FOR REFERENCE ONLY

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

41 0635494 4

ProQuest Number: 10183436

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.

ProQuest 10183436

Published by ProQuest LLC (2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

Rootless Trash?
British 'mid-Atlantic' Cinema:
1970-1985

Matthew Knill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of The Nottingham Trent University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2004

10370188

THE NOTTINGHAM TRENT
UNIVERSITY LIS

REF | PH.D/HUM/04 KNI

S.L.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own efforts. The various sources to which I am indebted are clearly indicated in the text or in the bibliography.

I further declare that this work has never been accepted in substance of any degree, and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any other degree.

For Dennis Knill

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors at The Nottingham Trent University, Ben Taylor and Viv Chadder, for their invaluable help and encouragement. I am also indebted to Roger Bromley for coming to my aid in a moment of crisis. In addition, I am grateful to Sue Harper of The University of Portsmouth and to Steve Jones of Nottingham Trent for consenting to be my examiners.

Thanks are due to the staff of the libraries of The University of Nottingham and of The University of Wales, Cardiff. Additional thanks go to the staff of Sheffield City Library and the Psalter Lane library of Sheffield Hallam University. I would also like to acknowledge the role played by all those who loaned equipment, books, films and resources (sometimes without knowing it).

And finally, I would like to thank my family for their unstinting support.

Abstract

Britain in the 1970s is characterised typically as a crisis-ridden cultural wasteland. Moreover, despite the revisionist academic accounts that have over recent years reclaimed hitherto reviled facets of British filmmaking, 1970s British cinema remains firmly beyond the pale. Especially despised are the star-laden, big-budget 'Hollywoodesque' movies produced by such as Rank, EMI and ITC throughout the decade; financed upfront by international distribution and television presales, and designed specifically to appeal to the largest possible global audience. Having been deemed too consciously mainstream and American to be taken seriously by British film scholars and, conversely, too British for American cultural critics, these mid-Atlantic movies have long been neglected both critically and academically.

By situating these mid-Atlantic movie packages within broader economic, social, political and generic analytic frameworks – in many cases for the first time – I herein explore the widespread Americanisation of British cinema in the period 1970 to 1985, and highlight how this international strategy was a response to fundamental shifts in both the national culture and the global cinema industry. Each chapter explores a different facet of the relationship between the US and the cinema in Britain, and considers how particular mid-Atlantic films may be read in relation to the specific circumstances in which they were produced and distributed.

As well as identifying competing tendencies towards (nationalist) nostalgia and (internationalist) modernism, I challenge the orthodox reductive generalisation that views 1970s British cinema as culturally 'rootless' and devoid of indigenous relevance. Moreover, I argue that the ascendancy and popularity of this policy of cultural concealment, cloaking British films in the glamorous trappings of mainstream Hollywood cinema, reveals an underlying crisis in British culture and throws into relief contemporary concerns about the practicality and desirability of existing concepts of national identity.

Contents

1.

Introduction – Better Best Forgotten: British Cinema in the 1970s

> For British cinema, as for British society as a whole, the 1970s is often regarded as a moribund period in which there was precious little in the way of either cultural innovation or economic success. Whereas the 1960s had given rise to a new, vibrant, youth-oriented film culture which had produced films which succeeded in both artistic and commercial terms, the 1970s has generally been characterised as a time of stagnation.[1]

The above quotation draws attention to a widely held popular perception of 1970s Britain as a place where 'crisis' – whether economic, political or cultural – was endemic; a decade of tragedy enacted against a dramatic backdrop of political upheaval (the hung parliament and twin elections of 1974), calamitous industrial relations (the three-day week and the Winter of Discontent), ideological conflict and political polarisation (signalled by a cultural anti-permissive backlash and the demise of the centrist postwar political consensus).[2] In accordance with this view, 1970s Britain (and 1970s British cinema more specifically) has long been caricatured as an atrophied cultural wasteland devoid of artistic value or merit.[3] Conversely, American cultural production in the period has been valorised for its counter-cultural stance and for challenging orthodoxy and the political establishment, in response to such socio-cultural disturbances as the Watergate scandal and the ongoing conflict in Vietnam, and for articulating "a more rueful and troubled notion of who we are,"[4] as typified by

---

[1] James Chapman (1999) *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films* (London, I. B. Tauris) page 153

[2] For more broad-ranging discussions of the period, see Christopher Booker's excellent *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade* (London, Allen Lane, 1980); Phillip Whitehead's *The Writing on the Wall: Britain in the Seventies* (London, Michael Joseph/Channel 4 Books, 1985); and Bart Moore-Gilbert's *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge, 1994)

[3] This view is refuted somewhat by the list published by the BFI in 1999 of the nation's favourite 'culturally British' feature films from a century of British filmmaking, exactly one-tenth of which hail from the 1970s. For the record, the top 1970s films were *The Wicker Man* (1973, no. 96), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971, no. 81), *The Day of the Jackal* (1973, no. 74), *The Railway Children* (1970, no. 66), *Sunday, Bloody Sunday* (1971, no. 65), *The Go-Between* (1970, no. 57), *Performance* (1970, no. 48), *Monty Python's Life of Brian* (1979, no. 28), *Get Carter* (1971, no. 16) and *Don't Look Now* (1973, no. 8), all of whom fit too comfortably within the orthodox canon of recognisably 'British' cinema to warrant discussion in this thesis.

[4] David Thomson, 'Why *Dirty Harry* beats *Harry Potter*' in *The Observer* (13 January 2002)

what was swiftly dubbed the 'New Hollywood' of *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969), *M*A*S*H* (Robert Altman, 1970), *Klute* (Alan J. Pakula, 1971), *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973), *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975) and *Taxi Driver* (Martin Scorsese, 1976). According to Steven Spielberg, New Hollywood 'movie brat' par excellence,

> The '70s was the first time that a kind of age restriction was lifted, and young people were allowed to come rushing in with all their naïveté and their wisdom and all of the privileges of youth. It was just an avalanche of brave new ideas, which is why the '70s was such a watershed.[5]

In contrast, the overarching critical response to British cultural production in the period has been to caricature the 1970s as a harmless but ultimately meaningless decade that taste forgot or, more typically, to consciously 'forget' that it ever occurred. And yet, paradoxically, it is the decade's perceived lack of taste that has aided its popular rehabilitation. Whereas the label 'the decade that taste forgot' had once been a derisory epithet, denigrating the period for lacking the emotional restraint felt to be desirable and so characteristic of the British; in the wake of the sobriety and earnest managerial culture of the 1980s and its allied obsessions with taste, style, political correctness and corporate image (the unavoidable decade-long morning after the raucous '70s night before), the 1970s is now praised and valorised for its very tastelessness, although admittedly often in the guise of post-modern ironic appreciation. The rose-tinting of nostalgia has anaesthetised us to much that was bad about the 1970s (strikes, power shortages and terrorism) and has shaped our retrospective perception of the period as a kitsch, carnivalesque, glamrock jamboree.

The Return of the Repressed?

Whether a consequence of post-millennial angst or simply the age of the current batch of music producers, TV controllers and commissioning editors (men and women in their late 30s or early 40s reliving their youth), the 1970s cultural archive has been raided time and again in recent years for inspiration and ideas. "A timely chance to reacquaint with an old favourite, or a poor excuse for repeats to fill schedules light on

[5] Quoted in Peter Biskind's compelling and often hilarious exploration of New Hollywood, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (London, Bloomsbury, 1998) pages 14-15

fresh ideas?" asks Meg Carter in *The Independent*.[6] Whichever, there is an undeniable vogue for nostalgia and all things retro on British television at present; as epitomized by such recent offerings as BBC2's *That Was the Week We Watched* and *I Love the 70s* (followed by *...the 80s, ...the 90s, ...Xmas*), a jumble of archive footage and vox pops where minor celebrities recite personal anecdotes pertaining to such cultural ephemera as Raleigh Choppers, Spangles, *Grange Hill* and The Bay City Rollers; and Channel 4's increasingly repetitive series of *Top Ten TV...* (*...Villains*, *...Soap Queens*, *...Bastards*). Note also ITV1's daytime panel game *Never Had it so Good*, which, despite its titular reference to PM Harold Macmillan's 1959 election sound bite, routinely trawls through the 1970s cultural treasure trove in pursuit of the cheap laughs to be gleaned from the arch excesses of glam rock and the rather-too-literal routines of the *Top of the Pops* dancers-in-residence Pan's People. In addition, while nostalgia clip shows "are 10 a pre-decimalised penny, ... hardly a week seems to go by without some old Lew Grade production being either dusted down and repeated, or given a 21st-century makeover,"[7] whether it be *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* (1969-70, revived 1999) or *Crossroads* (1964-88, revived 2001).

Seventies pop music has also proved to be an evergreen source of inspiration; as evidenced by such disparate cultural texts as the campy retro rock of The Darkness, the sub-Abba caterwauling of Steps and the recurrent plundering of the Bee Gees' musical back catalogue. Such recent British films as *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (Guy Ritchie, 1998), *The Killing Zone* (Ian David Diaz, 1999), *Circus* (Rob Walker, 2000), *Snatch* (Guy Ritchie, 2000) and their derivative ilk, owe a self-confessed debt of inspiration to such 1970s filmic role models as *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971), *Performance* (Donald Cammell, 1971) and *The Long Good Friday* (John Mackenzie, 1979), as well as the TV cop show *The Sweeney* (1975-78). These texts also served as crucial reference points for the loutish 'lad culture' of the late 1990s, as reflected and promulgated in the pages of such 'ballsy' UK men's magazines as *FHM* and *Loaded*. In recent years there has been a corresponding vogue for male-orientated nostalgic fiction, as typified by the '70s 'lad lit' of Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters Club* (2001), Simon Armitage's *Little Green Man* (2001), and Toby Litt's *Deadkidsongs* (2001) and *Exhibitionism* (2002).

---

[6] Meg Carter, 'Thunderbirds are go, Basil's back. What next?' in *The Independent* (29 August 2000)
[7] Brian Viner, 'So what price Zebedee or a pair of clackers?' in *The Independent* (2 August 2001)

The recent cinematic hits *Bean* (Mel Smith, 1997), *Kevin and Perry Go Large* (Ed Bye, 2000) and *Ali G in Da House* (Mark Mylod, 2002) signal the return of the big screen TV spin-off: "that is to say, making films whose chances of box-office success were underwritten by their success on the telly,"[8] explains Stuart Jeffries. This cautious but astutely commercial production strategy, trading on familiarity and name recognition, had previously been exploited ruthlessly in the 1970s and had resulted in the films *Man About the House* (John Robins, 1974), *Love Thy Neighbour* (John Robins, 1974), and the extraordinarily successful franchise *On the Buses* (Harry Booth, 1971), *Mutiny on the Buses* (Harry Booth, 1972) and *Holiday on the Buses* (Brian Izzard, 1973) amongst many others. Meanwhile, on the small screen, television perennials like *Dad's Army* (1968-77), *Are You Being Served?* (1972-85), *Porridge* (1974), *Rising Damp* (1974-78) and *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (1973) – no longer mere repeats but 'comedy classics' – have yet to vacate the primetime slots they first filled 30 years ago.[9] Coupled with a muted resurgence of what was once called the 'British disease' with strikes by fire fighters and train guards,[10] mass rallies in London against Britain's permissive society and the prevalence of sex on television,[11] the Queen's Golden Jubilee with its accompanying street parties and echoes of 1977's Silver Jubilee celebrations ("the epitome of English insularity,"[12]), and the return of the flared trouser as a desirable fashion item, the 1970s feel closer than ever.

Academic Amnesia

And yet, despite the prevalence and centrality of such 1970s artefacts and cultural aftershocks to 21st century Britain, academic denigration remains the norm and

---

[8] Stuart Jeffries, 'Are we being served?' in *The Guardian* (13 July 2001)

[9] With the exception of *Some Mother's Do 'Ave 'Em*, each of these series was later turned into a theatrical feature film: *Dad's Army* (Norman Cohen, 1971), *Are You Being Served?* (Bob Kellett, 1977), *Porridge* (Dick Clement, 1979) and *Rising Damp* (Joseph McGrath, 1980).

[10] As Donald Macintyre observes in *The Independent* (10 January 2002), "It feels like the return of a lost tribe. Resonating down the years come the distant echoes of 'Here we go, Here we go' in Sheffield; of the megaphone-amplified cries of 'all out' at Dagenham; of the menacing thud of police horses' hooves at Orgreave; of the taunts of 'I wont always be skint but you'll always be a scab' on just about any picket line. And the memories … come flooding back, scarcely believable, as if in a dream."

[11] The 'Mediamarch' held in London on 11 May 2002 by Mediawatch-uk (formerly the National Viewers and Listeners Association), although admittedly only attracting approximately 200 people, nevertheless called to mind The Festival of Light's 1971 'Rally Against Permissiveness'.

[12] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London, Routledge) page 18

critical consideration of the period remains scant and superficial. It is arguably '70s British cinema that has suffered most from the prevailing critical neglect. Despite the re-evaluative project that has sought to chart what at various times has been called Britain's 'unknown cinema' or cinematic 'lost continent,'[13] it remains the case that, as Leon Hunt explains, "the critical remapping of British culture, and particularly ... of British cinema history ... tends to skip hastily from the 1960s' boom to the alleged renaissance initiated by *Chariots of Fire* in 1981."[14]

The dominant critical view that 1970s British cinema is little more than an unpleasant cultural aberration or an unfortunate historical quirk is illustrated by the scholarly leap from Robert Murphy's elegy to *Sixties British Cinema* (1992) to John Hill's exploration of *British Cinema in the 1980s* (1999). Similarly, the British Film Institute's *The British Cinema Book* (1997) proves to be neither as encyclopaedic nor definitive as its title would lead one to believe, with essays ranging from the silent era through to the 1960s but tellingly no further.[15] The book concludes with Robert Murphy's précis of a century of British cinema history; but this too hops from the '60s to the safety of an oft-ploughed mid-1980s furrow for a discussion of Channel 4 and Mike Leigh, pausing only fleetingly to wax lyrical over Nic Roeg's *Bad Timing* (1980) and to postulate that "such a film was as welcome as a corpse at a children's party and the Rank Organisation refused to show it in cinemas and abandoned film production for good."[16] Murphy's implication, that Rank's decision to suspend

---

[13] See Alan Lovell (March 1969) *British Cinema: The Unknown Cinema* (BFI Education Seminar Paper); and Julian Petley (1986) 'The Lost Continent' in Charles Barr (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays* (London, BFI).

[14] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture* page 2

[15] The revised second edition (published 2001) acknowledges the temporal shortcomings of its forebear and appends a chapter by Pamela Church Gibson and Andrew Hill on the subject of excess in British films of the 1970s (' "Tutte e marchio!" Excess, Masquerade and Performativity in 70s Cinema' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)). Gibson and Hill outline how "The 70s, whether or not it is still seen as 'the decade the taste forgot', is certainly a decade that cinematic criticism has chosen to bypass or neglect. There are general overviews of British films of the period and a few in-depth studies of particular directors, but there seems to be an unspoken consensus that British cinema of the 70s should be bypassed or relegated to footnotes." (page 263) Despite this promising start, however, Gibson and Hill then proceed to bypass the bulk of the decade and to restrict their gaze to the films *Performance* (Donald Cammell, 1970) and *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971) – neither of which can be said to be notably 'neglected' – and to the directors Nicolas Roeg, Ken Russell and Derek Jarman, subjects of the existing 'in-depth studies' that the authors themselves make reference to: see, for example, Neil Sinyard (1993) *The Films of Nicolas Roeg* (London, Letts), Ken Hanke (1984) *Ken Russell's Films* (London, Scarecrow); and Chris Lippard (ed.) (1995) *By Angels Driven: The Films of Derek Jarman* (Trowbridge, Flicks Books).

[16] Robert Murphy (1997) 'Conclusion: A Short History of British Cinema' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI), page 262

production was a consequence of moral revulsion rather than fiscal imperatives, is novel but absurd. However, it does highlight how even what little discussion there has been of 1970s British cinema has been blighted with inexactitude and imprecision, and has hitherto lacked the scholarly rigour expected and taken for granted elsewhere.

John Walker's *The Once and Future Film* (1985) and Alexander Walker's *National Heroes* (1985) offer general historical accounts of what the former terms "rootless productions of no relevance to any nation, lacking purpose or passion,"[17] and the latter calls "the wasteland of British cinema in the mid-1970s,"[18] but neither volume is particularly sympathetic. Furthermore, while A. Walker's book is anecdotal and self-aggrandizing, J. Walker's book chooses to concentrate on the controversial (notably Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* and Ken Russell's *The Devils*, both 1971) at the expense of the popular. Similarly, Bart Moore-Gilbert's *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (1994) is made up of frequently polemical accounts of various cultural expressions including cinema but, by nature of the breadth of its remit, such accounts are necessarily brief.

On the few occasions where 1970s British cinema has been considered in any detail, it has generally been as an adjunct to generic histories centred on the previous decade. Regrettably, even such generic scrutiny has been patchy to say the least and British films of the 1970s remain under-analysed. For instance, in the case of British horror cinema, despite David Pirie's groundbreaking *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (1973) having awakened academia to the cultural value of a hitherto unobserved sector of indigenous film production; of those that have followed in Pirie's wake, "too many fail to progress beyond considering what has become a pretty limited canon,"[19] and remain wedded to a late 1950s and early '60s 'golden age' of classic Gothic Hammer horrors, and to *auteurist* criticism of director Terence Fisher. And so, despite a promising title, Peter Hutchings' *Hammer and Beyond* (1993) remains as enamoured of Frankenstein, Dracula and early Hammer as had Pirie, and fails ultimately to move very far beyond them. Likewise, David

[17] Walker, John (1985) *The Once and Future Film: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Methuen) page 45
[18] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Harrap) page 105
[19] Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (2002) 'The Return of the Repressed? British Horror's Heritage and Future' in Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Sanjek's otherwise engaging essay 'Twilight of the Monsters: The English Horror Film 1968-1975' (1994) betrays its temporal limitations in its subtitle. While it is certainly the case that the quantity of British horror films in production declined substantially post-1973, the same is not necessarily true of their significance or cultural value. There remains much to be said about such films as Pete Walker's *Frightmare* (1974) and *House of Mortal Sin* (1975), Jerzy Skolimowski's deeply disturbing *The Shout* (1977) and the striking slaughterhouse horrors of Norman J. Warren, such as *Satan's Slave* (1976) and *Terror* (1978).

How then can we account for this academic amnesia? Arguably the answer lies with the fact that these later examples of British horror more openly betray their debt to American cinematic styles and trends, in apparent contravention of Pirie's assertion that "the horror genre, as it has been developed in this country by Hammer and its rivals, remains the only staple cinematic myth which Britain can properly claim as its own,"[20] thereby undermining those critical accounts that have sought to identify and stress the indigenous purity of British cinema. As will be discussed further in chapter 5 with reference to British attempts to imitate *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973), this approach fails to appreciate that Hammer's distinctive Gothic formula (replicated and revised by British rivals Amicus and Tigon) had itself been shaped in response to American antecedents; a fact well understood by Pirie, but apparently forgotten by those that have followed him. Furthermore, while the company's aesthetic and narrative styles were initially formed in opposition to Universal's horror movies of the 1930s and 1940s, this defining policy of differentiation was soon qualified by a desire to imitate.[21] Likewise, Peter Hutchings has shown how Amicus, Britain's second house of horror, reworked and anglicised material from the likes of EC comics and the American author Robert Bloch. Seeking to account for the company's continuing critical neglect, Hutchings posits that its films have proved "too American to be

[20] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (London, Gordon Fraser) page 9

[21] *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Terence Fisher, 1957), for example, Hammer's initial Gothic horror hit, had been designed specifically to re-imagine Mary Shelley's tale so as to avoid infringing Universal's staunchly defended copyrights. Later, having formed close financial links with the Hollywood major, Hammer was able to plunder the company's back catalogue for inspiration; as evidenced in *The Mummy* (Terence Fisher, 1959), which mixes plot conceits from *The Mummy's Hand* (Christy Cabanne, 1940) and *The Mummy's Tomb* (Harold Young, 1942); and *The Evil of Frankenstein* (Freddie Francis, 1964), whose plot calls to mind both *The Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935) and *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* (Roy William Neill, 1943), and whose creature is, for the first time in Hammer's series, modelled on the iconic Boris Karloff/Jack Pierce conception of the character.

properly British and too British to pass for American, [hovering]...uneasily between the two national cinemas."[22] It is a contention that would serve as an equally apposite explanation for the enduring neglect of the self-consciously Americanised movie packages that this thesis explores, and that came briefly to dominate the British film industry's production schedules in the latter half of the 1970s.

In view of the reticence to extend critical study far beyond the publication date of Pirie's seminal research, Harvey Fenton and David Flint's *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s* (2001) is a welcome addition to a sparse field, albeit one that too often marginalizes text in favour of lurid illustrations. Consistently the most impressive contributor to discussions of this most neglected decade is Leon Hunt, whose *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (1998) explores such hitherto neglected 1970s texts as TV sitcoms and adventure serials, skinhead pulp fiction, softcore sexploitation movies and the films of late 1970s horror auteur Pete Walker. Hunt's analysis exposes a seam of what he terms 'permissive populism' underlying British society in the period, whereby the (sexual) imagery and language of 1960s liberalism filters through and is repackaged for the mass audience. Elsewhere Hunt has penned equally fascinating accounts of British crime and occult cinema.[23] Hunt's willingness to challenge critical orthodoxy by scrutinizing the denigrated and disreputable detritus of 1970s popular culture is extremely refreshing and has proved to be both a comfort and an inspiration to me during my researches in an area that others seem so ready to dismiss as one of intrinsically worthless, irredeemable rubbish.

However, whereas Hunt has focused consistently on facets of 1970s cultural production that have exploited indigenous cultural references, signifiers and traditions, and that were aimed (primarily, if not exclusively) at the domestic audience, it remains the case that those films, genres and cycles considered thus far were, on the whole, marginal to the production policies of the then big three British

---

[22] Peter Hutchings (2002) 'The Amicus House of Horror' in Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 133. See also Alan Bryce (2000) *Amicus: The Studio that Dripped Blood* (Liskeard, Stray Cat Publishing)

[23] See Hunt (1999) 'Dog Eat Dog: *The Squeeze* and the *Sweeney* films' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge); and (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK: Witchcraft and the Occult in British Horror' in Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)

film producers – the EMI Film and Theatre Corporation, the Rank Organisation and Lew Grade's ITC (part of the Associated Communications Corporation) – whose output, while similarly content to 'entertain' and rarely aspiring to 'high' cultural status, was now tailored explicitly to appeal to perceived American tastes.[24] Examples include *The Eagle has Landed* (John Sturges, 1977), *The Boys from Brazil* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1978), *The Lady Vanishes* (Anthony Page, 1979) and *Evil under the Sun* (Guy Hamilton, 1982). And yet, this turbulent 'mid-Atlantic' production policy, the most widespread and sustained attempt made so far by British film producers to breach the lucrative US marketplace, has time and again been an overlooked feature of the decade that academia forgot. In the pages that follow I seek finally to counter this oversight, daring to suggest that these big-budget British films of the 1970s and early 1980s are indeed worthy of critical consideration.

For the benefit of the ensuing discussion, it will first be necessary to make clear some of the defining features of the British mid-Atlantic movie package. I concede from the outset that the films examined in this thesis constitute a fairly incongruous bunch but, in my defence, mere aesthetic or generic diversity seemed no reason to prolong their critical neglect. Indeed, the range and variety of films discussed herein should silence those carping voices that continue to characterise British cinema in the 1970s as being homogeneously drab. Ultimately, what unites the films that follow is the explicitness of their interaction with American (cinematic) culture, employing themes, narrative strategies, casts, crews and conventions calculated to overcome national insularity and to satisfy audience expectations on both sides of the Atlantic.

> Not one of these movies made the slightest claim to project British culture; most were directed by Americans; all were obligingly registered by the Department of Trade as 'legally' British films on the grounds of labour costs, thereby eligible to receive nourishment from the Eady Levy subsidy siphoned off box-office takings and meant to keep honest British flesh and bone together.[25]

---

[24] According to the Second Report of the Interim Action Committee on the Film Industry, as of 1979 these three British companies were the only ones then investing in British cinema to "a material extent." *The Financing of the British Film Industry*, Cmnd. 7597 (London, HMSO, 1979) page 2

[25] Alexander Walker (1974) *Hollywood England: The British Film Industry in the Sixties* (London, Harrap) page 135

As this venomous tirade from veteran film critic Alexander Walker makes clear, British film scholars and cultural critics remain wedded to naïve but comforting notions of the untainted 'purity' of the domestic culture, and its corollary fear of American cultural imperialism. They find the transatlantic sensibilities of these films to be not only distasteful but also somehow damaging to Britain's cinematic heritage by apparently 'selling out' to Hollywood. American critics have been comparably neglectful of a body of film all too often dismissed as both thematically shallow and culturally rootless, neither British nor American, neither one thing nor the other.[26] "They are intended for a world market where audiences are less demanding and scripts have to be amenable to dubbing in many languages. It also means that spectacle ... takes precedence over character,"[27] argues American critic Desmond Ryas with regard to what he sees as a recurring problem common to the films produced by British impresario Lew Grade.

However, as will be discussed further in the following chapter, such criticism is fundamentally flawed in that it ignores the contentious nature of existing concepts and definitions of national identity; as well as, more prosaically, falsely assuming broad agreement on how we ascribe nationality to particular filmic texts. Moreover, to bypass 1970s British cinema because of its pronounced internationalism acts to imply that such global aspirations both originated in and were confined to the period, which is certainly not the case.

In this thesis I seek to challenge the charge of cultural 'rootlessness' and to discern how the films discussed speak to and for the national audience, how they respond to national anxieties and raise domestic concerns even as they look beyond the British market. These are not simply British movies – nor are they simply American – but culturally hybrid texts that, via popular entertainment in a commercial medium, both reflect and negotiate issues of global cultural interaction and (inter)national identity; a dialogue ever more pertinent in a world shaped and defined increasingly by global commerce, supranational organisations and transnational politico-economic unions.

---

[26] One of the few places that one can find a scholarly appraisal of the wholly British funded *Murder on the Orient Express* is, ironically, Thomas Leitch's *Crime Films* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), part of an ongoing series exploring 'Genres in American Cinema'.

[27] Desmond Ryas, 'What do you do with it once you *Raise the Titanic*?' in *The Columbus Dispatch* (6 August 1980)

An irony of British film studies is that, whilst films from the 1950s and '60s have been eulogized, and the 1980s continue to be spoken of as a 'renaissance' of truly British filmmaking, economically speaking it is generally inaccurate to label their output as such. Most indigenous film production in the post-war period has been dependent upon American production capital, whether to exploit a momentary vogue for British culture amongst American audiences, to take advantage of tax-concessions and Eady money, or to free up frozen assets. For example, the quintessentially British horrors from Hammer were financed through relationships with the Hollywood majors, notably Columbia and Warner-Seven Arts. Significantly, as mentioned earlier, even consideration of Hammer in the 1970s, when it was forced to forage for British production capital, is rather negligible and cursory. The only decade of modern times in which British film production can realistically claim to have been British economically speaking is the 1970s, particularly the latter half of the decade by which time the US studios had almost completely abandoned British shores. Paradoxically, although free of American financial input, British cinema in the 1970s exposes the extent of Hollywood's stylistic hegemony more clearly than any other decade. Consequently, British film critics keen to stress the distinctiveness and artistry of Britain's cinematic heritage have, perhaps understandably, been reluctant to engage with a period in which consciously mid-Atlantic and explicitly commercial films came to characterise the national film industry.

The 1970s proved to be a turbulent point in time for the perennially precarious British film industry (as is discussed in more detail in chapter 3), and a variety of techniques were employed to secure the production finance necessary for the ascendant cycle of internationally orientated medium to big budget movies discussed herein. The Rank Organisation financed its films primarily from its own reserves and occasionally in collaboration with others – Tony Maylam's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1978), for example, was produced in conjunction with the National Film Finance Corporation – using its established national distribution and exhibition networks as leverage when securing international distribution deals for its features. In contrast, EMI sought typically to offset production costs by pre-selling its films to international distributors; and Lord Lew Grade at ITC chose to elaborate on the strategy he'd employed profitably for television of pre-selling the television rights to his films to the

American TV networks (and/or cross-funding and subsidising his films with the profits from his TV shows, which were generally more successful), effectively ensuring a profit even after an unsuccessful theatrical run: what Alexander Walker dubs "Fail-safe film-making at last!"[28]

Marquee Value and Media Synergy

The inevitable result of this pre-sell mentality was a high degree of conformity and creative conservatism, a consequence of the need to create decorative movie packages of 'proven' attractions designed to entice prospective buyers and convince them of a project's audience-enticing viability. The quest for that elusive 'sure-fire hit', coupled with a long-established perception dominant in both the British and American film industries of the parochialism of US audiences, prompted a reliance on established 'bankable' American stars. Certainly the phenomenal worldwide success of EMI's *Murder on the Orient Express* (Sidney Lumet, 1974) – advertised as 'The Who's Who in the Whodunit' – cemented the notion that star-laden casts could guarantee an international box-office winner. However, whereas *Orient Express* had benefited from a truly A-list cast,[29] most that followed seemed content to valorise star quantity over star quality. Indeed, many of the mid-Atlantic films produced in Britain in the 1970s do to some extent resemble cinematic retirement homes for jaded Hollywood stars whose careers (and salaries) aren't quite as big as they once were – a quality that only adds to the myriad (guilty) pleasures on offer. Much of the enjoyment to be had from *The Mirror Crack'd* (Guy Hamilton, 1980), for example, "a Miss Marple mystery masquerading as a Royal Command Performance in which all the American stars look stoned,"[30] comes from the wealth of bad wiggery to be seen atop Rock Hudson, Tony Curtis, Kim Novak and Liz Taylor.

Other examples of stars in the descendent decamping to Britain include Ava Gardner in *The Cassandra Crossing* (George Pan Cosmatos, 1977), James Stewart in *The Big*

[28] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes* page 111
[29] Ingrid Bergman went on to win the best supporting actress Oscar for her role in the film. Albert Finney was also nominated for best actor. The film also won best actor (Albert Finney), best supporting actress (Wendy Hiller) and best supporting actor (Sir John Gielgud) at the British Academy Film Awards.
[30] Don Macpherson's *The Mirror Crack'd* film review in John Pym (ed.) (1998) *Time Out Film Guide 1998* (London, Penguin) unpaginated

Sleep (Michael Winner, 1978), Bette Davis looking visibly frail in *Death on the Nile* (John Guillermin, 1978), Kirk Douglas frolicking naked with Farrah Fawcett in *Saturn 3* (Stanley Donen, 1980), and Richard Widmark experiencing a belated career revival thanks to *Bear Island* (Don Sharp, 1979), *Who Dares Wins* (Ian Sharp, 1982) and *To the Devil a Daughter* (Peter Sykes, 1976). The apotheosis of this tendency is *The Sea Wolves, The Last Charge of the Calcutta Light Horse* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1980), starring Gregory Peck, David Niven, Trevor Howard and Patrick Macnee. Practically the entire cast of this true tale – of how, in 1943, pensionable amateur commandos sunk a German spy ship off the coast of the neutral Portuguese colony of Goa – were in receipt of a free bus pass.

The pursuit of star names to adorn the advertising poster also served to elevate B-list journeymen and women to above-the-title status; even if, as with O. J. Simpson in *The Cassandra Crossing* and Sonny Bono in *Escape to Athena* (George Pan Cosmatos, 1979), their 'name recognition' value derived primarily from professions other than acting. Once suitably bejewelled with internationally recognised star talent, the cast could then be augmented with (cheaper) British thespians and character actors: such as Harry Andrews in *Night Hair Child* (James Kelly, 1972), *The Internecine Project* (Ken Hughes, 1974) and *Hawk the Slayer* (Terry Marcel, 1980); Sir Alec Guinness in *Raise the Titanic* (Jerry Jameson, 1980); Sir John Gielgud in *Gold* (Peter Hunt, 1974) and *The Wicked Lady* (Michael Winner, 1983); and Michael Hordern in *The Medusa Touch* (Jack Gold, 1978). Intriguingly, despite employing such recognisable and renowned directorial talents as Sidney Lumet, Stanley Donen, Franklin J. Schaffner and Richard Lester, the star mentality seems not to have included production personnel. These were certainly not advertised as *auteur* movies, presumably for fear that a distinctive *auteurist* vision might be at odds with the viewer-friendly, universal entertainment envisaged by the pre-buyers. Thus, when director Stanley Kramer cited 'creative differences' and withdrew from *Raise the Titanic* he was replaced by virtual unknown Jerry Jameson, a TV journeyman schooled in episodes of *Perry Mason*.

The quest for built-in audience name recognition also encouraged the adaptation of existing novels, and preferably ones that had been recent American bestsellers. It should be noted that the very concept of 'bestsellers' was itself seen by Britain's literary establishment as an inherently American notion, supposedly encouraging

literary appreciation based solely on vulgar commercial imperatives rather than on a text's intrinsic literary worth. Britain's first bestseller list appeared finally in the *Sunday Times* in 1974. Adaptations of blockbuster novels from the period include Frederick Forsyth's *The Odessa File* (1972, filmed 1974) and *The Dogs of War* (1974, filmed 1980), Jack Higgins' *The Eagle has Landed* (1975, filmed 1977), Clive Cussler's *Raise the Titanic!* (1976, filmed 1980) and Ira Levin's *The Boys from Brazil* (1976, filmed 1978). Incidentally, most of these were published first in America, irrespective of the nationality or domicile of the author. The pre-sell mentality also favoured the work of celebrated authors of popular novels, for whom there was both widespread audience familiarity and a pre-existing popular readership, such as Agatha Christie, John Buchan, Dennis Wheatley, Alistair MacLean and Wilbur Smith.

The 1970s saw ever-greater interconnectedness of the filmmaking and publishing industries, with the rise of a new breed of huge entertainment conglomerates with corporate fingers in various media pies. The realisation that the film-of-the-book could revitalise sales of the book-of-the-film (as well as other sundry merchandise) led to the practice of re-issuing the source text to tie in with the film's theatrical release, suitably adorned with stills from the movie and the legend 'Now a major film!' In the wake of the movie adaptation, Agatha Christie's novel of *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) achieved phenomenal sales that eclipsed those of her latest bestseller, *Curtain* (1975). The trend for novelising original screenplays is further evidence of growing consolidation within the entertainment industry in the period. This practice was popularised (but not originated) by the commercial success of David Seltzer's novel of his script for *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976).[31] Of the films discussed herein, novelised examples include *Capricorn One* (1978) by Bernard L. Ross, *The Cassandra Crossing* by Robert Katz (1977), *Escape to Athena* (1979) by Patrick Blake, *Hands of the Ripper* (1971) by Spencer Shew, *The Long Good Friday* (1981) by Russell Clayton, *Saturn 3* (1980) by Steven Gallagher, and James Follett's *The Tiptoe Boys* (1982) based on *Who Dares Wins*.[32]

[31] Such was the popularity of Seltzer's novel that it was followed by several non-film-related sequels: Gordon McGill's *Omen IV: Armageddon 2000* (1983) and *The Abomination: Omen V* (1985).
[32] Although based on Reginald Rose's script of an original George Markstein story (itself inspired by true events, namely the storming in 1980 of London's Iranian Embassy by the Special Air Service) Follett's book purports to be 'The novel that inspired Euan Lloyd's stunning new film.'

For British producers struggling to breach the US market, recent stateside box-office hits appeared to offer an insight into American audience tastes. Hence, in the wake of the worldwide success of *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) came *Saturn 3*, in which a homicidal creature once again hunts human quarry in an isolated space station.[33] Similarly, *Juggernaut* (Richard Lester, 1974) and *The Cassandra Crossing* were belated additions to the disaster movie cycle then prevalent in Hollywood, and *Raise the Titanic* was envisioned as but the first instalment in a series of adventures featuring Clive Cussler's marine salvage hero, Dirk Pitt, in emulation of the evergreen James Bond franchise. The telekinetic horror movie *The Medusa Touch* plagiarises dramatic riffs from *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976) and *The Omen*, the latter also starring Lee Remick, and the possession horror films *To the Devil a Daughter* and *I Don't Want to be Born* (Peter Sasdy, 1975) sought to hitch a ride upon the diabolical bandwagon set in motion by *The Exorcist*. The late 1970s also witnessed a trend for remakes of confirmed movie classics – including *The Lady Vanishes*, *The Big Sleep*, *The Wicked Lady* and *The Thirty Nine Steps* (Don Sharp, 1978) – now with the added attractions of colour and celebrity casts.

So how can we account for the ongoing critical neglect of these mid-Atlantic movies? Again there are parallels with the conventional critical response to British horror cinema. Peter Hutchings outlines how

> The formulaic nature of much British horror, the way in which it seems to define itself entirely in relation to the demands of the market place, ensures that the films involved are accorded a lesser status than those films which are seen to have been made by 'artists' who in some way have transcended commercial constraints.[34]

---

[33] David Robinson's contemporary review of the film for *The Times* (9 May 1980, page 11) criticised *Saturn 3* for its lack of originality, declaring: "John Berry's (sic) story and Martin Amis's script are a shameless and rude amalgam of horror-movie clichés. The monster, squashing dogs while vulnerable to female beauty, steals elements from *King Kong* and Frankenstein's monster; the tunnels of the space station are the sewers of *Phantom of the Opera.* Alas all the borrowings fail to give the picture the smallest fragment of the style and spirit of the originals." Likewise, more recently, Sue Short has argued that "*Saturn 3* ... exemplifies the worst tendency of postmodern film to borrow from sources without contributing anything of its own ... Opening with a shot from *Star Wars* (1977) and concluding with a spaceship scene reminiscent of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), it borrows from numerous sf texts including Harlan Ellison's short story 'I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream' (1967), *Forbidden Planet* (1956) in the near incestuous relationship between Major and Alex, and *Alien*'s claustrophobic setting. The film remains a relatively poor example of British sf compromising artistry and originality in a bid to sell itself." Sue Short (1999) 'No Flesh Shall Be Spared: Richard Stanley's *Hardware*' in I. Q. Hunter (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 177

[34] Peter Hutchings (1993) *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press) pages 9-10

Unlike its New Hollywood cousin, whose expressed wish to "cut free of its evil twin, commerce, enabling it to fly high through the thin air of art"[35] is so customarily admired, the explicit commercialism of British cinema in the 1970s has marked it as unworthy of reasoned consideration; as is evident in the tone of this contemporary review of *Who Dares Wins*: "This is the cynical result, prepackaged with an international cast, presold and ludicrously fictitious from beginning to end."[36] In his excellent appraisal of the ongoing James Bond movie franchise, James Chapman accounts for their comparable critical neglect by postulating that

> The most obvious explanation is the nature of orthodox film criticism, particularly in Britain, with its emphasis on 'realism' (exemplified by documentary, social-problem films and kitchen-sink dramas) and notions of 'quality' (exemplified by adaptations of classic literature, from the Dickensian films of David Lean in the 1940s to the so-called 'heritage' films of Merchant-Ivory and others in the 1980s and 1990s). The writing of British cinema history, until very recently, has been done predominantly from the perspective of a critical discourse which privileges sober, unsensational narratives, believable characterisations and a restrained visual style. In a critical tradition which favours realism and quality at the expense of fantasy and escapism, it is easy to understand why the Bond films, with their futuristic plots, their glossy visual style and their origins in a tradition of 'shocker' literature, should have been excluded from the canon of critically respectable cinema.[37]

As with Bond, there is little sobriety, moderation or aesthetic restraint to be found amidst the giddying (sexual) hysteria of *Lifeforce* (Tobe Hooper, 1985), the star-studded camp frivolity of *Escape to Athena*, or the sumptuous decadence of *Murder on the Orient Express*, whose art department elected to further enhance the carriages of the world's most luxurious train.

John Ellis draws attention to the distinction between critical concepts of 'quality' and legitimate 'good taste' on the one hand, and extravagant entertainment of the kind produced in Hollywood on the other, and traces the roots of this dichotomy back to the Second World War. He describes how, in the 1940s, British film critics identified a new spirit abroad in British films: "They increasingly strove to define what that spirit was, and to promote it as the valid way forward for British cinema in general.

---

[35] Peter Biskind (1998) *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* page 17
[36] Phillip Strick (1982) '*Who Dares Wins*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 49, no. 584)
[37] James Chapman (1999) *Licence to Thrill* page 11

They even coined a term for this spirit, 'the quality film'."[38] Such films as *In Which We Serve* (David Lean and Noel Coward, 1942), *Great Expectations* (David Lean, 1945) and *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier, 1946) not only found favour with the critics of the day but also with the popular audience, and appeared to suggest that British films had acquired a positive cultural identity of their own. However, the conceptual foundations about which the notion of 'the quality film' was built were far from stable. Ellis explains:

> The critics wrote of 'the quality' film'; the industry spoke of 'the prestige film'. The industry's definition is more financial: in terms of overall budget, predictable box-office components such as stars and source of the original story (play or book), or the event for which the film was destined. Ultimately, the term 'prestige film' meant 'expensive film with which we can finally break into the mainstream American market.' This conception had an uncertain relation to that of quality, if any at all.[39]

The 'prestige' pictures produced by Rank in the 1940s have much in common with the mid-Atlantic films of the 1970s; sharing the same ambition to break into the American market by imitating Hollywood production values and expenditure patterns, and, after 1945, sharing much the same critical disdain. For, much to their displeasure, the critics found that away from the special circumstances of the war the gulf between 'quality' films and what was popular with the mass audience grew ever wider. "For the critics, it seemed that the good reception given to quality wartime pictures depended on the fact of war rather than the fact of quality."[40] Increasingly, the films enjoyed by the popular audience possessed little of the restraint, sobriety and good taste identified by the critics as indicative of 'quality'. However, despite the apparent failure of the critics to enlighten the mass audience to the virtues of 'the quality film', they succeeded in defining middle-class ideas about cinema for decades to come. "The critics had more success in influencing British tastes than perhaps they realized," argues Ellis. "Decades of film appreciation have maintained the divisions that they initiated."[41] As Gerry Coubro makes clear with reference to the typically negative critical attitude to British fantasy cinema:

---

[38] John Ellis (1996) 'The Quality Film Adventure: British Critics and the Cinema 1942-1948' in Andrew Higson (ed.) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London, Cassell) page 67
[39] ibid, page 67
[40] ibid, page 88
[41] ibid, page 67

> The dominant image of British cinema is not one associated with excitement on the whole but with 'quality'. Of course, quality and excitement are not incompatible, but the term 'quality' has been used by apologists, reviewers and critics of British cinema to refer to films which express sobriety and moral concern and which are based on an empiricist mode of practice in which verisimilitude, naturalism and coherence are the defining as well as desired characteristics. British cinema, thus, comes to be associated with selected aspects of the British Documentary movement, Ealing and the British New Wave. Consequently, to find a place, within this image, for those movies which depart from this practice and which might be thought exciting because of their emphasis on the subjective, and to have them taken seriously, is extremely difficult.[42]

Despite such difficulties, however, in recent years there has been a significant change in emphasis and discourse amongst British film scholars that has led to the re-evaluation of previously maligned texts and genres. In his exploration of the James Bond films, James Chapman makes the case for "using their ostensible fantasy ingredients as a means to explore various identities – national, class and, especially, sexual identity – which have particular resonances for audiences at historically specific moments."[43] Chapman goes on to concede that the Bond movies do not really belong to the 'lost continent' of British cinema in the same way as the other popular genre films that have so far come in for critical reappraisal. The same is arguably true of the mid-Atlantic fare with which we are here concerned.

> The Bond movies are big-budget films with lavish production values which are filmed on location around the world, in contrast to the modestly budgeted and predominantly studio-bound Gainsborough and Hammer films. And, on a textual level, whereas the pleasure offered by the Gainsborough and Hammer films has generally been explained in terms of their trangressive characteristics, there is nothing particularly transgressive about Bond. Indeed, the films are at best ideologically conservative, and at worst downright reactionary in their representation of, for examples, race and gender.[44]

Like Bond, these mid-Atlantic movie packages are big-budget films and, accordingly, despite the critical contempt heaped upon them, they have generally proved too aesthetically polished, professionally too well constructed, and too self-consciously mainstream to possess the required 'trash' aesthetic (typified by the ham-fisted films of Edward D. Wood) for them to be reclaimed as counter-culturally 'paracinematic',

---

[42] Gerry Coubro (1995) *Hammer and Horror* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/Sheffield Hallam University) page 4
[43] James Chapman (1999) *Licence to Thrill* page 12
[44] ibid, pages 12-13

as identified by Jeffrey Sconce and others.[45] "Critics nowadays prefer a bit of subversion,"[46] posits Ian Hunter, but there is nothing particularly subversive about the bulk of the films discussed in this thesis. Indeed, quite the opposite. For instance, EMI's *Death on the Nile* comes to an end only after all of the unsettling, transgressive elements disclosed by the narrative have been suppressed or eradicated. The conniving Linnet Ridgeway, as singularly unpleasant as foreigners and the *nouveau riche* always are in Christie's novels – "those who have artificially and unnaturally acquired the external prerequisites without the 'real', 'natural' and profoundly English social qualifications to belong,"[47] – is murdered. So too are the murderers, Simon Doyle and Jacqueline De Bellefort, and the blackmailing Louise Bourget. The nymphomaniacal alcoholic Salome Otterbourne is shot through the head, thereby freeing her emotionally repressed daughter, Rosalie, to marry Jim Ferguson (*"citizen of the world"*) who, in the course of the film, appears to abandon his radical Marxist beliefs. Pennington's fraudulent scheme is stifled and Miss van Schuyler fails to purloin the pearls she covets. Tellingly, at the film's conclusion only Miss Bowers – long-suffering lesbian (if that is what we are to infer from her preference for masculine attire) and transgressor of the approved heterosexual divide – remains consigned to a life of misery at the sharp tongue of Miss van Schuyler. Such reactionary depictions of sexuality are echoed in the post-*Exorcist* British horror films *I Don't Want to be Born* and *To the Devil a Daughter*, whose tales of possession express extreme gynophobia and reassert the fundamental need for patriarchal social control; and in *North Sea Hijack* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1980), wherein our pussy-loving hero is given ample narrative justification for slaying a pair of psychopathic and anti-British homosexuals.

Issues of race and cultural heterogeneity are rarely raised in these films, perhaps being considered too complex or contentious for certain territories of the international

---

[45] According to Sconce, paracinema is "a most elastic textual category" encompassing such miscellaneous cultural effluent as "Japanese monster movies, beach-party musicals, and just about every other historical manifestation of exploitation cinema from juvenile delinquency documentaries to soft-core pornography." Jeffrey Sconce (Winter 1995) 'Trashing the Academy: Taste, Excess and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style' in *Screen* (vol. 36, no. 4, pages 371-393); see also Deborah Cartmell, I. Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye and Imelda Whelehan (eds.) (1997) *Trash Aesthetics: Popular Culture and its Audience* (London, Pluto Press)

[46] I .Q. Hunter (1999) (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 6

[47] Derek Longhurst (1989) 'Sherlock Holmes: Adventures of an English Gentleman 1887-1894' in Derek Longhurst (ed.) *Gender, Genre and Narrative Pleasure* (London, Unwin, Hyman) page 63

market at which they were aimed. Even those that are set solely or predominantly on the British mainland reveal an English or London-centric bias and say very little about national diversity within the United Kingdom – beyond the fact that Scotsmen are invariably called 'Jock' (see Ronald Fraser in *The Wild Geese*). A rare exception is *Juggernaut*, which gives voice to the complexities of cultural identity as felt by British Asians – *"I'm born in Africa. Black government doesn't like me because I'm Asian. Go to England, and white government doesn't like me because I'm Asian."* – and features a charming performance from Asian actor Roshan Seth as a cockney ship's steward who, ostensibly for his own amusement, elects to speak in pidgin-English when in the presence of the passengers.[48]

It is certainly the case that black people are underrepresented in these films. Where blacks do figure prominently, as in the trio of Roger Moore adventure films shot in South Africa (despite apartheid and the threat of being 'blackballed' by the ACTT union), they are either little more than primitive savages or enlightened colonial converts (dutifully laying down their lives, like Bosambo before them, so that Roger Moore can save the day) in roles seemingly recycled from such 1930s British colonial adventure films as *Sanders of the River* (Zoltan Korda, 1935) and *The Song of Freedom* (J. Elder Wills, 1936). In each, Africa serves as a two-dimensional exotic backcloth, while Africans are either peripheral extras or plot ciphers, as in *Gold* and *Shout at the Devil* (Peter Hunt, 1976); corrupt, as in the startlingly cynical *The Dogs of War* (John Irwin, 1980); or cannon fodder, as in *The Wild Geese* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1978).

Cinema and Television

Having typically been financed by presales to television, and with eventual TV broadcast in mind, these Hollywoodesque films make limited use of 'scope' aspect ratios; favouring instead the more televisual ratios of 1.77:1 and 1.85:1, or having been shot 'full-frame' and masked to a widescreen ratio only for theatrical exhibition.

[48] This is unlike I. S. Johar's performance as the manager of the Karnak Nile steamer in *Death on the Nile*, a crude comic stereotype whose dialogue is of the *'goodness gracious me'* variety. Accordingly, in his 1978 review of the film for the British *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 45, no. 537, page 197), Clyde Jeavons drew attention to what he saw as a "distinctly jarring strain of racial condescension in the depiction of the Egyptian menials who make up the supporting cast."

Escape to Athena and *The Lady Vanishes* are uncommon exceptions, shot in 2.35:1 Panavision. Both films, however, show signs of having been shot with television transmission in mind and do not suffer unduly when cropped to the TV (Academy) ratio of 1.33:1. While 'scope' films are rather less common now than they used to be, and the practice of composing shots in 4:3 within the cinematic frame is now routine, the film industry having awakened to the fiscal importance of TV and home video sales (camera viewfinders are now marked with a variety of aspect ratios), this was not the case generally even by the end of the 1970s.

Indeed, it is tempting to see this close relationship with television as a further contributory factor to the ongoing critical neglect of 1970s mid-Atlantic cinema. As well as lacking suitably *auteurist* credentials and being too tastelessly commercial and responsive to the whims of the market to be valorised as 'art', they have also been viewed as somehow insufficiently 'cinematic' by cinephiles, with theatrical exhibition reduced to little more than a momentary hiatus on their pre-sold route to television. Ultimately, such an argument amounts to little more than cross-media snobbery, in accordance with an entrenched view that favours the focused, concentrated way in which films are viewed in the cinema over what is seen as the transient and ephemeral medium of television. Critic Adrian Turner expresses just such a view in a mid-1970s polemic from *Films Illustrated* magazine in which he attacks the 'unceremoniousness' of watching films on television and emphasises how

> Distractions at home are many and varied, just as in a cinema, but the lack of a screen that dominates the room serves to accentuate the domestic disruptions. The kettle may be whistling, the dog may be barking to be let out, the traffic outside may be hooting loudly and your viewing partners may be chatting or pressing to switch channels … While the cinema audience is largely a captive one, and the various distractions are at least related to the cinema, the TV viewer is subjected to diversions which are unrelated to the film. Even the two modes of viewing encourage two distinctive definitions: you 'watch' a film on television, underlining the more casual approach to viewing, while you 'see' a film in a cinema, emphasising the more serious commitment you make when you actually go out and buy a ticket.[49]

Contemporary film critics seem not to be unduly concerned that the British film industry is now firmly rooted in, and totally at the service of, the television industry:

---

[49] Adrian Turner (1975) 'Rectangle into Square' in David Castell (ed.) *Cinema 76* (London, Independent Magazines (Publishing) Ltd.) page 69

According to film director Alan Parker, "In many ways it has nothing to do with cinema, and, for the most part nothing to do with the legacy of David Lean or Carol Reed."[50] And yet, at no point during his rigorous examination of the decade does John Hill express obvious concern that, as he concedes:

> what stability the British film industry enjoyed during the 1980s largely derived from a continuing dependence upon the state – either directly in the form of help from state-funded agencies such as British Screen or indirectly through television, and Channel 4 in particular.[51]

The 1970s witnessed an unprecedented degree of rapprochement between the hitherto antagonistic media of cinema and television.[52] Not only were presales to television central to the film industry's production strategy, but also in this period a number of television producers turned to film production, notably ITC and Euston Films (the filmmaking subsidiary of the ITV franchise holder Thames). TV schedulers became increasingly reliant on the cinema's extensive back catalogue (in 1974 the BBC paid the then extraordinary figure of £120,000 for the broadcast rights to David Lean's *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, 1957), and, reciprocally, filmmakers came increasingly to use television as a source of inspiration, talent and brands familiar to the audience. When viewed from this perspective, Channel 4's filmic pursuits in the 1980s can be seen as merely the fruits of an inter-media relationship whose seeds were sown in the 1970s. Is it not then odd that the critical attitude to '70s British cinema should remain so disparaging?

I must confess that my experience and appreciation of the films discussed in this volume is entirely a consequence of having viewed them repeatedly on television and home video. Indeed, I have not been fortune enough to have seen any of them on the

---

[50] Alan Parker, 'Don't get me wrong, what we have at the moment is great, but I contend that very often it is not cinema. What it is, often, is great television' in *The Guardian* (27 October 1997)

[51] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) page 52; see also John Hill and Martin McLoone (eds.) (1996) *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television* (Luton, John Libbey/University of Luton Press)

[52] In 1958 Britain's major film distributors/exhibitors, including Rank, Granada and ABPC, formed the Film Industry Defence Organisation (FIDO) specifically to block the sale of films to television. Using funds raised by charging a levy on theatrical box-office receipts, FIDO paid filmmakers a gratuity to sign a pledge not to sell their films to television. Filmmakers who refused risked being blacklisted, as happened to veteran producer Samuel Goldwyn after he sold a raft of 50 feature films to Lew Grade's ATV. However, by the late 1960s British television's hunger (and willingness to pay) for feature films had become such that filmmakers could no longer resist and FIDO finally collapsed.

theatrical big screen for which they were intended. Postulating that TV as a medium is more warmly remembered and nostalgically loved than cinema, John R. Cook argues:

> Because TV intrudes so decisively into personal domestic space, its programmes are often able to achieve a greater degree of intimacy with their audience than the more communal, one-off spectacle of cinema viewing. In addition, as part of the domestic furniture of our existence, TV is inextricably bound up with the progress through time of our lives. Old shows have the power momentarily to evoke flickering memories of long-gone eras of private history, underlining TV's unrivalled capacity for intimacy.[53]

Accordingly, I have no doubt that much of my appreciation of these films stems from their being the moving picture accompaniment to my childhood. I was born in 1976 and by the time I had grown to appreciate the myriad pleasures television had to offer the films discussed herein had made their way to my TV (in accordance with the then existent 'gentleman's agreement' of a five-year delay between theatrical presentation and television transmission), where even now they can so frequently be found.

Thus, recognising the danger of neglecting the viewer's experience as a source of meaning for any filmic text; whereas mainstream critics have consistently denigrated these self-consciously Americanised movies for their alleged cultural 'rootlessness', for me and my generation, who know them only as perennial TV favourites, they are deeply indigenous and intrinsic to my lived cultural experience of watching British television and of growing up in England. For instance, I recall *Death on the Nile*, presumably on one of its first television outings, being the centrepiece of BBC1's Christmas Day evening schedule and that my family gathered to watch (and perhaps to deduce) whodunit. Conversely, my experience of cinema was of a distinctly American medium. My hometown had, and indeed still has, only one cinema with only one screen – although 'split' in the early 1970s, like so many other theatres faced with dwindling audiences, we gained a short-lived bingo hall rather than the desired second auditorium – which offered little in the way of cinematic variety beyond the latest Hollywood blockbusters, such as *Jaws*, *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) or a returning Disney classic. When *Return of the Jedi* (Richard Marquand, 1983) was held over for two months, eight weeks of new releases simply passed us by.

