and roughly the same historical background. And yet, Ivory's production also presented significant differences, the most obvious one being the target audience: while *Gandhi* was conceived as a mainstream blockbuster from the very beginning, *Heat and Dust* was

produced by the independent Merchant-Ivory company. Accordingly, this film did not have such an international impact in terms of box-office success: it received, though, artistic recognition. For instance, it was nominated for eight BAFTA film awards, winning Best Screenplay for Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's adaptation; it was awarded the Golden Palm in the Cannes Film Festival and the ALFS Award for the Screenwriter of the year (www.merchantivory.com).

Two more conspicuous differences between *Heat and Dust*, *Gandhi* and *A Passage to India* are related to the particularity of the literary adaptation and to the multicultural aspects of its production. As explained above, *Heat and Dust* was adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from her own novel, which won the Booker Prize for 1975. From her very beginnings as a writer, Jhabvala combined her career as a novelist and screenwriter. She adapted some of her own novels as well as literary works by other novelists, such as E.M Forster and Henry James, and she also wrote directly for the screen. The result has been a literary and cinematic symbiosis in all her works (Fargo, 2007: 25). Jhabvala offers a remarkably prolific intertextuality between her novels and scripts. The outcome of this combination of the two media is a hybrid work that opens up new possibilities of expression in this semiotic mixture and breaks away from the hierarchical relationship between literature and cinema.

Heat and Dust presents the story of two women:[203] Anne (Julie Christie), an Englishwoman of the 1980s, decides to do some research on her great-uncle's first wife, Olivia (Greta Scacchi).[204] In doing so, Anne unveils Olivia's scandalous and silenced story. In the 1920s, Olivia had followed her husband Douglas (Cristopher Cazenove), a

[203] I summarise both novel and film but include the name of the actors playing the roles in the cinematic adaptation for its subsequent analysis in the following section.
[204] Both the book and the film locate the past back to 1923, yet the passages concerning Anne's story do not offer a precise date, so readers are made to believe that the action takes place in a postcolonial background, around the time the book was written, 1975. This lack of concrete reference to time makes the film easily adapted to the year it was released, 1982. This date appears in the credit sequence, which situates the present-day story in '1982, Satipur town'.

district collector, to India. There, she became part of the world of the memsahibs, yet she never managed to adapt to this type of life. In her attempt to escape from the constrictions of the British community, she fell in love with an Indian prince (Shashi Kapoor). She got pregnant and decided to have an abortion. However, she was discovered and consequently, expelled from the English society. She ends up living alone in the mountains, where she is occasionally visited by the Nawab. In order to learn all the secrets of that story, Anne travels over to India. During her stay in the new ex-colony, she goes through roughly the same experience as her great-aunt: she too has an affair with an Indian man and gets pregnant.

The novel *Heat and Dust* has been described as a cinematic piece in its use of 'editing'. Jhabvala explained that she was very much influenced by cinema and that she loved spending time in the editing room, trying to make sense of the different scenes by mixing up one and the other in order to create certain effects. She says this was the device she used in writing her novel *Heat and Dust*: she first wrote the contemporary story and then the block set in the past. Afterwards she cut and pasted passages and balanced out the different parts until a new, more complex narrative was generated. (Fargo, 2007: 25). On the other hand, the film is quite literary. The spectators have access to Olivia's story through letters, as if it was a classic epistolary novel. At the beginning of the film the character of Olivia looks directly at the camera (a very artificial mode of filmmaking) and starts telling her story, emphasising the verbal narration over the visual rendering of her story. Very often the scenes are introduced by a voice over narrator which corresponds to present-day Harry – the Nawab's English friend – telling Anne his version of the story. Moreover, several other important moments in the film are related by characters. Hence, the film is based more on narration than on action. In other words, it is closer to the literary 'telling' than to the visually 'showing' mode.

The second important aspect that makes of *Heat and Dust* a special film, worth analysing in the context of the Raj revival fictions, is the multicultural nature of its production team: the director, James Ivory, is a U.S. American, the producer, Ismail Merchant, is Indian, and Jhabvala herself presents a culturally hybrid background which is clearly reflected in her written and screened characters and stories. Born in Poland to Jewish parents, she took refuge in Britain during the Second World War. She married an Indian and migrated to her husband's country where she spent twenty-four years. She then settled in the United States but often travelled to India where she spent many months with her family. Against this personal background, Jhabvala's fiction is peopled with rootless, dislocated characters that try to make sense of the cultural clashes they are often exposed to. These tensions are frequently presented in terms of Orient and Occident. More concretely, Jhabvala's fictions deal with European or American characters trying to come to terms with their lives and intercultural relationships in the East. In her exhaustive analysis of Jhabvala's fiction, Marta Fargo expounds that the common feature obsessively repeated in these works is the conflict of characters who intend to overcome the constructed boundary that separates people from different cultural backgrounds. These barriers are shown to be very complicated – if not impossible – to trespass, and these characters often end up punished with the ostracism of their own communities (2007: 44).

These fictions present cosmopolitan characters who, in trying to escape from the impositions of their own community, become quite receptive to the community of the 'other'. Although they strive to find their own identity liberated from artificial constructs, they fail because no matter how aware a person is of the artificiality of any culture, this artifice is necessary for the construction of an identity. The bitterly pessimist paradox, which could be elicited in Jhabvala's fictions, is the fact that cultural constructions entail constrictions for the liberty of the individual and a lack of understanding in any pursuit of

intercultural dialogue. Yet the building of an identity divested of artificial impositions is an impossible task: a cultureless identity means nothing, only emptiness, ostracism or death. This is the price characters that rebel against the cultural constrictions of their own community have to pay. Interestingly enough, this recurrent topic in Jhabvala's fiction is also a common theme in imperial fictions, and one that was particularly present in the Raj screen productions of the 1980s. The attempt to do away with cultural constructs and the subsequent failure to create unconstrained identities are what lead to the tragic fate of rebel characters. The emptiness of the Marabar caves in *A Passage to India* is the most powerful example symbolising this situation.

The Raj fictions, thus, go back to the past of the empire in order to deal once and again with the issues of cosmopolitism and identity,[205] which are conspicuous matters of debate in increasingly globalised changing societies. Both tradition and changing values and the new possibilities offered by cultural interchange are reflected in the Raj productions as a tension between their temporal and spatial settings. Relationships between past and present, East and West are the main concerns in these films, with *Heat and Dust* being the piece that best puts in contrast these issues by inviting the spectator to travel backwards and forwards between present and past, and Western and Eastern spaces.

[205] The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah points to the importance of cosmopolitanism in contemporary globalised societies and he defines it as a combination of 'universality' and 'diversity'. Cosmopolitanism is universalistic because 'it believes that every human being matters and that we have a shared obligation to care for one another', but 'it also accepts a wide range of legitimate human diversity', that is, 'tolerance for other people's choices of how to live and humility about what we ourselves know'. Appiah concludes that 'conversation across identities is worthwhile because […] if you accept that you live in a world with many different kinds of people, and you are going to live in respectful peace with them, then you need to understand each other, even though you don't agree' (2008: 3). In *Heat and Dust* and in other Raj films, cosmopolitan characters try to put into practice these ideas of universality and diversity, however they find themselves caught in conflicting relationships of cultural identity and power which will prove it difficult for them to establish conversations with the Other.

4.4.2.1. Past and Present Reflected in a Critical Mirror

Past and present are closely related through two female protagonists. *Heat and Dust* thus confirms the tendency of recent Raj productions in feminising the imperial accounts of the past. At first, the two heroines seem to represent a relaxation in the former rigid barriers that separated different cultures. Nevertheless, this movie also shows how those boundaries have not completely disappeared, especially in the context in which this cinematic production was released. As seen in previous chapters, the 1980s were years of economic and cultural readjustment in the U.K. with resonant Thatcherite themes advocating for the preservation of a traditional, old-fashioned sense of Britishness and new racist ideas. These discourses reinforced the dichotomy 'self-otherness' and maintained the hierarchy of British superiority over those belonging to the realm of 'otherness'. At the time *Heat and Dust* was released, echoes of the Falklands' victory could still be heard. Hence, the increasingly multicultural reality of Britain clashed with aversive racist attitudes defended by a certain sector of society. Those daring to do away with cultural binarisms still found themselves in a blurred 'no-man's land'. Ironically, the expression 'no-man's land', quite a patriarchal, more often than not refers to the situation of women, who are the ones that have to fight against cultural as well as gender barriers.

This combination of gender and cultural conflicts has a conspicuous presence in the story of the two main characters in *Heat and Dust*. It is however very interesting to notice the manner in which this issue is also reflected in the formal presentation of the film. The social imposition of preservation of cultural boundaries which renders it difficult for those who want to penetrate 'the other's' culture is first portrayed with what seems to be a deliberate lack of psychological depth the characters present. The difficulty in accessing to the characters' minds prevents the spectator from knowing their feelings and the true intentions of their acts (Furness, 1983: 132). This fact enables the audience to distance

themselves from any character's position, no matter their cultural background. Thus, it is not easy to know whether the Nawab is really in love with Olivia or whether he is just using her as an instrument of revenge on the British colonisers. Likewise, it is difficult to know what Anne's feelings for Inder Lal are, or what she thinks about her situation as a single mother and about her future. The same occurs with respect to Olivia, even though the letters to her sister give clues as to her thoughts, they do not provide a full explanation of her inner life. Besides every access to her mind stops after the miscarriage.

This cinematic device exemplifies the frustration felt when there is a lack of communication between people, especially when there is a will to cross the bridge into another culture. Chion reports that:

> Ivory ne joue pas ce jeu qui consisterait à rebaisser une culture devant une autre, et, en l'occurrence, à mortifier l'occidentale devant l'indienne. Jeu stupide et destructeur, dans quelque sens qu'on le joue, et de surcroît mensonger: une culture n'est ni inférieure ni supérieure, elle existe, c'est tout (1983: 56).

By deliberately rendering it difficult for the spectator to empathise either with the British, or with the Indian characters, the film thus shows that both cultures are equally complex and difficult for an outsider to understand. This is a recurrent theme in Jhabvala's fiction. As Marta Fargo remarks, India in *Heat and Dust* is presented as a site of intercultural exchange that often ends up in frustration for both Western and Eastern characters. In this respect, the heat and the dust of the place are revealed to be both the literal and metaphorical elements of a suffocating and oppressive atmosphere. Fargo adds that, not only in *Heat and Dust*, but also in other works by Jhabvala, European and American characters undergo a triple mood cycle in their relationship with India and the Orient: admiration, indifference and disenchantment. The significant feature of this process is that it is not linear but cyclical, that is, 'disenchantment' is not the last stage because moments of admiration and indifference enduringly come and go (2007: 26). It could be said that this cycle, present in the Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala's productions, is also a feature

characterising the other Raj fictions' picturing of the difficult relationship with the 'Oriental other', reinforcing the multiple possibilities that may overlap: rejection, attraction, admiration, indifference and disenchantment.

In *Heat and Dust*, these different possibilities are presented through various characters. Olivia and Anne are those who best represent the difficulty of 'crossing the bridge' into 'otherness'. Olivia's story is portrayed through a spectacular past of grandeur and exotic palaces, princes and adventures. By means of its magnificent scenes of the past, *Heat and Dust* partakes of other Raj revival films nostalgia for the British Imperial past, also reflected in the visual aspect of the text. Walter Lassally, the cameraman, explains that as a means of visually contrasting both historical periods, filters were used in the shooting of the 1920s scenes in order to soften the colour and as a means of rendering the pictures 'more gentle and more pastel'. In contrast, the lighting and the camera movement for the modern sequences were 'somewhat more strident in both color and movement' (Lassally, 1984: 48). In this way, scenes of the past become more pleasurable for the spectator than those set in the 1980s. As Hill reports, 'the grandeur which was associated both with the Nawab and the English colonialists has ended and been replaced by the noise, bustle, and turmoil of modern India' (1999: 102) (Figures 9, 10).

Figure 9
(Still)

Figure 10
(Still)

In the same way, Michel Chion analyses the effect the different style in 1920s and 1980s sequences has on the spectator:

> L'époque passée est évoquée, en general, avec un certain lustre, une image léchée et nimbée, tandis que pour lépoque moderne, la photo se fait plate, terne, fonctionelle. Avec pour conséquence que le spectateur ressent comme une sorte de punition, de corvée, les retours à la période moderne, s'impatientant de retrouver les belles images, les belles demeures, les belles toilettes du passée (1983: 55).

A significant aspect of the film is therefore its self-consciousness in presenting the past through a nostalgic lens. In contrast to the transparent documentary style through which Attenborough presented *Gandhi*, Ivory clearly shows the mediation any recovery of the past has to undergo. The spectator is not promised a film that is going to be 'true to the spirit' of Olivia. On the contrary, we have a character, Anne, doing research on an event in the life of her great aunt which has been concealed for a long time. She tries to make sense of all the fragmentary records she finds through Olivia's letters to her sister and Harry's memories. She visits the places that served as the setting for Olivia's story and imagines how those decadent buildings would have been in the time of the splendour of the Raj. The

account of the past is the result of Anne's research and re-composition of events in her mind. The film clearly shows that what we have is Anne's interpretation, which is often tinged by the nostalgic recalling of the past and the exotic flavour the memories of the Raj entail, hence the different camera techniques and soundtrack that are used to present the different periods. It could therefore be argued that *Heat and Dust* is a self-conscious film which represents meta-cinematographically the process followed by all the heritage and Raj films.

The present is there simply to provide a window on to the past because it is thanks to Anne's research that Olivia's story is recovered from oblivion. Thus, the very film *Heat and Dust* appears as a synecdoche for heritage and Raj films in general. In this respect, Anne symbolises the research undertaken by the directors of such films in their intention to provide faithful approaches to the past. In the same manner, rather than conventional stories, ideologically committed to the dominant culture, the heritage films portray figures that had something different to tell, precisely those that were most often silenced. For instance, films such as *Maurice*, *Another Country*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View* or *Howards End* all present characters that confront the conventional rules of the society in which they live.

If Anne had really wanted to search for her roots as a means of reasserting her 'pure' white British identity in a post-colonial multicultural world, she would most probably have looked into the life of Douglas's second wife who was her direct relative, thus presenting the power of the British Empire and the past as unproblematic. Nevertheless, her interest is clearly focused upon what happened to the first wife, the one who was silenced, marginalised and expelled from the community for committing the worst possible crime: miscegenation. However visually attractive the past is presented to

the spectator, the film digs out the fissures, the inconsistencies that disrupted the alluring apparent stability of the days of yore.

This metaphor between the modern woman and nostalgic visions of the past is clearly reflected in one of the last scenes of the film, where Anne looks at the window of the house where Olivia lived after her divorce. Through this symbolic window, Anne sees images of the happy days spent by Olivia and the Nawab in the mountains. Yet, in this window, Anne's image is also reflected and is mixed up with Olivia's. This is relevant because it offers a clear connection between the past and the present (Figure 11). Anne, as a living symbol of the heritage films, not only recovers the past. She is a testimony of how present and past have reciprocal relationships. Anne's life is affected by Olivia's, at the same time that the 1923 story acquires more meanings if compared with the 1980s one. There is a clear parallelism in what one and another woman goes through. Both have a problematic relationship with an Indian man (in both cases, one member of the couple is married), both get pregnant and think of having an abortion, finally both end up living in the mountains.

Figure 11
(Still)

This point highlights how heritage films become more meaningful when set against the time of their production. In *Heat and Dust*, the most important issues linking past and present are those concerned with gender and cultural barriers. The presentation of the credit sequence at the very beginning of the film symbolically portrays the paradoxical relationship of mutual fascination and separation between cultures by classifying characters according to time and space. As a means of rendering the relationships between past and present easier to understand for the spectator, they are introduced in chronological order. Thus, the characters of the 1920s, living 'in the Civil Lines at Satipur' are firstly presented to the sound of a waltz – alluding to the European imposed culture on the East. In the background, there is an old drawing of a bridge half in ruins. Afterwards, the soundtrack changes to Indian music and the characters introduced are those 'at the palace in Khatm'. The background image is a different one, similar to a door, that is, a threshold which leads in to 'exotic otherness'. Finally, the characters in the 1980s are introduced with the same kind of Indian music but the drawing changes back to a bridge in ruins, similar to the one at the beginning, but seen from a different perspective. All the contemporary Eastern and Western characters are presented against the same background, without any the spatial separation being established.

The crossing of bridges is thus immediately presented as an important symbol for the union of different cultures, the entrance into the space of the 'other'. However, the bridges in the credit sequence are in ruins, portraying the great difficulty that both heroines come up against when crossing them due to the heavy weight of cultural impositions. Yet, as stated above, the drawing against which the characters of the 80s are introduced is seen from a different perspective. Now, crossing the bridge, even though difficult, seems to be possible.

4.4.2.2. Olivia: an Outcast in the Memsahib's World of the 1920s

The film's apparent conservative and nostalgic portrayal of the past is thus disrupted by the character of Olivia. Olivia is introduced as a loving young wife who becomes an outcast in the world of the memsahibs. Olivia's husband works all the time and her confinement at home constrains and bores her. Treated by everyone (her husband included) as a precious ornament to be admired and protected, all she can do to fill her days is write letters, play the piano and look out of a barred window.[206] From the very beginning, she is presented as an outcast in the English community. The film starts with Olivia vanishing and Dr Saunders statement: 'I knew she was rotten from the very first time I saw her'. After this intriguing beginning, a series of flashbacks recreate the events that lead up to such an outcome. This scene will be repeated at the end of the film, thus reinforcing Olivia's marginal condition and rebelliousness in the society of the 1920s.

Although *Heat and Dust* presents a higher degree of complexity in the temporal presentation of the events – it combines scenes set in both contemporary and imperial India, but the 1980s and 1920s sequences are also edited with flashbacks in their own time-span – Ivory's film reproduces flashback technique used by Attenborough in *Gandhi*, which served, as explained before, to both create suspense and reinforce the ideas conveyed the scenes. While in Attenborough's production what seemed to be highlighted was Gandhi's sacrifice and sense of defeat by showing his murder by one of his own people, in *Heat and Dust*, Olivia's exclusion from society enhances the character's appeal. The last images, of Olivia alone in the beautiful Indian mountains, smoking in solitude and with occasional visits from the Nawab, confer her with a sense of freedom and liberation from the oppressive world of the British community of sahibs and memsahibs. A further parallelism could be established between both films in connection with the repetition of

[206] This motif is repeated in the character of Lucy, a repressed female character, in Ivory's *A Room with a View* (1985).

these scenes in their presentation of the main character's antagonist. As explained in the previous section, Gandhi's murderer is portrayed as an anonymous character which represented the supposedly intrinsic fanaticism and violence of Eastern peoples. In *Heat and Dust*, Dr Saunders' condemning statement which 'kills' Olivia in the sense that it erases her out of the British world, is representative that particular community of English upper classes in India. Dr. Saunders does not represent the British nation as a whole, only a sector of it, which is criticised and ridiculed in the film. Olivia, in contrast, stands for an open-minded section of Britain which was a minority in the 1920s but with which an ample section of the contemporary spectators of the film could identify with. In other words, Gandhi's 'exceptionality' in India is Olivia's 'normality' for a spectator in contemporary Britain, and Godse's murderous act as exemplification of the Indian masses is equivalent to Dr Saunders' obsolete, English upper-class values, which were to be revived by the Thatcherite sector of 1980s British society.

Olivia is all the time presented in contrastive terms with the other memsahibs, who belong to the traditional world represented by Dr Saunders. At one point in the film Douglas notices Olivia's irritability and is convinced that her change of mood is due to the Indian climate, the heat and the dust: 'No Englishwoman is supposed to stand this weather', he states. However, her answer is that: 'The only thing I can't stand is the Englishwomen, the memsahibs'. The reference to the weather is important since, as Bhabha stated, the English weather is a sign of differentiation and identity, especially when contrasted with the weather of the colonized countries:

> [The English weather is] the most changeable and immanent signs of national difference. It encourages memories of the 'deep' nation crafted in chalk and limestone […] the quiet cathedral towns, that corner of a foreign field that is forever England. The English weather also revives memories of its daemonic double: the heat and dust of India; the dark emptiness of Africa; the tropical chaos that was deemed despotic and ungovernable and therefore worthy of civilizing mission (Bhabha, 1994: 169).

With this in mind, Olivia clearly places herself as an outsider in her own community. Unlike the other memsahibs, she *can* adapt to the heat and dust of India, yet she cannot stand the role that has been imposed on her. Olivia wants to discover the 'real' India. However, the only kind of 'formal contact' with the natives is boring, with endless banquets and ceremonies adapted to an English audience. For example, in one of the sequences at the beginning of the film, Olivia attends a ceremony, where she sees the Nawab for the first time, and there is a musical band of Indians playing 'God Save the Queen' and 'Tea for Two'. The scene is as visually splendid as it is ironic about the relationship between British and Indians in the times of the Raj. The Indian musicians look quite apathetic while playing the British national anthem, as it is a foreign imposition on them which does not arise any kind of patriotic feeling in them.

Both parties, Indians and British, seem to be bored and uneasy during the ceremony, all except Olivia, who is quite fascinated – fascination being one of the stages described by Jhabvala in European's contact with the East. In her eagerness to knoe the 'other', Olivia is looking at everything and at everybody in the place. Her active way of looking distances her from the other bored British ladies whose only function in that ceremony is precisely that of being looked as ornamental accompaniments of their husbands. Olivia is also observed, not only by the other memsahibs but also by the Indian women, especially by the Nawab's mother, the Begum. She laughs as Olivia is offered a kind of Indian pastry she is unable to eat. Mrs Crawford offers the candid newcomer a handkerchief so that she can discretely spit it out. Mrs Crawford's mechanical reaction and the Indian women's laughter reveal that this was by no means the first time that an Englishwoman found herself in trouble when tasting the pastry offered. In this way, both British and Indian women reaffirm their beliefs in the incompatibility of cultures, symbolised in the inability to appreciate the other's meals. The issue of food as a symbol

exemplifying the difficulties in contacting with the 'other' also appears in a scene of the 1980s when Harry, already an old man, warns Anne about the 'golden rules': 'no water ever, no uncooked food, no salads, no fruits'. This 'physical' incompatibility links in with the idea of the weather, the heat and the dust, which was so threatening for English women especially, and which Olivia defies.

When analysing the role of the memsahibs in the British Empire, Felicity Hand concludes that:

> the memsahibs have traditionally been blamed for the lack of real understanding between the British and the Indians during the Raj, and while it is true that their presence put an end to all previous social intercourse, they were merely the victims of a male-oriented society (1993: 153).

This seclusion of women in British 'spaces' reminds one of the Asian *purdah*. In other words, the lack of integration that Asian women are accused of in contemporary Britain is just a reflection of what the whites in India imposed on their own women in order to preserve cultural barriers (Hand, 1993: 158). Preventing contact between British women and the natives is crucial in a racist society and is directly related to sexual and racial issues. As said before, sexuality was at the centre of the very first pseudoscientific theories of race in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sexual unions between blacks and whites became an issue of debate because the hybridity resulting from miscegenation could destabilise the rigid structures of power that kept blacks and whites in positions of inferiority and superiority (R. Young, 1996: 97-8).

In *Heat and Dust*, Olivia is attracted to the India that lies *outside* British conventions, even though she is constantly warned of the dangers awaiting her if she dares to trespass the threshold towards 'otherness'. In these warnings, the British characters often use the stereotypes traditionally associated with black people.[207] Relating the notions of stereotype and colonialism, Bhabha explains that the stereotype:

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[207] According to Richard Dyer, the stereotype is a form of ordering the complex and chaotic reality. Its function is 'to maintain sharp boundary definitions, to define clearly where the pale ends and thus who is clearly within

> is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated… as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved. It is this process of ambivalence […] that gives the colonial stereotype its currency: ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive junctures; informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization; produces the effect of probabilistic truth and predictability (Bhabha, 1994: 66).

Thus, in stereotypes fashioned by whites, black/dark people are associated with threatening sexuality. For example, in the scene that shows Olivia coming back from a walk on her own, she is met by Mrs Saunders (Jennifer Kendal), a perfect example of the British memsahib, who advises her never to do that again because: 'Spicy food heats their [Indian men] blood. There is only one thought in their head, you know what with white women'. As mentioned in the analysis of *Gandhi*, non-whites are also considered to be violent, in terms of savage, 'irrational' attacks on other people, in contrast to European or Western 'civilised' manners. This comes from the traditional Eurocentric discourses which propagate the ideas that Europeans go to war or conquer other territories to expand their culture's positive values, while non-Europeans – namely native people in Africa, America, Asia or Australia – take part in irrational riots and perpetrate savage actions, hence, the scenes in the film dedicated to the Nawab's story of the attack of an Indian tribe or in Douglas's account of the sati. According to Lola Young the whites' need to project on to the 'other' – blacks – all the negative traits leads to an imagining of themselves as the positive counterpart of civilization:

> For Whites to see themselves as rational, ordered and civilised people, they have to construct a notion of irrationality, disorder and uncivilised behavior which is imposed on the object of their stimulus to anxiety. Elements of the culture which are repressed re-emerge in the despised culture (in Rutherford, 1990: 193).

Although, as reflected in the above examples, British 'whiteness' is clearly associated with order and Indian 'blackness' with chaos, this stereotyping is sometimes

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and who clearly beyond it' (Dyer, 1993:16). The stereotype provides a partial knowledge that helps to represent, appropriate and, therefore, control, the other (Baudrillard in Young, 1995: 143). In other words, the stereotype is used to classify people belonging to the sphere of 'otherness' according to a selection of traits which help to maintain hierarchical divisions.

tainted with an ironic hint. For instance, just after Douglas laments the woman's screams in her sati – an example of 'black savagery and irrationality' – there appears an image of the British ordering the shooting against a defenceless Indian demonstration.

The general belief in the danger represented by non-white Asians is not the only reason which obstructs Olivia's liberty to 'cross the bridge'. Harry (Nickolas Grace) is also a British subject who accepts the Nawab's friendship. As a man, nobody forbids Harry from living in the Indian prince's palace. His behaviour may be criticized by the British community but not condemned. The reason why he can decide from himself and Olivia cannot, is a question of gender. Yet again, in the background lies the fear of miscegenation. As Lola Young states, 'it seems that inter-racial sexuality is an unmentionable act in the context of a racist society' (1990: 188). Moreover, she adds that:

> The fear of portraying inter-racial sexual relationships contains within it implicit expressions of fears for the purity and superiority of the White 'race' which, as they relate to 'miscegenation' and 'race-mixing', are evocative of earlier pseudo-scientific racist discourse (1990: 197).

Not only can heterosexual inter-racial sex 'stain' the 'pure' and 'civilising' white race, but it also poses the terrible threat of producing hybrid beings. As Robert Young says, the relationship between a black man and a white woman is the worst possible one from the point of view of whites. Given the fact that hybridisation is looked upon with horror in a racist society because it means lowering the standards of the white 'pure' and 'civilizing' race, heterosexual relationships pose a threat that is absent in a homosexual one:

> Anxiety about hybridity reflected the desire to keep races separate, which meant that attention was immediately focused on the mixed race offspring that resulted from inter-racial sexual intercourse […]. In this situation, same-sex sex, though clearly locked into an identical same-but-different dialectic of racialized sexuality, posed no threat because it produced no children; its advantage was that it remained silent, covert and unmarked […]. In fact, in historical terms, concern about racial amalgamation tended if anything to encourage same-sex sex (playing the imperial game was, after all, already an implicitly homo-erotic practice (Young, 1996: 24-5).

Thus, homosexual relationships, although not accepted by mainstream society, were preferred to heterosexual ones when the race issue was involved because they could not threaten homogeneity. In the film, Nawab and Harry seem to be friends. If there is the

suspicion of a homosexual relationship, it is never explicitly elucidated. Anyway, whatever their relationship, the fact is that Harry can move freely in the Nawab's palace without being expelled from the British community. As shall be seen, the acceptance of male, intercultural friendship is also reflected in Lean's *A Passage to India* with the characters of Fielding and Dr Aziz, while the intercultural association between people from different sexes – Aziz and Adela – is presented as problematic. Taking *A Passage to India* as an example, John Hill explains how the women who dared to venture into closer contact with the natives are blamed for the loss of the empire in Raj films:

> In a sense, the women in the Raj films endanger British rule both because, as Mrs Moore, they have doubts about its moral basis and begin to question its legitimacy and because their attraction to Indians, or willingness to befriend them, upsets clear-cut divisions and weakens British ability to rule. Women, in this respect, may be seen less to epitomize colonialism than to be putting it in jeopardy. As Lean himself so bluntly put it: 'It's a well-known saying that the women lost us the Empire. It is true'. (Hill, 1999: 112).

Laura Kipnis also reports a close relationship between gender and colonialism:

> The relationship between phallocentrism and colonialism is such that a disturbance to the colonial order is analogous to a disturbance in the phallic order. The cinematic figure of woman – the sum of all its previously encoded implications of castration – can function as the most immediate synecdoche of this more global, and exo-physic, disturbance – decolonization (1989: 44).

Olivia therefore incarnates this problematic female character dangerously daring to trespass the cultural limits imposed by the society of her time and thus risking the stability of Raj structures (Figure 12). In her attempt to escape the rigid class conventions of the British community, Olivia falls into the Nawab's arms. The problem is that she finds in this Indian prince the same kind of oppressive patriarchal structure she was trying to escape from. As an Englishwoman, her presence in the palace is not welcome. After having been formally introduced to the Begum, she is never invited again to interact with the women in palace. She is merely tolerated by the Indian community until the moment she gets pregnant. This unborn baby, a source of scandal in the British community is not wanted by the Indians either, as a symbol of revenge against the British. This situation reveals that the same patriarchal and culturally chauvinist structures of the Westwere also

at work in the Eastern sphere: while male friendship was tolerated, heterosexual relations were apprehended more than problematic. No wonder that the Begum is eager to help Olivia with her abortion. Although Olivia ends up in isolation, the reason why she is able to maintain contact with the Nawab is that, in the hierarchical scale that condemns miscegenation, from the point of view of the Indian community, the relationship between an Indian man and a white woman is more acceptable because member of the couple who is in a position of power is the Indian man.

Figure 12
(Still)

Other examples of female oppression in both communities are the scenes in which Olivia tells Douglas and the Nawab of her pregnancy. Both men are convinced that the child is theirs. Of course, they also predict the sex of the baby: it will be a boy who will perpetuate their lineage and also their male-oriented societies. The Nawab's reaction is very telling because his happiness derives not only from his pride in having fathered a child with his lover, but because this baby will be a living revenge against the British overlords.

The Nawab, in this case, embodies Bhabha's 'mimic man' (1994: 44). As explained before, this 'mimic man' apparently admires the status of superiority of the coloniser; therefore, he imitates his master in order to assimilate himself with him although, in fact, the native hates his dominators. In this film, the Nawab is often dressed in Western clothes when entering the British space. This imitation becomes rather disturbing for the coloniser, who feels that his own power as over-ruler is threatened. This feared revenge turns out to be true: if Olivia's child is the Nawab's, this 'hybrid' baby would destabilise the hierarchical structures of power in the white system of domination.

At that time of strict separation between cultures, a 'hybrid' child still echoed the aberrant racial incompatibility defended by the pseudo-scientific theories of polygenesis and social Darwinist ideas of 'degeneration'. Interethnic sex would therefore be regarded as incompatible as the weather – the heat and the dust – and the food, hence, the harsh condemning reaction against Olivia on the part of the British. They expel Olivia from their community after the 'horrible' crime she has committed. This situation is manifested in the conversation between the Saunders, Crawfords and other members of the British club after Olivia's miscarriage. Mrs Saunders, whose child had died due to an illness caused by the hostile Indian atmosphere, laments that Olivia 'killed her own baby', thus censuring her for having carried out an abortion. Mrs Saunders's words, however, sound very hypocritical because had Olivia produced a 'half-caste' baby, she would also have been equally condemned, in this case, for having committed adultery with a member of the Indian community. Dr. Saunders reminds his wife of this fact: 'You forget whose baby it was'.

Along that conversation, Mr. Crawford comments: 'Poor Olivia! She *was* a fine looking girl, too'. Another gentleman who joins in the conversation remarks: 'Was? She is not dead…', to which Mr. Crawford answers: 'As good as'. This adamant categorisation shows how, for the British, Olivia had to be castigated for violating the rules. This

punishment entailed 'outlawing' her totally. Olivia's isolation and symbolic 'death' is what waits for those independent women who dare to 'cross the bridge' towards 'otherness'. Her fate as an 'outlaw' reveals that, for all the 'physical' connotations of undesirable racial mixing, Olivia's baby cannot be born in the 1920s due to culturally imposed dictates and restrictions regarding gender and ethnicity. Had she had the baby, she would have been expelled from the community, but with a miscarriage she was found out anyway and was forced to disappear.

Symbolically, 'modern' Anne finds herself in the same situation. The film implicitly makes it clear that the circumstances respecting abortion had changed greatly by the 1980s. As a result, Anne decides to go on with her pregnancy. The feeling of impotence in bridging the gap between different cultures in the 1920s has therefore apparently been overcome in the 1980s:

> For Anne, in the more tolerant climate of the 1980s, it seems possible to be a participant. Although like her great-aunt she spends a lot of time looking out of windows, she is able to live with an Indian family, picks up some of the language, can even mix with the Indian women from whom, two generations previously, she would have been kept in purdah. The barriers are crumbling. As with so much of Ivory's work, the theme is the possible reconciliation of two cultures […], yielding gradually over the years to an underlying sameness (Strick, 1983: 15).

Contrasting the experiences of these two women, the film shows how times have changed and cultural barriers are breaking down. Nonetheless the characters in the 1980s sequences do not enjoy complete freedom in their race and gender relationships.

4.4.2.3. The Apparent Freedom of the 1980s

In the images corresponding to the 1980s, the film clearly shows how everything has changed after the independence of India. This change is carefully presented in the references made to the different functions the buildings displayed in the film had in Imperial times and post-colonial India. For example, Inder Lal's – Anne's landlord – office had been Olivia's

house; the town hall had been Douglas's quarters and the Nawab's palace is reduced to nothing but a 'magnificent shell' (Millar, 1983:65). In the same way, the relationships between British people and Indians have also changed through time. Anne lives with an Indian family, studies a little bit of Hindi, tries to establish conversation with the native women, and is free to reject a white American's sexual advances, choosing to have an affair with her Indian landlord instead.

Nevertheless difficulties, not only in questions of ethnicity but also in gender relationships are still present. Inder Lal's advise to Anne to get married with an Indian man and have Indian children shows his desire to bring this liberated woman back to the traditional female role of wife and mother. Likewise, the Indian women cannot understand why Anne is still single and childless. On her part, Anne insists in Ritu visiting a doctor who practices Western medicine in order to heal her illness.

The film also shows the extent to which Asian women are still silenced. Although in the 1980s the British woman can exchange some words with Inder Lal's wife and mother, these female characters are presented as ghost-like figures walking in silence in the house. In their brief apparitions, they simply smile as they serve and attend the man in the family and his guests. They are always relegated to the inner spaces of the home and the only time they abandon it is for a religious pilgrimage to cure Ritu's illness. It is precisely Ritu's sickness that breaks the family order. Her hysterical screams in the middle of the night symbolically underline how something repressed wants to liberate itself. As Gayatri Spivak points out, black women are doubly subordinated because they were oppressed both by imperialism and patriarchy: 'She [the Third World Woman] is not allowed to speak: everyone else speaks for her, so that she is rewritten continuously as the object of patriarchy or imperialism' (Young, 1995: 165).

The difficulty in the reconciliation between cultures is also reflected in the film through the inclusion of a character in the contemporary sequences who unsuccessfully tries to trespass cultural borders. This character is Chid (Charles McCaughan), a U.S. American who goes to India in order to become a Hindu *sadhu*, and reach the status of 'non-identity'. Chion writes a rounded description of this character:

> Ce jeune Américain du Connecticut qui cherche à devenir un ascète indien modèle, avec son crâne rasé, sa robe, sa petite natte pour dormir chez les gens et ses ablutions rituelles. Américain jusqu'au bout des ongles, jusque dans sa façon très volontariste de rechercher l''ultimate experience' de la perte d'identité—Chid ne cesse de surprendre le spectateur en l'exaspérant, autant qu'il fait pour Anne (1983: 55).

In spite of the fact that he follows the religious norms of total abandonment, leaving out the material dependence of the physical body, he fails in his wish to become a true ascetic. From the very first moment he is presented to the audience, both Anne and the spectator realise that he has not totally imbibed the Hindu notion of complete abandonment. He has shaved his head, he is dressed in orange clothes and lives from begging. However, his Western capitalist education prevents him from truly following these ancient Hindu practices. He says he lives on nothing. Nevertheless, he constantly tries to take advantage of other people. Anne often gets angry with him for that reason. She tells him Indel Lal's family are too poor to take care of him, but he answers that 'it's good for their karma'. Once he even tries to steal money from Anne, and, in a different scene, he begs the heroine for sex. Albeit his attempt to become a spiritual man, Chid is obsessed with the satisfaction of his body's physical necessities.

By means of the ironic representation of Chid's incongruent behaviour, the film portrays the impact cultural upbringing has on people and how difficult it is to overcome and cross the bridge into ''otherness''. This fact is present even in Chid's name. He is called Chidananda. *Ananda* is a suffix some *sadhus*, or ascetic, Hindu monks, add to their name. It means the 'happiness' one enjoys once the union with God – with the 'Totality' – has been successfully achieved (Yogananda, 2001: 201). Nevertheless, this character asks

people to call him by a nickname, Chid, as is customary in America, thus devoiding his 'ascetic name' from its deep meanings. Consequently, it is made clear that he is still constrained by his Western education and all he does is to turn Indian culture into a commodity for the benefit of his individual needs.

He returns from the pilgrimage with the Indian women from Inder Lal's family so sick that he is unable to continue living in the Indian subcontinent. He therefore finally decides to go back to the United States under a doctor's prescription. Hence, throught the character of Chid, the film can be said to include yet another example of physical incompatibility that proves the difficulty in overcoming cultural pressures. In other words, if physical sickness is apprehended as a psychosomatic reflection of cultural differences, then Chid's illness as emblematic of cultural incompatibility as the episode in *A Passage to India* in which Mrs Moore and Adela Quested become feel physically ill after their pilgrimage to the Marabar caves. Their sickness makes these characters acknowledge that they are just matter. They are human beings who cannot help living immersed in a world of clashing cultures. They look for the union between people regardless of their culture. However, when they are finally confronted with the absence of identity, they collapse before the void. As Hall explains:

> Our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history (in Rutherford, 1990: 223).

Thus, people need identity in order to find stability in this ever changing world. In this respect, Chid's search for non-identity is not the solution to the problematic relationships between cultures. As explained before, the absence of identity is an impossible task. It entails death or the re-affirmation of one's own culture. It seems that rather than the absence of identity, the solution proposed in *Heat and Dust* is the creation of a hybrid space. In other words, Anne's quest in hybridity appears to be the only viable

reconciliatory process in the problem of clashing cultures, even though her pregnancy at the end of the film reveals the complexity still present in contemporary inter-cultural relationships.

Despite the fact that Anne is a white independent woman of the 1980s, who enjoys more freedom than her great-aunt and the contemporary landlord's wife, she also tries to have an abortion when she realises she is pregnant, and, like Olivia, she ends up isolated in the mountains. This denouement proves that the prejudices against miscegenation had not totally been eradicated at the time of the Thatcher decade. As a single mother, Anne does not fit in the Conservative party's promotion of domesticity and family values (Lay, 2002: 79-80). Margaret Thatcher was the first woman who became Prime Minister in Britain, however, she was not a militant feminist. On the contrary, she believed that the struggle for women's rights was something necessary in the past but out of date in her time: 'The battle for women's rights has largely been won […]. The days when they were demanded and discussed in strident tones should be gone for ever. I hate those strident tones we hear from some Women's Libbers' (Young, 1989: 306).

In several of her speeches Margaret Thatcher praised domesticity. In her view, 'the home should be the centre but not the boundary of a woman's life' (Young, 1989: 306). That is, the political notion of the freedom of the individual defended by the conservative party was also applied to the gender question: a woman should be free to decide for herself what her aspirations in life are. However, this discourse was accompanied by the praise of family values and the traditional role of wife and mother for women, which relegated them again to the private, rather than the public realm of society. Besides, as Barbara Castle, Labour MP 1945-79, complained, Thatcher's policy of cutting the social services worsened the life of many women (in Young, 1986: 132).

Unlike Olivia in the 1920s, Anne finally decides to have her baby. However, in real life she would most probably have to face problems respecting her child ethnic and cultural inbetweenness. This is hinted in at the final scenes of the film when she is shown to opt for complete loneliness in the Indian mountains. As Milne states: 'If Anne's sexual freedom sheds light on Olivia's frustration […], so Olivia's flight sixty years earlier suggests that Anne too is not yet quite free and feels obliged to seek refuge from the stigma of social shame' (Milne, 1983: 83). In this way, the film can be said to use the scenes set in the 1920s to denounce how past discourses of ethnic divisions were still resonant in contemporary Thatcherite society. For instance, when Olivia is commenting with her husband about Harry's identity, she asks: 'Is Harry one of us? Am I one of us? I want to have a baby like you'. Although Olivia's words belong to the past, they have their implications in the present, especially if one has in mind the situation of the female protagonist in the 1980s.

Recalling as it does Thatcher's classifying speeches and her evaluation of her own MPs according to whether they were 'one of us' or 'wets' (Young, 1986:53), the appearance of this phrase in the film could be extrapolated to the notion of identity construction based on difference rather than on similarity (Hall, 1997: 4). The use of the very words 'one of us' in the film evokes this obsession for classifying people in closed groups and communities with a view to avoiding destabilising hybridity. This idea is reinforced with Olivia's wish to produce a fair-skinned, blond boy that would guarantee homogeneity within the British group, and thus preserve the propagation of white ethnic patrilineality (Rutherford, 1997: 149). Against this background, Anne's baby is still a disturbing element in a society based on identity divisions. Consequently, it seems that she is not so free. Maybe this is the reason why she also chooses the isolated mountains as the place where her child will come to the world.

The film stops before the birth, leaving the characters in an open ended situation. If Anne remained in India, the child would be caught between the culture of his country of birth and her/his mother's English background. If they returned to Britain, this child would also find it complicated to fit into the discourses that equated 'Britishness' with 'whiteness'. Recalling Thatcher's 'swamping speeches' and the pervasive presence of new racist discourses at that time, Anne's baby would still represent a disturbing element in a society based on identity divisions. Consequently, it seems that this independent woman is not as free as she might at first hand appear to be. Maybe this is the reason why she also chooses the isolated mountains as the place where her child will come to the world. The ending, in this sense, is as symbolic as it is artificial. The realism of the 1980s scenes seems to be finally sacrificed for the sake of the film's structure. The film does not provide any explanation as to how and why a modern, independent woman, with access to contraceptive devices, gets pregnant of a firstly unwanted child. Besides, her decision to have the baby in a village hospital in the Indian mountains is more poetic than realistic (fig 7).

Figure 13
(Still)

And yet, the birth of Anne's 'hybrid' child does point to the symbolic possibility of reconciliation between two clashing cultures. Her decision not to have an abortion indicates, if not the total reconciliation between cultures, at least the hope that this possibility exists. Hence, the solution proposed in the film is not the erasure of cultural identities, but their mixture, in other words, hybridity. In the past, Olivia's pregnancy was stopped because 'the poor unborn creature becomes the symbol of multiple incomprehensions'. Nevertheless, in the present, 'an offspring of the East and the West in willing alliance' is going to be born (Millar, 1983: 66). This is precisely what this baby, half British and half Indian, represents: a positive hybridity that hopefully will put an end to the prejudices, dichotomies and separations of the past. The artificiality and openness of the ending, though, fosters further reflection on the fact that this beautiful closure is as regretful of present-day circumstances as it is nostalgic of the past sumptuousness of the Raj.

4.4.3. A Passage to India

'I think that most Indians, like most English people, are shits, and I am not interested whether they sympathise with each other or not'.[208]

David Lean's *A Passage to India*, released in 1984 and based on the homonymous novel by E. M. Forster, follows the ambivalent line of the Raj revival films; through its nostalgic presentation of British imperial past tinged with criticisms of the present. The film was not only praised in the United Kingdom but also abroad and among the many prizes it was awarded, the movie won two Oscar out of eleven nominations in the 1985 Academy

[208] This is a passage from Forster's letter written in 1922 to his Indian friend Masood, to whom *A Passage to India* is dedicated, in Robinson, 1984: 199

Awards Ceremony.[209] The critics, however, were divided with respect to the film adaptation: whilst critics, such as Neil Sinyard, approved of Lean's accurate adaptation of Forster's novel, others, such as Vernon Young, accused the film of being a rather conservative and simplistic text in comparison with the book.

Set in the 1920s, *A Passage to India* tells the story of a woman, Adela Quested (Judy Davis), who travels to India with her mother-in-law-to-be, Mrs Moore (Peggy Ashcroft), in order to join her fiancé Ronny (Nigel Havers), the City Magistrate of Chandrapore. Once in India, they meet Mr. Fielding (James Fox), an open-minded Englishman who respects the Indian culture, and Dr. Aziz (Victor Banerjee), a Moslem surgeon, who invites them to visit the Marabar caves. What starts as a pleasant exotic picnic ends up with Dr. Aziz in prison, accused of having assaulted Adela in the caves. Finally Adela retracts her charge, but by that time the former friendship between the Indian and British characters has been damaged. The film ends with Fielding and Aziz's reconciliation in the Himalayas while Adela remains alone in a rainy England.

Ambivalence is not the only characteristic that *A Passage to India* shares with *Heat and Dust*. Both films are set in the same period and, what is more relevant, both deal with the problems thrown up by the relationships formed across cultural boundaries between Western women and Eastern men. Significantly enough the TV series *The Jewel in the Crown* and *The Far Pavilions* explore the same type of relationships. As previously analysed in *Heat and Dust*, this phenomenon has much to do with the conflicts and preoccupations existent in a 1980's multicultural society.

Nostalgia is also present throughout the film. According to Stephen Teo, this is due to the filmmaker's British mentality: 'At the core of this mentality is the notion of a colonial

[209] Peggy Ashcroft won the Oscar for the best actress in supporting role and Maurice Jarre won the best music, original score award. The film also got prizes in in the BAFTA Awards, BSFC Award, Evening Standard British Film Award and in several categories in the Golden Globes as well, among others (see www.imdb.com/titlett0087892/awards).

imperative manifested in Lean's work, for the most part, as nostalgia for Britain's colonial glories' (1993: 20). This is the reason why, Teo argues, Lean, in his films, 'says more about Britain, the English and what it means to be English than about Asians living under colonialism' (1993: 21). This is a constant feature not only in Lean's productions, but in Raj films in general: they portray mainly a Eurocentric perspective of the British imperial past. The temporal gap that separates Forster's 1924 novel and Lean's 1984 filmic adaptation reinforces the nostalgic flavour which characterises the Raj productions As shall be seen, the nostalgic element present in *A Passage to India* is, therefore, a reflexive one which enriches the filmic text with a high degree of complexity and it becomes a crucial element for the cultural analysis of this particular film.

Before concentrating on the film itself, it is important to bear in mind that, since its publication, Forster's novel has been approached from many, different critical perspectives. When it was published in 1924, it became an immediate success. The book sold well, not only in Britain but also in the United States – and got excellent reviews by both British and Indian critics alike, who regarded the novel as a realistic depiction of Anglo-Indian relationships. Significantly enough, however, Anglo-Indians[210] – the British 'sahibs' living in India – condemned the book as lacking accuracy in its portrayal of British India (Davies, 1994: 1). While some critics have centred on the novel's criticism of the Empire and have focused on Forster's ambivalent attitude towards Englishness, others have concluded that *A Passage to India* is yet another text told from a Eurocentric perspective which perpetuates the dichotomy posed by Orientalist discourses (Tambling, 1995: 2-3). The novel has also been attacked because of its misogyny in the portrayal of Adela, yet feminist interpretations can also be found (see Goodyear, 1994: 153-170); while other critics have focused on the

[210] The term Anglo-Indian has a double meaning. It may refer either to the British sahibs, born or living in India, or to individuals of mixed British-Indian parentage.

relationship between the colonial enterprise and Forster's implicit homoerotic desire in the narrative (see Bakshi, 1994: 23-64).

In her analysis of Forster's work, Benita Parry postulates that it is a dialogic text because it simultaneously inherits and interrogates the discourses of the Raj (1994: 134). Parry argues that the novel presents a harmonious and perfect structure that contrasts with the open-ended, paradoxical and ambivalent meanings of the content. She concludes that Forster uses art to 'create order from the chaos of a permanently disarranged planet' (136), especially after the crisis in European liberal-humanist values spurred by the break of the First World War and the void experienced as a result of that conflict. In *A Passage to India*, God is obsessively invoked in multiple ways – by Christian, Muslim and Hindu characters – yet what remains is its absence, epitomised by the emptiness of the Marabar caves (Parry, 1994: 141). The caves represent this absence, the void, a signifier lacking a signified, provoking multiple interpretations aimed at filling this gap.

Forster wrote the novel many years before the independence of India. However the film came out in a post-colonial context. This is precisely what Lean took into consideration when he decided to introduce several changes in the narrative. The introductory scene with Adela buying her ticket to travel to India in a rainy England (Figure 14), her arrival to India on the same ship in which the Viceroy was travelling – a scene that includes the splendorous welcoming ceremony made in the Viceroy's honour – and the panning through the streets of Bombay, are Lean's additions at the beginning of the film. The filmmaker also included other relevant sequences, as the journey by train to Chandrapore, Adela's bike trip to the Hindu temple in ruins inhabited by monkeys, Godbole's farewell to Mrs Moore and the final scene with Adela in England (Lennie, 1986: 142-3). The way these scenes lead to a single interpretation of the story has impelled

some critics to consider the film a simplified version of the original. In Vernon Young's words:

> When David Lean decided to film the book by disregarding its pessimistic (or best, contentious) outcome, he sacrificed more than the fitting conclusion. Since he found Forster's inferences (about the future of India) 'out of date' in 1985, he had necessarily to falsify the protagonists of the story so that he could manipulate them in his own way. Up to the denouement he got the story right, in his episodic sequence, and he told that story with occasional flashes of brilliance. Yet, if you are familiar with the novel, his film, as a whole, is mistakenly far from the disenchanted spirit of the original (1985: 293).

Anita Desai has also interpreted the film negatively as a manipulation of the novel. She states that it was Lean's belief that he was improving the novel but history as well, a fact that 'draws attention to a continuing imperialist urge to control and censor the images of India' (in D'Souza and Shakur, 2003: 78).

Figure 14
(Still)

In contrast, Neil Sinyard regards Lean's film as an example of a successful screened version of the original novel because, in his view, it fulfils three criteria he considers crucial for an adaptation to be satisfying: it aims for the spirit of the original, it uses the camera to *interpret* rather than just to illustrate the written text and it exploits the affinity between the

novelist and the filmmaker (2000: 147). Sinyard argues that critical hostility against this film is the result of the traditional placement of literature over cinema, especially if the writer is considered a literary icon. Nevertheless, instead of drawing an endless comparison between both texts in order to establish a hierarchical ranking between them, Sinyard proposes to study the film separately, as a contextual interpretation of the novel: 'Novels describe, films depict. At their best, adaptations from one to another should not be seen as travesty but translation, not a reductive illustration of an inimitable masterpiece but an imaginative retelling of classic material in new form and new audience' (2000: 160).

The new form is the screen, a means that forces the filmmaker to make crucial decisions, such as the inclusion of breathtaking long-shots of the Indian landscape, the portrayal of close-ups of certain characters in certain moments which may lead the audience to sympathise with them, and the choice of actors and actresses in the casting. This last selection may modify the portrayal of the characters or add a different dimension to them – e.g. Judy Davies makes of Adela a physically nicer character, and Alec Guinness, a popular, white, British actor playing the part of Godbole confers on this character a Brechtian or ironic distance, while, at the same time, it reinforces the Eurocentric imposed view of India (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 154).

In contrast to the 1924 readers of the novel, the 1984 film audience corresponded to the spectators of a post-colonial world who were aware of the historical events that would happen after the closure of the narrative. Living in a new multicultural society in Britain, the 1980s spectator was conscious of cultural clashes occurring at that moment in time in the ex-mother country, which had witnessed important changes regarding class, gender and ethnic relationships. It is important, then, to study the film in this light and from the viewpoint of the new audience, as Sinyard points out (2000: 160).

4.4.3.1. A Packaged Holiday to an Exotic Past

The credit sequence and the first scenes in the film link the temporal gap that separates Forster's and Lean's texts. To begin with, the credit sequence presents images of old paintings, in warm colours, the type found in ancient Hindu temples. The music recreates the spirit of adventure in foreign – Oriental – countries but typically composed by a Westerner. This music is repeated in the film when Adela, visiting the Hindu temple in ruins, feels afraid and threatened by those statues representing explicit sexual scenes and by the monkeys jumping and screaming around. Referring to the music in this sequence, Laura Donaldson explains that: 'The music here repeats the overture's opening theme and orchestrates it with reed instruments, which are often the West's musical evocation of the mysteriousness of the East' (1996: 98). Ramón Moreno also highlights this contrast between images and music which reinforces the dichotomy East-West:

> Los créditos se cargan de sentido sobre unos coloristas – pero desechos – frescos indios que representan mujeres ricamente ataviadas; al tiempo suena la música compuesta por Maurice Jarre, refinadísima en el sentido clásico más occidental del término: el contraste está servido, pues, entre la sensualidad visual oriental y la manifestación cultural europea por antonomasia (1993: 326).[211]

This appealing music and scenes are contrasted with the dull and grey rain in London. There are people walking in the street under opened umbrellas, Adela Quested among them. She enters a travel agency and asks for a passage to India while looking at a spectacular picture of the Marabar caves hanging on the wall.

If a parallelism is established between this film and *Heat and Dust*, it could be said that Lean's opening sequences are likewise presented as a window on to the past. Although, in this case, the invitation to travel back into the past does not come through a contemporary woman searching out the story of another long dead woman, the first scenes,

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[211] Moreno also reveals the connection between this musical piece and the one present at Lean's previous film, *Ryan's Daughter*, being one a variation of the other. This fact highlights the importance of the female characters in their respective narratives and invites to relate the heroines of both films (1993: 326). Adela is, therefore, soon to be revealed as a relevant character in the film, her perspective and psychological drives gaining more preponderance on the screen than in Forster's novel.

deliberately added in the film, picture a journey, not only to the East but to the past proffered by Raj films for contemporary spectators. In the same way that the female protagonist buys a passage to India, the spectator of the 1980s is invited to share this journey with her, not only in spatial but also in temporal terms.

The following sequence portrays the actual trip and arrival of the two main female characters (Adela and Mrs Moore), together with the Viceroy to India. Once they reach their destiny, they are welcome with great ceremony (Figure 15). This juxtaposition between a boring, rainy England with a bright, magnificent India is, as Hill reports, *too* exaggerated. He says that this opening scene:

> … helps to construct a strong sense of *contrast* between the drab and wet England and a bright and visually spectacular India. The scene in England is followed by the arrival of Adela and Mrs Moore in Bombay where they are greeted by the spectacle of the Bombay Gate, the 'Gateway of India', and a full-dress procession for the Indian Viceroy, who has also been on board their ship (the film also adds a further welcoming party, and accompanying ceremony, for the Turtons at Cahandrapore) (1999: 100; my italics).

Figure 15
(Still)

This contrast could be analysed from the orientalist perspective of the West's exotic vision of the East as 'other'. As Donaldson states: 'In terms of imperialist processes, […] this fiction possesses strategic value for the creation and maintenance of an exotic Other as

an object of desire that legitimates the "civilizing" presence of the Western colonizer' (1996: 91).

Throughout the film there are many scenes which focus on the spectacular landscapes of India – the train trip to Chandrapore, the long shots of the Ganges at night, the views of the excursion to the Marabar caves, including a painted elephant, or the majestic Himalayas at the end. Olivier Assayas states that this contrast between the European spaces which are under human control and the excess of the Oriental ones is repeated in many films by Lean: [212]

> Comme son [Lean's] thème visuel est la relation entre l'humidité verdoyante du bocage britannique, sa dimension miniature et sa brume protectrice, entièrement à la mesure de l'homme, avec les excès absurdes de la végetacion et du climat de l'orient (1985: 70).

Dileep Padgaonkar also establishes an interesting parallelism between Lean's portrayal of spectacular images of Oriental countries and a *National Geographic* approach. Taking these views into account, it could be said that, instead of making a critical revision of the relationships between the East and the West, *A Passage to India* helps maintain the exotic Orientalist vision or myth the British created to describe their colonised countries. As occurs with the other Raj films, the camera's emphasis on the visual spectacle of the Indian landscape and on the glamorous spaces of British India may undermine or, at least, soften the incipient criticism of the imperial enterprise proposed by the narrative (Cornut-Gentille, 2006: 144).

Moreover, it seems that Lean consciously filmed a blockbuster for Western audiences. In terms of film production aiming at a box-office success, *A Passage to India* stands closer to Attenborough's use of the imperial myth in *Gandhi* as a commodity for mainstream cinema than to Ivory's more intimate and independent *Heat and Dust*.

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[212] Assayas gives some examples of the presence of these contrasting images in several of Lean's films: "Excès démesuré de chaleur (le soleil de *Lawrence*), excès démesuré de froid (la maison de *Jivago*), excès de la luxuriance (la forêt du *Pont de la rivière Kwaï*), les paysages de *Passage to India*, l'immensité suggérée, omniprésente), excès du vide (le désert de *Lawrence*) (1985: 70).

According to Noel Annan, the mainstream format of the film makes it depart from Forster's novel in three main points. First, the spectacular images of India which help re-create the past grandeur of the Raj: 'Ronny's bungalow looks as if it were in Beverly Hills […]. Yes, India glows. But it does not menace. It is the India of the coffee table book and the travel bureau' (1985: 5). Secondly, the characters are simplified. In order to sell the image an international spectator wants to see, not only some traits of the Indian but also of the British characters are exaggerated so mass audiences can easily classify them. This simplification is a biased one. As occurred in *Gandhi* and *Heat and Dust*, the British characters that are ridiculed for their jingoist and supercilious attitudes are presented as old-fashioned remnants of the past, while the protagonists – Fielding, Adela, Mrs Moore – present a higher degree of complexity: they are 'round' characters, to use Forster's terminology – which represent the open-mindedness of contemporary Britain. Indian characters, in contrast, retain the stereotypes traditionally attached to them; for instance, while Dr. Aziz's childish behaviour bestows a comic effect, the crowds are often presented as menacing.

Finally, the ending of the film is somehow happier than that of the novel: 'Lean, it is said, thought the ending of the novel out of date. So he cut the dramatic symbolism of Aziz being parted from Fielding but their horses swerving aside' (Annan, 1985: 5). As Padgaonkar concludes, these changes in the film are consciously made to appeal to Western audiences:

> David Lean was, of course, no reactionary. But he knew he was catering to a mass, essentially western audience. This audience would have recoiled with horror had he made the complexity—the hallmark of the novel—into his film's unique selling proposition (1993: 27).

Nevertheless, as John Hill argues, the contrast established in the film between Britain and India is too exaggerated, too obvious. In other words, it is not a 'natural' but a deliberate separation. Through the character of Adela, the film presents this journey into the East and into the past from the biased perspective of the tourist in need of the adventure

and exoticism the West is unable to provide. As with *Heat and Dust*, where the access to the past was mediated through Anne's research, in *A Passage to India* the camera accompanies Adela on her journey to India. By means of these techniques, both films acknowledge that any vision of Britain's imperial past is going to be tinged with subjectivity because cultural pre-suppositions and prejudices cannot be avoided.

4.4.3.2. India vs. Britain

Despite Lean's determination to make a marketable cinematic production, there are many elements in the film which criticise British and Indian relationships in both the past and the present. To begin with, the already mentioned contrast between the monotony of Britain and the bright spectacular India is not the only reference to the differences existing between these two countries. As in *Heat and Dust*, there are several scenes that clearly relate British people and spaces, such as their clubs or houses, with order and safety. At the same time, the natives and the places in India where the British influence is absent (i.e. the streets or slums inhabited by Indians) are always connected with disorder, chaos and consequently, with threat. As Ananda Mitra puts it:

> The images that become repeated in these sequences are those of squalor, poverty, and a sense of 'otherness' where the people in the bazaars are produced as different and strange as compared to the white protagonists who arrive at the station. For the arriving Europeans, the station becomes a place of strange curiosities with snake-charmers and scorpion-eaters. In these images the protagonist from the West, and the Western audience of the film, share voyeuristic pleasures in taking a peak in the unknown and the strange customs of the people of the East. Thus the wide-eyed wonder of the European women in both *Heat and Dust* and *A Passage to India* […] is a representation of the uniqueness of India and the East. However this wonder is not without its share of cultural judgements. The exotic is not only curious to the protagonists but also the reason why the Europeans have to intervene and provide guidance to the 'natives' (1999: 95).

Besides the Viceroy's welcome ceremony, the film presents other conspicuous examples. For instance, when Mrs Moore and Adela attend a party at the club, the gardens, the music, everything is carefully ordered according to Western, rational tastes. In contrast,

when these female characters have to go through the Indian part of the town, the crowded images of the street, with a funeral included, transmit a claustrophobic feeling of threat that disappears when the protagonists finally reach the English space (Figure 16). Similarly, in the last part of the film, the order at the trial is constantly disrupted by the Indian characters who, after hearing the verdict, go out into the street in a kind of chaotic celebration and, at the same time, a protest against the British rule.

Figure 16
(Still)

The association 'British order' and 'Indian chaos' could be related to British people's perception of immigrant Asians – or non-whites, in general – as a threat in the post-colonial era. At the time the story is set in the film, those riots and voices claiming for freedom in India eventually led, in 1947, to the country's independence. When the film was released, several race riots were taking place in Britain. However, as explained before, the government blamed the non-white population for the violence and disruption caused during the riots, obliterating other social circumstances that may have provoked the revolts. Thus, just as occurs in the film, dominant discourses in their respective periods were

employed to reverse the oppressor/victim dichotomy by showing the disorder and violence of Indian crowds as against British order in the judicial system.

In T. Muraleedharan's view, 'colonised India – a victim of political and economic oppression and exploitation – ends up appearing in these [Raj] films as a mysterious and evil force that disrupts middle-class domesticity of England' (2002: 150). He argues that India is presented as a dangerous and alluring place which traps female British characters, in this case Adela, who is presented in the film as a victim of India's mysterious power (153). Muraleedharan remarks that several strategies are used in the film to connect India with violence and aggression against whites. One of these tropes is the recurring image of crowds of Indian men. The motif of 'naked brown male bodies' is present when Adela arrives in India and in the scenes of the trial. Muraleedharan connects these images with the crowds of aggressive monkeys taking part in scattered scenes in the film and reaching greater prominence in the temple sequence. When Adela goes to court, a semi-nude Indian appears disguised as a monkey, thus merging both motifs in a single meaning of aggression and violence exerted by India against an endangered and delicate Englishness (154). The violence attached to Eastern crowds in the film is a reflection of the threat the 'swamping' waves of immigrants posed to the domesticity of contemporary Britain.

It could therefore be argued that the film is reinforcing this representation of race and contemporary immigration as a menace to white British identity. On the other hand, it is equally arguable that other scenes in the film are contrary to this idea. For instance, at the beginning, immediately after the sequences underlying the contrast between the ordered British welcome-ceremony and the chaos reigning in the Indian city streets, there is a scene in which the car that is taking the British characters to their living quarters almost runs over Dr. Aziz and his friend Mohamed Ali (Art Malik), both of them peacefully cycling along the street. Thus, despite appearances, it is the British who are

shown to be a threat and a disturbance to the Indians. In the same manner, one of the conclusions drawn by a study into the violent outbreaks that took place in Britain in the 1980s, was that those riots were produced by failures in British government policy that provoked frustration in those communities of unemployed and marginalised people who, all too often it would seem, happened to be black (Young, 1989: 233).

In the same way, the supercilious behaviour towards non-whites on the part of the British is criticised in some of the scenes in the film. At the beginning, Dr. Aziz suffers the memsahibs' disdain outside one of the British houses, when both women simply take the vehicle that he was supposed to use. In a different scene, Mrs Moore invites Dr. Aziz to join the party at the British club, but he tells her that Indians were not allowed in, a rule that surprises her greatly. Then, while the British sing their national anthem, the female protagonists look bored. It is already evident at this stage that they long to know the 'real India', outside the British community. In this sequence, the consciously separatist attitude of the 'proper' sahibs and memsahibs is questioned by the film, contrasting it with the more open-minded Mrs Moore. She has no prejudices and no fear of having a conversation alone in a mosque with the Indian doctor.

In this manner, the British reassertion of their identity, imposing on India their clubs, parties, gardens and music, thus disregarding any kind of relationship with the natives, is ridiculed. Even the remarks of Adela's lawyer (Clive Swift) at the trial are presented as pathetically comic when the context is taken into account: 'I want to state what I believe to be a universal truth: the darker races are attracted to the fairer but not vice versa'. To which Hamidullah (Saeed Jaffrey), the Indian lawyer, ironically answers: 'Even when the lady is less attractive than the gentleman?' Everybody laughs at this comment, underlining how the cultural constructions imposed by British jingoism are inconsistent.[213]

[213] This comic statement made by the Indian character parodies the notions of beauty linked with whiteness that were fashionable during the Renaissance, coinciding with the earlier stages of colonialism. As Ania Loomba

In that same scene, Ali also questions British rule in India when he realises that Mrs Moore, the only witness who could have supported Aziz's version, is not attending the trial: 'Is this your English justice? We are slaves!'

The criticism the film makes of British jingoism in the past could also be applied to the time in which the film was released: precisely two years after the Falkland's War. Apart from serving as a boost to patriotic feelings and pride in the country's intervention, the conflict also caused polemic. As said before, the question of whether the war was caused by British negligence over its territorial interests abroad, or whether the sinking of the Argentinian cruiser *General Belgrano* was necessary became the subject of heated debates. Consequently, despite the general feeling of victory and patriotism the war brought about, some dissenting voices seemed to be echoing Ali's question in the film: 'Is this your English justice?'

All this goes to show that the schema of difficult relationships between blacks and whites dramatised in *Heat and Dust* is repeated once again in *A Passage to India*. The symbolism of the crossing of bridges and the entrance into the 'other''s space is also present through the recurrent motif of the train. It allows the white female characters to enter and discover Indian spaces. As in *Heat and Dust*, the British, who in the main belong and accept white dominant values, are depicted as chauvinistic and hypocritical. And yet, Lean, like Ivory, shows that the difficulty in understanding the 'other' is a problem not only for the British but also for the Indians, hence Aziz's nervousness when he befriends the Western characters. On several occasions, Aziz manifests his knowledge of the British through pre-conceived stereotypical images. For instance, when he visits Fielding, he is

explains: 'The vast new worlds encountered by European travellers were interpreted by them through ideological filters or ways of seeing provided by their own cultures and societies […]. This dialectic shaped attitudes to outsiders as well as to "European" culture itself, for example, the centrality of whiteness to beauty was not an age-old idea that now cast black people as ugly, rather it was the actual contact with black people, based on conquest and exploitation, which also shaped English Renaissance notions of beauty' (2000: 71).

surprised to find the Englishman's house so untidy. It is clear that in his mind he had associated Britishness with decorum and orderliness.

In *A Passage to India*, the Indian characters also repeat Bhabha's ambivalence in their mimicry/admiration and mockery/rejection (1994: 86). Karen D'Souza and Tasleem Shakur draw attention to the portrayal in these films of the South Asian male of mixed-loyalties: 'Like Dr Aziz, the Nawab [in *Heat and Dust*] has professional connections with the British, but his social position demands a greater degree of political and cultural interaction which culminates in a sense of ruptured identity' (2003: 82). Dr. Aziz admires Fielding and tries to connect with him and his English friends whom he perceives as different from the other British overseers. Like the Nawab in Ivory's film, Aziz wears Western clothes when he is in British company. On the day of the excursion to the Marabar caves, for instance, the inconsistency of the imposition of British culture is manifest, especially as Aziz's suit is shown to be unsuitable for the occasion. Walking under the sun in those dark tight clothes, he feels uncomfortable, hot and constrained by them.

Symbolically, from the very moment he decides to break his relationship with the British colonialists, he wears Indian clothes again. This change in the style of dress marks a psychological evolution in the relationship of Aziz with the British. When Fielding visits him after the trial, Aziz, wearing an elegant smock, says: 'I'm an Indian, at last'. In this sequence, Fielding laments the fact that Aziz has demanded money for damages, but the Indian doctor answers in anger that, if he hadn't, the English would simply comment: 'Here is an Indian that almost behaves like a gentleman but for the colour of his face might not let him get into the club. Is that why you came to see me? In the end, you all English stick together [...]. Tell her [Adela] to keep her money and tell her to use it to buy herself a husband!'

However, after this condemning statement, he asks Fielding: 'Are you coming with me [to the celebration of the trial resolution]?' In other words, although the relationships between these cultures at a time of conflict are difficult to maintain, Aziz still makes an exception with his white friend, in spite of his anger. Hence, by means of this scene, the film shows that friendship among people belonging to different ethnic communities is possible, as these people are able to overcome cultural prejudices. In contrast, other Indian characters, Aziz's friends, represent the natives' conspiracy and craving of revenge against the white ruler. When they are together at Aziz's house, they criticise the British. Moreover, they take advantage of the trial to ask for the independence of their country. This represents another connection with *Heat and Dust*, since the Nawab also uses a woman's frailty to get revenge on the white colonisers.

4.4.3.3. Race and Gender Relationships

As in *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India* presents two women who do not fit in their role as memsahibs. Both Mrs Moore and Adela want to explore and know the 'real India' outside the British space. In spite of their good intentions, they fail. In contrast to Forster's novel – in which whatever happened in the cave remains a mystery – Lean's film offers a logical explanation to the spectator. He decided to construe the Marabar caves incident as a hallucination of the female character. In order to do so, Lean needed to rework this character, modify her, and add some scenes to make his filmic narrative more consistent (Synyard, 2000: 150-1).

Adela Quested is reconstructed as a heroine. Hence, not only her presence but also her perspective is highlighted in the film. With a close-up of Adela both at the beginning

and at the end of the film, Lean reveals his preoccupation in portraying the complexity of his heroines and equates her with Lara, Mary, Madeleine, Jane and Rosy (Moreno, 1993: 340).[214] Adela is a repressed Englishwoman because of the traditional – Victorian/Edwardian – values that are still present in the society she lives in. An early scene that presents her visiting a Hindu temple helps to understand her behaviour at the caves. When, on her bicycle ride, she unexpectedly comes across the ruins of a temple, she feels threatened by the images of explicit sexuality and more so by the monkeys' screams. As Millicent Bell notices:

> In the film, Adela guesses that she is like women who think they have received a proposal of marriage when none has been given – Freudianly, hysteric delusion has resulted from sexual repression. Lean adds substance to this view by inventing an early scene in which she wanders alone into a deserted Hindu temple. She sees erotic carvings, the expression of a culture in which sexuality is sacred rather than shameful, and is screamed by a band of wild monkeys—and she flees directly to Heaslop and becomes engaged to him as though to protect herself from sexuality rather than to embrace it (Bell, 1986: 105).

Adela's repressed attitude towards sexuality is closely related to the cultural constructions imposed by society. Her confrontation with the 'real India', that is, with 'otherness', reveals to her that what she had assumed to be 'natural' in her own Western culture is nothing but an artificial construction. That is why, in the void the caves represent, Adela is confronted with herself – the walls of the cave and the echo both acting as a mirror. As Assayas reports: 'Il n'y a rien dans les grottes, sinon un miroir, on se retrouve face à soi-même; un miroir total puisqu'en plus de reproduire l'image, il renvoie la parole grâce à un écho profond, infini, tournoyant' (1985: 71). There, she is alone, as if she were surrounded by nothingness. At that moment, she glances at the Indian doctor calling her from the entrance of the cave. In that situation, she feels her very own identity is threatened.

Adela realises that to live in society means to assume the cultural constructions produced by it. At first, she tried to ignore the prejudices imposed on her by her Western background in order to get a true knowledge of the East. Unable to embrace the Eastern

[214] Appearing in *Dr. Zhivago* (1965), *The Passionate Friends* (1949), *Madeleine* (1950), *Summertime* (1955) and *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), respectively.

culture either, Adela therefore finds herself in a void. Adela's failed attempt to do away with cultural conventions that oppress and repress her reveals to what extent women are relegated to a marginal position in both Western and Eastern cultures. Eastern women are relegated to the invisibility and silence of the purdah. This situation is manifested through Aziz's commentaries on his wife, how he would have allowed Fielding to see her, as if she were a object of his possession without any kind of subjectivity or capacity of decision. Yet, as a Western woman, Adela is not granted a greater degree of individuality in Eastern and Western patriarchal societies. She is constantly judged by both communities for her external appearance. Her fiancé does not show any kind of attraction towards her nor does he praise any other trait of her girlfriend's personality. This is patent when he just kisses her superficially in her cheek in his welcome at the train station and when he coldly leaves her in her room at night. He just treats her as an object of transaction, marriage being presented as one of his 'duties' as a sahib. Furthermore, her alleged ugliness is a butt of scorn, which undermines her accusation of rape.

After her collapse at the caves, if she wants to return to reality, that is, to exist again, she needs to envision herself as the Englishwoman she is supposed to be. But then, she must assume as her own the British culture with all its prejudices when confronted with the 'other'. She recalls her conversation with Aziz on the way up, when he told her that his arranged marriage was not a problem to him: 'We were a man and a woman and we were young'. Adela, then, understands that her ideas about romantic love were cultural constructions, too. Thus, she realises that she is not in love with Ronny, and that this marriage, although disguised with romanticism, does not, in fact, differ so much from Aziz's own arranged marriage. Consequently, in projecting her own repressed feelings on the 'other', she believes she is being attacked by a black man.

Gavin Millar criticises Lean's explanation of these events: 'He [Lean] trivialises what is clearly a quasi-mystical experience into a rush of hot blood to a not-so-young virgin's head' (1985: 139). Nevertheless, the psychological explanation added in the film can be used again as a tool to criticise that part of British society in the 1980s that defended a return to traditional values and which represented a step backwards in female liberation and multicultural co-habitation, especially as these values have proved to repress women and prevent the understanding between cultures. Thus, Lean's clarification of the events can also be understood not as a simplification but as a reinforcement of Forster's symbolism of the caves as a void which reveals the artificiality of cultural constructions. Rather than a victim of India, as Muraleedharan stated, Adela is a victim of her own society. By concentrating on this character's experiences and by interpreting what happened in the cave as Adela's hysteria resulting from her oppression as a woman in a patriarchal world, Lean's film follows the feminisation of Raj productions in the 1980s, which give more preponderance to the perspective of Western women in the imperial enterprise.

Some critics such as Laura Kipnis, John Hill and T. Muraleedharan have argued that this shift from the masculine to the feminine in imperial narrations is used to put the blame of the failure of Anglo-Indian relationships onto women. Laura Kipnis argues that, since its very beginnings, colonialism has been associated with masculinity. Consequently, the female presence in the colonies represented a disturbance within the imposed male order and, eventually, women became the signifiers of decolonisation. In post-colonial societies, revisionary texts on colonialism rely on the spectacle of diseased female sexuality:

> The filmic spectacle performs the work of disavowal by *gendering* colonialism, by displacing its scandal onto the female through a semiotic shift from the more familiar convention which coded the colony or colonial subject as female, to a new kind of formation in which the historical adventure of colonialism itself is represented in retrospect as a female enterprise – a 'female disease' (italics in original, Kipnis, 1989: 44).

Kipnis brings to the fore the spectacle provided by the trial in the film, the emphasis on the celebrations after Aziz's absolution and the close connection established between this episode and the 'quit India' demands of the Indian public:

> The trial is clearly Adela's trial rather than Aziz's. And uncovering the truth of her sexuality will mean the undoing of the colonial juridical system itself. As the rape charge is unravelled as a fabrication, so will colonial administration come undone. Both are revealed as elaborate injustices which the film disavows and renounces (1989: 47).

T. Muraleedharan follows the same argument. By comparing the female characters of *A Passage to India* and *Heat and Dust*, he concludes that women are depicted in these films as 'shallow and ridiculous', characterised by 'idleness and racism and at times a simplistic fascination with the "exotic" in India […]. [Olivia and Adela] are represented within their respective films as both frivolous and vulnerable, and simultaneously ridiculous and pathetic' (2002: 156). Muraleedharan asserts that the blame of colonial oppression and troubled relationships between British and Indians is thus transferred unto the feminine, which is the 'other' to the 'real' masculine British culture. At the same time, these women are presented as vulnerable and are victims of the powerful forces of a mysterious India; and as a consequence, the blame is shifted back on to India. According to this critic, the portrayal of Adela in the film is very telling: 'the translucence of her skin, her injured body, her scorned soul and her final loneliness makes of Adela a victim, even a martyr of the dangers represented by the mysterious East' (157).

Although it is true that the feminisation of the empire films may lead to assign the responsibility for the troubled Anglo-Indian relationships in colonial times to the feminine, I would argue that it is the *destabilisation* of the colonial structures women are blamed for. Even though in post-colonial societies the past is envisaged with nostalgia, severe criticism of the exploitation of the imperial enterprise is made. As a consequence, the end of imperialism is not necessarily something negative, rather the opposite. If women are portrayed in these films as facilitating the change from a colonial to a post-colonial world,

they should therefore be regarded not as negative characters but as heroines who destabilised the oppressive colonial structure. Rather than 'ridiculous and pathetic', I regard Adela and Olivia as strong characters who dare to confront the society of their time.

In contrast to Forster's depiction of Miss Quested as an obstacle in Fielding and Aziz's friendship, Lean elevates her and, by means of the close-ups portraying her desires, frustrations and fears, a feeling of empathy is created between the character and the spectator. When Indians at the trial cruelly laugh at her by commenting on her ugliness, the camera shows a close-up of her, inviting the audience to share Adela's troubled feelings (Figure 17). When she, bravely, decides to withdraw the charges in spite of the humiliation and the consequent ostracism she will have to suffer on the part of her own community, the film raises her to the status of a heroine, a status reinforced by the last scene of her lonely figure, portrayed through a glass of rainy – and metaphorically weepy, melancholic – England (Figure 18). It is her experience as an outcast that is emphasised in the film, an outcast in both India and Britain, a person who has been relegated into the margins of both societies precisely *because* she tried to break with the rigid colonial structures that separated both communities.

Figure 17
(Still)

These structures were rigid because they were founded on white patriarchal dominance. This social order established a hierarchy of gender and race which could not be broken to ensure the maintenance of the white male privileged position. The portrayal of Adela as a tragic heroine and the frustration of her relationship with Dr. Aziz reveal the oppressive nature of this society. The events depicted in the film point to the fact that prejudices among people belonging to different cultures provoke misunderstandings that may have very negative consequences for both parties. Significantly enough, the situation experienced by Adela and Aziz in the film, though set in the past, is still relevant to the present, and could perfectly be repeated in 1980s Britain. As Lola Young stated, aversive racism is present in contemporary post-colonial societies. The aversive racist can be a person apparently in favour of the rights of non-whites but who at the same time holds (and hides) racist tendencies:

> If an aversive racist perceives a threat from Blacks because they are getting too close […] action, motivated by the belief in White superiority, will follow […]. Disconcertingly, aversive racists frequently appear 'liberal' and 'tolerant', seemingly supporting struggles for Black liberation: yet beneath this veneer of 'ideologically correct' activity, they maintain the features of aversion" (Young in Rutherford, 1990: 191-2).

In the film, Adela, is initially driven to act as an aversive racist precisely because she has been unconsciously imbued with some of the cultural orientalist perspectives of her British background. She, apparently, does not despise the natives; on the contrary, she wants to establish a relationship with them. But she is impelled to accuse Aziz because she is affected by the ideological discourses of her own culture, which in turn make the individual see their own prejudices towards the other as something natural. As explained before, during the cave incident and the trial, she suddenly realises how the individual's identity is made up of cultural discourses that are nothing but constructions. She finally understands the echo at the Marabar caves and decides not to follow the status quo. She

tells the truth, but this truth condemns her to be an outcast in both communities. After the accusation, she is rejected by the Indians. After the trial, she is expelled – as Olivia was – from the British community. She ends up in England, alone, looking out of a window. As a British subject she has gone too far in crossing the bridge, therefore, for the British community, it is as if she were dead.