---

[53] John R. Cook (1999) 'Adapting Telefantasy: The *Doctor Who and the Daleks* films' in I. Q. Hunter (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 133

Meanwhile, my television set was disgorging a relentless and ever-changing succession of exciting movies. My viewing taste has always been for the adventurous, the glamorous and the exciting, as typified by Hollywood. And yet, even as a child, I could detect an ill-defined British quality in such childhood favourites as *Hawk the Slayer*, *North Sea Hijack* and *Evil under the Sun.* The faint but recognisable signifiers of national identity contained within served to set them apart from similar star-laden Hollywood tales – notable favourites were *The Towering Inferno* (John Guillermin and Irvin Allen, 1974), *King Kong* (John Guillermin, 1976) and *Airport* (George Seaton, 1970) – whose skyscrapers, yellow cabs, gun-wielding cops and grimy urban locations served to set them apart as both inaccessible and foreign. Andrew Higson has identified this as Hollywood's double mode of popular fantasy:

> being both a naturalised part of national culture, and, at the same time, 'other', visibly different, even exotic, hence its propensity to be dismissed as escapism, while at the same time being so evidently the mode of production, representation, and consumption that has become the international standard.[54]

The same was true of the James Bond movies; Bank Holiday TV regulars that felt discernibly un-American while, at the same time, noticeably atypical of what I'd come to expect from British cinema, namely black-and-white social realist tracts whose pleasures seemed both less sensual and sensational. *The Boys from Brazil, Juggernaut* and *The Medusa Touch* (whose literally 'death defying' dénouement I recall as proving especially nightmare-inducing) possessed an added frisson of relevance and excitement by featuring recognisable British imagery, whether double-decker buses, travelogue footage of London landmarks, red telephone boxes or the hedgerows and country lanes of rural England. In short, they depicted a world, albeit caricatured, that broadly resembled my own and thus suggested to my fertile childish imagination that the thrills and fabulations depicted onscreen might one day happen to me. This was an intoxicating and powerful prospect for a boy living in an English rural backwater.

---

[54] Andrew Higson (1995) *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford, Clarendon/Oxford University Press) page 8; see also Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1987) 'Popular Culture' in *New Formations* (issue 2, pages 79-90)

Echoing David Pirie's 30-year-old comments uttered in defence of another equally denigrated filmic constituency, my aim in this thesis "is simply to probe an area which has been the significant major casualty of the refusal to take commercial English film seriously,"[55] namely the hitherto ignored, intentionally international movies that proliferated in Britain in the period 1970 to 1985. Incidentally, the latter date marks 'British Film Year', by which time EMI, Rank and ITC had all effectively abandoned film production and been replaced by Channel 4 and a coterie of independents whose production schedules offered small scale social-realist and 'heritage' films inspired by the Oscar success of *Chariots of Fire*, as has been discussed so extensively elsewhere.[56]

This thesis explores and seeks to explain the sudden enthusiasm amongst British filmmakers for a transatlantic production policy (in terms of narrative preoccupation, aesthetic style and target audience), arguing that the broad acceptance of this process of cultural concealment as a viable strategy for survival reveals underlying transformations, concerns and anxieties about the practicality and desirability of existing concepts and definitions of British cultural and national identity. Furthermore, far from being 'rootless' and devoid of cultural significance, I propose that these attempts to package British culture as a readily exportable commodity permit an intriguing insight into the popular mood and the British national character, as much by what is concealed or left out as by what is flaunted and put in. To put it another way, and to quote Roger Manvell, this is an exploration of 'Britain's self-portraiture in feature films,'[57] revealing our conception of ourselves through what we imagine foreign audiences will wish to see of us.

Rather than proffer a grand overarching meta-narrative, my exploration of this virgin territory takes the form of what John Hill terms a 'contextual history,'[58] situating textual analyses of films that have thus far barely received serious consideration within broader economic, socio-political and generic analytic frameworks; thereby

---

[55] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror* page 8

[56] For a wide-ranging discussion of the main themes and issues characterising the decade, as well as useful references, see John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s*. Incidentally, 1985 also witnessed both the opening of the UK's first purpose-built 'multiplex' in Milton Keynes, and a gradual increase in cinema admissions from the all-time low of 54 million in 1984.

[57] Roger Manvell (August 1953) 'Britain's self-portraiture in feature films' in *Geographical Magazine*

[58] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s*

moving beyond the paraphrasing and reductive generalisations that have for too long served in place of reasoned critical enquiry. Whereas previous assessments of the period have focused almost solely upon typically unsympathetic contemporary critical responses (exemplified by *Time Out*'s summation of *The Dogs of War* as "just another weary hack job from a rootless British film industry in decline."[59]) and box-office returns that, aside from a few notable global successes including *Murder on the Orient Express, The Eagle has Landed* and *The Wild Geese* (the latter dismissed by the *Monthly Film Bulletin* as a "morass of gratuitous mayhem, improbable stiff-lipped heroics, and half-baked political sermonising."[60]), were healthy domestically but disappointing internationally, I have sought always to return to the film-texts themselves. By so doing, I have identified, on the one hand, recurring and revealing themes and motifs and, on the other, aesthetic diversity and thematic depth in a body of films viewed typically as homogeneously drab and undemanding. By revisiting the 1970s I aim to augment, enhance and at times challenge the accepted but selective critical conception of British cinema history. To quote Leon Hunt:

> At the end of the day, value cannot be separated from use, and all of these objects have a capacity to produce knowledge of one sort or another. And if their popularity doesn't automatically translate into 'quality' (of whatever kind), I have no reservations about asserting their importance.[61]

Chapter 3 considers in detail the economic wrangling that plagued the British film industry throughout the period 1970 to 1985, and evaluates the responses of Britain's big three film studios: Rank, EMI and ITC. The rich vein of nostalgia discovered therein points to a telling desire to retreat from contemporary social turbulence and to a wistful longing for the less complex cultural and generic terrain imagined to have once existed, as evidenced by the disproportionately large number of period and specifically wartime films produced in the period; such as *Voyage of the Damned* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1976), *Escape to Athena*, *The Passage* (J. Lee Thompson, 1979), *The Eagle has Landed*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *The Sea Wolves* and *Eye of the Needle* (Richard Marquand, 1981). It should also be noted that the Second World War as a symbol of Anglo-American cooperation was both an appropriate and convenient

[59] Chris Auty's *The Dogs of War* film review in John Pym (ed.) (1998) *Time Out Film Guide 1998* (London, Penguin) unpaginated
[60] Clyde Jeavons (1978) *The Wild Geese* film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 45, no. 534, pages 145-146)
[61] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture* page 15

source of inspiration for British mid-Atlantic filmmakers, being a subject of relevance and potentially of interest to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic and effortlessly justifying the presence of large numbers of Americans amongst the cast.[62]

This chapter also examines the quartet of all-star period films based on the novels of Agatha Christie and produced by EMI (*Murder on the Orient Express, Death on the Nile, The Mirror Crack'd* and *Evil under the Sun*) that have hitherto had to endure a double-whammy of revulsion as a consequence of being produced in the 1970s and for deriving from a popular literary genre that is disparaged as "a habit which ...[is]... wasteful of time and degrading to the intellect."[63] On the few occasions that these "cardboard thrillers ... vivified by all-star casts of ageing legends"[64] have been discussed it has been as little more than footnotes to Christie's literary canon, whereby their respective cinematic achievements are overlooked and their fidelity to Christie's source texts is deemed the sole benchmark of quality.

The focus in chapter 4 is on mid-Atlantic tales of terrorism – a scenario of particular resonance throughout the 1970s – and how, both thematically and stylistically, they invalidate the all too readily accepted criticism that 1970s British cinema by endeavouring to appeal beyond British shores consequently jettisoned all indigenous relevance. Detailed analysis reveals an emergent tendency as the decade progresses towards ever more pronounced moral retrenchment, jingoistic nationalism and the denial of Britain's racial and cultural diversity; qualities that echo both the socially conservative agenda of Thatcher's ascendant Tory Party and the fragmentation of the centrist political consensus that had dominated British politics since the end of the Second World War.

My concern in chapter 5 is to explore how British horror filmmakers responded to, and sought to imitate, the worldwide success of Hollywood's *The Exorcist*. I examine two neglected texts in particular, *To the Devil a Daughter* and *I Don't Want to be*

---

[62] A comparable approach was taken by the hugely popular BBC TV drama serial *Colditz* (1972-74), a decidedly mid-Atlantic retelling of life in the eponymous mountaintop POW camp, co-produced with Universal TV and starring David McCallum and Robert Wagner.
[63] E. Wilson (1957) 'Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?' in Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (eds.) *Mass Culture* (USA, Free Press) page 153
[64] Brian McFarlane (1986) 'A Literary Cinema? British Films and British Novels' in Charles Barr (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays* (London, BFI) page 141

Born, both of which abandon the Gothicism so typical of British horror in emulation of Hollywood's contemporary iconoclasm. Furthermore, it is striking how its British imitators recast *The Exorcist*'s themes of familial politics, sexual awakening and youthful rebellion as the imperilment of patriarchal structures of social control; a revision that discloses domestic anxieties about the vulnerability of the established order and the social status quo. Finally, in chapter 6 I explore the appropriation by a number of British horror films in the early 1970s of psychoanalytic discourse as a narrative conceit, in such films as *Incense for the Damned* (Robert Hartford-Davis, 1970), *I, Monster* (Stephen Weeks, 1970), *Demons of the Mind*, *Hands of the Ripper* and *Night Hair Child*. The hijacking of Freud's therapeutic practice was at once both a means of broadening generic horizons in an overcrowded and increasingly overfamiliar field; and a response to, on the one hand, broad societal dissatisfaction with the status quo and, on the other, a cultural quest for answers and new ways of seeing. Crucially, this early 1970s vogue for analysis, psychological probing and self-help literature was itself appropriated in large part from America.

However, before considering these critically marginalized Hollywoodesque films in more detail it will first be necessary to establish a broader context for the discussion by investigating what is meant by 'British cinema' – an analytic term whose meaning all too often remains nebulous and implicit – and by chronicling the history and longevity of the mid-Atlantic sensibilities that last came to the fore in the 1970s.

2.

Just Like Hollywood, Only Different: Defining 'British' Cinema

> Of course one has a vague image of indigenous cinema, but try to pin it down and what does it come to? In the Thirties, I suppose, to some comedies and musicals – not much export for Will Hay and George Formby, or even for Gracie Fields, but even Jessie Matthews and Hitchcock were not entirely for home consumption. Still, one can set Michael Balcon against the international approach of Korda – even though it was Balcon who headed first the most substantial attempt to bring American money into British films in the pre-war years with the MGM programme which produced *Goodbye Mr Chips, A Yank at Oxford* and *The Citadel*. Even in those days, it would seem, the people most interested in the Britishness of British films were by no means averse (and why should they be?) to using American money to finance the notion.[1]

Despite the widespread critical (re)mapping of Britain's formerly 'unknown cinema'[2] that has taken place since the 1960s, there remain periods and generic regions of the nation's filmic past that have yet to be charted. Moreover, for the most part, British scholars continue to operate within a critical framework whose boundaries remain essentially implicit.[3] Like the proverbial elephant, defining it is one thing but we all know it when we see it, or so the argument goes. However, upon closer inspection, the canon of incontestably 'British' films proves to be somewhat more limited than is generally held to be the case. Take, for instance, London Films' *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949); a film that, despite being widely hailed as the finest British film ever made, is hardly an example of untainted indigenous cultural purity.[4] As well as

---

[1] John Russell Taylor (1974) 'Tomorrow the World: Some Reflections on the unEnglishness of English Films' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 43, no. 2) page 81

[2] Alan Lovell (March 1969) *British Cinema: The Unknown Cinema* (BFI Education Seminar Paper)

[3] Exploring comparable territory in the wake of the March 1938 Cinematograph Films Act, Charles Davy stressed the Act's failure to distinguish between British films and films made in Britain, before conceding: "the problem of how to define a British film, except in strictly legal terms, has always been somewhat obscure. *Farewell Again*, one of the best pictures to come from a British studio recently, was sponsored by Alexander Korda, Hungarian born; produced by a German, Erich Pommer, from a story by another German, Wolfgang Wilhelm; directed by an American, Tim Whelan, and photographed by a Chinese, James Wong Howe." (1938) 'Postscript: The Film Marches On' in Charles Davy (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.) page 304

[4] Despite its pronounced transatlantic qualities, in 1999 the film topped a BFI poll of the nation's 100 favourite 'culturally British' feature films released in cinemas during the 20th century. True to form, the meaning of 'culturally British' was left unclear. Moreover, the list includes several entries whose

being set entirely in postwar Vienna and starring imported Hollywood talent, the Americans Joseph Cotton and Orson Welles, it was designed specifically for the global market by its famously internationalist producer Alexander Korda, and was produced in collaboration with the American impresario David O. Selznick. Furthermore, the film is indebted to Hollywood *film noir* (a formal technique adapted from German Expressionism and brought to Hollywood by such European émigrés as Fritz Lang and Robert Siodmak), not merely visually (featuring Oscar-winning cinematography from the Australian-born Robert Krasker), but also thematically (a fatalistic blend of deceit, greed and betrayal) and stylistically (even more so in the American version of the film, where Joseph Cotton's first person opening narration is redolent of *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941) and the novels of Dashiell Hammett). I am in no way suggesting that *The Third Man* is not a British classic. It undoubtedly is. What I do suggest, however, is that the film serves to illustrate that international aspirations have long been a feature of the cinema in Britain and are by no means confined to the 1970s. Evidently the presence of 'foreign' creative influences and international commercial aspirations do not automatically have to disqualify a film-text from reasoned consideration or critical acceptance.

> To write about British cinema is to operate, however implicitly, with some understanding of what that cinema is, what its limits are, what distinguishes it from other cinemas. Innocent though they may seem, these are far from straightforward matters, which can be approached from a variety of perspectives. Each perspective will inevitably offer a different way of thinking through what it is that makes cinema 'British'.[5]

The waters of British cinema have always been muddy and, more often than not, the issue of defining its parameters has been fudged. The label 'British cinema' is applied typically with inexactitude and imprecision. Rarely, however, has this been admitted as candidly as by film scholar Raymond Durgnat; who confessed that, in his opinion, the process of discerning the relative Britishness of any given film-text amounted to

---

'cultural Britishness' is somewhat questionable: notably *The Commitments* (Alan Parker, 1991, no. 38), the tale of a group of young Dubliners who form a 60s soul band, and *The Killing Fields* (Roland Joffe, 1984, no. 100), starring Sam Waterston and John Malkovich and based on the memoirs of a *New York Times* reporter who remained in Cambodia after the American evacuation. Correspondingly, while David Lean's Dickens adaptations *Great Expectations* (1945, no. 5) and *Oliver Twist* (1948, no. 46) can be rightly praised as culturally British masterpieces, *Doctor Zhivago* (1965, no. 27) is rather more problematic (shot in Spain, based on a Russian novel and produced by the Italian Carlo Ponti for the American MGM).

[5] Andrew Higson (2000) 'The Instability of the National' in Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson (eds.) *British Cinema: Past and Present* (London, Routledge) page 35

little more than asking, "is it about Britain, about British attitudes, or if not does it feel British."[6] Predictably, Durgnat's 'feeling' has been denounced for being a most unstable conceptual foundation upon which to construct a comprehensive history of the cinema in Britain. And yet it remains the case that, despite its obvious lack of scientific objectivity and scholarly rigour, this same nebulous feeling continues to underscore most modern accounts of British cinema.

British cinema as a critical term is polyvalent and is employed in a myriad of different and competing ways in an assortment of contexts. Accordingly, while some have adopted a cultural historical attitude to explore the ways in which British filmmaking is rooted in national traditions, others have used reception studies approaches to assess the ways in which audiences interpret texts and circulate meanings within culturally specific contexts. From such a position, far from being a passive, monolithic entity, the spectator is seen as an amalgam of competing identities (having to do with ethnicity, gender, religion and sexual orientation) of which national sentiment or allegiance is but one factor. Ideological criticism, meanwhile, has explored the role that cinema has played in shaping and maintaining the idea of the nation, in accordance with Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as but a symbolic referent – what he terms an 'imagined community' – maintained by a miscellany of social processes and discursive institutions, including the mass media.[7] The relationship between cinema and the nation is thus characterised by a process of ideational reciprocity that accepts that not only will films draw on and naturalise identities already in circulation, but that they will also construct new identities and representations of the nation.

The first half of this chapter explores the multiplicity of definitions and perspectives that have been used by film scholars, cultural critics and lawmakers in the pursuit of an unquestionably 'British' cinema. However, it is not my intention, nor indeed would it be possible in the limited space available (if at all), to solve the hitherto inscrutable riddle of the sphinx and realize a universal formula for discerning filmic nationality. That particular (Sisyphean) task I leave for others. My purpose is simply to highlight

[6] Raymond Durgnat (1970) *A Mirror for England* (London, Faber & Faber) page 5
[7] Benedict Anderson (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso)

how, in view of the fact that we lack even the most elementary recipe for delineating which films can rightly be labelled as British, the orthodox critical decision to discount a decade of home-grown moviemaking on the basis that it is somehow insufficiently British is both perverse and indefensible. The latter part of this chapter proffers an admittedly abridged history of the interconnectedness of British and American moviemaking, and exposes the longevity of what I term mid-Atlantic sensibilities in the British film industry. My intention here is to reiterate that it is absurd to bypass 1970s British cinema on account of its avowed internationalism when such global aspirations (although perhaps less conspicuous) have been central to the cinema in Britain since its very inception.[8]

British Films: Definitions and Debates

Traditionally the most prosaic approach to discerning cinematic nationality has been one based solely on economic or fiscal factors, irrespective of filmic content or onscreen representation. Such a view perceives the cinema as an industry first and foremost and discounts artistic or ideological considerations to look beyond the film-text to the factors involved in its productions – typically the location of studio facilities, the nationality of production personnel and the source of production capital. Andrew Higson explains how, "From this point of view, the history of a national cinema is the history of a business seeking a secure a foothold in the market-place in order to maximise profits, and/or to keep a 'national' labour-force in full employment."[9] As such, it is the perspective most frequently adopted by national governments and lawmakers. For example, in order to shield the ailing indigenous film production sector from the brutality of the global free market, and to counter the near total domination of British cinema screens by Hollywood films, in 1927

[8] In a relatively recent and uncommonly insightful newspaper article ('Made in the UK' in *The Guardian*, 16 November 2001), critic Andy Beckett observed how "This tension between seeing the film business as essentially American, with unbreakable American rules about everything from narrative structure to target audiences, or as an international enterprise, with many local traditions and ways of doing things, probably runs through every film industry outside southern California. In Britain, an anxiety about the country's place in the cinematic order of things has been present almost since the beginning." See also David Puttnam (1997) *The Undeclared War: The Struggle for Control of the World's Film Industry* (London, Harper Collins), an engaging and informative, albeit polemical and occasionally self-aggrandizing, overview of how various national cinema industries have responded to the hegemony and economic dominance of Hollywood.

[9] Andrew Higson (1995) *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford, Clarendon/Oxford University Press) page 4

Parliament passed the Cinematograph Films Act.[10] The Act stipulated that, henceforth, film distributors and exhibitors would have to ensure that a minimum 'quota' of the films they handled were British.[11] The imposition of this protectionist measure also necessitated the framing of a legislative definition with which to determine which films would satisfy quota requirements.

For a film to qualify as British it had to meet the following criteria. It had to have been made by a British company or by a British subject; the studio scenes had to have been photographed in a studio in the British Empire; the author of the 'scenario' had to have been a British subject (although what actually constituted the scenario was left unclear); and not less than 75% of the salaries, wages and payments for labour and services in the making of the film (exclusive of payments in respect of copyright and the salary or payments to one foreign actor or actress or producer, but inclusive of the payments to the author of the scenario) had to have been paid to British subjects or persons domiciled in the British Empire.[12] Likewise, for a film to qualify as British according to the British Films Act of 1985, 92.5% of its running time had to have been created in Britain, most of its labour costs had to have gone to British citizens, and the film had to have been made by a British or other European registered company.

However, in spite of the apparent precision and meticulousness that has gone into their framing, such legislative definitions of filmic nationality as these have proved consistently to be inadequate, as well as being susceptible to all manner of anomalies and abuses. For instance, with reference to 1970s British mid-Atlantic moviemaking, while Durgnat's formless British feeling is certainly detectable with regard to EMI's *Murder on the Orient Express* – which, despite having an American director and largely American cast, is a markedly faithful adaptation of an English novel (in so far as it was written by an Englishwoman and published first in England) from a

[10] Whereas British films had accounted for near 25% of those exhibited in UK cinemas in 1914, the rest being predominantly American, this had fallen to just 5% by 1925. Figures quoted in Sarah Street (1997) 'British Film and the National Interest: 1927-1939' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI) page 17. At the same time, the number of feature films in production in the UK fell from 137 in 1921 to 68 in 1923, and to just 33 in 1925.

[11] The quota was set initially at 5% for exhibitors and 7.5% for distributors, to ensure exhibitors were given a selection of films from which to choose, and was raised incrementally to 20% by 1936. Its life was later extended by the Act of 1938, and only finally curtailed by the 1985 British Films Act.

[12] For further discussion, see Jill Nelmes (1999) *An Introduction to Film Studies* (London, Routledge)

peculiarly British literary genre and was, to quote its producer, "a totally British picture, shot over here, financed by EMI (all British money) and in those days it grossed something like $50 million. At the time it was the most successful wholly British film ever made,"[13] – this is not the case with many other British registered features from the period. Prominent amongst the myriad examples of seemingly all-American fare branded as British (if only to qualify for Eady nourishment) is *Superman* (Richard Donner, 1978).[14] Although shot in Britain at Pinewood Studios, the film is set entirely in the US (and planet Krypton) and chronicles the exploits of an American pop-culture icon committed to promulgating the values and virtues of 'truth, justice and the American way.'

Conversely, according to such strict legislative criteria as set out above, many seemingly British movies are deemed to be foreign. Notable examples include *Sense and Sensibility* (Ang Lee, 1995) from Jane Austen's quintessentially English novel, Alan Parker's *Evita* (1996) from Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1978 musical, and, most ironically, *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella, 1996). Similarly, the successful and notionally British independent film production outfit Working Title – the company behind *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985), *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Mike Newell, 1994), *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999) and *Bridget Jones's Diary* (Sharon Maguire, 2001); four of the most successful British films of recent decades – is in fact a wholly-owned subsidiary of the American studio Universal, which is in turn owned by the French media conglomerate Vivendi. Writing in *The Independent*, Thomas Sutcliffe outlines how,

> While there might be a popular prejudice in favour of the 'who pays the piper' approach to establishing national pedigree (if the Americans foot the bill then it's an American movie), it very quickly runs into trouble. *Bridget Jones's Diary*, for instance, could credibly be claimed as a French movie by those lights, since a large chunk of money came from Studio Canal. Follow the money and you could claim that Peter Greenaway makes Dutch movies and Ken Loach Spanish ones.[15]

---

[13] Lord Brabourne quoted in Brian McFarlane (1997) *An Autobiography of British Cinema* (London, Methuen) page 94

[14] Introduced in August 1950 and named after Sir William Eady, the Treasury official charged with implementing the scheme, the Eady Levy was essentially a tax on cinema tickets, the proceeds from which were used to reimburse and reward the producers of successful British (registered) films.

[15] Thomas Sutcliffe, 'A question of nationality in the film world' in *The Independent* (30 January 2002)

The James Bond films produced by Eon Productions afford another prominent example of the failings of legislative and economic definitions of cinematic nationality, as well as drawing attention to the multi-nationalism of much contemporary filmmaking. As would appear reasonable for a series of films devoted to the exploits of a British Secret Service agent, the majority of the Bond films have been registered as British, have been shot at Pinewood Studios and have employed largely British casts and crews.[16] The original producers of the series, however, Cubby Broccoli and Harry Saltzman, were American and Canadian respectively;[17] their holding company, Danjaq International, is registered in Switzerland; and the films are financed and distributed by the American company United Artists. Moreover, the films themselves are designed specifically to appeal to the largest possible global audience, and the series has frequently aped recent international box-office hits and adapted in line with perceived Hollywood trends.[18] In other words, despite having been honoured in 2002 by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) for their outstanding contribution to the British film industry, the Bond films hardly afford an example of uncomplicated British nationalism. It is no doubt because of this that, as with 1970s British cinema more generally, the Bond films have yet to receive the critical attention that their box-office popularity and obvious generic influence would suggest they deserve.[19]

---

[16] *Moonraker* (Lewis Gilbert, 1979) is an exception, and was an Anglo-French co-production shot in cheaper studio facilities in Paris as a consequence of the punitive tax hikes imposed by Jim Callaghan's crisis-hit Labour administration from 1976 to 1979.

[17] The current producers of the series, Barbara Broccoli and Michael G. Wilson, are both American.

[18] Reflecting the widespread 'Americanisation' of British culture (and cinema more specifically) that occurred in the period, in the early 1970s the Bond producers undertook to explicitly Americanise the franchise by casting American actors in the role of James Bond. John Gavin was actually signed to play Bond in *Diamonds are Forever* (Guy Hamilton, 1971) but was later bought out of his contract when Sean Connery consented to return to the role, and Burt Reynolds was frontrunner for the part before Roger Moore was cast in *Live and Let Die* (Guy Hamilton, 1973). Furthermore, both these films make extensive use of American locations: respectively Las Vegas and New Orleans. *Live and Let Die* also taps into a contemporary vogue for American 'blaxploitation' movies such as *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (Ossie Davis, 1970) and *Shaft* (Gordon Parks, 1971). Similarly, *The Man with the Golden Gun* (Guy Hamilton, 1974) incorporates kung-fu and martial arts sequences that recall the recent global box-office hit *Enter the Dragon* (Robert Clouse, 1973); and, while Jaws the metal-toothed killer in *The Spy Who Loved Me* (Lewis Gilbert 1977) is an obvious reference to Steven Spielberg's 1975 'nature in revolt' thriller (complete with man eating shark gag), *Moonraker* is clearly imitative of *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977).

[19] Despite there being seemingly hundreds of books on the Bond films, these are typically journalistic or fan accounts that choose to evaluate the films in relation to each other or to Ian Fleming's source novels as opposed to relating them to broader cinematic or politico-cultural trends. The few noteworthy exceptions are David Cannadine's 'James Bond and the Decline of England' in *Encounter* (September 1979, pages 46-55); Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott's pioneering *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* (London, Macmillan, 1987); and James Chapman's insightful and engaging study *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films* (London, I. B. Tauris, 1999)

However, one should not be fooled into thinking that BAFTA can be relied upon to furnish the last word on cinematic Britishness. Thomas Sutcliffe explains how

> Bafta's definition of Britishness turns out to be pretty straightforward. If you qualify for government tax relief as a British film then you qualify for this section. Since the rules are that a film only counts as British if more than 70 per cent of its budget is spent in the United Kingdom and more than 70 per cent of the payroll goes to European and Commonwealth talent, you can see that there's a concept of nationality here that is more all-embracing than that generally adopted by the UK immigration service.[20]

Hence why BAFTA's 2002 shortlist for best British film included such fundamentally American (runaway) movies as Robert Altman's *Gosford Park* and Warner Bros' *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Chris Columbus). While both films make use of largely British casts and exploit Britain's literary tradition, both were directed by Americans and were financed almost exclusively with American cash. Their selection as candidates for best 'British' film of the year, irrespective of their individual merits, serves to highlight the fundamental economic enfeeblement of the British film industry. Indeed, the value of the economic definitions detailed above is that, despite their propensity to produce seemingly aberrant and nonsensical results, they do permit a more accurate picture of the fiscal health of the national film industry to develop. Such definitions enable one to see that, in terms of the number of films produced and more significantly exhibited, and regardless of actual content, the British film industry was in much ruder health in the mid-to-late 1970s under a triumvirate of vertically integrated internationalist British film producers than it is today, despite having experienced an apparent renaissance since the early 1980s.

In 1997 the British Film Institute undertook to classify British filmmaking in more contemporary terms, mixing purely fiscal factors with more cultural considerations, based on its analysis of 78 'British' films produced in 1995. The BFI survey identified four distinct areas of British filmmaking activity. Firstly, films where the cultural and financial impetus is from the UK and the majority of the production personnel are British: films such as *Brassed Off* (Mark Herman) and *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle). Secondly, majority UK co-productions where, although there are foreign partners,

[20] Thomas Sutcliffe, 'A question of nationality in the film world' in *The Independent* (30 January 2002)

there is UK-specific cultural content and a significant amount of British finance and personnel, such as *Nil by Mouth* (Gary Oldman) and *Secrets and Lies* (Mike Leigh). Thirdly, what it terms minority UK co-productions, defined as foreign (non-US) films in which there is limited UK involvement in finance and personnel, such as *Breaking the Waves* (Lars Von Trier) and *Stealing Beauty* (Bernardo Bertolucci). And finally, the BFI draws attention to American films with a UK creative and/or part-financial involvement, such as *Emma* (Douglas McGrath) and *The Portrait of a Lady* (Jane Campion).

Unfortunately this pseudo-empirical categorisation is seriously undermined by necessarily having to rely on an initial and subjective pre-selection process, and consequently amounts to little more than a more complex reiteration of Raymond Durgnat's oft-felt British feeling. Moreover, whether it tells us anything new or previously unobserved about the state of the cinema in contemporary Britain is debatable. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that had this analysis been conducted in the late 1970s it would have been necessary to append a fifth classification for those films where, although the cultural content was principally or indeed solely American, the financial impetus was from the UK. For example, many of the films produced and financed by the film production arm of the British entertainment conglomerate Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI) have the manifest appearance of American movies.

This is particularly true of those films produced under the aegis of Barry Spikings and Michael Deeley who, while at British Lion, had overseen *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (Nicolas Roeg, 1976), the first feature to be filmed entirely in the US without any American financial participation. EMI also gave the world *Convoy* (Sam Peckinpah, 1978), inspired by the lyrics of a country and western song, which modernises myths of the old Wild West (trucker 'Rubber Duck' is described as *"the living embodiment of the American cowboy tradition."*). *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978), meanwhile, explores the emotional and cultural legacy of the Vietnam War on the American psyche. Likewise, many (but by no means all) of the movies produced by the British Associated Communications Corporation (ACC) have seemingly little or no cultural relevance to their nation of origin. For example, *Borderline* (Jerrold Freedman, 1980) is a rather dour exposé of racketeering and illegal immigration on

the American-Mexican border starring Charles Bronson; *Capricorn One* (Peter Hyams, 1978) tells of the corruption of the 'American dream' and a faked NASA space mission to Mars; and *March or Die* (Dick Richards, 1977) is an engaging tale of the French Foreign Legion starring Gene Hackman and Max Von Sydow.

> In the land of unfathomable questions ... what exactly defines film as British is possibly the most perplexing poser of all. With so many variables – the source of funding, the nationality of the director, the Britishness of subject matter – all rearing up to complicate the issue, what we can rightfully cheer on come Oscar night is a conundrum of Countdown proportions.[21]

In the absence of many truly home-grown British successes on the world stage, the media in Britain have grown accustomed to praising what one might call expatriate achievement; the critical or box-office success in America and in American films of British production personnel who have either relocated to Hollywood from the British film industry or who have built film careers there having had no experience of working in the industry in Britain. Media attention has typically been focussed on thespian talent but also on the director, the most public face of those behind the camera. A noteworthy recent example is the treatment of British-born director and 'Hollywood hero' (*The Independent*, 28 March 2000) Sam Mendes, who won the best picture and director Oscars for the film *American Beauty* at the Academy Awards in March 2000. Somewhat ironically considering the film's title, Mendes' victory was trumpeted in the British press as being a triumph for British filmmaking in articles headed 'Hollywood hails new Brits on the block' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 16 February 2000) and 'Britons steal the Oscars show' (*The Guardian*, 28 March 2000). "Our boy from the Donmar Warehouse made his detour to Tinseltown, beat the Yanks at their own game hands down, first time around," gloats *The Guardian* (31 March 2000) with palpable anti-American glee, "and made no bones about the fact that he was on the next plane home to the country that understands quality, that is daring and innovative, that makes art in the finest tradition, without pandering to the lowest common denominator."

Exploring comparable territory in a provocative and prescient article written in 1974 for the British film journal *Sight and Sound*, John Russell Taylor argued:

---

[21] Ian Freer, 'Squeezed in the UK' in *Empire* (October 1997, issue 100) page 154

> the question is rather, to my mind, is there anything one could isolate as a specifically British quality which can operate at maximum intensity not only in films about Britain, but also, perhaps all the more perceptively, in films which call upon directors to respond to a foreign scene? It seems to me, for instance – perhaps naively – that some of the special intensity and excitement of *Midnight Cowboy* or *Point Blank* or *Bullitt* ... resides in precisely this quality of being a non-American view of America, with the director functioning, among many other things, as a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, excited by frequently mundane things which an American would take for granted.[22]

Although certainly a brave attempt to reconfigure the discussion, Taylor's belief in some hitherto elusive but peculiarly British quality is, as he suspects, naïve. The characteristics he discerns are by no means unique to British eyes, but merely highlight how an outsider's view of whatever national scene can perceive qualities and facets of a nation's character that may well be overlooked by someone raised, immersed and infused with the indigenous culture. There is clearly nothing uniquely British about this. The international success of the filmmaking partnership of the American James Ivory and the Indian Ishmail Merchant – purveyors of the so-called 'heritage' films that came to typify British cinema in the popular imagination throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s – derives, at least in part, from benefiting from their outsiders view of the detailed minutiae and naturalised absurdities of the entrenched British class system. The popularity of these films amongst British audiences suggests that their exterior perspective has challenged the indigenous audience to look again at what it wrongly felt to be familiar, while their assimilation by non-British audiences has no doubt been aided by their sharing an exterior view. Likewise, the most successful and interesting heritage offerings of recent years, such as Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* and Shekkar Kapur's *Elizabeth* (1998) have also been the work of non-British directors and have again de-familiarised the familiar.

On account of the inadequacies and anomalies associated with such fiscal and legislative demarcations of cinematic Britishness as outlined above, most scholarly accounts of national cinema have favoured filmic content over issues of production and have chosen to ascribe nationality as a consequence of onscreen representation.

---

[22] John Russell Taylor (1974) 'Tomorrow the World' page 82

Moreover, despite the apparent objectivity of the legislative definitions explored thus far, lurking behind them and the protectionist measures that have more often than not necessitated their framing is an acceptance of the existence of, and desirability of maintaining, some ill-defined but distinctive indigenous filmic quality. To put it another way, there appears to be widespread acceptance of the notion that there is some special virtue in the continuance of a specifically British cinema, beyond simply that of keeping studios open and of keeping actors and technicians in work. As John Russell Taylor explains,

> A higher goal of some kind is suggested to reside in Englishness (or at least Britishness) as an insoluble, recognisable quality. Moreover, it seems to be assumed that it is the duty of British film-makers to exemplify this quality at all times, or, if they are not able through *force majeur* (and are not strong enough to choose the way of national purity and silence) to do so all the time, at least they are supposed to be worried about their failure, and contrite, and eager to make up for their lapses by doing better and more British next time. All of which, put this boldly, sounds strange and suspect. Of course, it never is put this boldly, and no doubt many who seem to accept it as unspoken assumption would be horrified to be told that this is really what they mean. Yet how else can one explain the often bitter criticisms levelled on the heads of film-makers who make international-type (even if British based) films ... Some sort of buried but still potent chauvinism appears to be working away.[23]

It is certainly the case that the desire to protect the domestic film industry and the national culture (however imagined) from foreign influence and cultural 'contamination' (the images of disease and infection connoted by this word, often used in this context, are particularly revealing) has been common to each successive British government almost since the inception of the cinematic medium over one hundred years ago. For instance, discussing the rationale behind the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act, Linda Wood outlines how

> that trade followed film was an article of faith reinforced by the US success in both. Business leaders were convinced that if they could show off British wares in British films this would go a long way to fight off US competition. But for the Imperialist lobby it was not simply a matter of trade; the need to promote British cultural values was considered of equal importance.[24]

---

[23] ibid, page 81

[24] Linda Wood (1997) 'Low-budget British Films in the 1930s' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI) page 48

Likewise, even Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives, laissez-faire economic libertarians who in the 1985 Films Act abolished all of the film industry's existing legislative safeguards (the quota, the Eady Levy and the subsidised National Film Finance Corporation), came belatedly to accept the cultural significance of having a national film industry, and continued to subsidise it (albeit less generously than had previous administrations) via the new British Screen Finance Consortium long after it was supposed to have become financially self-sufficient and to have stepped out onto the purportedly level playing field of the global free market.

The 'Junior Partner' History of the Cinema in Britain[25]

> In keeping with the past, the British cinema since the 1970s has persisted with its obsessional fashioning of indigenous subject matter into facsimiles of the Hollywood product in the hope of finding a formula that will revive its fortunes on both sides of the Atlantic. Only the epic biographies of Richard Attenborough (*Gandhi*, 1982, and *Cry Freedom*, 1987) and the adroit adaptations of the British-based Indian-American partnership of Ishmail Merchant and James Ivory have come close to repeating the success of Hugh Hudson's *Chariots of Fire* (1981). Thus, it has been a period of recurrent false dawns for the industry as a whole, with many leading performers and talented directors ... ultimately forced to pursue their careers in Hollywood.[26]

Underlying David Parkinson's remarks cited above, disclosed by the filmic examples he selects, is the familiar view that while heritage films, classic literary adaptations and David Lean-like epics are good, commendable and British; popular entertainment is not only valueless and reprehensible, but also fundamentally American. For Parkinson goes beyond suggesting simply that there is something 'unique' about British cinema that given free reign would be different to Hollywood cinema (whatever that might be), to suggest that the pursuit of the American audience, or indeed the British mass audience, is deplorable and harmful to all concerned. Comparable disdain is expressed in this contemporary review of the British mid-Atlantic adventure *Shout at the Devil* (Peter Hunt, 1976):

> The danger of such films is that box-office results generally *appear* to vindicate them. The public want to be told stories, and they are not critical in detail of the way their stories are told. But in the long run a diet of pictures

[25] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* page 2
[26] David Parkinson (1995) *History of Film* (London, Thames & Hudson) page 243

> that are deficient of the most elementary skills of narrative can only depress the general appetite for movies.[27]

Such comments, as well as calling to mind paternalistic Reithian ideals of 'quality' broadcasting, articulate the view that the proletarian mass should be given what it *needs* and not what it thinks it *wants*. Moreover, the blending of (thinly-veiled) cultural elitism with half-suppressed anti-Americanism is itself typical of the British middle class. More damagingly, the above comments are based on the perverse assumption that, because 'popularity' is considered to be a defining feature of the American cinema – where 'popular' is used to mean, as defined by Raymond Williams, "well-liked by many people,"[28] – in order to be truly British and unlike American cinema, British films must be intrinsically 'unpopular' both at home and abroad.[29] Taking this absurdity one step further, Andrew Higson highlights how

> It is certainly the case that the types of British film which have over the years been understood within intellectual film culture as truly national – the documentary-realist tradition or the heritage genre, for instance – have been unable consistently to win popular support. The terms 'national' and 'popular' are therefore not generally equivalent within British film culture, with 'national' tending to indicate bourgeois interests, values and tastes. One implication of this scenario is that, for a cinema to be nationally popular, it must paradoxically also be international in scope; that is to say, it must work with Hollywood's international standards.[30]

Contrary to halcyon recollections of a healthy, untainted, uncomplicated cinematic past, pronounced transatlantic sensibilities have been a perennial facet of filmmaking in Britain. For example, throughout the 1920s Michael Balcon, later the head of the quintessentially English Ealing Studios, was importing American stars to bolster the international appeal of such British features as *Woman to Woman* (Graham Cutts, 1922) and *The Prude's Fall* (Graham Cutts, 1923). Similarly, foreign films have dominated British cinema screens since the very earliest days of the medium. It is

---

[27] David Robinson, '*Shout at the Devil*' film review in *The Times* (15 April 1976) page 13

[28] Raymond Williams (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, Croom Helm) page 237

[29] Similarly, Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich draw attention to "the way in which the popular is often defined as foreign with national contexts. For example, within Britain, the popular has often been associated with America and Americanization. This position is usually constructed around a conception of the national in which Britishness is associated with legitimate culture." (1995) 'Introduction: Popular Film and Cultural Distinctions' in Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press) page 6

[30] Andrew Higson (1995) *Waving the Flag* page 9

estimated that even by the outbreak of the First World War only 25% of the films screened in UK cinemas were in fact British in origin, with the rest coming from America and principally France. Tom Ryall explains that

> The war was to shift the balance dramatically in favour of America partly because European production was severely curtailed during the war and partly because during the 1914-18 period America's standing in the world of international trade and business was radically transformed from the position of debtor nation to that of creditor nation. From the beginning of the war to the mid-1920s, American film exports to Europe increased fivefold and, in Britain, the American share of the market estimated at 30% in 1909, had increased to 60% in 1914 and to a staggering 95% in 1926.[31]

To put it another way, the British public's experience of cinema has always been of a predominantly foreign, and latterly largely American, medium. The upshot of this foreign supremacy has been that British cinema, what it is and what it should be, has been defined by British critics, lawmakers and filmmakers in opposition to the dominant American industry almost from the outset. In essence, the British cinema is what the American cinema is not.

> It would seem reasonable to define a national cinema as one that draws on indigenous cultural traditions, one that invokes and explores the nation's cultural heritage. But what exactly is an indigenous cultural tradition? ... Is the national heritage ever really 'pure', or is it always to some extent a cultural collage, an amalgam of overlapping and sometimes antagonistic traditions, a mix of ingredients from diverse sources?[32]

This oppositional definition has not only shaped the attitude of British filmmakers as to what types of film they should be making, it has also coloured the responses of the critics and encouraged the valorisation of certain 'British' values, styles, genres and texts over others. Critical discourses do not simply describe an already existing national cinema, but rather, observes Andrew Higson,

> they themselves produce the national cinema in their utterances. This is not to deny that the film industry has produced a huge range of films over the years. Of course it has, but descriptions of British cinema as a national cinema do not generally attempt to embrace all such activity. On the contrary, they tend

[31] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/Sheffield Hallam University) pages 5-6
[32] Andrew Higson (2000) 'The Instability of the National' page 36

> to be far more selective in promoting one particular reading of British cinema over others.[33]

Accordingly, those that have been praised have typically been those that are more readily distinguishable from the American cinematic mainstream and the classical Hollywood tradition. "British films have lived in the shadow of not just the American cinema but also in the shadow of the British documentary film which has enjoyed considerable prestige amongst critics and writers both in Britain and abroad,"[34] argues Tom Ryall. The position of the documentary film as the national cinema's core formal approach was cemented by the unparalleled popularity of British films with British audiences (and British critics) during the Second World War.[35] Furthermore, in the special circumstances of the war a number of British films, including *In Which We Serve* (David Lean and Noel Coward, 1942) and *49th Parallel* (Michael Powell, 1941), also achieved great success in America.[36] According to Tom Ryall, whereas the 1930s had seen an almost absolute divorce between the 'escapist' entertainment of the commercial film industry and the socially alert documentary films of the government and industrial sector, the war drew these cinematic strands together, with the style of the documentary film influencing the fictional narrative as in *The Gentle Sex* (Leslie Howard, 1943) and the world of fiction influencing the documentary as in *Fires Were Started* (Humphrey Jennings, 1943).[37] For example, to bring authenticity and 'realism' to the war films being made at Ealing, studio head Michael Balcon recruited documentary filmmakers like Harry Watt and Alberto Cavalcanti to helm fictional feature films like *Nine Men* (1943) and *Went the Day Well?* (1942).

However, wartime British cinema's newfound domestic popularity was brought about not simply by the cultural impact of the war and the patriotic wish of British audiences to see the British experience of war honestly depicted on the cinema screen, but also (and more prosaically) by the flow of new American films having

---

[33] Andrew Higson (1995) *Waving the Flag* page 1
[34] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* page 3
[35] For further discussion, see Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards (1986) *Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War* (Oxford, Blackwell); and John Ellis (1996) 'The Quality Film Adventure: British Critics and the Cinema 1942-1948' in Andrew Higson (ed.) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London, Cassell)
[36] Putting it another way, "The second world war temporarily solved the problem of Britain not being an interesting enough subject for audiences at home and abroad," suggests Andy Beckett in a humorous critique of British filmmaking, 'Made in the UK' in *The Guardian* (16 November 2001).
[37] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* page 14

been stemmed by the ongoing Battle of the Atlantic.[38] In summary, the wistful and oft-expressed yearning of British cultural critics for the 'good old days' of British cinema, when British films were in all things British, untainted by foreign and specifically American creative influence and immune to the economic vacillations of Hollywood ignores the ceaseless transatlantic mimesis and processes of cultural transference that have always shaped and reshaped the film industries on both sides of the Atlantic.[39] Moreover, while current approved wisdom has it that the Americanisation of British cinema and culture is in all things bad, this was not always the case. For instance, in the 1920s and 1930s the dominant attitude was that making movies specifically for international export was laudable and to be encouraged both for artistic and for economic reasons. In the same way that following the introduction of sound Britain became America's prime overseas market because of the common language, British filmmakers came increasingly to view the vast American market as a bountiful land of opportunity. Transatlantic co-operation and the pursuit of the American audience were to be encouraged because, as well as promising the fiscal advantages of spreading costs and gaining access to a greatly increased market, such a course of action

> implied a degree of Anglo-American cultural *rapport* and was perceived as a sign of the health of the British film industry as well as an indicator of Anglo-American co-operation. Hollywood's success at home and abroad made it the dominant model of world cinema, a capitalist blueprint for a successful movie industry – surely, many argued, Britain should follow suit.[40]

---

[38] However, lest we overstate the situation, "It should be borne in mind that throughout the war years at least three-quarters of the films shown in British cinemas came from Hollywood and the majority of them ignored the war. British films like *49th Parallel, In Which We Serve* and *The Way to the Stars* were competing with *Rebecca, Gone with the Wind* and *The Philadelphia Story*." Robert Murphy (2000) *British Cinema and the Second World War* (London, Continuum) page 14

[39] The process of cultural transference, by which films from one national context are taken up and absorbed by audiences in another national context, "is a story of assimilation without final control, a story in which difference matters as it helps de- and reconstruct the familiar. It is a story in which the reception of artefacts from one nation by another shifts from moments of dominance to moments of liberation and back again in an unpredictable ebb and flow. It is a story in which the 'dreadful' words 'They say, they say, they say' are met and addressed in dialogue by 'We say' – whether the 'they' in question were the utterances of a British text or the domestic ideological constraints realized by American audiences in their understandings of that text. It is, finally, a story in which meanings constructed 'here' speak about, with, and to meanings from 'there' – and vice versa – and in which nothing, inevitably, is completely different." Jeffrey S. Miller (2000) *Something Completely Different: British Television and American Culture* (Minneapolis, University Of Minnesota Press) pages 182-183

[40] Sarah Street (2000) 'Stepping Westward: The Distribution of British Films in America, and the case of *The Private Life of Henry VIII*' in Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson (eds.) *British Cinema: Past and Present* (London Routledge) page 52

These are lines of reasoning that would be closely followed half a century later by EMI, Rank and ACC – British filmmakers similarly intent on securing a foothold in the coveted transatlantic market.

Pre-war British cinema was far more embracing of foreign ideas and formal techniques than many modern accounts of the period would have us believe. On the subject of foreign influences on British filmmaking, Andrew Higson outlines how

> A key moment in British cinema history from this point of view is the late 1920s and 1930s, when two interrelated tendencies encouraged an exotic strain in British film-making. First, from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s, various business initiatives explored the possibility of a pan-European cinema, or 'Film Europe', as it was known at the time. Some of the more enterprising British film production companies were involved in these initiatives, developing co-production arrangements with companies elsewhere, but especially in Germany and France, sharing production facilities, exchanging personnel and generally attempting to make films that might appeal to audiences in several different national markets.[41]

One of the earliest beneficiaries of 'Film Europe' was Alfred Hitchcock, whose first features were shot at the UFA studios in Berlin and Emelka's in Munich, as well as on location in Germany, Italy, Austria and France, as part of a co-production arrangement between Gainsborough and Münchener Lichtspielkunst. Hitchcock's films are "the meeting place of stylistic influences from America, Germany and the Soviets. Hitchcock made no secret of this," explains Charles Barr. "He would always refer, in articles and interviews, to the impact made on him by Soviet montage editing and to the satisfaction he took in using devices drawn from Pudovkin and Kuleshov."[42] Hitchcock's appropriation of 'foreign' methods is much in evidence in his first British film, *The Lodger* (1927), which, as well as making use of montage and a decidedly expressionistic aesthetic redolent of F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922), also exposes an uncommonly early appreciation of the conventions of what would later be called 'classical' Hollywood cinema (notably shot/reverse shot and point of view compositions).

---

[41] Andrew Higson (2000) 'The Instability of the National' pages 41-42

[42] Charles Barr (1997) "Before *Blackmail*: Silent British Cinema" in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI) page 13

The European influence on British cinema would soon be further compounded by the influx of émigré filmmakers fleeing Nazi persecution on the continent. "The establishment of the British film industry as a centre for émigré film-makers had an impact on the range of personnel working in British studies and the aesthetic and technical standards of the 'British' films they worked on,"[43] explains Andrew Higson. *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933), a worldwide hit and arguably the first British feature film to break through into the American market, was the work of one such émigré: Alexander Korda. Korda had produced and directed movies in America, Austria, Germany, France and his native Hungary before finally settling in England in 1931, whereupon he formed London Film Productions. Less a progenitor of contemporary British heritage cinema than a forerunner of the stylised, melodramatic bodice-rippers produced by Gainsborough in the 1940s,[44] *The Private Life of Henry VIII* is a lavish and consciously playful depiction of medieval England that benefits greatly from a suitably histrionic performance from Charles Laughton as the eponymous monarch (a performance for which the British-born Laughton won the Oscar for best actor – the first time the award had been presented to a non-American). Korda was clear on why he thought the film had become such an international sensation:

> On the whole it is true that the average man and woman in every country has certain fundamental feelings in common, and it is to these feelings that the average film must appeal. When a film has reached out to appeal to the Lowest Common Multiple – or, in a more flattering phrase, to the Highest Common Factor – in human emotion, then it will succeed all over the world. It must always be remembered, too, that in doing so it need lose nothing of the highest quality in human drama. The extent to which a British film resembles a Hollywood film, or the extent to which it is national cannot matter beside the width of its universal human appeal.[45]

Buoyed by the success of *Henry VIII*, Korda initiated a cycle of lavishly budgeted movies, typically based on historical subject matter, aimed squarely at the American market and occasionally starring imported Hollywood talent. Noteworthy examples

---

[43] Andrew Higson (2000) 'The Instability of the National' pages 41-42; see also Kevin Gough-Yates' thoroughly researched account of the domination by European exiles of British film production in the 1930s, 'Exiles and British Cinema' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *British Cinema Book* (London, BFI, 1997)

[44] See Sue Harper (1987) 'Historical Pleasures: Gainsborough Melodrama' in Christine Gledhill (ed.) *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (London, BFI); and Sue Aspinall and Robert Murphy (eds.) (1983) *Gainsborough Melodrama* (London, BFI)

[45] Alexander Korda (1938) 'British Films: To-day and To-morrow' in Charles Davy (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.) page 168

are the soundalike *The Private Life of Don Juan* (Alexander Korda, 1934) starring Douglas Fairbanks Snr., the hugely expensive *Catherine the Great* (Paul Czinner, 1934) starring Douglas Fairbanks Jnr., *Rembrandt* (Alexander Korda, 1936) with Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester, and *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (Harold Young, 1937) with Leslie Howard. Tom Ryall points to a related cycle of 'Imperial Epics' that sought to represent and (re)package the exoticism of the beneficent British Empire for consumption by audiences both at home and abroad.[46] Examples of such romanticised colonial adventures are London Films' *Sanders of the River* (1935), *The Drum* (1938) and *The Four Feathers* (1939), each directed by Korda's brother Zoltan; and *Rhodes of Africa* (Berthold Viertel, 1936) and *King Solomon's Mines* (Robert Stevenson, 1937) from Gaumont-British. Other historical pictures from the period are *Nell Gwynn* (Herbert Wilcox, 1934), *The Iron Duke* (Victor Saville, 1934), *Tudor Rose* (Robert Stevenson, 1935) and *Scrooge* (Henry Edwards, 1935). Alas, none that followed *Henry VIII* across the Atlantic could match the success of Korda's original. In truth, much of the American success of *The Private Life of Henry VIII* was due to Korda's close links with United Artists, whose established distribution network ensured that the film gained much wider exposure in the US than was typically the case for British films.[47] Sarah Street explains how

> From 1938 British protective measures for the film industry were accompanied by incentives for American companies to produce in Britain, thus encouraging them to give their 'British' films, as well as those financed by British capital, fair distribution in the USA. American companies, anxious to prove that they did not discriminate against British films and keen to protect their own overseas markets, made a concerted attempt to show that if British films were good enough, they would get a fair chance in the USA. Somewhat ironically, therefore, American corporate attitudes towards British film cannot be considered without reference to their interest in preserving the flow of Hollywood's films to the UK. The favourable trend towards 'reciprocity' between British and American companies found it clearest expression in Korda's links with United Artists in the 1930s and Rank's much

[46] See Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema*

[47] "The success of this meretricious film in America served to stress the impression, never widespread there, that England had learned how to make motion pictures good enough to command attention from the American public … By the same token, the harm done was incalculable. No one bothered to spare the time for an intensive study of the possibilities of British product in America. No one paused to debate whether *The Private Life of Henry VIII* had been a phenomenon that might have caught on in the United States for any number of varied reasons. The assumption became automatic that England finally had found a formula for easy success through all the days to come. An entire national enterprise, it appeared, had fastened its present and its future on the success of one motion picture." Maurice Kann (1938) 'Hollywood and Britain – Three Thousand Miles Apart' in Charles Davy (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.) page 191

> publicised deals with Universal which were largely responsible for the relatively high number of British films distributed in America in the 1940s and 1950s.[48]

Encouraged by United Artists, and with financial backing from the Prudential Assurance Company, in the wake of *Henry VIII* Korda began construction of grand studio facilities at Denham. Rank too began a programme of massive studio expansion. Incidentally, the redevelopment in the 1930s of Rank's Pinewood studios at Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire, was based on the blueprints of the Radio Pictures studio in Hollywood. In other words, even Britain's premier studio complex, whose very name is redolent of English ideals of agrarianism and the nation's rustic past, is by no means free of US influence. However, "while Korda established himself as the leader of a renascent British industry, his increasingly profligate ways merely served to encourage the industry to grow beyond its means,"[49] and, when box-office hits failed to appear, these lavish period adventures proved too costly to endure (as would be the case for Rank, EMI and ACC in the early 1980s). The years 1936 and 1937 saw huge losses in the British film industry and the widespread closure of studios. Korda suffered too and lost control of his beloved Denham studios to Prudential, who promptly sold them on to Rank. Even so, his ingrained internationalism and confidence in British cinema's global appeal seems not to have been dented. Writing in 1938 he warned there could be no more serious setback to the British film industry than a retrenching from its world ambitions. "To take this retrograde step would be a disaster to the industry economically. The theory that British pictures can be made for the British market alone is unsound."[50]

> The American connection has also disfigured the debate about what sort of films British producers should be making … Should they be making low-budget films pitched largely at the local market and emphasising their Britishness, as the critics demand, or big films on the Hollywood model for the world? Does being true to oneself, and not selling out to Hollywood, really mean abandoning melodrama for realism, showmanship for seriousness, spectacle for solemn emotion, tight scripts for improvised styles? Too often the choice for the British filmmaker has seemed to lie between critical approval combined with minimal box-office or going all-out to emphasise the most garish, flamboyant and parochial aspects of popular cinema.[51]

---

[48] Sarah Street (2000) 'Stepping Westward' page 52
[49] David Puttnam (1997) *The Undeclared War* page 160
[50] Alexander Korda (1938) 'British Films: To-day and To-morrow' page 171
[51] James Park (1990) *British Cinema: The Lights that Failed* (London, B. T. Batsford) page 16

Prefiguring the above comments from James Park, writing in the 1960s renowned film critic Penelope Houston prophesised that the next decade would witness a cinema split between mass-entertainment movies made at huge cost for huge audiences, "and the small-scale films which have left the majority audience lagging behind … Certainly one could no more expect a mass public to go every step of the way with Antonioni or Resnais or Goddard, or even Truffaut despite his sensitivity to audience response."[52] This after all had been the case in the 1940s. At the same time as J. Arthur Rank sought to woo US audiences with lavish British 'prestige pictures' inspired by the stateside success of Laurence Olivier's *Henry V* (1946), such as *The Red Shoes* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948) and *Hamlet* (Laurence Olivier, 1948), the domestic audience was treated to the rather more modest comedies of British insularity from Ealing, notably *Passport to Pimlico* (Henry Cornelius, 1949) and *Whisky Galore!* (Alexander Mackendrick, 1949), and such provincial potboilers as *Dancing with Crime* (John Paddy Carstairs, 1947) and *My Brother's Keeper* (Alfred Roome and Roy Rich, 1948). Moreover, despite the Rank Organisation's avowed internationalism in the latter half of the decade, André Bazin was able to praise the dominance of the realist aesthetic in Britain and "the appearance of a British cinema that was free from the influences of Hollywood."[53]

The same distinction between moviemaking for global and local audiences had been true of the 1950s. The decade witnessed the increased incidence in Britain of transatlantic co-productions and Hollywood 'runaway' movies, such as *Moby Dick* (John Huston, 1956) and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (David Lean, 1957), that mixed British and American themes and stars in a manner designed to appeal to the widest possible international audience. "In many ways this repeated the pattern of the thirties and, as then, such films were accompanied within the British industry by films of modest ambition, films more parochial in appeal,"[54] explains Tom Ryall. Likewise, British cinema in the 1960s had seen the mixing of international feature films, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (David Lean, 1962), *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964) and Rank's *The Heroes of Telemark* (Anthony Mann, 1965), with the social-realist texts of the British

[52] Penelope Houston (1963) *The Contemporary Cinema* (Harmondsworth, Penguin) page 194
[53] André Bazin (1968) 'The Evolution of Film Language' in Peter Graham (ed.) *The New Wave* (London, Secker & Warburg) page 33
[54] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* page 18

'new wave' whose budgets and appeal were somewhat more limited, such as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karol Reisz, 1960), *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (Tony Richardson, 1962) and *This Sporting Life* (Lindsay Anderson, 1963). Those few new wave movies that did achieve distribution in the US typically did so via the art-house circuit.

On the other hand, unlike in previous decades and contrary to the scenario prophesised by Penelope Houston, while in the 1970s mid-Atlantic aspirations dominated, British cultural critics could find little praiseworthy about those few features that were content to appeal solely to the domestic audience: films such as Rank's increasingly dog-eared *Carry on* franchise, progressively more graphic sex comedies like *The Amorous Milkman* (Derren Nesbitt, 1974) and *Ups and Downs of a Handyman* (John Sealey, 1975), and spin-offs from TV sitcoms. For George Perry, writing in 1974, the commercial success of the films *Dad's Army* (Norman Cohen, 1971), *On the Buses* (Harry Booth, 1971), *Please Sir!* (Mark Stuart, 1971) and *Up Pompeii* (Bob Kellett, 1971) was "not only a dismal index of public taste, but a direct encouragement to Wardour Street not to exercise too much imagination."[55]

In the main, however, British cinema in the 1970s chose not to exploit indigenous cultural texts and traditions, and to ignore the national culture's cherished theatrical and literary heritage in favour of imported Hollywood stars and modern novels whose recent sales success in America (rather than literary merit) was the source of their appeal. This is in contrast to British films of the 1980s, whose critical valorisation has been based specifically upon the way in which it is perceived to have exploited Britain's history, literary heritage and theatrical tradition (the tendency of 'heritage cinema' to draw thespian talent from the theatrical stage). In addition, there has been critical approval for the way in which 1980s British cinema apparently re-engaged with the issues affecting modern Britain, particularly with regard to the contemporary social realist texts emanating from Channel 4, including *Wetherby* (David Hare, 1985) and *Letter to Brezhnev* (Chris Bernard, 1985). Again, unlike the mass entertainment of the 1970s, where these films have circulated in America it has generally been in the guise of 'art' cinema.

---

[55] George Perry (1974 / 1975) *The Great British Picture Show: From the Nineties to the Seventies* (St Albans, Paladin) page 278

In contrast to the neo-realism of the 1980s, 1970s British cinema is consciously cosy and retrospective: note, for instance, the disproportionately large number of period and specifically wartime movies produced during the decade. The dream on offer in the glamorous mid-Atlantic movies with which we are here concerned is one of escape from grim reality, domestic unrest and social heterogeneity into a make-believe rural past or an alternative, tranquil and crucially more alluring present. Indeed, such a dream was in fact characteristic of British popular culture in the 1970s more generally (as is discussed in more detail in chapter 3), as evidenced by the widespread popularity of mock-rustic décor and design and Laura Ashley's pseudo-Edwardian aesthetic, as well as the back-to-basics ethos parodied in the popular BBC sitcom *The Good Life* (1975-78). Certainly one could not claim that the films discussed herein present an accurate or realist depiction of contemporary Britain, and this was certainly never their intention. Although by no means devoid of domestic concerns and anxieties (as is explored further in chapter 4), their appeal was based on a tried and tested transnational recipe of textual attractions (ingenious concept, established stars, glamour, high production values and built-in audience name-recognition) rather than their fidelity to lived experience in Britain or anywhere else.

Andrew Higson highlights how the last half-century has seen a shift in cinematic representation from images of homogeneity to heterogeneity, and postulates that this can be tied "to the more general sense of cultural fragmentation and diversification that is widely assumed to have taken place following the loss of faith in the modernist project and the emergence of postmodern sensibilities."[56] In light of this, he argues, the shift from a British cinema of consensus to one of heterogeneity and dissent appears inevitable. From this perspective British cinema is seen to abandon the hegemonic model and its ideology of collectivism and communality, as typified by Ealing's postwar comedies, in favour of depictions of social diversity and cultural variety, as explored in such films as *High Hopes* (Mike Leigh, 1988) and *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinda Chadha, 1993). His analysis of this process of cultural diversification prompts Higson to ask,

[56] Andrew Higson (2000) 'The Instability of the National' page 38

> Should such films still be seen as the products of a national cinema? It might in fact be more useful to think of them as embodying a new post-national cinema that resists the tendency to nationalise questions of community, culture and identity. The concept of post-national cinema surely better describes films that embrace multiculturalism, difference and hybridity.[57]

On the contrary, there is nothing distinctly 'post-national' about British filmmaking in the 1970s. Indeed, quite the opposite: it comprehensively denies diversity and difference at every turn. That said, however, it is the case that the selfsame destabilising processes of cultural fragmentation that gave rise to the progressive, neo-realist, 'post-national' film-texts of the 1980s also led to the transformation in the 1970s of the British film industry from being a national cinema to an aspirant international cinema. How then can it be justified that one response is lauded, while the other is singularly ignored? Moreover, as explored above, the cinematic dialogue between Britain and America is by no means restricted to the 1970s.

The history of British cinema is the history of the interconnectedness of one national film industry with those of other nations and chiefly the pre-eminent American cinema. This thesis explores this Anglo-American relationship in more detail, and considers how particular mid-Atlantic film-texts may be read in relation to the specific socio-cultural circumstances in which they were produced and circulated. John Russell Taylor proposes that, "it is possible, oversimplifying a little but not really that much, to see the whole history of the British cinema in terms of its fluctuating relations with America and the American market."[58] This is certainly true from an economic standpoint. Hollywood has funded the bulk of British filmmaking since the 1930s. Accordingly, the British film industry's mid-'60s boom was a direct consequence of the decision by the Hollywood studios (notably Columbia and United Artists) to exploit the cheaper overheads Europe had to offer and to invest in British-based 'runaway' productions. The subsequent 'crisis' that overcame the industry in the early 1970s was a result of their decision to withdraw.

In summary, the nature and meaning of British cinema is determined relationally, by its differentiation from other cinemas and particularly the dominant American

---

[57] ibid
[58] John Russell Taylor (1974) 'Tomorrow the World' page 81

cinema, and not by reference to any properties that can be isolated as being forever fundamental or eternally archetypal. It therefore seems especially illogical to dismiss 1970s British cinema on account of the explicitness with which it conducts this transatlantic dialogue when, as we have seen, such a dialogue has been a perennial facet of the cinema in Britain.

> British filmmakers have always needed to face two ways, inwards towards the hopes and fears of the native audience to which they must address their pictures, and out to the broader, international public. Unable to develop an idea of filmmaking that was both British *and* international, they concentrated their energies on defining their position on either side of that spectrum, and lost any sense of what cinema really is for.[59]

Although right to draw attention to the longevity of international aspirations in the British film industry, the above comments from James Park about the quality of British cinema seem undeservedly harsh. They call to mind Satyajit Ray's opinion that the British are not temperamentally equipped to make the best use of the movie camera, or François Truffaut's assertion that there is a certain incompatibility between the terms 'cinema' and 'Britain'. While both are patently mistaken, the most erudite response to the latter remark remains that uttered by British film director Stephen Frears: "Bollocks to Truffaut".[60]

This chapter began by making reference to Alan Lovell's late 1960s comments that British cinema remained largely 'unknown'. Despite academic cartographers having since mapped much of its hitherto virgin territory, and having rightly challenged the disparaging views of Park, Ray and Truffaut in the process, there remains much still to be explored. In the chapters that follow, critical light is shed finally on one such previously unknown province, namely those big-budget films made in Britain in the period 1970-1985 and designed for consumption by the global audience; mid-Atlantic movies that are, contrary to Park's contention, both British *and* international.

---

[59] James Park (1990) *British Cinema: The Lights that Failed* page 17

[60] So begins Frears' provocative exploration of British moviemaking (co-written with Charles Barr) *Typically British: A Personal History of British Cinema* (Stephen Frears and Mike Dibb, 1994), one of a series of documentary films about national cinemas commissioned by the BFI to celebrate the '100th anniversary of cinema'.

3.

Hollywood or Bust!
Britain's mid-Atlantic Moviemakers

I believe in the law of averages. One of these *has* to be a blockbuster![1]

In a ferocious attack on the inadequacies of the British film industry written in 1974, David Gordon argued, "British films have traditionally been aimed at the wrong place: they are too expensive for Britain, and too parochial for the international market."[2] Ironically, at the same moment as Gordon was concocting his polemic, Britain's 'big three' studios – the Rank Organisation, the EMI Film and Theatre Corporation, and the Associated Communications Corporation – inaugurated production strategies that sought explicitly to jettison parochialism and to appeal to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Hollywood studios had invested heavily in British film production throughout the 1960s, to such an extent that by 1968 almost 90% of all production capital was American. Conversely, during this period Britain's two vertically integrated studios, Rank and the Associated British Picture Corporation (ABPC), chose to concentrate their energies on the consistently more profitable distribution and exhibition wings of their respective organisations at the expense of production. By having thus allowed itself to become reliant on the American majors, the British film industry also made itself susceptible to the confusion and economic wrangling that continued to plague Hollywood throughout the decade as the cash-strapped studios were bought out by non-film conglomerates. The mini-major Universal had been the first to go when, in 1962, it was bought by the talent agency Music Corporation of America (MCA). Paramount became part of Gulf + Western soon after, and in 1967 United Artists was acquired by the Transamerica Corporation.

---

[1] Lew Grade summarises his moviemaking strategy, as quoted in David Hewson, 'Over-priced, over-promoted, mid-Atlantic and sinking' in *The Times* (2 July 1981) page 10

[2] David Gordon (1974) 'Ten points about the crisis in the British film industry' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 43, no. 2) page 72

In an attempt to stem the long-term decline in cinema attendance, towards the end of the decade the Hollywood studios had invested heavily in spectacle with a succession of big-budget 'event' movies, typically cast in the mould of the hugely profitable *The Sound of Music* (Robert Wise, 1965). The majority of these would-be blockbusters, including *Star!* (Robert Wise, 1968), *Hello Dolly!* (Gene Kelly, 1969), *Sweet Charity* (Bob Fosse, 1969) and *Darling Lili* (Blake Edwards, 1970), proved to be costly flops.

At the turn of the decade, as over-spending, over-production and poor box-office returns conspired to threaten the studios with bankruptcy, they reacted by dramatically cutting costs. Furthermore, prompted by a perceived waning vogue for British product and recent changes in American tax law that made it possible for producers to deduct 7% of a film's production cost from their tax bill,[3] the studios cut back on overseas 'runaway' production and quit Britain: although even by the mid-1970s American cash still accounted for roughly 50% of the finance for British film production.

The ownership restructuring in the US also had knock-on effects in the UK. In late 1966 Elliot Hyman's mini-major Seven Arts bought Warner Bros, and promptly sold Warner's 25% stake in ABPC to the British leisure conglomerate Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI).[4] Then, in 1969, EMI purchased the remaining 75% of ABPC shares and appointed erstwhile talent agent Lord Bernard Delfont as head of the renamed EMI Film and Theatre Corporation. EMI had previously acquired Delfont's The Grade Organisation, Europe's largest talent agency, for £8 million. Delfont now appointed his brother Leslie Grade (co-managing director of The Grade Organisation) to the EMI board and named the renowned actor, screenwriter, producer and director Bryan Forbes as head of production at what was now called EMI Elstree Studios. Armed with a relatively generous production budget of £15 million, Forbes tried (and failed) to, in the company's words, "bring life to Elstree and to launch a programme of quality films."[5] Of the films initiated by Forbes, only Lionel Jeffries'

---

[3] Noted in Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street (1985) *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the British Government 1927-1984* (London, BFI) page 240

[4] For further discussion of the internal economic strife of the Associated British group, see Alan Eyles (1993) *ABC, the First Name in Entertainment* (London, BFI)

[5] Quoted in Peter Waymark, 'Brian Forbes quits as head of Elstree studios' in *The Times* (26 March 1971) page 2

The Railway Children (1970) was successful commercially.[6] Forbes resigned as head of production in March 1971, 13 months before his contract was up for renewal, having made what Brian McFarlane calls "a valiant but ultimately frustrated attempt to retain a British industry."[7]

Forbes' responsibilities were now acquired by Nat Cohen, chairman and chief executive of Anglo-EMI Film Distributors – the result of the May 1970 merger of Associated British-Pathé and Anglo Amalgamated, the small production and distribution company Cohen had helmed with Stuart Levy (who had died in 1966). Cohen oversaw a successful programme of moderately budgeted features and cultivated friendly relations with small but reliable independent producers like Hammer Films. Moreover, Cohen would later instigate the lavish and hugely profitable *Murder on the Orient Express* (Sidney Lumet, 1974); the success of which would prompt EMI to pursue its mid-Atlantic production policy.

The changes in British cinema in the 1970s were part of a much longer term transformation of the institution of cinema, argues Andrew Higson:

> In the post-war period, film shifts from being something consumed at the cinema, in the public environment, to something consumed at home, in the private domestic environment – on television and, by the late 1970s, increasingly on video.[8]

Ever since the BBC had reintroduced its television service in 1947, to be joined by the more entertainment orientated ITV network in 1955, UK cinema attendance had been in decline. The problem was exacerbated during the 1970s by the widespread adoption of colour television as the norm by both broadcasters and viewers. The theatrical exhibition sector had protected itself from dwindling revenues in the short-term by simply increasing admission prices. But his only added to the long-term problem by pricing the cinema-going habit out of the increasingly diverse leisure market.

---

[6] The other films overseen by Bryan Forbes at EMI include *Hoffman* (Alvin Rakoff, 1970), *The Breaking of Bumbo* (Andrew Sinclair, 1970), the psychological thrillers *And Soon the Darkness* (Robert Fuest, 1970) and *The Man who Haunted Himself* (Basil Dearden, 1970), *Mr Forbush and the Penguins* (Albert T Viola, 1971), the paraplegic love story *The Raging Moon* (Bryan Forbes, 1971), and *Tales of Beatrix Potter* (Reginald Mills, 1971) as performed by the Royal Ballet.

[7] Brian McFarlane (1997) *An Autobiography of British Cinema* (London, Methuen) page 190

[8] Andrew Higson (1994) 'A Diversity of Film Practices: Renewing British Cinema in the 1970s' in Bart Moore-Gilbert (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge) page 218

The 1960s witnessed record numbers of cinema closures as it became progressively more difficult to attract sufficient numbers of ticket-buying patrons. "As the post-war consensus began to fragment," explains Andrew Higson, "so the cinema-going public came slowly to be recognised as a series of small publics, rather than a mass entity, the family audience."[9] Certainly many of the independent cinemas that remained chose to dispense with their established menus of family orientated entertainment and to cater to specialist tastes with a diet of horror, sexploitation and increasingly pornography. The cinema circuit owners, whose grip on the exhibition sector tightened with the closure of each independent, likewise found it ever harder to fill their grand picture palaces and consequently sought both to 'downsize' and to diversify. Less profitable theatres were transformed into lucrative real estate, while large auditoria were subdivided or 'split' into two or three smaller spaces (frequently achieved by simply blocking off the stalls under the gallery) for use as cinemas or bingo and dance halls.

Writing in 1974,George Perry observed, "It has been calculated that the number of cinemas open in the whole of Britain by the beginning of the seventies is equal to those in the London area only a quarter of a century earlier."[10] Similarly, Margaret Dickson and Sarah Street outline how

> By 1960 the cinema had lost two-thirds of its 1950 audience; in the next decade it lost half of what remained … Such a severe contraction of the home market naturally had far-reaching effects on the strategy pursued by the trade. Producers began to look increasingly to revenue from exports and sales to television.[11]

As noted above, to counter dwindling attendance figures Hollywood had sought to distance the cinematic experience from the televisual one through the use of all manner of formal techniques and technological gimmicks; including widescreen and 3-D processes, the adoption of colour film-stock as the industry norm by the mid-1960s, ever more sophisticated surround sound and greater onscreen spectacle. By the mid-1970s, undeterred by the costly mistakes of the previous decade, Hollywood's

---

[9] ibid, page 220
[10] George Perry (1974 / 1975) *The Great British Picture Show: From the Nineties to the Seventies* (St Albans, Paladin) page 265
[11] Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street (1985) *Cinema and State* page 227

blockbuster mentality had resurfaced and expensive 'event movies' were again being trumpeted as the most effective means of enticing reluctant audiences out from the comfort of their respective living rooms. Higson explains how this obsession with the event movie hammered yet another nail into the coffin of the cinema-going habit:

> the blockbuster is a one-off attraction, a special event: it renews the spectacle of cinema, but it also confirms the irregularity and specialness of cinema-going, rather than the regularity of the 'mass' audience of thirty years earlier.[12]

Nevertheless, to British film producers seeking viable cinematic forms in a difficult period of decline, the phenomenal international success of such American event movies as *The Towering Inferno* (Irwin Allen and John Guillermin, 1974), *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975) and *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) seemed to offer a glimmer of hope. Moreover, the critical and commercial success of the home-grown, British funded *Murder on the Orient Express* served to support the notion that the way forward was to reduce output and to concentrate on big-budget 'Hollywoodesque' productions for the international market.

> The film industry is very different now … In those days, if a movie wasn't a hit, you could kiss goodbye to most of your investment. Nowadays, however, films that fail to make it at the box-office, can, unless their initial costs are astronomical, continue to bring in revenue through TV and videocassette sales. Cable TV is another lucrative outlet, and … [there is] … worldwide satellite broadcasting to add to the 'shelf life' of a film – regardless of its age. In the movie business blockbuster mega-hits are the exception rather than the rule. Having one is like winning the jackpot.[13]

As the above comments from self-styled British movie mogul Lew Grade highlight, for filmmakers in the 1970s, limited to three national television channels and before the advent of home video, theatrical exhibition was effectively the only means of recouping production costs. However, during the 1970s the domestic theatrical audience dwindled to such meagre proportions that even the indigenous low-budget movie sector, safeguarded by the quota, no longer appeared viable. Both the evergreen *Carry on* franchise and the once healthy British horror sector had all but expired by the middle of the decade. Latterly the *Carry on* films had tried to broaden their

[12] Andrew Higson (1994) 'A Diversity of Film Practices' page 219
[13] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* (London, Collins) page 245

international appeal, by casting continental starlet Elke Sommer in *Carry on Behind* (Gerald Thomas, 1975) and by spoofing Euro-porn in *Carry on Emmannuelle* (Gerald Thomas, 1978), but to no avail. Conversely, British horror filmmakers had seen the 1970 re-rating of the X certificate from 16 to 18 years of age as an opportunity to enhance their domestic appeal with added sex and gore. Yet this only served to deny them access to their biggest export market, namely the American teenage audience – British Gothic chillers having routinely been released to coincide with the school holidays in the US. In short, not only did Hollywoodesque filmmaking – emulating the budgets, sensibilities and style of Hollywood's blockbusters in the hope of appealing to international audiences – appear to promise plentiful profits, the withering domestic market seemed to offer little alternative.

Lord Lew Grade and the Associated Communications Corporation

> With very few exceptions, all the films which ACC has spawned since it set out to rival Hollywood have been greeted as palpable stinkers by the critics and received a hiding at the box-office.[14]

The Associated Television Corporation (ATC) turned to film production in the mid-1970s with a roster of big-budget international movies, "self-consciously tailored to appeal to what was imagined to be American taste,"[15] and in the process changed its name to the Associated Communications Corporation (ACC). The company, which owned a host of other initialisms, including the independent television franchise holder ATV (Associated TeleVision) and the film and television production company ITC (Independent Television Company), was helmed by the Ukrainian émigré Lew Grade. A flagrant self-publicist with a penchant for nine-inch Monte Cristo cigars, Grade very quickly became the standard-bearer for the British film industry's latest attempt to beat Hollywood at its own game. Armed with a policy of mid-Atlantic entertainment honed during his reign as the head of ITV's most successful franchise holder, Grade's "progress had the tragic inevitability of a slow motion rerun of the Charge of The Light Brigade. It was magnificent, but it was not film making."[16] And yet, for a time, he appeared to have succeeded where J. Arthur Rank and Alexander

[14] David Hewson, 'Over-priced, over-promoted, mid-Atlantic and sinking' in *The Times* (2 July 1981)
[15] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) page 40
[16] John Walker (1985) *The Once and Future Film: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Methuen) page 40

Korda had failed on earlier crusades. That is until June 1981, when a freshly raised Titanic sunk his company with debts of £26.4 million.

Born Louis Winogradsky in the Crimea in 1906, Grade's family settled in London's East End in 1912. Grade's first career was as a variety dancer, becoming World Charleston Champion in 1929. Later, he joined the theatrical talent agency owned by Joe Collins (father of Joan), before founding his own hugely successful agency with his younger brother Leslie (who died in 1979). Lew and Leslie Grade Ltd represented such international stars as Julie Andrews, Shirley MacLaine, Mario Lanza, Roger Moore, Bob Hope, Nat King Cole, Edith Piaf and Sammy Davis Jnr.[17]

The Associated Broadcasting Development Company had been formed in 1952 to act as a pressure group for the introduction of British commercial television. By 1955 it had not only succeeded in its aim but had been awarded one of the first ITV franchises, broadcasting to the Midlands Monday to Friday and to London at weekends. However, the company lacked know-how as well as money and sought the assistance of one of the unsuccessful bidders, Grade's ITC. Grade very quickly assumed control of the new franchise holder, at first named ABC (Associated Broadcasting Company) but later changed to ATV to avoid confusion with the identically named cinema chain then owned by ABPC.

From the outset, Grade's ATV was committed to a policy of entertainment. Grade famously sought to truncate ITV's ten o'clock nightly news programme from 30 to 20 minutes, arguing that his audience could not concentrate for that long so near bedtime. ATV was also responsible for the notoriously cheap motel-based soap opera *Crossroads*, which in 1979 was cut from four to three shows a week by the Independent Broadcasting Authority in a futile effort to improve its quality.[18] Arguably, ITV's spring 2003 schedule, featuring a 20 minute nightly news programme and *Crossroads* five nights a week, testifies to the irresistibility and far-sightedness of Grade's entertainment vision. However, Grade's idea of (lucrative) television entertainment is perhaps best demonstrated by the long-running ITC show

[17] The company was renamed The Grade Organisation in 1964, having merged with the agency run by Lew's other brother, Bernard Delfont.
[18] The decision to base the show in a motel, a form of accommodation uncommon in the UK, suggests that Grade may have hoped to export the format overseas.

Sunday Night at the London Palladium, which began in 1955. ATV's weekly variety showcase featured a raft of stars, supplied by Lew and Leslie Grade Ltd, performing at the eponymous theatre owned by the Stoll/Moss Entertainment Group, which also happened to be part of ACC.

When ITC's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1956-60) proved popular in America, as well as being hugely successful in Britain, it became the blueprint upon which most of ITC's subsequent action/adventure serials were based – notably *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot* (1956-57). Although filmed in Britain, these were usually financed upfront by presales to the US television networks and typically featured internationally recognisable American stars in the lead roles.[19] They were even filmed in the standard American 525-line NTSC format and converted to 625-line PAL for British TV.

> When the social history of Britain from the 1950s onwards comes to be written, then Lord Grade must inevitably take his place among the main interpreters and arbiters if not actual innovators of contemporary taste … His over-all Americanization of ITV did as much as anything else to feed transatlantic rather than European values to a country hungry for something new and thirsting for material prosperity … The trophies lining his office testify to his success as a spinner of popular dreams and visions.[20]

Grade was given a knighthood in 1969 for services to British export, and a peerage in 1976 when his friend Harold Wilson returned as prime minister. To dispel criticism of ATV's diet of ephemeral entertainment, Grade would intermittently seek out prestige cultural properties. In his biography Grade recalls:

> It was Sam Goldwyn, I think, who once said that every time he hears the word culture, he reaches for his chequebook. I know what he means, for culture is expensive, and it doesn't always make money. But then money, as someone else once remarked, isn't everything…[21]

---

[19] For example, Steve Forrest was *The Baron* (1966), Richard Bradford was the *Man in a Suitcase* (1972-73) and Gene Barry was *The Adventurer* (1972-73). Likewise, Robert Vaughn made up one-third of *The Protectors* (1972-73), and Tony Curtis accounted for one-half of *The Persuaders!* (1971-72); the other being Grade Organisation star Roger Moore, who also starred as *Ivanhoe* (1958) and *The Saint* (1962-68). Even the puppets of the British-made *Thunderbirds* (1964-66), excepting Lady Penelope and the adenoidal Parker, were voiced by Americans. *The Champions* (1968), meanwhile, featured spies with super powers and was a clear attempt to tap into American comic-book culture.

[20] Jack Tinker (1980) *The Television Barons* (London, Quartet) page 77

[21] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* page 185

Despite his concerns about culture's remunerative properties, *Jesus of Nazareth* (Franco Zeffirelli, 1976), Grade's greatest cultural achievement, also proved to be a nice little earner. However, before *Jesus* came *Moses the Lawgiver* (Gianfranco De Bosio, 1975), a six-hour TV mini-series co-produced with the Italian state broadcaster Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI). Despite a lucid script from Anthony Burgess and a solid performance from Burt Lancaster in the title role, *Moses* makes for decidedly dull viewing. It is more readily digested in the heavily pruned 141-minute version concocted for international theatrical release. Nonetheless, for his efforts Grade earned an audience with Pope Paul VI, at which the Pontiff is supposed to have suggested a film be made of the life of Christ (although, recalling Grade's maxim never to let the facts spoil a good anecdote, he may not have). Whatever its origin, Grade's Biblical sequel, the six-hour £18 million TV epic *Jesus of Nazareth,* again produced in collaboration with RAI, earned him a second papal audience at which Pope John Paul II awarded him the title of Knight Commander of the Order of St Silvestre.

Expertly directed by Franco Zeffirelli, once more co-scripted by Anthony Burgess, exquisitely scored by Maurice Jarre and featuring a celebrity cast that almost defies belief (including Robert Powell, Anthony Quinn, Michael York, Anne Bancroft, Rod Steiger, James Mason, Laurence Olivier, James Earl Jones, Ernest Borgnine, Peter Ustinov, Christopher Plummer and Ralph Richardson), *Jesus of Nazareth*, as well as being Grade's greatest televisual treat, is one of the masterpieces of the medium. However, even his most ecclesiastical offering was born of pre-production funding and was pre-sold to the US television network NBC and sponsored first by the American General Motors Corporation and then, when GMC became jittery about its involvement in a religious programme and withdrew, the detergent manufacturer Procter & Gamble.

Lew Grade – dubbed 'Low Greed' by the British satirical magazine *Private Eye* – took his first tentative steps into the movie business with *The Possession of Joel Delaney* (Waris Hussein, 1972), a tasteless occult shocker designed as a vehicle for Grade Organisation star Shirley MacLaine. The movie, an unsavoury and disturbing stew of incest, decapitation and possession by irate Puerto Rican spirits, failed at the box-office and permanently soured relations between Grade and his favourite star.

The prurient manner with which it dwells on human suffering does, however, prefigure the taboo-breaking iconoclasm that would soon become commonplace following the success of *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973). *The Return of the Pink Panther* (Blake Edwards, 1975), meanwhile, was a project with which ITC had rather accidentally become involved. Lew had signed Grade Organisation artist Julie Andrews to star in a series of 24 one-hour shows, creatively titled *The Julie Andrews Hour*, for ATV and the American TV network ABC. As part of the deal, ITC would finance two feature films to be directed by Andrews' husband Blake Edwards, the first of which was *The Tamarind Seed* (1974). However, Grade disliked Edward's second proposal, a remake of RKO's *Rachel and the Stranger* (Norman Foster, 1948), and vetoed the proposal. An alternative project, therefore, had to be found. He recalls:

> Then I had a brainwave. 'Blake,' I said, 'you own the rights to the *Pink Panther* films. So why don't we make a film called *The Return of the Pink Panther*?' 'Because you'll never get Peter Sellers,' he replied. 'He and I don't get on very well and he has absolutely refused to do any more Pink Panther films.' 'What happens if I get him?' I asked. 'Then we'll do it,' he said. I telephoned Peter Sellers, with whom I had been closely associated for many years, and asked him to come and see me. Two hours later I'd persuaded him to do *The Return of the Pink Panther* with Blake Edwards directing.[22]

The resultant movie, the fourth instalment in the misadventures of the bumbling Inspector Jacques Clouseau, was a major success and spawned a series of sequels beginning with *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (Blake Edwards, 1976). Flushed with success, and awakened to the potential profits of filmmaking, in October 1975 Grade convinced the ITC board to commit to a programme of roughly 15 to 20 films a year, each with a budget of at least £3 million.[23] To ensure US exhibition, Grade went into partnership with the Boston-based General Cinema Corporation, which owned 600 cinemas throughout the US and was then the world's largest cinema chain. The new company, Associated General Films (AGF), was to specialise in 'family and adventure' entertainment for distribution throughout the world and had resources of roughly £50 million.[24] The ill-fated partnership was dissolved after only two years.

---

[22] ibid, page 228

[23] In addition, on the subject of Grade's sudden interest in the movie business, Alexander Walker (1985) notes that in 1976, at the age of 70, Grade would be forced to relinquish control of ATV under the rules of the Television Act 1954. For Grade, whose working day began at 6.45am and for whom a restful retirement would have been anathema, the movie business presented new challenges with which to fill his time. *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Harrap).

[24] 'New Anglo-US film venture has funds of £50m' in *The Times* (22 October 1975) page 3

Grade's film finance strategy was essentially an extension of the one he'd employed profitably for television; namely pre-selling prospective projects to international distributors and, crucially, the US television networks with whom he'd developed a close working relationship. To assuage the concerns of potential backers, Grade's Americanised movie packages were assembled from 'proven' components: best-selling novels, renowned production personnel and Hollywood stars. His years as a talent agent had imbued him with an unshakeable belief in the value and appeal of stars. When the star-studded wartime melodrama *Voyage of the Damned* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1976) lost money at the American box-office (despite proving hugely popular in Japan), Grade is said to have proclaimed with incredulity, "I had thirty stars in that one!"[25]

Andrew Higson has pointed out how filmmaking accounted for only a small proportion of the overall corporate activities of the British 'big three', and how "film production, being essentially a high-risk business, was low on the corporate agenda, while film as an art was probably not on it at all."[26] Correspondingly, much to the chagrin of cultural critics keen to promote the artistic rather than the commercial aspects of filmmaking, Lew Grade viewed his movies as little more than the necessary by-products of his salesmanship: "like the manager of a delicatessen with a home-bakery in the back," argues Alexander Walker, "[t]he pride and pleasure he got from it was in the selling, not the cooking. That is the key to Lew Grade."[27]

> The presale mentality, as evidenced by Grade, demonstrates more and more persuasively that chucking however many expensive ingredients into a tepid container does not result in *cordon bleu* cooking. And as the pursuit of that elusive winner leads the dauntless entrepreneur more hectically into what the jargon calls the megabuck league …, the need to limit risks becomes ever more pressing. The legacy of *The Boys from Brazil, Movie Movie, The Big Sleep, The Cassandra Crossing,* and *Escape to Athena*, to name not all that have come and quickly gone, is a reduction of flexibility and opportunities to experiment. More of the same, only bigger, is the order of the day. *Capricorn One,* creative expansion nil.[28]

---

[25] Quoted in Jack Tinker (1980) *The Television Barons*
[26] Andrew Higson (1994) 'A Diversity of Film Practices' page 219
[27] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes* page 94
[28] Simon Perry (Summer 1980) 'Finance for Local Talent' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 49, no. 3) page 46

As the above comments from Simon Perry make clear, Grade's films are knowingly derivative, both for ease of selling and to minimise risk, and are designed to ride the coat-tails of recent cinematic hits and cultural trends. For example, the desire to replicate the critical and box-office success of *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968) and *The Stepford Wives* (Bryan Forbes, 1972), both of which were based on novels by Ira Levin, prompted Lew to acquire the author's latest blockbuster, *The Boys from Brazil* (1976, filmed 1978).[29] Franklin J. Schaffner, who'd previously helmed the comparably dystopian fantasy *Planet of the Apes* (1968), was assigned to direct. The resultant movie starred Gregory Peck as real life Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz 'Angel of Death', intent on creating the Fourth Reich with the aid of 94 clones of Adolf Hitler. Peck gives an intense if slightly camp performance, roaming his Paraguayan freak-farm like a latter-day Dr Moreau.[30] Out to thwart this Teutonic threat is the Simon Wiesenthal-like Nazi hunter Ezra Lieberman, played by Laurence Olivier. Schaffner's faithful adaptation retains the energy and inventiveness of Levin's novel but loses much of its paranoia and menace; despite a lurid promotional tagline that wondered, 'If they survive, will we?'

Ever ready to exploit a popular cinematic trend – in this case the '70s vogue for star-studded disaster movies, such as *The Poseidon Adventure* (Ronald Neame, 1972) and *Earthquake* (Mark Robson, 1974) – Grade gave the world *The Cassandra Crossing* (George Pan Cosmatos, 1977); of which the *Monthly Film Bulletin* observed, "from performances through plotting, shooting style and special effects, it is constantly outdoing itself in monumental silliness."[31] The movie, produced in collaboration with Carlo Ponti and pre-sold to NBC television, opens with a botched terrorist raid on the headquarters of the International Health Organisation in Geneva in the course of

---

[29] Grade may also have been impressed by the recent success of *The Odessa File* (Ronald Neame, 1974), an Anglo-German co-production from Domino Productions Ltd and Oceanic Filmproduction GMBH based on the Frederick Forsyth bestseller. As with *The Boys from Brazil,* the film features Nazi hunter Simon Wiestenthal (played by Schmuel Rodensky) and a fictional plot to ensnare a real life Nazi; in this case Eduard Roschmann, the notorious 'butcher' of Riga Concentration Camp, here played by Maximilian Schell.

[30] Patrick Gibbs', writing in *The Daily Telegraph* (16 March 1979, 'Long live the Nazis!' page 15), wondered where Mengele had been hiding since the war: "To judge from Gregory Peck's curious appearance it can only be from Japan, where he must have been playing the lead in a touring company of the Mikado, so slit are his eyes, so plucked are his eyebrows, so oriental in style are his hair and moustache." The frivolous tone of Gibbs' review conforms to the orthodox critical view of ITC's films as uniformly undeserving of serious consideration.

[31] Richard Combs (1977) '*The Cassandra Crossing*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 44, no. 522) pages 142-143

which one activist is infected with pneumonic plague before escaping aboard a trans-European train. The terrorists' grievance is never explained (something to do with Swedish peace protestors), thereby not only de-nationalising but also de-politicising the narrative to aid digestion by the intended global audience. The remainder of the film charts the efforts of passengers Martin Sheen, O. J. Simpson, Ava Gardner, Richard Harris and Sophia Loren (Mrs Carlo Ponti) to escape from the plague-ridden train before army colonel Burt Lancaster can send it over the edge of a cliff. The script, from Tom Mankiewicz and Robert Katz, is a fairly crude amalgam of recycled plot riffs from *The Lady Vanishes* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1938) and principally *Horror Express* (*Panico en el Transiberiano*, Eugenio Martin, 1972),[32] and is not helped by graceless direction.

George Pan Cosmatos would return, however, with, to quote *The Daily Telegraph*, "another lurid Lew Grade presentation with the usual quota of shootings and fireworks,"[33] as both writer and director of the improbable wartime caper *Escape to Athena* (1979). Essentially an outré regurgitation of *Kelly's Heroes* (Brian G. Hutton, 1970), with a hint of *The Guns of Navarone* (J. Lee Thompson, 1961) and latterly *Star Wars*,[34] the film has Elliot Gould, David Niven, Richard Roundtree, Sonny Bono, Telly Savalas, Stefanie Powers and Claudia Cardinale escape from a prisoner-of-war camp so as to liberate Greek art treasures from the Germans. Roger Moore is cast against type as a Nazi camp commandant (more camp than Nazi) with a *faux*-German accent that is even more dubious than was Michael Caine's in *The Eagle has Landed* (1977). The movie also features a frivolous cameo from William Holden,[35] a superfluous present-day coda and a disagreeable disco theme tune that serve to highlight both a disappointing lack of fidelity to the wartime milieu and the calculated 'modernism' of ITC's movies. This is contrary to producer Euan Lloyd's *The Sea Wolves* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1980), for example, a largely authentic recreation of

---

[32] In this British/Spanish co-production from Granada Films and Benmar Productions, concocted to re-use an elaborate model train first seen in *Nicholas and Alexandra* (Franklin J. Schaffner, 1971), an entity from space turns the passengers of the Trans-Siberian Express into undead zombies. The day is only finally saved when horror stalwarts Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee (*"But what if one of you is the monster?" – "Monster? We're British you know!"*) manage to send the train, monster and zombies plummeting over a cliff.

[33] Eric Shanter, 'Intrigues of a top cop' in *The Daily Telegraph* (25 May 1979) page 15

[34] The Nazi V2 rocket squad, bedecked in PVC boiler suits and silver space helmets, are certainly redolent of Darth Vader and the anonymous Imperial troops of the Death Star.

[35] When asked *"Are you still here?"* Holden replies *"It's not a bad life."* despite having apparently escaped from *Stalag 17* (Billy Wilder, 1953).

an audacious Allied sabotage raid that, thanks to production designer Syd Cain, benefits greatly from a skilfully realised sense of period. Furthermore, the film's veteran cast – featuring such familiar faces and seasoned warhorses as Trevor Howard, Allan Cuthbertson, Michael Medwin, Patrick Macnee, Glyn Houston and Percy Herbert – seems curiously to bestow further legitimacy upon *The Sea Wolves* by calling to mind (while not exactly British wartime cinema) the broadly realist war movies made in Britain in the 1950s that have since, via recurrent TV screenings, so firmly lodged themselves in our collective cultural consciousness.[36]

The Eagle has Landed is a typically energetic wartime tale from ITC and was the final film from veteran director John Sturges, who'd earlier helmed *The Great Escape* (1962). Based on the successful Jack Higgins novel, the film echoes Ealing's *Went the Day Well?* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1942) by having Nazi paratroopers capture a picturesque English village, but also grafts on a plot to kidnap Churchill that calls to mind Lawrence Huntington's *Warn that Man* (1943), and pro-IRA sympathies calculated to appeal to American sensibilities. The film features assured performances from Donald Sutherland, Robert Duvall, Anthony Quayle and Donald Pleasence as Heinrich Himmler; while the unlikely casting of cockney Michael Caine as a heroic German leads one to believe that verisimilitude was never the dominant concern.

Perhaps inspired by EMI's reclamation of Agatha Christie, Grade signed Robert Mitchum to star as Raymond Chandler's hardboiled private eye Phillip Marlowe in an impressive and critically lauded period retelling of *Farewell my Lovely* (Dick Richards, 1975). The sequel, Michael Winner's *The Big Sleep* (1978), imprudently relocates Chandler's tale from 1940s California to 1970s London – *"I came over here during the war and couldn't find my way home."* – and suffers as a consequence, particularly when compared with Howard Hawks' *noirish* 1946 version. With this comparison in mind, critic David Robinson argued, "Uneasy out of its proper context,

[36] For example, Trevor Howard starred in *Odette* (Herbert Wilcox, 1951), Allan Cuthbertson in *Ice Cold in Alex* (J. Lee Thompson, 1958), Michael Medwin in *Malta Story* (Brian Desmond Hurst, 1953), Patrick Macnee in *Battle of the River Plate* (Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1956), Glyn Houston in *The Cruel Sea* (Charles Frend, 1953), and Percy Herbert in *The Cockleshell Heroes* (Jose Ferrer, 1955) and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (David Lean, 1957). Similarly, reiterating its retrospective attitude, *The Sea Wolves* features a song called 'The Precious Moments', written by Leslie Bricusse and performed by Matt Monro, based on Richard Addinsell's 'Warsaw Concerto' from the classic British war film *Dangerous Moonlight* (Brian Desmond Hurst, 1941).

wearisome in the telling, it seems above all, a superfluous enterprise."[37] However, the film's geographical and temporal transition is significant, and is emblematic both of Grade's avowed modernism and his desire to create texts that transcend national specificity – intrinsically exportable commodities for consumption by the international audience.

Grade's predilection for properties with built-in audience name recognition led him to produce a succession of lavish adaptations of familiar classic works of literature, each enlivened by distinguished casts. Examples include *Great Expectations* (Joseph Hardy, 1974) with James Mason, Robert Morley, Michael York and Anthony Quayle; *The Count of Monte Cristo* (David Greene, 1975) with Richard Chamberlain, Trevor Howard, Donald Pleasence and Tony Curtis; *The Man in the Iron Mask* (Mike Newell, 1976) with Patrick McGoohan, Louis Jordan and Ralph Richardson; and a remake of the anti-war classic *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Delbert Mann, 1979) with Ernest Borgnine, Donald Pleasence and one-time John-Boy Walton Richard Thomas. Conceived as mini-series for the American NBC TV network (and sponsored by Hallmark, the greeting card company), they proved popular with US audiences and were re-edited for theatrical release overseas.

ITC was also responsible for a slew of violent and seemingly American Charles Bronson thrillers, including *Love and Bullets* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1980), *Borderline* (Jerrold Freedman, 1980) and *The Evil that Men Do* (J. Lee Thompson, 1984), each cast in the mould of Michael Winner's morally dubious yarn of urban alienation *Death Wish* (1974). Similarly, *The Medusa Touch* (Jack Gold, 1979) is ITC's attempt to cash-in on the contemporary vogue for glossy horror films. The resultant movie, from Peter Van Greenaway's 1973 novel, is a bizarre melee of horror and disaster movie riffs, telekinetic sci-fi, whodunit and police procedural in which Richard Burton reprises his bellicose performance from *Exorcist II: The Heretic* (John Boorman, 1977) as John Morlar, *"the man with the power to create catastrophe!"* As an Anglo-French co-production (known in France as *Le Grande Menace*) to avoid the excesses of the British Labour government's punitive taxes, the movie features French actor Lino Ventura in the lead role as Inspector Brunel. Lee Remick co-stars,

[37] David Robinson, '*The Big Sleep*' film review in *The Times* (29 September 1978) page 9

and serves as an additional international horror attraction, reprising her persona of wide-eyed scepticism from *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976). Director Jack Gold skilfully melds the film's disparate generic influences, and a consciously confused flashback-driven narrative, into an absorbing whole. As impossibility follows improbability, Gold deftly holds the viewer's attention with the promise that all will soon be revealed. (In truth it isn't, and loose ends abound. Who was the tramp on the park bench? Who or what is 'L'?)

Although apparently killed in the opening scene, Morlar's presence is felt throughout via recurrent flashbacks staged to blur temporal boundaries. Furthermore, moments such as when Brunel stumbles on a loose stair-rod remind us that Morlar's malignance is omnipresent. Note also both a physical similarity between Burton and Ventura (who as dubbed by David de Keyser also sounds rather like Burton) as well as distinct character parallels. Morlar and Brunel view the world with comparably cynical disdain and are notably rueful of the pernicious influence of television. At one point Brunel concedes, *"I am learning to admire the man more and more."* In short, Brunel's Morlar-like qualities ensure that the ominous 'medusa touch' remains an ever-present threat.

Into this already heady brew director Gold and screenwriter John Briley drop a scathing polemic on the insidious intrusion of television into our lives, suggesting that it is analogous to Morlar's sinister gift. Thus, it is via television that Morlar induces the Achilles lunar probe to malfunction, and because of it that he provokes his neighbour's suicide. Similarly, Zonfeld only finally switches the television off after having beaten Morlar's head to a pulp, thus silencing both malevolent media. Correspondingly, Morlar regains consciousness only after the television has been switched back on. Moreover, for the remainder of the film we watch his strengthening brain activity via an electroencephalogram TV monitor. Throughout the film television serves as an omen of doom: Brunel learns of the power of telekinesis by watching television, erstwhile *Police 5* presenter Shaw Taylor appears as a TV anchorman narrating the loss of the lunar probe to the dark void of space, and via television we see Minster Cathedral crumble (complete with oft-noted Styrofoam masonry) upon the *"unworthy heads"* of the dignitaries assembled within. Most extraordinarily, upon witnessing Morlar will a Boeing 747 passenger jet out of the

sky and into a skyscraper, Zonfeld seeks confirmation of the cataclysm from the TV news; seemingly accepting that only television possesses the dark power to bring such atrocity into our homes.[38]

Finally, in the hope of ending his reign of terror, Morlar's life-support system is switched off. At the moment his electrocardiograph monitor flatlines, Morlar's eyes open – as one transmitter closes, so another one opens. The closing shot of the movie, of Brunel's face reflected in the screen of Morlar's frenzied EEG monitor, ties together visually both harbingers of catastrophe (Morlar's mind lives on through the television monitor), as well as cementing the Morlar/Brunel parallel noted earlier (Brunel's face superimposed on Morlar's brainwaves). Extra-textual features further enhance the richness of the film's assault on television. Jack Gold is predominately a TV director – responsible for *The Naked Civil Servant* (1975) with John Hurt and, more recently, *Goodnight Mr Tom* (1998) with John Thaw – with a televisual aesthetic that is further enhanced by Arthur Ibbetson's flat photography. Likewise, as noted, the film was produced by a TV company, cross-funded by TV profits and pre-sold to television. It was also shot 'full-frame' and was masked to the widescreen ratio of 1.85:1 only for theatrical presentation. Evidently, although intended initially for the cinema, the film's eventual sale to television was always a consideration.

While no doubt inspired by the mixing of horror with telekinesis in *Carrie* (Brian de Palma, 1976), Gold elects to abandon *Carrie*'s disturbing psychosexual content (even the psychiatrist Dr Zonfeld proffers precious little psychological explanation) in favour of more conventional thrills.[39] In place of *Carrie*'s intimate tale of repression and revenge, *The Medusa Touch* broadens the theme and stresses the danger posed by Morlar to society and the (implicitly desirable) status quo. Morlar is dangerous not because of his *"gift for disaster"* but because of his radical anti-Establishment ideals. The violent punchline to each episodic flashback reiterates his barefaced rejection of authority and the pillars of British society – institutionalised religion, middle-class morality, the educational establishment, the judiciary and, ultimately, the monarchy.

---

[38] This sequence makes for uneasy viewing in light of the (televised) atrocity of 11 September 2001.
[39] Other *Carrie*-inspired telekinetic horrors from the period include *Patrick* (Richard Franklin, 1978) and de Palma's *The Fury* (1978), which, although recalling *The Medusa Touch* in its generic eclecticism (conspiracy thriller, science fiction and horror), reverses the theme and presents telekinesis as a 'gift' and those that seek to exploit it as universally corrupt.

Moreover, the fact that Britain's saviour is a Frenchman acts not only to suggest that the existing structures of British society are both desirable and universally accepted, but also to stress that Morlar's radical republican plans appear misguided and foolish even to those who hail from an established republic.

Despite its myriad virtues, contemporary critical reaction to *The Medusa Touch* was decidedly lukewarm. The *Monthly Film Bulletin* argued, "Jack Gold directs with faceless efficiency,"[40] and *The Times* expressed the condescending view that, "The film is best when it is funny."[41] Its box-office performance was also unjustly modest, although it more than adequately recouped its restrained budget. The same cannot be said, however, of *Raise the Titanic*; a film that "for a time became synonymous with the collapse of the British film industry,"[42] and whose symbolic significance to this period of British filmmaking cannot be overestimated.

Raise the Titanic (1980)

> *Raise the Titanic* can be seen as an awesome omen of what was soon to ensue with escalating speed and highly damaging publicity ... [T]hat word 'Titanic', with all its connotations of historic disaster, was the deadliest of curses; it found its way into virtually every headline written during the crisis period. It soon detached itself from the box-office fate of one specific film and became a general metaphor for the fate of Lord Grade's huge communications empire.[43]

The true significance of *Raise the Titanic* is that it highlights how unsound were the foundations upon which Lew Grade's transatlantic crusade was built. One significant failure, albeit one plagued by production difficulties and tarnished with the moniker of the world's most iconic manmade disaster, was enough not only to stifle Grade's filmic ambitions, but also to fragment his vertically integrated film company. And yet reasoned consideration of this important movie remains scant, beyond Grade's oft-quoted Sam Goldwynism that it would have been cheaper to lower the Atlantic.

---

[40] David Badder (1978) '*The Medusa Touch*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 45, no. 534) pages 138-139
[41] David Robinson, '*The Medusa Touch*' film review in *The Times* (23 June 1978) page 11
[42] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 40
[43] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes* page 203

Clive Cussler's international bestseller *Raise the Titanic!* (1976) had first been brought to Grade's attention through the channels of the William Morris Agency, who, aware that he had money to spend, regularly sent him properties and scripts. On this occasion, believing that the Titanic story had been done to death, Grade had declined the offer. Then Richard Smith of the General Cinema Corporation, ITC's American partner in Associated General Films, had recommended the book. This time Grade read it. Now, struck by the potential of the spectacular story in which the US government refloat the RMS Titanic so as to retrieve a rare radioactive mineral from its hold,[44] Grade contacted Clive Cussler only to find that noted director Stanley Kramer had already optioned the property. Grade convinced Kramer to let him buy the rights for $400,000 in exchange for which Kramer would both produce and direct.

In actual fact, Kramer would soon jump ship citing 'irreconcilable creative differences' and his involvement would amount to little more than shooting the footage of New York's bicentennial Great Boats Parade that would later double for the Titanic's triumphant (albeit late) arrival in America.[45] The movie would be produced by a Los Angeles-based ITC subsidiary called Marble Arch Productions (ACC House in Great Cumberland Place overlooked Marble Arch) of which Grade was chairman and erstwhile ABC TV executive Martin Starger was president. Starger would act as executive producer. The job of adapting Cussler's novel fell to Adam Kennedy (who'd previously scripted the ITC thriller *The Domino Principle* (1977) for Kramer) and later Eric Hughes.[46]

Following Kramer's departure, the director's chair was handed to Jerry Jameson. Jameson was predominantly a TV director and veteran of *Ironside, Hawaii Five-O* and *The Six Million Dollar Man*, whose most recent cinematic foray had been the aquatically themed *Airport '77* (1977), in which Jack Lemmon had rescued

---

[44] While it is now common knowledge that the RMS Titanic actually split in two as she sank – as depicted in James Cameron's *Titanic* (1998) – this was not known until the wreck was discovered in 1985, and thus refloating the vessel was at the time at least a theoretical possibility.

[45] Lew Grade recalls, "We had various artistic differences with Stanley, and finally reached an amicable settlement whereby he would no longer be involved in the production." (1987) *Still Dancing* page 260

[46] In 1981 Kennedy and Hughes' script – which includes such wretched dialogue as *"They had Russian agents coming out of their ears. They fought a running gun battle all the way from Aberdeen to Southampton."* – was nominated at the inaugural Golden Raspberry Awards, which annually honour outstanding ineptitude in the movies. The film was also in the running for the prestigious worst picture and worst supporting actor (David Selby) Rassies.

Hollywood celebrities from a sunken Boeing 747. By the time of Jameson's investiture, construction of an elaborate Titanic model (55½-foot long, 12-foot high and weighing 10 tons) was already underway.[47] Improbably, upon completion of this intricate prop it was discovered that it was too large to fit comfortably into any water tank then in existence and available anywhere in the world. Plans to construct a new water tank on the back lot of the CBS Studio Centre in California were abandoned once it was appreciated just how large the new tank would need to be.

In the meantime, the film's model unit had decamped to the Mediterranean Film Studios, Malta, to photograph surface model work in a vast 4-foot deep shallow tank noted for its unspoiled horizon line. The production now procured some land adjoining the shallow tank upon which to construct the world's largest permanent water tank (300-foot by 250-foot, and 35-foot deep) to accommodate the Titanic model. The new construction took 10 months to build, beginning in November 1978, cost in excess of $3 million and had a capacity of more than 9 million gallons, of which 135,000 gallons seeped out each day. To pipe the water in, 4 huge diesel pumps capable of pumping a quarter of a million gallons an hour were imported from Holland. Alas, the tremendous water pressure kept bursting the pipes. The tank also incorporated a turntable upon which the Titanic model could rotate, although this soon collapsed under the weight of the water. It was not repaired and was deemed unnecessary once it was discovered that it was just as easy for the cameras to move round the model as for the model to revolve before the cameras.

Such shenanigans as these conspired to delay filming for 6 months, during which time many cast and crew were kept on standby on full pay. When finally the film wrapped, 4 months over schedule, its medium budget had grown to $36 million (then equivalent to roughly £17 million). As was usual, Grade had used international presales to raise finance and in so doing had committed himself to non-negotiable delivery dates. Post-production was completed hastily, and the final print was delivered a mere three days before its Boston premier. Consequently *Raise the Titanic*

[47] The total cost of the models used in the film, including several warships, elaborate submersibles and tugs, as well as a detailed 10-foot model of the Titanic glimpsed only fleetingly in the finished film, is estimated to have been in the region of $6 million. Seemingly the intention had been to re-use the models in a series of films derived from Clive Cussler's aquatic thrillers and thereby spread their cost.

was denied the luxury of audience test-screenings, but was cut from 122 minutes to 109 minutes just prior to release so as to quicken its pace.

The film performed extraordinarily badly upon release and recouped a mere $8 million from the crucial US market, not enough even to cover its printing and advertising costs, and was critically mauled on both sides of the Atlantic. Tim Pulleine in the British *Monthly Film Bulletin* noted, "For an action spectacular, aimed at the mass audience, *Raise the Titanic* is almost perversely lacking in action, spectacle, or even plot."[48] Likewise, David Robinson in *The Times* stressed how:

> The players have little chance against a banal script that is by turns tediously explanatory and mystifyingly inexplicit, and all the hazards of the enterprise are presented with about as much excitement and suspense as digging a stony potato patch.[49]

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Janet Maslin in the *New York Times* asked, "Take the adventure out of an adventure movie and what have you got?"[50] Larry Kart in the *Chicago Tribute* offered a similarly scathing critique, arguing:

> The plot, such as it is, unravels with mind boggling ineptitude ... as scenes that do nothing to advance the story line are lingered over interminably while action sequences that promise a few cheap thrills are abandoned almost before they get started ... Never before have I seen a movie that made me doubt the basic wisdom of projecting images on a screen.[51]

Lew Grade chose to blame the film's poor box-office performance on his younger brother Bernard Delfont. Only months after Grade had announced *Raise the Titanic* in May 1977, Delfont (then head of EMI's entertainment division) had commissioned a lavish television dramatisation of the sinking of the Titanic, featuring 114 speaking roles and more than 2,000 extras. The resultant mini-series, *SOS Titanic*, had aired on ABC TV in America on 23 September 1978 and had met with critical derision and audience disinterest. In an effort to recoup its investment, EMI had re-edited 2½ hours of TV drama into 1¾ hours of attractive (thanks to veteran cinematographer Christopher Challis) if uninspiring cinema for release to the rest of the world. A

---

[48] Tim Pulleine (1980) '*Raise the Titanic*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 47, no. 563)
[49] David Robinson, '*Raise the Titanic*' film review in *The Times* (14 November 1980) page 13
[50] Janet Maslin, 'Raise the Titanic, her cargo is dangerous' in *New York Times* (1 August 1980)
[51] Larry Kart, 'Shallow plot, disastrous effects sink boring *Raise the Titanic*' in *Chicago Tribune* (6 August 1980)

notable cast, including David Janssen, Cloris Leachman, Susan Saint James, Ian Holm, David Warner, Helen Mirren and Harry Andrews, is largely wasted and, as a contemporary review commented, "A good subject is wilfully thrown away."[52] Billy Hale's direction is workmanlike at best, and is not helped by an over-familiar script content to make perfunctory observations about the tyranny and injustice of the British class system – *"This ship is a microcosm of the British social system, a maze of barriers erected to keep 'them' from where we are, and to keep 'us' from where they are."* Moreover, the ship's eventual sinking is a muted affair.[53]

Despite its dramatic shortcomings, *SOS Titanic* proved moderately successful upon its international release and in so doing, argued Lew Grade, slaked the thirst of the audience for further Titanic projects. In support of his contention Grade cites the case of Japan, the only major territory in which *SOS Titanic* had not been screened.