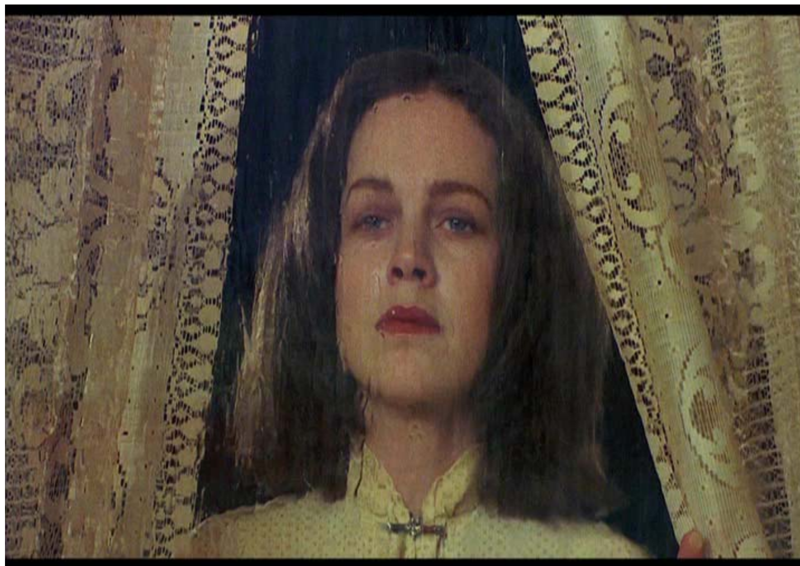

Figure 18
(Still)

Mrs Moore undergoes the same experience in the first cave. On her way back to Britain, she dies because, after the confrontation with 'nothingness', she realises that individuals are nothing but cultural constructions. If the delusion is removed or effaced, then, only non-existence remains. According to Sartre:

> The Other is simultaneously the origin of self-consciousness and the source of its destruction. To be looked at, or recognised by, the Other, is to become an object of his world, an event which undermines the self-consciousness of one's own world […]. Only through the domination of the Other can an individual achieve an identity (1997: 158-9).

That is why both women experience a state of near collapse after hearing their names in that cave. The echoes symbolise the deconstruction of cultural identities.

Even so, the film does not end with Forster's nihilistic message. As mentioned before, Lean changed the ending. Time has passed after the dramatic event at the Marabar caves and the disagreeable trial. Aziz now lives in the mountains with his children. He still feels anger against the British, especially against Fielding, whom he considers a traitor in his belief that he has married Adela. As in *Heat and Dust*, isolation in the mountains seems to be the fate that awaits those characters who have dared cross the bridge into another culture but fail to establish a positive relationship.

Nevertheless, Fielding visits Aziz in search of reconciliation. When the doctor realises that his friend's wife is not Adela but Mrs Moore's daughter, he is ready to forgive and recover their friendship. Again as in *Heat and Dust*, hope in the future is implicitly established through a portrayal of a pregnant woman. Fielding, the father, represents 'la face acceptable de la colonisation britanique' (Assayas, 1985: 71) and Mrs Moore's daughter, the mother, might represent a reincarnation of that old, open-minded, British woman. Thus, this unborn child may symbolise an incipient future where friendship among races can finally be possible. Aziz's children are also present in that scene, reinforcing this idea of hope in future generations.

Nonetheless, in my opinion, treatment and screen representation of gender relationships across races in *A Passage to India* represents a step backwards with respect to *Heat and Dust*.[215] As pointed out earlier, Lean argued that he had introduced changes in his film because things were not the same as when Forster wrote the novel (Annan, 1985: 5). He therefore made possible the friendship between the male protagonists. It seems, however, that the times had not changed enough to portray a real reconciliation between Aziz and Adela. Unlike Fielding, she is not allowed to come back to India. All she gets is

[215] In 1913 Forster delineated the plot of the first manuscript which entailed a romance between an English woman and an Indian man. However, after a second trip to India in 1921, he changed the love story to one dealing with the 'interracial rape' issue. Jenny Sharpe argues that probably the (non) rape worked out better to symbolically depict the historical tensions of the time, especially after the Amritsar massacre that had taken place in 1919 (1994: 235).

a letter from Aziz in which he says he has forgiven her. Yet she remains alone, sad and rejected by society.

Taking into account Robert Young's explanation about the relationship between gender and race, it can be said that a homo-social relationship between the two men is possible precisely because they are men (Young, 1996: 25). Their reconciliatory friendship poses no threat to the preservation of identities. In contrast, if reconciliation were allowed to take place between the Indian and the white woman, then the ghost of miscegenation, produced by a destabilising hybridity, would haunt the narrative. As Arthur Lindley says:

> The dreaded miscegenation will not take place in large part because the natives, far from being aroused, find this particular English rose repulsive. Her non-rape will, in turn, lead to a trial which produces a kind of non-verdict: we know who didn't do it, but not who did or even whether there was an it […]. After the trial she will be rescued […] by a 'hero' who only wants to get rid of her so that he can be alone with another man (1992: 63).

Hybridity is thus still avoided as a future solution for race relationships. As Arthur Lindley explains: 'Heterosexual possessiveness – the white racist's fear of the darkies attacking his women – has been presented as one of the root fictions of imperialism and (perhaps) as *the* root of racism' (1992: 65; italics in original).

The colonial enterprise was regarded from its very beginnings as a rape of the 'virgin' territories (Loomba, 2000: 79).[216] The feeling of guilt colonial exploitation also provoked and which was epitomised by the image of the violent white master was counteracted by foregrounding the importance of the Westerner's civilising mission, namely, the 'white man's burden'. Projection was another way to negate guilty feelings, consequently, the blame is turned back unto the colonised. In this way, the native came to represent a threat to vulnerable European women, and hence their protection became the perfect excuse for the exploitation and enslavement of the colonial natives. The motif of the

[216] Ania Loomba explains that, apart from the motif of the rape, which was encoded in a wide variety of discourses, many poets of the seventeenth century, such as John Donne, used the image of colonial relations to describe sexual encounters (2000: 73).

rape of white women in colonial fiction reinforces the image of women as objects or property to be protected so as to ensure a white lineage.

The paranoia of native rebellion was symbolised in recurrent accounts depicting the figure of the lustful native who can only think of ravishing white women. In this discourse, Europe is therefore envisaged as a woman threatened by barbarous male ‘others’. In Britain, this image of the country as female was reinforced by queens who represented the nation – Elizabeth I and Victoria – at the beginning and in the heyday of the imperial enterprise (Loomba, 2000: 78-9). Pushing the argument further, it could even be said that Margaret Thatcher’s success and charisma as well as her narrow, British ‘Island race’ nationalism were associated with this symbolism.

Post-colonial studies trace the motif of the rape back to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.[217] In the play, Prospero accuses Caliban of attempting to rape his daughter Miranda when she was trying to teach him their ‘civilised’ language and culture. After that moment Caliban’s lack of gratitude and aggressive attitude justifies his subsequent repression and enslavement by Prospero (D. Lindley, 2002: 33). The threat of miscegenation and its consequent destabilising of the colonial rule is also present in the post-colonial interpretations of Shakespeare’s play when Caliban answers back to Prospero’s accusations of rape by saying: ‘Thou didst prevent me – I had peopled else the isle with Calibans’ (1.2. 350-1). The birth of ‘mix-breed’ offspring of non-white male descent is the worst fear experienced by white colonial rulers. This fear that results from projecting their guilty conscience of having, in fact, ‘raped’ or usurped the land from the natives, is the issue tackled in both film and novel versions of *A Passage to India*, through the portrayal of a fake rape accusation.

[217] See Eric Cheyfitz, 1991; Barbara Fusch, 1997; Ania Loomba, 2000; Paul Brown, 1988.

Ania Loomba draws attention to the fact that the figure of the dark-skinned rapist is produced through historically specific conditions. She explains how the stereotype of the 'mild Hindoo' changed radically into a threatening rapist precisely during and after the 1857 Revolt.[218] The bloody events that took place in 1857-8 were originated by some incidents leading Sepoy soldiers to mutiny against the British officials. The causes of the general revolt were multifaceted and ultimately pointed at the economic and social exploitation of the British-ruled areas in the Subcontinent.[219] The consequences were horrible massacres perpetrated by the Indians and subsequent blood-thirsty revenges on the part of the British. Amongst all those terrible events taking place during the revolt, it is the episode at Cawnpore, known as the 'Bibi Ghar Massacre' that traumatically prevailed in the memories of the British rulers. During the revolt, Nana Sahib, a Hindu leader of the rebellion, had unmercifully killed about four hundred British women and children he had kept as prisoners in the Bibi Ghar ('women's house').

Even though avenging British armies ravaged villages and massacred Indian soldiers and civilians, the senseless and barbaric violence of the revolt was exclusively attributed to

[218] Depending on the perspective, the 1857 Sepoy Revolt was labelled as 'Indian Mutiny' by the British and 'First War of Independence' by Indian historians. The spur that inflamed the mutiny was the inclusion if the Lee Enfield rifle in the army. The soldiers were supposed to bite off the cartridges which had been greased with pig or cow fat. Polluting for Muslims and sacred for Hindus, the use of these rifles challenged basic practices of the soldiers' respective religions. Some of them refused to load the weapons and were publicly humiliated and expelled from service. The result was a rebellion on the part of the sepoys that had witnessed what they believed an unjust treatment on the part of the British officers to their colleagues. The initial mutiny was followed by revolts in the countryside: 'landlords and peasants, princes and merchants, each for their own reasons, took arms' (Metcalf, 2002:100).

[219] The causes of the revolt can be elicited in the article Karl Marx had already published in 1853 in which he denounced the British's economic exploitation and lack of respect to local cultural practices in the colonies: 'The profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilisation lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked. Did they not, in India […] result to atrocious extortion, when simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity? While they prated in Europe about the inviolable sanctity of national debt, did they not confiscate in India the dividends of the rajahs, who had invested their private savings in the Company's own funds? […]. And did they not, in order to make money out of the pilgrims streaming to the temples of Orissa and Bengal, take up the trade in the murder and prostitution perpetrated in the temple of the Juggernaut? These are the men of "Property, Order, Family, and Religion"'. In the year of the mutiny, Marx published another article in *The New York Daily Tribune* in which he stated that 'the British rulers in India are by no means such mild and spotless benefactors of the Indian people as they would have the world believe' (in Patel, http://www.english.emory.edu/ .). For a detailed account of the socio-economic causes of the revolt, see Metcalf, 2002: 99-106; http://www.bbc.co.uk; Patel, Nilesh, 1998, http://www.english.emory.edu/)

the Indian faction in subsequent accounts of the events. The revolt was finally suppressed by the British and, from that moment on, the rule of India passed to direct control of the Crown.[220] The severe punishments inflicted on the rebels were justified in terms of the savage acts committed by the criminals and as exemplary lessons to prevent further rebellions. The cases of indiscriminate massacres carried out by the British were also justified as 'natural' reactions of madness by those who had lost their women and children in the Bibi Ghar slaughter. Jenny Sharpe gives some examples of the British reprisals:

> After the British regained control over Cawnpore, they forced captured rebels to lick floors clean of dried blood before hanging them. It was also common practice to tie mutineers to the front of cannons and explode their bodies into miniscule pieces. The roads down which an avenging army marched were lines with the dead bodies of Indian men, women and children dangling from the trees as a message to the populace about the consequences of rebellion. Upon recapturing Delhi, the British army was reported to have massacred anywhere from twenty-five thousand to thirty thousand of its inhabitants. The response of revenge for the dishonour of English women thus not only re-established a claim of lawful (sexual) ownership but also enforced violent strategies of counter-insurgency (1994: 233).

As in any war or revolt, horrible crimes were equally committed by both factions, yet the resonances of the mutiny reinforced the dichotomy Western-civilisation and Eastern-barbarism and thus justified the British presence in the colony. In Barbara and Thomas Metcalf's words: 'the "mutiny" offered the British a cleansing sense of heroism and self-assertion, a confirmation of moral superiority and the right to rule' (2003: 106).

Another consequence of the mutiny, and especially of the Bibi Ghar massacre, was the proliferation of the discourses on sexual violence inflicted upon innocent British women by ravaging Indians. From that moment on, rape stories in the shape of accounts of the events at the Bibi Ghar, tales, novels or paintings depicting the massacre proliferated, thus transforming the stereotype of the colonial Indian. Until that moment, the 'Oriental type', especially the 'mild Hindoo' was 'licentious, but effeminate; cruel yet physically weak; duplicitous rather than savage'. As a consequence, 'in the absence of a stereotype for the

[220] Until that moment power and authority over India had been exercised by the private entity, The East India Company, founded in 1600.

"savage Hindoo", the "bloody-thirsty Musselman" was often identified as instigator and perpetrator of its worst crimes' (Sharpe, 1994: 235). Jenny Sharpe connects the motif of the rape in the post-mutiny narratives – in the case of India – with colonial rebellion. As explained before, rape in colonial contexts means the threat of insurgency against the colonial rule. Sharpe argues that the mutiny narratives of death, rape and brutal violence perpetrated on women were so recurrent and morbid in their detailed accounts of the torture and mutilation inflicted on female bodies that they actually objectified women and turned them into 'sexualised, eroticised and ravaged bodies'. In other words, 'the narratives that stage the deaths of Englishwomen as public spectacle constitute a violent appropriation of their bodies' (229-30).

Very often, these narratives were told or focalised through the eyes of the woman's husband, who was cruelly forced to witness his wife's defilement. This fact turned the husband into a victim or even a martyr of the situation. It was not just the woman's torture that mattered, but the humiliation of the husband who saw his 'property' profaned. In this sense, these narratives 'reenact a sexual nightmare that fixates on the bodies of not just women, but *women who belong to Englishmen*' (230; italics in original). The female body therefore acts as a symbol or signifier not of a woman, a person, an individual whose subjectivity has been profoundly damaged by all types of violence inflicted upon her, but as the property ravaged by the colonised, the value of colonialism, the mother country, the purity and innocence of the British civilising mission (Cowie in Sharpe, 1994: 232).

Interestingly enough, there are two relevant absences in the narratives of the mutiny that reinforce the objectification of the white woman for imperialist purposes. The first conspicuous omission is that of narratives that objectify the mutilated bodies of Englishmen. English soldiers died bravely at battle, but any torture or defilement of their bodies is not recounted or portrayed as public spectacle. The second significant silence is that of the rape

of Indian women. Even though it was reported that entire villages were ravaged by British armies, the rape of Indian women was never directly stated (1994: 231).[221] The silence concerning the violence inflicted upon Indian women, together with the objectification of white women therefore reinforce the image of British men as subjects of the imperial enterprise and bearers of civilisation. The protection of their women justified the segregation of British and Indian communities and the relegation of the memsahibs exclusively to the spaces inhabited by whites. On the other hand, the silenced victimisation of Indian women allocated barbarism and violence exclusively to 'brown' men.[222]

Loomba mentions Forster's *A Passage to India* to exemplify another discursive alteration of the rape motif in fiction resulting from new historical conditions that occurred before the novel was written. She argues that the Amritsar Massacre in 1919 'challenged the usual British claim to a civilising presence' (2000: 80). General Dyer's killing of innocent women and children inevitably recalls the Bibi Ghar massacre of 1857. In Sharpe's words: 'The name of "Amritsar" was for Indians synonymous with massacre much in the same way that "Cawnpore" resonated with the murder of innocents within the Anglo-Indian community' (1994: 235). Forster's inclusion of the rape accusation placed by an Englishwoman against a Muslim man in his 1924 novel can be interpreted within the context of the Amritsar massacre, questioning, as it seemed bent on doing, the dichotomy British-

[221] Indian women did suffer different forms of sexual violence inflicted upon them by their British rulers. In the early years of colonisation, especially before the arrival of the 'memsahibs', many British soldiers and civil servants cohabited with Indian women and they were even given financial incentives to do so. The purpose of this practice was the breeding of a cheap workforce who did the empire's dirty work. These 'half-casts' resulting from these interracial unions formed a separate marginal community, rejected by both British and Indians, whose presence was carefully silenced as these 'Anglo-Indians' were living reminders of the taboo question of interracial sex. These Indian women, either forced or willing to submit to these 'arrangements' with Englishmen, were 'bibis' or mistresses, lacking any type of legal right and whose sole function was that of producing illegitimate children. Some civil marriages were contracted but never recognised, therefore, many of these women were abandoned after the arrival of a British woman with an officially approved marriage. The economic changes implemented by the British rulers and the imposition of new taxes ruined many families who were forced to sell their daughters to brothels for the use of British soldiers. These women were sex slaves who often contracted venereal diseases and were abandoned by their families and their masters (see Roychowdhury, 2000; Khan, 1999).

[222] Indian women as victims are present in narratives of sati; that is, violence against them is perpetrated by members of their own community. The issue of sati will be explained in the next section of this chapter.

benevolence versus Indian-violence that had prevailed in the collective memory from the times of the Mutiny.

By emphasising Adela's experience in the 'rape story', Lean's film reinforces this criticism of the imperial enterprise. Besides the crumbling of her own identity as a culturally constructed subject, Adela realises what it means to be constructed as a 'rapable' object (Sharpe, 1994: 225). When she arrived in India, she did not accept the segregation imposed by the colonial society, and she is presented as an independent woman cycling alone, under no man's protection. The fear she experienced in the ruined Indian temple is not only that of her own repressed sexual desire, but of her existence as a female under threat of being raped in the unfamiliar colonial territory. Having previously broken her engagement with Ronny, she runs back to him in search of protection and commits herself again to a loveless marriage. But, protection from whom, one may wonder; protection from the actual 'lustful' and 'savage' native, or from the hysterical narratives of sexual violence promoted by white patriarchal discourses? By marrying Ronny, Adela would definitely be protected from the potential rape of the 'threatening other', yet she would submit her body in this loveless marriage, 'which is nothing short of "legalised rape"' (Showalter in Sharpe, 1994: 223).

By putting into question the narratives of colonial rape as discursive patriarchal tools for the control of their social order, the film adds a new element that will become the new motif of the 1980s Raj fictions: the threat does not so much come from a native rapist but from the hitherto obliterated white female desire for non-white men. This attraction did not only destabilise colonial structures, as shown in these films, but became a cause of anxiety in contemporary multicultural societies. The increasing presence of immigrants in Britain, together with female liberation, favoured intercultural heterosexual relationships that resulted from the free choice of both members of the couple.[223] The portrayal in Raj films of female

[223] Upper-class female desire for 'darker' men was out of question. However, already in the eighteenth century, the historian Edward Long expressed his fears of English lower-class women feeling attracted by non-white

desire for non-white men corresponds to the anxiety felt by 1980s, white males witnessing how their formerly dominant power was dramatically diminishing.

As stated before, in inter-racial relationships, a homosexual affair is preferred to heterosexual cross-race couplings, especially if the female member in the pair is a white woman. That is why, if there is any hint in the film of a supposed attraction felt by Adela towards Aziz, it is presented as an illness, as something 'unnatural', as a 'female disease' (Kipnis, 1989: 44). In contrast, Fielding and the Indian doctor manage to recover their homo-social relationship. Although not fully accepted, the inter-racial, homo-erotic relationship works because dark races have also been feminised in colonial discourses. As Young states:

> But if all blacks and yellows are 'female or feminized', then the white male becomes instinctively attracted to both sexes; it is just that one kind of sexual engagement happens to produce mixed offspring. As so often in the colonial arena, civilization thus begins to merge with an inter-racial homo-eroticism (1996: 109).

In the film, an implicit homosexual relationship between the two characters is presented, yet it is not fully developed in order to maintain the political correctness of the text that aims to appeal to mass audiences.[224] Fielding is characterised as a dominant white male taking care of a feminised Indian. On several occasions Dr. Aziz expresses his dependency upon his English friend as if he were a female character in classical cinema relying on the hero's help. For instance, when the British man arrives too late to catch the train to the Marabar caves, he shouts 'I must have you!' at Fielding from the train window. Later on, when Aziz is arrested and Fielding must depart, the doctor yells in desperation 'Don't leave me!' Even so, the film allows this relationship to have a happy ending

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men: 'The lower-class women in England are remarkably fond of the blacks, for reasons too brutal to mention; they would connect themselves with horses and asses if the laws permitted them. By these ladies they generally have numerous brood. Thus, in the course of few generations more, the English blood will become so contaminated with this mixture… as even to reach the middle, and then the higher orders of people (in Loomba, 2000: 159).

[224] As Dyer states: 'There is certainly no development of the undertow of gay feeling that you get in the book. This kind of liberalism is happier showing friendship between people of different races if it can leave out of account the confusing, disturbing note on sexuality, especially if, as here, that sexuality is ineluctably caught up in the western imagination with notions of the deviant and the perverse' (Dyer, 1993: 138).

because no ‘half-caste’ offspring can threaten the preservation of identity. Simultaneously however, it prevents any kind of further contact with the heroine (Figure 19). While Fielding, as a white male, can freely travel through British and Indian spaces, neither Adela nor Aziz are granted passages to India or Britain respectively. Adela as a white female and Aziz as a non-white male are confined within the limits of their own communities so that cultural divisions are preserved.

Figure 19
(Still)

It could therefore be said that *A Passage to India* is a film that is set in the past but nevertheless contains many discourses related to the present. As other Raj revival texts, such as *Heat and Dust*, the nostalgic element is consistently present, portraying a distorting view of India that focuses mainly on British people in an exotic environment. However, as Fred Davis says, it is a ‘re-visionist nostalgia’ which is used not only to criticise the ills of the past but also to manifest the inconsistencies of the present (in Hill, 1999: 84). Paying attention to the racial aspect of the film, it can be stated that there is an attempt at reconciliation between blacks and whites in the new post-colonial context, where imperial relations have disappeared and friendship can be based on equality. Even so, *A Passage to*

India does not go as far as *Heat and Dust* in presenting hybridity as a solution. On the contrary, all that remains at the end of the film is preservation and *separation* of identities. Although Lean suppressed Forster's ending, with the horses 'swerving apart', it seems that the resonant words 'No, not yet […]; no, not here', were still effective in the society of the 1980s (Forster, 1989: 316). The time and the place for an untroubled relationship between cultures in terms of gender and ethnicity is not yet ripe, despite Lean's intentions, in the 1980s. If the 'not yet' opens up a possibility for the near future, the 'here' is not the actual reality of the 1980s, but merely its representation on screen (Figure 20). The difference between Forster's and Lean's texts, then, is that the latter *can portray* a happy ending.

Sinyard and Moreno, among others, have highlighted the parallelisms existent between the novelist and the filmmaker of *A Passage to India*. It took fourteen years for both of them to complete their respective works which became their last production.[225] It seems that the powerful echo of the Marabar caves, pointing at the artificiality of cultural constructs and the instability of meaning, which both Forster and Lean express in their last works, offers no alternative for the explanation of human existence. 'The rest is silence'.[226]

Figure 20
(Still)

[225] Forster continued writing non-fiction, but *A Passage to India* was his last novel (Sinyard, 2000: 148).
[226] Hamlet, V.II, 337.

4.5. History, Heritage and the Raj on TV. The case of **The Far Pavilions** *and* **The Jewel in the Crown.**

4.5.1 Adapting history and literature on the small screen

If 1982 marked the beginning of the Raj revival phenomenon with the release of Attenborough's *Gandhi*, 1984 could be regarded as the year of the empire striking back on British screens. Lean's extremely successful portrayal of India was paralleled by no less thriving literary adaptations of the imperial past on television. [227] Although my aim in this work is to explore the way imperial relations are represented on screen, and both cinema and television are equally visual media, I would like to begin this section by mentioning the specific representational practices attributed to the medium of television.

In the introduction to his book *Tele-Visions*, Glen Creeber points at the importance of studying a medium that is integrated in people's daily and domestic lives. He gives the example of the commonly used sentence 'just watching TV' when asked about our occupation at home (2006: 1). In contrast to our decision of *going* to the cinema and selecting the movie we want to see – and paying for it – TV programmes *come* to our living-room and our selection of one or another channel depends solely on our finger freely pressing the buttons of our remote control. The everyday acceptance of television may

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[227] In his article 'Too Much of a Good Thing', published in *Broadcast* on 20th January 1984, Patrick Stoddart complained about the 'Raj indigestion' provoked by its ongoing presence on television. He argued that it would have been nicer 'to have a breather between *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown*' […]. This doesn't mean I didn't enjoy *The Far Pavilions* or that I have already set my heart against *Jewel* – only that I wish we'd been given time to recover from one before having to cope with the next. "She should marry Ben Cross", I hear myself muttering as Susan Wooldridge rejects Tim Piggot-Smith for the 15th time' (1984: 20). Not only did the two series come together but *The Jewel in the Crown* was broadcast first on ITV and immediately repeated a few days later on Channel 4 (Dyer, 1997: 187). To this overdose of the Raj in British TV Channels, it is worth mentioning that not only was *A Passage to India* being shown in cinema theatres, but also the box-office hit, Spielberg's US American production *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, set in India, was released in June, the very same year.

have an unconsciously pervasive effect on the viewer, which makes the study of television a crucial subject. As Creeber puts it:

> Television constantly punctuates, articulates and manipulates the world around us, presenting us with highly constructed and artificial images that inevitably inform and influence our everyday lives and perceptions. Indeed, the potential power of television is so great precisely because we rarely recognise or perceive its internal dynamics at work, so good is it at making itself appear natural and transparent 'window to the world' (2006: 1).

This 'window to the world', which in most nations is present in every household, and which broadcasts the same programme at the same time, creates a sense of community that transcends the boundaries of the TV frame.[228] In other words, the cultural meanings and practices emanating from a successful TV programme create a field of intertextuality that increases the cultural impact of the product though reviews and articles in magazines, interviews, references on other TV shows, publicity, and more or less public or domestic debates and gossip on such programmes. Accordingly, John Fiske and John Hartley argue that 'television functions as a social ritual, overriding individual distinctions, in which our culture engages in order to communicate with its collective self' (1980: 85).

Television works as a social ritual because its constant flow of visual representations is not void of ideological meanings. In their works on TV studies, Jonathan Bignell (2008: 293) and John Fiske (1997: 116) often mention Stuart Hall's 'Encoding and Decoding' (1986: 134-8). In this article, Hall argues that the images and sounds presented on screen convey 'dominant ideological discourses' or 'preferred readings' to be decoded by audiences. These representations, though, are 'polysemic', that is, they do not usually carry a single ideological stance to be straightforwardly swallowed by passive audiences, but may also present 'negotiated' or 'resistant' meanings. John Fiske explains that many televisual texts present a dominant ideology and a conventional form of realism:

[228] This study is contextualised in the decade of the 1980s, which pre-dates the cultural impact of the growing availability of TV programmes and channels through cable and satellite stations together with the internet. Consequently I will not be referring to the more recent phenomenon of TV 'à la carte' but to the more limited choice of channels that most people had at that time.

> […] to ensure the program's popularity and accessibility, but do not necessarily deny the progressive oppositional discourses a space for themselves. Rather they provide a frame within which such oppositional discourses can be heard and their oppositionality made part of the substance of the drama (1997: 47).

This polysemy may be the result of the various interpretations which can be elicited from a single text or the consequence of its intertextual relations with other texts in the constant flow of images provided by television.[229] In Stuart Hall's words:

> Twentieth century massive development of the means of reproducing and circulating images has pushed representations into the centre of the cultural arena […]. Images are clearer, more impressive than the reality they claim to represent, but they are also fragmented, contradictory and exhibit a vast variety that questions the unity of the world of experience. Images are made and read in relation to other images and the real is read as an image […]. Images exist in an infinite chain of intertextuality (in Fiske, 1997: 116).

For instance, one can discuss how non-white people are represented in *The Far Pavilions* in terms of character building, their presence, absence, relevance in the narrative and/or their portrayal on screen. Nevertheless, if the series is contextualised within the flow of images that appear on television, the meanings attributed to the signifier of 'non-white people' may be reinforced, challenged or complicated by their relationship with certain commercials disrupting the narrative and the programmes that precede or follow the series, such as the news, shows or other serials which represent non-white people in similar or different ways.[230]

It is true that polysemy and intertextuality are not exclusive attributes of televisual representations; on the contrary, these are features equally applicable to the cinematic medium. The difference is that of immediacy and domesticity of television, which renders its discourses more accessible and permeating in the everyday life of audiences. John Ellis

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[229] Fiske applies Barthes' notion of 'inescapable intertextuality' to television studies so as to understand how the complex and competing meanings that the flow of TV programmes and the popularity of the medium make of it an important mediator of 'reality' itself: 'Intertextual relations are so pervasive that our culture consists of a complex web of intertextuality, in which all texts refer finally to each other and not to reality […]. For Barthes, then, the knowledge of reality, and therefore, reality itself is intertextual: it exists only in the interrelations between all that culture has written, spoken, visualized about it' (1997: 115).

[230] Patrick Stoddart observed that 'by no coincidence the final episode of *Pavilions* was followed on Channel 4 by the final film of Jeff Perk's *Our Lives* series, this one looking at three Asian Cockney girls trying to decide whether home meant here or Hyderabad' (1984: 20).

states that television was originated as ‘a medium that had something of theatre, something of cinema and something of radio, but was distinct in itself’ (2006: 13). The defining features of television, according to Ellis, are those of both ‘fluidity’ and ‘fragmentation’. Televisual images flow in an endless stream of programmes; however, they are constantly fragmented by its mixture of experiences, commercials and boundaries between one type of programme and the other. He also points at the ‘intimacy’ of the medium, which is characterised by working best with close-ups, as they represent a more or less real-size image of the human face, in contrast to the large cinema screens, which tend to portray medium and long shots instead (2006: 16).

Ellis also mentions other authors’ attempts to define the experience of watching television in comparison with going to the cinema. McQueen, for instance, mentions both the poorer quality of the televisual image and the domestic surroundings in which it is perceived, normally with natural light, or lighting imitating natural light. This domestic context entails a ‘lower degree of sustained concentration’ (16). Concentration may even diminish by the disruption of commercials, which may provoke a change of activity or of channel on the part of the viewer. Christian Metz proposed the theory of the ‘glance’. He argued that the context in which a film is seen at the cinema facilitates the spectator’s concentration with a ‘fixated gaze’. In contrast, televisual images only require casual glances from audiences (in Ellis, 2006: 16). Metz’s ‘glance theory’ was criticised in the late 1990s by John T. Caldwell, who pointed at an emerging new phenomenon in the mid-1970s that emphasised a new visual style of television which demanded more attention from the viewer (2006: 17).

Although it is true that the viewing conditions of a TV programme entail a more casual approach to the screen than the dark and uninterrupted cinematic experience of seeing a film in ‘one-sitting’, Caldwell, it would seem, is also right when signalling the

increasing strategies used by television to attract the spectator's attention. In the case of the Raj TV series, the emphasis on the visual style which foreground the Indian landscape and the detailed and realistic-museum-like portrayal of the past bring them closer to the cinematic productions of the kind than to other series or TV programmes. This was especially the case of *The Far Pavilions*. The main difference however lies in the length and fragmentary portrayal of the narrative on television as opposed to the – in average – two-hour continuous depiction of the fictional text on the big screen.

Television has intrinsic codes or set of conventions that are shared by producers and audiences in order to make sense of the televisual texts. A relevant convention of television is the use of 'boundary rituals' that serve to make the transition from one type of programme to the next. In the case of TV series, the opening credits are boundary rituals that have two main functions. One is to signal the genre of the text the audience is about to watch. By means of images and music, spectators will realise whether the programme they are going to watch is a show, quiz, a film, the news or a serial and, in the case of the latter, if it is going to be a sit-com, a soap opera or a period drama.[231] The second function of the title sequences is 'anamnesic', that is, they 'bring to mind' what the audience already knows about that serial in particular and the genre it belongs to in general (Fiske and Hartley, 1980: 168; Bignell, 2006: 117). The opening credits in *The Far Pavilions*, for instance, contextualises in time and space the narrative at the beginning of every episode. Moreover, by means of selected sequences portraying images of adventure and romance against a background of spectacular views of the Indian landscape and specific music related to a genre of adventure and romance, the spectator soon situates the series within the general label of 'TV series' and, more concretely, 'Raj period drama'.

[231] As occurs with cinema genres, in television, generic conventions tend also to be mixed to appeal to a wider range of audiences or just to innovate. In spite of that, credit sequences usually foreground a certain genre in order to clearly demarcate these boundaries and capture viewers' attention.

Productions such as *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* have been categorised as ‘TV series’, ‘serious drama’ or ‘serial’. In his monograph on the serial television, Glen Creeber distinguishes several types of fictional drama portrayed on the small screen and labels this kind of fiction as ‘serial’, in opposition to the ‘single play’, ‘made for TV movie’, ‘soap opera’, ‘series’, ‘anthology series’ and ‘miniseries’. He therefore defines the ‘serial’ as ‘a continuous story set over a number of episodes that usually comes to a conclusion in the final instalment’ (2004: 8-9), and he mentions *Brideshead Revisited* as a clear example of it.

The serial could thus be regarded as an ‘expanded’ and fragmented film made for TV, as it develops along several episodes but follows a narrative line that leads to a resolution. Even though, as said before, television serials, or fragmented films, present distinctive features from cinematic productions, it could be argued that – apart from the ‘made-for-TV movie – the serial is closer to the film than other TV genres, which is why, in the case of literary adaptations, we find both televisual and filmic versions of a novel, as is the case of the fiction of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. Creeber argues that in the case of classic literary adaptations, the TV serial appears as an appropriate mode of transferring the written texts into visual productions precisely because they share similar narrative conventions:

> Classic novels often find their ‘natural’ home in the television serial. Six, seven or even eleven separate episodes allow greater room for the adaptation of a complex and dense novel. Indeed, it is well known that nineteenth-century writers like Charles Dickens originally wrote their novels in a serialised form, publishing them in weekly or monthly magazine instalments that echo television and radio serialisation today (2004: 6).

Serialised Victorian novels left the end of every chapter in a moment of suspense in order to create expectations in the readers and to make sure that they would buy the next instalment as soon as it was published. The beginning of the next chapter often recapitulated what had happened before and made use of repetitions to connect the

otherwise fragmented narrative. Because of each instalment's length and their separation in time, characters – even complex ones – were presented through typified traits so that readers could easily identify with them along the narrative. All these traits are present in contemporary TV serials with the inclusion of the so-called 'cliff-hanger' method, which impels the audience to return episode after episode. Another important feature they share is the space allowed for multi-narrative stands and subplot digression; in this manner, 'Mikhail Bakhtin's 'heteroglossia' of the multilayered intertextual possibilities of the novel can equally be applied to the serial TV' (Creeber, 2004: 7). Paul Scott's four-volume work *The Raj Quartet* is a clear example of how a long, multi-protagonist, interwoven text finds in the twelve-chapter serial the best mode in which it can be visually adapted.

As occurred with the films, the fact that these serials are adaptations from well-known novels makes them acquire a status of 'prestige' and 'quality' that separates them from other 'popular television' programmes. The issue of 'quality' attached to television has always been closely related to the British television industry. Jonathan Bignell indicates that although television programmes are distributed globally, its local forms are different. Accordingly, he distinguishes the intrinsic nature of local televisions such as the US American and the British, the former based mainly on commercial or 'Fordist' grounds, and the latter conceived as a 'public service'.[232] Bignell notices that in contemporary British television there is 'a tension between taking responsibility to society seriously and regarding television as entertainment for a consumer' (2008: 4).

The traditional conception of British television as a 'public service' comes from the 'Reithian mission',[233] which 'was based on maintaining high moral and social standards

[232] This conception of television could also be regarded as inheriting John Grierson's documentary style, which was conceived as a means to educate the audience.
[233] John Reith was the BBC first Director General who had a strong moral control over the Corporation. His paternalistic attitude towards the education of the audiences has had a pervasive influence on British television broadcast (Medhurst, 2006: 116).

together with a sense of duty to promulgate the very "best culture" to the audience' (Medhurst, 2006: 116). As Robin Nelson states:

> In the UK […], public service broadcasting (PSB) dominated from the inception of the BBC in 1936. Though in 1955 commercial television was introduced in competition, the ethos of British television was already established and Independent Television (ITV), though somewhat more populist, took its cue in respect of drama from the BBC. As late as the early 1980s, Granada Television, an independent company, was making expensive, prestigious drama serials such as *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Jewel in the Crown* as flagship productions to illustrate their remit to PSB remit (2006: 89)

However, in the 1980s, Thatcher's policy of privatisation also affected television. This measure explains the 'tension' Bignell mentions between the British tradition of promoting a 'serious', 'quality' television and the urge to produce popular, marketable programmes which become profitable for private channels or investors.[234] The discourses promoted by the government equated the freedom of the market with the ideal of 'free choice' of the individual and the consumer. Nonetheless, as George Brandt observes:

> In many fields, certainly in broadcasting, a greater multiplicity of goods in the shop window didn't necessarily spell greater variety. It might simply mean more of the same, with no meaningful widening of choice at all. American television, the free-market ideal towards most Thatcherite thinking appeared to be tending, was a case point. The approximately forty channels on tap in New York merely offered a choice of similar material inferior on the whole to what was available to the British viewer on four (1993: 9).

A consequence of the drift towards commercialism in the UK was that the 'single-play', which had signalled the quality standards of British television up until the 1980s, was replaced by the television film and the serious drama. Lez Cooke postulates that the demise of the single play was the result of the 'reactionary climate of Thatcherism', which made it 'increasingly more difficult for radical or progressive drama to get commissioned in the 1980s (2003: 140). According to Caughie, the reasons for the increase of the serialised fiction drama in detriment of the single play were commercial as well:

> The cost per hour of a serial was lower than the costs of a single play and made fewer demands on resources […]. It carried its audience over from one week to the next in a way which a series of

[234] In his chapter on 'Television Drama and Thatcherism', Lez Cooke mentions the case of the BBC, which was the target of the government's monetarist policies and transformed from a public service broadcast to a more 'commercially minded corporation' at the end of the decade (2003: 129). (For a more detailed account on the BBC's discordances with the Thatcherite government see Brandt, 1993: 10-11)

> single plays could not. And ultimately some serials were attractive because they could be marketed in an economy more and more dependent on overseas sales (2000: 204).

The serials to be analysed in this section are clear examples of the tension between the concept of television as a public service or concept of television as a commodity. In this sense, these serials are connected with the double-standards of heritage films. As explained in previous chapters, heritage and Raj films combined the 'quality' standards of the British mode of filmmaking with the capitalist ethos of transforming cultural products into profit-making commodities. *The Jewel in the Crown*, often cited as an example of British 'quality' television,[235] also enjoyed great popularity among audiences and became a commercial profit-making success in spite of its high production costs. As occurred with most heritage and Raj films, the popularity of the serial transcended frontiers as it very carefully portrayed a marketable image of the British Raj, appealing to international audiences. *The Far Pavilions*, although not as successful as *Jewel*, was also popular among audiences, exported to the US and conferred five nominations in the BAFTA and Cable ACE Awards.

The attachment of the label of 'quality' to these serials has often led to their classification as 'serious drama', a category that is envisaged as 'the respectable end of television' (Caughie, 2000: 2). In this sense, 'serious drama' allows a medium that is intrinsically defined as belonging to 'popular culture' to participate in forms of 'high culture' (Caughie, 2000: 5). The presence of these bits of 'high culture' on television is used as a 'variety strategy' and thus as a way of advertising a particular channel as providing a great variety of programmes adapted for all tastes and audiences and therefore gaining certain prestige (Brunsdon, 1990: 84).

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[235] It had sixteen nominations and was awarded with the Golden Globe, and nine other prizes including BAFTA, Emmy and Television Critics Association awards (see www.imdb.com/title/tt0086739/awards).

The question of 'quality', though, is quite controversial and became a topic of debate in the 1980s. Due to the commodification of culture promoted by the market-driven policies of government, it was feared in TV circles that the long-standing tradition of 'quality standards' of British television could be transformed into a 'popular' commercial set of channels in the US American 'Fordist' style (Bunsdon, 1990: 67). As John Caughie puts it:

> Fears of the complete destruction of the values of public service broadcasting it television were thrown completely to the market were addressed by introducing something called 'the quality threshold', a very loosely defined notion of quality which bidders had to satisfy if they were to be awarded franchise to operate one of the regional commercial stations (2000: 210)

In these debates, *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Jewel in the Crown* were frequently invoked as the hallmarks of quality. In this context, Charlotte Brunsdon questions what 'quality' meant in the realm of television drama and states that the notions of 'quality' and judgement are always closely related to issues of power: 'Quality for whom?, Judgement by whom?, On whose behalf?' (1990: 73). She distinguishes four distinctive features that enable a programme to be endowed with that qualification.

Firstly, a literary source legitimises the presence of the serial on television as an educational PSB. Brunsdon points out that apart from the literary classics, which confer prestige to the serial, television dramas are often adapted from the so-called 'middle-brow' literature because 'it is not itself spoilt by the vulgar medium of television, and indeed enhances the upstart with a little culture' (1990: 85). This would be the case of Paul Scott and M. M. Kaye. Secondly, these serials cast well-known actors, often coming from a theatrical background so as to maintain the high standards of British acting and its cultural tradition associated to the theatre. Dame Peggy Ashcroft, for instance, is responsible for some of the prizes *The Jewel in the Crown* was awarded. To continue, Brunsdon mentions the importance of money investment, in her own words: 'these series cost a lot, and, as importantly, looked as if they cost a lot'. This money is used to represent upper-class-life

and the exotic settings of the Raj. This spectacle, she adds, needs to be combined with 'restraint', as opposed to 'the common or the vulgar', which is yet another characteristic of 'quality' being associated with the values of the upper class. Hence Brunsdon states that 'the way the money is spent in *Brideshead*/*Jewel* is fundamentally "nice", even, or especially, when dealing with horrid subjects like rape, racism, alcoholism, homosexuality and suicide by fire' (86). Finally, these images of the upper-classes and the Empire help to export certain images of Englishness that international audiences are eager to consume. Brunsdon therefore concludes that the praise of these serials as 'quality' productions indicates how the term is closely associated with a series of power relations that privilege the tastes of the middle/upper classes.