> The Japanese people, Toho-Towa, are really brilliant. They bought the film *SOS Titanic* for very little money, put it on the shelf, and never showed it, because they had already given me a $1 million advance plus a percentage for our film, *Raise the Titanic*. As a result of *SOS Titanic* not being shown in Japan, *Raise the Titanic* was one of the biggest box-office successes in that country that year. So, as I have to blame somebody, I'm blaming my brother![54]

Watching *Raise the Titanic* now, aware of its mammoth budget and unenviable reputation, one is immediately prompted to wonder where all the money went. It certainly doesn't look like a $36 million epic: *Cleopatra* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1963) it is not. Indeed, quite the opposite. The combination of Matthew F. Leonetti's murky photography and Jerry Jameson's penchant for intimate close-ups and shot-reverse-shot compositions (aesthetic sensibilities that betray his TV past) means than *Raise the Titanic* actually looks and feels rather cheap. Likewise, despite an emphatic title (albeit one that dispenses with Clive Cussler's exclamation mark) that suggests a tale of grandiose proportions, and the production having entailed shooting in twelve diverse locations in the US, Greece, the UK and Malta, *Raise the Titanic* is quite an intimate affair. Accordingly, the film deliberately sidesteps the novel's biggest and

---

[52] David Robinson, '*SOS Titanic*' film review in *The Times* (7 March 1980) page 9
[53] The finale of *SOS Titanic* incorporates colour-tinted footage borrowed from Rank's superior black-and-white version of Walter Lord's *A Night to Remember* (Roy Ward Baker, 1958).
[54] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* page 262

most exhilarating episodes, as if constrained by budgetary limitations. For instance, whereas in the novel Soviet paratroopers had stormed the Titanic and claimed her radioactive cargo for mother Russia, herein the glimpse of an American atomic submarine dissuades them from doing so. In addition, whereas in the novel Hurricane Amanda had very nearly re-sunk the eponymous ship, in the movie it fails to show up.

Having thus stripped Cussler's novel of many of its more outlandish elements, what remains is a rather simplistic tale of marine salvage, and one that singularly fails to unleash the potential of the fascinating gimmick at the heart of Cussler's admittedly indifferent novel. The long lost vessel is located with relative ease after only a few minutes of watching model submersibles float through the murky waters of a Maltese tank while sundry American seaman stare intently at depth-gauges and sonar sets. Moreover, despite abandoning many of the novel's supplementary narrative strands – including a lengthy flashback to the sinking of the Titanic (although much of this sequence was actually filmed), the development of the Sicilian Project, Dana Seagram's affair with the American president, Dr Gene Seagram's nervous breakdown and suicide attempt, and all manner of double-dealing and suspicion within the ranks of the Soviets – all too often the film gets caught up in Cussler's 'McGuffins' and departs along tangential expository avenues. Where Stanley Kramer might have been able to forge a satisfying whole out of Cussler's stylistic vacillations (as a political thriller segues into melodrama before becoming an action adventure), Jerry Jameson's movie simply compounds Cussler's faults and discards many of his virtues.[55]

Raise the Titanic is all the more disappointing because, for the most part, it fails to evoke the emotion one would have thought an intrinsic element of the Titanic tragedy. Arguably, however, like much of Lew Grade's production programme, the film doesn't so much fail to fulfil lofty ambitions as set its sights deliberately low, proffering stars and spectacle in place of stimulating the emotions. Jameson's movie simply isn't interested in the tragedy of the Titanic, in much the same way as our

[55] The film has its own Internet website – www.raisethetitanic.com – founded in August 2001 by Gabe Waters of Ohio, USA. Despite expressing dissatisfaction with the movie and preferring Cussler's novel, Waters has amassed a wealth of material pertaining to the film, including scripts, location photographs and original publicity material. Visitors even have the opportunity to sign a petition to encourage someone (who?) to make a better movie from Cussler's book.

heroes only raise the ship so as to procure the radioactive 'byzanium' that has been stored in its hold since 1912.[56]

From the outset Lew Grade had envisaged *Raise the Titanic* as but the first instalment in a series of Clive Cussler adaptations featuring Dirk Pitt, the Special Projects Director of the US National Underwater and Marine Agency (NUMA), in emulation of the perennial James Bond franchise. Accordingly, the film tries (and ultimately fails) to recast Pitt as an aquatic James Bond. Moreover, by depicting Pitt as a gallant trouble-shooter and roguish knight errant, the film also calls to mind Leslie Charteris' saintly Simon Templar. But the ludicrously named Dirk Pitt (*"What kind of a name is that? Sounds like a pirate!"*) lacks the snobbery, sexual appetite or narrative pre-eminence of either Templar or Bond. Instead, he drifts in and out of Cussler's novels and is herein forced to share the limelight with moralising scientist Dr Gene Seagram (David Selby) and scenery-chewing NUMA chief Admiral James Sandecker (Jason Robards). Moreover, although the script has been doctored to emphasise Pitt's Bondian qualities, Richard Jordan's performance, partially concealed behind an unflattering beard, accentuates Pitt's irascibility and arrogance. Likewise, although the film introduces a suitably Bondian sexual subplot involving Pitt and Dr Seagram's girlfriend, Bond's sartorial style is jettisoned in favour of a succession of cardigans and Arran sweaters guaranteed to cool any woman's ardour.

And yet, having decried the movie's myriad faults and woeful lack of emotional depth, it is not entirely devoid of moving moments. Alec Guinness' cameo as John Bigalow, a surprisingly sprightly survivor of the Titanic disaster, is both charming and touching, as is the film's opening photomontage that introduces us to the Titanic as she was before she hit the ice. Similarly, the scene aboard the refloated ship (shot in Athens aboard the derelict passenger liner Athinai) in which Pitt explores the corroded vessel before re-hanging the pennant on the masthead is both poignant and impressively staged. The actual raising of the Titanic (shot high-speed at 350 frames per second) is also quite effective. It should also be noted that these four sequences are uniformly indebted to John Barry's elegant and elegiac musical accompaniment.

[56] "Where they acquired the remarkable prescience to foresee the metal's role in nuclear weaponry more than 60 years later is one of the many questions *Raise the Titanic!* (sic) leaves trailing in its wake." opines Desmond Ryas. 'What do you do with it once you *Raise the Titanic*?' in *The Columbus Dispatch* (6 August 1980)

Barry, best known for his work scoring eleven of the James Bond films, presents some of his finest work here. His score, consisting of haunting piano and string arrangements and pseudo-nautical shanties, proves far more successful than Jameson's visuals at evoking the majesty and pathos of the Titanic and the turbid gloom of her aquatic grave.

For the most part, however, *Raise the Titanic* dispenses with stimulating the emotions, choosing instead to excite its audience with incident and audacity. Building upon a leaning evidenced in *Airport '77*, director Jameson elects to fetishise the military might and marine salvage hardware that his camera so lovingly caresses at every given opportunity.[57] For example, Bigalow's reminiscences of *"that lovely ship"* give way to a lengthy and superfluous aerial shot of US Navy vessels. It is thus entirely appropriate that the violent physical tussle that had concluded the novel is herein replaced with the triumphant arrival of a United States Navy submarine.

Raise the Titanic is as jingoistic as a heartfelt rendition of the Star-spangled Banner: while it takes near 80 minutes to raise the eponymous liner, it takes only 20 minutes to raise the Stars-and-Stripes. Indeed, recalling that this is notionally a British movie, albeit one paid for with international cash, it is tempting to see it as Grade's last-ditch attempt to flatter his way into the American market. It is certainly the most palpably transatlantic of the films discussed in this thesis. While in the film the Soviets are besmirched as sinister and evil, America is depicted as wholesomely righteous. At one point Admiral Sandecker announces, without any apparent hint of irony or self-doubt, that if anyone were to have a byzanium bomb it *should* be America. The British, meanwhile, are shown to be quaintly inoffensive (a pair of apparently inbred yokels mooch around a graveyard) or past their prime (Bigalow cradles his memories and a pink gin in a rustic pub). Moreover, shots of ultramodern Washington DC are juxtaposed with traditional Cornwall to give the impression that Britain has

[57] The film's publicity press pack was also at pains to emphasise the US Navy's participation and the complex logistics involved in creating the film. Much of this information found its way, frequently verbatim, into early press accounts of the film. A photo-spread in *International Photographer Magazine* (October 1980), as well as being arguably one of the most anally retentive articles ever penned, describes how locations included the Naval Research Laboratory Cyclotron Research Facility, the USS Denver, the USS Tarawa, the USS Schenectady, the USS Carpenter, the deep submergence vessels Sea Cliff, Deep Quest and Trans Quest, and a vast assortment of other civilian vessels all enumerated with an archivist's precision.

progressed little since the Titanic left her shores in 1912. In short, of course America *should* have the byzanium bomb; the Russians are obviously too menacing and the British too backward to be trusted with it.

Raise the Titanic is in many ways the apotheosis of Lew Grade's moviemaking philosophy; featuring a world-wide best-selling novel, a readily conceptualised gimmick to pitch to prospective buyers, a proven director (albeit only briefly), built-in name recognition for the international market and enough stars to satisfy Grade's unshakeable belief in the appeal of celebrity. It is easy to see why he felt it would prove unsinkable. In addition, the film attests to ITC's deep-rooted modernism. Whereas with *SOS Titanic* EMI had been content to wallow in nostalgic evocations of period, sheltering from the social unrest and economic difficulties of modern Britain amidst the luxury and clearly defined class and social structures of the eponymous White Star Liner, *Raise the Titanic* eschews nostalgia and embraces the future. Grade's Titanic tale is a thoroughly modern affair (featuring laser beams and nuclear fission) of truly international proportions, pre-sold to the world; an indisputably mid-Atlantic creation that, aptly enough, was to sink without trace.

> "The lesson for the company was that star names and vast budgets not only fail to guarantee success, but, wedded to a limp vehicle, can destine a feature to oblivion."[58]

Raise the Titanic proved to be a high-water mark for the British film industry's mid-Atlantic policy. Budgets and expectations would not be so high again. In June 1981 Grade was quoted as saying, "You should learn by such mistakes. I was the first one to try such a difficult project," before announcing that in future ITC would limit itself to four films a year with the more reasonable budget of £7 million.[59] But his prudence came too late. The damage had already been done, and Grade's titanic failure would soon bring about the end of his reign as Britain's premier movie mogul.

Contrary to popular belief, by no means all of ACC's output was designed for the global market. In addition to its roster of international movie packages, ACC

---

[58] David Hewson, 'Over-priced, over-promoted, mid-Atlantic and sinking' in *The Times* (2 July, 1981) page 10

[59] John Witherow and Peter Waymark, 'Lord Grade in search of a big hit' in *The Times* (27 June 1981) page 3

established several satellite production companies, helmed by erstwhile accountant and would-be impresario Jack Gill, charged with producing low-budget films primarily for British television and domestic theatrical exhibition. ACC were to contribute to the ongoing cycle of theatrical spin-offs from British TV sitcoms with *Porridge* (Dick Clement, 1979), *George and Mildred* (Peter Frazer-Jones, 1980) and *Rising Damp* (Joseph McGrath, 1980). Aimed squarely at the domestic audience, they proved popular and profitable. Even so, Grade was lukewarm to the idea, noting, "This was a ridiculous move, for the last thing the company needed was another film division."[60] It would seem that Grade felt threatened by Gill's empire-building activities within the corporation, and certainly Gill felt himself to be the natural heir apparent. Perhaps Grade's antipathy towards 'another film division' masks his fear that Gill's production companies could one day serve as a creative power base with which to challenge Grade's own ITC. Whatever the reason, resentment between the two men continued to grow and in August 1981 Jack Gill, by then both a managing director and finance director of ACC, was dismissed.

Chips Productions, one of Gill's production satellites, catered to the exploitation market with such offerings as *Hawk the Slayer* (Terry Marcel, 1980) and *The Monster Club* (Roy Ward Baker, 1980). The former, a mediaeval fantasy released two years before the Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *Conan the Barbarian* (John Milius, 1982) would make such sword and sorcery fashionable, features a fine cast of slumming British thespians (including Harry Andrews, Bernard Bresslaw, Annette Crosbie, Patrick Magee and Ferdy Mayne), a tired-looking Jack Palance (to augment its American appeal) and a wholly inappropriate disco soundtrack from producer and screenwriter Harry Robertson.[61] *The Monster Club*, "another British film with an eye on the main chance across the Atlantic,"[62] to quote *The Times*, is a curiously coy and antiquated portmanteau comic-horror that largely wastes an exceptional cast that includes Vincent Price, Donald Pleasence, Anthony Steel, Stuart Whitman and an arthritically gnarled John Carradine.

---

[60] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* page 270

[61] This is a disappointing offering from Robertson who, as Harry *Robinson*, had contributed impressive orchestral scores to Hammer's Karnstein trilogy of *The Vampire Lovers* (Roy Ward Baker, 1970), *Lust for a Vampire* (Jimmy Sangster, 1970) and *Twins of Evil* (John Hough, 1971), based on the story 'Carmilla' from *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) by J. Sheridan Le Fanu.

[62] David Robinson, '*The Monster Club*' film review in *The Times* (22 May 1981) page 12

The film also incorporates a selection of musical interludes in which tawdry, post-punk pop bands perform monster-themed tunes. B. A. Robertson's rendition of the vampire inspired 'I'm Just a Sucker (for your Love)' is possibly the most horrific sequence in the movie, although Night, The Viewers, UB40 and The Pretty Things proffer comparably grotesque musical distractions.[63] The decision to augment proceedings with musical and comic appurtenances serves to highlight a lack of faith in the film's chosen genre on the part of its veteran producer Milton Subotsky and director Roy Ward Baker. The film's jokey publicity artwork promises, 'You'll meet some interesting people and hear some great songs at The Monster Club,' but neither pledge is fulfilled. While the film does feature a refreshingly different electronic musical score from Alan Hawkshaw (for the 'Humgoo Story') and toys with potentially engaging elements of self-referentiality (the 'Vampire Story' purports to be based on the childhood recollections of horror film producer Lintom Busotsky), these are very minor attractions in what is otherwise a fairly fatuous film. Critic David Robinson observed, "There is a breed of film buff who collects this sort of third-rate horror, but even they are likely to baulk at this insipid nonsense."[64] The film was a commercial failure at the UK box-office and failed to find a distributor in the US.

Also from Chips Productions came the television series *Hammer House of Horror*, a series of 13 one-hour contemporary mystery dramas.[65] The show proved popular when it was broadcast in late 1980. A second series was commissioned but later abandoned as a result of ACC's post-*Raise the Titanic* cash crisis. Jack Gill's Black Lion Films was also responsible for commissioning John Mackenzie's gangster masterpiece *The Long Good Friday* (1979, released 1981). Ironically, Lew Grade loathed what is arguably ACC's finest film, and considered it to be both politically and morally distasteful. Furthermore, contrary to some sources, Grade doubted it would attract a sufficiently large theatrical audience and demanded it be re-edited and censored for broadcast as a two-part television drama.[66] Screening it on television

[63] Chips Records, a division of ACC (which also owned Pye Records), also released an album of the songs featured in the movie. One can only assume it was not a big seller.
[64] David Robinson, '*The Monster Club*' film review in *The Times* (22 May 1981) page 12
[65] The 'Hammer' brand name was on loan from ICI's Pension Fund Securities division, of which Hammer Films had been a part since going bust in 1979.
[66] James C. Robertson's claim that Grade wanted to re-edit the movie for television because he thought it was *too good* for theatrical release is quite simply wrong; see 'The Censors and British Gangland' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) (1999) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 25

would allow for two-thirds of the film's £1.2 million budget to be written off against the advertising revenue levy paid by the commercial television companies. Theatrical release would also involve additional costs for prints and advertising and would mean a much slower return on the original investment. When director Mackenzie and producer Barry Hanson protested, however, the film was shelved. It emerged finally two-years later having been bought by George Harrison's Handmade Films, which had earlier rescued *Monty Python's The Life of Brian* (Terry Jones, 1979) from similar treatment at EMI. *The Long Good Friday* proved to be both a commercial and a critical success. According to *The Times*:

> Barrie Keefe's screenplay is quick and deft, makes good use of the essence of modern cockney idiom and is expertly structured, as the story progresses from ordinary crime thriller to a mad, accelerating vortex of violence and destruction. It is a film of true suspense in that at every turn John Mackenzie succeeds in sustaining a positive anxiety to know what will happen next.[67]

Intriguingly, the film anticipates the growing internationalism of the UK economy, as exemplified by Grade's film policy, as East End villain and proto-Thatcherite Harold Shand (Bob Hoskins) embraces 'New Right' thinking and American cultural values.[68] He subsequently rejects such ideals (*"What I'm looking for is someone who can contribute to what England has given to the world: culture, sophistication, genius, a little bit more than a hotdog!"*) upon learning that transatlantic self-serving capitalism is no match for purer forms of (cultural) expression forged from a true sense of national conviction (in this case the political violence of the IRA). As such the film serves as a telling allegory for the failure of Grade's mid-Atlantic production strategy.

The extremely public failure of *Raise the Titanic*, coupled with that emotive, iconic name, tarnished Lew Grade's reputation irrevocably. The media, whom Grade had long courted – sharing Christmas drinks each year with forty specially selected influential journalists and film critics – and who had long enjoyed his "chutzpah of the most genial kind,"[69] turned suddenly savage. Furthermore, the ACC board, which had previously rarely questioned his business judgements, now became sceptical,

---

[67] David Robinson, '*The Long Good Friday*' film review in *The Times* (21 November 1980) page 10
[68] For further discussion, see Danny Leigh, 'Get Smarter' in *Sight and Sound* (June 2000); and John Hill (1999) 'Allegorising the Nation: British Gangster Films of the 1980s' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge)
[69] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes* page 94

fearing that Grade's Midas touch had finally abandoned him. Having raised the Titanic it was now necessary to raise cash, quickly, to pay off ITC's debts and to repay the line of credit made to Associated Films Distributors (ACC's new US and Canadian film distribution division). Under the headline 'Lord Grade is forced to mortgage the Muppets', *The Times* (26 June 1981) revealed how Grade had raised £23 million by selling forward contracts for various television programmes, including *The Muppet Show* and *Jesus of Nazareth,* to American banks. Similarly, rather than endure the protracted wait for theatrical release revenues, Grade sold the foreign distribution rights to a handful of ITC productions to MCA/Universal. With vicious irony these pictures proved to be amongst the most commercially successful of all Grade's film projects, and included the Jim Henson puppet films *The Great Muppet Caper* (1981) and *The Dark Crystal* (1983), as well as *Sophie's Choice* (Alan J. Pakula 1982) and three-time Oscar winner *On Golden Pond* (Mark Rydell, 1981). A strike by ITV technicians that dragged on for eleven weeks was to further compound ACC's financial troubles by depriving ATV (the corporation's independent television franchise holder) of much-needed advertising revenues. Cruelly this occurred at the very moment that the American success of ITC's *The Muppet Movie* (James Frawley, 1979) could have offset the worst of the company's financial difficulties.[70]

Then in 1982, in a bizarre boardroom coup, Grade was toppled as head of ACC by the Australian entrepreneur Robert Holmes à Court. With so many takeover-vultures circling above the beleaguered ACC, Grade had consented to sell his voting shares to à Court, believing that he would most effectively revive the stricken corporation. In return Grade would become executive deputy chairman of the entertainment division. However, it soon became clear to Grade that he had been duped. He recalls, "I'd begun to realize that there was a decidedly different atmosphere in the company and that Mr Robert Holmes à Court wasn't the warm hearted Mr Nice Guy I'd thought he was."[71] His new position within the corporation was never officially ratified and he found himself increasingly marginalized and distanced from the decision making process. He was soon ousted from the board of directors.

---

[70] Curiously, while *The Muppet Movie* grossed in excess of $32 million in North America, it made only £225,000 from its UK theatrical release.

[71] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* page 279

Grade's film empire, that he'd so desperately sought to vertically integrate, was soon fragmented. The recently acquired Classic cinema chain, the third largest in Britain, bought for £12 million in 1979, was sold to the rapidly expanding Cannon Corporation for £7 million in 1982. On 22 June 1982 Lew Grade resigned from his own company. The following day he joined Embassy Pictures (formerly Avco-Embassy) where the old presale strategy was used to finance the impressive *Champions* (John Irvin, 1983), the moving tale of how jockey Bob Champion overcame cancer to win the Grand National riding Aldiniti. In October 1985 Lew founded The Grade Company to produce a series of all-star TV movies derived from Barbara Cartland's turgid romantic novels, including John Hough's *A Hazard of Hearts* (1987), *The Lady and the Highwayman* (1989) and *A Ghost in Monte Carlo* (1990). Lord Lew Grade died on 13 December 1998.

Lord Delfont, EMI and Agatha Christie

> EMI launched into films in a fit of enthusiasm at the worst possible time ... when the American majors, natural partners for the kind of films EMI should have been making, were ferociously economising.[72]

In the early 1970s Lew Grade's younger brother and EMI Films' chairman and chief executive Bernard Delfont, encouraged by the early success of ACC's mid-Atlantic film policy (as well as a degree of sibling rivalry no doubt), launched a similar roster of big-budget Hollywoodesque productions. Delfont, formerly Boris Winogradsky, had changed his name early in his career to avoid confusion with his brother, assuming the name of the stage act of which he was then a part – The Delfont Boys.

EMI had toyed previously with the idea of international co-operation when, in March 1971, they had forged an alliance with MGM to produce movies on bigger budgets than either company wished to underwrite alone. In addition, EMI's studio facility at Elstree, renamed EMI-MGM Elstree Studios, would receive an annual subsidy of £170,000 from the American partner. However, in company with the other Hollywood majors, MGM was in financial difficulty and soon set about pruning its production schedule. Its lack of fiscal commitment ensured that EMI-MGM Productions was both short-lived and typically inactive. In truth, MGM had seen the Anglo-American

[72] David Gordon (1974) 'Ten points about the crisis in the British film industry' page 67

partnership as primarily a way of placating hostile British film unions still reeling from the closure of MGM's Borehamwood studios, situated just up the road from Elstree. The partnership dissolved in October 1973, Elstree studios changed its name once more, and by the year's end had halved its staff to just 250.

As noted above, EMI's embryonic transatlantic production policy was greatly encouraged by the early success of its glamorous Agatha Christie mystery *Murder on the Orient Express*. Christie had written her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), at the age of 30 and continued to write one or more books a year for the next fifty-five years until her death in 1976. Her tendency to push to its limits the 'play fair' ethos of detective fiction, which stipulated that the reader be armed with *all* the facts available to the detective, quickly made her pre-eminent in her field.

> Although a mainstay of popular literature, the whodunit type of detective story has been a minor force in commercial cinema. Because of its emphasis on wordy ratiocination over suspenseful action, it is not considered a strongly cinematic form.[73]

As indicated by the above comments from Martin Rubin, Christie's 'wordy ratiocination' has indeed proved problematic for filmmakers. The classical detective novel or 'whodunit', wherein the narrative focus is centred on the detection rather than the perpetration of crime, is essentially an intellectual puzzle more reliant on cerebral problem solving than proactive clue hunting. In view of the fact that cinema is a medium undeniably better suited to cataloguing 'external' activity than it is 'internal' mental musing, the armchair detection of Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple can be seen to be intrinsically uncinematic, and Christie's labyrinthine puzzle-plots have proved difficult to condense into ninety minutes of cinematic screen time. However, one should not underestimate the importance of the relationship between Christie and the cinema, for "the medium of film (and television) has had a great deal to do with the continuing success of Christie's work."[74]

The first film treatment of Christie's work was produced in Germany in 1928. *Die Abenteuer GMBH* (*Adventurers Inc.*) features the sleuthing spouses Tommy and

---

[73] Martin Rubin (1999) *Thrillers* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press) page 182
[74] Scott Palmer (1993) *The Films of Agatha Christie* (London, B T Batsford) page 9

Tuppence Beresford in a tale of international espionage. Based on *The Secret Adversary* (1922), one of Christie's spy thrillers, the film effectively sidesteps many of the problems implicit in adapting her complex wordy yarns. Arguably the first Christie film of note is Rene Clair's Hollywood rendition of *And Then There Were None* (1945), from the novel *Ten Little Niggers* (*Ten Little Indians*, 1939) and the stage play of the same title (the film employs the rather more upbeat ending used in the play). Equally admirable is Billy Wilder's *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957), once more based on a proven Christie play from 1953 (itself based on a 1933 short story). The film features a distinguished cast, including Charles Laughton, Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich and Elsa Lanchester, alongside its star director, and gives a foretaste of the all-star adaptations to come.[75]

In the 1960s MGM produced a series of Miss Marple adventures directed by George Pollock and starring Dame Margaret Rutherford, beginning with *Murder She Said* (1962).[76] The next two instalments, *Murder at the Gallop* (1963) and *Murder Most Foul* (1964),[77] substitute Miss Marple into what had been Hercule Poirot stories, highlighting MGM's loose adaptation style and an acceptance of Poirot's greater cinematic potential as a rather more proactive sleuth. The final film, *Murder Ahoy* (1964), dispenses with a source text and is an original screenplay by David Pursall and Jack Seddon *'Based on their interpretation of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple'*, indicating that Rutherford's reading of the role had become a suitably cinematic creation in its own right, autonomous of her creator and literary namesake. Although the MGM franchise was hugely popular with audiences, Agatha Christie was less than satisfied. She later recalled:

> I kept off films for years because I though they'd give me too many heartaches. Then I sold the rights to MGM, hoping they'd use them for television. But they chose films. It was too awful! … I get an unregenerate pleasure when I think they're not being a success. They wrote their own script for the last one - nothing to do with me at all - *Murder Ahoy*! One of the silliest things I ever saw! It got bad reviews I'm delighted to say.[78]

---

[75] The film earned six Academy Award nominations: best motion picture, director, actor (Charles Laughton), supporting actress (Elsa Lanchester), editing and sound.
[76] Based on the novel *4.50 from Paddington* (1957).
[77] Based on *After the Funeral* (1953) and *Mrs McGinty's Dead* (1952) respectively.
[78] Agatha Christie quoted in Charles Osborne (1982) *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* (New York, Random House) page 203

Aware of Christie's disenchantment with the cinema, EMI's Nat Cohen chose John Brabourne, one of Britain's most widely respected film producers, to approach the author. Brabourne's production credentials include *Sink the Bismark!* (Lewis Gilbert, 1960), Laurence Olivier's *Othello* (Stuart Burge, 1965) and Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968). Dennis Sanders and Len Lovallo explain how,

> To break the ice with the intractable author, Brabourne asked his father-in-law, Lord Louis Mountbatten, to meet with Christie. Mountbatten, hero naval commander, former Viceroy Of India, and uncle to Prince Philip, was one of the most famous men in England, and someone Christie could hardly refuse to have lunch with. And though at that time Christie and Mountbatten had not met, they had an important professional link, since, as a youth, Mountbatten had written to Christie with the idea for *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd.*[79]

After eighteen months of negotiation over lunches at the Savoy Grill, a deal was struck whereby Agatha Christie Ltd (the company founded in 1955 to oversee Christie's finances) would receive an undisclosed advance payment for the film rights and a percentage of its profits. Brabourne and his business partner Richard Goodwin sought a renowned director to helm the project and settled upon the American Sidney Lumet who, as well as having a reputation for making 'faithful' adaptations (*Long Days Journey into Night,* 1962), had previous experience of creating a compelling movie out of mere wordy exposition in a confined space (*12 Angry Men,* 1957). Brabourne explains:

> We got Sidney Lumet to direct and that was really a coup. He had recently made some very successful films, including *Dog Day Afternoon*, and his name, along with Albert Finney's, suddenly made everybody want to be in it.[80]

EMI assigned the project a budget of $1.4 million, considerably in excess of the medium budgets it was committing to other projects at that time. While stars Lauren Bacall, Ingrid Bergman, Jacqueline Bisset, John Gielgud, Richard Widmark, Anthony Perkins, Michael York, Vanessa Redgrave and Wendy Hiller each received a flat fee, Sean Connery was given a special box-office percentage deal.

---

[79] Dennis Sanders and Len Lovallo (1989 revised edition) *The Agatha Christie Companion* (New York, Berkley Books) page 406

[80] Brian McFarlane (1997) *An Autobiography of British Cinema* page 95

Murder on the Orient Express (1934) is one of Christie's most audacious puzzles: a whodunit in which they all do it.[81] It was chosen from amongst Christie's eighty published works because it not only featured the sumptuous setting of the world's most luxurious train, but also a reasonably large cast of caricatures in one of the author's ingenious 'closed shop' mysteries wherein the suspects are isolated in some remote locale. Furthermore, in 1974 it was one of her lesser-known novels, thus maintaining the freshness of the central puzzle. Indeed, in America the novel was known as *Murder in the Calais Coach*, and Christie's reputation was still based on three great works: her novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, her eternal play *The Mousetrap* (first performed in 1952 and still running in London's West End) and her twice-filmed tale *Ten Little Indians/And Then There Were None*.[82] Erstwhile critic and renowned screenwriter Paul Dehn was assigned the task of translating Christie's labyrinthine plot into a compelling script, which he does by remaining faithful to the source text. As well as retaining every major character and the narrative structure of the novel, Dehn even reuses much of Christie's dialogue. The main innovation is the film's opening reprise of the Daisy Armstrong kidnapping, a vital clue that Christie mentions much later in the novel, thus satisfying the classical detective story's pledge to arm the reader with *all* the facts.

The most intriguing aspect of the film, however, is its casting. The selection of Hollywood stars to personify Christie's thinly sketched plot ciphers is inspired and was appreciated at the time by film critic Penelope Houston, who observed that "the dryness of the mixture, in popular movie terms, demands what the film offers – a liberal sprinkling of plums in the casting."[83] According to Charles J. Rolo, the classical "detective story leaves no room for portraiture-in-depth,"[84] as truly believable characters only serve to clutter the plot and to emphasise the narrative's

[81] "Forty years before Hollywood would become notorious as the town where movies were outlined on luncheon napkins, Christie had perfected the high-concept mystery. Novel after novel that she published ... turned out to be organized around a single brilliant device for concealing, then revealing, the criminal pattern; but ... none of her concepts was more simple or successful than the secret of *Murder on the Orient Express*." Thomas Leitch (2002) *Crime Films* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press) page 176

[82] Filmed as *And Then There Were None* (Rene Clair) in 1945 and *Ten Little Indians* (George Pollock) in 1965, the novel has been filmed twice more since as *And Then There Were None* (Peter Collinson) in 1975 and most recently as *Ten Little Indians* (Alan Birkinshaw) in 1989.

[83] Penelope Houston (1974) '*Murder on the Orient Express*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 41, no. 491) pages 279-280

[84] Charles J. Rolo (1957) 'Simenon and Spillane: The Metaphysics of Murder for the Millions' in B. Rosenberg and D. Manning White (eds.) *Mass Culture* (USA, Free Press) page 172

improbabilities. Christie's protagonists are not 'real' characters but hollow shells whose emotions are deliberately underdeveloped so as to maintain the integrity of the puzzle-plot. Astutely, Lumet and Dehn retain this under-characterisation and let their stars 'flesh out' their respective roles with their pre-existing star personas. And so, while Richard Widmark plays yet another hardboiled tough-guy (as in *Night and the City,* Jules Dassin, 1950, or *Madigan*, Don Siegel, 1968), Anthony Perkins reprises his Norman Bates persona of stammering, twitching guilt. Likewise, in the sequel, *Death on the Nile* (John Guillermin, 1978), Bette Davis performs the same bitter old harpy routine she'd essayed previously in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Robert Aldrich, 1962) and *The Anniversary* (Roy Ward Baker, 1968); and in *The Mirror Crack'd* (Guy Hamilton, 1981) Liz Taylor and Kim Novak play Liz Taylor and Kim Novak with devastating aplomb.

Phil Hardy outlines how "Lumet's camera celebrates the actors rather than integrating the characters they play."[85] While this is plainly intended as criticism, it actually draws attention to Lumet's incisive comprehension of the appeal of the classical detective story, namely its function "as a kind of conundrum whose pleasure derives from trying to guess the murderer, and which sacrifices characterisation and plausibility to the exigencies of suspenseful plotting."[86] As such, the defining quality of whodunit fiction is an obsession with artifice, the reader's enjoyment arising from the proficiency with which the author manipulates the clue-puzzle plot. The mastery of Lumet's film is that it gives cinematic expression to the artifice central to the literary genre. The apparent 'failure' either to incorporate or contain the pre-existing personas of its stars within the diegetic world of the movie is in truth a deliberate rejection of realism. Thus, rather than functioning merely as poster-adorning enticements to aid presales, as is so often assumed of this type of mid-Atlantic movie, Lumet's stars are an essential ingredient in the cinematic translation of Christie's oeuvre. Note also the delicious irony that Albert Finney's Poirot, the supposed facilitator of truth, is the only star rendered unrecognisable beneath a prosthetic nose and body padding. It is a ruse worthy of Dame Agatha.

---

[85] Phil Hardy (ed.) (1997) *The BFI Companion to Crime* (London, Cassell/BFI) page 235
[86] Alison Light (1991) *Forever England* (London, Routledge) page 65

To put it another way, one cannot 'faithfully' bring Christie's world to the screen in a 'realistic' way because Christie's world is not 'realistic'. It is a stylised world designed to facilitate the perpetration and detection of murder. Any effective cinematic rendition must, therefore, be stylised accordingly. Lumet's contribution to this process of stylisation is to employ an aesthetic of excess and to create an aura of sumptuous and exaggerated decadence.[87] Accordingly, the real carriages of the Orient Express, borrowed from the Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-lits Museum, were deemed to look insufficiently glamorous onscreen and were subsequently enhanced with even more opulent accoutrements. In short, the mise-en-scene strives not for verisimilitude but for a kind of hyper-reality where glamour is taken to implausible extremes.[88]

By "changing the emphasis from plot to decor, from character to *acting,*"[89] Lumet created a new kind of Christie. Whereas the appeal of the novels resides with the ingenuity of their puzzle-plots, EMI's Christie films are sumptuous eye-candy first and foremost; what Thomas Leitch calls the "final triumph of cultural embalming over the brain-teasing pleasures of the great whodunit series."[90] In *Murder on the Orient Express* Lumet paints a picture of the past more lavish than could ever have truly existed.[91] This counterfeit depiction of pastness, unburdened by manifest claims to authenticity, is reminiscent of the period romances made by Gainsborough Studios in the 1940s, such as *The Man in Grey* and *The Wicked Lady* (Leslie Arliss, 1943 and

---

[87] "Melodrama is a heightened theatricality that makes the implausible plausible," explains director Sidney Lumet. "By going further it seems more real. *Murder on the Orient Express* is a first-rate whodunit that keeps you completely off balance ... And after a bit of thought I realised it was about something else: nostalgia. For me, Agatha Christie's world is predominantly nostalgic ... everything about her work represents a time and a place that I never knew existed, indeed, I wonder if they ever did." (1995) *Making Movies* (London, Bloomsbury) page 11

[88] Pamela Church Gibson and Andrew Hill (2001) argue that excess in 1970s British cinema – encompassing visual extravagance, as exemplified by *Murder on the Orient Express*, excessive forms of behaviour and a reordering of traditional ideas about gender – was a mediated response to contemporary deprivations and strife. See ' "Tutte e marchio!" Excess, Masquerade and Performativity in 70s Cinema' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (second edition) (London, BFI)

[89] Phil Hardy (ed.) (1997) *The BFI Companion to Crime* page 235

[90] Thomas Leitch (2002) *Crime Films* page 180

[91] Sidney Lumet explains: "Tony Walton (who did the clothes) knows that nobody gets on a train dressed like that. But what people actually wear isn't the point. In fact, what people actually wear when getting on a train is the last thing we would have considered. The object was to thrust the audience into a world it never knew – to create a feeling of how glamorous things used to be ... No detail was spared in creating a glamorous look. Would white or green *crème de menthe* look more beautiful served on a silver salver? We decided on green. For the Princess Dragomiroff, two French poodles or two Pekingese? The Pekes. For a vegetable cart in the Istanbul station, cabbages or oranges? Oranges, because they'd look better when they spilled onto the dark-gray floor." (1995) *Making Movies* pages 95-96

1945 respectively). And yet, while Agatha Christie has since become inextricably linked with nostalgia and, according to Alison Light, "synonymous with lavish and painstaking reconstructions of *period*,"[92] her novels are rarely wistful or nostalgic. On the contrary, the themes of social progress and change are recurrent concerns in her work.[93] Furthermore, the longevity of Christie's career as a writer of bestsellers testifies to her ability to move with the times and to satisfy the expectations of an ever-changing readership even within the rigid generic boundaries of the 'whodunit'.

It is interesting to note that most of the films based on the writings of Agatha Christie have in fact been adapted from pre-existing stage versions of her novels. These theatrical intermediaries, having ironed out many of the complexities of her plots, have proved more readily adaptable.[94] Although *Orient Express* had not previously been adapted for the stage, Lumet's direction has a measured 'theatrical' quality. The film's closing tableau, where the twelve passengers of the Calais Coach raise their glasses to Mrs Hubbard, over whose shoulder Lumet's camera peers, has the players take their bows to the audience. It is a sequence that, as well as acknowledging the constructed artificiality of the movie, evokes the etiquette of the theatrical world. Moreover, Lumet's leisurely pace, his penchant for static long-takes (Mrs Olson's interrogation lasts for several minutes without edits) and his fondness for dialogue ("Dialogue is not uncinematic ... I love long speeches,"[95]) all suggest theatrical sensibilities. This theatricality – including the tendency to draw thespian talent from the English stage (John Gielgud, Albert Finney, Vanessa Redgrave and Wendy Hiller) and an aesthetic where "the past is displayed as visually spectacular pastiche,"[96] – is suggestive of the heritage sensibilities identified by Andrew Higson and others,

---

[92] Alison Light (1991) *Forever England* page 62

[93] The opening chapters of *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* catalogue both Miss Hartnell's critique of modern shopping habits and Miss Marple's exploration of St Mary Mead's new housing estate, which she concedes is absolutely necessary: "These things had to be. The houses were necessary, and they were very well built ... 'Planning' or whatever they called it. Though why everything had to be called a Close she couldn't imagine." (1962 / 1993, London, Harper Collins) pages 10-11

[94] For example, Billy Wilder's *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957) is based on Christie's 1953 play, which changed the ending of the original 1933 short story. The films *Spider's Web* (Godfrey Grayson, 1960) and *Black Coffee* (Leslie Hiscott, 1931) are based on original Christie plays, and the first adaptation of *And Then There Were None/Ten Little Niggers* (1945) followed the 1943 theatrical adaptation of Christie's 1939 novel.

[95] Sidney Lumet (1995) *Making Movies* page 36

[96] Andrew Higson (1993) 'Re-presenting the Nation Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film' in Lester Friedman (ed.) *British Cinema and Thatcherism* (London, UCL Press) page 109

particularly with regard to the early 1980s revival in British filmmaking in the wake of *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981). Higson explains:

> The image of the past in the heritage films has become so naturalised that, paradoxically, it stands removed from history: the evocation of pastness is accomplished by a look, a style, the loving recreation of period details - not by any critical historical perspective. The self-conscious visual perfectionism of these films and their fetishization of period details create a fascinating but self-enclosed world. They render history as spectacle, as separate from the viewer in the present, as something over and done with, complete, achieved.[97]

However, while EMI's Christie films do exhibit certain heritage qualities, their ersatz evocation of a nostalgic fantasy untroubled by any pretence of verisimilitude suggests that *Orient Express* and its sequels would occupy at best a precarious position within this category. Likewise, their hubristic excess is quite distinct from the self-effacing reserve of the British heritage cycle of the 1980s. While heritage films "operate primarily as middle-class quality products, somewhere between the art house and the mainstream,"[98] the way in which the Christie films showcase Hollywood celebrity smacks rather of crass commercialism.

> *It is my opinion that your detective stories are the normal recreation of snobbish, outdated, life-hating, ignoble minds.*[99]

Although the Christie films clearly derive from pre-existing literary sources, as does much of the heritage cycle – such as *Sense and Sensibility* (Ang Lee, 1995) and *Howards End* (James Ivory, 1992) – the work of Agatha Christie is by no means as revered as that of Jane Austen or E. M. Forster. Furthermore, the possessive moniker used to sell all these literary adaptations serves a different purpose in the case of the Christie films from those of the heritage cycle. *Murder on the Orient Express* uses Christie's name as yet another star billing to adorn the advertising poster, to serve as both an audience attraction and a presale enticement. Heritage films, on the other hand, use the author's name as part of a process of self-effacement that at once acts to

---

[97] ibid, page 113

[98] Andrew Higson (1996) 'The Heritage Film and British Cinema' in Andre Higson (ed.) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London, Cassell) page 232

[99] 'Jumped-up pantry boy' Milo Tindle (Michael Caine) gives his opinion of 'Golden Age' detective fiction in *Sleuth* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1972), Anthony Shaffer's ingenious two-handed whodunit. Shaffer would later adapt both *Death on the Nile* and *Evil under the Sun* for Brabourne and Goodwin – as well as *Appointment with Death* (Michael Winner, 1988) for Cannon – and is rumoured to have given the script for *Murder on the Orient Express* an uncredited polish.

deny their status as movies while pointing to, and basking in the reflected glory from, the more revered and 'legitimate' cultural artefacts upon which they are based.

Murder on the Orient Express was both an international critical and box-office success. The film was granted a full-circuit release in the UK through EMI's ABC cinema chain and became the biggest grossing British film of its day. Similarly, it earned $19 million from its American and Canadian releases alone, where it was distributed by Paramount. The film garnered six Academy Award nominations – for best actor (Albert Finney), supporting actress (Ingrid Bergman, the only winner), screenplay, cinematography, music and costumes. The British Film Academy voted it the best film of 1974 and named Albert Finney as best actor, as well as awarding Sir John Gielgud and Dame Wendy Hiller the titles of best supporting actor and actress respectively.

Keen to replicate this success, EMI commissioned a sequel. *Death on the Nile* (1978) swaps the Orient Express for the Karnak Nile cruiser and casts a star name in every role (with one-scene cameos from Sam Wanamaker and Harry Andrews), as well as upping the glamour ante more generally (the film won the Academy Award for Anthony Powell's exquisite costumes). Assigned a budget of $10 million, it was EMI's costliest venture to date. The film, from Christie's 1937 novel of the same name, is slavishly modelled on its predecessor; so much so that it was originally to have been re-christened *Murder on the Nile*.[100] Thanks largely to its distinguished cast – which includes Peter Ustinov, Bette Davis, David Niven, Mia Farrow, Jane Birkin, George Kennedy, Maggie Smith, Jon Finch and Jack Warden – and an impressive script from Anthony Shaffer, *Death on the Nile* performed exceedingly well internationally and earned generally favourable notices. Although critical of John Guillermin's direction, *The Times* conceded, "It is fun, and with a bit more talent and a bit more trying might even have been as much fun as its predecessor."[101]

Next from EMI came *The Mirror Crack'd* (Guy Hamilton, 1980) which, fearing audience fatigue with Poirot's *"little grey cells"*, sought to broaden the series to

[100] Agatha Christie had previously used this title for her 1946 stage adaptation of the novel. In the play, which was not a success, the character of Hercule Poirot had been replaced with a sleuthing clergyman known in Britain as Father Borrondale and in America as Archdeacon Pennyfeather.
[101] David Robinson, '*Death on the Nile*' film review in *The Times* (27 October 1978) page 12

include the adventures of Christie's septuagenarian spinster Miss Marple, here played by Angela Lansbury. In contrast to its predecessors, budgetary restraint is herein the order of the day with a slimmed-down roster of Hollywood star names (Kim Novak, Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson and Tony Curtis) incongruously transposed to the Home Counties. Despite being critically mauled, its box-office return was sufficiently respectable to warrant one final instalment, namely the delightfully camp *Evil under the Sun* (Guy Hamilton, 1982). Once more featuring Peter Ustinov as the eccentric Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot, the movie also stars James Mason, Diana Rigg, Maggie Smith, Colin Blakely, Roddy McDowall and Sylvia Miles as theatrical murder suspects vacationing on a remote island in the Adriatic. Anthony Shaffer's script recasts Christie's 1941 novel in the mould left over from *Death on the Nile*, and the film has an endearing frivolous quality.[102] Moreover, the prominence of comedy and acerbic wit at the expense of mystery and detection suggests a return to the Margaret Rutherford Miss Marple mysteries of the 1960s and gives "the overall impression that the producers, not satisfied with merely cloning their earlier lucrative venture, have hedged their bets by cramming in a few cheap laughs along the way."[103] The series had run its course. However, the all-star format with Ustinov's Poirot on the case was later resurrected for US television and for Cannon's *Appointment with Death* (Michael Winner, 1988).

Throughout the 1970s many imitators sought to climb aboard the *Orient Express* money train. The infamous Harry Alan Towers, while on the run from the FBI for allegedly running a call-girl racket,[104] was typically first on the scene with an inept retelling of *And Then There Were None* (*Ten Little Indians,* Peter Collinson, 1975). Ever ready to exploit popular cinematic trends (he'd previously offered Sax Rohmer's *The Face of Fu Manchu* (Don Sharp, 1965) in emulation of the exotic James Bond adventures), Towers revised his script for the 1965 version, written under his regular pseudonym Peter Welbeck, relocating the story from Cornwall to the Shah Abbas Hotel, Isfahan, in a tax-break deal to promote tourism in the Shah's Iran. The film

[102] The film's frivolity was echoed by art deco promotional artwork that noted how, 'While vacationing in the Greek isles, famous detective Hercule Poirot spotted a beautiful woman on the beach. Realizing that she was dead, he did not ask her to dinner.'

[103] Clyde Jeavons (1978) '*Death on the Nile*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 45, no. 537) page 197

[104] As discussed in Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs (1994) *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema In Europe 1956-1984* (London, Primitive Press)

features an 'international all-star cast' that includes Richard Attenborough, Oliver Reed, Elke Sommer, Herbert Lom, Charles Aznavour, erstwhile James Bond villains Gert Frobe and Adolfo Celi, Maria Rohm (Mrs Harry Alan Towers), Alberto de Mendoza and the voice of Orson Welles, but otherwise lacks style, interest or technical accomplishment. The *New York Times* observed, it feels "less like a movie than a movie deal, the kind that gets put together over drinks at the Carlton Hotel Bar during the Cannes Film Festival ... *Ten Little Indians* is an international movie mess of the sort that damages the reputations of everyone connected with it."[105]

Orient Express' successful blend of celebrity, nostalgia and mystery was also the inspiration for Neil Simon's whodunit spoof *Murder by Death* (Robert Moore, 1976), in which Elsa Lanchester, Peter Sellers, David Niven, Maggie Smith, Peter Falk, Alec Guinness and James Coco (as effete Belgian sleuth Milo Perrier) endeavour to outsmart Truman Capote. This recent vitriolic review from the *Radio Times* reasserts the orthodox critical opinion that 1970s all-star entertainment remains beneath contempt, while apparently failing to appreciate that the movie is in fact a parody:

> *Murder By Death*; a bizarre hotpotch of greats, also-rans and has-beens combine to pay the mortgage in one of those whodunits in a big house ... This one belongs firmly in the genre that maintains that as long as you can get enough famous names on the poster the public will accept anything. Not true.[106]

In Agatha's wake, Amicus, Britain's second largest horror factory, offered *The Beast Must Die* (Paul Annett, 1974), a whodunit horror yarn where the audience is given a 30-second 'werewolf break' to decide which of the inhabitants of an isolated country house is in fact a bloodthirsty lycanthrope.[107] And in 1974 Hammer announced its intention to remake Hitchcock's train-based caper *The Lady Vanishes*, although it took until 1979 for it to finally arrive, by which time Rank had assumed control.

---

[105] Vincent Canby's *New York Times* review quoted in Dennis Sanders and Len Lovallo (1989 revised edition) *The Agatha Christie Companion* page 408

[106] J. Ferguson *et al.*, '*Murder by Death*' film review in *Radio Times* (6-12 March 1999, vol. 300, no. 3916)

[107] Although redolent of schlock gimmick master William Castle – whose *Homicidal* (1961) had featured a 'fright break' two minutes before the end of the movie so that viewers too terrified to stay could leave the theatre – this notion was in fact borrowed from the 1965 version of *Ten Little Indians*, in which viewers had been given a 60-second 'whodunit break'.

Rank, Hitchcock and nostalgic Hun-bashing

The Rank Organisation had noted the initial successes of both EMI and ACC and, not wishing to miss the Hollywoodesque boat, in 1977 increased its film production budget from a meagre £1½ million a year to a more impressive £10 million. However, having perhaps learned from J. Arthur's failed foray in the '40s, Rank never appeared as enthusiastic as either Lords Grade or Delfont about the latest mid-Atlantic venture, and it proved consistently to be the least daring of the 'big three' in terms of both fiscal outlay and filmic subject matter. In contrast to the modernism of ACC or the explicit Americanism of EMI, by and large Rank seemed content to face the challenges of a rapidly restructuring cinema sector with what John Walker calls "blinkered responses to the past,"[108] most notably the Hitchcock remakes *The Thirty Nine Steps* (Don Sharp, 1978) and *The Lady Vanishes* (Anthony Page, 1979). Despite the merits of both these films, however, in the end they cannot escape feeling like inferior Xeroxed copies of precious originals.

The first cinematic rendition of John Buchan's espionage classic *The Thirty Nine Steps* (1915) had been Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 masterpiece. Hitch's loose adaptation had starred Robert Donat as the tenacious amateur adventurer and defender of the British Empire, Richard Hannay. The misguided 1959 Ralph Thomas remake starring Kenneth More owed more to Hitchcock than to Buchan, and mixed farcical light comedy with travelogue footage of the Scots highlands. Don Sharp's 1978 version is a back-to-basics affair incorporating previously unused elements of the source text and, for the first time, evoking the pre-World War One milieu in which Buchan's tale is set. As well as imbuing a potentially overfamiliar yarn with freshness and suspense, the return to Buchan enables the film to sidestep comparisons with its illustrious precursor by effectively telling a different story. Indeed, the film is least satisfying when ploughing familiar soil – the political rally sequence, for example, lacks either the humour or the tension of the original – and is at its best when offering something new; notably its finale set amidst the cogs and gears of the Palace of Westminster's famous clock tower.

---

[108] John Walker (1985) *The Once and Future Film*

Whereas Buchan's 39 steps were to be found on the Kent coast and Hitchcock's had been the recollections of a theatrical memory-man, this time out the steps lead to Big Ben which has been wired to trigger a bomb and so destroy Parliament and precipitate war. In order to save Parliament and the visiting Greek prime minister, Karolides, Hannay must hang precariously from the minute hand of Westminster's iconic clock and literally hold back the hands of time. This inspired invention, courtesy of scriptwriter Michael Robson, makes for a thrilling climax, albeit one that calls to mind Will Hay's *My Learned Friend* (Basil Dearden, 1943), finally surmounting the dramatic diminuendo that had marred Buchan's novel and its earlier cinematic translations. Moreover, this resonant image serves as a neat analogy for Rank's entrenched nostalgia and conservative attitude in the face of sweeping change.

Don Sharp is an energetic director with a keen eye for innovative composition, schooled in exploitation filmmaking. Noteworthy amongst his credits are the Hammer horror films *Kiss of the Vampire* (1963) and *Rasputin the Mad Monk* (1966), and the inaugural episodes in Harry Alan Tower's Fu Manchu series, *The Face of Fu Manchu* and *The Brides of Fu Manchu* (1966), which had similarly mixed period trappings with tales of derring-do. Sharp's talent for orchestrating action set pieces is typified by the stunning boat chase through the canals of Amsterdam that he contributed as second-unit director to Geoffrey Reeves' otherwise pedestrian *Puppet on a Chain* (1970), from the Alistair MacLean novel of the same title. On the other hand, Sharp's films frequently lack emotional depth. *The Thirty Nine Steps* is no exception. While it is certainly energetic and intermittently suspenseful, one actually cares little for Hannay's predicament, and his burgeoning romance with Alex MacKenzie (Karen Dotrice) is execrably underdeveloped. However, Sharp piles incident upon incident with such unrelenting vigour that one has barely a moment to consider the film's broader deficiencies.

Alfred Hitchcock was to recycle narrative and thematic riffs from *The 39 Steps* throughout his career, especially that of the innocent man ensnared in a web of espionage: only by solving the mystery can he clear his name. Sharp's film reverses this process by reusing ideas and set pieces from Hitchcock's back-catalogue, and most explicitly *North by Northwest* (1959). For example, whereas in the novel Colonel Scudder had been murdered in Hannay's flat, herein he is assassinated in a

crowded railway station in a sequence that evokes *North by Northwest*'s murder at the United Nations. In both cases our heroes, Richard Hannay and Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant), are left holding the corpse while onlookers jump to similarly inaccurate conclusions. Hannay is later dive-bombed by a monoplane in a sequence that knowingly reprises Thornhill's near fatal encounter with a swooping crop-duster. Moreover, in both films the villains' henchmen, Baylis (Ronald Pickup) and Marshall (Donald Pickering) in the former and Leonard (Martin Landau) in the latter, are characterized as repressed homosexuals who ultimately meet their respective ends falling from famous monuments (namely Big Ben and Mount Rushmore). The arch villains, meanwhile, Appleton (David Warner) and Vandamm (James Mason), react to their eventual apprehension with comparable sangfroid. Remembering that *North by Northwest* is essentially an elaboration on concepts that Hitchcock had first road-tested during *The 39 Steps*, it is delectably apposite that Sharp's remake of the test-piece should incorporate lessons learned from the final production model.

One-time Jesus of Nazareth Robert Powell is well cast as Hannay, bringing sincerity and vulnerability to the role in place of the arrogance of Buchan's hero or the self-assured flippancy of Robert Donat's depiction. Powell's impressive physical interpretation was later spun-off into a successful TV series, called simply *Hannay* (1988-89), which ran for 13 one-hour episodes and was produced by Thames Television. David Warner, Sir John Mills and Eric Porter give assured performances in supporting roles. Although critical reaction to the film was lukewarm – "It lacks altogether the joyful invention and the pleasure in character of Hitchcock's film."[109] – it did excellent business at the British box-office and was amongst the top five British films on general release in the UK in 1980, alongside *Watership Down* (Martin Rosen, 1978), *Midnight Express* (Alan Parker, 1978), *The Wild Geese* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1978) and EMI's *Death on the Nile*.[110] In short, while perhaps not as captivating as its illustrious predecessor, Don Sharp's *The Thirty Nine Steps* is an engaging and attractive, if admittedly old-fashioned, entertainment.

---

[109] David Robinson, '*The Thirty Nine Steps*' film review in *The Times* (24 November 1978) page 11

[110] Rank's other features from the period include *Wombling Free* (Lionel Jeffries, 1977) from the popular children's TV show, *Tarka the Otter* (David Cobham, 1979), the revisionist western *Eagle's Wing* (Anthony Harvey, 1979), *Bad Timing* (Nicolas Roeg, 1980) starring Art Garfunkel and Harvey Keitel, *The Human Factor* (Otto Preminger, 1980) from the novel by Graham Greene, and *Silver Dream Racer* (David Wickes, 1980) starring 1970s pop star David Essex. All failed to make a noticeable impression at the box-office, either domestically or internationally.

This is less true of Rank's remake of Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), an ill-considered venture marred by significant pre-production difficulties. Michael Carreras, the new head of Hammer Film Productions, had first expressed a desire to remake the train-based espionage classic in early 1974 as a means of capitalizing on the hype surrounding *Murder on the Orient Express*. Michael had bought Hammer from his father Sir James Carreras in January 1973, supported by a sizeable loan from the Pension Fund Securities (PFS) division of Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), and was keen to see the company diversify into new genres and media. To help finance the planned $4 million feature, intended initially for American television, Carreras convinced exploitation specialists American International Pictures (AIP) to join the project along with Rank, who held the remake rights. This proved to be a most unhappy production partnership and after 3 years of intransigence and creative differences AIP backed out. A subsequent co-production deal with Columbia Pictures also came to naught.

Only at this late stage, having made significant pre-production investment, did Rank finally consent to cover the whole production budget. Then, in August 1978, PFS acted to freeze Hammer's account. All of the company's outstanding residuals would now go towards repaying its debt. Playing for time, in the hope that box-office returns from *The Lady Vanishes* would cover the debt, Carreras renamed an inactive Hammer subsidiary, 'Jackdaw', as 'Hammer Films Limited' and pressed on with pre-production. Shooting commenced finally on 11 December 1978 on location in Austria and at Pinewood Studios, Buckinghamshire. However, when the film's production costs spiralled beyond the agreed $4 million Michael Carreras was replaced as producer. By the time of the film's London premier on 5 May 1979 PFS had passed Hammer to the Official Receiver who declared her insolvent to the tune of £800,000.

Rank's remake is a disappointing vulgarisation of the Hitchcock original. Elliot Gould and Cybill Shepherd are miscast in the lead roles, herein re-imagined as verbose Americans (whose vaudevillian wisecracking would better suit an episode of *Bilko* than a supposedly thrilling tale of wartime espionage). "One result of … [scriptwriter George Axelrod's] … radical alterations in the characters originally played by Margaret Lockwood and Michael Redgrave," observed *The Daily*

Telegraph in a generally favourable review, "is to turn what was essentially a very English film into something much more international in character."[111] But in the process the whimsy and satire of the original is lost amidst much madcap noise.

Whereas Hitchcock's film had, with remarkable prescience, highlighted the need for class unity and national consensus in the face of totalitarian aggression, director Anthony Page's mid-Atlantic remake depicts an Anglo-American 'special relationship' in which the US has assumed the role of senior partner. Such a revision reflects not only the economic need to entice US audiences, but also Britain's dwindling status as a 'world power' since the end of the Second World War. Moreover, the decision to abandon the hegemonic theme of the original highlights the filmmakers' appreciation of the increased social heterogeneity of contemporary Britain, even if they then sidestep the issue by calling into play a succession of consciously old-fashioned British national stereotypes. Of these the most engaging and fully formed are the blustering Blimps Charters and Caldicott, now played by Arthur Lowe and Ian Carmichael in roles made famous by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne, if only because they were consciously old-fashioned British national stereotypes in the original too. Ultimately, having added little to Hitchcock's superlative version aside from Douglas Slocombe's attractive pastel colour photography, this is a somewhat needless remake. Nevertheless, it proved popular with British audiences and was also moderately successful abroad.

Much better is Rank's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1978), from Erskine Childers' 1903 espionage thriller, in which patriotic Englishmen Davies (Michael York) and Carruthers (Simon MacCorkindale) foil Kaiser Wilhelm's plan to invade Britain. Director Tony Maylam tells his decidedly tall tale "with such persuasion, and against such realistic and picturesque backgrounds that it is willingly swallowed,"[112] observed *The Daily Telegraph*, skilfully balancing intrigue and excitement with a character-driven narrative and an authentic period feel despite occasionally obvious budgetary restrictions. Maylam, cinematographer Christopher Challis and composer Howard Blake conspire to reproduce the composure of Childers' novel, whose surface serenity is intermittently fractured by the nefarious activities of the baleful

[111] Patrick Gibbs, 'Making the "lady" reappear' in *The Daily Telegraph* (11 May 1979) page 15
[112] Patrick Gibbs, 'A link with the past' in *The Daily Telegraph* (4 May 1979) page 9

Boche. Inexplicably, despite widespread critical praise, Rank deemed the film to be commercially 'non-viable' and shelved it. By the mid-1980s it had still received only a very limited release, and was not released in the US until 1984.[113]

In the same way that the heritage films of the 1980s that blossomed in the wake of *Chariots of Fire* and *Gandhi* (Richard Attenborough, 1982) have been read as a retreat from the socio-cultural turmoil of Margaret Thatcher's reign – "providing satisfactions which the present does not provide or compensations for what it lacks," and, according to John Hill, "offering images of stability at a time of upheaval and a sense of continuity in a time of change."[114] – so the ersatz nostalgias of the 1970s, like *The Riddle of the Sands*, permit a momentary respite from contemporary crisis. Evidence of this retreat into a simpler, more secure and happier past is commonplace in '70s Britain. Note, for instance, the proliferation of regressive moral groups like The Festival of Light, and the unprecedented burgeoning of what Martin J. Wiener terms "antigrowth and antitechnology movements."[115] The period also featured a trend for romanticised ruralism,[116] epitomized by the creation of the Campaign for Real Ale, and a vogue for cultural and historical preservation illustrated by the fivefold increase in National Trust membership between 1969 and 1979.[117] According to Wiener:

> Perhaps the chief literary embodiment of this spirit of resistance was the immensely popular poet laureate John Betjeman, who was more widely read than any previous laureate. Betjeman extended the pastoral nostalgia of his predecessors, John Masefield and Alfred Austin, to suburbia, now an integral part of Old England. His writing disparaged the new and evoked the security of old, familiar things.[118]

---

[113] *The Times* (24 December 1980, page 3) described how the film had become a firm favourite with the yachting and sailing fraternity via recurrent charity screenings in aid of the Royal Yachting Association Seamanship Foundation.

[114] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* pages 74 and 75; see also John Corner and Sylvia Harvey (1991) 'Mediating Tradition and Modernity: The Heritage/Enterprise Couplet' in John Corner and Sylvia Harvey (eds.) *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture* (London, Routledge)

[115] Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press) page 165

[116] Such sylvan sentiments are expressed in the EMI films *All Creatures Great and Small* (Claude Whatham, 1974) and *All Things Bright and Beautiful* (Eric Till, 1975), from the hugely popular series of books by James Herriott that began with *If Only They Could Talk* (1970).

[117] Figures quoted in Bart Moore-Gilbert (1994) 'Cultural Closure or Post-Avantgardism?' in Bart Moore-Gilbert (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge) page 12

[118] Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* page 165

The appeal of the period films explored in this chapter as far as British audiences were concerned was that not only did they paint a reassuringly clear picture of the 'English way of life', even if only through the use of caricatures and national stereotypes, but they also offered a strategic retreat from the instability of the present. For example, with regard to the phenomenal popularity of the BBC period drama serial *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1971-1975), Christopher Booker argues that the show offered "a day-dream vision of a world in which the two realms, upper and lower, could still coexist in happy, interdependent harmony – such a striking contrast to the bleak, envious, divided, class-racked society of today."[119]

This depiction of Britain, based not on being fashionable or up-to-the-minute but on history, heritage and apparent cultural stability as dramatised in these narratives of class-defined social status and rural tranquillity, may also account for their success in America where they offered a contrast to the social turbulence prompted by the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War. Discussing the popularity amongst American audiences of British television exports in the 1970s, Jeffrey Miller discerns a post-swinging 60s "shift in signification from a mod sense of contemporary consumption to a historical and literary sensibility of aristocratic nobles oblige,"[120] exemplified by the success in America (as well as domestically) of the period dramas *The Forsyte Saga* (1967) and *Elizabeth R.* (1971). However, this ideological shift was seemingly lost on Lew Grade, whose roster of self-consciously modern (at least in terms of narrative) adventure films failed consistently to ignite the US box-office.

Although Britain had been in decline for many decades, both economically and in terms of international significance, the 1970s saw these trends thrown into sharp relief, particularly by the need to borrow from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1976. The prevalence of these 'proto-heritage' films, which predate the stilted Merchant-Ivory period dramas that have proliferated since the 1980s, can best be explained as a response to contemporary concerns about Britain's role in the modern world. These films present reassuring visions of a 'Great' Britain (invariably imagined as England) with tales of English tenacity, sinister foreigners and laudable

[119] Christopher Booker (1980) *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade* (London, Allen Lane) page 164
[120] Jeffrey S. Miller (2000) *Something Completely Different: British Television and American Culture* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press) page 75

Hun-bashing. Moreover, regardless of specific temporal setting, these are narratives that reiterate comforting and enduring World War Two fantasies of a unified and uncomplicated 'finest hour' and, more specifically, a clearly defined adversary against whom Britain can define itself. Clyde Jeavons outlines how,

> with Britain's position as a world power becoming less and less assured and her traditional political values beginning to be questioned ..., there was an apparent instinctive desire on the part of the public to have its national confidence and pride bolstered by some substitute means. Hence the nostalgic harking back to a time in the recent past when issues were clear-cut and Britain's greatness, though under threat, was self-evident and confirmed by victory.[121]

Consequently, of Rank's three nostalgic contributions, *The Riddle of the Sands* presents the most intricate analogy because, rather then simply externalising the threat in the guise of the hateful Hun, it warns of the danger within (be it political indecision, gluttonous trade unionism, social intolerance, or economic and cultural retardation), here in the guise of a traitorous fifth-columnist.

As with many of the films discussed in this thesis, although well received domestically, Rank's mid-Atlantic movies typically did only moderate business abroad. Then in 1981 the Rank Organisation announced that, because of high interest rates and inflation, it no longer considered film production to be financially viable and meant to cancel all its existing production plans. This came as something of a shock, especially considering that merely two-weeks earlier at the Cannes Film Festival Rank had announced a £16 million production programme. Henceforth, although retaining its involvement in film distribution and exhibition, Rank's energies would be concentrated on more lucrative aspects of its diversified corporation, notably exploiting it non-US rights to the Xerox photocopying process.

Back at EMI, *Murder on the Orient Express* had set in motion a money train that appeared to confirm the viability of pursuing a mid-Atlantic production programme. To spearhead its Hollywoodesque campaign EMI sought experienced hands. On the 25 August 1976 EMI had bought the long-established film production and

[121] Clyde Jeavons (1974) *A Pictorial History of War Films* (London, Hamlyn) page 188. Although made to account for the incidence and popularity of British war films in the 1950s, Jeavons' comments also serve to illuminate the ideological function that lies beneath the surface of the equally wistful wartime and 'proto-heritage' narratives that proliferated in the 1970s.

distribution company British Lion Films for £730,000, primarily to acquire the talents of its managing directors Barry Spikings and Michael Deeley. To quell fears that its takeover meant the end of British Lion, EMI announced its intention "to retain the name of British Lion in some significant form within the context of the EMI Group's film financing and distribution activities, having regard to British Lion's long history and the goodwill attached to its name, both at home and abroad."[122] Nonetheless, by May 1977 British Lion had ceased to trade.

Barry Spikings (erstwhile chairman of British Lion's Shepperton Studios facility) and Michael Deeley had in fact only recently assumed control of British Lion, having procured it from its holding company J. H. Vavasseur/Lion International – "an exceptionally well-run international outdoor poster company"[123] – on 30 June 1975. Once ensconced within the EMI group as joint managing directors of EMI Film Distributors and members of the board of the EMI Film and Theatre Corporation, Spikings and Deeley continued with the controversial policy they had inaugurated at British Lion: to make American films for the Americans. John Walker explains:

> At British Lion they had backed Nicolas Roeg's *The Man Who Fell To Earth*, which was the first British film to be made in America without financial backing from that country ... Spikings showed little interest in wanting to revitalise or even keep alive the local industry. He even moved EMI's main production office to Los Angeles. Spikings's apparent belief was that if he could break into the American market with big budget, basically American movies, then he would have the power to create a market for smaller British movies. The blockbusters would batter down the walls that kept British films out and they would rush through the gap. It was an attractive theory unless you were a British producer seeking finance for your film.[124]

Much in the manner of Lew Grade, Spikings' 'global strategy' entailed pre-selling movies in strategic territories and principally the United States. Thus, potential projects had to have inbuilt US appeal. Spikings famously refused to back the films *Gandhi, Chariots of Fire* and *Local Hero* (Bill Forsyth, 1983) because of what he considered their innate parochialism. Indeed, in the roster of international product formulated by Deeley and Spikings at EMI – which included *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978), *Convoy* (Sam Peckinpah, 1978) and *The Driver* (Walter Hill,

[122] Derek Threadgall (1994) *Shepperton Studios: An Independent View* (London, BFI) page 144
[123] David Gordon (1974) 'Ten points about the crisis in the British film industry'
[124] John Walker (1985) *The Once and Future Film* pages 29-30

1978) – the all-star Agatha Christie movies produced by Lord Brabourne and Richard Goodwin are perhaps the most manifestly British in flavour. However, even this lucrative franchise soon found production capital difficult to come by as it became progressively apparent that the British film industry's latest crack at outdoing Hollywood was not paying the anticipated dividends.

As British film after British film failed to live up to expectations stateside, the suspicion grew amongst their British producers that the problem lay not with the films themselves but with the way in which they here being handled in the US marketplace by apparently unsympathetic American distributors. For Lew Grade, dissatisfaction with Warner Bros' handling of ITC's *Movie Movie* (Stanley Donen, 1978) – a bizarre satirical concoction, part melodrama, part Busby Berkeley musical, in which Grade had considerable faith – seems to have been the last straw. And so, in collaboration with EMI, in October 1978 Grade formed yet another initialism, Associated Film Distributors (AFD), to handle American and Canadian distribution. While ACC held a 60% stake in the company, EMI held the remaining 40% but, crucially, AFD had only $9 million working capital, supported by a credit line from the First National Bank of Boston. It was hardly enough to offset expenses and, as Grade later conceded,

> What I *should* have done, of course, was to make a deal with one of the major film companies to distribute all our films. That way I'd have none of the problems of bearing the massive overheads that go into theatrical distribution, such as the prints and advertising costs.[125]

In May 1979 Grade won assurances from 14 leading American cinema chains that they would exhibit his films.[126] However, to ensure AFD's continued viability, EMI and ACC would have to guarantee a steady stream of high quality movies, of which at least some would have to be box-office successes. But, while Grade continued to (partially) offset production costs via TV presales and EMI pursued their policy of

---

[125] Lew Grade (1987) *Still Dancing* page 252

[126] *The Daily Telegraph* (30 May 1979, page 3) reported how Grade "announced the deal on disembarking the QE2 at Southampton yesterday after playing host during the Atlantic crossing to the men who control some 7000 cinemas in the United States. For his guests, Lord Grade, 72, booked the entire penthouse suit deck, 18 first-class luxury State rooms and used the cinema to show them clips from his latest film *Saturn Three* (sic) …'They were absolutely knocked out,' he said, 'It's a blockbuster of a film and when I told them about our other new films like *Raise the Titanic, The Jazz Singer* and *The Lone Ranger*, we were home and dry'."

pre-selling international distribution rights, both companies repeatedly missed the profitable American box-office target. James Park contends that

> AFD became operational in March 1979, long before either EMI or ACC had shown they could sustain a flow of saleable films, and the new company's existence encouraged Spikings and Grade into a wild spending spree. It's not surprising that what they bought were duds.[127]

Associated Film Distributors was disbanded in 1981, after a short but turbulent life, having lost $62 million. In its place, Grade struck a distribution deal with MCA/Universal. AFD had been a costly flop (as had been Rank Film Distributors of America 30 years earlier, on which it was modelled), but worse was yet to come and 1981 would see only 24 British feature films in production.

At the close of the 1970s, Rank was on the cusp of suspending its film production activities and Lew Grade's efforts to turn a Clive Cussler thriller into an epic had set ACC on a collision course with an iceberg of her own making. EMI was also in financial turmoil. The company's medical research division had developed an innovative 'Computerised Axial Tomography' (CAT) body scanner, at huge financial expense; but, when it became apparent that the lucrative American medical market could not easily be cracked, EMI's profits tumbled from £70 million to £17 million and its stock collapsed. By the end of the decade EMI had amassed debts of £50 million, and it came as no great surprise when, in late 1979, the company was acquired by Thorn Electrical Industries for £169 million. The new company, Thorn-EMI, immediately cut back its film programme. The costly flop *Honky Tonk Freeway* (John Schlesinger, 1981), EMI's most expensive film, would be the last of its big budget productions. Budgets and aspirations would henceforth be rather more modest.

In November 1982 Verity Lambert, a former BBC TV producer and head of drama at Thames Television, was appointed director of production at Thorn-EMI. Her job was to oversee a somewhat more restrained roster of five films a year, each budgeted at between $5 and $10 million.[128] At the same time as the British popular press were enthusing about a supposed 'renaissance' in British filmmaking, stirred by the March

---

[127] James Park (1990) *British Cinema: The Lights that Failed* page 138

[128] As reported in *The Times* (16 November 1983, page 3) under the erroneous headline 'Cinema firm plans *larger* film output' (my emphasis).

1982 Oscar success of *Chariots of Fire*, EMI reorganised its film division as Thorn-EMI Screen Entertainment (TESE) so as to concentrate on distribution and marketing. Lambert's tenure proved less than eventful and her contract was not renewed after the allotted 3 years in office, by which time Barry Spikings had also (prematurely) left the company. In May 1986, after a period of inactivity, TESE was sold to the Australian brewery baron, entrepreneur and fraudster Alan Bond for £110 million. Less than a week later Bond sold it for £170 million to Cannon, owned by the Israelis Menehem Golan and Yoram Globus. "History has an uncomfortable way of repeating itself in the film industry," opines John Walker. "Whatever its executives learn from, it is not the past."[129] In keeping with this view, and having seemingly learned nothing from the unsuccessful transatlantic policies of EMI, Rank and ACC (from whom, incidentally, much of Cannon's vertically integrated film empire had been bought), Golan and Globus sought to appeal to the international market with such mid-Atlantic fare as *Lifeforce* (Tobe Hooper, 1985) and a decidedly camp remake of *The Wicked Lady* (Michael Winner, 1983) starring Faye Dunaway and Alan Bates.

Elsewhere, the small British production outfit Goldcrest, founded by the Canadian Jake Eberts, had been investing shrewdly in a string of critically and commercially successful films; including *Chariots of Fire, Gandhi, Local Hero, The Killing Fields* (Roland Joffe, 1984) and *A Room With a View* (James Ivory, 1986).[130] Whereas many of Goldcrest's competitors obtained production capital from presales, Goldcrest chose to spread risk through co-investment and by nurturing links with big business and the City of London, exploiting recent changes in British tax law that now "treated the backing of films in the same way as buying an engineering lathe."[131] In other words, investment could be written off against tax directly it was made and, if the film proved successful, profits would be taxed as income. The films *The Wild Geese* and *The Sea Wolves*, from successful independent producer Euan Lloyd, were also financed in this fashion. This capital allowance tax incentive encouraged a large number of insurance companies, pension funds and City institutions to play an active role in the British film industry, as they had in support of Alexander Korda's

[129] John Walker (1985) *The Once and Future Film* page 28
[130] For a full history of Goldcrest's turbulent life, see Jake Eberts and Terry Ilott (1990) *My Indecision is Final: The Rise and Fall of Goldcrest Films* (London, Faber & Faber)
[131] Ross Davies, 'Business Diary: of wolves and geese' in *The Times* (3 July 1980) page 21

'international strategy' half a century earlier. As had also been the case on that occasion, they would soon come to regret it.

In 1985, following Ebert's departure and flushed with international success, Goldcrest inaugurated a much bolder production programme under new chief executive James Lee. With reckless haste, Lee commissioned three major productions to be shot concurrently: *Revolution* (Hugh Hudson, 1986), budgeted as $15 million; *Absolute Beginners* (Julien Temple, 1986), budgeted at $9 million; and *The Mission* (Roland Joffe, 1986), budgeted at $17 million. This ambitious trio would each encounter problems that caused production costs to soar (*The Mission* wound up costing $23 million) and, when all three bombed at the box-office, Goldcrest collapsed.

> In October 1987, at a meeting lasting about three minutes, Goldcrest, which just a couple of years earlier had been the blue-chip symbol of the British film industry, was sold at a knock-down price to Masterman, a company controlled by Brent Walker whose interests ranged from betting shops to pubs.[132]

The latest and most sustained 'British invasion' of the coveted transatlantic market had again faltered at the foot of the Hollywood hills, unable ultimately to counter Hollywood's inbuilt competitive edge, namely the vastness of its domestic market. The remainder of this thesis looks in more detail at some of the ways in which British cinema in the 1970s sought to appeal to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic by incorporating both global and local concerns in films formulated to work within American modes of address.

[132] David Puttnam (1997) *The Undeclared War: The Struggle for Control of the World's Film Industry* (London, HarperCollins) page 311

4.

Decade of Discontent: Politics, Film Policy and Texts of Terrorism

> The winter of 1973 and the spring of 1974 have seen the word 'crisis' used with a fair degree of accuracy to cover the industrial situation, the future of energy supplies, the relations of the Government with the trade unions, and the balance of payments position. If there is a crisis in the film industry, it is in danger of being engulfed in the avalanche of crises.[1]

Accepting that movies are not autonomous artistic artefacts emanating from a cultural vacuum, but rather that they form an integral part of a complex extra-textual nexus of socio-political factors, in this chapter I chart developments in Britain's political, economic and social spheres during the apparently crisis-ridden period 1970 to 1985. "The primary aim is to examine how (some of) the meanings 'spoken' by films during this period connected to broader patterns of social and cultural life."[2] For ease of understanding, I have elected to present a chronological history. I have found it necessary to carve up the period under scrutiny into more manageable sub-sections, using national general elections as obvious punctuation points: all the same, I have tried always to avoid over-emphasising the effect that changes of political administration have on the character of the nation.

Into this contextual framework I introduce case studies of popular British films that have hitherto attracted little interpretative effort; specifically the United Artists British 'runaway' production *Juggernaut* (Richard Lester, 1974), the Roger Moore star-vehicle *North Sea Hijack* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1980) and the SAS drama *Who Dares Wins* (Ian Sharp, 1982). By so doing, I seek to counter the charge of cultural 'rootlessness' made against that section of 1970s British film production intended expressly for export, arguing that they do articulate both the national character and national concerns. In addition, the centrality of terrorism as a narrative conceit within

---

[1] David Gordon (1974) 'Ten points about the crisis in the British film industry' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 43, no. 2) page 67

[2] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) page xi

these films itself expresses British concerns during a turbulent decade in the face of increased levels of lawlessness and militancy (indeed, both *Juggernaut* and *Who Dares Wins* are based on real life events),[3] and a progressively more aggressive IRA campaign that finally crossed-over onto the British mainland.

Intriguingly, for a body of work designed specifically for export overseas, there is an ongoing debate within these films as to the relative value, power and authority of the British nation in relation to the rest of the world; and, more specifically, an Anglo-American power struggle in which over time Britain appears to gain the upper hand. Arguably, these pro-British sensibilities partially explain why all three films fared noticeably better at the British box-office than they did in America, despite the presence of internationally recognisable and bankable stars (such as Roger Moore, Omar Sharif, Richard Harris and Richard Widmark). Finally, reiterating that the British film industry does not exist in a political vacuum, I draw attention to the film policies of successive governments and their effects on the industry and its output.

Heath, Europe and Flying-Pickets: 1970-1974

Opinion polls leading up to the general election of 18 June 1970 had given Harold Wilson's Labour Party a comfortable lead of 11% to 13% over Edward Heath's Conservatives. Nevertheless, contrary to expectations, Heath's Tories proved victorious. However, aside from the commitment to take the country into Europe, and despite high-flown rhetoric whereby he pledged to "change the course of the history of this nation – nothing less,"[4] Heath's agenda seemed unclear. On 30 June 1970, just 12 days after his election, Heath reopened discussions with Britain's European neighbours to negotiate for her early entry into the Common Market. Luckily for Heath, French President Georges Pompidou proved far more receptive to the idea of UK membership than had his illustrious predecessor, Charles De Gaulle, who had

[3] The 1970s witnessed an alarming growth in terrorist activity, the audacity, ingenuity and barbarity of which was unprecedented; perpetrated by such as the Red Brigades in Italy, the Red Army Faction/Baader-Meinhof gang in West Germany, Carlos the Jackal, the Palestinian Black September group who were to murder 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, the US Weathermen, the Symbionese Liberation Army, and the IRA who in 1974 instigated an outrageous campaign of pub bombings on mainland Britain.

[4] Quoted in Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press) page 163

vetoed Britain's previous application in 1963. On 28 October 1971 the House of Commons voted in favour of the UK joining the Common Market with a majority of 356 to 244, and as of January 1973 Britain was in. Heath later observed, damning with faint praise, "It was my greatest success as Prime Minister."[5]

The rest of Heath's vague political programme was based on the twin tenets of 'modernisation' and laissez faire economic liberalism, and pledged to cut taxes and 'rationalise' public expenditure in time-honoured Tory tradition. In addition, reflecting the national popularity and party influence of the erudite hard-right thinker Enoch Powell (soon to be sacked for making 'inflammatory' racial remarks), Heath's government pledged to offer financial inducements to promote the repatriation of immigrants. Although this racial policy was left to wither on the vine once Heath was elected, the 1971 Immigration Act did rescind the automatic right of black Commonwealth citizens to settle in the UK.

Ironically, Heath owed much of his electoral success to a popular misconception prompted by a pithy yet erroneous epithet coined by Labour PM Harold Wilson. In January 1970 Heath had convened a pre-election policy meeting at Selsdon Park, a large hotel near Croydon, at which the Conservative's election campaign strategy was to be devised. However, following Heath's ill-considered insinuation that the meeting had been to discuss issues of law and order, Wilson warned of the Tories' 'atavistic desire to reverse the course of 25 years of social revolution' and branded Heath 'Selsdon Man.' While clearly intended to vex vacillating voters by depicting Heath as an authoritarian Neanderthal, in practice his new tough-guy Tory tag proved popular with an electorate worried that Britain had become a scarier place to live in. Leon Hunt notes how "The fear that Britain was becoming 'ungovernable' was seemingly confirmed by such diverse phenomena as student and trade union militancy, the trials of the Kray, Richardson and Tibbs gangs, terrorism and 'mugging'."[6]

> *Judges' rules, habeas corpus, never mind his previous record, give the prisoner four square meals a day and does he take sugar in his tea? And who did it? You, and people like you! And why? Because, it is better that any*

[5] Edward Heath (1998) *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London, Hodder & Stoughton) page 380

[6] Leon Hunt (1999) 'Dog Eat Dog: *The Squeeze* and the *Sweeney* films' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 137

> *number of guilty men should get away with it than one innocent be found guilty. It's that sort of sentimental drivel that's got this country down onto its knees!*[7]

Responding to, and simultaneously reinforcing, the nation's amplified fear of and fascination with crime, 1970s Britain witnessed a boom in increasingly violent cop shows and crime films (exploiting the greater leniency afforded by the X-certificate following its 1970 re-rating from 16 to 18 years of age); such as *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971), *Villain* (Michael Tuchner, 1971), *The Squeeze* (Michael Apted, 1977) and *The Long Good Friday* (John Mackenzie, 1979, released 1981), as well as *Sweeney!* (David Wickes, 1977) and *Sweeney 2* (Tom Clegg, 1978) from the gritty Euston Films television series. Significantly, these movies share narrative structures that either marginalize the role of the police, suggesting a society dominated by gangland rivalry and mob rule, or feature cops so long immersed in the criminal underworld that they have become virtually indistinguishable from their criminal prey. Both structures highlight growing disquiet about the moral health of Britain, as well as questioning the efficacy and dependability of society's moral and legal guardians. In addition, "with the switch to colour after 1965 a sort of dirty realism emerges," argue Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy, "Their location shooting and lack of stylisation add to their feel of representing a seedy, run-down Britain."[8]

In the '70s *The Sweeney*'s beer-swilling anti-authoritarian hero Jack Regan supplants Jack Warner's PC George Dixon – hero of Ealing's *The Blue Lamp* (Basil Dearden, 1949) and the long-running BBC serial *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955-1976) – as

---

[7] Police commissioner and aspirant Selsdon Man Oliver Griggs (John Savident) berates British liberalism in *Trial by Combat* (Kevin Connor, 1974), a film that recasts the vigilante theme popularised by *Death Wish* (Michael Winner, 1974) and *Dirty Harry* (Don Siegel, 1971) as an *Avengers*-style fantasy in which Donald Pleasence dresses as a mediaeval knight and metes out 'justice' to criminals seemingly beyond the law – *"The police wouldn't touch him, the courts couldn't touch him. It was left to us to bring the murdering swine to justice!"* The film's reactionary ethos also calls to mind ITC's *The Persuaders!* (1972-73), in which the playboys and reluctant vigilantes Lord Brett Sinclair (Roger Moore) and Danny Wilde (Tony Curtis) dispensed private justice at the behest of retired Judge Fulton (Laurence Naismith). *Trial by Combat*'s desire to appeal to the international audience is exposed by its caricatured depiction of the English as amiable eccentrics (Sir John Mills as an accident prone John Steed in tweeds, and Brian Glover's affable mother-loving gangster) in an *olde worlde* milieu of castles, country houses and pubs in the Home Counties; and by the presence of American interlopers David Burney and Barbara Hershey amidst the cast of British character actors. Even so, it is skilfully directed by the consistently underrated Connor and is remarkably good fun. Where else can one see lance-wielding mediaeval knights on horseback in pursuit of a speeding Mini Cooper?

[8] Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (1999) 'Parole Overdue: Releasing the British Crime Film into the Critical Community' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 5

popular culture's iconic copper. Of the films cited above, only *Villain* features a Dixon-like detective (played by Nigel Davenport), contentedly tending his herbaceous borders when not nabbing crooks, but the character seems awkwardly outdated even within the context of what is a fairly retrospective movie that takes its cultural cues from the 1960s (Richard Burton's Vic Dakin, a mother-loving homosexual gang boss, is an obvious amalgam of '60s hoodlums Ronnie and Reggie Kray). By depicting a sleazy criminal underworld where pornography is pre-eminent, and by so frequently baring breasts and buttocks as a means of enticing reluctant cinemagoers away from their less prurient television sets (an aesthetic strategy similarly exploited in British comedy and horror movies of the period), these films demonstrate what Leon Hunt terms the 'pornification' of British society in the early-1970s, where 1960s liberalism curdles into a sordid miasma of page 3 stunners, top-shelf men's magazines, Soho sex shops and private cinema clubs.[9] The exposure of widespread corruption in Scotland Yard's Obscene Publication Squad only served to underline the point that no facet of British society was immune to the spread of sleaze and the perniciousness of porn.

The pageant of crooked coppers and bent politicians on display in British crime films of the '70s reflects a popular conception of a boom in sleaze, political corruption and misconduct amongst society's ruling class. As we shall see, such cultural pessimism is also prevalent in British mid-Atlantic movies from the period. For example, *Ransom* (Caspar Wrede, 1975), an Anglo-American co-production from 20th Century Fox and (British) Lion International in which the UK government sponsors the hijacking of a foreign passenger plane in order to catch the hitherto elusive leader of a gang of anti-British anarchists, depicts Britain's ruling elite as both morally unscrupulous and ideologically moribund.[10] Similarly, *Juggernaut* catalogues Britain's economic and ethical decline and presents stiff upper lips on the brink of turning flaccid.

---

[9] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London, Routledge)

[10] Despite its intriguing premise, which raises potentially fascinating moral and political implications, *Ransom* (also known as *The Terrorists*) is something of a disappointment. Although clearly intended to be both realistic and relevant, hence an opening montage of actuality footage of IRA bomb devastation (although herein ascribed, somewhat improbably, to upper-class English anarchists) and faux news commentary from TV newscaster Gordon Honeycombe, such aspirations are undermined by the film's picture postcard depiction of Britain (shots of Tower Bridge and the Palace of Westminster) and by the decision to stage the bulk of the story in the fictional country of 'Scandinavia' (although filmed largely in Norway). Furthermore, why does the unorthodox Scandinavian Security Chief (Sean Connery) have a broad Scots brogue, and why has virtually everyone else been re-voiced with impeccable English accents? Not only has English actor John Quentin been overdubbed by Robert Lang, but David de Keyser's distinctive burr can be heard emanating from the mouths of several different Scandinavians.

In Britain in the 1960s and 70s, argues Lewis Baston, deference collapsed and the veil of secrecy that protected the privacy of the political class was torn.

> Suddenly, starting with the Profumo affair in 1963, the public discovered that their faith in the ruling class of the 1950s had been built on illusions. A more commercial and aggressive press was steadily less willing to help sustain these illusions, and blind trust in the integrity of the political class was replaced by a general suspicion that all politicians were crooked.[11]

Such suspicions were more than vindicated by the case of John Poulson, a corrupt architect whose business empire was built on bribery and backhanders to influential councillors and Members of Parliament, including the deputy leader of the Conservative Party and Home Secretary Reginald Maudling. When Poulson was declared bankrupt in 1972, later to be convicted of corruption, Maudling panicked and resigned. The scandal led directly to the introduction in 1975 of the Parliamentary Register of Members' Interests, whose rules and regulations have been flouted ever since. In August 1976, former Labour government minister John Stonehouse – recently deported from Australia, where he had been living under a false name since faking his own death in 1974 – was convicted on 18 counts of fraud, theft and deception and was jailed for 7 years.[12] Even more lurid is the case of Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe, who in November 1978 was arrested on charges of conspiracy to murder his ex-lover, a young neurotic named Norman Scott.[13]

Set against this squalid backdrop of vice and venality, Heath's election success can be seen as evidence of a growing national mood of cultural conservatism, and a rejection of the apparent excesses of 1960s permissiveness. This moral backlash is epitomized by such cultural signifiers as The Festival of Light's 1971 'Rally Against

---

[11] Lewis Baston (2000) *Sleaze: The State of Britain* (London, Channel 4 Books/Macmillan) page 9

[12] Stonehouse had vanished while swimming in the sea, in the manner of Leonard Rossiter's popular 1970s TV character Reginald Perrin (*The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*, 1976-78), leaving no trace but for the pile of clothes he left behind on the beach.

[13] Jeremy Thorpe was a 'closet' homosexual and had been in a long-term relationship with Scott. When finally the relationship came to an end, Scott set about revealing intimate details of their association to anyone that would listen. In October 1975, indirectly through close associates, Thorpe acted to silence Scott permanently by hiring a novice contract-killer. But Thorpe's hired gun had a pathological fear of dogs, whereas Scott had an ever-present Great Dane called Rinka (the debacle was later dubbed 'Rinkagate' by the tabloid press). The would-be assassin panicked, shot the dog and fled, only to be arrested 48 hours later. In May 1976 intimate correspondence between Thorpe and Scott were unearthed and he resigned as leader of the Liberals. Thorpe lost his seat at the 1979 general election.

Permissiveness', and the draconian punishments meted out to the publishers of the irreverently iconoclastic magazine *Oz*. Tried for obscenity in 1971, the three accused were fined £1,000, plus costs of £1,250, and awarded prison sentences of fifteen, twelve and nine months respectively. Furthermore, the judge recommended that one of the men, an Australian, be deported. In May 1971 Lord Longford urged the government to set up a commission to investigate what he considered to be the insidious swell of obscenity tainting British life. When the government declined, Longford (labelled Lord Porn by the popular press) set up his own commission. Its spurious report, published in September 1972 with the titillating title *Pornography*,[14] adroitly argues against itself for 500 pages before finally endorsing Longford's oft-stated desire for greater censorship and radical reform of what he perceived to be an excessively liberal British Board of Film Censors (BBFC).[15]

In the meantime, on 1 July 1971 long-time secretary of the BBFC John Trevelyan had resigned and been succeeded by Stephen Murphy, a former programme officer at the Independent Television (later Broadcasting) Authority.[16] But Murphy's tenure was not to be a happy one and he soon found himself under sustained attack from society's self-styled moral guardians, including Lord Longford, The Festival of Light and Mary Whitehouse's quasi-puritanical Viewers and Listeners Association. On 22 July, merely three weeks into Murphy's term of office, the release of Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971) induced much moral indignation. In truth Trevelyan not Murphy had passed the 'blasphemous' film, as was the case with the equally notorious *Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah, 1971). Further controversy was courted when the Yugoslavian art film *W. R. Mysteries of the Organism* (Dusan Makavejev, 1971) was passed for certification despite featuring footage of an erect penis.[17] By the time of the release of *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrik, 1972), the trade journal *Cinema TV Today* (11 March 1972) was proclaiming 'Murphy Must Go!' and the bone of contention had changed from sex to violence amidst increasing social unrest, ever more hostile

[14] Longford Committee Investigating Pornography (1972) *Pornography: The Longford Report* (London, Coronet)
[15] In 1985, in a fit of Orwellian Newspeak, having realised the uncomfortable associations of the word 'censorship', the BBFC changed its name to the British Board of Film *Classification*.
[16] For contemporary accounts of BBFC snipping, see John Trevelyan (1973) *What the Censor Saw* (London, Michael Joseph Ltd); and Clyde Jeavons (1975) 'The Unkindest Cuts' in David Castell (ed.) *Cinema 76* (London, Independent Magazines (Publishing) Ltd.)
[17] The film was later 'sanitised' by director Makavejev and the offending article obscured with a strobing light effect that, amusingly, calls to mind Luke Skywalker's lightsabre.

industrial relations and an unprecedented growth in terrorist activities in Northern Ireland and, crucially, on mainland Britain.

Steven Murphy weathered the storms of controversy for four years, before finally resigning in 1975 and returning to the relative tranquillity of the IBA. He was replaced at the BBFC by one-time TV producer James Ferman. Despite Murphy's liberal reputation, 1974 saw more BBFC snipping than any other year, with 33.9% of the 708 works submitted being cut (compared to just 2.3% of the 525 works submitted in 2000, for example). In truth, like some latter-day King Canute, Murphy's unprecedented scissor wielding could do little to stem the surge of sex, porn and smut that seemed to simultaneously disgust and delight the British public. Leon Hunt views this cultural contradiction as characteristic of what he terms the 'post-permissive society' where, at the same time as manifest demands and attempts to reclaim the innocence of a pre-existing past, there is a successful mainstreaming of pornographic imagery;[18] as typified by the increasingly graphic sex comedies that in the 1970s came to be one of the last remaining viable genres of indigenous British film production, such as *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (Val Guest, 1974) and *Come Play with Me* (George Harrison Marks, 1977).[19]

Heath's right-wing administration espoused the seemingly contradictory virtues of modernisation and nostalgia, as would later be the case with the governments of Margaret Thatcher. In the difficult economic climate of the early 1970s, however, Heath's rhetoric of radical industrial modernisation was soon replaced by a wistful longing for a tranquil status quo. "The triumph of the gospel of competition was superficial and short-lived,"[20] opines Martin J. Wiener, in much the same way that Harold Wilson's much vaunted 'white heat of technological revolution' had earlier been allowed to cool. Faced with a potential economic collapse, Heath's promised laissez faire liberalism and embryonic monetarism were jettisoned or reversed as U-turn followed U-turn. Though enacted in the name of political pragmatism, such inconsistency was in truth little more than reactionary short-term crisis management and crude electioneering fuelled by a critical lack of core ideological principles. In

[18] Leon Hunt (1999) 'Dog Eat Dog: *The Squeeze* and the *Sweeney* films' page 144
[19] For further discussion, see David McGillivray (1992) *Doing Rude Thing: The History of the British Sex Film 1957-1981* (London, Sun Tavern Fields); and Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture*
[20] Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* page 153

place of much needed decisive leadership, Heath offered vacillation. His flirtation with the free-market soon gave way to restrictive practices and corporatist conclaves with the CBI and TUC. A little privatisation (such as the travel agent Thomas Cook and a couple of nationalised pubs in Carlisle) soon became a lot of nationalisation, primarily to rescue politically significant 'lame duck' industries from impending bankruptcy (including Rolls-Royce and the vociferous Upper Clyde Shipbuilders). Indeed, Heath's administration nationalised far more than its Labour predecessor had. Correspondingly, despite being pledged to 'small government', public spending as a proportion of gross domestic product increased substantially during Ted Heath's four-year reign, and the number of public sector officials increased by 400,000.

Similarly, in pursuit of small government and the forlorn hope of stemming public spending, Heath's administration acted to reduce its fiscal support for the British film industry by trimming its financial contribution to the beleaguered National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC), the film development fund established by the Cinematograph Film Production (Special Loans) Act 1949. Henceforth, the NFFC, which in 1972 made a loss of more than £400,000 and had an accumulated deficit of £6.5 million, would receive an annual subsidy of £1.5 million in place of the £5 million pledged by the previous Labour administration.[21] Furthermore, espousing the virtues of the free market and pre-empting Thatcher's purely economic conception of the film industry, the government promised an additional £1 million on condition that the NFFC attract £3 million from private sources.

> In 1972 John Terry, a solicitor who had joined the NFFC in 1949 and who became its managing director in 1958, set up a consortium with private investors. £1 million was duly advanced by the government, and ten groups in the private sector contributed £750,000. But the record was poor: in its first six years the Consortium financed the production of only nineteen features, one short and a television series.[22]

[21] To make up the financial shortfall, "Mr Michael Relph, chairman of the Film Production Association, has called for a 10 per cent tax on all cinema films shown on television, to bring in at least £1m a year for the ailing National Film Finance Corporation ... He estimates that nearly a thousand films are shown on the three channels every year." Tim Devlin, 'Call for £1m levy from old films on TV' in *The Times* (30 November 1973) page 20

[22] Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street (1985) *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the British Government 1927-84* (London, BFI) page 241

With bigger and more disruptive fish to fry, it proved to be Heath's one and only film policy. Although far from successful, the selfsame policy would be resurrected a decade later by Margaret Thatcher with similarly injurious results.

Ted Heath's industrial relations policies were also marred by contradictory indecision. Industrial relations reform was urgently required. Mollified and placated for too long, the British trade union movement had grown overly defensive, conservative and complacent; "suspicious of change, reluctant to innovate, energetic only in maintaining the status quo,"[23] contributing to the severe retardation of ambition and economic capacity plaguing British industry. "Were the unions so politically central in the 1970s that the *Daily Express* once carried the full result of the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians executive elections on its front page?"[24] asks Donald Macintyre in a recent newspaper article.

Such obstinate intractability was also evident in the British film industry. Preceding years had seen the British film unions, including the powerful Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT), fight successfully for the rights and privileges of their members – indeed, arguably, *too* successfully – subsequently replicating the over-manning, over-pricing and drought of competitive drive prevalent throughout the British economic sphere. British films had become progressively more expensive as the unions induced the film studios to acquire large, permanent staffs of full-time employees. Writing in 1974, David Gordon opined:

> the total number of full-time employees at these studios is now some 1,200 costing the industry not less than £2 million in fixed overheads. Since these technicians come with the studio, many films that might otherwise come to a studio stay on location so that the makers can pick their own crews and have more scope for economising.[25]

For those that rejected the potential limitations of location shooting, rising production costs and dwindling domestic box-office returns coalesced to encourage the mid-Atlantic ethos that would dominate British cinema from the mid-1970s onwards. To put it another way, international box-office appeal was now essential if films were to

[23] Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* page 154
[24] Donald Macintyre, 'One out, all out, the return of the strike' in *The Independent* (10 January 2002)
[25] David Gordon (1974) 'Ten points about the crisis in the British film industry' page 67

cover their burgeoning production budgets. International television and distribution presales, meanwhile, were a means of minimising mounting fiscal risk.

To combat such industrial intractability, Heath's government devised a far-reaching, if ill considered, programme of union reform. Exploring hitherto uncharted depths of political naivety, the Industrial Relations Act 1971 displaced all existing trade union legislation, including the sacred act of 1871 that had first recognised the legal right of trade unions to exist. Predictably, in response to the proposals the British trade union movement sought to flex its combined muscles more defiantly than ever. Patrick Cosgrove asserts that it is hard imaginatively to remember

> how breathtaking the industrial relations proposals of the 1970 government were. That a new Conservative government should make some changes in the law on trade unions was not unexpected; that the government should decide to repeal *all* existing legislation, and institute a completely new legal framework, not only enraged the Labour Party but astonished the most devout of Conservative supporters.[26]

Heath's administration had been in conflict with the unions from the outset. The first crisis had occurred within a month of his election victory when, on 15 July 1970, the first national dock strike since 1926 had threatened the free flow of essential food supplies. Heath had been swift to invoke the little used Emergency Powers Act 1920, never intended for peacetime implementation, declaring a state of emergency on 16 July. Heath would go on to invoke such exceptional powers on a further four occasions before his brief spell in office was through. Heath's resolve proved less stiff four months later when a threatened strike by dustmen was averted when he conceded to their 14% pay demand. On 7 December 1970, only days after the government published its industrial relations proposals, power station workers began a work-to-rule. Heath declared yet another state of emergency, and electricity supplies were suspended for brief periods each day – a foretaste of the deprivations to come. Post Office workers were next, demanding a 20% pay increase and threatening to strike during the busy Christmas period of 1970. Ultimately, to maintain public support, their walkout was postponed till January.

---

[26] Patrick Cosgrove (1992) *The Strange Death of Socialist Britain: Post War British Politics* (London, Constable) pages 143-144

Heath's recurrent concessions to union pay demands merely added to the inflationary pressures threatening the stability of the economy. Moreover, as Patrick Cosgrove explains, the UK's imminent entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), via the Treaty of Brussels, would soon impose further inflation-inducing financial burdens, while the benefits of membership would take several years to make themselves felt.[27] Threatened with an economic crisis and stock market slump as investment funds poured out of the UK, and seeking to avoid devaluing sterling, Heath now abandoned the free-market in favour of government intervention and a freeze on pay and prices. While alleviating inflationary pressures temporarily, such a move angered the unions who, having grown accustomed to regular pay increases in excess of inflation and caring little for Heath's problems, pledged further industrial action.

The most vociferous and militant union was the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), whose belligerent deputy (soon to be promoted) leader was the infamous Arthur Scargill. Scargill's socialist ambitions went far beyond merely safeguarding the rights and privileges of his union's members: his oft-stated wish was to bring down the democratically elected UK government. The NUM pushed the boundaries of unreasonably excessive pay demands by calling for a mammoth 45% increase, while simultaneously amending the union's rules by lowering the majority needed to call industrial action from 66% to 55%. When offered only 8% by the National Coal Board, the NUM announced the first national coal strike in nearly fifty years, commencing 9 January 1972. Such industrial action was hardly unexpected and, shrewdly, to buy itself bargaining time the government had been stockpiling coal supplies. Regrettably, too much had been hoarded at the pitheads, which were now off-limits, and reserves at the power stations were frequently barred by Scargill's unprecedented use of 'flying pickets'. Heath would later contend:

> This dispute and, in particular, the role of the pickets, was the most vivid, direct and terrifying challenge to the rule of law that I could ever recall emerging from within our country … We were facing civil disorder on a massive scale.[28]

---

[27] ibid
[28] Edward Heath (1998) *The Course of My Life* page 351

Civil disorder was by no means confined to mainland Britain and, throughout the decade, Northern Ireland teetered on the brink of civil war. In recent years the province had grown increasingly uncontrollable, culminating in Harold Wilson's decision in 1969 to send in the British Army – as a result of which IRA membership grew fivefold and "politically motivated killings rose from twenty in 1970 to 467 two years later."[29] Heath's attitude to the province was as ambivalent and contradictory as the rest of his political package. Thus, amidst much tabloid-pleasing hard-line rhetoric and the imposition of curfews, secretary of state William Whitelaw began freeing internees and holding clandestine discussions with the IRA.

On 30 January 1972, later dubbed 'Bloody Sunday', a Londonderry march turned into a bloodbath when fourteen civilians were shot dead by the Parachute Regiment. In February, for the first time in over a hundred years, blood was spilled on the mainland when an IRA bomb went off at an Army barracks in Aldershot killing seven people. A spate of pub bombings followed, most notoriously the murder of four British soldiers at the Horse and Groom public house, Guildford, on 5 October 1974, and the bombing of the Mulberry Bush Inn, Birmingham, on 22 November 1974 where 21 civilians were killed and 182 were injured. Heath later observed,

> The atmosphere had now grown more poisoned than ever and I feared that we might, for the first time, be on the threshold of complete anarchy. Northern Ireland was enduring around 100 bombs a month and the death toll in the first two months of 1972 was forty-nine, with an additional 257 people injured. I therefore decided that we had to assume direct control of law and order forthwith.[30]

Direct rule was reintroduced on 24 March 1972 and emergency anti-terrorist legislation introduced the controversial policy of internment without trial, which was roundly condemned by Amnesty International and the European Court of Human Rights. Although a new Northern Ireland assembly was introduced on 1 January 1974, this had disintegrated by 28 May. According to Tory grandee Alan Clark,

---

[29] Bart Moore-Gilbert (1994) 'Cultural Closure or Post-Avantgardism?' in Bart Moore-Gilbert (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge)
[30] Edward Heath (1998) *The Course of My Life* page 436

> At the halfway stage of the Heath administration the whole body politic, like some middle-aged patient in chronic ill-health, was vulnerable to an unforeseen accident or shock.[31]

The outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War on 6 October 1973 provided just such a shock. President Anwar Sadat of Egypt chose Yom Kippur – the Day of Atonement and the most sacred event in the Jewish calendar – to launch his attack on Israel, demanding that she withdraw from all the territories she had occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and give the right of self-determination to the Palestinians. In support of Egypt's demands, the Arab oil producers induced a quadrupling of the international oil price, announced that oil supplies would be cut by 5% each month until Israel conceded, and embargoed exports to countries perceived as sympathetic to Israel, including the United States. Britain's new EEC partners, displaying Heath-like resolve, took less than a month to decide that Israel must relinquish the occupied territories, by which time armed conflict had ended with the 24 October ceasefire. The repercussions of the conflict rumbled on through the world economy for considerably longer, however, as did the politically motivated oil price hikes of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Deprived of adequate oil supplies, as well as suffering the effects of overtime bans by the NUM, power station workers and the train drivers' union ASLEF, it looked as if Britain might grind to a halt. Consequently, on 13 December 1973, Heath declared yet another state of emergency. Fuel rationing was encouraged, maximum speed limits of 50 mph were introduced and television broadcasting was suspended at 10.30pm each night. Advice soon gave way to compulsion when, to safeguard and conserve dwindling energy supplies, Heath declared a three-day week taking effect from 1 January 1974 (and remaining in place until 8 March 1975). Characteristically, Heath mixed hard-line rhetoric with political procrastination and sought to secretly buy-off the unions with concessionary deals in contravention of his own prices and incomes policies. Such dithering only served to encourage the perception amongst union leaders that Heath was weak and could be broken. In accordance with this view, on 4 February 1974, the NUM upped the political ante and declared an all-out strike.

---

[31] Alan Clark (1998) *The Tories: Conservatives and the Nation State 1922-1997* (London, Phoenix) page 425

Aptly for an administration marred by poor judgement and political naivety, Edward Heath inadvertently administered his own *coup de grâce*. Faced with an unprecedented balance-of-payments deficit of £3 billion, and seeking to reinforce his crumbling political mandate in the face of union militancy, Heath called a 'back me or sack me' general election for 28 February 1974. The gamble backfired disastrously and resulted in a 'hung' parliament with no single party in possession of an overall majority (Labour 301, Conservative 297, Liberals 14). Choosing not to bow out gracefully, Heath sought the political support of Jeremy Thorpe's Liberals, but found their demands for electoral reform, proportional representation and his resignation as PM to be unacceptable. The Ulster Unionists, still reeling from Whitelaw's covert discussions with IRA activists and opposed to Heath's Northern Ireland power-sharing Sunningdale Agreement, also refused to prop up a lame duck minority government. Likewise, Harold Wilson summarily dismissed the mooted government of national unity. Having exhausted all options, Ted Heath resigned his government.

Juggernaut (1974)

Filmed at London's Twickenham Film Studios with a predominantly British cast and crew, and partially concealing itself in the trappings of a disaster movie, United Artists' 'runaway production' *Juggernaut* offers a scathing critique of contemporary British society, replete with cynical three-day week despondency. In the film, a disgruntled British bomb-disposal expert with the sobriquet 'Juggernaut' demands a ransom of £500,000 having secreted seven explosive devices aboard the (fairly dilapidated) British luxury cruise liner HMS Britannic, threatening the lives of 1,200 passengers and crew. Conforming to the age-old adage that truth is stranger than fiction, the film was in fact inspired by actual events. In 1972 a blackmailer had attempted to extort $350,000 from ship owners Cunard by claiming to have planted several explosive devises aboard the ocean liner QE2, then mid-Atlantic out of New York. The British government had responded by assigning a 4-man SAS bomb disposal team to defuse the situation.

Juggernaut director Richard Lester has chosen to expand upon writer/producer Richard De Koker's pertinent tale of shipboard terrorism so that the ramshackle Britannic supplants Britannia as the personification of an equally defunct nation.

Significantly, the ship's moniker not only connotes its nationality but also calls to mind that harbinger of imminent (aquatic) disaster, the RMS Titanic.

- *Who's that?*
- *I suppose it's the captain.*
- *He looks like Ted Heath.*[32]

In the same way as the ship personifies the nation, so her captain serves as the prime minister's nautical substitute. The above remarks call attention to the analogy, particularly when one notes that the Britannic's sleazy captain, as portrayed by the moustachioed Omar Sharif, in fact looks not a jot like Ted Heath. However, there are strong character parallels and the actions of the captain – an emotional *"iceberg"* concerned with little more than maintaining his pre-eminent position aboard ship (*"This is* my *ship!"*), despite being completely out of his depth in the current crisis – frequently call to mind Heath's frantic attempts to cling to prime ministerial power following his defeat at the February 1974 election.

It is illuminating to contrast Lester's dilapidated Britannic with the elegant, albeit upturned, liner featured in Ronald Neame's similarly shipboard yarn *The Poseidon Adventure*, made two years earlier in Hollywood. Whereas the décor of the SS Poseidon is colourful and luxurious, the Britannic is drab, functional and grey. While the Poseidon connotes a floating Hilton in which Hollywood celebrities and the *nouveaux riche* can enjoy the extravagant fruits of a successful capitalist economy, the Britannic calls to mind a squalid aquatic Butlins where the repairs are ongoing, the gyroscopic stabilisers are inoperative and the seas are very rough. Significantly, director Richard Lester makes extensive use of location footage that serves to lend the film a dynamic realist edge not found in the studio-bound *Poseidon Adventure*. Furthermore, in conjunction with Gerry Fisher's grainy photography, Lester's film evokes the 'run-down Britain' identified by Chibnall and Murphy in relation to British crime films of the period, as was noted earlier.

To add to the Britannic's troubles, the weather accompanying the voyage is unrelentingly bad. Despite the efforts of the ship's phlegmatic passengers to live out the fantasy of a luxurious Atlantic cruise, attempts at playing tennis on windswept,

[32] An exchange between passengers heard aboard the HMS Britannic in *Juggernaut*.

wave-splashed decks prove fruitless. This scene anticipates the opening titles of the 1980s BBC drama *Triangle* (1981-83) – a pitiable British attempt to emulate the self-indulgent glamour of *Dallas* (1978-91) and *Dynasty* (1981-89) – in which, each week, Kate O'Mara was seen sunbathing in patently sub-zero temperatures on the deck of a similarly decrepit passenger ferry conveying folk on a three-pointed journey (hence the title) through the freezing waters of the North Sea. Such attempts to wholly immerse oneself in the myth and prescribed conduct of opulent ocean cruising can be seen to mirror a broader national desire to wallow in fantasies of both a happier, more glamorous past and a prosperous, contented future; a yearning to retreat from, and to be blissfully ignorant of, the very real problems all around them.

Juggernaut is infused with Richard Lester's typically wry wit – evident in such diverse offerings as The Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), the absurd *The Bed Sitting Room* (1970) and the wistful romance *Robin and Marion* (1976) – notably the acerbic carping of proletarian figures peripheral to the narrative. We are introduced to the Britannic from the bottom up, via a montage of typical Lester vignettes: we first meet the beleaguered social director (*"Hi-di-hi, ho-di-bloody-ho!"*) and stoic engine room personnel, and initially only glimpse the captain from afar. In contrast to the ersatz glitz of *The Poseidon Adventure* or the sumptuous nostalgic gloss of *Murder on the Orient Express*, Lester jettisons surface style in favour of squalid substance. For example, Lester employs food as a tool to critique both the destructive, devouring quality of human (power) relations and profligate bourgeois culture, recalling Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy* (1972) – a director with whom Richard Lester shares a penchant for black-humoured farce. Thus, he shows us *haute cuisine*, left unconsumed by passengers too seasick to eat, as it is scraped into the bin.

Juggernaut exudes such cynicism from every scene. The Britannic, 'Great' Britain by proxy, is a neglected, outmoded and dehumanising space in which to feel under appreciated, undervalued and alienated amongst a fragmented mass. Such sentiments are played out in the opening scenes in which Superintendent John McCleod (Anthony Hopkins) finds that his voice cannot be heard above the noise of the thronging multitudes on the quayside, and is thus unable to express his true feelings to his departing wife. Likewise, Juggernaut (Freddie Jones) cares little for financial reward (he refuses to divulge how to deactivate the bombs even after he is arrested);

his bomb threat is solely an attempt to prove his worth and to find a purpose in life, having been retired from active service as superfluous to requirements. The moniker 'Juggernaut' has chosen for himself is illustrative of the recognition he craves, deriving from Hindi and meaning 'lord of the world'. Such diverse social signifiers as the dramatic increase in trade union membership in postwar Britain, unmatched anywhere else in Western Europe, and the growth of Welsh, Scots and regional political organisations, suggest that by expressing the need for community and commonality the film was tapping into a sense of social alienation and national fragmentation prevalent throughout British society at the time.

Discussing British crime films from the 1970s, Chibnall and Murphy argue, "These films with their anti-heroes and uncertain moralities all exhibit a cynical pessimism, not only about the administration of justice but also about the failure of Britain as a prosperous and honourable society."[33] Comparable cultural scepticism is evident here. The film's notional hero, Fallon (Richard Harris), is a world-weary bomb-disposal expert with a penchant for social criticism (*"Doesn't anybody work in this bloody country anymore?"*) and impassive fatalism (*"No family, no mortgages, no future..."*), cast in the anti-establishment mould of *The Sweeney*'s Jack Regan (*"So he's an admiral? So he can get stuffed!"*). Similarly, when told of the bomb threat the passengers of the Britannic react with classic British resolve and little more than a collective raised eyebrow. Despite the traditional pomp and time-honoured circumstance seen on the quayside as the vessel sets sail, this is a society in flux. These are people tired of keeping the British end up in the face of terrorist threats, strike action, power shortages, corruption and tediously frequent general elections.