The characteristics Brunsdon enumerates as symptomatic of 'quality' TV drama productions are the ones also applied to heritage films. John Caughie comments on this connection between television, cinema and heritage in the 1980s:

> The notion of a 'quality television' seems to have come out in the 1980s inextricably linked to discourses of literary and cultural heritage. In the cinema of the 1980s, from *Chariots of Fire* (1981) to *Howards End* (1991), films continually returned not simply to the past but to a very particular past: to the period in the first few decades of this century before and after what in Britain is known as the 'Great War', the historical moment in which the land-owning aristocracy began to give up the reigns of power to the new urban bourgeoisie, and in which Britain began to detect the fault lines in its imperial destiny. On television, drama cultivated the charms, manners, and costumes of the nineteenth-century novel (2000:211)

As Caughie states, taking the serialised form of the Victorian novel, the content of the TV series in the 1980s is closely related to that of the heritage and Raj films portrayed on the big screens. TV 'Serious drama' also attempted to both revise the past and commodify it within the context of the heritage industry. In the case of the Raj productions, their mutual success furnished the proliferation of visual representations of the empire in the mid-1980s. Both *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* shared with their filmic counterparts the recreation of an exotic and appealing past from a Western point of view and hence perpetuated Orientalist discourses in the portrayal of the 'other'.

On the other hand, as in the films, the televisual re-vision of the past was complex. Issues of national identity, class, gender and race were raised, and the open-ended nature of the episodes, together with an uncertain final resolution, questioned the nostalgic return to the past as a mere adventurous and exotic portrayal of romances in a distant time and place.

4.5.2. Raj Serials: *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown*

4.5.2.1. Orientalism and Realism

Both *The Far Pavilions* and *The Jewel in the Crown* have been included under the label of Raj productions: they share the setting in India at the time of the Raj and include in their plots both the nostalgic flavour of a lost time of splendour for the British nation, together with implicit criticisms of the imperial enterprise in the form of an inter-ethnic romance and the presence of 'hybrid' characters at odds with communities conforming to the colonial society they inhabit. Even so, these two serials portray the past in completely different ways. *The Far Pavilions* adapts 1978 M. M. Kaye's novel, set at the end of the nineteenth century, with a format that recalls the early empire films of adventure, charged with Orientalist discourses in their portrayal of the East. For its part, *The Jewel in the Crown*, adapted from Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* (1966), conforms to the pattern of 'serious quality drama' with a realistic portrayal of the last days of the empire, and the troubled relationships between rulers and ruled against the background of imminent independence.

The Far Pavilions presents the story of Ash (Ben Cross), a British subject raised by an Indian family who grows up fascinated by this culture and who ends up living in the Indian mountains — the Far Pavilions — with his beloved, Anjuli (Amy Irving), a half-cast Indian princess. The credit sequence situates the action in 1865 in Mardan (Punjab), when the British army was at war with the 'rebel' independent tribes in the North West

frontier. An Indian-looking teenager enters the headquarters of the army asking for protection. Through a series of flashbacks, we learn that he is Ash, an English boy whose parents died during the Indian mutiny and who was adopted, first by his Hindu maid and, after her death, by Koda Dad (Omar Shariff), the Muslim servant of a Royal Hindu family. Ash becomes a servant but has to run away due to the tyranny of Biju Ram (Saeed Jaffrey), the prince's counsellor, leaving behind his friend Anjuli, the prince's half-sister. Thus, from the very beginning of the series, the spectator becomes aware of the multiplicity of identities that have forged the main character's hybridity. This mixture of identities is even present in his name, since he is called Ash by the British and Ashock by the Indians.

As seen in the previous analyses of the Raj films, the issue of hybridity and inter-ethnic relationships is a constant feature in these productions, as it aids to explore the fears and hopes present in the multicultural society of the 1980s. However, for all the troubled identity of the main character and his disapproval of the imperial enterprise and racist behaviour of parochial British characters, the serial was criticised for the old-fashioned approach to the imperial adventure, closer to the propagandistic empire films of the 1930s and 1940s than to the more complex, ironic or realistic *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India* or *Gandhi*. The scarce attention and negative critiques that *The Far Pavilions* received were mainly due to its comparison with *The Jewel in the Crown*, which, as mentioned before, was broadcast just a few days afterwards. The latter was generally regarded as an example of realism, quality and restraint, in contrast to the 'Hollywood-like' adventure-melodrama of the former.[236] Even audiences granted a major degree of success to the 'end-of-empire'-set *Jewel*, which was probably closer to the spectators' memories and

[236] The director/producer Geoff Reeve got money invested from Goldcrest company, and the three two-hour episodes were sold to Channel Four, the Italian Station RAI and the U.S. American cable television Home Box Office. Hence presence of not only British and Indian actors and actresses but also Italian and U.S. American ones was required. This co-production tried to combine the British tradition of investing great amounts of money to recreate a realistic portrayal of the past, together with the melodramatic mode of Hollywood film-making (*Broadcast*, 1983: 22).

experiences than the nineteenth-century romance between a British official and a Hindu princess. As Sergio Angelini explains,

> *Jewel* was generally greeted as a more prestigious and serious production, reinforcing the view that *Pavilions'* story was very old-fashioned. The narrative cast in the familiar mould of such popular Empire adventure stories such as Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, P. C. Wren`s *Beau Geste* and *The Four Feathers* by A.E.W. Mason, all of which had been filmed several times. In fact, Zoltan Korda's *The Four Feathers* (1939) had been partly photographed by Jack Cardiff, who also lit *The Far Pavilions*. The unsophisticated appeal of the story is further emphasised by the politically incorrect casting (as Indians) of such disparate international actors as Christopher Lee (British), Rossano Brazzi (Italian), Omar Sharif (Egyptian) and, in the crucial role of Princess Anjuli, the American actress Amy Irving (www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/501550/).

The casting of actors and actresses is perhaps one of the most controversial and criticised issues of the serial. Salman Rushdie condemns old-fashioned 'blackening' of white actors to play the roles of 'good' Indian characters and the use of Indian stars to play the villains. By strongly disapproving of both M. M. Kaye's novel and its screen version,[237] Rushdie complains that *The Far Pavilions* reinforces the Orientalist vision of India by the West and thus perpetuates the discourses that maintain the West in a position of superiority with respect to the East (1992: 88-9):

> The two central characters, both supposedly raised as Indians, have been lobotomized to the point of being incapable of pronouncing their own names. The man calls himself 'A Shock', and the woman 'An Jooli'. Around and about them there is branding of human flesh and snakery and widow-burning by the natives […]. It would be easy to conclude that such material could not possibly be taken seriously by anyone, and that it is therefore unnecessary to get worked up about it […]. I should also mind less, were it not for the fact that *The Far Pavilions*, book as well as TV serial, is only the latest in a very long line of fake portraits inflicted by the West on the East. The creation of a false Orient of cruel-lipped princes and dusky slim-hipped maidens, of ungodliness, fire and the sword has been brilliantly described by Edward Said in his classic study *Orientalism* […]. Let me add only that stereotypes are easier to shrug off if yours is not the culture being stereotyped; or, at the very least, if your culture has the point to counterpunch against the stereotype. If the TV screens of the West were regularly filled by equally hipped, big-budget productions depicting the realities of India, one could stomach the odd M. M. Kaye. When praying to the mountains is the norm, the stomach begins to heave (1992: 88-9).

[237] With respect to the book, Rushdie declares that 'Paul Scott was M. M. Kaye's agent, and it always seemed to me a damning indictment of his literary judgement that he believed *The Far Pavilions* to be a good book. Even stranger is the fact that the *Raj Quartet* and the Kaye novel are founded on identical strategies of what, to be polite, one must call borrowing. In both cases, the central plot motifs are lifted from earlier, and much finer novels. In *The Far Pavilions*, the hero Ash […], raised an Indian, discovered to be a sahib, and ever afterwards torn between his two selves, will be instantly recognizable as the cardboard cut-out version of Kipling's *Kim*. And the rape of Daphne Manners in the Bibighar gardens derives just as plainly from Forster's *A Passage to India*. But because Kaye and Scott are vastly inferior to the writers they follow, they turn what they touch to pure lead' (1992:89).

Nobody can deny Rushdie's accusations. *The Far Pavilions* presents an Orientalist view of the East in the traditional way that reinforced, as old empire films did, the superiority of the West over the East. Furthermore, the serial depicts many of the scenes in a cinematic rather than a televisual fashion; in other words, in contrast to the prominent use of close-ups and dialogue of TV productions, *The Far Pavilions* spared no efforts in devoting many scenes to depicting, by means of long-shots, the Indian landscape, the exotic land that belonged to the wealthy British empire, together with the glamour and splendour of both the Maharaja's palaces and the exquisite and rich houses, clubs, ballrooms and gardens of the British spaces. India is, therefore, presented as a place of adventure, a place where Westerners' fantasies can be fulfilled, far removed from the rigidities imposed by European society, and where even a romance with an Indian princess takes place, in the way already related in the famous late nineteenth-century opera *Lakmé*.[238]

I also agree with Rushdie in his bitter reproach concerning the cast, and the way the characters are stereotyped, especially those embodying the Indian 'baddies', roles played by Indian actors and actresses, selected by European directors. It is true that the U.S. American money invested required the presence of Hollywood stars, but Amy Irving's blackening is as artificial as it is pathetic: 'Raymong Hughes's brilliant costumes and chief make-up artist Pay Hayes' skills do not turn an essentially all-American actress into a delicate Indian flower. Instead Irving ends up looking like a Woolworth doll manufactured in Southall' (*Broadcast*, 1983:22) (Figure 21).

[238] Based on Pierre Loti's novel, *Le Mariage de Loti*, Delibes *Lakmé* (1883) tells the tragic love story between a British oficial and the daughter of a Brahmin priest (www.frenchopera.suite101.com.articel.cfm/leo_delibes_opera_lakme).

Figure 21
(Still)

Even though I agree with Rushdie's criticism of the serial and the overdose of Orientalist discourses that appeared in the portrayal of the British Raj in both cinema and television, I would argue that, as occurred with the films previously analysed, a certain degree of ambivalence in the portrayal of past British-Indian relationships can be elicited from the TV productions. My point is that, especially in *The Far Pavilions*, the Orientalist discourses are *so* obvious, *so* patent, that they could perhaps be read as a parody of previous empire films, rather than as a straight-forward nostalgic revival of them. In other words, following Pam Cook's interpretation of the 1940s Gainsborough's melodramas as masquerades which manifested the artificiality of cultural impositions upon women, it could be said that Amy Irving's wig and excessive make up comes close to producing a Brechtian type, distancing effect or *Verfremdungseffekt*.[239] Hence, instead of

[239] The *Verfremdung* effect, also called 'V-Effekt', 'Alienation technique' or 'A-effect', consists in making well-known, ordinary events seem strange, unfamiliar on stage. (Gray, 1980: 67). In Bertolt Brecht's own words: 'A Common use of the A-effect is when someone says "Have you ever looked carefully at what you watch?"' (1964: 144). Elizabeth Wright translates the theatrical V-Effekt into cinematic practices. She argues that in cinema it results in 'estrangement', yet it has ideological implications that go beyond the mere concept of 'defamiliarisation'. Wright postulates that this V-Effekt reminds spectators that screen representations are not something given but socially, politically and ideologically produced (1989: 19). To these definitions, Fredric Jameson introduces the issue of historicity, which becomes a relevant issue in the screen fictions analysed here.

straightforwardly disparaging the portrayal of the past in the series, my aim is to develop a less categorical interpretation by focusing my analysis on the hybridity of the main character and his inter-ethnic relationship with his beloved princess. This, I propose to do by comparing the representational devices used in *The Far Pavilions* with the more acclaimed *Jewel in the Crown*.

In contrast to the cinematic 'orientalist' long-shots and reliance on action and romance of *The Far Pavilions*, *The Jewel in the Crown* is a classic British TV 'serious' drama praised mainly for the theatrical quality of script and direction and for its realistic portrayal of the complex relationships between colonisers and colonised at the end of the Raj. The close-ups that reveal the excellence of the actors, together with the serial emphasis on dialogue rather than on action and spectacle, immediately situates *Jewel* in a higher status of quality than the *Pavilions*.

The Jewel in the Crown is set in the years previous to India's independence from the, until then, great British Empire – the first episode relates the events taking place in 1942 and the serial closes with the independence of the country in 1947. In contrast to the opening credits of *The Far Pavilions*, which presents the action of the main character as if it were the beginning of a fairytale, *The Jewel in the Crown* opens up with documentary or journalistic-styled images of the empire, one of these sequences corresponding to royal ceremonies in India against a background of European music – as was the case of *A Passage to India*. This ceremony in honour of the British royalty in India recalls the coronation of Queen Victoria as empress of India, a title created for political reasons by Benjamin Disraeli in 1876 (Figure 22). This is a recurrent motif that appears several times

Jameson refers to the placement of familiar objects under a new light through the V-Effek and he states that: 'the familiar or habitual is identified as the "natural", and its estrangement unveils that appearance, which suggests the changeless and the eternal as well, and shows the object to be instead "historical", to which may be added, as a political corollary, made or constructed by human beings, and thus able to be changed by them as well, or replaced altogether' (2000: 40). It could therefore be said that *Pavilions* deliberately makes use of the V-Effekt to show that the old empire film was ideologically and historically constructed, and what remains are parodic re-enactments of those colonial fictions in an attempt to both pay a nostalgic homage or criticise its old propagandistic views.

in the serial, against the background of the painting depicting the scene of Victoria's coronation and entitled, precisely 'The Jewel in the Crown'. Apart from that, there is a scene showing the decorative dimension of the British Indian army in these nostalgic screen fictions with Indian soldiers at the service of the Empire and an Indian child cleaning their boots. The last part of the credit sequence displays elephants crossing a river in the Indian jungle with explorers in search of adventure. This presentation of the serial has a twofold interpretation. On the one hand, one is immediately 'hit' by this realist aesthetic. It is as if the scenes were not 'invented' in the way the adventures of the child Ashock in the palace at the beginning of *Pavilions* were, but taken from historical records and just showing on screen the same images that people could have witnessed themselves at the time of the empire. On the other hand, the inclusion of these old black and white archives that portray both the splendour of the Raj and the spirit of adventure ascribe the same orientalist discourses offered in the colourful *Pavilions*.

Figure 22
(Still)

Following Attenborough's inclusion of black and white news footage of the time, *The Jewel in the Crown* intercalates this type of primary source material with the fictional narration in every episode. The inclusion of these 'news' sequences in a TV serial is very significant as it reinforces the realism the production aims at. In his study on television culture, John Fiske devotes a chapter to the analysis of 'the News' as a constructed genre which reaches the highest status of all programmes broadcast in the small screen. Fiske states that the News' 'claimed objectivity and independence from political or government agencies is argued to be essential for the workings of a democracy'. Nonetheless, 'News is also a commodity […]. News has to be popular, it has to produce an audience' (1997: 281). He therefore warns of the dangers of proffering an apparently transparent reproduction of 'reality as such', without considering the unavoidable mechanisms that mediate any 'real' event in its *re*production by the media. This idea has already been discussed in the chapter devoted to historiography and its use in the film *Gandhi*, yet I find it relevant to include the issue of representational tropes again in this section devoted to television studies because, as Fiske asseverates, television, and more concretely, TV News, is an even more persuasive medium to portray artificial representations as reality itself:

> The idea that television is a window on the world, now known as the 'transparency fallacy', still survives, if anywhere, in TV newsrooms […]. The first struggle of news is to impose the order of culture upon the polymorphous nature of 'the real'. The news text is engaged in a constant struggle to contain the multifarious events and their polysemic potential within its own conventions. For news is as conventional as any other form of television (1997: 282-3).

Similarly to what Hayden White postulated on the tropes affecting not only works of fiction but also historiography itself, TV newsrooms also employ artificial conventions to select, interpret and order the chaotic external reality and thus mediate it in its transference to the audiences. Accordingly, as occurred with *Gandhi*, the inclusion of the news sequences in *The Jewel in the Crown*, create an illusion of reality directly transferred from the past. The editing of the news with the fictional sequences, though, ends up

manipulating the overall effect. The piece of news shown at the very beginning of the first episode is very telling, because it reflects the sentiments that Britain was a world power whose rule over its dominions was indispensable, a feeling kindled again during the Falklands war crisis. In the series, this sequence justifies the British action in the East, defending India from the Japanese, because the Indians, with Gandhi's non-violence policy, and with the revolutionary Indian, Leader Subhas Chandra Bose, inciting them to form part of the Indian National Army, were considered by a paternalistic Britain as incapable of defending themselves.[240] This idea will be reinforced by the fictional events presented in the serial which, as will be explained in the following section, bring to the fore the sacrifice of the white man's mission in the colonies, as well as the extreme violence attached to the Indians – their country ending in chaos after the British were forced to leave.

This realist aesthetic of *Jewel*, which helped the drama achieve tremendous success and reach the status of 'quality' television, also contributed, comparatively speaking, to the devaluation of *Pavilions* as Hollywoodian fantasy and tinsel. This said, the realism in *Jewel* could nevertheless be questioned in terms of its ideological implications. In their study on television programmes, Fiske and Hartley explain that 'realism is the mode in which our [Western] particular culture prefers its ritual condensations to be cast'. As a consequence, 'the more 'realistic' a programme is thought to be, the more trusted, enjoyable – and therefore the more popular – it becomes. Yet realism is too an artificial construct […]. TV realism 'naturalises' the way in which we apprehend the world out there' (1980: 160-1).

[240] The INA was formed to aid the Japanese at war, even if they attempted to invade their own country. They accepted that this could be the price to be paid in order to expel the British.

Basing their theory of the ideological implications of a realist aesthetic on Barthes's conception of mythology[241] – namely, that a sign has a cultural meaning rather than a merely representational one –, Fiske and Hartley postulate that:

> Once the 'real' is established as such, it becomes a vehicle for the communication of messages which embody, not our 'real' social relationships but rather our cultural mythologies *about* these relationships. It only remains to consider, then, the mythological uses to which television's artificial reality is put (1980: 170).

The serial, however, offers an ambiguous interpretation of the relationship between Britain and India. Although in *The Far Pavilions* a greater number of shots are dedicated to portraying the Indian landscape, and, indeed, more time is allotted to panoramic views of the scenery in this drama than in *Jewel*, the images of the Indian backdrop in the latter are deliberately presented as exotic, mysterious, threatening as well as appealing. Moreover, *The Jewel in the Crown* foregrounds the realistic portrayal of India and of the British living there during the last days of the Empire. That is, the accurate decoration of every house, room, club or hospital, in both British and Indian spaces is accorded more prominence in this serial than spectacular images of the landscape. The serial thus clearly makes use of what Jonathan Bignell refers to as 'redundant material', by which he means all those 'unmarked' sceneries or tropes with no relevant function in the development of the narrative but that 'deepen the consistency and believability of the narrative' (2008: 97). Viewed in this light, it could be said that the dusty streets of the Indian cities recall the 'turmoil India' depicted in the spaces inhabited by Anne in *Heat and Dust*, which resemble a documentary, in contrast with the veiled glamour of Olivia's adventure with the Nawab. Similarly, *Jewel*'s documentary style in brownish and greenish colours contrasts with the excessively colourful, quasi-Bollywood-like, style of *Pavilions*.

The long-shots of Indian dawns or sunsets, which foment a certain nostalgia for this long lost precious possession of the British Empire – 'the jewel in the crown', are

[241] See Barthes, 1957, 193-207.

interrupted at the end of each chapter by frozen images or sudden cuts. This technique creates a feeling of tension in the spectator that inhibits or precludes escapism. In contrast to other Raj productions, namely the films and the *Pavilions* serial, there is, as Richard Dyer comments, a sense of 'awkwardness' in the *Jewel in the Crown*:

> Scenes would come to an abrupt end or go on longer than seemed necessary for the story; episodes would end on a disconcertingly sudden freeze frame; there were quite long stretches of dialogue that, when they were over, you realized had been quite opaque as far as understanding quite what had been going on between characters, a feeling intensified by the performances, full of pauses and shifting and sudden loudness and looking away (1993:139).

It could therefore be said that, on the one hand, *The Jewel in the Crown* creates an illusion of a historical reality directly transferred from the past to the present-day domestic spaces through television, enabling audiences to vicariously re-enact the traumatic days of the loss of the empire. On the other hand, the fragmented composition of the serial, the mixing of fictional and non-fictional documents and the frozen images at the end of every episode, somehow frustrate complete identification with the events portrayed. Furthermore, the use of a realistic aesthetic in the portrayal of British characters enduring the troubled days of the end of the empire, combined with the propagandistic news of the time – especially those concerning Britain's success in the Second World War – provides the serial with a nostalgic flavour. In this sense, Britain is presented as a civilising power whose forced abandonment of the colony would soon leave the new country in state of chaos and civil war. All the same, the nostalgic ingredients shared by *Jewel* with other heritage and Raj narratives are problematised by some characters' outward criticism of that imperial past. In other words, the depiction of the past in *Jewel* is tinted with the same, previously mentioned, 'revisionist nostalgia' included in most films and serials of the 1980s.

Huge amounts of money were also invested *The Far Pavilions* to portray a realist account of the past through the use of the above mentioned 'redundant material'. On the

one hand, the overt reliance on period detail serves to foment an escapist nostalgia for these long lost days of the Empire, even though the imperial past portrayed is tinted with 'politically incorrect' orientalist discourses, exalting as they do, the superiority of the West over the East. On the other hand, this device can also be interpreted as a tool to foreground parody and masquerade and thus question, rather than bolster, the artificial construction of empire screen fictions.

4.5.2.2. British, Indians and Hybrid Transvestism

As in the analysis of the Raj films, the following sections will apply the formal features described above to the actual representations of identity, mainly in terms of gender, class and nation. In spite of the criticism that could be elicited from some aspects of the films, most of Raj productions coincided in their representation of British and Indian spaces as corresponding to order and chaos respectively. Albeit the attempt to proffer more complex portrayals of both the British and the Indians, most of the characters are stereotyped, a fact that reinforces a view of Western rationality and Indian irrationality. Characters that contradicted these long-standing views of oppositional cultures were depicted as exceptions to the rule, e.g. General Dyer and Gandhi as outstanding figures that do not conform to the definition of their respective communities. In general terms, depth of personality and humanity were granted to British rather than Indian characters, as was the case of Fielding, in contrast to the rather childish Dr. Aziz in *A Passage to India.* According to Glen Creeber, television is even more susceptible than cinema to the use of stereotypes 'because the medium often needs to establish character almost instantly before an audience loses interest and switches over or off' (2006: 47). This is clearly reflected in the Raj serials here analysed, yet the stereotyping of certain characters entails relevant

ideological implications that go beyond the mere justification of its use for formal requirements of the TV medium.

Furthermore, the issue of stereotyping is closely related to the televisual representation of ethnic minorities. In their book published in 1980, Fiske and Hartley reached the conclusion that, since the 1970s, in spite of the continuous over-portrayal of middle-class men and occupations on the small screen, the appearance of non-whites had increased significantly, and that ethnic minorities were treated more favourably on television than in society. In contrast, women, in terms of occupation and class, were depicted as more socially disadvantaged than members of racial minorities (1980: 24-5). In 2008, Jonathan Bignell observes that the presence of white, middle-class men in TV programmes is still prominent. Nevertheless, there is a growing preoccupation in diluting this dominant 'WASP' (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) ideal, promoting instead the inclusion of other minorities. The danger of this practice, he argues, is the way these 'other' identities are represented because if the increasing presence of hitherto invisible minorities is proffered by means of politically incorrect misrepresentations, this inclusion will have a negative, rather than a positive effect for these groups. Significantly enough, Bignell states that non-whites are still treated in terms of exceptional 'otherness' in such a popular medium as television. In the 1980s Raj TV serials, the 'otherness' of the Indian characters was patent.

In *The Far Pavilions*, each episode opens up with the image of a map to help locate the concrete place of the action within the Indian subcontinent, followed by spectacular images of the natural landscape, and ending with a view of two big mountains: the Far Pavilions. The first chapter starts with Ash, now a young Englishman, travelling by train to Mardan on his return to India from Britain. On this point, Ananda Mitra analyses the significant recurrence of the railway in the empire and Raj fictions. Mitra argues that the

train not only brings the European protagonists to India but also points to the notion of the 'iron horse' conquering the 'Wild West' in western films. This idea is also connected with Britain presented as the pioneer industrial society, which brought technological progress to India. Furthermore, this mode of locomotion, with its first, second and third-class wagons, also becomes a reflection of the colonial structures of power and, as such, reinforces the separation between the British and Indian communities (1999: 88-90).

As occurs in *A Passage to India*, *Gandhi* and *The Jewel in the Crown*, the train is not only a means of travel for the main British characters. It also enables the spectator to travel back into the imperial past by providing panoramic views of this lost possession of the British Empire. Ellen Strain highlights the importance of tourism in such nostalgic screen fictions:

> Essentially, the use of film as an analytical lens creates a double layer of touristic practice to be examined: the travel experience of the fictional character at the center of the novel or film in question and the "virtual tourism" of the reader or spectator as armchair traveller (1998: 148).

She argues that although the tourist embarks on a journey trying to find some truth lacking in his/her daily life through the contact with other cultures, that aim is hardly ever fulfilled because as soon as the indigenous culture is commodified by the tourist industry, it loses any authentic meaning (1998: 151). In *The Far Pavilions*, this tension is depicted in Ash's determination to find his true identity in his journey back to India, a goal that clashes with the appropriation and commodification of the Indian landscape for the visual pleasure of the spectator.

bell hooks remarks that behind the contemporary will to contact the 'other' – embodied by Ash – lies a hidden orientalist approach to foreign cultures: 'In mass culture, imperialist nostalgia takes the form of reenacting and reritualising in different ways the imperialist, colonizing journey as narrative fantasy of power and desire, of seduction by the Other' (1992: 25). Thus, the hero's attraction towards the Indian culture, his marriage to an Indian princess, and his final settlement in the Indian mountains could be understood

as the desire of appropriation of the white Western culture to appropriate the 'other' for its own benefit. In bell hooks's words:

> The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture (1992: 21).

Throughout the serial, but especially in the first episodes, which show Ash socialising mainly with the British community, a careful portrayal is provided of the splendorous lives of the British upper-classes in India, through elaborate displays of the opulence of their clubs, balls and exotic picnics. The scenes devoted to the time Ash spends in the army portray the characters' male bonding and the adventures they undergo, together with their patriotic defence of the British interests. Reaching the end of the series, Wally (Benedict Taylor) — Ash's friend — dies at the hands of the rebel tribes in Afghanistan, when defending the British fort. In a symbolic gesture, Ash puts the corpse on the cannon and covers it with the Union Jack before leaving the place.

The portrayal of the lives of Indians is centred on upper strata, too. Almost two chapters are dedicated to the journey of the two Indian princesses, Anjuli and Shushila (Sneh Gupta), undertake to meet up with their future husband in his palace. The narrative action alternates with long shots of the never ending parade of decorated chariots, tents, elephants, horses and servants singing and dancing, as well as with a detailed recreation of the ceremonies of the princesses' wedding, the Rana of Bithar's (Rossano Brazzi) burial and Shushila's (Sneh Gupta) sati.

The Indians are generally presented as disordered crowds in the streets, at war or fanatically witnessing the barbaric sati. The Indian princes and princesses are despotic and whimsical; the servants are either faithful or treacherous. The Amir of Afghanistan also embodies the stereotypically treacherous Oriental, a despotic chief who can easily be bribed with wealth and who does not care about his own people. His behaviour is childlike

– another stereotypical trait often allotted to Easterners. This is made patent in the scene depicting the formal presentation of jewels to the prince and his whimsical fascination with a clock, symbol of the technological advances of the West. Significantly enough, when in isolation, Muslim characters are presented in *The Far Pavilions*, as well as in *The Jewel in the Crown*,[242] in more positive terms than Hindus. Their monotheist religion, their attachment to family values and the protection of their women rendered them less alien to Western culture than polytheist and 'superstitious' Hindus.[243] Accordingly, Koda Dad (Omar Sharif) and Zarin (Art Malik), Ash's foster father and brother respectively, accept Ash's hybrid identity, help him to cope with it and are ultimately presented as faithful allies of the hero. All the same, these characters serve to portray the hero's superiority, as it is Ash who saves Zarin from being accused of theft and treason in the army. Unable to defend himself personally, Zarin needs Ash's intervention to maintain his honour in the army.

Several British characters are also negatively stereotyped in the serial, precisely the ones embodying parochial and racist attitudes. This is the case of Mrs. Harlowe (Mary Peach) with her disdainful comments against Ash's Indian friends. On several occasions Ash denounces this type of racist behaviour. At one point in the serial, he even questions the British dominance over India. In one scene at the club, he tells other the Englishmen who had shown supercilious attitudes towards the Indians, to picture themselves in the place of the natives. In so doing, he explains, they could understand the Indian's rebellious behaviour against their rulers. After this comment, many members of British community

[242] *The Jewel in the Crown* included a positive Muslim character, Kasim, who saves his British friends by dying at the hands of fanatic Hindus. He is, however, a Westernised character who wears exclusively European suits throughout the serial. On top of that, he belongs to the Indian upper classes, a feature the serial uses in positive terms. In contrast, the Muslim low-class peasants who attack Daphne are depicted as fanatic and violent, as are the Hindu fanatics that assaulted the train at the end of the serial. In *A Passage to India* it is a professional Muslim too, Doctor Aziz, who is depicted as a more humane character, as opposed to the mystical and inscrutable Professor Godbole.

[243] See Chapter 2 on the appraisal of Pakistani communities on the part of the government as conforming Thatcherite ethos in 1980s Britain against other more 'problematic' ethnic communities, e.g Afro-Caribbeans. This positive judgement occurred right before the Rushdie affair, in 1988.

turn against Ash, to such a point that he is attacked one night by several men. In spite of his enemies outnumbering himself and his friend Wally, Ash manages to defeat them all. In portraying Ash as a hero, the serial seems to present the character's open-mindedness towards the Indians as the model of behaviour the audience should identify with, while the parochial English characters, whose attitude is closer to Thatcher's defence of the preservation of a traditional British identity based on Victorian values, are ridiculed and presented as obstacles to the hero's happiness. This comment Ash makes at the Club might, however, be interpreted otherwise: Ash's words could be regarded as a justification of those 'naturally' hostile attitudes of a community suffering the invasion of a vast number of foreigners – a justification that, yet again, recalls Thatcher's 'swamping speeches' and thus contributes to the ambivalence of the serial.

For all his apparent open-mindedness and defence of hybridity as against the old-fashioned parochial attitudes of British imperialists, Ash embodies the dream of the white European/Westerner of 'going native'. With Kipling's *Kim* (the source text of several film adaptations, one of them produced in 1984)[244] as the most conspicuous example, there are other fictions that make use of this subject, such as Meyer's *The Deceivers* (1988) and Attenborough's *Grey Owl* (1999). The heroes in these productions have in common their troubled identities, the feeling they belong to a community which, from a Eurocentric perspective, is regarded as 'inferior' but which they love more than the one they belong to by right of birth and lineage. This would be the case of Kim, Ash, and Archie (Pierce Brosnan) in *Grey Owl*, William Savage (Pierce Brosnan) in *The Deceivers* and – to a certain extent – Kurtz in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or homonymous character (Marlon Brando) in Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

[244] Directed by John Howard Davies and released in 1984, *Kim* follows the same action-and-adventure plot as *Pavilions* with an equally politically incorrect blackening up of white characters playing Eastern roles, such as Peter O'Toole as the Lama, Bryan Brown as Mahbub Ali and John Rhys-Davies as Babu.

Fascinated by the 'other''s culture, these characters also search for freedom out of the constrictions of their own 'civilised' culture. Notwithstanding, they are able to 'go native' or 'pass as non-white' precisely because they are *white men* and can choose to do so. In either community, they, as men, are in a position of power. If in their 'going native' experience they find themselves in trouble or marginalised at any time, they can always claim their legal rights as white sahibs. That is precisely why, both Ash and Kim carry with them their birth certificates, which they keep as precious possessions while 'playing the game' in their blackening up roles. Anne McClintock postulates that, while Bhabha's colonial mimicry entails a certain degree if destabilisation and consequent threat to established order, 'the staging of symbolic order by the privileged can merely pre-empt challenges by those who do not possess the power to stage ambiguity with comparable license or authority' (1995: 69). In her analysis of Kipling's *Kim*, McClintock states that this novel:

> Offers a rich example of mimicry and cross-dressing as a technique of, not colonial subversion, but of surveillance […]. As a cultural hybrid, Kim is what Kipling called a 'two-sided man'. But here mimicry is neither a flawed identity imposed on the colonized, nor is it a strategy of anti-colonial resistance. The transvestite Kim blurs the distinction between colonizer and colonized but only in order to suggest a reformed colonial control. The urchin mimic man embodies symbolic ambiguity and ethnic hybridity, but employs his hybridity not to subvert colonial authority but to enhance it. He is the Indianized sahib: Indian but not quite. Kim's passing is the privilege of whiteness (1995: 69-70).[245]

Concerning the issue of 'passing', McClintock concludes that 'passing "down" is permissible in the colonial hierarchy, while passing "up" is not' (70). That is, for all the criticism Ash has to face when confronting the British memsahibs and the sahibs at the Club, all he gets is disdain, but not complete rejection or marginalisation. He can maintain his social status and work in the Indian Army as an official. This is not the case of Indians who try to pass 'up', as with Hari in *Jewel*, or of those individuals of mixed-parentage who

[245] Kim frequently reflects, as Ash does, on his multiple identity: '"I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?" His soul repeated it again and again' (1994: 374). In the novel, Kim is often called 'Little Friend of all the World', as he associates with Indians – Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists –, as well as with the British. However, more than 'a friend', he actually benefits form his chameleonic knowledge and becomes a spy, thus aiding one faction against other. Similarly, Ash/ock, also becomes a spy in the Afghan conflict.

try to pass as whites but are nevertheless marginalised when their ‘mixed-blood’ is discovered. McClintock also highlights the fact that passing ‘down’ is exclusively a *male* privilege since women are, as seen before, either absent in that masculine fantasy of the colonial enterprise or sources of trouble when they try, not even to ‘pass’ but to ‘cross’ the boundaries of colonial communities (70).

The presence of a ‘half-caste’ character in *The Far Pavilions* is quite significant, especially considering the extent to which such individuals have been ignored, silenced, or rendered invisible in historical and fictional accounts of the imperial past. In the first chapters, when Ash returns to India as a sahib, George Garforth (Rupert Everett) is presented as a stiff-upper-lipped Englishman who warns his new friend Ash not to mix with the Indians. Behind George’s snobbish attitudes, he hides his ‘true self’ as the son of a ‘half-cast’ ‘bazaar’ woman, which makes of him a ‘non-pure’ Englishman in spite of his ‘passing up’ with his clothes, manners and education. Once his secret is known, he is rejected by the members of the British community in a way that Ash is not. Not being part of the Indian culture either, he finally commits suicide. Even though George’s personal drama does not form part of the main narrative, the mere presence of this character and his tragic ending brings out a hitherto invisible topic never featured in other productions of this kind. The inclusion of this issue can be regarded as a positive feature of this serial as it represents the ‘un-representable’ stories of those called ‘Anglo-Indians’.[246]

[246] Laura Roychowdhury carried out a research on Anglo-Indians at the time of the Empire, and she found that they were given multiple names: ‘Eurasians, Firinghees, East Indians, Britasians, Indo-British. Most of these names had been imposed on them by Raj administrators, who tried to compose regulations to pin down their identity (2000: 17). Roychowdhury describes the marginalisation these people and their descendants suffered, as well as their troubled identity in both social and psychological terms. She mentions schools such as St James, where Eurasians were kept. ‘They were concerned by the scandal of white-skinned children running wild and going native in the bazaars. The only solution for their rootlessness, which threatened British prestige, was to scrub them down, teach them about the Pennines, the robin redbreast, technical daughtsmanship, moral decency and the Norman Conquest. These children, the bastard sons of army officers or the offspring of temporary paper marriages contracted between Chinese tanners or Manila sailors and Eurasian women, were taken from their parents and placed within the walls of St James’ (28).

With respect to women, the serial does not portray them under a favourable light. As with previous empire films, *The Far Pavilions* draws quite a negative vision of the memsahibs. With the exception of Mrs Viccary, who supports Ash's relationships with the Indian community and tries to comfort George in his desperate sense of rejection as a child of mixed-parentage, the other women clearly embody the role imposed on them as bearers of civilisation in the midst of the barbaric colonies. Mrs Harlowe (Mary Peach) does not approve of Belinda's flirting with Ash precisely because of the hero's sympathies with the Indian community and she openly speaks against that kind of inter-cultural relationships. Belinda Harlowe (Felicity Dean), in contrast, seems, at first, to lack the prejudices of Mrs. Harlowe. Belinda becomes romantically interested in Ash's childhood in India. She finds everything very exotic and attractive, and seems to have fallen in love with the hero. Belinda's excitement in acquiring knowledge of the 'other' is, however, based on Orientalist assumptions. Just like the aversive racists, she ends up avoiding contact with the 'other' when it becomes *too close* to her: she rejects Ash and chooses to marry a rich old Englishman instead. This election, based on economic reasons, also has racist implications, since she had previously rejected George when she realised he was a 'half-caste'.

The serial thus presents a very negative portrayal of British women. In the same way that other textual and screen fictions make women ultimately responsible for the end of the empire, they are also blamed in *The Far Pavilions* for the lack of understanding between cultures and racist oppression of the natives. I find it relevant to include here a passage of the book which describes the 'effects' of the memsahibs in the colonies:

> From the first, it had been the memsahibs who had created distrust and raised social barriers between white men and brown in the territories of the Raj. In the old days […] deprived of their society the Sahibs had married or taken mistresses from the local population, and had, in consequence, come to understand the country and its people – and to speak their languages with great fluency. There had been friendship and brotherhood between white men and brown in those days, and a great measure of mutual respect. But when the harnessing of steam had made sea voyages quicker and more comfortable, the memsahibs had flocked to India – bringing with them full complement of snobbery, insularity and intolerance.

> Indians, who had hitherto been treated as equals became 'natives' and the term itself lost its dictionary definition and became an opprobrious word, signifying members of an inferior – and coloured – race. The memsahibs preferred not to have any social contact with 'natives' […]. Their menfolk no longer married Indian brides or kept Indian mistresses, and the memsahibs reserved the greatest scorn for the numerous half-castes that their own countrymen had fathered in happier times, referring to them contemptuously as 'Eurasians' or 'Blacky-whites', and ostracizing anyone whom they suspected of having what came to be termed as 'a touch of the tarbrush' (Kaye, 1978: 133)

This book, written in 1978 by a woman, re-enacts previous imperial fictions that construct the early days of the empire as a time of exotic adventure and inter-ethnic male bonding as well as alluring heterosexual romances. The book disregards the true oppression suffered by those 'natives' and especially 'native' women at the hands of adventurous colonisers. As said earlier, imperial exploitation left peasants in extreme poverty and many Indian girls were sold to brothels to be enjoyed by British soldiers. Those 'mistresses' Kaye so romantically mentions, and their illegitimate children, could never have the same status of a wife and were thus vulnerable to legal and social ostracism if British lovers refused to grant them protection. And yet, the truth is that 'half-castes' did not suddenly become the object of scorn and ostracism with the arrival of snob memsahibs. They had already formed a marginalised community of cheap workers in the building of the famous railway the civilised British had brought to India.[247]

In spite of bearing the butt of the blame, the memsahibs were not the only perpetrators of racism and segregation between communities but, as stated in the analysis of A *Passage to India* and *Heat and Dust*, some of them were the victims of dominant ideologies and imposed social structures. In *The Far Pavilions*, Belinda is presented solely to establish a clear contrast with the character that will later on become the true heroine (Figure 23). Belinda is a selfish woman who only cares about her own interests, as opposed

[247] Not to mention other 'romantic' *liaisons* between European men and native women in other colonies in America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Second-rate wives, mistresses, prostitutes or sexually abused, this was the fate of many 'native' women. Marginalisation and ostracism, as well as similar fates followed the subsequent generation of illegitimate mixed-breed offspring of these relationships. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987), W. Somerset Maugham's 'The Force of Circumstance' (1924) – not to forget Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) on the sexual exploitations suffered by black slaves in U.S. American plantations, are just a few examples that reveal what lied underneath imperial adventures.

to Anjuli, who devotes her life to the hero, whom she submissively refers to as 'her love and her life'. What is not openly expressed on screen, though, can be very telling. It is true that Belinda is selfish and a snob. She acts cruelly towards Ash and George, also in love with her. The girl's subjectivity, however, is never openly shown. As a consequence, Ash infers that the reasons for Belinda marrying an old man instead of him are economic and social. The only scene dedicated to illustrating Belinda's decision is the one showing the two ex-lovers quarrelling. Belinda's racist comments about George and disdainful attitude towards the hero lead the audience to identify with poor, desperate Ash. Belinda's sudden change of opinion seems to be explained in terms of her own ambition for climbing the social scale and becoming a richer woman as well.