Roy Kinnear, one of Lester's regular stars, appears as the ship's beleaguered social director, trying to keep spirits high in the face of impending doom. Kinnear signifies the little man, meeting adversity with upper-lip stiffened. But even his impressive resoluteness is finally dented and he at last swaps Dunkirk spirit for an altogether more intoxicating libation. Such irremediable defeat mirrors much broader cultural concerns, whilst explaining further the British film industry's newfound transatlantic ethos. Just as Kinnear's dogged British tenacity eventually wanes, so the switch from

[33] Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (1999) 'Parole Overdue: Releasing the British Crime Film into the Critical Community' page 13

indigenous to international production styles highlights underlying uncertainties about the viability and desirability of existing concepts of British national identity.

Significantly, the sole source of tenderness in this otherwise emotionally sterile movie proves to be an American couple (Doris Nolan and Clifton James) who reaffirm their love for each other in the face of imminent death. Conversely, Britain and the Britannic have conspired to separate the two British couples featured: Captain Brunel (Omar Sharif) chooses his ship and his career over Mrs Banister's (Shirley Knight) amorous charms, and Susan McCleod (Caroline Mortimer) and her children are travelling to America to see relatives while her husband, an overworked police superintendent leading the search for Juggernaut, is unable to take time off to be with them. In short, Britain is not only a nation beset by problems, as depicted it is also a divisive culture that stifles emotional expression.

The film's finale is deliberately and appropriately muted. By rejecting his mentor (cutting the blue wire instead of the red as directed), Fallon averts disaster, but one feels it is but a temporary victory. As Ken Thorne's maudlin music accompanies the end credits, designed deliberately to repeat those that opened the film, Fallon's triumph seems especially hollow. When told by a government official that Britain does not deal with the likes of Juggernaut, the Britannic's owner retorts, "*You make people like that!*" stressing the inevitability of national self-destruction unless we follow Fallon's cue and reject complacency, convention, vested interests and the status quo, and dare to confront the inadequate postwar political settlement that has led us to the brink of disaster. This is a surprisingly radical call-to-arms, albeit one that reflects the cheerless despondency of the period from which it sprang, concealed within the body of a populist yarn that is usually dismissed as, to quote the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, "nothing more or less than yet another ship-disaster blockbuster."[34]

Wilson, Callaghan and Rubbish in the Streets: 1974 - 1979

Aware that a minority government was untenable, Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced his intention to seek a fresh mandate from the British people as soon as

[34] Jonathan Rosenbaum (1974) '*Juggernaut*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 41, no. 489) pages 224-225

possible. He immediately set about securing the electorate's support by acceding to their every demand and granting their every wish. To alleviate crippling industrial action, Wilson yielded to all of the unions' demands, buying off power workers, miners and railwaymen with pay rises of 30%. In addition, public spending was increased significantly (by 9% in 1974-75) unlike anywhere else in Europe, and rents and prices were frozen.

Wilson's spending spree had the desired effect, coupled with minimal opposition from a directionless Tory Party reeling from the failure of nearly all of its policies, and at the general election of 10 October 1974 Labour's majority over the Conservatives was increased to forty-two. But Wilson's reckless electioneering had sent inflation soaring beyond 20%, veering toward hyperinflation. As economic crisis loomed large, and having already sought and failed to cap wage settlements at 5%, in 1976 the government was forced to seek a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The loan was granted, enforced by strict economic conditions, and spending was firmly capped as inflation breached 26%. According to Patrick Cosgrove,

> Wilson was … fortunate in having in Denis Healey a Chancellor with an exceptionally tough character and a total lack of principle. Healey's self-esteem could be punctured neither by criticism nor by failure. He took reversals of policy in his stride.[35]

Additionally, as Bart Moore-Gilbert explains, "the IMF crisis not only lent credibility to the monetarist philosophy of the emerging Tory New Right, but also seriously undermined Labour's confidence in Keynesian models of economic management,"[36] because pure Keynesian theory demands that high unemployment be countered, and economic growth induced, with increased public borrowing and spending. As the economy slumped into stagflation with inadequate increases in productivity and limited growth coupled with rapidly inflating prices and wages, the Keynesian model was shown to be deeply flawed.

The Tories, meanwhile, moved to oust Ted Heath who was now perceived to be an unelectable liability. Heath was reluctant to go and so, to expedite his departure, in

---

[35] Patrick Cosgrove (1992) *The Strange Death of Socialist Britain* page 168
[36] Bart Moore-Gilbert (1994) 'Cultural Closure or Post-Avantgardism?' page 2

December 1974 the procedures for electing a Tory leader were changed. Henceforth there would be annual leadership elections, with the successful candidate needing an overall majority of at least 15% of those eligible to vote. If no single candidate obtained the necessary majority, the election would move to a second ballot, at which stage new candidates could join the race. In the leadership election of February 1975, former cabinet minister Margaret Thatcher won the first ballot, beating Heath by 130 votes to 119. But it was not enough to secure the leadership and the process moved to a second ballot, at which point Heath withdrew his candidacy. While it is probable that many who voted for Thatcher in the opening ballot did so purely to oust Heath and to open the field for more preferable candidates (including Jim Prior and Geoffrey Howe) Thatcher went on to win the second ballot with 146 votes against Willie Whitelaw's 79 votes. Although ideologically still something of an unknown quantity, Margaret Thatcher came to symbolise a new, dynamic Tory party in stark contrast to Labour's cloth cap paternalism. Finding direction in the monetarist economics of Milton Friedman, Thatcher's Tories moved politically to the right.

The issue of Britain's membership of the EEC was to further split the parties, particularly Wilson's Labour government. At the October 1974 election, to postpone potentially damaging internal conflict, Wilson had promised a referendum on whether Britain should withdraw from Heath's cherished Common Market. Now the time had come to fulfil that pledge. As Wilson had feared, his cabinet was unable to agree a policy, with left-wingers like Tony Benn and future leader Michael Foot demanding immediate withdrawal while liberal-leaning ministers like Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams (later to break free of Foot's radically socialist Labour Party to form the centrist Social Democratic Party) advocated continued membership. Unable to square the circle, Wilson compromised and the doctrine of 'collective cabinet responsibility' was suspended. Free suddenly to openly espouse contradictory opinions, Wilson's government began singing from different hymn-sheets. The result was chaos, and such unseemly squabbling tarnished irrevocably Labour's image as a responsible party of government. The referendum held on 5 June 1975 asked 'Do you think that the United Kingdom should stay in the European Community (Common Market)?' Sixty-seven per cent of the electorate thought that she should.

> Wilson clung on to the leadership of the Labour Party between 1970 and 1974 almost solely in the hope of gaining revenge on Heath. When in power between 1964 and 1970 he was ever full of initiatives – specious though most of these turned out to be – but he at least gave the impression that he was always moving forward to meet new challenges. However, in his third administration, from February 1974, he seemed able only to roll with the punches of political life and, by the end, to be punch-drunk.[37]

Harold Wilson resigned as prime minister and leader of the Labour Party in 1976. His successor, former chancellor James Callaghan, was cast in much the same mould and shared Wilson's corporatist perspective. Callaghan's accession to the leadership did, however, signal Labour's absolute rejection of the Wilsonian 'white heat of technological revolution' – a concept tainted by association with Heath's vague but divisive 'modernisation' – and a return to Labour's traditional socialist values. Following his resignation, lifelong film enthusiast Harold Wilson chaired a parliamentary Interim Action Committee on the Film Industry (as well as hosting his own short-lived TV chat show). Stressing the crucial cultural significance of a domestic film industry, in contrast to the predominantly economic conception of the previous administration, the committee advocated increased state support for the film production sector and the setting up of a unified British Film Authority that would draw together all the filmic responsibilities of government.[38] The government endorsed the committee's proposals but, losing out to more pressing issues, the necessary legislation was lost in the twilight years of Callaghan's regime.

In March 1977 Thatcher's Conservatives tried to curtail Labour's law-making life with a parliamentary censure motion. To counter this vote of no confidence, Callaghan sought the support of the minority parties. The Liberals were placated with a Speaker's Committee on the subject of proportional representation, the Welsh and Scottish nationalists were offered a consultative Bill providing for devolution, and the Ulster Unionists were pledged an increase in the number of parliamentary seats in the province. By such wheeler-dealing Callaghan's government survived, albeit much weaker and now beholden to both the IMF *and* the minority parties.

---

[37] Patrick Cosgrove (1992) *The Strange Death of Socialist Britain* page 154

[38] See *Proposals for the setting up of a British Film Authority*, Report of the Interim Committee on the Film Industry, Cmnd. 7071 (London, HMSO, 1978); and *The Financing of the British Film Industry*, Second Report of the Interim Action Committee on the Film Industry, Cmnd. 7597 (London, HMSO, 1979)

Industrial relations continued to deteriorate. The unions endeavoured to breach the government's anti-inflationary wage caps, and Callaghan's much-vaunted industrial 'social contract' was shown to be a dismal failure. The winter of 1978-79 (hailed as the 'Winter of Discontent' by *The Sun*) saw walkouts by motor workers, lorry drivers, print workers, civil servants and public sector employees, culminating in the iconic image of uncollected rubbish piled high in the streets. According to Ted Heath, it was "the worst outbreak of industrial unrest since the end of the Second World War. Over a million more workers were involved than had been active in the winter of 1974."[39] On 28 March 1979 Mrs Thatcher administered the *coup de grâce* to Callaghan's government by tabling yet another censure motion. The minority parties now withdrew their support for Callaghan's increasingly ineffectual administration and, while 310 MPs expressed confidence in Labour's performance, 311 MPs did not. With the battle cry of 'Labour isn't working!' the Conservatives romped home at the subsequent election of 3 May 1979.

North Sea Hijack (1979)

Where *Juggernaut*'s threat had been symptomatic of a nation beset by interclass conflict, crippling industrial retardation and social alienation – a disgruntled bomb-disposal expert's desperate quest for recognition amidst a morally bankrupt, cynically exploitative society – *North Sea Hijack* (begat during Thatcher's short-lived post-election 'honeymoon period') exhibits a renewed sense of national purpose and vigour, albeit in a rather superficial manner. *Juggernaut* had depicted the nation as akin to a scarcely seaworthy ship, suggesting a static and strictly stratified social hierarchy, analogous to a ship's crew, hardly able to meet the challenges of the modern world. On the other hand, *North Sea Hijack* presents a 'United' Kingdom of economic 'free enterprise' in which even eccentric non-conformists of the calibre of Rufus Excalibur ffolkes (sic) – "the most tediously dotty hero in the canons of popular culture since Lord Peter Wimsey"[40] – can be convinced of the need for hard-line New Right action in the face of foreign economic aggression and can learn to accept that a

[39] Edward Heath (1998) *The Course of My Life* page 572
[40] Gilbert Adair (1980) '*North Sea Hijack*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 47, no. 555) pages 73-74

woman can be prime minister (*"She seems to have some grasp."*). It is worth noting, however, that the cohesive national fantasy on offer here is an exclusively white, predominantly English one, and that this Anglocentric vision mirrors closely the narrow English nationalism of Thatcher's Tory Party.

A Cinema Seven production for Universal, *North Sea Hijack* features Roger Moore, James Mason, Anthony Perkins, Michael Parks and a host of British character actors, and was filmed on location in Galway and at Pinewood Studios by a predominantly British cast and crew. Universal's pecuniary participation hinged upon securing the movie's international distribution rights and the presence of Roger Moore, convinced of his box-office bankability as the incumbent James Bond. Pre-empting Lords Delfont and Grade, the film's American producer Elliot Kastner had made the switch from talent agent to film producer in the mid-1960s, settling in Britain to fully exploit the fiscal advantages of international 'runaway production'. Although his films rarely found critical favour, they typically impressed at the global box-office. Especially successful were the mid-Atlantic thrillers derived from the novels of popular British author Alistair MacLean, including MGM's *Where Eagles Dare* (Brian G. Hutton, 1969), Rank's *When Eight Bells Toll* (Etienne Perier, 1971) and Anglo-EMI's *Fear is the Key* (Michael Tuchner, 1972).[41] Kastner also produced the Raymond Chandler remakes *Farewell my Lovely* (Dick Richards, 1975) and *The Big Sleep* (Michael Winner, 1978) for ITC, as well as the telekinetic horror movie *The Medusa Touch* (Jack Gold, 1978) featuring his friend and regular star Richard Burton.

Director Andrew V. McLaglen (son of American actor Victor McLaglen) was a veteran of many gung-ho John Wayne movies (including *Hell Fighters,* 1968, *Chisum,* 1970, and *Cahill: United States Marshal,* 1973) and a prolific director for US

[41] Other Alistair MacLean adaptations from the period (not involving Elliot Kastner) are *Caravan to Vaccares* (Geoffrey Reeve, 1974), a British-French co-production from Geoff Reeve Productions Ltd and Société Nouvelle Prodis SA; and *Bear Island* (Don Sharp, 1979), 'A Canada – United Kingdom Co-Production Film' from Selkirk Films Ltd and Bear Island Films (UK) Ltd, made with the participation of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. The former was filmed entirely in Provence by a predominantly British crew and stars Charlotte Rampling, French character actor Michel Lonsdale and the American David Birney. The latter movie is an astonishingly loose adaptation of MacLean's novel made under the auspices of 1975's Anglo-Canadian production treaty, and was shot on location in British Columbia and at Pinewood Studios. The film features a variety of international star names, including Christopher Lee, Lloyd Bridges, Vanessa Redgrave, Richard Widmark and the Canadians Donald Sutherland and Barbara Parkins, sporting an assortment of colourful and somewhat comical European accents.

television and regular contributor to *Ironside*. In the late 1970s, while his career having waned somewhat in the US, McLaglen was much in demand in the UK where readily exportable action/adventure movies were in vogue and directors schooled in Hollywood's aesthetic were seen as a bonus when crafting such consciously transatlantic fare. McLaglen's other mid-Atlantic offerings include the similarly action-packed *The Wild Geese* (1978) and *The Sea Wolves* (1980) for British independent producer Euan Lloyd.

As one might expect from a movie scripted by comedy writer Jack Davies (*Doctor at Sea,* 1955, *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines,* 1965, and the Norman Wisdom comedy *The Square Peg*, 1958), *North Sea Hijack* is a fairly tongue in cheek affair, befitting Roger Moore's lightweight performance style. Aside from comic interludes and witty repartee *("Both my parents died tragically during childbirth.")*, the film concerns the audacious hijacking of an oilrig supply vessel, an oil production platform and a British-owned drilling rig – the eponymous ladies of Davies' source novel *Esther, Ruth and Jennifer* (1979) – and their subsequent release by a crack team of British frogmen under the command of Moore's improbably named Rufus Excalibur ffolkes (*"Two small 'f's!"*).

As noted, the movie – retitled *Ffolkes* in the United States for fear that most Americans would be ignorant of the geographical location of the North Sea – depicts Britain as having been infused with a renewed sense of national self-assurance, albeit one founded on a conservative (and Conservative) nostalgic bedrock. Negotiating cinematically the contradictory impulses of Thatcherism (which simultaneously espoused the virtues of *laissez-faire* economic neo-liberalism alongside a vein of social neo-conservatism that rejected the permissiveness of the 1960s in favour of unprecedented state intrusion into the private sphere) the saviour of Britain's North Sea oil supplies, Thatcher's cherished harbinger of Britain's economic revival, is a misogynistic freelance commando with a penchant for Edwardian tweed suits, cross-stitch and cats.

The North Sea hijackers, the symbolic impediments to Britain's economic revival, are representatives of the global economy's big-hitters: America and Japan. Furthermore, whereas Juggernaut was merely proving a political point, the North Sea hijackers have

no political motivation whatsoever (*"We're not terrorists captain. Terrorists are confused. I don't follow politics of any kind and I have no philosophies, but I do know what I want!"*) and are solely intent on the capitalist exploitation of Great Britain, the primary stockholder in Ruth and Jennifer. By successfully vanquishing Britain's economic aggressors, and abandoning his divisive misogyny in the process (*"My God, you are a girl! Even so, a lot of people owe you a great deal. And so do I."*), ffolkes rejects the entrenched opinions and social disruption of the 1970s, endorsing Thatcher's vision of a reinvigorated nation unified in the pursuit of economic success. By expressing "the kind of 'national-popular' sentiments that Thatcherism sought to orchestrate,"[42] the film anticipates (albeit in muted, embryonic form) the cultural 'Falklands factor' (the wave of national pride and hegemonic solidarity) that spread in the wake of that successful military campaign in 1982, which in turn transformed Mrs Thatcher from the most unpopular prime minister since records began into a second-term election winner. Moreover, the way in which Thatcher sought to use the monetarist theories of American economist Milton Friedman (who would later serve as Ronald Reagan's policy advisor from 1981 to 1989) to enable Britain to surpass America as the global economy's powerhouse (as depicted in *North Sea Hijack*) is itself analogous to the British film industry's mid-Atlantic policy of emulation and the construction of exportable British movies based on Hollywood blueprints.

In place of the anti-establishment cynicism of *Juggernaut*, wherein politicians and government mandarins had been depicted as dispassionate, insensitive bureaucrats willing to sacrifice 1,200 hostages to safeguard specious principles; *North Sea Hijack* casts the political establishment in a much more favourable light, as well-meaning but ineffectual apparatchiks who wisely leave difficult situations in the hands of qualified professionals. *Juggernaut*'s 'whodunit' narrative structure had necessarily concealed the villain's true identity, thereby refocusing the story to emphasise the plight of the passengers and strengthening our identification with them. Consequently, the government's refusal to accede to Juggernaut's demands had seemed especially ruthless. In *North Sea Hijack*, however, we are discouraged from empathising with the stricken hostages and, excluding a few expendable administrative personnel, never even glimpse the occupants of the besieged drilling rigs, underlining the fact that first

[42] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford, Clarendon Press) page 13

and foremost the hijackers represent a menace to property and national prestige. Furthermore, the hijackers are depicted as so ruthless and unpleasant that negotiation is never a viable option. When one considers that merely five-years earlier Juggernaut had wanted only £500,000, the hijackers' ransom demand of £25 million seems as unreasonably excessive as an NUM pay claim.

Faith Brook appears as the prime minister, flouncing about in a diaphanous gown, and is a rather more glamorous variation on Margaret Hilda Thatcher.[43] Her initial response is uncompromising (*"I do not propose to let a group of murderers hold the British nation to ransom!"*), evoking Thatcher's hard-nosed anti-terrorist rhetoric, soon to be confirmed by her refusal to grant 'political' status to republican prisoners in Northern Ireland or to bow to hunger strikers, and by sanctioning the SAS raid on London's Iranian Embassy. However, in the movie, the PM's resilience soon gives way to Heath-like vacillation with the suggestion that perhaps the ransom should be paid. Thankfully Rufus ffolkes is on hand to remind her that the lady is supposedly not for turning, and to offer a little patriotic prodding: *"You must not do that madam, or every hoodlum with a boat will be holding the nation to ransom!"*

Anthony Perkins stars as the chief villain, Kramer, littering his arch performance with nervous twitches recycled from *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) and a most unEnglish tendency towards temper tantrums. Michael Parks plays Shulman, a myopic sociopath and Kramer's aide-de-*camp*. Intriguingly, connoting the Thatcher regime's intolerance of sexual difference (later epitomized by Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 that prohibits the 'promotion' of homosexuality), the film hints that Shulman and Kramer may be lovers (Shulman caresses Kramer when he suggests that he get some rest); an insinuation reinforced by the casting of the sexually ambiguous Perkins. The rest of Kramer's gang are an unpleasant bunch of gun-toting, xenophobic would-be-rapists. Amongst their number are two Japanese characters that have virtually no dialogue and little to do beyond construct and affix limpet mines, reiterating the orthodox view of Japan as the land of the technological rising sun. The

[43] By way of contrast, in the James Bond film *For Your Eyes Only* (John Glen, 1981) Mrs Thatcher (played by impressionist Janet Brown) is glimpsed in the kitchen of No. 10, wearing rubber gloves and a tabard and conversing with a foul-mouthed parrot (*"Give us a kiss!"*).

Japanese are called Tanaka and Yamamoto,[44] calling to mind unpalatable memories of World War Two (Colonel Tanaka decreed that conquering Japanese forces should take no prisoners, and Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet and instigator of the pre-emptive raid on Pearl Harbor), and the comment *"I'm afraid I don't know which of you gentlemen is which"* reawakens the hoary racial stereotype that all Japanese look alike.

There are no black faces to be seen amongst 'Ffolkes Ffusiliers' (sic), nor indeed in the film as a whole.[45] The acceptance of Britain's cultural diversity, as depicted in *Juggernaut,* has herein been abandoned in favour of Thatcher's preferred conception of Britain as a (more readily unified) white and predominantly English nation. In the run up to the 1979 election the Conservatives had warned of the danger to the traditional 'English way of life' of 'swamping' by Britain's established black and brown communities, and such fears were soon enshrined in law in the British Nationality Act 1981. John Hill outlines how

> Support for Thatcher was also overwhelmingly in the south of England ... In Scotland there was little acceptance of the Thatcher government's break with consensual, social-democratic government ... Thus, for all its rhetoric of 'national unity', the nationalism of the Thatcher government was less British (or Unionist) than (southern) English and pivoted, moreover, upon a particularly narrow and exclusivist version of 'national' identity.[46]

Exemplifying this English and London-centric view, the movie treats Scotland as little more than a quaint (but outdated) setting in which unconventional Englishmen can get away from the hurly-burly of modern metropolitan life.

The violence and emotional exuberance of the hijackers is juxtaposed with classically British sangfroid, typified by James Mason's somnambulant performance (as well as

---

[44] While introduced by Herring (David Wood) as Ya*k*amoto, the character gives his own name as Ya*m*amoto.

[45] This seems especially odd when one considers that race relations proved to be both a high profile and problematic issue throughout the 1970s: as evidenced in America by the Black Power movement that culminated in the founding of the militant Black Panther Party in 1966 and the National Black Political Convention in 1972; and in Britain by the Race Relations Act of 1976, and the race riots at the Notting Hill carnival that same year, in Lewisham in 1977, in Southall in 1979, and in Brixton and Toxteth in 1981. The film's deliberate disavowal of racial diversity does, however, remind us that when analysing British mid-Atlantic cinema it is often as useful, if not more so, to consider what has been (consciously) left out as what has been put in.

[46] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 14

employing fewer facial expressions than even Roger Moore, Mason's languid, soporific tones are the vocal equivalent of Mogadon). To counterbalance its villainous Americans, the film also features a friendly American named King, his monarchist moniker stressing his pro-British sensibilities as he sits amidst the beleaguered Brits imbibing innumerable cups of tea.[47] The Norwegian crew of the Esther, meanwhile, are depicted as rather simple folk and quite incapable of defending themselves. Captain Olafsen, played by Scots actor Jack Watson, sports a ludicrous singsong faux-Norwegian accent that even the film's villains feel compelled to mock. Having been overrun with considerable ease by foreign aggressors they again need British assistance, once more suggesting that the film's ideological foundations are to be found amidst evergreen British World War Two 'finest hour' fantasies.

However, these racial stereotypes and arch performances ideally complement the film, wherein parody and caricature have replaced the subtle character complexities of *Juggernaut*. As such, whereas the equally world-weary Fallon had seemed truly radical in *Juggernaut*, it is all too easy to dismiss Moore's gruff, hard-drinking, anti-authoritarian hero as simply quirkily unconventional. Rufus ffolkes is effectively a comic counterpart to Moore's James Bond persona. Bond's womanising is swapped for ffolkes' extreme misogyny (in place of Fallon's misanthropy) and Bond's sexual virility is quelled by a penchant for cross-stitch.[48] Indeed, to dispel speculation regarding ffolkes' sexual orientation, the film goes out of its way to stress that he was once married, thereby distancing the hero from the dangerous homosexual threat posed by Kramer and Shulman. However, while ffolkes' sexual preference may be open to interpretation, his patriotism is never in doubt. His ultimate rejection of the medals and gongs on offer for saving the day is merely another facet of a comically idiosyncratic personality rather than a politically motivated denunciation of Britain and her political establishment. Martin J Wiener opines that

---

[47] King is played by Moore's long-time friend, and one-time fly, David (formerly Al) Hedison. Hedison had starred as the eponymous insect in *The Fly* (Kurt Neumann, 1958) opposite Vincent Price, and alongside Roger Moore in *Live And Let Die* (Guy Hamilton, 1973), *The Naked Face* (Bryan Forbes, 1984) and in the ITC teleseries *The Saint* (1962-69).

[48] Despite this dissimilarity, the film's British and American advertising campaigns both sought to exploit Moore's Bond persona. The UK poster has Moore dressed in a vermilion wetsuit and brandishing a harpoon gun, recalling the promotional artwork by Frank C. McCarthy and Robert McGinnis for *Thunderball* (Terence Young, 1965). Likewise, the US poster features a giant-sized Moore, dressed in a naval commander's uniform, straddling a burning oilrig with various scantily clad women clinging to his arms and thighs, and is startlingly similar to the Robert McGinnis poster for *Diamonds are Forever* (Guy Hamilton, 1971).

> The general election of 1979 … was fought around the question of national economic decline. In a historic exchange, whose outlines were first perceptible in 1970, the Labour Party stood for English tradition, the status quo, and 'safety first', whereas the Conservatives – their leader especially – gave the calls for sweeping change.[49]

While not wishing to overstress the point, it is tempting to read *North Sea Hijack*'s newfound optimism as reflective of this expectant belief within British society that Thatcher offered something new, different (if for no other reason than that she was a woman) and, by implication, better. The movie depicts Britain as exuding defiant self-confidence in the face of more successful economic aggressors. Echoing Thatcher's nostalgic yearning for a less (ethnically) diverse society, and harking back to unifying wartime fictions, the film rejects the divisive social turbulence of the 1970s in the hope of a calmer and more prosperous future. However, as John Hill makes clear:

> there was a certain tension between the economic and politico-legal aspects of Thatcherism, and the ideological rhetoric of Thatcherism was often at odds with its economic effects. Thus, despite the 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.[50]

Thatcher, Miners and the Islas Malvinas: 1979 – 1985

Seeking to stimulate a quiescent economy, chancellor Geoffrey Howe's June 1979 anti-inflationary budget dramatically cut spending, far in excess of what was dictated by the IMF. Yet the economy mulishly refused to revive and, as inflation ballooned and unemployment breached 3 million (despite the use of increasingly devious statistical massaging, calculated to keep claimants off the unemployment register), in 1981 Howe unleashed another stringent budget of deflationary measures. Despite Thatcher's wide-ranging monetarist restructuring of the economy, high inflation and limited growth coupled with record levels of unemployment remained the norm until the mid-1980s when Britain's long-awaited economic boom finally arrived, closely followed by a cyclical bust.

---

[49] Martin J. Wiener (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* page 162
[50] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 10

The monetarist new broom was taking longer to sweep clean Callaghan's rubbish-filled streets that had been widely expected, and the hopeful optimism that had greeted Thatcher's electoral success proved short-lived. In response to opinion polls that named her as the most unpopular British prime minister since records began, Thatcher's strict monetarism was diluted and gave way gradually to what Bob Jessop calls policies of 'popular capitalism' for 'the entrepreneurial society.'[51] Thatcher's policies to control inflation, restore free collective bargaining, cut the tax burden and encourage home and share ownership appealed particularly to the middle-class and to those skilled and semi-skilled workers that had borne the brunt of consecutive governments' wage caps and incomes policies.

Thatcher's declared intention to make the British economy more flexible and market-driven was evident when, in 1981, the Tories turned their attention to the British film industry. Ideologically committed to 'rolling back the frontiers of the state', and eager to reduce public expenditure so as to enable tax cuts, Thatcher saw film policy as one of the less politically sensitive areas of government responsibility ripe for pruning. Rejecting the previous Labour government's cultural conception of cinema, in the National Film Finance Corporation Act 1981 the Conservatives restructured the NFFC along commercial lines with the aim of making it financially self-sufficient. To achieve this aim, the government wrote off the NFFC's existing debts and awarded it a supposedly final grant of £1 million. Echoing Heath's failed policy of a decade earlier, the NFFC would also be allowed to borrow up to a further £5 million from the commercial sector. Furthermore, "£1.5 million, or 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the Eady Levy, whichever was the greater, was to supplement this, with the result that the NFFC's fate became inextricably bound up with that of the Levy."[52]

This arrangement proved to be short-lived, however, and the Films Act 1985 announced the abolition of both the Levy and the NFFC.[53] The British film industry's protective quota, introduced in the Cinematograph Films Act 1927 to ensure that exhibitors show a minimum percentage of specifically British films, had been

[51] Bob Jessop (1992) 'From Social Democracy to Thatcherism: Twenty-Five Years of British Politics' in Nicholas Abercrombie and Alan Warde (eds.) *Social Change in Contemporary Britain* (Cambridge, Polity Press)
[52] Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street (1985) *Cinema and State* page 246
[53] See *Film Policy*, Cmnd, 9319 (1984, London, HMSO)

suspended as of 1 January 1983. Thus, as the British film industry celebrated the Oscar success of *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1982) and sought to sell itself with 1985's anticlimactic 'British Film Year', the government dismantled the industry's most cherished legislative defences: the quota, the Eady Levy and the NFFC. However, as John Hill rightly observes, these defensive measures were far from perfect and had long been inadequate.[54] Legal enforcement of the quota was slack and many cinemas, primarily independents, flouted their quota obligations consistently. Besides, with the number of British films in production declining, the quota was clearly failing in its mission to stimulate and facilitate production. Likewise, the Eady Levy, its rate long unchanged, now represented one-seventh of its original value in real terms.

> Moreover, with the decline of cinema attendances that was a feature of the late 1970s and early 1980s there was certainly some justice in the exhibitors claims that the levy was not only an increasingly onerous burden upon them but also an unfair one given the extent to which films were viewed on television and increasingly videotape.[55]

Thus, whilst it was perhaps unsurprising that the Levy and quota should have been amended or abolished, what was surprising was the lack of any kind of legislative replacement.[56] The NFFC's successor, the British Screen Finance Consortium, would now be required to fulfil the NFFC's cultural remit but within a framework of profit-making private enterprise. Given a 'final' grant of £7.5 million over five years by the government, by which time the company should have become self-supporting, British Screen was encouraged to seek the support of private investors.

> Three private investors – Channel 4, Cannon and Rank – agreed to provide (in the form of loans) £300,000 per annum for five years, £300,000 per annum for three years, and £250,000 per annum for three years respectively. Neither Cannon nor Rank renewed their commitment after the initial three-year period … Channel 4 alone continued with its investment during this period.[57]

---

[54] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s*
[55] ibid, page 36
[56] Amongst those measures suggested as replacements were calls to nationalise the industry, heard repeatedly throughout the decade, and the imposition of a levy on the broadcast of films on television. "The recommendation points out that a quarter of a penny levy on each viewer would produce £10 million for the NFFC, at present struggling lamely along." Robin Stringer, 'Are we on the verge of a brave new film industry?' in *The Daily Telegraph* (24 December 1982) page 9
[57] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 35

Despite proving marginally more successful than its predecessor in terms of both the number of projects in which it invested and having achieved greater returns on its investments, British Screen failed consistently to turn an overall profit. It remained reliant on the annual subsidy of £1.5 million granted by the government. Thatcher's film policy reforms were a failure in that they failed to divest the government of responsibility for Britain's fragile film industry. However, despite her free market rhetoric, her government never dared wholly withdraw its fiscal support; finally, but reluctantly, conceding that there is a crucial cultural significance to a national film industry. Even so, Thatcher's reforms left the industry considerably weaker than it had been at the time of her accession to power. While the number of British features films produced each year fell dramatically from an average of between eighty and ninety in the early 1970s, to just fifty in 1977, fifty-four in 1978, and sixty-one in 1979; Thatcher's reforms hastened the decline, and 1984 saw only nineteen British films on general release. British film production had reached its lowest level since the First World War.

In October 1980 Jim Callaghan resigned as leader of the Labour Party. As had earlier been the case with the Tories, Labour had been left reeling by its latest election defeat, the Winter of Discontent having invalidated "the Labour Party's claim that its 'special relationship' with the unions would induce moderation in exercising their veto power."[58] Never having fully recovered from Wilson's divisive 'agreement to disagree' during the 1975 Common Market referendum, the Labour Party seemed content to wallow in internal feuding, and Callaghan's departure left no clear unifying successor. The subsequent election of staunch left-winger Michael Foot served merely to expose the party's deep divisions; and in March 1981 the liberal-leaning 'gang of four' (Shirley Williams, Roy Jenkins, David Owen and William Rodgers) left the party, taking 28 Labour MPs and one Tory with them, intent on 'breaking the mould of British politics' as the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

On 19 March 1982 a boatload of Argentine scrap merchants made an unauthorised landing on the tiny uninhabited British protectorate of South Georgia, situated 400 miles from Argentina and 8,000 miles from Britain. Finding that this political

[58] Bob Jessop (1992) 'From Social Democracy to Thatcherism' page 25

indiscretion met with quiescent indifference from the British, Argentina's President Leopoldo Galtieri sanctioned the invasion of the 'Islas Malvinas' (as the British Falkland Islands are known in Argentina), home to 2,000 sheep-farming Britons. Although British citizens had occupied the islands continuously since 1833, in recent years Britain's commitment to the Falklands had waned noticeably. Indeed, the UK government had until recently been discussing with Argentina the feasibility of a 'lease back' arrangement that, against the wishes of the islanders, would have seen the islands become Argentinean sovereign territory on temporary loan to Britain.

Like every Argentine leader since Peron, Galtieri saw reasserting Argentina's claim of sovereignty over the Falklands as a means of distracting public attention from crippling domestic problems, as well as securing his own fragile position within the brutal ruling junta. On 2 April 1982 soldiers of the Argentine Special Forces landed at Port Stanley, the capital of the Falklands. The island's garrison of fifty marines were hopelessly outnumbered and the sole naval support vessel, the soon-to-be-scrapped ice patrol ship HMS Endurance, could do little to halt the Argentine invasion fleet. Furthermore, because successive British governments had been reluctant to spend the £5 million needed to upgrade the islands' existing runway, the Falklands lacked the necessary facilities to fly in reinforcements.

Unlike the omniscient state depicted in *Who Dares Wins*, the Argentine invasion had come as a complete surprise to the British government, despite numerous intelligence reports from Buenos Aries that the Argentine military was preparing to mobilise.[59] Most explicitly, Argentina had for some time been undergoing a programme of massive naval expansion and had bought several retired warships and destroyers from Britain. Indeed, the flagship of the Argentine invasion fleet, the aircraft carrier Veinticino de Mayo, had formerly been known as HMS Venerable. Likewise, the soon-to-be-sunk General Belgrano had once been the USS Phoenix and was a veteran of Pearl Habor. "It should have been obvious that the junta had its own good reasons for spending money on naval refurbishment."[60]

---

[59] There was also the explicit precedent that, in 1977, a previous Argentine invasion plan had been thwarted only after a pair of British warships and a nuclear submarine had been dispatched to the South Atlantic on a supposed 'naval exercise'.

[60] Christopher Dobson et al. (1982) *The Falklands Conflict* (London, Coronet) page 7

Mrs Thatcher now found her foreign policy in tatters and the nation's pride severely dented, just as British citizens now found themselves under military occupation for the first time since the Nazis had occupied the Channel Islands in 1940. Henceforth British Falklanders would not only be expected to learn Spanish, but would also be forced to drive on the right. Neatly summing up the situation, the foreign secretary Lord Carrington declared, "The fact remains that the invasion of the Falkland Islands has been a humiliating affront to this country,"[61] and promptly resigned, taking much of the political flack with him. Thatcher again assumed the Iron Lady persona that had met with popular approval during the Iranian Embassy siege the previous year. Amidst widespread calls for a negotiated settlement – including from her personal friend US President Ronald Reagan who, as Galtieri had anticipated, was reluctant to lose a valuable anti-communist South American ally in an argument over what Reagan dubbed 'ice cold rocks in the South Atlantic' – Thatcher despatched the largest British naval fleet since the Second World War to retake this oft-forgotten residue of Empire.

Any suggestion that Thatcher's martial response was merely idle posturing was swiftly disproved when, on 25 April 1982, Royal Marines recaptured South Georgia. Port Stanley was liberated on 14 June. Despite Argentina's refusal to declare a cessation of hostilities, the conflict was over. Although brief, the war in the Falklands was not without casualties on both sides. Britain's sinking of the General Belgrano with the loss of 323 Argentine lives, amidst speculation that it had been sailing *away* from the combat zone, had met with international indignation. Such ire was swiftly quelled however when, two days later, HMS Sheffield was crippled and sunk by an Argentine Exocet missile purchased only days earlier from France.

> The whole country was delighted. The war was short, heroic and, against hugely superior numbers, victorious. The return of the troopship Canberra to the Solent was marked by celebration as prolonged and uninhibited as the relief of Mafeking in 1900.[62]

Thatcher was convinced that military success in the Falklands, allied with an upsurge in national fervour (epitomised by *The Sun* headlines 'Gotcha!' and 'Stick it up your

[61] ibid, page 71
[62] Alan Clark (1998) *The Tories* page 476

junta'), would improve the Tories' electoral prospects and announced a post-conflict general election for 9 June 1983. Meanwhile, what was left of Foot's Labour Party following the SDP exodus lurched leftwards. "Labour went into the 1983 election committed to policies of increased taxation, greatly increased public expenditure, and vastly increased intervention by the state in the affairs of the nation and unilateral disarmament."[63] Its manifesto proved to be, in the words of Labour MP Gerald Kaufman, 'the longest suicide note in history' and was completely out-of-synch with the pro-military mood of a delighted nation that felt that its international prestige had been restored. At the subsequent election, the Conservatives were re-elected for a second term with a landslide majority of 188 over Labour, and 144 overall.

Throughout the period, trade union militancy continued to grow. Accepting the inevitability of conflict, in September 1981 Thatcher named Norman Tebbit as the new Secretary of State for Employment, explicitly charged with dissolving union power. In actual fact, Britain's exceptionally high rates of unemployment, breaching 3 million for the first time, had already significantly weakened the trade union movement. From a high of 13.3 million in 1979, union membership in the UK had fallen by 17% by the end of 1983. Having learned from Ted Heath's mistakes, Tebbit sanctioned the stockpiling of enormous reserves of coal at the power stations, sufficient to satisfy the nation's coal requirements for two years. The ever-colourful Tory MP Alan Clark later recalled, with palpable relish, "Now the stage was set for the final, and to some Conservatives the most sweet-tasting, of all Margaret Thatcher's achievements. Revenge exacted on the party's traditional enemy, the National Union of Mineworkers."[64]

Armed with a renewed electoral mandate and a huge parliamentary majority, Thatcher now announced her long-planned raft of pit closures, intended to rid her of a costly nationalised industry that could never compete with markedly cheaper coal imports from Eastern Europe and principally Poland. As anticipated, NUM leader Arthur Scargill called an immediate all-out strike. According to Clark,

---

[63] Patrick Cosgrove (1992) *The Strange Death of Socialist Britain* page 203
[64] Alan Clark (1998) *The Tories* page 476

> The Prime Minister was fortunate in her adversary. Like her, Arthur Scargill was infected by more than a trace of megalomania. But he had no guile whatever; nor patience, nor sense of tactics … he could only think in terms of the previous conflict (in which he had been victorious) at Saltley Gate in 1972…[65]

But things were very different in 1984. In contravention of the new Trade Union Act, the NUM Executive had failed to ballot all of its members before calling strike action. The strike was thus illegal. As such, employers were able to take the union to court to sequester its assets to pay costs and damages. To protect its chattels, the NUM had deposited the bulk of its funds abroad, but by so doing had rendered itself unable to pay its members full strike pay. Furthermore, unlike 1972, the media seemed to have little sympathy for the miners' grievances. Not only was the strike illegal, but also the government's closure package was considered by many to be fairly reasonable and there were to be no compulsory redundancies. Scargill's threatened general strike failed to materialise, and the miners' unity was smashed when Durham and Nottingham miners refused to strike, later breaking away from the NUM to form the Union of Democratic Mineworkers. The 1984 miners strike was an exceptionally bitter conflict that dragged on for a year, the longest ever in UK history. By the time the miners returned to work, having failed to gain a settlement, Arthur Scargill, the NUM and the British coal industry had each become either an exhausted or greatly weakened force.

Who Dares Wins (1982)

Conceived to capitalise on the public's renewed fascination with the British Army's elite Special Air Service (SAS) following their audacious (televised) storming of London's Iranian Embassy in April 1980, *Who Dares Wins* is both a eulogy to the military prowess of the SAS and a cinematic paean to Thatcherism. Indeed, the film comes closest to satisfying Thatcher's oft-expressed wish for a filmic record of Britain's military accomplishments in the Falklands,[66] as well as echoing her post-Falklands rhetoric that 'we have ceased to be a nation in retreat.'[67]

---

[65] ibid, pages 476 - 477

[66] As was the case with America's war in Vietnam – with the exception of John Wayne's ideologically hawkish and critically derided *The Green Berets* (John Wayne and Ray Kellogg, 1968) – those few

The film's explicit ultra-conservative (and Conservative) ideology not only endorses Thatcher's get-tough national defence and foreign policies, but also acts to legitimise greater state intervention in the private sphere by depicting a benign and beneficent state operating to protect an exclusively white society (as with *North Sea Hijack*, there are no black faces on show here) from the unvaryingly threatening, covert activities of foreigners. The relative scarcity amongst contemporary British cinema of such uncritical patriotism (not seen since the officer-class war movies of the mid-1950s, such as *The Dam Busters* (Michael Anderson, 1954) and *Sink the Bismark!* (Lewis Gilbert, 1959), that exude hegemonic 'never had it so good' confidence) makes *Who Dares Wins*' unapologetic flag-waving all the more fascinating. Indeed, as James Chapman argues, "with its unequivocal anti-terrorist message and its celebration of ruthless, clinical military force, *Who Dares Wins* is surely one of the most ideologically right-wing tracts ever produced by the British cinema."[68]

Critical reaction to the film's openly nationalistic and militaristic stance was universally hostile. *The Times* commented that "Euan Lloyd's SAS salute ... is so antiquated in technique that it might have escaped from a cobwebbed Pinewood vault: only the topicality of embassy sieges and some aggressively naïve politics stamp the film as contemporary."[69] Similarly, the *Monthly Film Bulletin* felt that it "should manage to offend just about anybody - punk, pacifist or policeman – inclined to take seriously the subject of global security."[70] Ironically, *Who Dares Wins* owes much of its success at the British box-office to the selfsame jingoism that so offended the

---

films that do feature the Falklands conflict, such as *For Queen and Country* (Martin Stellman, 1988) and *Resurrected* (Paul Greengrass, 1989), are uniformly critical.

[67] The novelisation of George Markstein's original story for *Who Dares Wins*, James Follett's *The Tiptoe Boys* (1982), draws attention to Britain's indomitable fighting spirit and links contemporary social turbulence with the nation's wartime experience, and in so doing exposes the theme that underpins many of the mid-Atlantic movies made in Britain in the period 1970 to 1985: "But he thought how wrong the apparatchiks could be. Like the press attaché at the embassy who had sneered the previous day: 'Just look at the British marching on their ritualistic Sunday demos, shrieking anti-war mottos. I tell you, comrade, you're watching a people who've lost their backbone. You know what they are? They're *scared*. Three million unemployed have demoralised them.' ... But he thought that mistake had been made before. Didn't the students of Oxford affirm in 1938 that they would never fight for King and country? And weren't those same students piloting Spitfires two years later, blowing the Hitlerites out of the sky?" (London, Corgi) page 196

[68] James Chapman (1999) *Licence to Thrill* page 204

[69] Geoff Brown, '*Who Dares Wins*' film review in *The Times* (3 September 1982) page 7

[70] Phillip Strick (1982) '*Who Dares Wins*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 49, no. 584) page 209

critics. Released within months of Britain's victory in the Falklands, the film deftly exploited the upsurge in national pride that is the inevitable accompaniment to a successful military campaign. In the process, the film articulates much the same patriotic rhetoric as would later be used by Mrs Thatcher to secure her return to Downing Street at the 1983 post-Falklands general election.

John Hill has elsewhere illustrated how such pro-Thatcher sensibilities are atypical of 1980s British cinema; which is, in the main, united in its explicit criticism of the Thatcherite project and its accompanying ethos of ruthless capitalism.[71] Even *Chariots of Fire*, the film most frequently cited as embodying the 'Falklands spirit' and espousing Thatcherite values, "is a rather more complex piece of work than its reputation often suggests and, if it became identified with refurbished national sentiment and a Thatcherite outlook, this was undoubtedly related to the special circumstances in which it was received,"[72] namely its four-time Oscar success to the accompaniment of Colin Welland's partisan cry of 'the British are coming!' and its re-release coinciding with the outbreak of hostilities in the Falklands. Conversely, as we shall see, *Who Dares Wins* is a relatively 'closed' text whose intended meaning and right-wing ideological stance are less open to divergent interpretation.

On 30 April 1980 six armed terrorists representing the inelegantly named Democratic Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Arabistan (DRMLA) seized control of the Iranian Embassy in London taking 26 hostages. The group, upon learning that their initial call for the Iranian authorities to release 91 Arabistani prisoners would not be met, then demanded that a plane take them and their hostages to safety in an unnamed Arab country (generally thought to be Saddam Hussein's Iraq which, it later transpired, had sponsored the escapade). Although at first seemingly reluctant to carry out their threat to kill hostages, after five days of negotiation the DRMLA terrorists finally committed murder and shot dead the embassy press attaché. Thatcher now approved an assault by the SAS. At 7.20pm on 5 May 1980 international television broadcasts were interrupted by live footage of the assault and the image of SAS men dressed in black abseiling down the white stone façade of the Victorian embassy.

---

[71] For further discussion, see John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s*; and Lester Friedman (ed.) (1993) *British Cinema and Thatcherism: Fires Were Started* (London, UCL Press)
[72] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 21

Deploying specially designed bombs capable of shattering bullet-proof glass, the SAS gained access to the building and shot dead five of the six terrorists within.

Although undeniably impressive, Operation Nimrod had not gone quite as smoothly as would later be depicted in the movie *Who Dares Wins*. The alarm had been raised sooner than expected when an abseiling soldier had inadvertently put his foot through a window, and another was badly burned after becoming tangled in his harness above a fire started by his own stun-grenade. Despite these minor slip-ups, however, and the death of a second hostage, it was widely hailed as a triumph by the media, for whom it made great copy. Characteristically, the British popular press could muster little sympathy for the grievances, genuine or otherwise, of the Middle Eastern states involved – routinely depicted as fanatical regimes overly keen on flag burning, public displays of grief and rifle wielding in front of disturbing murals of despotic rulers – and the five dead 'terrorists' and their political cause garnered very few column-inches. Rather, Mrs Thatcher's recourse to the use of deadly force was broadly accepted as essential. *The Sun* chose to echo Thatcher's reaction with a headline that trumpeted 'Proud to be British!' Her 'Iron Lady' persona of trenchant resilience would soon be further reinforced by her intractability during the 1984 miners strike and the Falklands crisis (epitomized by an iconic photo opportunity of Mrs T atop a Challenger tank), and by her apparent indestructibility after narrowly escaping the IRA bomb blast that in 1984 destroyed much of the Brighton Grand Hotel in which the Tory cabinet were staying during the party's annual conference.

Former publicist and successful film producer Euan Lloyd, whose credits include *Shalako* (Edward Dmytryk, 1968) and *Paper Tiger* (Ken Annakin, 1975), was quick to see the moneymaking potential of a celebratory filmic treatment of the SAS siege, as had earlier been demonstrated by the American TV movies *Raid on Entebbe* (Irvin Kershner, 1976) and *Victory at Entebbe* (Marvin J. Chomsky, 1976); hastily made and highly successful, star-laden dramatisations of a similar hostage-freeing assault by Israeli commandos on Uganda's Entebbe Airport.[73] For his title, Lloyd chose the SAS

[73] The following year saw the release of *Operation Thunderbolt*, an Israeli retelling of the events of 4 July 1976 from Cannon front men Menehem Golan and Yoram Globus. Of the three dramatisations, *Victory at Entebbe* is unquestionably the least satisfying: hamstrung by a lumbering cast that includes Liz Taylor, Kirk Douglas, Richard Dreyfuss, Linda Blair and Helen Hayes from *Airport* (George Seton, 1970), it trivialises the crisis and resembles a tasteless, sub-standard disaster movie.

motto 'Who Dares Wins' – a dictum later employed as a Thatcherite entrepreneurial epithet, as used by would-be yuppie Del Trotter in the hugely popular BBC sitcom *Only Fool and Horses* (1981-2002).

Who Dares Wins is based on an 'original' story from alleged onetime spy George Markstein, long immersed in espionage plotting as script editor of the ITC serials *Danger Man* (1960-66) and *The Prisoner* (1967). The screenplay is by Lloyd's regular scriptwriter, Reginald Rose. However, despite having been written by the author of the provocative and Pulitzer Prize-winning plan *12 Angry Men*, Euan Lloyd's quartet of Boys' Own movies are uniformly shallow and ephemeral (see also *The Wild Geese, The Sea Wolves* and *Wild Geese II*). *Who Dares Wins* sacrifices character depth to the exigencies of hackneyed plotting. Pertinent political and moral debates regarding issues of nuclear proliferation and disarmament are given the most perfunctory consideration (*"Isn't it a bit strange that you resort to terrorism to win your peace?"*) even though such issues were at that moment precipitating unprecedented political polarisation, with the Labour Party fighting the 1983 general election pledged to unilateral nuclear disarmament while the Tories acted to extend Britain's nuclear fighting strength by importing the American Trident deployment system.

> *One, two, three, four, we don't want a nuclear war!*
> *Five, six, seven, eight, we don't want to radiate!*[74]

The film opens with an anti-nuclear demonstration led by The Peoples Lobby for Peace, a militant protest group funded secretly by Libyans intent on destabilising the West. When an undercover police officer masquerading as a protester is murdered, SAS captain Peter Skellen is ordered to infiltrate the group and thwart its disruptive plans. As a means of penetrating the group, Skellen seduces its belligerent leader Frankie Leith (played by Australian actress Judy Davis with a dubious American accent, in a role for which Jane Fonda was initially considered). Leith, a bored rich kid spending daddy's fortune, foolishly and unbelievably recruits Skellen as military advisor for the group's latest and most audacious stunt, a hostage-taking raid on the American Ambassador's London residence (played by Pinewood's oft-filmed

[74] The protest chant and 'peace cry' of The Peoples Lobby for Peace, as heard in *Who Dares Wins*.

administration block).[75] The group threaten to kill their high profile hostages, including the British Foreign Secretary and the US Secretary of State (Richard Widmark), unless a British-based American nuclear missile is targeted to destroy a Scots submarine base, so as to awaken the British public to the horror of nuclear war. Unfortunately, the film's long-awaited *raison d'etre*, the climactic assault by the SAS, proves markedly less exhilarating than the actuality TV footage it tries to replicate, despite the involvement of SAS military advisors (credited as 'Anonymous').

Directorial duties are handled by Ian Sharp, a successful TV director charged with lending the movie the same energy and authenticity he brought to such British television series as *Minder* (1979-94), *CATS Eyes* (1985-87) and *The Professionals* (1977-83); the latter being a gritty British crime show frequently criticised for its excessive violence, paramilitary fetishism and supposed crypto-fascist politics but, improbably, praised by self-appointed moral guardian Mary Whitehouse for its restrained use of bad language. Lewis Collins, the film's hero, was also loaned from *The Professionals*, in which he starred as ex-SAS operative Bodie opposite Martin Shaw's Doyle (the one with the ozone-depleting bubble perm).

"From the opening postcard shot of Big Ben, the director Ian Sharp … displays a rare gift for plangent cliché,"[76] opined critic Geoff Brown, and Sharp does little to enliven Rose's pedestrian script or, relying on derivative compositions and unimaginative televisual close-ups, imbue the movie with the vitality, verisimilitude (faux news bulletins fronted by BBC newscasters Anna Ford and Bill Hamilton) and relevance it so desperately craves. For example, the post-siege tag scene, in which a sinister Libyan meets a (Labour?) MP for lunch, serves to reiterate the film's cautionary 'message' as its thoughts turn from isolated (semi-fictitious) acts of terrorism to widespread political corruption and the ever-present threat posed by malignant non-Western nations. The inclusion of villainous Libyans – President Ronald Reagan's adversaries, soon to be bombed by US planes launched from British airbases – lends the film extra US-appeal. Additionally, in its quest for immediacy and significance, the film proffers a closing caption of embassy siege data accompanied by a rendition

[75] Pinewood had previously featured as a similarly besieged ambassadorial abode in *Carry on up the Khyber* (Gerald Thomas, 1968), a film whose political worldview and ideological stance are in many ways markedly more sophisticated than is the case here.
[76] Geoff Brown, '*Who Dares Wins*' film review in *The Times* (3 September 1982) page 7

of 'The Red Flag', the socialist anthem of the British Labour Party.[77] This musical coda not only restates the film's rejection of Labourite thinking by equating left-wing policy with anti-British foreign aggression (*"They may be misguided, but actually they were committed to our own objectives."*), but also raises somewhat outdated fears of communist infiltration, echoing Reagan's anti-Soviet 'evil empire' rhetoric that had seemed anachronistic and outdated the moment it was uttered.

For the most part, *Who Dares Wins* aspires to the violent 'gritty realism' typified by the British cop shows and gangster movies of the 1970s, with graphic violence, Sam Peckinpah-like bloody bullet wounds and a liberal sprinkling of profanity. Significantly, the film's composer Roy Budd had earlier penned the exquisitely simplistic score for *Get Carter*, the British gangster genre's seminal text. However, Sharp's pseudo-documentary sensibilities sit uncomfortably with the film's aesthetic glossiness, high-key lighting and complacent conservatism, all of which more effectively evoke the fabulations of the James Bond films.[78] The film's formal and aesthetic inconsistencies suggest perhaps that Sharp, long entrenched in television, was seduced by the greater visual potential afforded by the cinematic medium.

However, one should note that this stylistic inconsistency is a feature common to all the Lloyd/Rose collaborations, which not only share the same cast, crew and plot,[79] but also many of the same defects, particularly the awkwardness with which they seek to incorporate social relevance and issues of morality into transient and trivial tales of masculine derring-do. For instance, the same (inappropriate) pretensions to Bond-style are evident in Lloyd's *The Wild Geese* – "an efficient exercise in gilt-edged, widescreen exploitation which will do little to illuminate the politics of the wind of change."[80] Employing such Bond veterans as editor John Glen, production designer

---

[77] The edifying caption reads: *"In one year (1980) 42 Embassies and diplomatic missions were seized worldwide by terrorists and radicals: 22 Ambassadors were taken hostage; 5 Embassies were destroyed; 53 people were killed in Embassy shoot-outs. (these figures do not include the US Embassy in Teheran)"*.

[78] Indeed, the film's cinematographer, Phil Meheux, would go on to photograph the James Bond film *GoldenEye* (Martin Campbell, 1995).

[79] In *The Wild Geese* geriatric mercenaries embark on one last mission to save a deposed African president, in *The Sea Wolves* retired British soldiers embark on one last mission to sink a German spy ship in wartime India, and in *Wild Geese II* geriatric mercenaries hired by an exclusive-hungry American TV boss embark on one last mission to bust Rudolf Hess out of Spandau Prison.

[80] Clyde Jeavons (1978) '*The Wild Geese*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 45, no. 534) pages 145-146

Syd Cain, main title designer Maurice Binder and the then current James Bond Roger Moore, the film injudiciously seeks to muster audience sympathy for a band of pensionable mercenaries as they merrily slay their way through post-colonial Africa.

Inspired by the exploits of Colonel 'Mad' Mike Hoare (who also served as the film's military advisor), via Daniel Carney's novel, the film marries gunfire, gore, profanity (*"You fucking abortion!"*), political corruption, an idiot's guide to the complexities of Africa's socio-political history and, were that not enough, musings on the futility of racism. Thus, Hardy Kruger's Kaffir-hating South African, forced to carry Winston Ntshona's wounded black president Limbani (literally the white man's burden), learns that skin colour is only skin deep and promptly sacrifices himself so that his new friend and Africa's political saviour might live. Sadly this proves to be a futile gesture, and Africa's political saviour is soon rendered an ex-president. However, no one seems unduly troubled by Limbani's untimely demise – although the implications for Africa are presumably grave – and the film, having stressed the importance of interracial tolerance, heads off towards its Kaffir-killing conclusion.