Figure 23
(Still)

Notwithstanding, the sequences portraying Mrs. Harlowe's disapproval of Belinda's relationship with Ash may cast a shadow on Belinda's true feelings and limited freedom of choice for a 'right partner' according to the standards of the time. The audience is invited to share Ash's anger and despair, nevertheless, Belinda remains absent for the rest of the serial, the audience never knowing whether she is happy, sad, desperate, or was

forced by circumstances to marry and old man instead of the young, attractive boy Mrs Harlowe so strongly disapproved of. Once Belinda, and her uncertain future as a memsahib, is forgotten, Ash, as a man, is free to go on with a life of adventure and will be rewarded with a beautiful, submissive princess who will help him understand and come to terms with his own hybrid condition.

In contrast to the void of the Marabar caves in *A Passage to India*, Ash/ock's multiplicity of identities – Indian, British, Muslim, Hindu, Christian – transcend all cultural manifestations, creating a new 'Third Space' where the dichotomies of inferiority and superiority are no longer at work:

> The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom […]. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha in Rutherford, 1990: 211).

This 'Third Space' already appears in the narrative at the end of the first chapter when Ash/ock is shown alone in front of a spectacular sunset in the mountains. This image recalls the scene when Ash/ock is asked by the British community how he managed to cope with not only two but three cultures — or religions — during his childhood, as he was born a Christian, then raised by a Hindu woman and later by a Muslim foster father, to finally come back to England. His answer to them is that he prayed to the mountains.

Several conversations between Ash/ock and different characters reveal his worries about his hybrid condition. For example, when he befriends Wally, he tells him that he feels like 'a citizen of no man's land', to which Wally answers that it is as if Ash/ock inhabited the 'limbo'. However, it is with the Muslim Koda (Omar Shariff), whom Ash/ock calls 'dad', that the issue of troubled identity is mostly discussed. Ash/ock tells him how uncomfortable it is to be 'two people in one skin', to which his foster-father

answers: 'With time you will find a third person within you who is not Ashock, not Sahib but yourself'.

In this conversation Koda makes reference to Bhabha's Third Space of hybridity, which is the place Ash/ock needs to find in order to accept his condition. It is interesting to notice that Ash/ock's answer to Koda's comment is 'I love her [Anjuli]', because from this very moment, a clear connection is established between Ash/ock's identity and his love relationship with Anjuli. The Indian princess's 'half-caste' condition is also a source of trouble to her. From her early childhood she is marginalised and even the servants treat her differently. 'I had no one else to love', she confesses to Ash/ock when she tells him how alone she felt after his departure. In both the British and the Indian communities, then, mix-breeds seem to be marginalised and even despised.

After many troubles and adventures, love triumphs and the couple ends up together. Just before their reunion, Koda, who had been mortally injured, tells Ash/ock: 'She is not of your race but I think that she is a good woman. In you, Ash/ock, sahib, may she have beautified that third person, your true self'. Therefore, it is through Anjuli, half Indian and half Russian, that Ash/ock constructs and finally accepts his new 'third identity'. Lacking subjectivity and a true identity for herself, Anjuli thus functions as the object through which the male character finds his 'true self'.

In other words, in spite of his integration into the Indian world, Ash/ock remains the superior coloniser who uses Anjuli, his 'other', in both ethnic and gender terms, as the means to mend his troubled identity. On this point, an interesting connection can be made between Ash/ock's and Anjuli's romance as pictured in the series and bell hook's claim that nowadays imperialist attitudes are echoed even in some apparently non-racist situations, such as young white men's desire to have sex with non-white girls: 'The direct objective was not simply to sexually possess the 'other'; it was to be changed in some way

by the encounter. "Naturally", the presence of the 'other', the body of the 'other', was seen as existing to serve the ends of white male desires' (1992: 24). Taking hook's words into account, Anjuli's role in the series is simply to serve the male hero's needs to construct his own identity. Although one learns that her hybrid condition has always caused her trouble, her own subjectivity and feelings throughout the series boils down to sacrificing her life for the sake of others. Her sacrifice is ultimately rewarded, but her subjectivity is clearly submitted to the man who is 'her love and her life'.

The last scene of the series is that of Anjuli and Ash/ock, riding a white and black horse respectively heading for the Indian mountains, the Far Pavilions. This image of the main characters ending up in the natural landscape of the mountains is a recurrent one in the Raj Revival productions. According to Ananda Mitra, the foothills of the Himalayas represent in these productions a more European-like environment where the British characters can better cope with the extreme Indian weather, the heat and dust of southern places: 'Since it is impossible to control the climate, the Europeans produce their mini-Europe not only in the civil lines, but in the foothills of the Himalayas' (1999: 101).

In these films, the mountains, however, seem to add another meaning. They appear as the suitable place for those who dare to trespass the rigid boundaries of segregated identity construction. On the one hand, these high-lands can be perceived as symbolising the still unknown 'third space', the origins of a new tolerant multicultural society. On the other hand, the mountains seem to be a refuge for those who dare to destabilise social hierarchies. In this view, this apparent 'happy ending' could also be the beginning of a troubled life for the couple, now relegated to the margins of society (Figure 24). The ending is, therefore, an open one, depicting an aesthetically beautiful and romantic image of the couple finally united against the background of the impressive Far Pavilions, yet

with an uncertain future in a world where dichotomies and hybridity still matter – as George cried out in desperation at the beginning of the serial.

Figure 24
(Still)

Even though this ending is similar to those of other Raj Revival, it nevertheless differs in a significant aspect. In *A Passage to India*, *Heat and Dust* and *The Jewel in the Crown*, all the attempts to establish an inter-ethnic love relationship end up in tragedy or frustration. In contrast, in *The Far Pavilions*, the couple remains together. According to Lola Young:

> Avoiding issues raised by interracial sexual relationships and maintaining a distance from any activity which may be interpreted as interracial intimacy is one of the manifestations of a strategy of aversion. This can be identified as a consistent feature of films made by white people: there is a constant refusal to relate intimately to black's people's knowledge and experiences, despite protestations of the contrary […]. The practice of aversive racism may be seen as a significant feature of white British mainstream, independent and 'art' cinema (1996: 26).

Lola Young argues that, from the very beginnings of British cinema, 'interracial sexual activity constituted a significant taboo area' (1996: 44) due to traces of pseudoscientific racist discourse in colonial times. In the light of these assertions, *The Far Pavilions*' positive representation of an interracial, heterosexual relationship is an exception to the rule, since it goes directly against cinema's usual avoidance of emotional

interracial sexuality (Young, 1996: 168). Not only does the couple end up together, but the series also devotes minute-long scenes to depicting the two characters' brief elopement and love making, thus defying the conservative preservation of the white, national identity boundaries of the 1980s and ensuing cinematic and social taboos.

Nonetheless, there are several aspects that problematise the series' apparent infringement of the norms, most of which are related to the representation of the main female character. In a white patriarchal society, black women are deprived of any kind of power. However they are the source of white men's anxieties:

> Within a supremacist white representational schema, black women are marginal. Unlike black men, black women represent no *present* threat to established hierarchies of privilege, since black women have so little political and social power, however black women represent a *potential* threat, a danger yet to come since they—because of their responsibility in continuing the black 'race'—carry the future dissidents against subordinate status (Young, 1996: 179-80; italics in original).

After their love-making scene, Ash/ock implores Anjuli to elope with him, however she insists in remaining with her half-sister at the wedding, even if she gets pregnant after their sexual encounter. It turns out that she does not bear a child. Anjuli, then, does not represent the stereotype of the sexually threatening dark woman, nor is her role that of the tragic mulatta who needs to sacrifice her love and her life for the welfare of the hero or the social structures (Wiegman, 1998: 164).[248] She is the passive woman who willingly conforms to the demands of an old – Victorian – traditional, patriarchal society: She is a virgin who has been waiting for the hero to 'give herself in', in spite of the problems this action might cause in her arranged marriage. Anjuli submits her subjectivity to her hero and, even in the face of an eventual pregnancy, she insists that her lover does not need to take on the responsibility of fatherhood. She is passive enough to submit to the hero yet active enough to take full responsibility for possible consequences.

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[248] In *The Rains Came* (1939), there is a white woman who falls in love and seduces an upper-class Indian doctor. This woman is presented as a *femme fatale* who is doomed to die and thus sacrifice herself for the hero's future brilliant career. Although the Indian is played by the U.S. American actor Tyrone Power, the couple is not allowed a single kiss on screen. Their relationship remains platonic and ending tragically.

The inter-ethnic couple, then, ends up together, however the future of their 'hybrid offspring' is not assured. Moreover, Anjuli is not completely black, she has white blood in her veins. This 'white streak' in her could be inferred as the reason for her 'noble' behaviour, so different from the cruel and egotistic drives of her pure Indian half-sister and half-brothers. In this respect, it is worth recalling that the black wig and the dark make-up served to camouflage a white U.S. American actress. The use of white actors and actresses to play non-white roles was a common trait in the 1950s and 1960s in both American and British movies that featured either an inter-ethnic relationship or a half-cast 'passing' for white (Young, 1996: 95; Wiegman, 1998: 163). Hence the fact of having a white actress playing a non-white character in the 1980s may be read as hinting at the prejudices that were still alive at the time in terms of cinematic representation. Significantly enough, the Raj production that devotes most time to inter-ethnic love-making avails itself of two white actors.

It could therefore be said that, even as an outcast in the Indian community, Anjuli submits to social norms. She offers herself as part of an arranged marriage in order to comfort her half-sister's despair. In spite of her sacrifice, Shushila ill-treats her in the palace. She imprisons Anjuli in order to become the exclusive Rani and love object of the Rana. Moreover, after the old man's death, the cruel princess tells the heroine that she will not have the honour to be sati – which meant spiritual purification for the widow – but will be blinded instead after contemplating the burning ceremony. Despite Shushila's heartless actions against her, Anjuli still pities her and implores Ash/ock to shoot her in the sati so as to save her the pain of being burnt. She patiently waits to be rescued by Ash/ock, whom she repeatedly refers to as 'my love and my life' and 'the husband of my heart'. Anjuli is a totally resigned woman, a 'Cinderella' figure who is finally rewarded for her submission and sacrifice. Thus, the characterisation of Anjuli as the suitable partner for the male hero

clearly diminishes the innovational tone of this cinematic production. In this respect, Anjuli, in her exotic 'otherness', represents the white male's nostalgic desire for the traditional submissive femininity that was disappearing in Western societies after the rise of feminism.[249]

Through the relationships the hero establishes with the Hindu royalty, *The Far Pavilions* reinforces the stereotypes traditionally attached with Oriental cultures that 'demonstrate' the superiority of the West over the East. One of those barbaric practices the British always make reference to in both imperial and post-imperial fictional and non-fictional texts is that of sati or 'widow burning' (Figure 25).[250] Interpreted as a barbaric custom, the British proudly insisted that it was thanks to their colonial rule that a law forbidding the tradition was passed.[251] Barbara and Thomas Metcalf explain that it was with Lord William Bentinck as governor general that the first acts against sati were implemented in 1928:

> With this immolation of a living woman in a funeral pyre, this act, rather than British public executions, created an English obsession with death as a spectacle. Although English observers in the eighteenth century had valorized sati as a heroic act of romantic self-sacrifice, by Bentinck's time it was seen as emblematic of India as a land of a barbarous and bloody-thirsty faith. Above all, for the British, sati testified to the moral weakness of Indian men, who lacked the masculine strength to nurture rather than to degrade their women, and so to the consequent need for Britain to stand for to protect them (2003: 81).

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[249] The nostalgic return of the traditional values of the past claimed by the British conservative government during the 1980s included the defence of the traditional role of wife and mother for women. Despite being the first woman who became Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher believed that feminism was out of date: 'The battle for women's rights has already been won […]. The days when they were demanded and discussed in strident tones should be gone forever. I hate those strident tones we hear from some Women's Libbers' (in Young, 1989: 306).

[250] For the origins and meanings of the practice, see Khan, 1999: 41-5.

[251] This issue appears in *Heat and Dust*, *The Deceivers* and in *The Far Pavilions*.

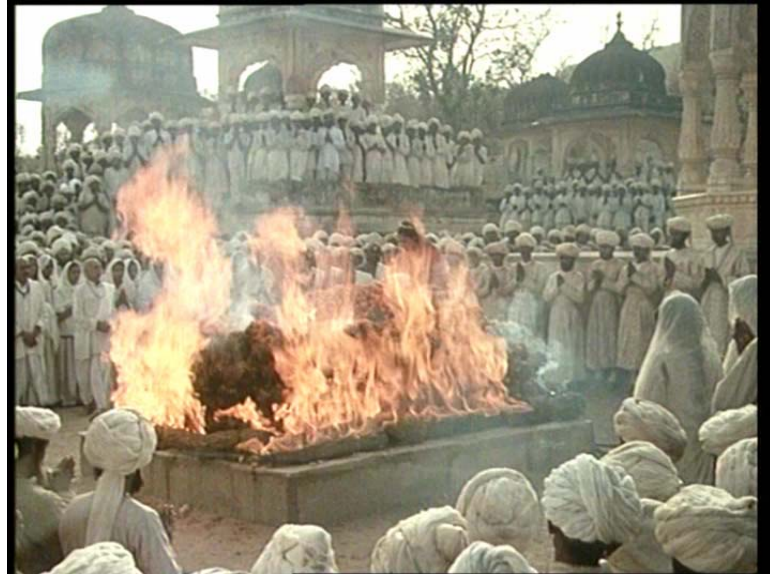

Figure 25
(Still)

Sati therefore helped construct the British as heroes saving the natives from their own 'savage' practices. In Gayatri Spivak's words, 'the abolition of this rite by the British has been generally understood as the case of "White men saving brown women from brown men"' (1988: 297). What was not included in these Raj fictions is that 'sati, like purdah, was not uniformly followed by all women expected to bear *sat*: 'voices of dissent from women and men were raised long before the British Raj' (Khan, 1999: 43). Sitara Khan points to the fact that the rights of women even diminished during the Raj. As a result of the invasion of a foreign ruling culture, practices reasserting their own traditions were exacerbated. Sati continued to be practiced in some states, especially among the upper castes and the British still had difficulties to police the custom. As a response to imperialism, purdah and sati were promoted. The practice of sati in Bengal, actually increased during British imperial rule (14-15).[252] On the other hand, 'for the colonialists,

[252] As Sitara Khan explains, Bengal was a state with quite a good number of wealthy families: 'Hindu women, although owning no property in their own right, benefited from the general position of their families. Widows could 'safe-keep' the family state for their minor sons until they were old enough to inherit the land. By the pundits insisting that sati was an integral part of Hinduism and that a Hindu woman could show her devotion to her deceased husband and prove her purity by entering into self-immolation, they could free the family property which could then be incorporated into the British state' (1999: 15).

the separation of male workers from their potential dependants, either by isolating women through purdah or eliminating them through sati, increased men's availability as transportable cheap labour force' (14). This occurred with Indians as indentured workers or 'coolies' after the abolition of slavery, which gave way to the Indian diaspora in the times of the Raj.

Hence, while these oriental practices were economically profitable for the early colonialists, later on, they served to justify the moral superiority of the West over the East. What is more, in comparison with the oppressive situation of Indian women – Hindu women submitted to sati and Muslim women relegated to purdah, most of them having been forced into arranged marriages – the European memsahibs enjoyed no end of freedom and were therefore willing to stay under the protection of their white men.

The Far Pavilions clearly exemplifies the oppression of the native woman and her necessity to be saved by the white hero. The serial devotes a long scene to the ceremony of Shushila's sati and carefully depicts female relegation to enclosed spaces by the practices of purdah. The princesses are transported in a small carriage with no windows, and they are always veiled whenever they appear in open spaces or in front of other men unless a superior man allows them to remove the cover. Anjuli hides herself behind a *burka* in her visit to Ash/ock's tent. The serial also presents an obnoxious arranged marriage, which in turn proves the vulnerability of Indian women. The character who chooses Shushila's old husband is her despotic younger brother, who, as pointed out before, embodies the childish nature of colonised cultures. Anjuli offers herself to become a second wife, following yet another Oriental custom, that of polygamy. In subsequent scenes, Ash/ock – again the white hero – strives to attain for her the status of Queen or Rani rather than as a mere concubine so that she may be granted at least some of the rights that an unprotected

mistress would lack. The hero also 'mercifully' relieves Shushila of the pain of being burnt in sati by shooting her, and Anjuli is finally rescued by her lover.

Nonetheless, if the last scene showing Anjuli and Ash/ock finally united is compared to Ash/ock's separation from Belinda, the dichotomy free-European versus oppressed-Indian female is not so clear. Of course Belinda would not become sati if her old husband died before she did. However, can it be assured that her marriage was a free one? Or was it arranged as well and based on economic reasons? Were not women, in both East and West used as commodities and as symbols of the national and cultural values of their own communities and thus relegated to their respective spaces? The idea of women having little or no choice in their marrying options was also present in the character of Adela in *A Passage to India*. As stated before, her convenient – not to say 'arranged' – loveless marriage was 'a legalised form of rape', yet, after briefly contemplating the possibility of running away from her future next to Ronny, Adela comes back to him in order to be protected from the terrors that await a woman alone in the uncertain colonial territory. As is known, she ends up alone and marginalised as a result of her failed attempt to go against the norms. In being alone, indeed, she will carry the disparaging label of 'spinster' whose only option is to 'use her money to *buy* herself a husband', as Aziz angrily states. Perhaps Belinda's decision to marry an old husband was also prompted by her need for protection within the boundaries of the British community that Ash/ock continuously dared to trespass.

What is made clear, not only in *The Far Pavilions*, but also in the other Raj productions, is the necessity for women, both British and Indian, to remain within the bounds of their respective communities. Even though the experience of Eastern and Western women were very different in imperial times, the connection between gender and nationhood was established in their respective confinements, as well as the inscription on

their bodies of the patriarchal assumptions of nationality, culture and imperialism. *Protection* of women thus meant a practice exercised in patriarchal societies to control and silence female bodies.[253] Hence, although the memsahibs were blamed for the imposed segregation between communities, this was not the result of their own will or choice but of patriarchal segregatory rules. Similarly, the Eastern woman's 'protection' in her purdah from alien invaders, as well as the imposition of certain cultural practices that aimed to prevent their Westernisation can be understood as the long-standing habit of using the female body as the vessel of traditional values or the 'nationalist appropriation of women's identity' (Herrero, 2008: 43).[254]

This said, the main couple's inter-ethnic relationship in *The Far Pavilions* destabilises the rigid boundaries that confine women to their corresponding spaces according to their social and ethnic status. Nevertheless, Anjuli's mixed condition allows her to escape with the partner who, although 'racially pure' in the physical sense, also suffers from a dislocated sense of identity. In this British-American production, the couple formed by a white man and a non-white woman is permitted because it is not based on equal terms, as the white man's superiority is never contested.

The conclusion to be drawn out of this analysis is that the serial nostalgically reinforces the imperialist ideology of old empire films. All the same, the exaggeration in the portrayal of the exoticism of the setting and the masquerade imposed on the

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[253] In the case of the native woman, she is doubly protected and thus doubly subjected. She is protected by their own men against the foreign rulers and thus relegated into purdah or early arranged marriages. On the other hand, she is rescued by white men from brown men in the case of sati or unwilling arranged marriages. Significantly enough, this was not an issue exclusive of colonial times. As Spivak argued: ' the protection of woman (today the "third world woman") becomes a signifier for the establishment of a good society which must, at such inaugurative moments, transgress mere legality, or equity for legal policy' (1988: 298)

[254] Although she analyses the situation of the contemporary Muslim woman, Fayeza Hasanat words could be applied to the study of the image of the white woman in colonial times as represented in the Raj productions, 'when a nation's identity lay dependent on its womanhood, the image on womanhood became more important than reality' (2008: 83). Although I repeat, the universal situation of women differs greatly depending on circumstances of place, time, class and sexuality, my attempt to compare the situation of the female experience in general is to undermine the patriarchal discourses that assigned more freedom to their white women in their attempt to save 'brown women from brown men' (to use Spivak's expression) when, in fact, they used similar discourses equating women and nation in order to control patriarchal and colonial structures.

'multicultural' actors problematises this nostalgic harking back, not to imperial times but to imperial movies. Interpreted from a Brechtian optic, this imperial adventure could be regarded as a parody and thus a critical tool that puts to the test the very issues it presents. Even though the Eurocentric perspective is overwhelming in this revision of the imperial past, it could be taken as a carnivalesque masquerade that reduces the old ideologically-charged tales of the imperial past to mere constructions. If characters in *A Passage to India* felt the void of cultural artifice in human relations, *The Far Pavilions* portrays an excess of identities. Identity is therefore the key issue explored in the serial, which could be transposed in the context of the 1980s. This TV production may critically reflect the troubled identity of contemporary multicultural Britain through an inter-ethnic love story in which the main characters involved find their identity in the Third Space of hybridity. Issues of gender and race intermingle and give way to ambivalent meanings in the serial, proving that the concept of hybridity is not an easy one, and that the burden of an imperial, patriarchal and racist past makes it difficult to construct a Third Space where new relations can be set on equal terms.

4.5.2.3. Eurocentric 'Realism': Rape and Punishment

If *The Far Pavilions* started with the portrayal of the hero's troubled identity due to his dual condition as a white sahib raised as an Indian, *The Jewel in the Crown*, set in the 1940s, displays a powerful beginning with a similar, yet opposite situation: that of an Indian man educated in Britain. Forced by circumstances to come back to his original country, he finds himself caught between two cultures and thus disturbed by his lack of adaptation to the new environment. In spite of the nostalgic imperialistic portrayal of the credit sequence, the serial makes a promising start by presenting the events from the point

of view of 'the other', that is, of Hari Kumar (Art Malik) an Indian character. Even more promising is the inter-ethnic love relationship between Hari and an English girl, Daphne Manners (Susan Wooldridge). These two characters feel out of place in the rigid structures of colonial India and try to overcome racial prejudice by physically and symbolically 'crossing the bridge' that separates both communities. In the complicated historical background of the 1940s, with the Second World War and the imminent independence of India, the fate of this love story cannot but end in tragedy. This tragedy, though, occurs at the end of the second chapter with Daphne's death in childbirth after being gang raped and Hari imprisoned, tortured and accused by Ronald Merrick (Tim Pigott-Smith), the chief of police, of having organised the rape.

What is left of this story in the remaining twelve chapters of the serial is the mystery surrounding what, from then on, is mentioned as 'the Manners case', involving the scandalous inter-ethnic relationship resulting in a rape and in a 'mixed-breed' child, and the dubious methods carried out by Merrick in the police enquiry. The third chapter, then, introduces new characters, the Laytons. The father, Colonel Layton (Frederick Treves), is prisoner of war in Germany and is eventually released towards the end of the serial. His wife, Mildred (Judy Parfitt) and two daughters, Sarah (Geraldine James) and Susan (Wendy Morgan) live as memsahibs in the Indian mountains together with Mabel Layton (Fabia Drake), the Colonel's stepmother, who shares her house with Barbie Bachelor (Peggy Ashcroft), a retired missionary. They are the neighbours of Lady Manners (Rachel Kempson), Daphne's aunt who takes care of her unfortunate niece's baby and is thus the object of gossip among all the memsahibs in town. The link between the events of the first episodes and the subsequent stories comes through Ronald Merrick, now an army officer. He first acts as the best man at the wedding of his fellow officer, Teddie Bingham (Nicholas Farrell) and Susan Layton. During the ceremony, the Layton family become

acquainted with Ahmed Kasim (Derrick Branche), whose father, Mohamed Ali Kasim – or M.A.K. – (Zia Mohyeddin), is a Muslim leader in the Hindu Congress Party. Soon after the wedding, Teddie dies in an attack by the Japanese and the rebel Indian National Army. The widow, by then pregnant, enters into a state of despair and remains mentally insane for the rest of the serial. After a while, she marries Ronald Merrick, whose insidious presence remains more or less apparent in almost every chapter. It is towards the end, in the tenth episode, that Guy Perron (Charles Dance) appears. Knowing Hari from Chellinborough School in England, he tries to establish a link between Hari's forgotten story and Merrick's involvement in the events. Meanwhile, he becomes closely related to Sarah and he is the character who focalises the last episodes which portray India's independence and partition, together with the British abandonment of what had been the jewel in the crown of the, until then, vast and powerful empire.

In the chapter devoted to the analysis of *The Jewel in the Crown* in his book *White*, Richard Dyer's comments on the issue of race and gender representation in Raj productions recapitulate all that has been said in the previous sections and thus serves as a preamble for the analysis of the serial. Dyer states that:

> The processes of imperialism express, in representation, white identities. These are forged from the roles and functions of white people in imperialism and the qualities of character that performing them is held to require and call forth. When the text is one of celebration, it is the mainly white qualities of expansiveness, enterprise, courage and control (of self and others) that are in the foreground; but when doubt and uncertainty creep in, women begin to take centre stage. The white male spirit achieves and maintains empire; the white female soul is associated with its demise.
> … The representation of white women in such texts relate in complex ways to both the traditional role of white woman's place in imperialism and also to feminism. The traditional view has positive and negative variants. The positive is most readily evoked through the idea of white woman's civilising mission. This might be accomplished literally through missionary work, but that tended to be unattractively pro-active and spinsterish, and it was rather the memsahibs, the mothers, wives and daughters of the white officers and administrators, who were to instil civilisation, through the example of their own moral refinement. The straightforwardly negative view of this was the image of the memsahib as more snobbish and crueller to natives, than the men, at once morally repressive and, with the heat and boredom, more liable to be prey of adultery and worse. (1997: 184-6).

Dyer analyses the presence of female characters in *The Jewel in the Crown*, a Raj serial that follows the same pattern of the 'feminisation' of empire films as in the other Raj

screen fictions of the 1980s. He states that these female characters often pose a criticism of the empire, by expressing dissenting opinions on the way the British men treat the Indians, or by their transgressive and/or 'illicit' associations with Indian people. However, in Dyer's view, they 'criticise the conduct of the empire, not the enterprise itself' (1997: 186). On the other hand, this criticism results in impotence or nothingness, in downfall, silence or lack of action. 'There is nothing I can do' is the most repeated sentence all along the episodes, uttered by female characters who try to change things but end up in stasis. Aware of the ideological constructs that oppress those in the margins, they end up trapped in the net of nothingness – symbolised by the lace the Layton family possess that depicts some butterflies caught in a net – or in the silence of the Marabar caves in *A Passage to India*, also enacted in madness or death. In Dyer's words, 'doing nothing, nothing, thus provides the basis for the complex construction of white femininity' (187).

The construction of femininity, ethnicity and the revision of that particular moment of the British-Indian historical past is quite ambivalent in this serial. As said before, the production presented certain formal features – emphasis on dialogue, use of close-ups – that brought it closer to the TV medium through which it was released than *The Far Pavilions*. These formal characteristics presented a tension in the realistic portrayal of the past, with public journalistic archives juxtaposed with the private lives of the characters. This tension was also present in the realistic portrayal of the scenes as if they were seen through a transparent window, and the sudden 'freezing' of images at the end of every episode. The serial is, at once, a fluid narrative entailing a willing suspension of disbelief and a fragmented vision of the past which prevents a fully vicarious experience.

This tension is not only manifested in the formal presentation of the events, but also in the actual development of the narrative. As stated before, the serial opens up with the presentation of a troubled non-white character as a hero – quite a promising aperture that

stands against all the traditional Eurocentric screen fictions of the past. According to Naman Ramachandran:

> Based on Paul Scott's acclaimed Raj Quartet, *The Jewel in the Crown* (ITV, 1984) comes the closest to capturing the mood of the last days of the Raj than any of the several films and television dramas made on the subject in the early 1980s. It achieves this by choosing to concentrate on the politics of the time and a few well-etched, complex characters, instead of simply casting a nostalgic eye on the glory days of the Raj. Moreover, by avoiding overt criticism of British policy in India, and letting events speak for themselves, the drama manages to create a convincing portrait of a turbulent time. Compared to Scott's fragmented, non-linear narrative, the production can seem conventional, forced to adopt a more straightforward structure to meet the demands of mass audience television. Perhaps because of this, the production managed to average more than 7 million viewers per episode; Critics and commentators heralded the programme as evidence of the rebirth of quality drama on British television (http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/501531/).

Against this perspective, my view is that, for all the critically acclaimed realism in the complex representation of the past, the serial nevertheless undermines the initial attempt to portray the 'other''s point of view to show, as I see it, a Eurocentric, or rather, a very British vision of the last years of imperial power. As in the verbal expression of a traumatic experience in order to relieve it, *The Jewel in the Crown* re-tells the past as an exercise of self-justification and as a means of understanding the contemporary position Britain holds in the world. Hence, as occurred in *Gandhi*, the serial makes extensive use of those traditional stereotypes and motifs that continued to prevail at the time the serial was released.

In the first episode, after the 'news' sequence, a landscape of India at night is presented. Everything is quiet, beautiful but also mysterious, almost gothic, with a nun and an Indian doctor carrying a light and searching for what we soon learn to be dying people. They find the protagonist by the river. They first think he is dead or ill, but then they realise he is just drunk. The first impression could therefore be regarded as positive because what the spectator is presented with is people helping people, regardless of race, class or gender. Sister Ludmila (Matyelok Gibbs) would remind the audience of Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who was given the Nobel Prize of Peace in 1979 and who started organising relief for the helpless precisely during the 1940s. Sister Ludmila is the first

white woman the audience is confronted with in the series, a positive character embodying the traditional roles attached to white femininity: purity – she is a nun – and benevolence in the civilising colonial mission. However, with the appearance of Ronald Merrick, this atmosphere of disinterested love and support is disrupted. This English police officer embodies the values of domination and preservation of the British Empire – a phobic belief in the necessary separation between white rulers and 'inferior otherness'.

Merrick's interrogatory helps introduce the main character to the audience. Due to the colour of his skin, Merrick and the spectator are led to think that this character is a native Indian. The policeman therefore starts talking to him in Hindi, to show off that he masters both languages and, consequently, that he is in control. Nevertheless, the protagonist surprisingly answers, 'What? Sorry, but I don't speak Hindi', with a perfect upper-class, English accent. His almost arrogant attitude before a British officer, closer to that of an Englishman, rather than of an Indian, who is expected to be submissive before his British rulers, provokes immediate tension. In spite of Hari's confrontational attitude, the sequence presents the characters in such a way that the audience cannot but sympathise with Hari and not with Merrick. The former is first seen in daylight washing his head to relieve his hangover. In spite of the dreadful situation in which he was found the previous night, the camera zooms in on a careful display of his almost naked, tanned and clean body. In contrast, the first shot of Merrick's body presents the character in quite a comic way to the audience, still unaware of the policeman's sadism, and cruel actions in the development of the story. Clad in Bermuda shorts and holding a stick, which, for a post-Freudian audience, would represent not only power but also a displacement of inferiority complex in terms of masculinity, his stiff-upper lip attitude when confronting the handsome Kumar makes of him seem a ridiculous figure (Figure 26). In spite of that, a sinister shadow is cast on this character, which the audience will soon identify as the main

antagonist. Sister Ludmila is quite disconcerted by Hari's attitude. Emulating Gandhi's scene in the train, Hari is surprised at being treated as a 'second-class' citizen in India. Sister Ludmila gives him a piece of advice that will prove erroneous in the subsequent events occurring between these two characters: 'If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear, don't be silly!' Hari has nothing to hide yet he has good reasons to fear. His condition as 'mimic man' will pose a threat to those like Merrick, who still relied on the relationships of power based on racial hierarchy.

Figure 26
(Still)

From the very beginning, the main character's name also appears to be problematic because it hints at Hari's hybrid condition between two different cultures. 'Why did you say Coomer if it is Kumar?' sister Ludmila asks Mr. De Souza (Om Puri), the Indian doctor, when he tells her the mysterious man's name. When Merrick asks the protagonist if his name is Kumar, he answers: 'No, but it'll do'. This problem appears again when he talks to Daphne (Susan Wooldridge), the young British woman he falls in love with. He tells her that in England he was Harry Coomer, but in India he is Hari Kumar: 'Hari, like in

Mata-Hari', he says, laughing, due to the apparent absurdity of the comparison.[255] This fact depicts this man's in-between condition, his Indian origin reflected in his skin colour, but educated as an Englishman. Yet again, this situation highlights how the relationships of power among races are no more than cultural constructions. Who is Hari Kumar? Does his education, culture and class status make of him a British over-ruler, or should he be considered a 'ruled' native Indian because of his dark skin?[256] As mentioned before, white dominance is based on its invisible association with the 'norm', whereas non-whites are considered to be a 'deviation' from that 'norm' (Dyer, 1993:142-145). Showing English education and attitude under his Indian physical appearance, Hari Kumar embodies white values and thus produces a threatening effect on the white rulers because his dark skin destabilises the very construction on which white power is based.

With this in mind, it is not so much what Hari does but what he *is* – what he represents – that renders him highly suspicious in Merrick's eyes. Feeling threatened, Merrick thus bases his accusations on a hypothetical plot organised by the Indian, educated elite against British rule over the country. However, these accusations do not come from rational empirical evidence but from the irrational fear that the 'mimic man's' ambivalence provokes on the coloniser. This kind of mimicry puts to the test the legitimacy of white British power over other countries and races, showing that it is nothing but a cultural construction that could be deconstructed at any moment (Bhabha, 1994: 88).

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[255] Mata-Hari was Margaretha Zelle's artistic name, who was a Dutch, not Indian woman. Under a fake identity, she performed exotic oriental-type dances and she was eventually killed, accused of spying activities during World War I (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990, vol. 7: 926). This mixture of identities and accusation of carrying out illegal political activities makes the comparison of these two personages no so absurd. In fact, the reference to Mata Hari could be hinting Hari Kumar's troubles and subsequent imprisonment.

[256] The name 'Hari' has a further ironic connotation if its meaning is considered in the light of the Hindu tradition. In the Hindu sacred book, the *Bhagavad Gita,* Hari is one of the names given to Krishna (XI:9 and XVIII:77) when he appears as a divinity, that is, transcending the dualities of the *Maya*, comprising as he does the contradiction of being one and multiple at the same time (XI:13). This is precisely the character's situation. He is one and multiple (at least dual). However, unlike the god and given the imperial social set up of the times, Hari's tragedy is that neither culture accepts him fully, both treating him as 'the other'.

The figure of Hari Kumar helps the spectator understand the situation of many – second- or third- generation – Indians born in Britain who were trapped between the original culture of their families and the Western world in which they had been raised. However, the series turns out to be less innovative concerning race relationships than it initially promised to be: Hari Kumar is a positive character because he is an exception. He is assimilated as an Englishman and is completely adapted to English culture, customs and language, therefore, for British audiences, it is easy to identify with him.[257] What is more, he belongs to an elite of Indians educated in Britain in public schools, who represent something exotic rather than dangerous for their white companions at, for example, Chellinborough.[258]

For the white British audience in the 1980s, the fact of identifying with non-white characters – especially when these are shown to belong to an exceptional elite, as Hari Kumar or the Muslim Ahmed Kasim (Derrik Branche), was unproblematic, just as they accepted Attenborough's Gandhi, whose exceptional qualities of leadership set him apart from the traditional stereotypes associated with eastern 'mobs'. Nonetheless – as with the previous examples described in the analysis of the other Raj productions – when non-white characters appear in a big group and belong to the lower strata of society, they become threatening. This is the case of the Muslim peasants that rape Daphne, or the crowd of Hindu rioters that attack the train and commit horrible crimes against the Muslims in the last episode. It can be said, then, that phobias against the 'other' usually appear when this 'otherness' comes in high numbers because the 'homogeneous' mainstream identity could

[257] In this sense, the character of Hari recalls the Conservative party campaign poster for the 1983 elections showing a suit-clad black man with the caption 'Labour says he's black. Tories say he's British'. All the ideological implications of such an advertisement were analysed in chapter two of this dissertation.

[258] As Felicity Hand explains, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the few Indians belonging to a high caste who were educated in public schools in England, were welcomed: 'They were often pleasantly surprised with hospitality of the indigenous population. Associations and hostels were founded to make these young people feel "at home" by providing them with social and cultural activities' (Hand, 1993: 102).

be 'swamped', to use Thatcher's words. Recalling what Felicity Hand stated, 'it is a question of numbers' (1993: 104).

In this way, as with a Westernised Gandhi in the train scene at the beginning of Attenborough's film, Hari Kumar, is bewildered by the different attitude of the British towards the Indians in Britain and abroad. In England, Hari felt at home, participating in the close, male-friendship bonds promoted in public schools. However, in India, he is rejected by whites and, as he often complains, becomes 'invisible' for them. In the colony, his subjectivity is erased. He is treated as a mere object to be ruled over and controlled. He is even ignored by the person who used to be his best friend in England when they meet again in India. One learns, further on in the series, that the reason why he was found totally drunk near the river at the beginning of the serial was because he had been snubbed and repudiated by his former school friend.

The representation of an Indian in a main role in TV has its counterpart in the role played by Ronald Merrick. In the same manner that Hari, like Gandhi, was a positive exception among Indians, Merrick, like General Dyer, was negative exception among the British. The problem with Ronald Merrick is that the ills of the imperial enterprise are reduced to a single evil person, an 'escape-goat' that redeems other 'minor' faults of the British in India. No other white character in the serial is as base and wicked as he is; on the contrary, most of them are round characters. If they have any faults, these are justified at some later point in the serial. As Tana Wollen states:

> Ronald Merrick is the man the nation loved to hate, which, given his racism and uptight sexuality, might have been encouraging. His malevolence seemed to issue, however, from that sin so originally English – having a chip on the shoulder. As so often pointed out, he was not quite 'our sort'. His homosexuality is a mark of his cruelty and of his inability to love […]. In the end Merrick's behaviour cannot be read beyond the bounds of his lower middle-class character. His come-uppance coincides with the British withdrawal to their Home Counties, but Merrick is one of those individuals for whom we have to apologize, in the apprehensive hope that the rest of us were not really like that (2001: 184)

The issue of racism is thus linked in the serial to class and class belonging. If an Indian character belongs to the educated upper classes and is assimilated within British culture, then he will be granted a positive representation on screen, whereas if a white British policeman is a 'grammar school boy', he will end up being an antagonist. In an interview, Tim Pigott-Smith confessed how difficult it had been for him to play the role of such an evil character. He tries to explain how he understood the character:

> He [Merrick] tried to get into the Army but didn't have enough class. So he went to India as a policeman, taking second best. A talented man, hard-working, courageous, ambitious, ruthless. But it is the weakness of his character that comes to the fore in the story. Scott wrote about the corruption that happens to people when they rule, about how that gradually eats away and diseases them. Merrick was trained to think he was racially superior, conditioned by 300 years of rule in India. And what makes him a tragic as opposed to a melodramatic figure is that, when he hounds young Hari Kumar he believes not that he is performing some kind of evil act, but that he is actually doing what it is right. That's a terrifying form of corruption (Pigott-Smith in Furness, 1984: 16).

Merrick's behaviour is therefore explained in terms of his condition as a person of humble origins, educated in the ideals of the empire and who wields too much power. There is a moment at the beginning of the serial, when Ronald confesses to Daphne his lowly, underprivileged roots, the hardships of his life, his feeling of not being 'one of them' and hence his situation as an outcast. The sentiments he expresses are so understandable that his proposal to Daphne and subsequent rejection somehow incite an instant of pity for him. Furthermore, this scene ends up with the *Claire de Lune* piece sounding in the background, which allows Merrick a hint of sensitivity and humanity. It is not that this moment in the serial redeems the villainy of the character, but 'the explanation' somehow softens his wickedness.[259]

Merrick shows an inferiority complex when confronting the other sahibs in India and thus exerts his power against those whom he considers as his inferiors. On top of that, he cannot abide the destabilisation of hierarchies caused by a 'black' man's class

[259] Similar explanations for the violent actions of nameless crowds of Indians are never found in any Raj production, as explained in the section on *Gandhi* concerning the assassin Nathuram Godse. Daphne's rapists, or the Hindu killers on the train are never presented as individuals with a personal background. In other words, no account is proffered for their rage or barbaric acts.

superiority. This negative feeling is accentuated when his offer of marriage is turned down by Daphne and more so when he witnesses how she gets more and more involved with that snob Indian, who, according to his standards, is superior in class but inferior in terms of ethnicity. It is not that his cruelty is justified, the narration simply presents it as a reaction that was, in a sense, as comprehensible as the racist behaviour of working-class people in Britain when threatened by waves of immigrants whom they regarded as potential usurpers of both 'their jobs' and 'their women'.