Director Andrew V. McLaglen deftly maintains an unrelenting pace that, despite typically trite Reginald Rose dialogue (*"Can you hold General Ndofa in Burundi while I'm grabbing Limbani?"*), lends *The Wild Geese* an unwarranted sense of narrative cohesion by denying the audience time to realise that what they are watching is not only morally and ideologically dubious but also frequently nonsensical. Conversely, as a ten-minute stunt sequence tiresomely padded to fill two-hours, *Who Dares Wins'* deficiencies are all too apparent. Even if arguably mirroring the polarisation of political debate in contemporary Britain, the film overly simplifies issues and dichotomises debate in line with its militaristic, ultra-conservative worldview. Thus, on the one hand, the SAS are eulogised as Nietzschean *Übermenschen*, benevolently training second-rate foreign Special Forces in advanced British methods (in much the same way as the crack Argentine Special Forces deployed to secure Port Stanley had honed their skills on SAS training courses) while, on the other hand, the peace lobby is caricatured and ridiculed – as they savagely critique American capitalist exploitation via the medium of dance (protesters dressed as intercontinental ballistic missiles writhing to a disco rendition of the Star-spangled Banner) – or vilified as the foolish dupes of malignant foreign powers. Likewise, the

dithering pacifist bishop played by Kenneth Griffith is dismissed as naïve and redundant, vainly imploring a rioting mob to *"long for peace"*, thereby suggesting that there is little room for Christian communion in an increasingly secular free-marketplace where 'there's no such thing as society' and competition is king.

Intensifying xenophobic tendencies glimpsed in *North Sea Hijack*, *Who Dares Wins* reflects Thatcher's burgeoning Euro-scepticism by depicting all foreign elements as potentially damaging to Britain's prosperity and moral health, thereby advocating her get-tough rhetoric as well as increased defence spending and draconian immigration policies. As depicted, Aharon Ipale's subversive Libyan, Ingrid Pitt's baby-bullying Teuton and Judy Davis' bourgeois American radical all endanger iconic Britain (as represented by travelogue footage of London landmarks and ubiquitous red double-decker buses) and the peaceful existence of her *right*-thinking citizens. This is most explicitly illustrated by the sequence in which horror movie icon Ingrid Pitt's infanticidal Hun, all the more transgressive for rejecting feminine maternal instincts, invades the tranquil familial space of Skellen's home taking his wife and newborn daughter hostage – a direct assault on the cherished domesticity and 'family values' espoused by Thatcher, Reagan and the New Right.

Thatcher, while generally mistrustful of Britain's European partners, conversely encouraged the 'special relationship' with the United States and closely tied Britain to US foreign policy; as illustrated by the situating of American cruise missiles at RAF Greenham Common and RAF Molesworth in 1980 (a controversial policy of which *Who Dares Wins* explicitly approves), and by permitting US bombers to use British air bases for the highly contentious attack on Libya in 1986. *Who Dares Wins* reflects these cosy Anglo-American ties, and in so doing permits the presence of (faded) American stars among its cast, such as Richard Widmark and Robert Webber, to help guarantee American distribution. (In the US, the film was released as *The Final Option* but was not a success). Crucially, Britain has acquired extra politico-military clout since *North Sea Hijack*, in which she had vanquished worthy American aggressors. Thus Widmark and Webber, lead players in an earlier (cinematic) age, sit idly by while British commandos ensure the safety of the free world and rescue American hostages. Conversely, in April 1980, merely nine days before the successful SAS embassy assault that inspired the film, the US Delta Force had botched a mission

to free 52 American hostages from the US Embassy in Teheran. Despite having been aborted while still in the Iranian desert, and having failed to engage the enemy, the mission resulted in the deaths of 8 American servicemen. This farrago is cited conspicuously in *Who Dares Wins*' informative closing caption.

In contrast, from the outset *Who Dares Wins* is reassuringly confident about Britain's capacity to anticipate attack, and defend herself and her citizens from all assailants, with the loss of very few British lives. The opening assassination scene, which serves to highlight that The People's Lobby are deviants for whose cause we as viewers should have no sympathy, is followed by a strategy meeting of Britain's seemingly omniscient anti-terrorist agencies – Special Branch, Scotland Yard's C13 division, MI5 and the SAS – who reveal that they have already rumbled The People's Lobby (*"Known terrorists hiding right out in the open!"*). Similarly, upon the Libyan's arrival in the UK, even before we know of his nefarious purpose, he is scrutinized by a dour but diligent Special Branch operative (played by TV wine-taster Oz Clarke). Moreover, we later glimpse a police control centre crammed with computer banks and monitors that calls to mind an all-seeing Orwellian 'Big Brother' or, recalling George Markstein's pedigree penning *The Prisoner*, a 'Village'-like police state of total surveillance. John Hill outlines how

> Thatcherism was only committed to the rolling back of the state in the interests of market freedom; otherwise it was quite prepared to strengthen state power, and restrict freedoms, in the interests of national regeneration, social order and discipline.[81]

Faced with such apparently omniscient opposition (albeit an assertion disproved by the 'surprise' Argentine invasion of the Falklands), the Libyan seems to anticipate defeat and ultimately greets it with stoic restraint. At the conclusion of a movie that has eulogised and endorsed strict policies of state scrutiny and security and the use of brutal military force, depicted as the precise 'surgical' removal of the cancerous elements that taint British society, the Libyan's threat that there will be many more opportunities for terror seems like empty bombast.

[81] John Hill (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* page 8

Despite endorsing the Thatcherite project, and thus by implication Mrs Thatcher herself, *Who Dares Wins* is noticeably troubled by female power, as was Rufus Excalibur ffolkes in *North Sea Hijack*. Indeed, despite 1970s Britain seemingly having witnessed greater female emancipation and equality of the sexes – the decade opening with the Equal Pay Act 1970 and closing with the election of Britain's first woman prime minister – many (if not most) mid-Atlantic texts from the period are uneasy with sexual equality. Clearly more comfortable with 'uncomplicated' machismo than the apparent complexities of modern feminist thought and, contrary to the social realities of contemporary Britain, these films depict a testosterone-fuelled fantasy land in which women have been almost wholly marginalized. For example, in *The Odessa File* (Ronald Neame, 1974), co-written by George Markstein, the male hero's girlfriend (Mary Tamm) is little more than a troublesome narrative necessity that spends practically the whole film ensconced in her flat. Similarly, Chris Petit's *Time Out* review of *The Wild Geese* observes how "it's also the kind of film that would be deeply misogynist … if there were any women in it!"[82] Likewise, John Russell Taylor outlines how

> *The Wild Geese* is one of those films whose currency is entirely and shamelessly tokens … a token happily married man, a token playboy, a token black, a token gay – indeed, just about everything except a token woman.[83]

In the main, these are not romances or love stories but tales of action and adventure, focusing typically on themes of mateship, camaraderie and male bonding, with an occasion hint of homoeroticism. For instance, in *The Riddle of the Sands* the good ship Dulcibella is positively awash with sexual tension, and the byplay between Davies and Carruthers certainly calls to mind that between Charles and Sebastian in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (published 1945 and dramatised for television by Granada in 1981, and now considered one of the founding texts of the heritage genre). Similarly, the close fraternal bond between Faulkner (Richard Burton) and Janders (Richard Harris) in *The Wild Geese* acquires a discernibly homoerotic dimension as the film progresses. Both are notably unable to maintain relationships with women, and talk of their lost loves with suitably masculine restraint (*"She died three years ago. Some kind of bone cancer, took a month that's all. Fine woman."*).

[82] Chris Petit (1998) '*The Wild Geese*' film review in John Pym (ed.) *Time Out Film Guide 1998* (London, Penguin) unpaginated
[83] John Russell Taylor, '*The Wild Geese*' film review in *The Times* (7 July 1978)

And yet, when Janders is killed Faulkner is moved to tears. Faulkner later adopts Janders' curiously effete son Emile as his own, thereby cementing the familial bond between the two men.

To counter such homoerotic undertones as these, one frequently finds that token female love interests and camp, comic or criminal gay characters have been sprinkled amongst the mid-Atlantic derring-do so as to confirm our male heroes' heterosexuality in the case of the former, or to throw their 'straightness' into sharp relief in the case of the latter. For example, in *The Wild Geese* Kenneth Griffith plays Witty (more or less Mr Humphries in fatigues),[84] whose harmless gayness is flagged up by his recurrent references to 'bums' and proctologists. In view of the film's proto-Thatcherite ideology, it comes as no great surprise when the (deviant) gay guy dies.

Where women are permitted to intrude into these Boys' Own adventures, aside from as masculinity-affirming sexual conquests, they are routinely cast in stereotypical and thinly drawn roles within narrative structures that define them in relation to their attitude to male narrative protagonists and macho heroic leads. Womankind as depicted herein is typically duplicitous (see Barbara Kellerman's glamorous Nazi spy in *The Sea Wolves*, or Jean Marsh's spinsterish fifth columnist in *The Eagle has Landed*), dangerous (Donald Sutherland's hitherto ruthless super-spy is finally undone when he falls for Kate Nelligan's sexually frustrated farmer's wife in *Eye of the Needle*) or, at best, an impediment to male fun-seeking (Jack Watson's wife implores him not to go on an adventure with the lads in *The Wild Geese*). Accordingly, in *Who Dares Wins* women are cast as either dutiful wives – Rosalind Lloyd as Skellen's wife has little to do besides cooking, cleaning and minding the baby – or megalomaniacal ball-breakers. Reassuringly, for the contemporary male audience, female aspirations to (male) power are consistently undermined throughout the film by their inherent feminine emotionality. Thus, Frankie's plan to seize control of the (phallic) nuclear missile is spoiled the moment she falls for Skellen's pitiable chat-up lines and involves him in the operation (*"I'd like to take you to bed. Have you got a car?"*). Likewise, her death is hastened when, a slave to feminine romantic yearning, she hesitates instead of shooting him and is gunned down by less emotional men.

[84] The exceptionally camp gentleman's outfitter, with the mincing gait and *"I'm free!"* catchphrase, played by John Inman in the long-running BBC sitcom *Are You Being Served?* (1972-85).

The explicit marginalization and objectification of women in these films is certainly striking, but was by no means limited to cinema in the period. Leon Hunt draws attention to what he terms the 'masculine presence' of the 1970s:

> evident not only in the 'heroes' of the era but in an almost unprecedented empowering of the male gaze. This is the era of *Top of the Pops*' scantily clad dance team Pan's People, (Benny) Hill's Angles, tobacco ads featuring a bikini-clad Caroline Munro amidst promises of 'sheer enjoyment'.[85]

As a consequence, he argues, 1970s popular culture has become something of a reference point, particularly for contemporary 'lad culture', for a kind of unqualified straight masculinity, before the 'castration' of the 1980s and the birth of the seemingly feminised New Man. However, one can't help but feel that there's more than a little overcompensation going on in the 'man's world' of 1970s mid-Atlantic cinema, and that all this machismo is but a façade concealing an underlying crisis in masculine identity and a nostalgic yearning to return to simpler concepts of masculinity believed to have once existed.[86] In other words, contrary to the popular conception of the 1970s as a reassuring haven of uncomplicated straightness, as Hunt explains, "whenever masculinity's 'crisis' actually started, it certainly seems to have been in place by the 1970s, and the signs of it were everywhere."[87]

The pronounced machismo and complementary misogyny of *North Sea Hijack, The Wild Geese, Who Dares Wins* and many others, is further evidence of how British mid-Atlantic cinema in the 1970s sought to retreat from and to deny the traumatic transformations then occurring within British society by presenting consciously cosy (from a male perspective) entertainment. The next chapter explores this theme further, and analyses how British filmmakers sought to imitate and to re-imagine the hugely successful American horror film *The Exorcist* in accordance with, and to give voice to, domestic preoccupations and concerns.

---

[85] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture* page 57
[86] See also Murray Healy (1995) 'Were We Being Served? Homosexual Representation in Popular British Comedy' in *Screen* (issue 36, volume 3, pages 243-256)
[87] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture* page 73

5.

Demon Babies, Hollywood Style: Anglicising *The Exorcist*

> The rather striking truth is that in international commercial terms, the British cinema (including not just Hammer but other smaller companies: this is a national phenomenon) has effectively and effortlessly dominated the 'horror' market over a period of almost twenty years with a series of films which, whatever their faults, *are in no way imitative of American or European models* (my emphasis).[1]

The above quotation is taken from David Pirie's pioneering *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972*, in which he stressed the centrality of horror to Britain's filmic tradition. Ironically, even as Pirie wrote these words, in Hollywood Warner Bros was refining *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973); a home-grown horror that was to set new records at box-offices around the globe, as well as kick-starting an international horror boom that very swiftly brought Britain's dominance of the horror market to an end. Hollywood's new high-dollar, mainstream horrors transformed the genre throughout Europe in terms of style, tone, form and narrative concerns, as well as (armed with generous special-effects budgets, the like of which the genre had previously only dreamt of) 'pushing the envelope' with regard to gore and visceral shocks.

In this chapter I evaluate critically two hitherto unobserved British horror films that, rejecting Pirie's claims of indigenous uniqueness, sought to adorn themselves in the trappings of *The Exorcist*: the demon baby movies *I Don't Want to be Born* (Peter Sasdy, 1975) and *To the Devil a Daughter* (Peter Sykes, 1976). Accepting Leon Hunt's assertion that a thematic approach, as opposed to one centred on a particular auteur or company, can enable one to discern recurring patterns and motifs that point to the cultural strains into which texts are tapping,[2] I argue that the way in which

---

[1] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (London, Gordon Fraser) pages 9-10

[2] Leon Hunt (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK: Witchcraft and the Occult in British Horror' in Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)

these films abandon English Gothicism in favour of the irreligious iconoclasm of Hollywood's contemporary horrors flags up a fundamental lack of faith in not only the viability and worth of indigenous cinematic forms and aesthetic styles, but also in the very concept of Britishness itself. Moreover, I contend that, despite sporting mid-Atlantic occult robes, these movies rework generic conventions and plot conceits in ways that expose their British origins and, by this means, permit a more accurate appreciation of the national character and mood at the time of their production.

With hindsight we can see how Pirie's landmark study came at a moment of transition "when the Gothic strain in English genre cinema was being challenged both by cultural upheavals in Western capitalist society and by new styles of horror cinema developing in America and continental Europe."[3] The long-term decline of the traditional cinema-going family audience, whose entertainment needs were being satiated increasingly by television, had prompted the Hollywood studios to reorganise their output in favour of, to quote Tom Ryall, "specialised film cycles and genres addressed to particular fragments of the public and particularly to the young adult."[4] Consequently, by the late 1960s the pre-eminence of British horror was under threat, imperilled by a succession of American critical and box-office successes, such as *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero, 1968) and *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), and the waning of the 'cool Britannia' brand that had impacted so heavily on American culture earlier in the decade.

While international horror filmmakers had at first been content to copy British Gothic models, emulation had given way gradually to innovation. Jonathan Rigby has elsewhere outlined how "the grisly efflorescence of British horror cultivated even grislier blooms around the world."[5] In the wake of *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) came horror films that dispensed with Hammer's notional *mittel*-European period settings and repertory company of monsters, in favour of contemporary locales and murderous madmen based on real life evildoers like the Wisconsin cannibal Ed Gein;

---

[3] Steve Chibnall (2002) 'A Heritage of Evil: Pete Walker and the Politics of Gothic Revisionism' in Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 156
[4] Tom Ryall (1995) *British Popular Cinema* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/Sheffield Hallam University) page 21
[5] Jonathan Rigby (2000) *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* (London, Reynolds & Hearn) page 8

the inspiration not only for *Psycho*, but also for *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974) and *Deranged* (Alan Ormsby, 1974).

The growing confidence of the Hollywood studios in the vitality and potential profitability of horror encouraged both the mainstreaming of horror narratives and the leaving behind of Britain's established horror specialists, of whom Hammer Films was the most successful. Horror filmmakers in the UK proved more reluctant to innovate and slower to respond to generic competition than elsewhere on the continent, and a hitherto healthy facet of the British film industry was to suffer as a consequence. [6] In addition, the worldwide success of *The Exorcist* served to further vindicate the decision of the American studios to abandon British shores. Devoid of US capital, British horror film production would wither with dispiriting speed. While 1970 saw approximately twenty horror movies in production in the UK (roughly one-fifth of the total number of UK feature films in production that year), rising to twenty-four in 1971 (one-quarter of the total), this had dwindled to only four by 1975 (roughly one-twentieth of the total).[7]

The belated response of those British horror producers that remained was to re-imagine their nightmares in accordance with the perceived style and preoccupations of their more successful American and European competitors, in accordance with the broader trend for cultural self-effacement discernable throughout British cinema in the period. For example, Richard Marquand's *The Legacy* (1978) owes a clear narrative and formal debt to the work of Italian horror maestro Dario Argento, and

---

[6] It is interesting to note that comparable and similarly fatal intransigence also characterised the Spanish film industry in the period; which, under Franco's ideologically repressive regime, had developed a healthy and subversive Gothic horror canon in many ways akin to that of the UK. For further discussion, see Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs (1994) *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984* (London, Primitive Press)

[7] While accepting that generic classification is never as straightforward as it may at first appear and that there are thus potentially other 'hybridised' or 'cross-over' films that one could conceivably designate as horror, a fairly orthodox inventory for 1970 would encompass: *And Soon the Darkness, Assault, The Beast in the Cellar, Blood on Satan's Claw, The Corpse, Countess Dracula, Crescendo, Cry of the Banshee, Fragment of Fear, Goodbye Gemini, The Horror of Frankenstein, The House that Dripped Blood, Incense for the Damned, Lust for a Vampire, The Man who Haunted Himself, The Scars of Dracula, Trog, The Vampire Lovers* and *Mumsy, Nanny, Sonny and Girly.* A similar inventory for 1971 would comprise: *The Abominable Dr Phibes, Blind Terror, Blood from the Mummy's Tomb, Burke and Hare, Crucible of Terror, Demons of the Mind, The Devils, Die Screaming Marianne, Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde, The Fiend, Fright, Hands of the Ripper, The House in Nightmare Park, The Night Digger, Night Hair Child, The Nightcomers, Revenge, Twins of Evil, Vampire Circus, Venom, Virgin Witch, What Became of Jack and Jill?, Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?* and *I, Monster.* In comparison, 1974 has only *Exposé, House of Mortal Sin, I Don't Want to be Born* and *The Spiral Staircase* to offer.

specifically *Suspiria* (1976). Likewise, the British sexploitation horrors of Spanish émigré José Larraz, *Symptoms* and *Vampyres* (both 1974), echo the ethereality of Mario Bava and the eroticism of Jean Rollin. Meanwhile, looking to the US for inspiration, the decision to remake *The Spiral Staircase* (Peter Collinson, 1975), from Robert Siodmak's 1946 Hollywood psychodrama, can be seen to expose a critical lack of inspiration and direction in the genre in Britain. Employing a more recent American role model, Pete Walker's *Frightmare* (1974) and Alan Birkinshaw's *Killer's Moon* (1978) endeavour to replicate the tone, themes of nihilism and alienation and overarching 'body-in-pieces' fantasy of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* – the former features the exploits of a drill-toting matriarch and her homicidal clan, and the latter has to do with schoolgirls being terrorised by the mentally ill in the Lake District.

The Exorcist (1973)

> The dispiriting thing about *The Exorcist* is not so much that it so patently expects to be taken seriously, as the fact that it *has* been taken seriously by revered gentlemen talking about 'a social and religious phenomenon'.[8]

In 1973 Warner Bros, the US major with whom Hammer had enjoyed the closest relationship, commissioned its own in-house atrocity based on the William Peter Blatty novel that had spent 55 weeks on the US bestseller list: *The Exorcist*. In the hope that he would lend the movie the same degree of authenticity and verisimilitude he'd brought to *The French Connection* (1971), Oscar winner William Friedkin was assigned to direct.[9] As part of a concerted attempt to differentiate itself from other monster-on-the-loose horrors, and in the hope of reaching out beyond the regular horror audience, *The Exorcist* adopts a sombre countenance and high moral tone, as if to belie its own sensationalism. Furthermore, much was made at the time of the film's release of the (alleged) case of possession that had occurred in 1949 in Mount Rainier, Maryland, upon which Blatty's book was based. It had the desired effect. Upon release the film met with much misguided ballyhoo from religious leaders and society's self-proclaimed moral guardians; all of which, as well as boosting its box-

[8] Tom Milne (1974) '*The Exorcist*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 41, no. 483) page 71
[9] Friedkin's documentary sensibilities and predilection for location shooting had been honed and cemented as head of the documentary film unit of WGN Television, Chicago, where he'd gone to work after graduating from high school.

office take immeasurably, helped secure its place as the first horror 'event' movie. The success of the film drew the hitherto marginal horror genre into the mainstream, as well as shifting audience expectations in terms of content, form and aesthetic. Moreover, it seemed to indicate that from now on for a horror film to be successful it would have to aspire to the film's budget and profession gloss.

Seeking to account for the film's appeal, Phil Hardy highlights how *The Exorcist* caters to a diverse generational audience, exploiting parental anxieties even as it offers taboo-breaking shocks that will appeal to a younger audience:

> The film cunningly tweaked a sensitive contemporary nerve. There but for the grace of God, many a parent anxiously contemplating the mystery of precocious rebellion must have sighed as the 12-year-old child is possessed of a demon; and when that demon provokes the child to piss on the parental carpet, vomit green bile over a priest and masturbate violently with a crucifix, many a teenager must have applauded and envied the inventive daring. All this, religion and big-budget respectability too![10]

In addition, *The Exorcist* refocused horror narratives away from horror's long-cherished but increasingly tired-looking Gothic monsters (werewolves, mummies, vampires and mad scientists having been the mainstay of both Universal's horror cycle in the 1930s and '40s and Hammer's in the '50s, '60s and '70s) onto narratives of Satanism, Black Magic and demonic possession.

Predictably, many were to aspire to its international success. "We're talking about the movie business, after all, where everyone wants to be first to be second."[11] Typically, this meant purloining and repeating its plot, premeditated blasphemy and taboo-breaking set pieces in a succession of increasingly bizarre variations on a possessive theme. For example, *L'Anticristo* (*The Antichrist* or *The Tempter*, Alberto de Martino, 1974) is an Italian reworking of the material, showcasing levitation, animate furniture and pea soup projectile vomiting. *Abby* (William Girdler, 1974) is a blaxploitation variant, starring one-time *Blacula* (William Crane, 1972) William Marshall. Further examples of rip-offs from around the world are the Spanish films *La Endemoniada*

[10] Phil Hardy (ed.) (1985 / 1996) *The Aurum Film Encyclopedia: Horror* (London, Aurum Press) page 274

[11] Bruce Lanier Wright (1995) *Nightwalkers: Gothic Horror Movies - The Modern Era* (Dallas, Taylor Publishing) page 157

(*Demon Witch Child* or *The Possessed*, Amando de Ossoria, 1974) and *Exorcismo* (*Exorcism*, Juan Bosch, 1974), and the Brazilian *O Exorcismo Negro* (José Mojica Marins, 1974).

The European co-production *La Casa dell'Esorcismo* (*The House of Exorcism*, 'Mickey Lion', 1975) is in truth a truncated version of Mario Bava's lyrical *Lisa e il Diavolo* (1972) with additional and unrelated scenes in which Elke Sommer blasphemes, vomits up toads and is exorcised. Similarly, the Franco-Belgian *Exorcisme et Messes Noires* (*The Black Masses of Exorcism*, 1974), from the prolific Jess Franco, was later re-cut and re-issued with hardcore pornographic inserts as *Sexorcisme*.[12] The Italian films *L'Ossessa* (*The Sexorcist*, Mario Gariazzo, 1974) and *Un Urlo dalla Tenebre* (*Naked Exorcism* or *Return of the Exorcist*, Elo Pannaccio, 1976) are further sexploitation variations on the theme of exorcism.

Roman Polanski's bleak and cerebral *Rosemary's Baby*, released five years earlier, had proved a hard act to follow and difficult to imitate. However, in the wake of *The Exorcist* its themes of paranoia, alienation and, above all, diabolic impregnation were appropriated repeatedly by filmmakers hoping to enliven an already over-familiar possession sub-genre. The Italian *Chi sei?* (*Beyond the Door* or *The Devil Within Her*, Sonia Assonitis, 1974), a cynical and clumsy concoction of commercial elements, incorporates sexual politics purloined from *Rosemary's Baby* and the novelty of terrifying 'Vibrasound' (an acoustic gimmick reminiscent of Universal's 'Sensurround' process, as used in Mark Robson's *Earthquake*, 1974) to rekindle an *Exorcist*-inspired stew that features Juliet Mills as the pea soup-spewing possessee with the now obligatory knack of turning her head through 360 degrees.

American attempts to hitch a ride on the diabolical bandwagon include *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976) from Twentieth Century Fox, starring Gregory Peck, Lee Remick and David Warner, and Universal's *The Sentinel* (Michael Winner, 1976). This squalid tale from director Winner opens with a superfluous prologue set in northern Italy that is clearly imitative of *The Exorcist*'s Iraqi preamble, before switching to present-day Brooklyn where fashion model Christina Raines discovers

[12] The film would resurface twice more, each time re-cut and with new footage, as *La Sadique de Notre Dame* (*The Sadist of Notre Dame*, 1979) and *The Ripper of Notre Dame* (1981).

that her new apartment has been built over the gateway to hell.[13] Also starring Martin Balsam, Jose Ferrer, Ava Gardner and John Carradine as a mad-eyed priest, the film plumbs new depths of reactionary intolerance by casting real deformed and handicapped people as the 'legions of hell'. Predictably, Warner Bros sought to turn their original horror hit into a franchise with John Boorman's flawed but fascinating spiritual odyssey *Exorcist II: The Heretic* (1977), starring Linda Blair, Max Von Sydow, Richard Burton and Paul Henreid. Deliberately avoiding the lurid excesses of its predecessor, and in so doing disappointing audience expectations, the film was a box-office disaster. Ultimately, limited innovation and audience desensitisation to the profane atrocities on display ensured that the post-*Exorcist* possession cycle was as short-lived as it was prolific. Meanwhile, the commercial success of John Carpenter's micro-budget *Halloween* (1978) served to reject the religiosity, star names and high-dollar special effects of Hollywood's newfound mainstream horrors in favour of a tide of ideologically repressive contemporary serial killer/stalk-n-slash movies – *The Toolbox Murders* (Dennis Donnelly, 1978), *The Driller Killer* (Abel Ferrara, 1979), *Friday the 13th* (Sean S. Cunningham, 1980) and sequels – in which the villain's motivation owed less to the Devil than to psychological loose screws.

The relative belatedness of any British response to *The Exorcist* serves to highlight the failure of British filmmakers to recognise potentially profitable cinematic trends when they saw them, or perhaps reluctance to break with established generic formulas, or simply difficulty securing production finance. In truth, it was probably a combination of all three. Whatever the reason, up to the mid-1970s British horror cinema pretty much ignores international generic developments, and tries instead to repeat and replicate past glories within formal, aesthetic and ideological frameworks that had been established by Hammer's initial successes in the late 1950s, such as *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1957 and 1958 respectively).

The 'head in the sand' mentality that typified British horror moviemaking in the early 1970s is made most obvious by Tyburn Film Productions; a short-lived and threadbare production company (frequently, but erroneously, cited alongside Hammer, Amicus and Tigon as a major player in the genre) that entered the field at

[13] The film's narrative conceit was later parodied in *Ghostbusters* (Ivan Reitman, 1984).

the most inopportune moment with the psychological thriller *Persecution* (Don Chaffey, 1973) starring Lana Turner. Leon Hunt posits that Tyburn's follow-up features, the markedly wistful Gothic horrors *Legend of the Werewolf* and *The Ghoul* (both 1974), "constitute a kind of 'heritage' horror, blandly reworking 1960s Hammer narratives as little more than a longing for simpler generic terrain."[14] Both films, as well as being directed by genre regular Freddie Francis (whose son, Kevin Francis, ran the company), derive from John Elder scripts (the pseudonym of Hammer writer and producer Tony Hinds) and are thinly disguised re-workings of, respectively, Hammer's *The Curse of the Werewolf* (Terence Fisher, 1960) and *The Reptile* (John Gilling, 1966). *The Ghoul* (a title purloined from a 1933 Gaumont British vehicle for Boris Karloff) also features a derivative set piece slaughter based on *Psycho*'s famed shower scene, further emphasising the retrograde quality of Tyburn's output.

I Don't Want To Be Born (1975)

- *She believes her child is possessed.*
- *Possessed?*
- *By the Devil.*

I Don't Want to be Born is a stillborn monstrosity from the Rank Organisation, that tries to duplicate, in the manner of a Xerox copier, ideas, plot conceits and motifs from an array of recent international horror hits, including *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Exorcist* and *It's Alive* (Larry Cohen, 1973), as well as borrowing Hilary Mason from *Don't Look Now* (Nicolas Roeg, 1973). Indeed, the film's American advertising campaign openly expressed its debt to Polanski's psychological chiller with a poster tagline that warned, albeit somewhat vaguely: 'Not since "Rosemary's Baby"...!' In some territories the film was given the aptly plagiaristic moniker *Sharon's Baby*, despite featuring neither Sharon nor her babe. The movie is also known by a truly dizzying array of *noms de plume*; including the Dennis Wheatley-like *The Devil Within Her*, the curiously muted *The Baby* and the suitably lurid *It's Growing Inside Her*. Despite receiving a critical mauling upon its initial release – derided by the *Monthly Film Bulletin* as "A ludicrous attempt to cash in on the exorcism cult, set in a travelogue London and reducing the monster-baby theme dignified by *It's Alive* to

[14] Leon Hunt (1998) *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London, Routledge) pages 143-144

penny-dreadful histrionics."[15] – the film was theatrically reissued in 1982 to much the same response with the flaccid horror tag *The Monster*. By whichever name, this is an obscene Frankensteinian patchwork that, as well as pushing Rank's characteristic cultural conservatism to unpleasant misogynistic extremes, ultimately fails to cohere as a filmic entity in its own right.

Joan Collins stars as cabaret stripper Lucy Carlesi who, having spurned the groping advances of a dwarf called Hercules (played by one-time Oompa Loompa George Claydon), is cursed to bear a monstrous child – *"You will have a baby, a monster, an evil monster conceived in your womb, as big as I am small, and possessed by the Devil himself!"* This is no empty threat from a malcontent midget, but a powerful satanic invocation. Nine months later, Lucy gives birth to a big baby: 12lbs of mewling resentment with homicidal intentions. It isn't long before the tyke, christened Nicholas (old Nick?), starts displaying signs of extreme anti-social behaviour. Besides trashing his bedroom, Nicky is prone to spitting, biting (with toothless gums), dunking dead mice in cups of tea and sniggering malevolently. From the confines of his cot, the infant embarks upon a murderous reign of terror. He not only hangs his father (Ralph Bates) from a tree, decapitates his doctor (Donald Pleasence) with a shovel, stabs his mother to death with a scalpel and assaults a nun (Dame Eileen Atkins with an improbable Italianate accent) with a baby rattle, but also soils himself deliberately so as to be able to drown the babysitter while she bathes him in the tub (he fails at this attempt, but later drowns her in the duck pond). At this point, the child having not only slaughtered all those within easy reach of its crib, but also having displayed an unholy dread of religious practice and paraphernalia since birth, Nicky's aunt (a nun well-versed in Lucifer's wily ways) begins to suspect that there may be something amiss with the freshly-orphaned babe and elects to exorcise the infant. This concession to modern generic expectations proves to be a relatively simple prayer-reading procedure that, despite conjuring a cot-rocking gust of spectral wind, proves "about as exciting as a late-night prayer spot on TV."[16] At this point, back at the strip club, Hercules the improbably named person of restricted growth drops dead.

---

[15] Tom Milne (1975) '*I Don't Want to be Born*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 42, no. 498) pages 155-156
[16] ibid

Andrew Tudor's distinction between what he terms 'secure' and 'paranoid' horror is useful here.[17] According to Tudor's dichotomy, 'secure' horror fictions develop in a society with an entrenched and widely shared moral code with clear delineation between right and wrong and good and evil.

> Its function is the reassertion of moral coordinates by dramatising the defeat of some threat to the normative order ... The audience is expected to suffer fear and uncertainty before being offered the reassurance that the authorities are still capable of vanquishing disorder.[18]

'Paranoid' narratives, conversely, serve to question all the assumptions implicit in the secure paradigm: "faith in the efficacy and legitimacy of established social and intellectual authorities is undermined, leaving an audience, which is already uncertain about the appropriateness of its identifications, in a general state of doubt and unease."[19] The paranoid, nihilistic cynicism that Tudor posits was to become the dominant genre paradigm by the middle of the turbulent 1970s is typified by the influential *Night of the Living Dead*, in which the nominal 'hero' (Duane Jones) had escaped the zombie hordes only to be shot dead by his fellow humans.

Likewise, despite a manifest happy ending, William Friedkin's film of *The Exorcist* dramatises a minor victory for the forces of darkness, unlike William Peter Blatty's source novel in which evil had been resolutely vanquished. Although the demon Pazuzu is forced finally to relinquish its grip on the teenage Regan MacNeil, Friedkin makes clear that she was only ever bait with which to lure and destroy Father Kharris (at their first meeting the demon intones "*What an excellent day for an exorcism ... It would bring us together ... You and us.*") and to settle an old score with Father Merrin (flagged up by the lengthy Iraqi prologue). Pazuzu achieves both these goals. The same 'paranoid' questioning of the efficacy of the existing moral order, although expressed in a rather more self-conscious and smug manner, inflects the conclusion of *The Omen*, wherein the 'hero' (Gregory Peck) is shot dead by the police before he can destroy the (anti-establishment) Antichrist.

---

[17] Andrew Tudor (1989) *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford, Blackwell)
[18] Steve Chibnall (2002) 'A Heritage of Evil' pages 162-163
[19] ibid, page 163

On the other hand, *I Don't Want to be Born* exhibits unquestioning faith in the legitimacy and moral power of the established order, institutional religion and the eventual conformability of youth, and proffers a would-be neat conclusion. The ambiguity and 'paranoid' potential of its closing shot – that sees the police arrive at the Carlesi home only to find one angelic baby, three fresh corpses and a bloodstained nun with a lot of explaining to do – is undermined and rejected by Ron Grainer's upbeat musical accompaniment that serves to reassure the viewer, in accordance with Tudor's 'secure' model, that not only have society's spiritual and legal guardians successfully dispelled the child's revolutionary and antisocial convictions, but also that Sister Albana will probably not be serving an undeserved spell in chokey.

Stressing both the recurrent conservatism and thematic confusion of much of the post-*Exorcist* possession cycle, Phil Hardy indicates how:

> the ultimate horror of these exorcism pictures is that any deviation from a suffocating oppressive familial and moral order is presented as undiluted evil to be controlled with the most drastic of measures. In effect, a refusal to confirm to bigotry becomes the work of the devil.[20]

In accordance with Hardy's description, the core theme of *I Don't Want to be Born*, although tainted by an unresolved paradox befitting such a thematic hotchpotch as this, is regressively conservative. Lucy's 'punishment' comes, ostensibly, as a result of defending her womanly honour and rejecting Hercules' predatory sexual advances. However, the ensuing film contradicts this and makes clear that her 'crime' is to have harboured, and sought to satisfy, lustful desires. As the film's unwieldy moniker makes clear, little Nicky's atrocities are acts of revenge against those connected with his unsolicited birth. The reason? According to the film's patriarchal, anti-permissive stance – albeit one that frequently lapses to permit the viewer a glimpse of the very thrills its pretends to condemn – Lucy is an unsuitable mother: a sexually active ex-stripper who copulates with love 'em and leave 'em rogues the night before her wedding and is not entirely certain as to who the father of her child is.

[20] Phil Hardy (ed.) (1985 / 1996) *The Aurum Film Encyclopedia: Horror* pages 290-291

The film is structured around a succession of physical and psychological punishments inflicted upon Lucy, centring on the startlingly reactionary premise that sees the physical agony of childbirth as inevitable retribution for the pursuit of sexual gratification. Indeed, cementing this link in its opening shot, Lucy's excruciating labour is filmed in such a way and in such extreme close-up that initially she appears to be in the throes of sexual ecstasy. Only when successive medium shots reveal the maternity room locale is it revealed that she is in fact in labour. Furthermore, implicit throughout is the notion that the vagina serves as a portal to the realm of the demonic. This gynophobic premise recurs in *To the Devil a Daughter* during Catherine's lip-smacking orgasmic nightmare, in which the goblin-baby is seen to crawl up into her womb. Barely able to conceal their pregnancy-phobic terror, both films depict not the 'miracle' of childbirth, but an obscene biological atrocity. While *To the Devil a Daughter* showcases perverse gut-bursting births that anticipate the equally monstrous sequence in *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979), *I Don't Want to be Born* depicts the act of childbirth as an abusive ordeal that calls to mind some horrific mediaeval torture (as had Regan's distressing medical examinations in *The Exorcist*).

Such repellent associations as these disclose the unpalatable cultural conservatism common to many British horror texts. "Ever since the civil war, we [British] have been lumbered with an unresolved puritanical streak which plays havoc with our attitudes to things such as sex, food and children," opines Anne Billson, "But the horror genre has long provided a conduit through which our most unspeakable fears and desires can be expressed."[21] By such puritanical processing is *The Exorcist*'s theme of parental alarm at a child's sexual maturity transmogrified into *I Don't Want to be Born*'s extreme repugnance and fear of female sexuality. The film's director, Peter Sasdy, had earlier expressed comparable abhorrence in *Countess Dracula* (1970), which had recounted the nefarious activities of real-life seventeenth century 'vampire' Elizabeth Bathory, "a schizophrenogenic mother *par excellence*, finally turning on her own daughter for the blood that she needs to preserve her youth."[22] As depicted, Bathory's crime is as much vanity and the pursuit of sexual gratification – clearly an aberrant and unsuitable quest for an aging mother and widow – as it is mass slaughter. Indeed, her sanguinary atrocities are treated as peripheral by the film's

[21] Anne Billson, 'More is at stake than sheer terror' in *The Times* (13 August 1994) page 14
[22] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror* page 97

narrative, and are carried out either off-camera or with anaemic reserve atypical of Hammer's horrors.

At the heart of *The Exorcist* had been the theme of sexual awakening; dramatised as violent conflict between, on the one hand, the established forces of Christian restraint, and, on the other, youthful sexual exuberance awakened by an ancient Babylonian demon. "Pazazu is a pre-Christian demon, bringing with him the connotations of an ancient and archaic paganism, with all its supernatural barbarism and demands for human sacrifice."[23] The horror implicit in the depiction of such oppositional pre-Christian belief systems is the dread of wanton sexual expression. Comparable disquiet is evident amidst the agrarian paganism of Hammer's *The Witches* (Cyril Frankel, 1966), which culminates in an (admittedly coy) orgiastic ritual at which a young virgin is to be sacrificed and skinned.

Likewise, *The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973) depicts the lascivious abandon of the populace of Summerisle (couples rutting in the church yard) as an affront to Sergeant Howie's Christian self-discipline; and, prefiguring *The Exorcist, Blood on Satan's Claw* (Piers Haggard, 1971) features an ancient demon that, once exhumed from the soil, proceeds to awaken (dangerous, anti-authoritarian, evil) sexual longing amongst the village adolescents. The danger posed by dissolute youth to established Christian mores is most explicitly expressed in the scene in which the young coven leader and 'Lolita-from-Hell'[24] Angel Blake (played by oft-nude 1970s starlet Linda Hayden) removes her clothes and propositions the village priest for sex, later to accuse him of rape. Alas, compared with such tantalisingly subversive scenes as these, or indeed Regan's blasphemous masturbation, the mayhem *I Don't Want to be Born* has to offer seems extremely innocuous. A child's off-camera room-trashing tantrums or protestations at prayers being read somehow lack the lasting impact of levitation or the ability to speak in tongues.

Articulating the broader anti-permissive backlash prevalent throughout British society in the period, and indulging in the most reactionary representations of sexuality

[23] Tanya Krzywinska (2000) *A Skin for Dancing In: Possession, Witchcraft and Voodoo in Film* (Trowbridge, Flicks Books) page 36
[24] Leon Hunt (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK'

imaginable, *I Don't Want to be Born* acts to delineate women as either reproductive mothers, of whom its approves, or licentious whores (strippers and good-time girls on the Pill), whom it tolerates if only to gratify male sexual needs. Lucy's crime, however, is to transgress this divide. She is the 'whore mother' for whom sexual intercourse is not merely an act of procreation but a source of pleasure. In essence, Nicholas is a personification of Lucy's unpardonably active and ultimately self-destructive libido: a pleasure-seeking creature from the id. The 'devil' within her, referred to in one of the film's many alternative titles, is not the Devil of Judeo-Christian faith (itself a creature associated with indulgent and notably non-reproductive acts of fornication, including sodomy), but carnal desire unchecked by social mores. Unfortunately, the film acts to muddy its own ideational waters by disgorging unwieldy lumps of pseudo-Christian hogwash into this psychosexual paradigm, even if only at the most perfunctory level (celibate nuns are good, randy dwarves are evil). In the end, an asexual nun (adeptly sidestepping the film's reductive sexual divide by representing the rejection of sexual pleasure in favour of abstinence and the preaching of the virtues of Catholic procreation) curtails Lucy's reign of sexual terror by suppressing her libido-by-proxy with a surfeit of religious guilt during a muted exorcism that feels like little more than a concession to perceived audience expectations.

Despite patent attempts to contemporise its hoary horror tale in the manner of its commercial role models, with its present-day setting, up-tempo music score and graphic depictions of sex and nudity, the film's core dynamic is very conventional. Indeed, its overarching conservatism is markedly reminiscent of Hammer's similarly chauvinistic *Dracula Prince of Darkness* (Terence Fisher, 1965) wherein, reasserting the notion that female "sexual promiscuity is the first step towards greater evils,"[25] Dracula's bite turns Barbara Shelley's prudish English matron into a lascivious harlot who proceeds to let her hair down and to toy with lesbianism (advancing toward Susan Farmer intoning *"You don't need Charles..."*). Finally, in defence of the existing social order, in a scene that stresses the self-destructive nature of female sexual desire, she is destroyed and symbolically gang-raped by a band of stake/phallus-wielding monks. *The Creeping Flesh* (Freddie Francis, 1973) dramatises

[25] Dennis Wheatley (1953 / 1972) *To the Devil – A Daughter* (London, Hutchinson & Co) page 75

equally reactionary representations of sexuality with a tale that elides the concepts of evil, madness and female sexuality. After having been injected with a serum of pure evil, itself derived from a decidedly phallic demon's digit, virginal Lorna Heilbron starts frequenting low inns and dancing provocatively in a red dress.

Prefiguring the often pathologically anti-sex discourses of the stalk-n-slash sub-genre inaugurated and typified by *Halloween*, in which Jamie Lee Curtis' survival had been as much a reward for sexual abstinence as it had been the result of ingenuity or bravery on her part, anyone caught *in flagrante delicto* in *I Don't Want to be Born* is swiftly and ruthlessly punished. For example, Gino's murder follows on immediately from a sex scene montage that recalls *Don't Look Now* during which, with prurient hypocrisy, we get a good look at Joan's nakedness to the accompaniment of Ron Grainer's sexy sax score. Lucy's sexual fulfilment comes at a price, notably the agonising birth of a 12lb homicidal baby and the imminent disappearance of her husband. Her parasitic child – an intriguing narrative reversal of the consumptive mother of Sasdy's earlier *Countess Dracula* – ultimately rejects and destroys its maternal host by stabbing her through her nurturing breast. Significantly, Lucy is killed in the bedroom, the scene of the sexual 'crime'. Incidentally, she dies wearing a revealing silk nightgown of which the film obviously disapproves as inappropriate for a new mother. (Something in winceyette would perhaps have been more fitting?)

The film's innate fear of female sexual voraciousness is underlined by the alarming ease with which its male characters succumb to the destructive forces unleashed by Lucy's libidinal desire. Horror movie journeyman Ralph Bates is suitably effete as floppy-fringed Gino Carlesi, frequently to be found either in the feminised, emasculating domestic space or in the company of de-sexualised women, be they nuns, matronly housekeepers or prissy secretaries. Bates' intrinsic androgyny had been exploited previously to great success in *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (Roy Ward Baker, 1971), Hammer's quirky, gender-swapping reworking of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic. We accompany Gino, who is evidently not averse to a spot of traditional 'woman's work', on a lengthy shopping trip which serves no discernable narrative function but does enable Sasdy to pad the film with travelogue footage of Oxford Street, apparently in the hope of creating a sense of here-and-now relevance. Things degenerate further when, during a meaningless *Rosemary's Baby*-inspired

dream sequence, Lucy opens the door to find Ralph Bates looking wan in a nun's habit and wimple.

Mumbling, tea-sipping gynaecologist Dr Finch proves equally ineffectual and is soon bumped off by the lethal newborn; and Hercules, mocked by his own name, is hardly up to the menacing role ascribed to him. On several occasions Lucy peers into Nicky's crib only to find Hercules, dressed in the infant's yellow romper suit, leering up at her. Moreover, little Nicky is repeatedly heard to emit Hercules' sinister snigger as he stalks his adult prey. While clearly intended to reinforce the notion that Lucy has somehow been impregnated by proxy, invoking the recurrent and ever-powerful theme of demonic cuckoos depositing their progeny on unsuspecting hosts,[26] these would-be shocks are more amusing that terrifying and are hardly worthy of the musical crescendos that accompany them. Hercules, whose status as chief villain had been based solely on his physical abnormality, is finally destroyed in accordance with the film's wholly intolerant attitude. Indeed, for David Robinson, "The nastiest thing about it is the film's perpetuation of medieval superstitions about Little People."[27]

Tellingly, the only male protagonist to escape with his life is strip joint owner Tommy (John Steiner). Tommy is unquestionably the most immoral (*"Jesus, you're not suggesting the little bastard's mine?"*) and sexually active male in the film, and not only beds Lucy but also has her best mate Mandy (bikini-clad 'Lambs Navy Rum' pin-up Caroline Munro, whose voice is dubbed throughout). Tommy embodies the film's chauvinistic view that, while female infidelity is to be punished, sexually predatory males are to be applauded and rewarded with their lives. Conversely, less rapacious menfolk – the monogamous like Gino, the happily married like Dr Finch, and sexual failures like Hercules, whose propositions are rebuffed – all pay a heavy price. Gino is hanged from a tree and his body dropped down a manhole. Dr Finch, upon peering into the manhole, is decapitated (symbolically castrated) with a shovel before also falling into the gaping hole. The dangerous, consumptive qualities of the (wo)manhole are immediately apparent.

---

[26] As essayed in the films *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960) and *Children of the Damned* (Anton M. Leader, 1964), both from John Wyndham's novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957), *Rosemary's Baby*, *And Now the Screaming Starts* (Roy Ward Baker, 1973), *The Omen* and London Cannon Films' *The Godsend* (Gabrielle Beaumont, 1980).

[27] David Robinson, '*I Don't Want to be Born*' film review in *The Times* (30 May 1975) page 13

The twin threat to the existing patriarchal society posed by, on the one hand, sexually liberated, self-reliant womanhood and, on the other, ineffectual, enfeebled menfolk is also dramatised in London Cannon Films' *Lifeforce* (Tobe Hooper, 1985). This big-budget, mid-Atlantic, post-*Alien* invasion movie is noticeably indebted to Hammer horror, Nigel Kneale and Agatha Christie.[28] In the film, *man*kind is infected with a soul-sapping space sickness brought to Earth by a parasitic and predatory, but beautiful, female alien (gratuitously naked for much of the film) who then takes up residence in St Paul's Cathedral. Peter Wright has explained how the film presents "England threatened not by alien manifestation alone, but by the collapse of English reserve into unbridled carnality."[29] As with *I Don't Want to be Born*, the (implicitly desirable) pre-existing social order can only be re-established by eradicating the dual terrors of both a "sexually precocious female and an easily seduced, irrational male who, since his seduction, has lost his 'proper' masculine authority and indifference."[30] The film "climaxes with a plague ridden London infested with a mixture of disintegrating corpses and marauding vampires (an Aids parable this time, perhaps?)."[31]

Despite its near incomprehensible plot, courtesy of Stanley Price – co-author of the Hollywoodesque Roger Moore movies *Gold* (Peter Hunt, 1974) and *Shout at the Devil* (Peter Hunt, 1976) – from what is audaciously credited as an 'original' story from executive producer Nato de Angeles, *I Don't Want to be Born* director Peter Sasdy seeks once more to catalogue what David Pirie described as "the symbolic disintegration of the family,"[32] whereby the sins of the elder generation lead to the corruption of their children. The film most obviously calls to mind *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1969) from amongst Sasdy's canon. Here too children had been used as tools of moral retribution against unworthy parents. Christopher Lee's Count had

---

[28] In terms of ideas, both the film and its neo-existential source novel, Colin Wilson's *The Space Vampires* (1976), are reminiscent of Kneale's *Quatermass and the Pit*, written for BBC television in 1959 and filmed by Hammer in 1967, particularly the powerful notion that human culture, civilisation and development have been shaped by prehistoric alien visitation. Meanwhile, Colin Firth's trench coat wearing detective, the film's rambling 'whodunit' narrative structure of gradual revelation and its (literally 'hysterical') country house lunatic asylum interlude are redolent of Christie's milieu.
[29] Peter Wright (1999) 'The British post-*Alien* intrusion film' in I. Q. Hunter (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 147
[30] ibid, page 149
[31] David Robinson, '*Lifeforce*' film review in *The Times* (4 October 1985) page 13
[32] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror* page 97

served as a catalyst for youthful rebellion, inspiring the children to patricide and the rejection of Victorian hypocrisy and repression, and becoming the new 'authority' figure in the process: "the anti-father and anti-Christ, replacing the corruption and impotence of the old. Under his spell they are suddenly endowed with a vigorous and destructive life."[33]

In *Taste the Blood of Dracula* Sasdy had lent the Count's revolution-inducing agitation moral weight by showcasing first the brutality, tyranny and duplicity of the Victorian establishment; as personified by Hargood, an abusive drunk who purports to do 'charity work' in East End brothels. Via such narrative structuring Sasdy had invited audience sympathy for the oppressed youngsters, as well as casting Dracula as a symptom rather than a cause of society's ills. Patriarchal hypocrisy is also critiqued as corrupting in Sasdy's *Hands of the Ripper* (1971). Having witnessed her father's violence as a child, Jack the Ripper's daughter, Anna, finds that she is 'possessed' of his sanguinary mania. Sasdy again invites audience empathy and identification with the child's plight by employing camera positions that favour Anna's perspective. Indeed, she is presented as being every bit as much a victim as are those she kills; the nominal villains being Anna's infamous parent and her misguided psychoanalyst.

I Don't Want to be Born reverses this narrative structure and Lucy's 'punishment' is born immediately, suggesting that it is somehow justified and deserved. In this respect the film elaborates on conservative concerns previously essayed in Sasdy's *Nothing but the Night* (1972), "a bizarre little thriller about a scientific method of bestowing immortality on an elderly millionaire by grafting the nucleus of his personality on to the brain of a child, who is then liable to become a particularly cunning murderer."[34] The child's homicidal urges are presented as a direct consequence of the inadequacies and unsuitability of her mother (Diana Dors); an alcoholic prostitute, triple murderess and (lest we miss the point) ex-Broadmoor inmate whose soul can only finally be redeemed and purified by sacrificial burning at the stake. Dors gives an appropriately outré performance as the monstrous matriarch and, in contrast to Joan Collins' sympathetic portrayal of confusion and mounting hysteria, is more readily acceptable as the cause of her daughter's (psychological) malady. This preoccupation with the

[33] ibid, page 96
[34] Ronald Hayman, *'Nothing but the Night'* film review in *The Times* (12 January 1973) page 10

psychodynamic of familial relationships was by no means unique to Sasdy and, as we shall see, Peter Sykes' *To the Devil a Daughter* features a young girl similarly blighted by Satan-serving parental corruption.

I Don't Want to be Born singularly fails to cohere either thematically or stylistically, a consequence of rashly plagiarising from a number of cinematic role models that were themselves wildly different in tone, aesthetic and intent. Thus it tries to graft set piece slaughters onto a framework loosely modelled on that of *Rosemary's Baby*, which had deliberately eschewed gore in favour of the gradual revelation of the wildly abnormal beneath a surface of conventional banality. *The Exorcist*, on the other hand, had deliberately employed taboo-breaking obscenity and gore in the pursuit of a level of intensity and factuality that would differentiate it from the generic mass. Likewise, whereas *Rosemary's Baby* had abandoned religiosity in favour of discourses of paranoia and urban alienation, *The Exorcist* had invoked the good versus evil dichotomy of a mediaeval morality play and bejewelled itself in the trappings of Christianity, even if only "as profound as the religious conviction in a DeMille biblical epic."[35]

Keen to have its Christian wafer and to eat it, *I Don't Want to be Born* tries to weave a broadly demonological discourse (the curse it at least notionally satanic, the cure is Christian) within its self-consciously atheistic milieu, conceived to appear modern, contemporary and relevant. By so doing, the film effectively throws the demonic baby out with the Gothic bathwater, leaving an inadequately explained threat (is Nicky truly the Devil?) that, while perhaps acceptable in the sinister mythical realm of British horror's characteristic faux *mittel*-European 19th century milieu, simply feels preposterous amidst Sasdy's travelogue London.

Devoid of a distracting period locale, and the residual menace such a setting can conjure, the film's narrative contradictions and inadequacies seem even more apparent. For instance, the infant's resentment, explicitly expressed in the film's title, that inspires him to exact terrible revenge on those that instigated or aided his birth (mum, dad and Dr Finch) does not adequately explain either the need for an exorcism

[35] Phil Hardy (ed.) (1985 / 1996) *The Aurum Film Encyclopedia: Horror* page 274

or the murder of the nanny who played no part in his birth. Moreover, what has all this to do with the Devil, let alone a lustful and disgruntled dwarf? What would a strip club want with a dwarf anyway? Despite Hercules' Devil-invoking curse, there is little to suggest Satan's involvement, aside from little Nicky's extreme religio-phobia. Nicky's christening is a fraught affair and the screaming infant's tantrums prevent his admission to the Christian faith. It is a sequence that recalls Leon the lycanthrope's baptism in Hammer's *The Curse of the Werewolf*, during which the font water had boiled, as well as prefiguring Damien's reluctance to enter the House of God in *The Omen*. Nicholas is also upset by prayer-reading and nuns' habits ("*What is it, do my vestments frighten you?*"). However, such minor ecclesiastical irritations seem like nothing when compared with the acute blasphemy of *The Exorcist*, especially Regan's masturbatory cries of *"Let Jesus fuck you!"*

The film is also let down by the general shoddiness of its production. By emulating the narrative strategies and aesthetic gloss of such visually accomplished offerings as *Rosemary's Baby* and *The Exorcist*, rather than the more readily replicated sleazy sensibilities of the contemporary set *It's Alive* or *Night of the Living Dead*, the film invites artistic comparison. But, as a patently low-budget British film, *I Don't Want to be Born* struggles to match the high-dollar production values of its role models. Accordingly, *The Times* dismissed the film as "a very shabby spin-off on the demonic baby theme,"[36] and Leon Hunt posits that it is "scarcely able to compete with the apocalyptic grandeur of Hollywood demons and their offspring."[37] Bland photography from Sasdy regular Kenneth Talbot and an excess of poor quality post-synching serve to further emphasise the film's budgetary limitations and to deny it the realism and *Exorcist*-like authenticity is so desperately craves.

In accordance with its quasi-documentary aspirations, *The Exorcist* had made sparing use of music, reflecting that everyday reality is not played out to the accompaniment of a non-diegetic musical score. *Rosemary's Baby* had been equally prudent with Christopher Komeda's aptly melancholy score. *I Don't Want to be Born* does not exercise such melodious restraint. The usually reliable television composer Ron Grainer, creator of themes for the BBC sci-fi serial *Doctor Who* (1963-96) and the

[36] David Robinson, '*I Don't Want to be Born*' film review in *The Times* (30 May 1975) page 13
[37] Leon Hunt (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK' page 97

ITC adventures *The Prisoner* (1967) and *Man in a Suitcase* (1972-73), whom one can only assume was paid by the crotchet, overlays the movie with an omnipresent score of disco and lounge jazz compositions. Grainer makes prominent use of bongos and sub-blaxploitation guitar riffs in the pursuit of (swiftly dated) mid-'70s trendy 'nowness', and proffers overenthusiastic horror crescendos at consistently inappropriate moments.

Even the film's attempts to up the 'tits-n-ass ante' (common practice in 1970s British horror, where the boundaries between horror and sexploitation were becoming increasingly blurred,[38] and where a little nudity helped secure the X-certificate deemed crucial to luring audiences away from their TV sets) are fairly risible, as well as contradicting the film's avowed anti-permissive stance. The cunning strip club locale logically permits the exposure of much naked female flesh, but the sight of bikini-clad girls writhing with an overweight dwarf in top hat, white tie and tails is more tasteless than titillating. Likewise, a kinky whip-cracking routine proves somewhat less than arousing when backlighting and Sasdy's prurient close-ups reveal that the girl's bikini-line is in urgent need of a very thorough waxing.