On the other hand, critics such as Richard Dyer have analysed this character as an example of the anti-Thatcherite mood of the serial. He postulates that Merrick exemplifies the rise of that 'newly affluent working class' during the Thatcher decade which Dyer describes as 'ambitious, materialistic, insensitive, incipiently racist'. He concludes that this spirit promulgated during the Thatcher era,

> … is expressed in the person of *Jewel*'s hate figure, namely Ronald Merrick, lower class, a policeman (a member of a sector seen as allied to the Thatcher sensibility), racist and, most Thatcherite, at once nationalistic and yet scornful of 'soft' traditional values. The liberalism of the series is revealed in the way it sets up as villains those who speak in the language of Thatcherism (1997: 196).

Thus, as Dyer puts it, Merrick represents the Thatcherite ethos of the 1980s, presented in a wholly negative light. Even so, this is not the sole cause for his cruelty. At the end of the series, the audience learns that he was a repressed homosexual who exerted his sado-masochist inclinations on young Indians and carried out his fantasies dressed up as a Pathan. This also explains the sexual abuse Hari Kumar suffered when he was tortured by Merrick in the unofficial police interrogation that took place after Daphne's rape.

Contrary to the efforts made in positive representations of homosexuality on screen at a time when gay and lesbian rights were defended against Thatcherite values, and

homophobic reactions due to the spread of AIDS,[260] Merrick embodies the old stereotype of the homosexual as a 'deviant' or pathological form of sexuality rooted in the nineteenth-century medical discourses (Escudero-Alias, 2009: 8-10).[261]

For this reason, contrary to Dyer's argument, Rushdie condemns *Jewel* for being as clichéd as *Pavilions* in its depiction of the Raj in terms of sexuality, gender and race:

> Sadistic, bottom-flogging policeman Merrick turns out to be (surprise!) a closet homosexual. His grammar school origins give him (what else?) a chip on the shoulder. All around him is a galaxy of chinless wonders, regimental *grandes dames*, lushes, empty-headed blondes, silly-asses, plucky young things, good sorts, bad eggs and Russian counts with eye-patches. The overall effect is rather like a literary version of Mulligatawny soup. It tries to taste Indian, but ends-up being ultra-parochially British, only with too much pepper (1992: 90).

The way Merrick is assassinated also includes an orientalist vision of India as a dangerous place that recurs in the empire fictions. Merrick is murdered following a ritual. He is strangled and there are symbols which seem to belong to a sect. This killing recalls the ritual followed by Thuggees, an organisation of nomadic professional assassins, who was associated with the cult to the 'blood-thirsty' Hindu goddess Kali.[262] It was at the time of the British presence in India, under the government of Lord William Bentinck, that thugs of the type were persecuted and eventually weakened and eliminated. According to Barbara and Thomas Metcalf, the British were bent on promoting – or enforcing – a 'sedentarisation' of the tribal nomadic people of central India. Hence the campaign against

[260] Independent films depicting a positive portrayal of homosexuality and its inter-connections with ethnicity were also made, as was the case of Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston* (1988) and *My Beautiful Launderette* (Frears, 1985).

[261] In her study on gender identities, Maite Escudero-Alias explains that in the nineteenth century, the term 'queer' was introduced in Western discourses with a 'pejorative use to name (male) homosexuality; in fact, to be named "queer" [was] to be positioned on the margins of normative sexualities as defined by the dominant heteronormative matrix. "Queer" goes hand in hand with sexually perverted and abnormal behaviour' (2009: 8). Homosexuality was thus pathologized and defined as the Other to healthy heterosexuality. Escudero argues that it was not until 1969 that 'the first visible and collective reaction for the neutralization of homosexuality's stigmatised meaning took place' (10). From then on, the recognition and legitimisation of homosexual identities has undergone a continuous struggle. That is why, the representation *Jewel* does of the perverse homosexual as the villain of the series would reinforce the homophobic backlash of Thatcherite values instead of criticising them.

[262] Apart from the violent means they used to rob and pillage, the organisation became known for the way victims were killed, by strangling with a handkerchief following special religious rites of the brotherhood (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/594263/).

what they called ‘criminal tribes’ which were popularly stigmatised (2003: 79). As a result, stories of Thuggees proliferated at that time and were a source of inspiration in subsequent fictional accounts of India that reinforced its exoticism and danger (http://www.nationmaster.com/ encyclopedia/Thuggees). As in the case of sati, the alleged eradication of this criminal fraternity by the British also reinforced the triumph of Western civilisation over barbarism and justified their ruling presence in the chaotic and savage Orient. In 1988, Nicholas Meyer adapted the 1952 novel by John Masters, *The Deceivers*, which portrayed the barbarism of the Thuggeess and the heroic Captain William Savage (Pierce Brosnan) becoming one of them as a spy in order to save a woman from sati. This story unites all the ingredients that appear in most orientalist fictions on India: sati, Thuggees, English passing for Indians and the exoticism and savagery of the ‘other’ deeply transforming the repressed inner self of the hitherto restrained and civilised British hero, a transformation also undergone by the character of Kurtz in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902).[263]

With respect to Merrick, another troubling point is that, in spite of being an evil character and embodying Thatcherite qualities in a negative way, the fact is that his racist warning to Daphne about the dangers of ‘mixing’ with Indian men turns out to be true in the development of the narrative. The audience may be disgusted by or in dire disagreement with his racist comments on how ‘skin colour matters’ but the rape issue is constructed in such a way that if Daphne had obediently followed Merrick’s advice of not

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[263] Thuggess were popularised in a great deal of colonial novels and films as well as posterior productions which had the tribe as the main plot or mentioned it at some point of the novel or film. Some examples are the novels by Philip Meadows Taylor *Confessions of a Thug* (1839), George Bruce’s *The Stranglers: The culti of Thuggee and its overthrow in British India* (1968), Dan Simmons’s *Song of Kali* (1984). Arthur Conan Doyle and Emilio Salgari mentioned the thugs in some passages of novels. In the same manner, Thuggess appeared in films such as *Gunga Din* (Stevens, 1939), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (Anderson, 1956), *The Stranglers of Bombay* (Fisher, 1960), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (Spielberg, 1984).

going around late at night with Hari, and if she and had taken the car offered her by Merrick to return home, most probably she would not have been raped.

At his point, the relationship between Hari Kumar and the English girl is worth analysing. Their love represents the unity among races against cultural prejudices. The failure in their relationship proves the extent to which social phobia of miscegenation affects individual lives. Portrayed as a self-sufficient and liberated woman, Daphne Manners clearly breaks out of imposed conventions: she moves freely through the streets of Mayapore on her bicycle — a symbol of female independence; she has her own job and lives with an Indian lady (Zohra Segal) whom she has no prejudice in calling 'aunt Lily' or 'aunty'. When attracted by Hari Kumar and she rejects the traditional passive female role and takes the initiative in establishing a relationship with him. Likewise, at the party and, during the parade, it is Daphne who invites him to dinner and asks him to visit a Hindu temple with her (Figure 27).

Figure 27
(Still)

As regards her physical appearance, she is definitely not the prototype of the beautiful and seductive heroine who waits to be seduced and 'rescued' by the hero, as was the case of Anjuli. She feels attracted to Hari because she also finds herself out of place in a society whose rigid hierarchies and cultural impositions force women as well as non-white men into the margins. At first, she seems to emdody the new views on femininity proposed in the 1980s. It is in this decade that a more eclectic image of the New Woman was boosted by magazines such as *Elle*:

> Rejecting the coherence of uniform identity, *Elle* was determined to disturb: models were androgynous or parodies of femininity, racially varied and sexually amorphous. Our unpleasant confusions about our identities (what it means to be black or white, gay or straight, male or female) melted in a pleasurable, seductive ambiguity (Stuart in Rutherford, 1990:31).

With this in mind, Daphne represents a very attractive character that disrupts the traditional notions of female representation on screen by asserting her freedom against the patriarchal and racist society of the Raj. On the other hand, she is horribly punished for her feminist independence. In the way the story is presented, the fact is that if she had not been cycling alone at night and if she had not stopped in those isolated gardens to make love with Hari, she would not have been raped.[264] At the beginning of the 1980s, the message that a female spectator could infer from this situation was therefore that a woman should be

[264] The reasons why Hari and Daphne have to meet in such a solitary and thus dangerous place are better explained in Scott's novel. As Daphne confesses in a passage of the novel, in her justification for not telling the truth (that she was with Hari at the Bibighar):

'Well, if he had been an Englishman – that young subaltern who began to paw me at the War Week dance, for instance – the truth would have worked and it would have never occurred to us to tell anything else, I suppose. When people realized what he and I had been doing at the Bibighar they would have stood by us while they tried to see justice done [...]. But it wasn't an Englishman. And of course there are people who would say that it would never had happened if it had been, and I expect they would be right because he and I would never have had to go to the Bibighar to be alone, we would never have been there after dark. He would have seduced me in the back of a truck in the carpark of the Gymkhana club, or in the place behind the changing rooms of the swimming pool, or in a room in one of the chummeries, or even in my bedroom at tge MacGreggor on a night Lily was out playing bridge'. (Scott, 1978: 420-1).

The fact that there is no place where a British-Indian couple could meet entails a criticism on the existent racism of the time. The tragic ending of the couple could thus be interpreted as the novel condemning the phobic imperial society when heterosexual interracial relationships were involved. The serial, in contrast, omits that explanation. By presenting the Bibighar gardens as just an exotic place where the couple meets, the attack can be interpreted as the unfortunate outcome of the couple's imprudence.

careful about mixing with non-whites, especially in times of tension and upheavals, as was occuring with the racial riots taking place in different parts of the country.

The reason why Hari and Daphne's relationship ends in such a disastrous way can be explained in at least two ways. Firstly, in a society where there is such a separation between races, a relationship between two members from different groups cannot have but a tragic ending, like Romeo and Juliet or, better, Tony and Maria in *West Side Story*. A happy ending would have been criticised as fantastic escapism, closer to Hollywood romantic comedies than to serious British quality cinema.

On the other hand, the impossibility of miscegenation in fiction may also be related to the unconscious collective phobia regarding mixed couples as potential threats to the homogeneous structure on which white Western discourse is based. When Daphne and Hari have their first dinner together, both feel attracted to each other and the climax of that unity is the fast swing dance in circles. The roundness of the circle, a symbolic representation of eternity, as against linear dychotomies that represent the world in terms of binary constructions, could stand for the rejection of the separation between norm and 'otherness', of duality, in favour of unity beyond the boundaries of prejudices and separations. According to R. Rust, one of the functions of the dance is, precisely, that of the release of tensions (in Fiske, 1989:127). In this series, Hari and Daphne dance against the oppressions of a society that prevents their union on the only grounds that they have different skin colours.

This unity that Hari and Daphne beautifully represent in the first chapters of the serial could also be connected to Bhabha's 'Third Space'. Using a Hindu terminology, the union of the protagonists would correspond to the entrance in the divine conscience or *Kutastha Chaitanya*, represented by the 'third or spiritual eye' (*Kuthastha, ajna chakra*). This eye's vision leads to a state of unity and communion with the divinity, a place without

separation, without ‘otherness’, in contrast to the dual world of Maya, which is the source of human unhappiness (Yogananda, 2000: 250; Flood, 1988: 45; Gallud, 1999: 24). This fact is present in the series with the couple’s visit to the temple, where the ritual they undergo could be envisaged as a kind of ‘spiritual sanctioning’ of their union, as a kind of ‘wedding’ or rite actually blessing this heterosexual, inter-ethnic relationship. This is where Hari and Daphne are marked with a red stain on their foreheads – called ‘kumkum’, ‘bindi’ or ‘tilak’ –, the ‘third eye’ (http://www.hindunet.org). Their striving towards unity against all odds is also symbolised by the ‘crossing of rivers’, present in the title of the first chapter, in the credit sequence and in Hari’s words, all of which indicate the possibility of consonance and harmony between opposing cultures.

However, full unity never comes about. All the sequences in which Hari and Daphne are together are marked by tension. Every time their union is about to take place, something or somebody prevents it. In their first meeting at the party, Hari leaves Daphne because he feels overwhelmed by his hybrid condition in a society based on binarisms. Daphne compares her own situation as ‘cultural mix’ with Hari’s but he runs away shouting ‘it’s not the same!’, making an implicit reference to his skin colour. At the parade, both meet, but their encounter is haunted by Merrik’s disquieting presence. As they dine together for the first time, things seem to change: after their dance, the spectator is led to imagine that the following scene will be that of their union. However, aunt Lily appears, announcing that Hari’s car is waiting for him. The same happens when Daphne has dinner at Hari’s house.

There is always a physical or ghostly presence, embodied most often by Merrick, who prevents the fulfilment of their love. The symbolic Big Ben miniature at Lily’s house is also worth noticing because it could be taken both as a representation of British cultural domination and as a ‘phallic symbol’ of patriarchial control. Its constant presence is a

reminder of the influential power of culture over the individual's freedom. On this reading, the failure of these two characters' relationship in the fictional text could be interpreted as a criticism of the difficulties of inter-ethnic relationships in the past. But it could as well be understood as resulting from the collective phobia against miscegenation, still rife in contemporary Britain: whites being afraid of losing their identity and power when faced with hybridity. Hari and Daphne's sexual encounter is never explicitly shown and, unlike *The Far Pavilions*, only few seconds are devoted to their kissing.

Although, initially, the serial seems bent on giving voice to those normally silenced (i.e. women, non-whites) already, at the end of the second chapter, the main characters are relegated again to the margins of silence and passivity, fatalism and determinism – Hari is imprisoned and Daphne dies. 'There is nothing I can do' Daphne repeats after she is raped. Her hopelessness turns out to be an accurate assessment of the situation since, from the third episode onwards, Hari remains in prison. When he is finally freed in the last chapter, he is left alone, staring motionless at Daphne's picture.

On the one hand, for all the negative picture drawn of the impossibility of representating on screen of a happy union between a white woman and a non-white man overcoming all racial prejudices, Daphne and Hari never completely disappear. Their shadowy presence remains throughout the serial, haunting the lives of the other characters, as the ghosts in the legend of the *Bibighar* gardens where they made love and were finally united, but also where they were separated forever. Their pervasive presence can thus be read as the critical spectre that destabilises the invisible norm established by a white patriarchal society.

Connected to this idea of the phantoms of unity and hybridity haunting the dualistic world of cultural binarisms between Western norm and Eastern 'otherness', is the appearance in some scenes of Daphne's daughter, Parvati (Figure 28). She is a hybrid

offspring, comprising opposites, a recurrent motif in Hindu mythology. She could either be the product of inter-ethnic love and unity – if Hari is the father, as Daphne wants to believe – and thus, a living symbol of the possible merging of races. Or the child could be the living outcome of hate and violence after a rape, which, symbolically, represents the 'other''s revenge, so feared and abhorred by the colonisers.

Figure 28
(Still)

Parvati is also relegated to the margins. Apart from her brief appearances as a mixed-breed baby, she has no narrative significance in the plot.[265] By connecting this baby with the mixed-parentage pregnancy of *Heat and Dust*, the symbolism of this child could also be related to the multicultural situation of Britain in the 1980s. In other words, it could be argued that Daphne's daughter represents the hope for a future of reconciliation between races and genders as forwarded in Bhabha's idea of a 'Third Space'. On the other hand, the evident embarrassment concerning the child could also be read as reflecting a

[265] The name Parvati makes reference to a Hindu goddess and, as such, contains the contradictions of this tradition. She is the 'daughter of the mountain', and one of Shiva's multiform wives (Renou, 1991:54-5). Hindu goddesses are both independent beings and part of the main deity they are associated with, Shiva in this case, so they represent both unity and separation. They are also the supreme loving Mother or the cruellest warrior, carnal and spiritual at the same time (1991:55).

more pessimistic view of colonial and post-colonial relationships, in which phobias still relegate specific social groups to the sphere of 'otherness'.

This said, it is important to mention that the representation in *Jewel* of this inter-ethnic relationship is further complicated by the symbolic dimension in the serial. As said before, for all the serial's apparent realism, this Raj production is nevertheless replete with the symbols and orientalist stereotypes, already ascertained in previous fictional texts. Just as Rushdie criticised *The Far Pavilions* for 'borrowing' from Kipling's *Kim*, Scott's *The Raj Quartet* – and its filmic version – employ, in his view, the same topics that Forster dealt with in *A Passage to India*:

> [T]he rape of Daphne Manners in the Bibighar gardens derives just as plainly from Forster's *A Passage to India* […]. Where Forster's scene in the Marabar caves retains its ambiguity and mystery, Scott gives us not one rape but a gang assault, and one perpetrated, what is more, by peasants. Smelly persons of the worst sort. So class as well as sex is violated; Daphne gets the works. It is useless, I am sure, to suggest that if rape must be used as the metaphor of Indo-British connection, then surely, in the interests of accuracy, it should be the rape of an Indian woman by one or more Englishmen of whatever class. But not even Forster dared to write about such a crime. So much evocative to conjure up white society's fear of the darkie, of big brown cocks (1992: 89).

As Rushdie states, a clear parallelism could be established between A *Passage to India* and *The Jewel in the Crown*, not only as novels but as films as well. As explained before, the issue of rape has a long history of symbolic representations in colonial and postcolonial fictional texts, often related to the construction of femininity as the vessel which contains the values of tradition, civilisation and nationhood. Nonetheless, while *A Passage to India* treated the subject with an ironic distance, since the alleged rape was not actually committed, *The Jewel in the Crown* presents the rape as an undeniable fact. If *Passage* criticised the fears and phobias of white patriarchy that proliferated in fictional and non-fictional discourses after the Indian Mutiny of 1857, both novel and film versions of *Jewel* – published and released after the Amritsar massacre perpetrated by the British – attribute brutality, violence and chaos to the Indians. It is not by chance that the rape is inflicted in 'the Bibighar gardens'. Bibighar, as explained in the previous section, was the

place where the terrible massacre of British women and children was executed. In the first episode, Daphne tells Hari that there is a legend by which the garden is said to be inhabited by the ghosts of two lovers. In the past, the bibighar was the place where a Scotsman kept his Indian mistress or *bibi*. Although the story never reveals whether the Indian woman's involvement was through her own free will or the result of coercion, the fact is that she also had and Indian wooer. Once the Scotsman discovers her love affair, he kills both the woman and her lover.

The Bibighar gardens, therefore, recall two stories, that of the 1857 massacre and the lovers' legend. These two narrations affect the way the 'Manners case' is treated in the rest of the serial and hence, reinforce a Eurocentric vision of the break-up of the empire. As was the case with *Gandhi*, the realist or quasi-'documentary style' of *Jewel* involves a selection and interpretation of the events depicted on screen that clearly favours a white male British vision. For instance, the gang rape of Daphne by a faceless mob reinforces the stereotype of Indian chaos and violence when presented in a group, which recalls the events taking place in the bibighar in 1857. Daphne argues that the rapists were Muslim peasants, again reinforcing the stereotype of the violent Muslim against the 'mild Hindoo' (Sharpe, 1994: 235)

The last episode, however, presents Hindus behaving as violently as Muslims in the horrible and merciless crimes they commit on the train, with the killing of the innocent Ahmed Kasim and the massacre of other nameless Hindus travelling to safer places after Partition. As occurred in *Gandhi*, even though considerable time is devoted to reflecting the conversations amongst British characters concerning the independence of, up till then, Britain's most precious colony, no explanation is given as to the historical and political situation of India itself. As a consequence, the serial starts and ends in the same way: with Indians – both Hindu and Muslim – as perpetrators of the cruellest and senseless violence

against innocent victims. The only explanation given in the first episodes is the unrest provoked by groups demanding independence. In this respect, 1942, the year of 'the Manners case', was certainly a time of violent revolts.

What the serial does not explain, however, is how, on the outbreak of the Second World War, India became irremediably involved in the conflict as a result of a unilateral decision taken by Britain.[266] In 1942, British rulers consumed their investments in India thus creating an artificial famine to feed the allied military forces in the Pacific during the Second World War (Morton, 2007: 4; Metcalf, 2002: 201).[267] Not always following Gandhi's pacifist advice, radical Indian groups protested against these measures. The famine, together with the tension originated at the beginning of the war, culminated in the August 'rising' of 1942.[268] In was against this background that disturbances leading to Daphne's rape took place. Nevertheless, the important point is that, if radical contextualisation is omitted for these particular events, what remains is senseless violence against Western 'civilisation'. This is most patently illustrated in the last episode. When the British leave India, the country sinks into chaos. As Sarah Layton emotionally states: 'After three hundred years in India we have made this whole dumb bloody senseless mess'. From these words, it can be inferred that the British have been incapable of 'civilising' the Indians in all those years of imperial rule. At no moment is any query advanced as to

[266] Regarding the situation as an unfair act of imperialist reassertion, Indian National Congress ministers resigned and acts of civil disobedience followed (Metcalf, 2003: 200).

[267] After a programme in Channel 4 in 1997 on the Bengali famine, a contributor to the webpage created by the BBC about the people's memories of the Second World War recalls the holocaust taking place in during the Second World War in India: 'The 1942-43 Bengal Famine occurred in spite of a good harvest in Bengal and surplus grain stocks in other parts of India. The British exported the grain, pushing up prices and leaving the peasantry to starve. A British policy of destroying boats in case the Japanese invaded stopped villagers travelling to trade for food exacerbating things. The British lied about their policies claiming that grain was not being exported and massively downsizing the death toll, pretending that there was no famine. It was only when the British owned Statesman newspaper broke the silence that they had to acknowledge it and Lord Wavell was brought in to do something. He started bringing in surplus grain from other parts of India but this was, at first just piled up in the Botanical Gardens in Calcutta and not distributed to the starving. Indian protesters piled up dead bodies of refugees outside the gardens. Later the British tried to suppress the facts about this British-inflicted holocaust in India, occurring simultaneously with the German-inflicted genocide in Europe, as shown in the 1997 Channel 4 Secret History programme The Forgotten Famine' (http://www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/).

[268] See Metcalf, 2003: 201-204.

whether colonial rule and exploitation were underlying factors in the havoc of India's independence and partition.

On the other hand, the legend of the bibighar gardens in which a Scotsman kills two Indians is quite significant in its providing one of the few references to the Indian women kept as mistresses and suffering violence at the hands of the British. Nevertheless, this story is treated in the serial as a legend, not as a true historical event. This fact removes some of its importance, and thus downplays factual evidence relating the massacre of the bibighar to the Indian revolt. Moreover, lack of knowledge concerning the Indian woman's subjectivity (a living example of Spivak's subaltern's inability to speak in the march of history [1988: 308]) – in a way exculpates the white murderer, whose actions were motivated by rage. From a white Western male perspective, if that *bibi* had been faithful, she would probably have lived happily ever after with her British master. Although this is a feasible presupposition, I would nevertheless like to draw attention to how, from this perspective, blame yet again falls upon the female when violence is exerted upon women.[269]

As explained before, the feminisation of the Raj films conceded more space for female expression and perspectives on the past, and yet, these productions, to a greater or lesser extent, attributed the demise of the empire to women. In *Jewel*, the treatment of Daphne in the event concerning the rape and its consequences is particularly cruel. From the very beginning, she is presented as a nice-mannered, but not particularly beautiful girl. She is candid in her understanding of colonial society. She is brave enough to transgress the norms, but the serial depicts her as more naïve – and even silly – than brave. As a consequence, instead of a heroine, she is presented as an anti-heroine, a loser that cannot adapt to the society that surrounds her. Although she constantly takes her glasses off to

[269] This story could also be related to past discourses sanctioning domestic violence which still resonate in contemporary Western societies, as sexist violence exerted upon women continue to pester communities on a world-wide scale.

appear prettier, the result is that her lack of sight makes her clumsy in her movements: lacking the precision of the lenses, she is literally and symbolically short-sighted, she cannot see the consequences of her own acts (Figure 29).

Figure 29
(Still)

At one point in the second episode, Lady Chatterjee tells her, 'I was afraid for you, now I'm afraid for all of us because of you. You don't shrink from anything, even your mistakes. Like Pandora who bashed off to the attic and opened her blasted box'. Daphne is compared to Pandora, that is, she will be made responsible for the chaos that is going to follow her actions. In other words, she will be blamed for her own rape. Warned by Merrick, and even by Lady Chatterjee of the danger of infringing colonial norms, she nevertheless broke the rules, bringing on her own fate. In this respect, it is highly significant how the thirteenth episode, dealing as it does with the independence and partition of India, is also called 'Pandora's Box'. A clear relationship is thus established between female intromission in the colonial structure and Britain's subsequent withdrawal from the continent, leaving the new-born nation in the hands of 'incompetent' or 'childish' natives who, in no time, provoke or bring about a situation of chaos.

Even worse, not only is Daphne blamed for the attack inflicted upon her own self, but also for the terrible consequences suffered by Hari as a result of their liaison. As explained in the section dealing with *A Passage to India*, raped women not only endured the physical and psychological consequences of the violence perpetrated against their bodies, but also the shame inflicted upon them and upon their male partners – husbands, boyfriends or fiancées, who witnessed their ‘property’ being violated. Daphne is even criticised for not having been through an abortion to erase the ‘shameful’ circumstances of a ‘miscegenated’ pregnancy.[270] Desperately trying to convince herself that the baby was Hari’s, she goes on with the pregnancy. The narrative, however, punishes her with death in childbirth. On top of that, Hari’s stubborn silence, after having promised Daphne not to say a word about the events makes him suffer the most terrible physical and sexual abuse on the part of Merrick. Thus, not only is Daphne shown to initiate and spur on the relationship with Hari. She is also made responsible for the subsequent torture undergone by her partner.

Consequently, what was initially presented as a positive image of the ‘new’ feminist woman not waiting for the man to start the courtship, ends up finding fault with the irresponsibility of her acts. Initially, Hari does not show any kind of interest in Daphne but after her insistence, he finally finds in her the companion he needs in his situation as an outcast. Like Ash in *Pavilions*, Hari tries to find a third way in his troubled identity through his liaison with an unprejudiced English woman who, an orphan like himself, not

[270] The female body has always been the site of ethnic antagonisms. In the case of British-Indian conflict, the rape became the symbol of both colonial conquer and native revenge. Interestingly – and sadly – enough, the same type of symbolic and real events took place between different ethnic and religious communities – mainly Hindu and Muslim – after India’s independence and partition. In her analysis of the silenced histories of rape and female abduction at the time of Indian partition, Lopamudra Basu explains that ‘ethnic conflict [is] registered on the bodies of women’ (2008: 6) and rape ‘exemplifies the “intimate connection” of sexuality in the construction of nationalism’ (7). Questions not only of violence but also of shame fall on these women’s psychological injuries and abortion in the cases of inter-ethnic/religious rape was encouraged. In the different context of a white woman raped in pre-independent India, the same issues regarding the blame, shame, physical and psychological violence exerted on the female body can be applied in the symbolic consideration as a vessel for nationalist/imperialist discourses.

particularly beautiful and showing attitudes of female independence in a patriarchal society, is also an outcast in colonial India. All the same, the cause-and-effect narrative is constructed in such a way that, if it had not been for Daphne's constant insistence on meeting him, he probably would not have found himself accused of rape. As Dyer states, 'Daphne's transgressive "mistakes" are to blame for […] Hari's arrest, torture, rape and imprisonment' (1997: 199).

Even though Adela in *A Passage to India* also had to suffer the ostracism of British and Indian communities and was made responsible for the break in relations between British and Indians, the film nevertheless presents her as a brave heroine. As a living example of the manipulation inherent in patriarchal and colonial discourses, she is courageous enough to retract herself, thus putting the whole colonial enterprise to the test. Daphne, in contrast, starts as a heroine whose way of going about things opens up new areas of thought and/or action, yet she ends up denigrated by the narrative as a silly girl whose senseless actions create havoc around her and cause the suffering of other innocent characters. While *A Passage to India* parodies and therefore criticises the 'rape issue' as an invented discourse at the service of white patriarchy, *Jewel* reinforces the feasibility of rape as a logical consequence of the transgression of social norms.

After Daphne's death, the serial introduces the character of Sarah (Geraldine James) to counteract the extreme negative vision of Daphne as an 'apparently' liberated woman. The appearance of this more 'level-handed' feminist may be read as a way of avoiding too misogynistic a depiction of women. In contrast to Daphne, Sarah is a 'new woman' but one who knows where to draw the limits of female freedom. In contrast to other white women in the serial who try to do something but 'fail, go mad or create havoc', Richard Dyer describes Sarah as a character 'who listens more than she does':

> Ronald compares her to Daphne, but in order to say that they are not alike, that Sarah 'knows where to draw the line' and is not 'one of those English girls who come here with a bee in their bonnets about the rotten way we treat Indians'. Sarah replaces Daphne in the serial; she is fascinated by her and what the 'Manners case'

> represents (an indictment of the Raj) and does, in relation to Ahmed, seem to be more about to repeat Daphne's experience (as Ronald fears). But she does not in fact do so. Ahmed, it is true, resists her, wary of the danger of liaisons with 'English girls'; but, as we have seen, Hari resisted Daphne, it was she who insisted. Sarah does not insist. She does not repeat Daphne's doing (1997: 199-200).

Sarah, instead, 'crosses the bridge' one night but accompanied by a British official. She goes to a night club where native Indian women are dancing for the pleasure of men. After a one-night stand, she gets pregnant and opts for a discrete abortion, creating no havoc, scandal or fuss in the family. In this respect, she is presented as a liberated woman who can enjoy sex outside marriage without suffering concomitant problems. Yet this attitude is not so different from that of the submissive Anjuli, who also had sex with the hero – and violating social norms – and was eager to take all responsibility for possible consequences.

Sarah, for instance, has an affair with Guy Perron, but she does not even try to establish a long-standing relation with him, just friendship and casual sex. Relevant in this sense is how, after their having sex in the 'Mogul room', Guy kindly offers to accompany her home. Sarah, however, declines his offer and the camera shows her, a brave and independent woman, going her way through a solitary path in the jungle. She leaves and it is taken for granted that nothing evil will happen to her. If this episode is compared to the one depicting Daphne's sexual encounter with Hari, then the cause-and-effect development of the narrative and editing may lead us to draw certain conclusions: if a woman gets involved with non-white men, she will certainly expose herself to being attacked. If, on the contrary, a woman has casual sex with a white man in a deserted palace, she will be safe. *Jewel* thus presents a favourable portrayal of that kind of 'new woman', who is passive enough not to cause trouble, that is, who is free enough to have casual sex and not bother her partners with unwanted babies or romantic attachments. It could therefore be stated that Sarah represents the type of feminism accepted by patriarchy because, in spite of her liberation, she represents no threat to the established order.

The character of Sarah is likewise set in contrast with other women who follow more conventional forms of femininity. Her sister Susan, for instance, had married Teddie when both were very young. Now widowed, she marries Ronald Merrick. The consequences of her actions drive her mad. In this sense, she could be considered as the 'madwoman in the attic' of the serial, precisely because she follows the rules of conventional femininity that constructed her as a wife and mother romantically and exclusively devoted to her husband and offspring. She turns mad after realising her husband has died at war. Teddie dies in an attack by the Japanese, who are shown in the serial to have been aided by rebel Indians – traitors to the allied cause. Although set in the Second World War period, the serial makes no reference to the horrors taking place at the heart of Europe. The only statement made about happenings in Europe is through the character of Colonel Layton, absent in the first chapters because he was a prisoner of war in Germany and who then, after being released, comes back to his family in India, where he celebrates his liberation, showing no sign of mental instability. On this view, another conclusion could be established in terms of gender and ethnicity. Whereas a British man, prisoner of Germans, does not go mad, women in India, directly or indirectly exposed to the violence of war or revolts propagated by Eastern people, become mentally unstable. The explanation which could be elicited from the narrative could therefore be twofold: either men are mentally stronger than women, or, for all the cruelties perpetrated by the Nazis in Europe, the horrors of war in the East were even worse.

Sarah and Susan's mother, Mildred – Colonel Layton's wife – has an affair while her husband is a prisoner of war in Germany. She is presented as a very selfish woman, embodying the stereotype of the bored memsahib who does not take proper care of her daughters or her husband. The other type of femininity that is also criticised in the serial is that of the old single woman or 'spinster' who went to Indian as a Christian missionary to

civilise Indian children. Both missionaries Miss Crane (Janet Henfrey) and Barbie Bachelor (Peggy Ashcroft) become insane and wonder whether their vocation to civilize the empire was for any good at all, or whether lives have been wasted, sacrificed in a fruitless mission. Appearing almost at the same time on the small and big screen, playing roles of English women in India, Peggy Ashcroft was asked in an interview to compare both Barbie and Mrs Moore's characters. Her answer was that although they represent different types women, they have one point in common:

> Barbie represents what Scott takes to be the failure of the British Christian tradition. Religion, and its lack of reassurance, the silence of India that both women feel in their different ways, is also essential to Mrs Moore. They're both Christian women. And they both have a deep questioning of their faith brought about by their being in India (Ashcroft in Robinson, 1984: 199).

Both Barbie and Mrs Moore died after a period of silence brought about by the destabilisation of their cultural beliefs: nothingness and void is what they are confronted with at the end of their lives. Mrs Moore, however, seems to die in a more peaceful way on the ship taking her back to England; her death occurs at night against a beautiful scene of the sea under the moonlight. Barbie Bachelor, in contrast, ends up in a madhouse, watching the free birds flying in the sky while she is confined in the small room behind a barred window. Humiliated by Mildred because of her lower-class origins, and shocked after unwillingly witnessing Mrs Layton's extra-marital love affair, she becomes insane after a carriage accident in the mountains. [271] Feeling as the butterflies caught in the net of the symbolic lace, Barbie dies in madness and despair. She is yet another character that can do nothing against human wickedness. This is clearly represented when the editing shows Barbie in bed next to a scene depicting the news of the bombing of Hiroshima.

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[271] The serial does not present a positive portrayal of Barbie Bachelor femininity as a single, 'spinster' woman either. She is even more problematic when some characters accuse her of being a lesbian. This accusation is made in negative terms, as she is criticised for probably having molested the Layton girls, Sarah and Susan. Whether Barbie is a lesbian or not is never clarified in the serial. She is a pleasant character in the sense that Sarah, the heroine the audience is supposed to see under a positive light, loves her and takes care of her when she becomes ill. However, her possible lesbianism does not sanction her as good a model of femininity as Sarah's 'liberated heterosexuality' is.

The serial employs a series of symbols to portray the paralysis the characters are confronted with, 'there is nothing they can do'. The empire is coming to an end. Albeit the allied triumph in the Second World War, Britain's power and influence in world affairs is diminishing. The whole imperial enterprise is questioned when, in the last chapter, only chaos remains in the new independent India and Pakistan. The butterflies trapped in the net are a symbol of impotence. The burning out in the final credits of the 'Jewel in the Crown' painting confirms that the imperial enterprise with its ideals of civilisation and progress is over (Figure 30). Just as with the silence of the Marabar caves in *A Passage to India*, only void and nothingness remain.

Figure 30
(Still)

Fire is a motif that appears at different points in the serial and it is particularly related to the issue of 'death by fire'. Nevertheless, fire is also a symbol of regeneration. This is present in an image that appears more than once in several chapters: the figure of dancing Shiva in a circle of fire. The symbols held by this deity in the hands represent destruction, liberation and regeneration, a balance of creation and destruction in the eternal cosmic

dance (Zimmer, 1995: 150). This figure epitomises Shiva stepping on a demon, which stands for human ignorance. Victory over the demon of ignorance is reached through the union with the divinity, which means 'true' knowledge and which liberates humans from whatever keeps people entrapped in the constraining net of the world. Fire also means light, the light of divine wisdom. Dancing in a circle of fire represents the destructive powers of nature, but also regeneration and ultimately, liberation through divine wisdom.[272]

The symbolic 'death by fire' is also related to Miss Crane, who burns herself after going mad as a consequence of being attacked by Indians who killed her colleague in the August riots. Her death recalls the practice of sati, another recurrent issue in empire fictions. In this respect, sati is presented not only as an example of Indian 'savagery', but also as an effect this 'chaotic' place may have on Westerners. The same could be said of Susan, who, in her madness, almost kills her own baby by placing him inside a circle of fire.

It could therefore be concluded that the serial is as ambivalent in its re-vision of the last days of the empire as other Raj productions. On this line, *The Jewel in the Crown* portrays British imperial past in India both with nostalgia and criticism. The serial displays a certain longing or yearning for a time when Britain enjoyed unquestionable world power, prestige and a clearly defined national identity, in contrast to the situation of the country in the 1980s. And yet, the serial also proffers a view of those who are caught between two different cultures, a situation that was widely common in the 1980s, among second or third generation immigrants, with foreign roots but with a Western upbringing. The point of view of the serial, however, remains predominantly Eurocentric and includes orientalist discourses still in vogue in the portrayal of the East. Issues of class and gender interrelate

[272] For a detailed explanation of all the symbols that appear in this figure see Zimmer, 1995: 148-156.

significantly in the portrayal of ethnic relationships. While Westernised upper-class Indians are clearly favoured by the narrative, the supposedly inherent fanaticism of the East is illustrated through the violent deeds of faceless mobs, whose motivations for committing such actions remain unexplained. In terms of gender, inter-racial, heterosexual love is shown to be a failure. In contrast to Ash/ock and Anjuli's final union in *The Far Pavilions*, the affair between a white woman and a non-white man in *Jewel* cannot but end in tragedy. From a Eurocentric perspective, a union of the kind so destabilises established power relations that it cannot be allowed a happy fulfilment in mainstream screen representations. As 'vessels' that contain the essence of national identity, women – i.e. Daphne – should not transgress the boundaries of their own community, while men – i.e. Ash – can.

Both serials nevertheless coincide in their nostalgic depiction of a kind of femininity at the service of patriarchy, by rewarding those female characters who either devote their lives to the hero or do not bother them with undesired pregnancies or long-term relationships ending up in the constrictions of marriage. If female liberation is portrayed, it is a type of freedom still limited by the rules of white patriarchy. Hence the positive representation of Sarah who is open-minded enough to have an Indian Muslim friend yet, when it comes to sex, she chooses white partners. In contrast, Daphne is punished in the narrative for transgressing the boundaries of gender and ethnicity and, on top of that, is blamed for it.

As in *Gandhi*, the problem with *Jewel* is the emphasis on depicting a realist portrayal of the past, as if the screen provided direct access to the last days of imperial rule in India. The selection and interpretation of events that occurred in the past – and in this case, in the novel from which the serial was adapted – are rendered invisible. As a consequence, the historical turmoils portrayed are easily assumed to be real records rather

than fictional representations. In contrast, the excessive masquerade in *The Far Pavilions* provokes a distancing effect that calls into question the artificiality of the orientalist discourses depicted on screen. Nostalgia and criticism, despair and hope are therefore contradictory elements that, as in Hindu mythology, also integrated in these TV serials that deal with Western colonial rule over the East.

CONCLUSION

By concentrating on British Raj films produced and released in the 1980s, this dissertation has attempted to prove the importance of the visual media as a cultural and ideological apparatus that both reproduces and constructs – or 'refracts' – social realities. Hence the decision to approach the analysis from a cultural studies perspective through which all texts are considered cultural systems and culture itself is described in a broad sense as 'a way of life'. Special attention has therefore been paid to representational practices and how meanings are articulated in the process of communication. According to Stuart Hall, this process is based on 'codes' which are the result of a consensus reached among the members of a certain community. Such codes are so pervasive that they are no longer understood as 'artificial' but have been 'naturalised' in the collective unconscious. Their ideological gists are thus hidden under the appearance of 'common sense' practices or ideas. The codes are never 'stable' entities. Immersed in a continuous flux of ever-changing contextual backgrounds they constantly adapt temporally and spatially to new circumstances. As a consequence, not only the way events and images are depicted and framed on the screen but also the many gaps and silences all have significant value. It is under this light that the present thesis has attempted to explore how the competing views at stake in British society during the 1980s were reflected in Raj films in their re-vision of the country's imperial past. The relationship between form and content in this film genre has proved relevant, since the main concern of this analysis has been to focus on presences and absences and the way certain groups were (mis)represented.

The overall analysis proceeds in four stages. The first stage shows how the construction of cultural identities operated in colonial and neo-colonial landscapes. Post-colonialism, globalisation and the shifts in the economy have profoundly affected the

international sphere provoking massive migratory movements and thus increasing cultural contact and the cohabitation of different communities. One of the consequences of the new hybrid communities and cultures that are emerging emerge is the breaking down of former, rigid, hierarchical structures of dominance and marginalisation in terms of cultural background, skin colour, gender, sexuality or class. At the same time, however, the debunking of the old established social order is also creating a high degree of instability brought about by new social mix. Hence, enforced social repositionings are simultaneously provoking the revival and attempted restoration of precisely those discourses that once aimed at ordering the social structure in clear-cut categories – a social order which conceded certain privileges to the dominant classes and relegated to the margins those considered to belong to the sphere of 'otherness'.

Drawing from post-structuralist assumptions of self and otherness, the first part of the dissertation outlines the evolution of cultural identities, mainly in terms of ethnicity and nationality through time. After briefly delineating how the concepts of 'race' and 'racism' originated in certain social, political, ideological and economic backgrounds, I reached the conclusion that notions of 'blackness' and 'whiteness' are nothing but empty categories – mere cultural constructs that change according to the historical moment.

In the age of imperialism, hierarchies based on 'racist' assumptions were endorsed since they justified not only political but also cultural domination of powerful countries over their colonies. Thus, more often than not, hierarchical social systems relied on the binary nature of identity construction, i.e. 'white' vs. 'black', 'West' vs. 'East', 'civilisation' vs. 'barbarism'. Such clear-cut categories worked for the benefit of dominant, white, patriarchal sectors of Western society. Privileged classes, therefore, never regarded hybridity with benevolent eyes. Quite the opposite. Any type of cultural or physical mixing was considered as threatening to the established order, and thus envisaged with aversion.

Accordingly, in imperial times, miscegenation epitomised the anxieties experienced by members of communities who felt that their traditional cultural identities were being annihilated by new hybrid or less fixed orders. For this very reason, gender, in colonial contexts, was directly related to issues of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'miscegenation'. In patriarchal societies, women are closely linked to the land – 'mother earth' – and deemed to be the bearers of the intrinsic cultural traditions of the community they stand for. As a consequence, any attempt on the part of any female subject to trespass the imposed norms of her own society deserves the worst punishment, that is, physical death or social ostracism. It is hardly surprising therefore that phobia of miscegenation, especially in the form of a heterosexual couple formed by a white woman and a non-white man should have been such a 'dominant' discourse in imperial times. Continuing with Raymond Williams' terminology, neurosis concerning miscegenation persevered in 'residual' form in the post-colonial period, as demonstrated in contemporary films. And yet, the insistent portrayal of relationships of the type on screen points to or signals an 'emergent' interest in reworking issues of hybridity in the multicultural societies of the 1980s.

Following the same argument, the question of the artificial construction of national identity is tackled through the concept of 'Britishness'. By delineating the historically contingent apprehensions of 'nationality' in the British Isles, the conclusion reached shows how centuries of immigration actually challenge any essentialist definition of British identity. In spite of the multicultural nature of the British Isles from its early origins, the study of British immigration policies in the post-colonial context helps account for contemporary anxieties concerning British identity and its feasible obliteration by dint of new 'hybrid' orders.

In the following chapter of the thesis I have attempted to demonstrate how the mechanisms used in the construction of cultural identities operated in the concrete context

of the Thatcher decade. The new conservative government of the 1980s implemented a new economic policy that brought about important cultural and ideological changes that, in turn, generated contradictory discourses. On the one hand, the forward-looking economy based on neo-capitalist assumptions promised to 'set the people free' from statism and collectivism. Thus, as Mrs Thatcher saw it, the revitalising of the country's damaged economy would only come about by doing away with the notion of 'society', a concept which, in the Prime Minister's view, should be replaced by self-made individuals whose hard work would convert them in the 'fittest' in a 'Darwinist' society. On the other hand, Margaret Thatcher's market-oriented, economic policy was accompanied by an ideological turning-back to those values that had made of Britain, not only the first industrial power, but the greatest empire in the world. It is against this background of grandeur that the Falklands war helped reinforce the idea of Great Britain acting as a civilising power defending her colonies from alien, dictatorial invaders.

Using Raymond Williams' terminology once again, I argue that the dominant, nationalistic discourses of the decade fuelled by the government revived residual notions concerning ethnic relationships. As a consequence, new racist, anti-racist and multiculturalist views all clashed in a society in which some sectors still defended the equation of Britishness with 'whiteness', while other emergent views on identity clamoured for more, all-inclusive perspectives that challenged traditional notions of national boundaries in an increasingly globalised world. In this respect, both the tightening up of immigration controls and the 'race' riots at the beginning of the decade exemplify the 'anything-but-easy' relationships between 'native' Britons, newcomers and/or second-generation immigrants. The fact that the media and the government attributed the internal disorders to 'cultural incompatibility' rather than to the harsh economic difficulties suffered by certain communities (i.e. unemployment and inner city decay) contributed to

reinforcing those residual colonial discourses that upheld hierarchical relations of power between and among individuals and nations. From this perspective, a conspicuous discourse that helped perpetuate cultural differences was what Edward Said famously labelled 'Orientalism'. As exposed by Said, certain stereotypes of the 'oriental other' that pervaded imperialist ideologies persist in post-colonial times and are energised when troubles among communities occur. On this view, 'cultural incompatibility' became a simple way of explaining disturbances in the 1980s and a pretext that served to divert public attention from other political and/or economic causes.

The return to past values and the re-enactment of residual imperial discourses fomented a generalised harking back to the past in search of stability in a contemporary, ever-changing society marked by ever more fluid identities. The recovery of the past through different cultural practices – plastic arts, architecture, literature, the visual media, as well as museums and heritage centres (Samuel, 1999: 261) – materialised in the context of the post-modernist scepticism and distrust of master-narratives that generalise out the particularity of distinct identities and the existence of an essential 'Truth'. It is against this background that 'history' loses its capital letter and becomes 'histories' in the plural. The phenomenon of heritage, which became a significant feature of the Thatcher decade, is closely related to this change of perception respecting history. For this reason, the third chapter of the dissertation centres on the different conceptions of history through time, leading up to a discussion of the new, market-based relationships established between history and the heritage industry during the 1980s. The theories of Edward Carr and Hayden White point to the unavoidable subjectivity in attempts to chronicle the past in academic studies and the linguistic tropes affecting fictional or non-fictional representations of bygone times (Carr, 1980: 30; White, 1990: 47-8). Consequently, any portrayal of the past should be looked upon as the result of a selection and interpretation of

events based on the sources called upon by the historian. If according to Edward Carr (1980: 9) reconstructions of the past are no more than the sum-total of historical "picks 'n' mixes", then, what about the booming heritage industry of the 1980s, bent as it was on building a past that consumers would find attractive, meaningful and relevant?

Introduced and promoted by the neo-liberalist, Thatcherite ethos of making the most of anything marketable, the vibrant heritage industry specialised in the representation of an often 'Disneyfied' version of bygone times. In other words, the commodification of the past converted history into a pleasurable and attractive product, or as Fredric Jameson labels it, into mere 'nostalgia deco'(1992: xvii). On a more positive note, another relevant outcome of this obsession to 'sell' the past was the unearthing and reconstruction of unprecedented, alternative accounts, events and lived experiences to be purchased by consumers tired of a past presented in the form of great deeds perpetrated by great men. Significantly enough, interest was driven towards hitherto obliterated histories, that is, histories of the common people, the lower classes, women, ethnic minorities and/or homosexuals. The result was a movement from the public to the private realm of 'history'. To put it differently, at a time when hitherto marginalised groups were struggling to wedge a place for themselves politically and culturally, it was precisely the neo-liberalist measures advocated by the conservative government that contributed to re-visioning the past, even though, paradoxically, the executive was vindicating a return back to those staunch and stable values of the Victorian period.

A parallel situation was occurring at the level of visual representations of the past in both cinema and television. In spite of all the economic problems that the realm of the arts came up against as a result of Mrs Thatcher's free-market ethos, the British film industry experienced a 'renaissance' which was inaugurated by the 1982 Oscar success of *Chariots of Fire*, a film labelled as a 'heritage' production. Working in the same line as the heritage

industry, such screen fictions converted the past into a commodity through nostalgic evocations of those long lost days of British splendour. It is at this point that the question of realism and faithfulness acquires special relevance. As Robert Rosenstone argues, the documentary style and realism of certain historical films tend to nurture a sense that the screen provides direct access to the past, untrammelled by any kind of selection and interpretation of the events featured.

It is worth taking into account that, after the tremendous success of *Chariots of Fire*, the British cinema industry tended to 'exploit' indigenous characteristics so as to render its filmic productions more marketable both at home and abroad – especially in the United States. Set against Hollywood's 'fantasy' and 'tinsel' (Caughie, 1996: 3), Britain relied heavily on its documentary or realist tradition that, linked with the nation's heavy literary baggage, assured not only a distinctive trait but, in many cases, the guarantee of quality. Notwithstanding, the use of a realistic style in screened fictions that attempt to visually reproduce the past of a nation at a time when 'history' as a master-narrative was being questioned is a hazardous task. This is the reason why, in the present dissertation, special attention has been paid to productions that attempt to provide a 'transparent' access to the past, such as *Gandhi* and *The Jewel in the Crown,* and to those that offer a certain degree of ironic distance vis-à-vis the events portrayed, as occurs in *Heat and Dust*, *A Passage to India* and, to a certain extent, *The Far Pavilions*.

Because heritage is about nostalgia and selling, its gentrified and domesticated representations of the past compress together both mercantile pressures and realist evocations, thus ambivalence prevails as an outstanding feature that characterises the interpretations of past events in Raj films. In both the films and TV serials, orientalist discourses perpetuate the vision of the East as exotic and dangerous, simultaneously threatening and attractive, spiritual yet uncivilised and, ultimately, as a geographical space,

culture, civilisation, constructed as the West's 'other'. Not surprisingly therefore, examples of 'nameless' crowds of 'dark bodies' perpetrating irrational violence abound in this film genre, reinforcing, by the same stroke of hand, the 'racial' component attached to the riots that occurred in the 1980s and the consequent apprehension of certain cultures as 'incompatible'.

This could be the reason why, in their analyses of 1980s Raj fictions, the expression most often used by critics is 'nostalgia': nostalgia for a past of grandeur and nostalgia for lost power not only in political terms, but also in questions regarding class, gender and ethnicity. Form this perspective, Raj films offer a harking back to those times when white patriarchy was clearly dominant and everybody was assigned a place in a hierarchically organised society – a portrayal that appeals most particularly to those who, faced with the onslaught of ever-more fluid sexual, gender and ethnic identities, pine for the fixity and security of past selfhoods. And yet, these same films also include a re-vision of past ills with resonances in the British society of the 1980s.

More often than not, the negative happenings in the films are embodied in a single person or group of people whose obsolete convictions are shown to be at odds with contemporary developments as, for example, General Dyer in *Gandhi*, Dr Saunders in *Heat and Dust*, Major McBryde in *A Passage to India*, the parochial English gentlemen at the club in *The Far Pavilions* or Ronald Merrick in *The Jewel in the Crown*. On the other hand, more open-minded Western or white characters, such as Rev Charlie Andrews or the journalist Vince Walker in *Gandhi*, Harry in *Heat and Dust*, Richard Fielding in *A Passage to India*, Ash in *The Far Pavilions* and Guy Perron in *The Jewel in the Crown* offer audiences more likely points of identification. By means of these biased portrayals of British characters, the 'imperial guilt' of colonial exploitation is substantially diminished.

When it comes to the representation of Indians, the opposite technique seems to have been used. The 'nice' characters audiences are invited to sympathise with are the ones depicted as atypical. As such, they are 'individualised' as distinct from the violence and barbarism that supposedly characterise their countrymen. In this sense, Raj films give life to exceptional Indian characters such as Gandhi, but also Hari Kumar and Ahmed Kasim in *The Jewel in the Crown*, Aziz in *A Passage to India*, Koda Dad in *The Far Pavilions*, and, to a certain extent, the Nawab in *Heat and Dust*.

To put it differently, presented with a higher or lesser degree of ironic distance, stereotypes of both British and Indian characters pervade these fictions. Yet there is no denying that the representations of white characters are granted more complexity and hence understanding. In this sense, the re-enactment of the past on screen serves to revise the traumatic ending of British imperial rule as a means of coming to terms with the ever more fluid nature of contemporary societies.

On the other hand, the Raj films were not limited to reproducing the exclusively 'dominant' discourses of the time which tended to nostalgically evoke the imperial epoch of splendour. As pointed out earlier, alternative (emerging) discourses, also incorporated in the narratives, compete with or struggle to undermine dominant viewpoints and convictions. Moreover, since the ultimate aim of the film industry is to sell their products, filmmakers were compelled to include innovative elements that attracted a wider spectrum of audiences, which would explain the inclusion in the plot of previously silenced voices. On this view, Altman's theory of the evolution of cinematic genre conventions becomes particularly relevant, especially his views of genre as resulting from a struggle between central and marginal elements and the way he relates genres to the concept of nation. In the case of Raj films, a clear evolution may be appreciated from the early masculine adventure films set in Empire times to the post-colonial, female-centred narratives involving inter-

ethnic love relationships. Former marginal elements i.e. women and non-white characters seem to have acquired central space, thus offering a different version of Empire than that fostered in the more openly propagandistic productions of the 1930s and 1940s. In other words, one of the most relevant features I have found in these productions is the process of 'feminisation' they have undergone over the decades. This 'feminisation' should not be understood as a change in target audiences of the films but as a veering towards more metaphorical portrayals that centred on the 'domestic', private matters of the empire rather than on the 'public' actions and adventures of men.

Accordingly, attention is drawn to female characters who reject the role patriarchy imposed on them as memsahibs, that is, their task as 'proper' wives and mothers, confined within the living quarters reserved for the British ruling class in India. These rebellious women are often depicted as 'crossing the bridge' into the culture of 'the other' and establishing relationships with Indian men. From the point of view of white, Western, patriarchy, miscegenation is the one of the worst crimes imaginable because it destabilises the strict social structure of white male dominance with the possibility of women bearing 'hybrid' children after their love/sexual encounters with 'non-white' men. One of the tools colonial patriarchy employed to prevent such unions was the proliferation of discourses on white women as vulnerable, 'rapable objects' of the colonised 'black', lustful and revengeful male. In such discourses, white men were constructed as protectors of their own women and even as saviours of the native females, who were often regarded as victims of their own culture at the hands of their 'barbaric' men and customs such as arranged marriages and sati. Consequently, white colonisers saw moral and ethical justification for the maintenance of their European zones as areas of civilisation, as havens that offered security to all those who found themselves within their boundaries, particularly the

memsahibs, and even some Indian women, who also were 'protected' within these well-defined spaces.

In this sense, the inclusion in Raj films of heroines trying to break away from the shelter provided in their thirst for acquaintance with the 'other' marks a disruption in the social order propagated by such cultural divisions. Moreover, these narratives gave more preponderance to hitherto invisible or misrepresented non-white, 'colonised' characters. Through the dramatisations of the forbidden relationships they establish with the heroines, relevant space is provided in these productions to the problems faced by natives and to depicting their perspectives on the whole imperial undertaking. Significantly enough, the difficulties faced by potential inter-ethnic couples are caused by the constrictions imposed on them by the white, patriarchal overrulers. In other words, the heroines are not shown to be threatened so much by the 'lustful black male' as by the very discourses that construct the 'other' in such negative terms, thus preventing their happiness in the friendship or romantic union they establish with 'non-white' heroes, as was the case of Adela, Daphne or Olivia.

In contrast to most mainstream films of the time which tended to disregard issues of cultural or ethnic hybridity, the Raj productions dared to represent on screen what had hitherto been a taboo matter. The problem appears in the way the subject of inter-ethnic relations is tackled: whether it actually comes as a radical innovation that opens up the way for a more positive and influential representation of hybridity, or its representation is engulfed within back-looking, glamorous, visual depictions of the imperial past. Tension can therefore be perceived in these films between, on the one hand, a desire to break with past constrictions in terms of cultural constructions so that new possibilities of what Bhabha refers to as 'third space' can emerge and, on the other hand, attempts to re-frame

the limits of a certain social order so that cultural identities and power relationships remain as stable as they were in the past – that is, become unthreatened by a new contingent order.

When it comes to identity construction, the ever-changing nature of societies provokes psychological anxiety because fluidity challenges clear-cut categories. Categorisations are constrictive, yet have proved to be necessary for human beings to make sense of the world (Foucault, 1966: 10; Derrida, 1979: 212). The danger of abandoning classifications and understanding any type of identity an artificial construct entails entering in the void of the Marabar caves, which only brings about dissolution and silence. The solution porposed in Raj films is the creation of new hybrid possibilities through cultural associations through inter-ethnic bonds. Contrarily to homosexual, inter-ethnic relationships, more easily concealed or disguised under the mask of male friendship, heterosexual unions may bring to the world 'hybrid' offspring that symbolically stand for hope in a future society that will no longer be based on opposing binarisms. The representation on screen of heterosexual, inter-ethnic romance is thus a powerful tool to fight against the rigid boundaries that separate cultural communities.

Nonetheless, as said before, such unions are shown to be problematic in these productions, not only because most couples are prevented from reaching a happy ending together, but above all, because of these films' insistent depiction of troubled femininity. While *The Far Pavilions* allows the white hero to end up with his beloved Indian princess because she epitomises a type of femininity based on passivity and abnegated submission to the male partner, the heroine in *The Jewel in the Crown* is savagely punished for her active role in establishing a relationship with an Anglicised Indian. *A Passage to India* elevates the female character to the status of heroine, yet she ends up alone and marginalised by both British and Indian communities. The same occurs with Olivia in *Heat and Dust*, while the character of Anne, who, in the same film, brings a hint of hope by

carrying a symbolic 'hybrid' baby in her womb, is simply abandoned – the last scenes of the film showing her walking up in to the shelter in the Indian mountains where she will bear her mix-breed child alone and secluded. In other words, for all its visually majestic open-ending, the film provides no clue as to the future awaiting this British, single mother and her child of mixed parentage. As for Indian women, it seems that they continue to be denied subjectivity since they are either silent, as in the case of Ritu in *Heat and Dust*, or they are portrayed as mere stereotypes of either the 'bad' women (i.e. Shushila in *The Far Pavilions*) or the passive, Oriental female (i.e. Anjuli).

Although no inter-ethnic love affair is portrayed in *Gandhi*, the narrative is nevertheless built around the issue of Gandhi's multicultural and multi-religious conception of India. However, by showing the murder of a man who had once stated 'I'm a Hindu, and a Muslim, and a Christian', the film questions the possibility of smooth multicultural co-habitation in a post-colonial world.

Since in the present dissertation the analysis is restricted to the cultural representations proffered in *British* films within a *British* context, I feel obliged to make reference to my own subject position as a researcher. Clearly, this research has been carried out by an 'outsider' in both temporal and spatial terms concerning the issues broached in this dissertation. Admittedly, for all the attempted objectivity and use of different critical perspectives, the present analysis of British Raj films of the 1980s has been undertaken by a 'heterosexual', 'white', 'Spanish' 'woman', writing in the 2000s. This said, I have written these terms between inverted commas because the main purpose of this dissertation has been to prove how categorisations of any kind are no more than cultural constructs. Accordingly, one possible conclusion could point at the textual void of any representation and of 'reality' itself. In other words, all the contingency, fluidity and ultimate artificiality that characterise cultural identities is repeated ad-infinitum in all

existing labelings in terms of culture, physique, or geographical emplacement. To the point of leading once again to the meaningless echo of the Marabar caves.

Nonetheless, by no means do I wish this to be the final word in this dissertation. As already stated in the introduction of the thesis, my determination to use a cultural studies slant was motivated by this field of study's 'engaged' and 'committed' approach to the analysis of any cultural text. Because images and pictures are so easy on the eye and apparently so undemanding, cinematic representations of the past can be said to function today as important sources of knowledge for the bulk of the population. But from cultural studies' more suspicious point of view, these same cultural representations may be looked upon as either naturalising and perpetuating or challenging and changing the artificial constructions and constrictions of cultural identities. Hence, from a cultural studies' perspective, identity construction is perceived as invariably set against a network of power relations. For this reason, the whole purpose of deconstructing such discourses is to break out of long-standing, imposed dichotomies and favour instead the emergence of more hybrid connections and the endless possibilities they provide.

As a researcher writing in a post- 9/11, 3/11, 7/7 and 'War on Terror' era, I was writing out the conclusions of this dissertation precisely on the day of the ferocious terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Although the issue goes beyond the scope of this analysis, I feel compelled to mention the tragic events in India. Apart from all the official and unofficial coverage of the bloody attacks, in my opinion these events, at bottom, unfortunately exemplify a reaction against hybridity, the determination to maintain societies within strict and closed cultural boundaries, as well as a murderous attempt on the part of some group(s) to struggle for recognition and empowerment. These actions could be interpreted as yet another more patent and dramatic example of an emerging, hybrid world order fuelling the angry reaction of certain ethnic and national groups.

It is against this ongoing background of tensions and violence that 'hybridity' and dissenting voices should be highlighted in cultural representations. From my point of view, therefore, the analysis of how cultural practices – understood in the all-inclusive sense of 'art' and 'popular practices' – reflect or refract changing social structures may play an important role in the promotion of more harmonious co-habitation in hybridity against the violent silencing of the 'other' through belittlement, discrimination, marginalisation and/or death.

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A Room with a View (Ivory, 1985)
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Another Country (Kanievska, 1984)
Apocalypse Now (Coppola, 1979)
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Black Narcissus (Powell and Pressburger, 1947)
Bride and Prejudice (Chadha, 2004)
Brideshead Revisited (Sturridge and Lindsay-Hogg, Granada, 1981)
Caravaggio (Derek Jarman, 1986)
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Dr. Zhivago (Lean, 1965)
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Heat and Dust (Ivory, 1982)
Henry V (Branagh, 1989)
Henry V (Olivier, 1944)
High Hopes (Leigh, 1988)
Hope and Glory (Boorman, 1987)
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In Which We Serve (Coward and Lean, 1942)
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (Spielberg, 1984)
Karthoum (Dearden, 1966)
Kim (Davies, 1984)
King Solomon's Mines (Stevenson, 1937)
Kipps (Reed, 1941)
Lady Hamilton (Korda, 1941)
Lady Jane (Nunn, 1985)
Lawrence of Arabia (Lean, 1962)
Le Bal du Governeur (Pisier, 1990)

Letter to Brezhnev (Bernard, 1985)
Little Dorrit (Edzard, 1987)
Lives of a Bengal Lancer (Hathaway, 1935)
Looking for Langston (Julien, 1988)
Madeleine (Lean, 1950)
Maurice (Ivory, 1987)
Men of Two Worlds (Dickinson, 1946)
Mrs Brown (Madden, 1997)
Much Ado About Nothing (Branagh, 1993)
My Beautiful Launderette (Frears, 1985)
North West Frontier (Thompson, 1959)
Notting Hill (Michell, 1999)
Othello (Parker, 1995)
Our Lives (Perk, Channel 4, 1984)
Outremer (Roüan, 1990)
Pride and Prejudice (Langton, BBC, 1995)
Rhodes of Africa (Viertel, 1936)
Riff-Raff (Ken Loach, 1990)
Ryan's Daughter (Lean, 1970)
Saigon: The Year of the Cat (Frears, 1987)
Sammy and Rosie Get Laid (Frears, 1987)
Sanders of the River (Korda, 1935)
Sense and Sensibility (Lee, 1995)
Shadowlands (Attenborough, 1993)
Simba (Hurst, 1955)
Storm over Bengal (Salkow, 1938),
Summertime (Lean, 1955)
The Bridge (MacCartney, 1990)
The Charge of the Light Brigade (Curtiz, 1936)
The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover (Greenaway, 1989).
The Deceivers (Meyer, 1988)
The Drum (Korda, 1938)
The Far Pavilions (Duffell, Channel Four, 1984)
The Four Feathers (Korda, 1939)
The Great Barrier (Barkas and Roswer, 1936)
The Jewel in the Crown (Morahan and O'Brien, ITV, 1982)
The Last of England (Jarman 1988)
The Long Duel (Annakin, 1967)
The Madness of King George (Hytner, 1995)
The Passionate Friends (Lean, 1949)
The Ploughman's Lunch (Richard Eyre, 1983)
The Private Life of Henry VIII (Korda, 1933)
The Rains Came (Brown, 1939)
The Remains of the Day (Ivory, 1993)
The Seekers (Annakin, 1954)
The Sun Never Sets (Lee, 1939)
The Thief of Bagdag (Powell, 1940)
The Wicked Lady (Arliss 1945),
The Young Mr Pitt (Reed, 1943)
This England (MacDonald, 1941)

This Happy Breed (Lean, 1944)
Twelfth Night (Nunn, 1996)
Wee Willie Winkie (Ford, 1937)
Where Angels Fear to Tread (Sturridge, 1991)
White Mischief (Radford, 1987)
Wilde (Gilbert, 1997)

Selected Filmography

Raj Films of the 1980s

A Passage to India (Lean, 1984)
Gandhi (Attenborough, 1982)
Heat and Dust (Ivory, 1982)
Kim (Davies, 1984)
The Deceivers (Meyer, 1988)
The Far Pavilions (Duffell, Channel Four, 1984)
The Jewel in the Crown (Morahan and O'Brien, ITV, 1982)

Heritage Films of the 1980s

A Handful of Dust (Sturridge, 1988)
A Month in the Country (O'Connor, 1987)
A Room with a View (Ivory, 1985)
A Summer Story (Haggard, 1987)
Another Country (Kanievska, 1984)
Another Time, Another Place (Radford, 1983)
Brideshead Revisited (Sturridge and Lindsay-Hogg, Granada, 1981)
Caravaggio (Jarman, 1986)
Chariots of Fire (Hudson, 1981)
Dance with a Stranger (Newell, 1985)
Henry V (Brannagh, 1989)
Hope and Glory (Boorman, 1986)
Lady Jane (Nunn, 1986)
Little Dorrit (Edzard, 1987)
Little Lord Fauntleroy (Gold, 1980)
Maurice (Ivory, 1987)
On the Black Hill (Grieve, 1987)
Pascali's Island (Dearden, 1988)
Plenty (Schepisi, 1984)
Quartet (Ivory, 1981)
The Bostonians (Ivory, 1984)
The Dawning (Knights, 1988)
The Draughtman's Contract (Greenaway, 1982)
The Dressmaker (O'Brien, 1987)
The Bandit of Zhobe (Gilling, 1959)
The Fool (Edzard, 1989)

The French Lieutenant's Woman (Reisz, 1981)
The Lady and the Highwayman (Hough, 1988)
The Missionary (Loncraine, 1981)
The Return of the Soldier (Bridges, 1982)
The Shooting Party (Bridges, 1984)
The Wicked Lady (Winner, 1983)
White Mischief (Radford, 1987)
Why the Whales Came (Rees, 1988)

Empire Films

Black Narcissus (Powell and Pressburger, 1947)
Clive of India (Boleslawski, 1935; USA)
Death Drums Along the River (Huntington, 1963)
Elephant Boy (Flaherty and Korda, 1937)
Four Men and a Prayer (Ford, 1938; USA)
Gunga Din (Stevens, 1939; USA)
Khartoum (Dearden, 1966)
King Solomon's Mines (Stevenson, 1937)
Lawrence of Arabia (Lean, 1962)
Lives of a Bengal Lancer (Hathaway, 1935; USA)
Men of Two Worlds (Dickinson, 1946)
North West Frontier (Thompson, 1959)
Old Bones of the River (Varnel, 1938)
Rhodes of Africa (Viertel, 1936)
Sanders of the River (Korda, 1935)
Simba (Hurst, 1955)
Storm over Bengal (Salkow, 1938; USA),
Storm over the Nile (Korda, 1955)
The Brigand of Kandahar (Gilling, 1965)
The Charge of the Light Brigade (Curtiz, 1936; USA)
The Charge of the Light Brigade (Richardson, 1968)
The Drum (Korda, 1938)
The Four Feathers (Korda, 1939)
The Long Duel (Annakin, 1967)
The Man Who Would be King (Huston, 1975; USA)
The Rains Came (Brown, 1939; USA)
The Seekers (Annakin, 1954)
The Sun Never Sets (Lee, 1939; USA)
The Thief of Bagdag (Powell, 1940)
The Wind and the Lion (Milius, 1975; USA)
Wee Willie Winkie (Ford, 1937; USA)
West of Zanzibar (Watt, 1954)
Where No Vultures Fly (Watt, 1951)
Zarak (Young, 1956)
Zulu (Endfield, 1964)
Zulu Dawn (Hickox, 1979; USA)

FILMIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BRITISH RAJ IN THE 1980S: CULTURAL IDENTITY, OTHERNESS AND HYBRIDITY

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Marzo 2009

- **Resumen**
- **Conclusiones**

RESUMEN

En el último año de la carrera, así como durante el período docente de posgrado, tuve la oportunidad de conocer de mano de quien ahora es mi tutora, la Dra. Chantal Cornut-Gentille D'Arcy, el análisis de textos cinematográficos y literarios desde una perspectiva cultural. A partir de ese momento, mi interés se centró en el campo de los estudios culturales y decidí llevar a cabo mi investigación con un enfoque interdisciplinar a través del cual el análisis del los textos vendría dado tomando como punto de partida el contexto histórico, socio-político y cultural en el que éstos se producen y se consumen.

Desde esta perspectiva entiendo que, como productos culturales, el cine y la televisión resultan vehículos importantes en la transmisión de identidades sociales. De este modo adquieren un valor primordial en el estudio de comunidades sociales, ya que presentan un amplio espectro de significados que a menudo pueden resultar discrepantes, incluso contradictorios. En consecuencia, mi objetivo principal en los primeros años de mis estudios de posgrado fue el estudio de la representación mediática, prestando especial atención a aquellos grupos que tradicionalmente han sido marginados o han sufrido representaciones negativas y/o estereotipadas en los medios de comunicación de masas.

Para ello decidí centrarme en el análisis del cine británico y explorar el modo en el que la identidad cultural – especialmente aquellos aspectos relacionados con el tema de la etnicidad – se retratan en la gran y pequeña pantalla, teniendo siempre en cuenta el contexto de la sociedad británica contemporánea, cada vez más multicultural e influida por la globalización. Dado que los temas por los que siempre he tenido más interés han sido los concernientes a la identidad cultural, nacional y étnica, me incliné a encaminar mi investigación hacia las películas cuyo contenido se ceñía a la representación del imperio británico.

Las producciones cinematográficas llamadas “Raj”, es decir, las que tienen como motivo principal la representación del imperio británico en la India, me permitían examinar la construcción y evolución de las identidades culturales del pasado y del presente en términos de relaciones raciales o étnicas, a su vez interrelacionadas con cuestiones de género, clase social e identidad nacional. Dada la proliferación y éxito de estas ficciones ambientadas en la India durante los años ochenta, opté por restringir mi análisis a dicha década y profundizar mi investigación sobre la relación de estas producciones fílmicas y el entorno histórico, político y social en el que fueron realizadas.

Mi tesis doctoral, que lleva por título: “Representaciones cinematográficas del Imperio británico en la India en los años ochenta: hibridez y otredad en las identidades culturales del pasado y del presente”, es, en consecuencia, una continuación del estudio que empecé principalmente en una de las dos líneas de investigación del segundo año de doctorado. En este trabajo, titulado “East and West Meet in a New Multicultural Society. The Raj Revival Films of the 1980s as a Response to the Post-Colonial Phenomenon of Hybridity”, analizaba dos películas británicas de época relacionadas con el Imperio británico en la India, producidas durante la década de los ochenta: *Oriente y Occidente* (Heat and Dust, Ivory, 1982) y *Pasaje a la India* (A Passage to India, Lean, 1984). Este estudio me permitió comparar el aspecto temático y formal de las películas, que invitaba a una nostálgica vuelta al pasado, con el contexto político y social de los años ochenta, que coincidía con la década de gobierno de Margaret Thatcher y la implantación de los discursos de la Nueva Derecha.

La tesis doctoral sigue pues centrándose en las producciones cinematográficas de época de los años ochenta que versan sobre el Imperio británico, si bien el corpus de películas y series de televisión es mucho más amplio y el análisis también resulta más profundo y detallado, tanto de los textos como del contexto en el que se produjeron. El

corpus de producciones fílmicas está basado en el éxito y por tanto influencia nacional e internacional que éstas tuvieron en los años de su estreno y que se concreta en los siguientes títulos: *Gandhi* (Attenborough, 1982), *Oriente y Occiden*te (*Heat and Dust*, Ivory, 1983), y *Pasaje a la India* (*A Passage* and *to India*, Lean, 1984), y las series de televisión *La joya de la Corona* (*The Jewel in the Crown*, Morahan and O'Brien, ITV, 1982) y *Pabellones lejanos* (*The Far Pavilions*, Duffell, Channel 4, 1984).

Como género, este tipo de películas ha sido frecuentemente criticado por promover una visión anticuada y conservadora de la identidad británica, meramente basada en los valores Victorianos y en perspectivas jingoístas predominantes en la época del imperio. Se puede incluso argumentar que la fascinación por el pasado de la que estas películas hacían alarde estaba unida a un latente escapismo de los problemas del presente. Es por ello que muchos críticos se han referido a estas producciones como el equivalente cultural de la ideología conservadora del gobierno de Margaret Thatcher. Mi análisis de estos textos pretende, sin embargo, revelar cierto grado de crítica del pasado así como trazas de disconformidad con el presente, sobre todo en términos de relaciones étnicas y de género. De ahí mi interés a realizar un amplio estudio y explorar la presencia de distintos discursos en estas producciones, su complejidad y ambivalencia, así como su importancia cultural al reflejar, construir o refractar la realidad social de su contexto cultural.

La primera parte de mi tesis consiste en un análisis teórico e histórico del tema de la identidad como una construcción cultural. Además de centrarme en aspectos sociológicos contemporáneos como es el fenómeno de la globalización, en el primer capítulo trato de delinear aspectos culturales del pasado que todavía presentan una gran influencia en la construcción de identidades tanto individuales como colectivas del

presente y que causan cierto estado de ansiedad en algunos sectores de la población cuando se enfrentan a épocas de inestabilidad y cambio.

Mi estudio se basa en la premisa de que las identidades culturales son construcciones artificiales, esto es, categorías vacías de significado e históricamente variables, que a menudo presentan una carga ideológica favoreciente a los intereses de las clases dominantes. Aplicando los mismos parámetros, la noción de "hibridez" también se puede considerar como una construcción cultural; sin embargo, ésta se presenta como un arma de gran utilidad para combatir la opresión y marginalización de ciertos sectores sociales. Es por ello que la primera parte del capítulo está dedicada a una breve aproximación a las diferentes perspectivas sobre el postcolonialismo y la globalización para mostrar cómo estos fenómenos han afectado en gran medida el ámbito de las relaciones internacionales, con el aumento de movimientos migratorios y un creciente contacto cultural entre comunidades diversas.

Esta situación se está convirtiendo en un arma de doble filo ya que, por un lado, la tendencia hacia la globalización fomenta el mestizaje cultural y la creación de nuevas culturas "híbridas" que ayudan a desmantelar previas estructuras jerárquicas de dominio y marginación por la mera pertenencia a cierto grupo étnico, social, genérico o sexual; por otro lado, este nuevo régimen de mezcla social que cuestiona y desestabiliza el tradicional orden establecido, crea un alto grado de inestabilidad por el que muchas comunidades se sienten amenazadas ante la disolución de sus identidades preestablecidas. De ahí que el mismo fenómeno de contacto cultural haya provocado, además del mestizaje, el efecto opuesto, esto es, el resurgimiento y restauración de aquellos discursos tradicionales que precisamente estaba dirigidos a preservar el orden social, manteniendo una estructura con categorías preestablecidas y bien delimitadas; un orden social que concedía privilegios a

las clases dominantes y relegaba a la periferia aquellas identidades que se consideraban pertenecer a la terreno de la "otredad".

La investigación sobre la construcción de estas "otras" identidades me ha llevado a explorar las formaciones históricas de las nociones de "raza" y "racismo" para finalmente relacionar los orígenes culturales, filosóficos e ideológicos de estos conceptos con el del llamado mestizaje. El mestizaje, pues, ejemplifica el miedo y ansiedad experimentados por miembros de las comunidades que sienten que sus identidades culturales tradicionales se diluyen a favor de nuevos órdenes mestizos e inestables.

Finalmente, la última sección del capítulo se centra en el tema de identidad británica en particular, o *Britishness*, y en cómo siglos y siglos de inmigración claramente cuestionan cualquier intento de definición esencialista de la identidad británica como tal. A pesar de la naturaleza multicultural que las Islas Británicas presentan desde sus orígenes, el estudio de las políticas de inmigración en el contexto postcolonial me permite explorar la existente ansiedad contemporánea en asuntos de la construcción de identidades sociales.

El segundo capítulo de esta tesis se centra en un análisis detallado de la sociedad británica de los años ochenta, haciendo especial referencia al nuevo gobierno conservador de Margaret Thatcher y a los cambios políticos, económicos y sociales que se introdujeron en el país, así como a la emergencia del "nuevo racismo", silogismo que se usaba para excluir a aquellos grupos considerados "culturalmente diferente" y por tanto "incompatibles" con los grupos sociales mayoritarios.

Para revitalizar la dañada economía de la nación, Margaret Thatcher abogaba por la implantación de medidas neo-liberales basadas en una economía de libre mercado. Teniendo como objetivo principal la recuperación de la posición prominente internacional que Gran Bretaña había ostentado en el pasado, la Primera Ministra creó un discurso

populista con el que resucitaba aquellos valores del pasado que estaban en boga cuando la nación poseía un poderoso imperio.

En la última parte del capítulo trato de explorar las consecuencias de dicha revolución económica y los efectos que la cruzada moral e ideológica de Thatcher tuvo en el ámbito de las artes y la cultura en general y en la industria cinematográfica en particular. A pesar de las dificultades económicas a las que tuvieron que enfrentarse directores y productores, el cine británico experimentó, paradójicamente, un espectacular renacimiento durante esta década. El éxito internacional de *Carros de fuego* (*Chariots of Fire*, Hudson, 1981) dio lugar a un filón de nuevas producciones llamadas "de época" o *heritage* que proliferaron a lo largo de los años ochenta. El retorno al pasado retratado en estas películas tipificaba la esencia de los valores Thatcheritas ya que transformaban el patrimonio cultural de la nación en un producto de consumo. Al mismo tiempo, estas películas de época promovían una percepción de la identidad británica basada únicamente en un pasado homogéneo en el que predominaban las clases altas de "raza blanca". No obstante, un análisis llevado a cabo en profundidad, revela que otro tipo de interpretaciones que contradicen esa percepción unidimensional y aparentemente nostálgica de las películas también son posibles.

El modo en el que la industria de los bienes patrimoniales de la nación se ve reflejada en las ficciones nostálgicas de la gran pantalla es el tema principal que ocupa el tercer capítulo de esta tesis. La abrumadora presencia del pasado en la sociedad de los años ochenta hace inevitable que dedique una sección de este capítulo al estudio de la representación de la historia y la historiografía. Basándome en las teorías de Edward Carr y Hayden White que hacen hincapié en el inevitable carácter subjetivo de cualquier narración, así como en las figuras retóricas lingüísticas que afectan cualquier tipo de representación, ya sea de ficción o no, la conclusión a la que se llega es que cualquier

descripción del pasado resulta de una selección e interpretación de los acontecimientos aludidos, basadas en las fuentes consultadas por el historiador.

En el caso que nos concierne, esto es, las representaciones cinematográficas del pasado, todo esto conlleva un alto grado de manipulación en la traslación de de eventos históricos en versiones ficcionales del séptimo arte. Lo que tiene lugar es un acuerdo tácito entre el/los autor/es, los textos y las expectativas de la audiencia, ya que el objetivo final tanto del director como del productor es convertir cualquier película en un exitoso producto comercial para poder cubrir, al menos, parte de los gastos generados por este tipo de producciones. Es entonces cuando cuestiones de realismo y fidelidad adquieren especial relevancia. Según Robert Rosenstone, el estilo documental y el realismo de ciertas películas denominadas "históricas" tienden a convertir la pantalla en una ventana que da acceso al pasado de un modo totalmente transparente. Sin embargo, los textos fílmicos son particularmente permeables a las implicaciones ideológicas que resultan de la selección e interpretación de los acontecimientos representados.

Finalmente el análisis se concreta específicamente en la historia como tal representada en las películas británicas ambientadas en el pasado. Primeramente me dispongo a hacer una contextualización general del cine británico y ofrecer una amplia perspectiva sobre asuntos relacionados con el género cinematográfico, para poder así localizar tanto las películas de época como los "Raj Films" dentro del plano del cine británico nacional. En este aspecto, encuentro substancialmente interesantes las nociones de género derivadas de las teorías de Derrida y Foucault, entre otros, que denotan la paradójica imposibilidad de crear categorías fijas y estables frente a la inevitable necesidad humana de ordenar el mundo a través de categorizaciones genéricas a todos los niveles de la experiencia social. Esta hipótesis me permite establecer una asociación entre la naturaleza inestable e híbrida de categorías que tienden a clasificar la identidad social, a

la que hice referencia en el primer capítulo de esta tesis, con la naturaleza fluctuante de los géneros cinematográficos. Esta comparación está basada en la tesis propuesta por Rick Altman sobre la fluidez de los géneros cinematográficos que él asocia con el carácter constantemente cambiante del concepto de nación como una comunidad construida o imaginada (haciendo uso, en este caso, de la conocida definición de Benedict Anderson). En este sentido, de especial relevancia resulta la lucha entre categorías centrales y marginales, a la que hace referencia Altman. Esta lucha fomenta un proceso dialéctico interminable y facilita la evolución no sólo del cine sino también de la sociedad.

Tras esta visión general sobre los géneros cinematográficos y la sociedad, he añadido una sub-sección donde se incluye el candente debate entre críticos y académicos sobre las películas de época de los años ochenta. El capítulo concluye con una interpretación de los "Heritage" y "Raj Films" como promotores de una nostalgia "reflexiva" o "revisionista", es decir, una evocación al pasado que reconsidera la re-presentación y re-visión de las ideologías que prevalecían en aquellos tiempos pasados.

La última etapa de mi tesis corresponde a la aplicación de estos conceptos al análisis del corpus de "Raj Films" seleccionado. Teniendo en cuenta la correlación establecida entre el cine y la nación, géneros cinematográficos y contextos sociales, el último capítulo comienza con un análisis evolutivo de las películas del imperio de los años treinta y cuarenta, de un marcado carácter "masculino", propio del género de acción y aventuras (y en su mayor parte patrióticas y propagandísticas de la ideología imperialista), que dieron lugar más tarde a las producciones "Raj" de los ochenta, centradas principalmente en personajes femeninos y en una visión "doméstica" del imperio.

Partiendo la teoría de Altman sobre la disputa entre elementos centrales y periféricos, así como en los discursos ideológicos que se ponen de manifiesto en los

géneros cinematográficos y la sociedad, mi intención es demostrar cómo los personajes hasta entonces marginales y negativamente estereotipados de las primeras películas sobre el imperio, van adquiriendo gradualmente más relevancia hasta el punto de convertirse en elementos primordiales de la narrativa en las producciones de los años ochenta. Un acontecimiento crucial al respecto es el modo en el que las películas más contemporáneas se centran en el lado doméstico y femenino del imperio a través de heroínas que intentan establecer relaciones íntimas con hombres indios, hasta entonces obliteradas e incluso prohibidas. De este modo, estos personajes femeninos se muestran rompedores de moldes tradicionales constrictivos creados por las convenciones dominantes de las estructuras del patriarcado imperial. Asimismo, personajes pertenecientes a la comunidad "no-blanca colonizada", previamente invisibles o negativamente simplificados y estereotipados adquieren mayor preponderancia en el centro de las narrativas. Como potenciales parejas de las protagonistas británicas, algunos personajes indios se hacen con papeles destacados en estas películas y presentan un mayor grado de complejidad que mina características previamente estereotipadas o simplemente ofrecen un distanciado guiño irónico al modo en el que la comunidad oriental se representaba en primitivas producciones sobre el imperio.

Dado que el corpus de producciones fílmicas seleccionado presenta diferencias más que evidentes, he decidido analizar cada película por separado. Por ello empiezo con *Gandhi*, de Richard Attenborough ya que fue el primer "Raj film" en convertirse en una película de gran éxito internacional así como favorablemente aclamada por la crítica. *Gandhi* es la única película que no es una adaptación literaria, por consiguiente, dada la intención del director de mostrar acontecimientos históricos "reales", mi análisis se centra en la representación subjetiva del pasado y el alto grado de manipulación que se pone de manifiesto en la selección e interpretación de los eventos descritos, particularmente con el

uso del estilo prácticamente documental utilizado, que invita al espectador a ver lo que ocurre en la pantalla como si ésta fuera un mero cristal transparente que da acceso al pasado tal como ocurrió.

Tras una breve introducción sobre el tema de las adaptaciones literarias, el estudio continúa con el análisis de *Oriente y Occidente* de James Ivory y *Pasaje a la India* de David Lean. Estas dos películas aborda el problema del traspaso de fronteras en términos de género y etnia, para, en última instancia, cuestionar la posibilidad de la existencia del denominado "tercer espacio" en el cual antiguas dicotomías que prevenían la amistad y entendimiento intercultural pudiesen desaparecer. En sus continuas referencias hechas de un modo más o menos indirecto a las identidades (post)coloniales del pasado y del presente, estas películas desarrollan un concepto complejo de la hibridez como algo positivo y deseable aunque solamente susceptible de ser actualizado en la pantalla, ya que los finales abiertos que presentan estas narrativas dan lugar a que se cuestionen los conflictos culturales presentes en la realidad británica de los ochenta.

La última sección empieza con una discusión sobre las particularidades de la televisión como medio que difieren a las características intrínsecas de la gran pantalla. Después de esta introducción, el análisis se centra en las dos series de televisión de los ochenta ambientadas en la época del imperio británico, *Pabellones lejanos* y *La joya de la Corona* y en cómo las características formales que presentan pueden dar pie a significados dispares así como discursos ideológicos contradictorios cuando se estudian a la luz del contexto social y político de los años ochenta. La particularidad de estas series es que ambas abordan el tema de la hibridez con personajes que presentan un conflicto de identidad en si mismos al encontrarse a caballo entre dos culturas, como el británico nacido en la India Ash/ock Pelham-Martyn o el Indio anglo-sajonizado Hari Kumar. Sus complicadas experiencias en la India colonial recuerdan el conflicto cultural vivido por

inmigrantes de segunda y tercera generación en la Bretaña de los ochenta. Además, las relaciones interétnicas que establecen con las protagonistas de las respectivas series complica aún más el tema de la hibridez, a la vez temida por unos y deseada por otros, con la posibilidad del mestizaje.

Los distintos significados e interpretaciones promovidos por las películas y las series de televisión pueden variar según la presentación formal de las mismas. Es por ello que dedico especial atención al análisis de esas producciones que pretenden mostrar un acceso "transparente" al pasado, como es el caso de *Gandhi* y de *La joya de la Corona*, producciones que, a mi modo de ver, presentan un alto grado de complicidad con ciertos significados preferidos por cierta ideología dominante, esto es, más cercana a una perspectiva occidental/británica sobre los hechos históricos a los que se hace referencia. Por el contrario, aquellas producciones que ofrecen cierto grado de distancia irónica o a las que se le puede añadir una dimensión paródica cuando re presentan acontecimientos pasados, garantizan mayor grado de complejidad en su análisis, como por ejemplo *Oriente y Occidente*, *Pasaje a la India* y, hasta cierto punto, *Pabellones lejanos.*

A modo de conclusión, cabría argumentar que en esta tesis mi intención ha sido explorar los diversos significados que textos fílmicos sobre el pasado ofrecen al espectador contemporáneo en un mundo donde la globalización esta eclipsando las certezas que ofrecía el pasado y a cambio fomenta la inestabilidad de sociedades cada vez más "híbridas". El resultado final de mi análisis de estas producciones cinematográficas demuestra que la noción de hibridez que presentan los "Raj Films" de los ochenta tiene unas connotaciones más positivas que en las primeras películas que versaban sobre temas del imperio, en las que dicho mestizaje, si en alguna ocasión se representaba, se contemplaba como un hecho del todo indeseable. Dicho de otro modo, estas películas y series de televisión retoman asuntos del pasado no tanto para evocar antiguas relaciones

de poder que privilegiaban a unos y marginaban a otros sino como narrativas que tratan de cuestionar el resurgimiento de dichas categorías promovido por los discursos Thatcheritas que abogaban por la división social entre los que se consideraban "ellos" y "nosotros".

Es por todo esto que mi enfoque crítico de las películas se aproxima a la perspectiva de los estudios culturales como un modo de análisis "comprometido" (Nelson, 1998) y, por consiguiente, un modo de entender las representaciones fílmicas como un terreno más que propicio para el desarrollo de luchas ideológicas entre el centro y los márgenes en una red interconectada de cuestiones relacionadas con el género, la sexualidad, la clase social, la cultura, la etnia y la identidad nacional.

CONCLUSIÓN

A partir del estudio detallado de las producciones cinematográficas de los años ochenta sobre el Imperio británico en la India, esta tesis ha pretendido demostrar la importancia del cine y la televisión como mecanismos culturales e ideológicos que al mismo tiempo reproducen, construyen o "refractan" la realidad social. Es por ello que el análisis se ha llevado a cabo desde una perspectiva cultural por la cual los textos se consideran como sistemas culturales y la cultura como tal se define en un sentido amplio como "un modo de vida". Especial atención se ha prestado entonces a las prácticas de la representación y el modo por el cual los significados se articulan en el proceso de la comunicación. Según Stuart Hall, dicho proceso se basa en "códigos" que resultan de un consenso acordado entre miembros de una misma comunidad. La omnipresencia de estos "códigos" en las representaciones culturales de una sociedad hace que se consideren como algo "natural" en el inconsciente colectivo y que, por tanto, su "artificialidad" se vuelva invisible a los ojos de la mayoría de sus receptores. Es más, la carga ideológica que contienen se esconde bajo la apariencia del incuestionable "sentido común" de ciertas prácticas o ideas. Por otro lado, los códigos no son en absoluto entidades "estables", al contrario, inmersas en un flujo continuado de contextos cambiantes, se adaptan en términos temporales y espaciales de modo constante a nuevas circunstancias. Por consiguiente, no es sólo importante el modo en el que los eventos e imágenes se muestran en la pantalla sino también todo aquello que se omite y/o se silencia. Tomando este enfoque como punto de partida, en esta tesis se han explorado cómo los discursos en conflicto presentes en la sociedad británica de los años ochenta se reflejaban en los llamados "Raj films" a través de la re-visión que dichas películas realizaban del pasado imperial del país. La relación entre forma y contenido de este género cinematográfico tiene una gran relevancia, y por ello este análisis se ha centrado principalmente en las

presencias y ausencias y el modo más o menos (im)preciso en el que ciertos grupos sociales se han representado.

El análisis general se ha llevado a cabo en cuatro etapas. En la primera se muestra cómo la construcción de las identidades culturales operaba y opera en contextos coloniales y neo-coloniales. El post-colonialismo, la globalización y los cambios en la economía han afectado profundamente la esfera internacional, provocando movimientos migratorios masivos e incrementando así el contacto cultural y la convivencia entre distintas comunidades. Una de las consecuencias de las nuevas comunidades y culturas híbridas emergentes es el desmoronamiento de estructuras jerárquicas previas de dominación y marginalización según el origen cultural, color de la piel, género, sexualidad y clase social. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, la desestimación de las ideas obsoletas del antiguo orden social establecido está provocando un alto grado de inestabilidad causado también por el nuevo mestizaje cultural. De ahí que todos estos cambios culturales estén avivando la restauración precisamente de aquellos discursos que apuntaban a una sociedad ordenada con categorías claramente establecidas, es decir, un orden social que concedía ciertos privilegios a las clases dominantes y marginaban a aquellos que se consideraba pertenecientes al ámbito de la "otredad".

Tomando como base las hipótesis post-estructuralistas sobre el "yo" (ego) y la "otredad", la primera parte de la tesis se centra en la evolución a través de la historia de las identidades culturales, principalmente en términos de etnicidad y nacionalidad. Tras perfilar brevemente cómo los conceptos de "raza" y "racismo" se originaron en determinados contextos sociales, políticos, ideológicos y económicos, la conclusión alcanzada muestra que los términos "blanco" y "negro" no son más que categorías vacías de contenido, esto es, meras construcciones culturales que cambian según el momento histórico en el que aparecen o se desarrollan.

En la época del imperialismo, existía un interés generalizado por mantener jerarquías basadas en postulados "racistas" ya que servían para justificar no sólo la dominación política sino también cultural de los países poderosos sobre sus colonias. De este modo, dichos sistemas se basaban principalmente en la naturaleza binaria de la construcción de la identidad, como por ejemplo, "negro" y "blanco", "Este" y "Oeste", "civilización" y "barbarie". Estas categorías pre-establecidas y claramente delimitadas servían para el beneficio de los sectores "patriarcales" y "blancos" de la sociedad occidental. Es por ello que las clases privilegiadas nunca han visto la hibridez con buenos ojos. Más bien al contrario: cualquier tipo de mestizaje físico o cultural se ha considerado como una amenaza al orden establecido y, por tanto, percibida con aversión. Por consiguiente, en la época del Imperio, el mestizaje tipificaba la ansiedad experimentada por miembros de comunidades quienes sentían que sus identidades culturales tradicionales se veían suplantadas por nuevos órdenes híbridos y mucho menos estables. Por esta razón, el género, en los contextos coloniales, estaba tan sumamente relacionado con cuestiones de "raza", "etnicidad" y "mestizaje". En las sociedades patriarcales, las mujeres están fuertemente asociadas con la tierra – de ahí la expresión "madre tierra" – y se las considera como portadoras de las tradiciones culturales intrínsecas de la comunidad a la que pertenecen. Por tanto, cualquier intento de una mujer por traspasar las normas impuestas por su propia sociedad se merece el peor de los castigos, esto es, o la muerte física o el puro ostracismo social. Así pues, no es de extrañar que la fobia al mestizaje, especialmente la unión que resulta de una pareja heterosexual formada por una mujer "blanca" y un hombre "no-blanco", constituyese un discurso dominante en los tiempos imperiales. Haciendo uso de la terminología propuesta por Raymond Williams, la neurosis concerniente al mestizaje ha perseverado en forma "residual" en el período post-colonial, como demuestran las películas

contemporáneas. A pesar de ello, la insistente aparición de este tipo de relaciones en la pantalla precisamente apunta a un interés "emergente" por revisar los conceptos sobre la hibridez en las sociedades multiculturales de los años ochenta.

Siguiendo la misma argumentación, la cuestión de la construcción artificial del nacionalismo se aborda a través del concepto de la identidad británica (o "Britishness"). Tras delinear las diversas concepciones de "nacionalidad" en las Islas Británicas, se puede concluir que siglos y siglos de inmigración cuestionan cualquier definición esencialista de la identidad británica. A pesar de que la naturaleza multicultural de Gran Bretaña se puede observar desde sus propios orígenes, el estudio de las políticas de inmigración británicas en el contexto post-colonial demuestra la ansiedad existente por la posible "destrucción" de una identidad nacional imaginada ante la aparición de nuevos órdenes híbridos.

En el capítulo siguiente de la tesis he intentado demostrar cómo los mecanismos utilizados en la construcción de identidades culturales operaban en el contexto concreto de la "era Thatcher". El nuevo gobierno conservador de los años ochenta implantó una nueva política económica que conllevó importantes cambios culturales e ideológicos; unos cambios que también generaron discursos contradictorios. Por un lado, la economía progresista basada en premisas neo-capitalistas, prometía "liberar al pueblo" del estatismo y el colectivismo. De este modo, según Margaret Thatcher, la revitalización de la dañada economía del país sólo sería posible si se abandonaba la noción de "sociedad, un concepto que, desde el punto de vista de la Primera Ministra, debería sustituirse por individuos "hechos a sí mismos" cuyo trabajo les convirtiera en los mejor adaptados en un mundo darwinista. Por otro lado, la política de libre mercado propuesta por el Thatcherismo iba acompañada de una ideología reaccionaria basada en el retorno a aquellos valores tradicionales que habían hecho de Gran Bretaña, no sólo el

país pionero de la revolución industrial, sino también el mayor imperio del mundo. Es en este contexto de evocación del pasado admirable cuando tuvo lugar la guerra de las Malvinas, un evento que reforzó la idea del Reino Unido como una potencia civilizadora y defensora de sus colonias ante los ataques de invasores dictatoriales extranjeros.

Haciendo uso otra vez de la terminología de Raymond Williams, en esta sección expongo que los discursos nacionalistas dominantes de la década instigados por el gobierno resucitaban nociones residuales concernientes a las relaciones raciales o étnicas. Como consecuencia, posturas neo-racistas, anti-racistas y multiculturalistas competían en una sociedad en la que algunos sectores todavía defendían la ecuación de la identidad británica con la "raza blanca", mientras que otras voces emergentes abogaban por perspectivas más inclusivistas, atacando postulados tradicionales sobre la permanencia de fronteras nacionales en un mundo cada vez más globalizado. Al respecto, el endurecimiento de los controles sobre la inmigración, así como los disturbios "raciales" que se produjeron al inicio de la década, ejemplifican las relaciones problemáticas entre los británicos "nativos", los inmigrantes recién llegados y aquellos que pertenecían ya a segundas o terceras generaciones. El hecho que los medios de comunicación y el gobierno atribuyeran dichos disturbios a la "incompatibilidad cultural" en lugar de tener en cuenta también las duras dificultades económicas que se cernían especialmente sobre los sectores de la población más desfavorecidos contribuía a reforzar esos discursos residuales coloniales que mantenían las divisiones jerárquicas de poder entre individuos y naciones. Desde esta perspectiva, uno de los discursos más significativos que contribuyó a perpetuar las diferencias culturales entre naciones fue el conocido "Orientalismo" por Edward Said. Como Said argumentaba, ciertos estereotipos del "Otro Oriental" que permeabilizaban las ideologías imperialistas,

todavía persisten en la época post-colonial, incluso reviven cuando problemas o disturbios tienen lugar entre distintas comunidades étnicas. De este modo, la "incompatibilidad cultural" se convirtió en un modo sencillo para explicar y simplificar el origen de los disturbios que ocurrieron en los ochenta, y también en un pretexto para desviar la atención pública de otras causas políticas y/o económicas.

El retorno a los valores del pasado y al resurgimiento de discursos imperiales residuales fomentó una evocación generalizada del pasado para aferrarse a una cierta estabilidad que la cambiante sociedad contemporánea, caracterizada por identidades cada vez más fluidas, carece. La recuperación del pasado a través de distintas prácticas culturales (como pueden ser las artes plásticas, la arquitectura, la literatura, los medios audiovisuales, y también los museos o centros de historia) se materializó en un contexto posmodernista marcado por el escepticismo y la desconfianza de las "metanarrativas", o discursos totalizadores, que generalizaban la particularidad distintiva de identidades individuales basándose en la existencia de una "Verdad" esencial. En estas circunstancias, lo que hasta entonces se había considerado como la metanarrativa de la "Historia" pierde su "H" mayúscula para pasar a considerarse como "historias" en plural. El advenimiento de una defensa exacerbada del patrimonio cultural o "Heritage", que viene a estar estrechamente relacionado con este cambio en la percepción de la historia, pasó a caracterizar de modo muy significativo la llamada década de Thatcher. Dada la importancia de este fenómeno, el tercer capítulo de la tesis se centra en las distintas concepciones de la historia a través del tiempo, lo que lleva a realizar un análisis de las nuevas relaciones basadas en la economía de mercado establecidas entre la historia y la industria del patrimonio durante los ochenta.

Las teorías de Edward Carr y Hayden White apuntan a la inevitable subjetividad del historiador en cualquier intento de aproximación académica al pasado, así como a

los recursos estilísticos del lenguaje que afectan no sólo a los relatos de ficción sino también al género no-ficcional del ensayo sobre cualquier representación de tiempos pasados (Carr, 1980: 30; White, 1990: 47-8). Así pues, cualquier retrato que haga sobre el pasado viene a ser el resultado de una selección e interpretación de los hechos históricos. Dicha selección e interpretación estaría basada en las fuentes de las que disponen los historiadores. Si, teniendo en cuenta la tesis de Edward Carr, por la cual las reconstrucciones del pasado no son más que la recolección de retales históricos, ¿qué hay entonces del apogeo de la industria del patrimonio en los ochenta, que giraba en torno a la reconstrucción de un pasado atractivo y relevante para los consumidores en potencia?

Introducida y promovida por el espíritu Thatcherista y neo-liberalista de sacar el máximo beneficio de cualquier realidad susceptible de ser comercializada, la emprendedora industria del patrimonio se especializaba en la representación de una versión "Disneyficada" de tiempos pasados. En otras palabras, la comodificación del pasado convirtió la historia en un producto de consumo placentero y atractivo, lo que Fredric Jameson denomina como "nostalgia-deco" (1992: xvii). Por otro lado, esta obsesión por "vender" el pasado se puede interpretar de un modo más positivo ya que también implica la reconstrucción sin precedentes de relatos alternativos, de acontecimientos y experiencias vividas que los consumidores, cansados ya de grandes hazañas perpetradas por personajes importantes, pueden y quieren comprar. La relevancia de este asunto recae en el hecho de que existe un interés renovado por desenterrar historias hasta entonces olvidadas, esto es, historias de la gente común, del pueblo llano, de mujeres, minorías étnicas y/o homosexuales. Todo esto ha resultado en un cambio de la percepción de la "historia" de su lado público a un ámbito más privado. Dicho de otro modo, en un momento en el que los grupos que hasta entonces habían

sido marginados estaban luchando para hacerse con un espacio en el centro de la sociedad en el terreno político y el cultural, fueron precisamente las medidas neo-liberales defendidas por el gobierno conservador las que contribuyeron a re-visar el pasado aunque, paradójicamente, el ejecutivo estuviera abogando por el retorno a aquellos valores estables e incondicionales de la época Victoriana.

Una situación paralela tenía lugar al nivel de las representaciones visuales del pasado en el cine y en la televisión. A pesar de todos los problemas económicos a los que las artes tuvieron que hacer frente a causa del espíritu emprendedor de libre mercado propuesto por Margaret Thatcher, la industria cinematográfica británica experimentó un "renacimiento" que fue inaugurado con el éxito de *Carros de Fuego* (una película de las denominadas "heritage film") en la ceremonia de los Oscar de 1982. Siguiendo la misma línea de la industria del patrimonio, producciones cinematográficas como *Carros de Fuego* convertían el pasado en un producto de consumo a través de evocaciones nostálgicas de aquellos anhelados días de esplendor británico. Llegado a este punto, la cuestión de realismo y fidelidad adquiere especial relevancia. Como Robert Rosenstone argumenta, el estilo documental y el realismo de ciertas películas históricas fomenta la ilusión de que la pantalla proporciona un acceso directo al pasado, aparentemente libre de cualquier selección e interpretación de los eventos retratados.

Es importante tener en cuenta que, después del éxito sin precedentes de *Carros de Fuego*, la industria cinematográfica británica se dispuso a "explotar" las características indígenas para poder comercializar las películas no sólo en el país sino también fuera de sus fronteras, especialmente en los Estados Unidos. Opuestas a la fantasía de Hollywood, las películas británicas rescataban su conocida tradición documental (Caughie, 1996: 3). Este estilo realista, ligado al relevante bagaje literario de la nación, aseguraba no sólo un rasgo distintivo sino también, en más de una ocasión,

la garantía de calidad. A pesar de ello, el uso de un estilo realista en producciones que tratan de reproducir visualmente el pasado de la nación cuando la "historia" entendida como mentanarrativa está siendo cuestionada se convierte en una tarea considerablemente arriesgada. Es por esto que se ha analizado con especial atención el modo en el que ciertas producciones ofrecen al espectador un acceso "transparente" a lo ocurrido en el pasado, como *Gandhi* y *La Joya de la Corona*, mientras que otras, como *Oriente y Occidente*, *Pasaje a la India* y *Pabellones Lejanos*, añaden un cierto grado de distancia irónica respecto a los eventos que se retratan en la pantalla.

Dado que el patrimonio o "heritage" como industria y género cinematográfico comprende nociones tan dispares como la nostalgia y el negocio, las representaciones del pasado aristocrático y/o aburguesado en su ámbito doméstico aúnan evocaciones realistas junto con un claro interés lucrativo, haciendo que ante todo sea la ambivalencia la característica que mejor defina las diversas interpretaciones de las películas del Imperio. En estas producciones, discursos orientalistas perpetúan la visión de Oriente como un terreno exótico y peligroso, atractivo y amenazador al mismo tiempo, un lugar espiritual pero incivilizado también, en suma, un espacio geográfico cuya cultura y civilización se construye como el "otro" de Occidente. No es de extrañar, pues, que ejemplos de multitudes anónimas de cuerpos de piel oscura causantes de violencia irracional, abundantes en este género fílmico, refuercen, por la misma razón, el componente "racial" que se le atribuyó a los disturbios ocurridos en los ochenta y la consecuente creencia de la existente "incompatibilidad" de ciertas culturas.

Ésta puede ser la razón por la cual la expresión más recurrente en los análisis de las ficciones imperiales de los ochenta por académicos y críticos sea la de "nostalgia": nostalgia por un pasado de esplendor y nostalgia por un poder perdido, no sólo en términos políticos, sino también en cuestiones concernientes a la clase social, género y

etnicidad. Desde esta perspectiva, los “Raj films” promueven los recuerdos relacionados con aquellos tiempos en los que dominaba la clase blanca patriarcal y todos los individuos tenían un lugar claramente asignado en una sociedad jerárquicamente organizada. Esta imagen se revela particularmente atractiva para aquellos que, ante la amenaza de identidades sexuales y étnicas cada vez más cambiantes e inestables, se refugian en la seguridad de dicho pasado. Por otro lado, estas películas también incluyen una revisión de eventos problemáticos del pasado que pueden incomodar precisamente a estos grupos y que todavía resuenan en la sociedad británica de los ochenta.

Estos elementos negativos suelen estar personificados en un personaje o grupo cuyas convicciones resultan obsoletas si se comparan con la evolución y cambios ocurridos en la sociedad contemporánea. Ejemplos de estos personajes pueden ser el General Dyer en *Gandhi*, el Dr Saunders en *Oriente y Occidente*, McBryde en *Pasaje a la India*, o Ronald Merrick en *La Joya de la Corona*. Por otro lado, otros personajes blancos libres de prejuicios como el Reverendo Charlie Andrews o el periodista Vincent Walker en *Gandhi*, Harry en *Oriente y Occidente*, Richard Fielding en *Pasaje a la India*, Ash en *Pabellones Lejanos* y Guy Perron en *La Joya de la Corona* se construyen como personajes con los que los espectadores se pueden identificar más fácilmente. A través de estas representaciones claramente sesgadas de los personajes británicos, todo posible “sentimiento de culpa” concerniente a la explotación colonial queda substancialmente diluido.

Respecto a la representación de los personajes indios, se utiliza una técnica completamente opuesta. Los personajes retratados de un modo positivo con los que los espectadores tienden a identificarse son los que se muestran como “atípicos” dentro de su comunidad. Se presentan como “individualizados” y así se distinguen de la violencia

y barbarie que supuestamente caracteriza a sus compatriotas. En este sentido, los "Raj films" dan vida a personajes indios excepcionales como Gandhi, así como Hari Kumar o Ahmed Kasim en *La Joya de la Corona*, el Dr. Aziz en *Pasaje a la India*, Koda Dad en *Pabellones Lejanos* y, hasta cierto punto, el Nawab en *Oriente y Occidente*.

Dicho de otro modo, expuestos con un mayor o menor nivel de distancia irónica, los estereotipos de indios y británicos están más que presentes estas ficciones. Aun así, no se puede negar que a los personajes blancos se les garantiza una mayor complejidad en su representación y, por tanto, sus acciones son más fácilmente comprensibles para los espectadores. En este sentido, la dramatización del pasado en la pantalla sirve para revisar el final traumático del Imperio británico en la India y poder enfrentarse a su nueva posición más humilde en la esfera internacional así como a la naturaleza más fluida de la sociedad contemporánea.

Por otro lado, estas películas no se limitan a reproducir exclusivamente los discursos "dominantes" de la época que evocaban con nostalgia el esplendor imperial. Como ya se ha indicado con anterioridad, otros puntos de vista alternativos (emergentes) también se hallan incorporados en las narrativas y, por tanto, compiten y luchan por debilitar dichas convicciones dominantes. Asimismo, ya que el objetivo último y principal de la industria cinematográfica es vender sus productos, directores y productores se veían obligados a incluir elementos innovadores que pudiesen así atraer un amplio espectro de espectadores. Esto explicaría la inclusión en el argumento de aquellas voces que previamente habían sido silenciadas. Desde esta perspectiva, la teoría que Rick Altman propone sobre la evolución de las convenciones genéricas en el cine adquiere una gran relevancia para llevar a cabo este análisis. Según Altman, la evolución de los géneros cinematográficos, que resulta de la lucha entre categorías centrales y marginales, está estrechamente relacionada con el concepto de nación. En el

caso de los “Raj films”, se puede apreciar una clara evolución de las primeras películas producidas sobre el imperio, que se definían por el género “masculino” de aventuras y acción, a las narrativas más “femeninas” producidas ya en la época post-colonial que se centran en relaciones de amor interracial. De este modo, elementos que con anterioridad se consideraban marginales, como son los personajes femeninos y los que pertenecen a una etnia distinta de la blanca, han adquirido mayor preponderancia en el centro de la narrativa y, por tanto, la versión del Imperio que se ofrece difiere en gran medida de la que se promulgaba en las películas claramente propagandísticas de los años treinta y cuarenta. Es decir, que uno de los procesos más importantes que se ha advertido en este análisis ha sido la “feminización” que estas películas han experimentado a través de los años. Esta “feminización” no se debe entender como un cambio en el tipo de espectador al que se dirigen las películas, sino como un giro hacia representaciones centradas en asuntos “domésticos” y privados del Imperio, en lugar de la exposición de acontecimientos históricos “públicos” como hazañas o batallas de relevantes figuras masculinas.

De esta manera, las películas de los ochenta prestan especial atención a los personajes femeninos que rechazan el papel que la sociedad patriarcal les había impuesto como *memsahibs*, esto es, su rol de perfectas esposas y madres confinadas a las zonas reservados por la clase gobernante británica en la India. Estas mujeres rebeldes con frecuencia se retratan como personajes que intentan, a toda costa, cruzar simbólicamente “el puente” que les conduce a la cultural del “otro” y así establecer relaciones con hombres indios. Desde el punto de vista de la sociedad Occidental, blanca y patriarcal, el mestizaje es uno de los peores delitos imaginables ya que puede desestabilizar la estricta estructura social en la que se hallan debido a la posibilidad de que estas mujeres den a luz niños “híbridos” tras sus encuentros amorosos y sexuales

con hombres que no sean “blancos”. Una de las herramientas que la sociedad colonial patriarcal empleaba para evitar que estas uniones tuvieran lugar, era la proliferación de discursos sobre la vulnerabilidad de la mujer blanca como “objeto susceptible de ser violado” por los nativos “negros”, lascivos y vengativos. Dichos discursos ofrecían a cambio una imagen de los hombres “blancos” como protectores de sus mujeres e incluso como salvadores de las indias, a quienes se consideraba como víctimas de su propia cultura, siempre a expensas de sus hombres “bárbaros” y sus “incivilizadas” costumbres como los matrimonios concertados o la práctica del *sati*. Por tanto, los colonizadores encontraban así una justificación moral y ética al mantenimiento de sus zonas europeas como áreas de civilización, enclaves que ofrecían seguridad a todo aquél que se encontrara dentro de sus límites, especialmente las *memsahibs*, así como algunas mujeres indias, a las que también se las “protegía” dentro de estos espacios visiblemente delimitados.

En este sentido, la inclusión en los “Raj films” de protagonistas femeninas que huyen de esa “protección” en su afán por conocer al “otro” implica una alteración del orden establecido que se basaba en la estricta división cultural. De este modo, las películas también dan más preponderancia a los personajes indios, que hasta entonces habían permanecido estereotipados, simplificados o meramente invisibles. Esta dramatización de las relaciones interraciales prohibidas que establecen con las protagonistas, da pie a que se amplíe el espacio narrativo en el que se ofrecen los problemas con los que los nativos se encontraban en la época colonial así como sus propios puntos de vista sobre el propio Imperio. En este caso, especial relevancia adquiere el hecho de que las dificultades a las que se tienen que enfrentar las parejas inter-étnicas están causadas por las normas opresivas impuestas por la sociedad patriarcal gobernante. En otras palabras, lo que las películas muestran es que las

heroínas no están amenazadas tanto por el "hombre negro lascivo" como por los propios discursos que construyen al "otro" en semejantes términos negativos, lo cual hace que se impida un final feliz en la amistad o uniones románticas que ellas establecen con los héroes "no-blancos", como es el caso de Adela, Olivia o Daphne.

Al contrario que la mayoría de películas comerciales de esos años que tendían a obviar cuestiones de hibridez cultural o étnica, las producciones sobre el Imperio se aventuraban a representar en la pantalla lo que hasta entonces había sido un tema tabú. El problema aparece en el modo en el que el tema de las relaciones inter-étnicas se aborda: si realmente dicha cuestión se presenta como una innovación radical pionera que abre el camino a una representación positiva e influyente de la hibridez en producciones futuras, o esta representación se queda velada ante las glamorosas escenas visualmente atractivas del pasado imperial. Por tanto, lo que se percibe es una tensión existente entre el deseo por romper con las estrictas normas del pasado en términos de construcciones culturales para que nuevas posibilidades de lo que Homi Bhabha se refiere como "Tercer Espacio" puedan emerger y, por otro lado, los intentos de reestablecer los límites del antiguo orden social para que las identidades culturales y relaciones de poder permanezcan tan estables como lo eran en el pasado.

En el estudio de la construcción de las identidades, la naturaleza cambiante de la sociedad provoca un alto grado de ansiedad psicológica ya que la fluidez cuestiona la validez de las categorías establecidas. Las categorizaciones son constrictivas, sin embargo son necesarias para que los individuos puedan entender el mundo y dar sentido a la realidad que les rodea (Foucault, 1966: 10; Derrida, 1979: 212). El peligro de abandonar cualquier tipo de proceso clasificatorio y comprender que las identidades no son más que construcciones culturales implica entrar en el vacío de las cuevas Marabar, que únicamente proporciona la desintegración y el silencio. La solución que se propone

en las películas sobre el Imperio es la creación de nuevas posibilidades para la hibridez y el mestizaje a través de alianzas culturales y lazos inter-étnicos. Contrariamente a las relaciones inter-étnicas homosexuales, que se pueden ocultar de modo más sencillo bajo el disfraz de la amistad, las uniones heterosexuales pueden traer al mundo vástagos mestizos que simbolizan la esperanza en un futuro donde las estructuras sociales ya no estén basadas en oposiciones binarias excluyentes. La representación en la pantalla del romance heterosexual inter-étnico resulta, pues, un arma poderosa para luchar contra fronteras inexorables que separan comunidades culturales diferentes.

Sin embargo, como ya se ha argumentado con anterioridad, dichas uniones siempre adquieren un cariz problemático en estas producciones, no sólo porque la a mayoría de las parejas se les impide acabar juntas como en los finales convencionales de las películas románticas sino también por el retrato que se efectúa de modo insistente de una feminidad también problemática. Mientras que en *Pabellones Lejanos* al héroe se le premia en el último episodio con la unión de su amada princesa india ya que ésta se describe como un claro ejemplo de feminidad basada en la pasividad y sumisión abnegada a su pareja masculina, a la protagonista de *La Joya de la Corona* se la castiga con gran dureza por su rol activo, al ser ella quien toma la iniciativa en su relación con un hombre indio. *Pasaje a la India* eleva al personaje femenino al estatus de heroína, sin embargo ésta acaba sola y marginada por ambas comunidades, la india y la británica. Lo mismo ocurre con Olivia en *Oriente y Occidente*, y también con Anne, quien, en la misma película, trae un halo de esperanza con su simbólico embarazo de un bebé "híbrido", pero se puede decir que ella también se queda sola en las montañas del norte de la India donde tendrá a su hijo/o apartada de la sociedad. El final abierto es visualmente atractivo y metafórico en su referencia a la hibridez física y cultural simbolizada en ese bebé que sí nacerá en los años ochenta, algo que no ocurrió con el

vástago de Olivia en la época colonial. Sin embargo, la película no proporciona ninguna pista sobre el futuro que le espera a esa madre soltera y a su hijo/a fruto de una relación inter-étnica.

Por otro lado, si bien a las mujeres británicas se les concede un mayor grado de subjetividad en su nuevo rol como protagonistas de las narrativas, a las indias se les sigue negando dicha subjetividad y/o complejidad en su construcción como personajes, bien silenciándolas como a Ritu en *Oriente y Occidente*, o presentándolas como meros estereotipos, el de la “mujer malvada”, como Shushila o la pasiva y abnegada mujer oriental como Anjuli en *Pabellones Lejanos*.

Aunque en *Gandhi* no se presenta ninguna relación amorosa como motivo principal de la narrativa, ésta se construye no obstante alrededor de la concepción de la India por el protagonista como un lugar multicultural y multi-religioso. Sin embargo, el hincapié que la película hace del asesinato del Mahatma, quien una vez dijera “yo soy hindú, y musulmán, y también cristiano”, provoca un sentimiento de derrota y desamparo por parte del espectador que ve morir a Gandhi y con él la posibilidad de la convivencia multicultural en el nuevo mundo post-colonial que siguió a la independencia de la India.

Ya que en esta tesis el análisis se ciñe a las representaciones culturales que se exhiben en películas *británicas* en un contexto también *británico*, me siento obligada a hacer referencia a mi propia posición como investigadora. Claramente, esta investigación se ha concebido por una persona que es ajena en términos no sólo espaciales sino también temporales a los temas que se tratan en esta tesis. Por ello, a pesar de todos los intentos por mostrar la mayor objetividad posible haciendo uso de distintas perspectivas críticas, debo admitir que este análisis de las películas británicas de los años ochenta sobre el imperio británico en la India se ha llevado a cabo por una

"mujer" "española" "heterosexual" y "blanca" a principios del siglo XXI. Dicho esto, no he podido sino escribir estas palabras entre comillas ya que el objetivo principal de esta tesis ha sido demostrar cómo cualquier tipo de categorizaciones no es más que una construcción cultural. De este modo, una conclusión posible apuntaría al vacío textual de cualquier representación, así como de la "realidad" misma. En otras palabras, esta contingencia, fluidez y artificialidad que caracteriza las identidades culturales se podría repetir ad-infinitum en cualquier clasificación en términos de cultura, rasgos físicos o emplazamiento geográfico. Esto nos llevaría otra vez al absurdo eco de las cuevas Marabar.

Sin embargo, me es imposible acabar esta tesis con semejantes palabras. Mi decisión de usar los estudios culturales como enfoque metodológico se vio afectada por el carácter comprometido de este campo de estudio en el análisis de cualquier texto cultural. Dada la facilidad con la que las imágenes de la gran y pequeña pantalla se perciben por la vista sin una necesidad aparente de descodificarlas con gran dificultad, se puede decir que las representaciones cinematográficas del pasado funcionan hoy como una importante fuente de conocimiento para una gran parte de la población. Desde el punto de vista de los estudios culturales, sin embargo, se considera que estas mismas representaciones bien naturalizan y perpetúan o bien cuestionan y cambian las construcciones y constricciones artificiales de la identidad cultural. De ahí que, desde la perspectiva de dicho enfoque metodológico, la construcción de la identidad se percibe invariablemente asociada a la red de relaciones de poder. Por esta razón, el objetivo de deconstruir estos discursos es romper con todas aquellas dicotomías impuestas para promover la emergencia consolidación de relaciones híbridas con la infinidad de posibilidades que eso conlleva.

Como investigadora que trabaja en la era del post-9/11, 3/11, 7/7 y "War on Terror", estaba precisamente redactando estas conclusiones cuando ocurrieron los terribles ataques terroristas en Mumbai. Aunque el tema se sale del alcance de este análisis, me veo obligada a mencionar los trágicos acontecimientos en la India. Dejando a un lado toda la cobertura informativa (oficial y no oficial) de los hechos, en mi opinión, lo que subyace tras estos acontecimientos es, desafortunadamente, una reacción contra la hibridez, la determinación de mantener a las sociedades dentro de unos límites establecidos y cerrados, así como el intento por parte de unos grupos de adquirir reconocimiento y alcanzar un alto estatus dentro de las estructuras de poder. Estas acciones se podrían interpretar como ejemplo patente y dramático de cómo el nuevo orden mundial híbrido emergente puede fomentar virulentas reacciones opuestas por parte de ciertos grupos étnicos y nacionales.

Es precisamente en este contexto de tensiones y violencia en el que tanto la "hibridez" como las voces que discrepan de los discursos dominantes se deben resaltar en las representaciones culturales. En mi opinión, al considerar que las prácticas culturales (entendidas en el sentido global que incluye tanto el "arte" como las "prácticas populares") reflejan o "refractan" las estructuras sociales cambiantes, el análisis de las mismas puede tener un papel de gran relevancia en el fomento de una convivencia más pacífica en la hibridez, en contraposición del silencio impuesto al "otro" por medios violentos a través de la discriminación, marginalización y/o muerte.