While *I Don't Want to be Born* is unquestionably less accomplished than any of the films it tries to imitate, its shortcomings are most clearly exposed when compared with the following year's *The Omen*, of which it now appears like a cut-price copy. By mixing "the Antichrist theme of *Rosemary's Baby* with the Satanic tone of *The Exorcist*," argues Kim Newman, "*The Omen* is blockbuster B horror, with respectable stars (Gregory Peck, Lee Remick) and flamboyant death scenes ... set to Jerry Goldsmith's black mass."[39] *The Omen* was a success both commercially and critically

[38] Not only were directors such as Antony Balch, James Kenelm Clarke and José Larraz able to move freely between genres, but also their films are a meeting place of diverse generic conventions and clichés. Tony Balch was responsible for the bizarre portmanteau sex film *Secrets of Sex* (1969), which features linking scenes hosted by an ancient Egyptian mummy, and the impressive *Horror Hospital* (1973) featuring horror icon Michael Gough and British sexploitation star Robin Askwith. James Kenelm Clarke, who would later act as executive producer on Rank's remake of *The Thirty Nine Steps* (Don Sharp, 1978), directed three films featuring former Playboy Bunny and 1970s British sex starlet Fiona Richmond; the sex comedies *Let's Get Laid* (1977) and (the pseudo-autobiographical) *Hardcore* (1977), and the psychological thriller *Exposé* (1975). The latter was advertised with the provocative tagline 'Nothing, but nothing is left to the imagination...' and was later banned in the UK as a 'video nasty'. Spanish born Larraz followed the softcore sex thriller *Whirlpool* (1969), shot in Barcelona and London, with the sexually explicit British horror films *Symptoms* and *Vampyres* (both 1974) before returning to the continent and to sexploitation.

[39] Kim Newman (ed.) (1996) *The BFI Companion to Horror* (London, BFI) page 238

and firmly anchored movie horror in the Hollywood mainstream, subtly recasting *The Exorcist*'s challenging subversion as glossy, fundamentally cosy entertainment with a customarily cynical 1970s downbeat coda that feels less like a victory for the forces of chaos than a smug narrative twist.

Whereas *The Exorcist* had presented an affront to traditional middle-class family values with its intimate tale of adolescent rebellion (the radical power of which was not lost on those self-styled guardians of social morality whose apoplectic indignation helped ensure its box-office success), *The Omen* depersonalises and de-radicalises the threat, and in so doing strips away the psychosexual dynamic that had made *The Exorcist* so shocking. Damien Thorn is an anti-Establishment figure who threatens society's political hierarchy, in much the same way that in *The Medusa Touch* (Jack Gold, 1978) John Morlar's gift for catastrophe had threatened the entrenched pillars of British civil society: the judiciary, the monarchy, institutional religion and the public school system that continues to perpetuate the class system. As we shall see, Hammer's *To the Devil a Daughter* also depersonalises the danger by tapping into issues of socio-political domestic unrest and generational conflict in contemporary Britain, and by dramatising the anti-Establishment threat posed by foreigners, the inadequately socialised and all-too-readily corruptible British youth.

To the Devil a Daughter (1976)

> *- His ultimate purpose was to create an avatar, the personification of a god that would renew the vital spirit of the world.*
> *- You mean the personification of the Devil!*

Borrowing little more than its title from Dennis Wheatley's classic occult novel, *To the Devil a Daughter* is a British/West German co-production filmed at EMI's Elstree Studios. As was the case with *I Don't Want to be Born*, the film's attempts to mate the pregnancy-phobic fantasy of *Rosemary's Baby* with the taboo-breaking profanity and bleak po-faced tone of *The Exorcist* – as well as titillating 'nunsploitation' sensibilities cribbed from Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971) – has spawned an unwieldy monstrosity that, although in some ways analogous to the obscene homunculus bred by the Satanists in the movie, frequently borders on the

incomprehensible. Knowingly derivative, the film's main influences were even namechecked in its advertising campaign:

> The evil power of black magic has fascinated millions of cinema-goers. First... "*Rosemary's Baby*." Then... "*The Exorcist*." And now a motion picture that probes further into the mysteries of the occult than any has dared before.

As well as illustrating explicitly the transatlantic sensibilities that dominated the British horror genre in the immediate aftermath of the release of *The Exorcist*, the film's troubled production history – which I propose to consider in detail – highlights just how much the fiscal landscape of the British film industry had changed since the American withdrawal of the early 1970s.[40] The film is given extra significance as an example of the complex and cutthroat fiscal wrangling common in the industry in the period for being the last horror offering (and the penultimate film) from the once prolific Hammer Film Productions, indisputably the most successful British film production company of the post-war period.[41] For twenty years, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, Hammer was synonymous with savvy worldwide salesmanship and enviably close ties with the Hollywood majors, which enabled it to negotiate a lucrative niche for itself in the international movie marketplace.

In the early 1970s, the fledgling Charlemagne Productions, helmed by actor Christopher Lee and producer Anthony Nelson Keys, had optioned three occult novels by the British author Dennis Wheatley: *The Haunting of Toby Jugg* (1948), *To the Devil – A Daughter* (1953) and *The Satanist* (1960). Following he failure of its first feature, however, Rank's *Nothing but the Night* (Peter Sasdy, 1972) from the novel by John Blackburn, Charlemagne shut up shop. Christopher Lee, a great admirer of Wheatley's work, suggested to the new head of Hammer, Michael Carreras, that it should acquire the film rights from Charlemagne, as well as the services of Lee and Nelson Keys, in exchange for a percentage of the films' eventual

---

[40] Marjorie Bilbow used *To the Devil a Daughter* as the subject of her educative book *The Facts about a Feature Film: Featuring Hammer Films* (London, G Whizzard/André Deutsch, 1978), although why an X-rated horror film was considered an appropriate case-study with which to illustrate the basic principles of filmmaking to a juvenile audience remains unclear. Much better is Edward Buscombe's lucid account of *Making Legend of the Werewolf* (London, BFI, 1976).

[41] For further discussion see Gerry Coubro (1995) *Hammer and Horror* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/ Sheffield Hallam University)

box-office profits.[42] Carreras agreed, despite the fact that Hammer's previous Wheatley adaptations, *The Devil Rides Out* (Terence Fisher, 1967) and *The Lost Continent* (Michael Carreras, 1967),[43] had both been box-office failures, although the former had garnered much critical praise and the latter a cult following.

Although now largely forgotten, in the 1970s Dennis Wheatley was pre-eminent in the world of horror fiction. Moreover, thanks primarily to the successful 'Dennis Wheatley Library of the Occult' series published by Sphere Books throughout the decade, he was also a potent brand identity.[44] Wheatley's name would certainly have been considered an enticement to both audiences and financial backers. Indeed, Wheatley drew attention to the cachet of his name in a letter to Carreras in which he made clear his dissatisfaction with the film version of *To the Devil a Daughter*: "My name is of considerable value and I can see no reason why it should be abused."[45] Accordingly, on the original advertising artwork for the film, Wheatley's name appears prominently above its title. Conversely, Hammer's credit is barely noticeable, so great was its desire to distance itself from the familiar Gothic tradition so successfully exploited by, and so irrevocably associated with, the company. Even so, the *Monthly Film Bulletin* felt that the film was evidence that "Hammer is at last finding successful ways of reworking the Gothic idiom that is its stock in trade."[46]

As Rank had already passed on *To the Devil a Daughter* when offered it by Charlemagne, Carreras took the property to Nat Cohen, head of production at EMI. Keen to produce an *Exorcist*-type project, Cohen consented to cover the costs of pre-production. Denis Meikle maintains that the EMI deal was further elaborated to include production of a (later abandoned) series of dramas for television under the title of Wheatley's factual study of demonology *The Devil and all his Works*,

---

[42] As it turned out, Hammer could not raise finance for either *The Haunting of Toby Jugg* or *The Satanist*, and Tony Nelson Keys was soon considered too expensive and was replaced as producer of *To the Devil a Daughter* by Roy Skeggs before principal photography had commenced.
[43] From the novels *The Devil Rides Out* (1934) and *Uncharted Seas* (1938)
[44] The 'library' consisted of reissued horror classics each prefaced with an essay from Wheatley, and included such titles as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Elliot O'Donnell's *The Sorcery Club* (1912), Aleister Crowley's *Moonchild* (1929) and Guy Endore's *The Werewolf of Paris* (1934).
[45] Reproduced in Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes (1997) *The Hammer Story* (London, Titan) page 197
[46] Tony Rayns (1976) '*To the Devil a Daughter*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 43, no. 506) page 64

suggesting that, at this early stage, EMI had high hopes for the film.[47] In March 1974 John Peacock, a scriptwriter of limited experience who would later become a successful costume designer for film and television, was commissioned to write the screenplay. But Cohen disliked Peacock's script, and his initial enthusiasm began to wane appreciably. Meikle outlines how

> A start date of August 4 came and went, and with little progress to speak of, Michael [Carreras] began to get desperate. Memos to EMI urging action became more frequent and increasingly impersonal, and by October, Cohen had grudgingly consented to contribute 50 percent of the cost, provided that Hammer fund the other 50 percent. Since the coffers were now empty, this could only be done in conjunction with a co-producer, and finding one rested on the quality of the script.[48]

Exploitation specialists American International Pictures (AIP), with whom Hammer had co-produced *The Vampire Lovers* (Roy Ward Baker, 1970), were approached but declined, dismissing Peacock's script as in need of 'a tremendous amount of work.'[49] For this reason, Christopher Wicking was hired to redraft Peacock's 'confusing' treatment. Wicking seems like an eccentric choice to iron out Peacock's complexities in view of the fact that his own scripts are, to say the least, structurally daring, and make extensive use of flashbacks and temporal and spatial crosscutting.[50] Predictably, Wicking's rewrites served to add in as much confusion as they took out, and in so doing pushed the film ever further from its source text.

Meanwhile, Hammer's quest for a co-producer was proving fruitless. As noted previously, the 1970s was a period of retrenchment for the American studios, which now sought to cut overheads and to cut back on overseas productions, and to capitalise instead on the newfound success of innovative American movies in the vein of the seminal 'New Hollywood' picture *Easy Rider* (Dennis Hopper, 1969).

---

[47] See Denis Meikle (1996) *A History of Horrors: The Rise and Fall of the House of Hammer* (Maryland, Scarecrow Press Inc)
[48] ibid, page 277
[49] Quoted in Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes (1997) *The Hammer Story* page 166
[50] See *The Oblong Box* (Gordon Hessler, 1969), *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* (Seth Holt, 1971) and *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (Gordon Hessler, 1971). However, Wicking's greatest achievement is the schizophrenic and appropriately fractured *Scream and Scream Again* (Gordon Hessler, 1969); a consciously episodic movie whose disjointed, patchwork construction and incoherent paranoia complements ideally its tale of humanoid composites bent on surreptitious world domination. The film is based on the equally chaotic alien invasion novel *The Disorientated Man* (1967) by 'Peter Saxon', the house name used by Stephen Frances, Martin Thomas and Wilfred Glassford McNeilly.

Moreover, the worldwide success of *The Exorcist*, coupled with that of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and Universal's *Jaws* (Steven Spielberg, 1975), seemed to suggest that the US had rediscovered how to make horror movies and that the British horror specialists like Hammer, Amicus and Tigon were now surplus to requirements. Thus, whereas the Hollywood studios had backed virtually all of Hammer's previous horrors, of the ten Hammer films produced in 1971, all bar one, Warner Bros' *Dracula A.D. 1972* (Alan Gibson, 1972), were made with British money. Likewise, Universal, Columbia and Warner Bros, as well as minor players like Avco-Embassy, had all turned down the chance of co-producing *To the Devil a Daughter*.

Having exhausted America as a source of finance, and with Britain now a full member of the Common Market, Michael Carreras turned next to Europe. He eventually found a partner in Constantin-Film of Munich; but, beset by its own financial difficulties, Constantin almost immediately withdrew. It was replaced by the even more modest Berlin based Terra-Filmkunst GMBH. The long-sought co-production deal was signed finally on 16 June 1975, eleven months after principal photography was supposed to have begun, with Terra acquiring distribution rights to Germany, Austria and Switzerland. But the project was still in jeopardy. Hammer's agreement with EMI stated that if the film was not ready to commence shooting by 30 June 1975 not only would EMI's commitment be negated, but also all monies advanced up until that point would have to be repaid. In addition, the terms of EMI's co-operation were now markedly less favourable than had been the case when Michael's father, Sir James Carreras, had owned Hammer.[51] Hammer's share of the joint profit was to be much less than in past years, and half of its overhead was to be deferred. In short, Hammer stood to benefit to the tune of 17.5% of the gross (allowing for deductions, the percentages due to Christopher Lee and Dennis Wheatley, and the 5% earmarked to go straight to ICI's Pension Fund Securities to whom Hammer was in debt), and a further 10% of that was owed to Charlemagne's Anthony Nelson Keys.[52]

[51] Sir James Carreras and EMI Films' chairman and chief executive Lord Bernard Delfont were friends of long-standing, as well as being fellow members of the Variety Club.
[52] Denis Meikle (1996) *A History of Horrors*

Casting the film was proving equally problematic. While Christopher Lee remained in place as the villainous 'Father' Michael Rayner, his potential co-stars changed on an almost daily basis. With an English villain, EMI favoured casting an American hero to help secure distribution in the US. Those in the frame at various times included Michael Sarrazin, Cliff Robertson, Stacy Keach, Richard Dreyfuss, Peter Fonda, Beau Bridges and Orson Welles. Finally, with principally photography about to commence, in June 1975 Richard Widmark was signed to star as the Wheatley-like occult novelist John Verney; although at $130,000 his services had cost far more than Hammer had hoped to pay. Subsequent economies had to be made amongst the supporting cast. "In the process, Anthony Valentine substituted for David Warner and Michael Goodliffe did likewise for Jeremy Kemp – in both cases, literally days before *To the Devil – A Daughter* was due to go onto the floor."[53] The role of the young novitiate Catherine Beddows – who, in Wicking's reworking of Wheatley's novel, serves the same narrative function as that of Regan MacNeil in *The Exorcist* – went to Nastassja Kinski (although dubbed throughout with a curiously monotone voice), whose casting had been a stipulation of Terra who were grooming her for stardom in Germany (where the film was titled *Die Braut des Satans*).

The problem of finding a director acceptable to all parties in the production triumvirate proved equally knotty. *To the Devil a Daughter* was to be a most atypical horror from Hammer and, to quote Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes, "an unequivocal dismissal of all that had gone before."[54] Hammer veteran Terence Fisher, around whom the studio's distinctive good/evil dualism and cool visual style had been developed, was considered too intimately associated with the staid aesthetic the company now sought to break away from and was not asked to direct.[55] Others in the running at one point or other included Ken Hughes, Jack Gold, Douglas Hickox, Don Sharp and, most tantalizingly, Ken Russell. Eventually, and with obvious reluctance on EMI's part, in April 1975 the Australian Peter Sykes was signed to direct. Sykes had previously helmed *Demons of the Mind* (1971) for Hammer from a Chris Wicking script, as well as the Frankie Howard Gothic horror comedy *The House in Nightmare Park* (1973), and *Steptoe and Son Ride Again* (1973), another big-screen spin-off

[53] ibid
[54] Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes (1997) *The Hammer Story* page 167
[55] For further discussion of Fisher's aesthetic, see Wheeler Winston Dixon (1991) *Charm of Evil: The Life and Films of Terence Fisher* (New Jersey, Scarecrow Press)

from a small-screen sitcom. Sykes' innovative and modish use of off-kilter and low-angle shots imbues *To the Devil a Daughter* was an unsettling, avant-gardist quality that is consciously reminiscent of Friedkin's *Exorcist*; even if, according to Tony Rayns, it lapses occasionally "into outright cliché: in the risible succession of helicopter establishing shots, for instance, or the 'ritzy' overhead shots of occult rituals."[56] In addition, Sykes reveals a predilection for quirky, sometimes gimmicky set-ups that calls to mind the erratic visual style of horror and Hammer regular Freddie Francis (exemplified in *The Creeping Flesh* by an outlandish camera set-up that looks out from inside the monster's head, as if it were a hollow jack-o'-lantern).

However, the film's pretensions to the aesthetic and formal style of recent Hollywood successes go further still. The lustrous Eastmancolor cinematography that had epitomized classic Hammer (typified by the work of Jack Asher and Arthur Grant) is here replaced by naturalistic photography, courtesy of David Watkin, in emulation of the quasi-documentary look favoured by Polanski and Friedkin. Likewise, in place of a strident Gothic orchestral score from the likes of James Bernard, Harry Robinson or David Whitaker, the film features a '*musique concrete*' composition from Paul Glass that mixes screeching violin, discordant choral wailing and plinky-plonky piano to create the acoustic equivalent of having ones teeth drilled. The result is unsettling, although less memorable that Jerry Goldsmith's similarly satanic score for *The Omen*.

In emulation of the sombre tone of Hollywood's possession films, director Peter Sykes rejects the intentionally mischievous, camp sensibilities that had typified recent Hammer offerings, such as *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (Roy Ward Baker, 1971) and *Captain Kronos Vampire Hunter* (Brian Clemens, 1972). Unhappily, Sykes' earnest intentions are undermined somewhat by poor special effects (the goblin-baby glove puppet, from effects legend Les Bowie, is more cute than obscene) and such absurdities as why Verney needs a photograph to recognise Catherine at the airport (in a sequence designed ostensibly to enable product placements for Lufthansa and British Airways) when she is quite conspicuously dressed as a nun.

---

[56] Tony Rayns (1976) '*To the Devil a Daughter*' film review in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (vol. 43, no. 506) page 64

To further enhance its contemporary credentials, *To the Devil a Daughter* makes extensive use of St Katherine's Dock, a modern, cosmopolitan development that Sykes uses to evoke the same themes of urban alienation that had helped make *Rosemary's Baby* so compelling. For the most part, however, Sykes is content to pad his film with travelogue (aerial) footage of London landmarks and tourist attractions, including Tower Bridge and the Palace of Westminster, and imposing stately piles in the Home Counties. Similarly, the scenes shot at Lake Herrenchiemsee near Munich to satisfy co-production requirements are photographed as if for the West German Tourist Board. These are eminently exportable depictions of picturesque beauty spots, devoid of national specificity. Into this picture-postcard milieu the Devil's progeny are born, even if, as Leon Hunt suggests, "recession-hit 1970s Britain was looking so small that surely the Antichrist would have more important places to visit."[57]

Intriguingly, both British possession movies make less effective use of their native locales than is the case with the more overtly American *The Omen*, in which director Richard Donner had exploited both traditional Gothic situations (the windswept church yard in which Father Brennan is skewered by a weathervane) and the chilling potential of more modern locations (Damien's animal-worrying visit to London Zoo). Having realised what Jonathan Rigby calls "the amazing vitality, and elasticity of Gothic motifs,"[58] the American contemporary shockers, unlike their British imitators, had not abandoned but revised their Gothic themes. For instance, the Gothic haunted house motif serves as a fundamental signifier in *The Omen*, *Psycho* and *The Exorcist*. Thanks to such Gothic revisionism, these films create disquieting spaces in which rationality gives way gradually to illogicality as the malignant forces of evil materialize, and by so doing accrue significance. In contrast, both *To the Devil a Daughter* and *I Don't Want to be Born* reject what David Sanjek terms pejoratively the 'artificial horror' of Britain's Gothic tradition in their pursuit of relevance, modernism and what he calls the 'real horror' of the new American horror cinema.[59] In so doing, however, they sacrifice atmosphere for a dispiriting succession of knowingly blasphemous and lurid shocks.

---

[57] Leon Hunt (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK' page 97
[58] Jonathan Rigby (2000) *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* page 9
[59] David Sanjek (1994) 'Twilight of the Monsters: The English Horror Film 1968-1975' in Wheeler Winston Dixon (ed.) *Re-Viewing British Cinema: 1900-1992* (Albany, State University of New York Press) page 197

Peter Sykes, ignoring EMI's stipulation that he was not to tamper with the script, substantially rewrote *To the Devil a Daughter* during production with the help of producer Roy Skeggs and an uncredited Gerry Hughes. Indeed, when principle photography commenced on 1 September 1975 a suitable ending had yet to be written. Producer Roy Skeggs recalls:

> We just couldn't get the script right ... After each day's filming we would sit up until midnight, working on the next day's script. Richard Widmark would be given his script in make-up every morning – he called us Mickey Mouse Productions. I don't blame him in a way. In the second week of shooting he called me at 4 am one morning and told me he was getting the first flight to Los Angeles. I managed to get to him by 6 am, sat on the end of his bed and persuaded him to stay. He did the same the next week, and I went to him again. When it happened again I ignored him.[60]

Hammer's film elects to jettison much of Dennis Wheatley's tale of wicked Marquises and corrupt Canons dabbling in Satanism in the south of France. The tangential conceit of demonic homunculi and several character names (Verney, Fountain and de Grasse) are all that remain. In place of Wheatley's wicked Canon Copely-Syle is defrocked vicar Michael Rayner (Christopher Lee), whose villainy owes a clear debt of inspiration to the self-styled *'worst man in England'* Aleister Crowley.[61] Lee's performance is compelling and conveys the charisma of evil, and is arguably one of the highpoints of his prolific career. Despite Rayner's declaration that *"It is not heresy and I will not recant,"* Lee's portrayal suggests that the character is acutely aware of his blasphemy and that he delights in each new sacrilegious atrocity. According to Bruce Lanier Wright, "His Rayner is a ghastly parody of priestly piety; Lee's eyes gleam with affection and concern as he urges a mangled disciple to die."[62]

During a misty-filtered dream (or flashback) sequence in which Wicking and Sykes conspire to add a further layer of mystification to an already complex movie – presumably in the hope of replicating the way in which *Rosemary's Baby* had blurred reality and nightmare – we witness an explicit orgiastic ritual that calls to mind

[60] Roy Skeggs quoted in Marcus Hearn and Alan Barnes (1997) *The Hammer Story* page 167
[61] Crowley, an accomplished mountaineer, showman, drug addict, promiscuous bisexual, brilliant chess player, prolific writer and infamous occultist, had previously served as the inspiration for the characters of Hjalmar Poelzig in Edgar Ulmer's *The Black Cat* (1934), Dr. Julian Karswell in Jacques Tourneur's *Night of the Demon* (1957) and Mocata in Terence Fisher's film of Wheatley's *The Devil Rides Out.*
[62] Bruce Lanier Wright (1995) *Nightwalkers: Gothic Horror Movies* page 151

Crowley's brand of 'Sex Magick' as described in his novel *Moonchild* (1929). At this hedonistic rite, depicting the demon baby's conception, we see the goblin-child's mother, Margaret (who, so Sykes' cross-cutting would have us believe, is somehow also Catherine), impregnated by Father Michael (who is also a gold effigy of Astaroth), pointing to Oedipal sexual transgressions and hinting that Catherine possesses some kind of supernatural or empathetic connection with both the goblin-child and its mother. Such are the psychosexual imponderables at the heart of the movie. Reassuringly, however, the cries of *"For God's sake, what is going on?"* and *"I don't begin to understand this!"* heard throughout the film at least suggest that the viewer is not alone in his or her mystification.

As well as recasting the villain, in the movie the hero more closely resembles (an Americanised) Dennis Wheatley than the novel's Satanist-hunting secret agent, Lieutenant-Colonel William 'Conky Bill' Verney. Alas, Richard Widmark's one-note performance fails to articulate the character's supposed moral strength, religious conviction or alleged reserves of occult knowledge. The poor script, that repeatedly proffers purely physical responses to metaphysical terrors, admittedly does not help matters. For example, to free Catherine from Rayner's mind control Verney has only to punch her unconscious. Similarly, in the film's famously anti-climactic finale, Verney thwarts the demons of hell by lobbing a rock at Rayner's cranium.

The decision to switch the hero's nationality from British to American is both significant and revealing. As well as communicating the fundamental shifts in global power relations that had seen Britain's international clout greatly diminished since the publication of Wheatey's novel in 1953 (most explicitly by the Suez Crisis of October 1956), the switch is also indicative of a much broader cultural quest prevalent in '70s Britain to seek out 'external' and principally American solutions to post-Imperial Britain's indigenous problems – whether it be free-falling industrial productivity or unprecedented and seemingly unstoppable rises in crime (a rise of 172% between 1951 and 1971),[63] soon to be dramatised via media-aided moral panics over mugging

[63] Statistics quoted in Jock Young (1992) 'The Rising Demand for Law and Order and our Maginot Lines of Defence against Crime' in Nicholas Abercrombie and Alan Warde (eds.) *Social Change in Contemporary Britain* (Cambridge, Polity Press)

and football hooliganism.[64] The quest for external answers to Britain's long-term politico-economic problems is evidenced by such diverse cultural phenomena as the appropriation by Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives of the monetarist theories of the influential American economist and presidential policy advisor Milton Friedman and many of the social policies of Reaganite Republicanism, as well as the widespread acceptance amongst British film producers that the fabrication of purposely 'Americanised' movies would enable the industry to escape its perennial difficulties.

To the Devil a Daughter opens with the excommunication of heretical priest Michael Rayner. The use of an explanatory voice-over here, and later to introduce a flashback to Catherine's birth, points to post-production attempts to unravel Wicking's temporal jumps. Twenty years later, Rayner has become leader of The Children of Our Lord, a diabolical cult based in Germany. Stressing the film's debt to de Sade, Leon Hunt outlines how "Astaroth worship is resolutely phallic, and, as in de Sade, the defiance of nature happens at the expense of the female body."[65] The film reiterates the gynophobic fantasy expressed in *I Don't Want to be Born* that the gateway to hell is to be found between a woman's legs, and asserts that to create a personification of the Devil one must first find a pregnant disciple willing to forge a pact with Lucifer and so consign the soul of her unborn child into satanic servitude. The act of childbirth proves fatal for the chosen disciple, whose legs are bound together and whose baby is forced to claw its way out through her stomach wall in a kind of diabolical caesarean. The mother's blood is then used to baptise the infant. Eighteen years later, Catherine, the avatar-in-waiting, is to be re-baptised as Astaroth in the blood of a goblin-like baby that, although its origins are unclear, was also delivered in the aforementioned gut-bursting manner. As Catherine's birthday draws near, however, her father Henry Beddows (Denholm Elliot) recants and asks American author John Verney to save his daughter's soul.

Tanya Krzywinska argues that the violence against mother figures that is so explicitly expressed in *To the Devil a Daughter*, and is so central to *I Don't Want to be Born*, has two rather contradictory meanings:

---

[64] For further discussion, see Stuart Hall *et al.* (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London, Macmillan)
[65] Leon Hunt (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK' page 89

> the Satanists invert and corrupt the Christian ideal of nurturing motherhood, as well as tacitly expressing a generational disdain for overprotective mothering. This can be linked to the anti-parent trend in 1960s and 1970s popular culture, and, as in *Children of the Damned* (1964), seems to articulate a nascent fear for, and about, the young generation.[66]

The generational disquiet that Krzywinska discerns, which in allegorical form had been the menace of *The Exorcist*, is echoed in the Charles Manson-like teachings of Father Rayner, as recited by the young noviciate Catherine: *"The youth of the world has lost its way, it's in a vacuum. They need something to believe in, to follow. Something new and powerful!"* Such anxieties of youthful revolt and counter-cultural rebellion, although popularised by their expression in *The Exorcist*, had in fact been prevalent in British culture, and British horror cinema more specifically, long before Regan MacNeil had pissed on the lounge carpet. Stemming from a nascent fear that the future will be somehow worse and less secure (arguably endemic in the human condition, although undeniably more pronounced during periods of socio-cultural turbulence), children, perceived as the generational harbingers of that undesirable future, are viewed with caution and suspicion. Postulating that, on the whole, "British film culture never really got to grips with the 'youthquake' that swept through advanced industrial society in the late 1960s,"[67] Steve Chibnall argues that parental anxiety, and its associated discourse of generational conflict, was:

> displaced into the domain of allegory where it found its most expressive outlet in genre cinema. Thus one of the more marginal genres in British cinema, the horror film, became the most important site for the allegorical exploration of the struggle between the emergent discourses of radical change associated with youth culture and the beleaguered discourses of reaction associated with its parent culture.[68]

Accordingly, with reference to Piers Haggard's bucolic tale of witchcraft *Blood on Satan's Claw*, in his account of a century of English Gothic cinema Jonathan Rigby argues that:

> The youthful idealism of the 1960s 'alternative society' had come to a grotesque end with the Manson murders in August 1969 and, by recasting hirsute Svengali Charles Manson as 17th century sex kitten Angel Blake, the

[66] Tanya Krzywinska (2000) *A Skin for Dancing In* page 27
[67] Steve Chibnall (2002) 'A Heritage of Evil' page 158
[68] ibid, page 159

> film provided a blueprint for much 1970s horror, which would concentrate almost obsessively on the lethal potential of teenagers, children and even babies.[69]

Additionally, if one adopts a more economically determinist standpoint, it is possible to see how the prevalence of narratives of youthful rebellion also helped market these films to a contemporary horror audience whose demographic had changed and grown steadily younger, in accordance with cinematic trends that had seen the end of regular family audiences as a consequence of improved home entertainment.

Generational and counter-cultural conflict is also allegorised in the pseudo-spiritual paraphernalia employed by Rayner's cult; which mixes arcane occult iconography (pentagrams and other cabalistic symbols, the Grimoire of Astaroth and depictions of the Goat of Mendes) with sacrilegious inversions of Christian imagery, notably the legs-spread likeness of Astaroth on an inverted crucifix. The appropriation of Christian imagery and places of worship (the diabolical 'pact' is concealed in a church altar), the renegotiation and parody of theological concepts (Catherine's erotic nightmare, in which the devilish goblin enters her womb, suggests a perverse inversion of the birth of Christ and a less than Immaculate Conception) and the film's broader conflict between 'alternative' black magic and 'traditional' institutional religion parallel the wider cultural upheavals that shaped Britain in the 1970s. By cataloguing the cult's excesses and atrocities – in accordance with the Crowleyian edict of 'Do what thou wilt!' – *To the Devil a Daughter* uses possession as a trope for expressing fears about the corruption of the young and, argues Tanya Krzywinska, "it taps into the liberating and trangressive *frisson* that possession held for young audiences."[70]

With characteristic hypocrisy, the movie permits the viewer a glimpse of the sexually uninhibited, Epicurean occult world that it purports to castigate as indefensibly and ruinously obscene. John Verney appears as a belated 'Selsdon Man', armed with little more than conservative morality, patriarchal power and unquestioned Christian conviction, on a mission to stamp out indecency and insurrection in Western Europe. Lest we fail to appreciate whose side the film is on, the hedonism, permissiveness and

[69] Jonathan Rigby (2000) *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* page 169
[70] Tanya Krzywinska (2000) *A Skin for Dancing In* page 27

sexual liberation of The Children of Our Lord is depicted as ultimately self-destructive. Rayner's eventual off-camera destruction (made necessary when the production budget ran out) is at the hands of the very forces that he himself invokes, as was the case with Hercules in *I Don't Want to be Born*. When Verney, wielding his bloodstained flit rock (Satan's sacred stone), enters the satanic circle at the end of the film, he finds himself in a windswept psychedelic trip. Verney must steal the impressionable Catherine away from this scene of 1970s excess and the corrupting, sexualising influence of Father Rayner and his fellow perverts (*"Ninety-eight percent of so-called Satanists are nothing but pathetic freaks who get their kicks out of dancing naked in church yards and use the Devil as an excuse for getting some sex!"*). But Catherine's innocence has already been besmirched by nudity unbecoming of a nun and by lurid erotic nightmares in which the goblin-child burrows between her legs, during which Kinski indulges in much lip-smacking orgasmic gurning. Her final knowing smirk to camera indicates that Verney is too late, and foretells of more trouble to come (be it a currency crisis, an IMF loan or the Winter of Discontent). Just like the Biblical Eve and Regan MacNeil before her, having nibbled the forbidden fruit she now fancies a bigger portion.

To the Devil a Daughter differs from *The Exorcist* in that whereas Regan had been corrupted by a supernatural entity, signifying a slumbering libido awakened by puberty, the threat to Catherine is external and corporeal. Although both films dramatise the possession of a young girl by demonic forces, the threat in each case is subtly but significantly different. Whereas *The Exorcist* had explored familial politics, youthful rebellion and parental anxiety, its British imitator dramatises (and supports) attempts by society's moral and spiritual guardians to safeguard their young; or, more accurately, to safeguard themselves from those youthful elements of society all-too-easily corrupted by perverts and social misfits. In the end, the Establishment knows best. Indeed, the film's innate conservatism is one of the few things it shares with Wheatley's novel, which had explicitly stressed the anti-Establishment threat posed by practitioners of the Black Arts:

> the Devil was often referred to as the Lord of Misrule. The object of these high-up Satanists is to deliver the world up to him … they do everything they can to foment wars, class-hatred, strikes and famine, and to foster perversions, moral laxity and the taking of drugs. There is even reason to believe that they

> have been behind many of the political assassinations that have robbed the world of good rulers and honest statesmen, and naturally Communism has now become their most potent weapon.[71]

I Don't Want to be Born had similarly sought to personify the contaminating danger in the guise of a lascivious and wholly unsuitable mother and a physically 'abnormal' and amorous dwarf; the latter apparently destroyed by a surfeit of sexual desire while surrounded by disrobing cabaret girls. For all its overt, self-conscious formal and aesthetic modernism, *To the Devil a Daughter* employs a fairly traditional demonological discourse, dichotomised along time-honoured (Terence) Fisherian lines of carnal demarcation; all the while retaining a characteristic disdain for, and fear of, sexuality. "While Fisher's villains are rampantly sexual, and corrupt others by the exercise of that sexuality," argues Steve Chibnall, "his patriarchal heroes remain celibate as part of their defence against the power of evil."[72]

Fisher's is a polarised Weltanschauung redolent of the mediaeval morality plays, and is most explicitly expressed in *Dracula* (1958); in which the bookish, rationalist Dr Van Helsing thwarts the attempts of the urbane, licentious Count Dracula to dentally impregnate respectable, middle-class Victorian ladies. Fisher's interpretation of Wheatley's *The Devil Rides Out* had stressed the almost symbiotic relationship between Mocata's occult forces and the forces of light led by the Duc de Richleau. To quote Alan Eyles, the film "manages to convey a sense of constant cosmic imbalance, the flux of energies to which we are all vulnerable."[73] The same diametric opposition, though less adeptly expressed, characterises *To the Devil a Daughter*, with Widmark's celibate academic pitched against Lee's lustful vicar. In a wistful mood, Verney observes that Catherine reminds him of his estranged daughter, firmly establishing a paternal rather than sexual relationship between them. This is later dramatised when Rayner tries to breach the carnal dichotomy by tempting Verney with an arresting vision of Catherine naked (a photograph of which was reprinted as a titillating full page spread in the film's advertising press book). The scene, the cinema-going public's first glimpse of Miss Kinski's oft-exposed flesh, is made all the more striking when one considers that she was only 15 years-of-age at the time.

---

[71] Denis Wheatley (1953 / 1972) *To the Devil – A Daughter* page 74
[72] Steve Chibnall (2002) 'A Heritage of Evil' page 167
[73] Alan Eyles, Robert Adkinson and Nicholas Fry (1973 / 1994) *House of Hammer: The Complete Hammer Films Story* (London, Creation Books) page 115

The framework of binary oppositions around which these British possession movies are constructed (institutionalised Christianity versus radical occultism, blasphemy versus religiosity, rampant sexuality versus sexual morality and inhibition) is itself analogous to developments in Britain's socio-political sphere in the period: specifically the polarisation of political ideology and the fragmentation of the postwar centrist consensus following the repositioning of Thatcher's Conservative Party in the wake of Heath's chaotic hara-kiri administration and, later, Labour's relocation leftward under Michael Foot. Despite aping American texts, both *To the Devil a Daughter* and *I Don't Want to be Born* choose to marginalize the themes of familial disorder and dysfunctionality prevalent in US horror movies of the period (typified by *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), choosing instead to elaborate their occult narratives in unambiguously anti-social, counter-cultural terms as endangering Britain's established social institutions and her ruling elite. In *To the Devil a Daughter*, for example, lord of the manor Henry Beddows is made powerless and isolated within a protective magic pentacle.

All three films discussed above, *I Don't Want to be Born, To the Devil a Daughter* and *Lifeforce*, exhibit similarly complacent faith in the desirability and value of patriarchal, bourgeois society.[74] For example, thanks to Denholm Elliott's sympathetic performance and pre-existing persona, Henry Beddows appears merely misguided and weak, despite having indulged in morally degenerate bacchanalian orgies and having allowed his infant child to be corrupted by the Devil. Intriguingly, despite the fact that its closing scenes were shot at West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire, which had once belonged to Sir Francis Dashwood of the infamous eighteenth century Hellfire Club (itself synonymous with a debauched and corrupt aristocracy), *To the Devil a Daughter* makes nothing of this potentially fertile ideational link. It is also worth noting that all three films were the work of non-British directors: Peter Sasdy, Peter Sykes and Tobe Hooper being Hungarian, Australian and American respectively. The fact that all three did only moderate business at the British box-office, as well as calling into question the orthodox opinion than an

[74] For further discussion of *Lifeforce*, see Peter Wright's excellent analysis of the movie, 'The British post-*Alien* intrusion film' (1999), which also includes insightful accounts of the rather more modest but comparably sexually regressive British sci-fi/horror films *Inseminoid* (Norman J. Warren, 1980) and *Xtro* (Harry Bromley Davenport, 1982).

outsider's view facilitates more scathing, analytical representations of the host society, suggests that their reverential attitude towards the status quo failed to resonate with audiences in a period of union militancy, working class vociferousness and widespread socio-political disturbance.

Another striking facet of these British possession films is the manner in which the world is presented as being inherently menacing and predatory. The Britain they depict is one in which diabolical dangers lurk in every dank recess, and no one seems unduly surprised that strip show midgets and defrocked vicars possess potent black magic powers. Noticeably, both *I Don't Want to be Born* and *To the Devil a Daughter* seek to explain the inexplicable and rationalise the irrational, betraying both a critical misconception of the appeal of their American progenitors and a cultural need for revelation and reassurance. Whereas *The Exorcist* and *Rosemary's Baby* had showcased deliberately unmotivated and apparently random possessions, and had focused on the responses of those involved (whether to recruit an exorcist or simply learn to love one's diabolical offspring), their British counterparts go to extraordinary and preposterous lengths to account for the Devil's presence, either via the conjuring of a vengeful dwarf or by means of a bewildering succession of gooey arcane rituals. Significantly, both films fail in their respective quests for revelation and offer muted, ineffectual conclusions. Rayner and Verney's long-anticipated confrontation is woefully weak, and Sister Albana's exorcising is so improbably brief and effortless that one wonders why she didn't do it sooner and by so doing save several lives.

In conclusion, despite being shamelessly imitative of American forerunners and packaged for the international market, these British demon baby movies do indeed exhibit uniquely British characteristics and raise indigenous concerns. Their most explicit anxiety is disquiet over the fragility of Britain's established social order and the viability of the existing hegemonic consensus, which is presented as susceptible to even the caprices of irritable babies and sexy young nuns. Comparable unease is also evident with regard to the UK's uniquely suspicious attitude to Europe and in its almost pathological fear of losing sovereignty and identity as part of what was once called the Common Market. Such anxieties, although long held, were undoubtedly brought to the fore during the politically divisive 1975 referendum on whether Britain should withdraw her membership of the EEC. It is certainly conspicuous that in *To*

the Devil a Daughter Britain is once more imperilled by a dangerous force emanating from the continent of Europe. In light of Britain's enduring tendency to cling to its imperial and military past, particularly in moments of socio-cultural crisis, that the present problem should have originated in Germany (home to Father Michael's shameless, over-sexed cult) seems hardly surprising.

Paradoxically, despite being an Anglo-German co-production for the global market, *To the Devil a Daughter* replays the familiar wartime myths that Britons continue to find so comforting (defining who we as a unified nation are in relation to a monstrous aggressor) and that have underpinned so many of the films discussed in this thesis. The film is thus a meeting place of seemingly contradictory cultural aspirations, and is symptomatic of a lack of direction in 1970s Britain. On the one hand, there is the desire to modernise and to embrace internationalism (redolent of Harold Wilson's white hot technological revolution and Ted Heath's European dream) and, on the other, there is the inclination to take cover from contemporary turmoil behind nostalgic and nationalist myths of a happier past (pre-empting the 'little England' neo-conservatism of Thatcherism); in much the same way that *I Don't Want to Born* had tried to be both iconoclastic and contemporary even as it told a familiar and time-honoured anti-permissive tale. The next chapter looks at a body of films that took the opposite approach, and that sought to reinvigorate British horror's established Gothic formula by adding a psychoanalytic dimension of the kind then commonplace in America.

6.

Monsters and Mad Psychoanalysts: British Freudian Horror Films

> Psycho-analysis has little prospect of becoming liked or popular. It is not merely that much of what it has to say offends people's feelings. Almost as much difficulty is created by the fact that our science involves a number of hypotheses … which are bound to seem very strange to ordinary modes of thought and which fundamentally contradict current views.[1]
>
> Whether in pure, vulgarized or downright caricatured forms – from deconstruction to dirty jokes, from biography to Hollywood blockbusters – …[Freud's] work has permeated almost every aspect of modern culture.[2]

It does not seem unduly contentious to argue that psychoanalysis, both as a clinical practice and as a philosophy for comprehending human interaction and endeavour, has had a greater impact on, and been a more prominent feature of, American culture than has been the case in Britain. Despite Freud having chosen "lovely magnanimous England"[3] as his home upon leaving Vienna in 1938, it was in America that his theories were to take up residence, and to swiftly move beyond the clinical sphere into that of popular culture. In the 1940s the US military made extensive use of psychoanalysis as a means of explaining the hitherto inexplicable horrors of 'total war'. The atrocities of the Second World War had induced unprecedented levels of mental breakdown amongst American servicemen and women, the stress of combat having seemingly rekindled repressed, irrational and barbaric desires from childhood. Psychoanalytic theory also offered an explanation for the complicity of the German people in acts of outrageous barbarism under the Nazi regime. Later, in the 1950s, it was in the US that Freud's nephew Edward Bernays was to pioneer the use of analytic theory in the realm of public relations and advertising, stressing the pre-eminence of consumer *wants* over *needs* and spreading further the gospel of Freudianism.

---

[1] Sigmund Freud (1940 / 1991) 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis' in Anna Freud (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books) page 185

[2] Kevin Jackson, 'The A-Z of Sigmund Freud' in *The Independent* (9 May 2000)

[3] Sigmund Freud (1939 / 1990) 'Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays' in *The Origins of Religion* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 13, page 298

In the wake of widespread postwar disenchantment with the Marxist metanarrative of social collectivism, Freudian discourse with its exploration of the psychical apparatus of the individual rose to prominence and was soon to percolate throughout popular culture via such diverse avenues as the introspective psychologising of William Inge and Tennessee Williams, and the tragicomic angst of Woody Allen. Although there are examples of decidedly Freudian film-texts from the silent era – Victor Fleming's *When the Clouds Roll By* (1919) springs instantly to mind – Hollywood truly discovered Freud in the 1940s, from which point on the themes and clinical procedures of psychoanalysis were frequently to be fictionalised for the screen. Obvious examples are the films *Blind Alley* (Charles Vidor, 1939), *The Woman in the Window* (Fritz Lang, 1944), *The Spiral Staircase* (Robert Siodmak, 1946), *The Snake Pit* (Anatole Litvak, 1948) and, perhaps most famously, Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945). Kevin Jackson outlines how

> Hitchcock's films are a treasure trove of Freudian themes and motifs, and were influential purveyors of pop-Freudianism to the masses; the Oedipus complex in *Psycho*, frigidity and repressed memory in *Marnie*, psychoanalysis in *Spellbound* (fancy sets by Dali) and perversity *passim*.[4]

By the 1960s both 'Freudianism' (the more acceptable pop culture label for psychoanalysis) and its founding father had been widely embraced by America's collective bosom. In the process, Freud was recast as a loveable eccentric and scientific celebrity (as was also the case with Einstein) whose cuddly white beard made him appear like Santa Claus for the sexually repressed. In 1962 the 'biopic' *Freud* (John Huston) was released, with Montgomery Clift suitably whiskery in the title role. In the UK the film bore the suffix '*The Secret Passion*' which, as well as making it sound rather like a Barbara Cartland novel or nineteenth-century bodice-ripper, serves to highlight the enduring British perception of psychoanalysis as something that is both furtive and shameful. Whereas Huston's film had been a largely faithful rendition of Freud's early researches, popular culture's fictionalisation of the man and his therapeutic theories had progressed to such an extent by the 1970s that Freud was soon to be found curing Sherlock Holmes of paranoid delusions in

[4] Kevin Jackson, 'The A-Z of Sigmund Freud' in *The Independent* (9 May 2002)

Nicholas Meyer's *The Seven Per Cent Solution* (1975, filmed by Herbert Ross in 1976 with Alan Arkin as Freud).

However, unlike the situation expounded in this admittedly crude thumbnail sketch, Britain has for the most part resisted the charms of psychoanalysis; the call to air ones desires and purge ones emotions seemingly at odds with the stoicism and emotional restraint valorised throughout British culture as a desirable facet of the national character. *The Seventh Veil* (Compton Bennett, 1946) is a prominent and accomplished exception, albeit one that owes a clear debt of inspiration to the previous year's *Spellbound*, in which psychoanalyst Herbert Lom lifts the veil of Ann Todd's amnesia to the accompaniment of a piano concerto. Despite the success and popularity of this particular film (number one at the British box-office in 1945), in Britain psychoanalysis remains chiefly a therapeutic and academic concern, and one that even now rarely encroaches on popular cultural territory. The analyst remains primarily an American cultural character, as seen in such mainstream US TV fodder as *Frasier, Ally McBeal* and *The Sopranos*.

It was not until the late 1960s that psychoanalysis was to secure an effective cultural foothold in Britain, amidst the broader post-swinging pursuit of answers to seemingly endemic and intractable social problems, and a burgeoning cult of individualism that would soon find political expression in the New Right governments of Thatcher and (to a lesser extent) Heath. Discussing Britain in the 1970s, James Donald discerns a desire to see things differently and to pose cultural and social questions in new ways:

> This impulse clearly lay behind such projects as Juliet Mitchell's heretical rehabilitation, or reclamation, of Freud in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, of the journal *Screen's* attempts to establish film theory in Britain with its heady cocktail of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusserian Marxism, radical semiotics and a Brechtian aesthetic.[5]

This same impulse also brought about a vogue for self-help literature, with such pop psychology bestsellers as Eric Berne's *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relationships* (published in the US in 1964, and in the UK in 1966) bringing academic psychology to the masses on both sides of the Atlantic. Berne's theory of

[5] James Donald (1991) 'On the Threshold: Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies' in James Donald (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan) page 2

'transactional analysis' is surely one of the most accessible theories of modern psychology, and uses human encounters ('transactions') as its unit of analysis. Moreover, it is the very epitome of self-help; postulating that, by simply learning the 'games' that people play (ego states, each with defining linguistic and paralinguistic features, common to us all) and by varying ones response accordingly, one can alleviate ones own psychological issues and achieve personal psychical development.[6] By thus asserting that any neurosis is readily curable, it is also a remarkably comforting theory, as articulated in the title of Thomas Anthony Harris' bestseller *I'm OK, You're OK: A Practical Guide to Transactional Analysis* (published in the US in 1969, and in the UK in 1970). Its message of reassurance certainly seems to have resonated with the populace of crisis-hit 1970s Britain, and the book has now sold in excess of 10 million copies.

The outcome of these academic and popular encounters with Freudianism, and psychiatry more generally, was that psychoanalysis moved finally beyond being a marginal psychotherapeutic practice viewed with bewilderment and suspicion by many (if not most), to being a readily identifiable cultural property whose mysteries and practices (although bowdlerised) were now to be dramatised as entertainment. Correspondingly, in the early 1970s the tenets and procedures of psychoanalysis came to be incorporated into a number of British horror films. Complex neuroses and their concomitant psychoanalytic revelations underpin such contemporary psycho-thrillers as Peter Collinson's *Straight on till Morning* (1972) and *The Spiral Staircase* (1975), and rather more explicitly in the films *Incense for the Damned* (Robert Hartford-Davis, 1970) and *Night Hair Child* (James Kelly, 1972). Even more striking are the period horrors *I, Monster* (Stephen Weeks, 1970), *Demons of the Mind* (Peter Sykes,

[6] Eric Berne identified three alter ego states, later elaborated by Thomas Anthony Harris, archetypal characters that shape the way we interact with each other: the Parent, our ingrained voice of authority, the Child, our emotional response, and the Adult, our voice of reason and rationality. Their debt to Freud's conception of the ego, the id and the super-ego is instantly apparent (see Sigmund Freud (1923 / 1991) 'The Ego and the Id' in *On Metapsychology* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 11). Berne and Harris elaborate how each ego state has associated attitudes and verbal phraseology (the Parent will use judgemental words, the Child will use superlatives and the Adult will use comparative expressions) and explain how best to identify them. The key to effective and rewarding communication or transactions, they argue, is to ensure that one's response accords with that of the stimulus. For instance, if the stimulus is Parent to Child, the response must be Child to Parent or the transaction will be 'crossed'. For a balanced approach to life, Adult to Adult transactions are recommended. See Eric Berne (1964 / 1966) *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relations* (London, Penguin) and Thomas Anthony Harris (1969 / 1995) *I'm OK, You're OK: A Practical Guide to Transactional Analysis* (London, Arrow).

1971) and *Hands of the Ripper* (Peter Sasdy, 1971) that incorporate the therapeutic methods of psychoanalytic enquiry within the generic conventions of the established British Gothic horror canon.

"The fantastic is a privileged terrain since the spectacular elements of the story serve all the better to represent this other spectacle of the fantastic that is the cinema itself,"[7] opines Raymond Bellour. And yet, despite broad acceptance that horror movies offer fertile ground for psychoanalytic archaeology, and such research having proved so fruitful in the contexts of American and European horror, British horror cinema has been consistently overlooked analytically.[8] Indeed, Bellour's analysis of *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957) is a rare example of psychoanalytic attention having been focused on a British horror text, although its selection owes more to auteurist appreciation of its director than to any desire to correct the oversight.[9]

In this chapter I examine the exactness with which psychoanalytic therapy is depicted onscreen in the films cited above, or how it is re-imagined to better suit the conventions and demands of the cinematic medium. In addition, rather than invoking psychoanalytic discourse to construct a metapsychology of the cinema itself – as was expounded in the articles and editorials of both the influential French film journal *Cahiers du Cinema* and the British journal *Screen* throughout the 1970s – I make use of psychoanalytic thought as a means of interpretation. That is, to dissect film-texts psychoanalytically by invoking the very same analytic concepts (castration, repression, unconscious revulsion and desire) that they themselves employ at the level of narrative. Elizabeth Cowie explains how this approach is made possible, "despite the absence of any equivalent to the unconscious of the patient in analysis and which,

---

[7] Raymond Bellour (1990) 'Believing in the Cinema' in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 98

[8] Unassuming lowbrow horror movies aimed at the mass market would seem to be an obvious cinematic extension of Freud's suggestion that, when considering the psychological aspects of the creative process, we should "choose not the writers most highly esteemed by the critics, but the less pretentious authors of novels, romances and short stories, who nevertheless have the widest and most eager circle of readers of both sexes." (1908 / 1990) 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14, page 137

[9] The continuing neglect of these films is itself analogous to the cavalier and irregular manner in which they were originally distributed. Both *Demons of the Mind* and *Hands of the Ripper*, arguably two of Hammer's finest films of the 1970s, slipped out finally as second features to the trashy *Tower of Evil* (Jim O'Connolly, 1972) and Hammer's own *Twins of Evil* (John Hough, 1971) respectively. Similarly, *I, Monster, Night Hair Child* and *Incense for the Damned* each received only limited releases both in the UK and, critically, in the US.

in analysis, provides the resistance to interpretation which also confirms the interpretation, because the elements in the film act as signifiers."[10]

In place of exposing the neuroses of a human patient, this approach enables one to perceive the production of meaning in the film-text itself. As a result, these film-texts come to be seen as cinematic dreams, to be unpicked and unpacked in the pursuit of their latent meaning. As was the case with Freud's study of Jensen's *Gradiva* (1903), psychoanalytic tools are applied to "the question of the class of dreams that have never been dreamt at all – dreams created by imaginative writers;"[11] or, in our case, those enacted by invented characters in the course of a film-text.

Dr Freud's House of Horrors

For critic and scholar David Pirie, writing in 1973, British horror's newfound flirtation with Freudianism was to be deplored and disparaged as "half-understood experimentation" on the part of young British filmmakers new to the genre, tiresomely aping "the overtly Freudian and surrealist intellectual quality of the French approach to horror, without understanding the essential historical value of their own tradition."[12] While I consider Pirie's dismissal to be unfairly harsh, he is right to highlight how the psychological dimension evidenced in these films had up till then been atypical of British horror cinema. While *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) had popularised psychoanalytic terror in the US, the British imitations that followed had, for the most part, seemed content to retain the slayings while excising the psychological explanation. For example, the British *The Psychopath* (Freddie Francis, 1966), from a script by *Psycho* author Robert Bloch, was subjected to post-production tampering that removed much of the film's psychological explanation in the name of dramatic tempo, rendering it virtually incomprehensible in the process. Similarly, despite having been dubbed 'mini-Hitchcocks' by studio chairman Sir James Carreras, Hammer's *Maniac* (Michael Carreras, 1963), *Paranoiac* (Freddie Francis, 1964) and *Hysteria* (Freddie Francis, 1965) more closely recall the torturously

[10] Elizabeth Cowie (1991) '*Underworld USA*: Psychoanalysis and Film Theory in the 1980s' in James Donald (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan) page 107
[11] Sigmund Freud (1907 / 1990) 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14, page 33
[12] David Pirie (1973) *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (London, Gordon Fraser) page 165

complex plotting of Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's *Les Diaboloques* (Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1954) than they do Hitchcock's cod-Freudian tale of Oedipal identification. The same is true of the late 1970s shockers *Killer's Moon* (Alan Birkinshaw, 1978) and *Schizo* (Pete Walker, 1976) – whose advertising tagline, "Schizophrenia... when the left had doesn't know who the right hand is killing!!" caused considerable outrage amongst mental health campaigners – which use mental illness and the phraseology of psychiatry simply to ginger-up old-fashioned 'monster on the loose' shockers.

One is thus forced to ask why a medical procedure still somewhat uncommon, mysterious and stigmatised in Britain, came suddenly to be seen as suitable narrative fodder for horror films? The answer almost certainly lies with the need for generic diversification in a market increasingly saturated with horror films; as is inferred in these recollections from horror director Norman J. Warren, whose films include *Prey* (1977) and *Inseminoid* (1980).

> The 1970s were a wonderful time for British horror at the cinema, ... you would find that new horror films were opening at cinemas across the country almost every month, sometimes as many as two or three in a week.[13]

The use of psychoanalysis and its concomitant 'demons of the mind' seemed to offer a hitherto untried means of reinvigorating an overcrowded genre, and of escaping the tiresome regurgitation of an overfamiliar cast of ideas, themes and monsters. Moreover, Britain's psychoanalytic horrors were undeniably inspired, at least in part, by the commercial and critical success of similar American fare. The manner in which psychoanalytic discourse and procedure is incorporated into the period settings of the early 1970s British Gothic horror films *I, Monster, Demons of the Mind* and *Hands of the Ripper* is highly reminiscent of the series of Edgar Allan Poe-inspired ruminations on guilt, incest and catatonia directed by Roger Corman for American International Pictures throughout the 1960s and beginning with (*The Fall of the*) *House of Usher* (1960). However, British horror's sudden appropriation of Freudianism was not solely indebted to American produced texts, but also to the recent success in the crucial American marketplace of international horrors with a pronounced psychological

[13] Norman J. Warren (2001) 'Foreward' in Harvey Fenton and David Flint (eds.) *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s* (Guildford, Fab Press) page 6

dimension; such as Roman Polanski's disturbing trio of *Repulsion* (1965), *Cul-de-Sac* (1966) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Although both *Repulsion* and *Cul-de-Sac* were funded and produced in the UK, by focusing on sexual repression, paranoia and mental degeneration, they are both thematically and stylistically very different from what was typical of British horror at the time.

In response to Pirie's assertion that British horror's dalliance with Freudianism was both ungainly and inauthentic, one is forced to highlight how each of these films exploit indigenous popular texts, traditions and cultural signifiers. They do not invoke psychoanalytic thought arbitrarily, but choose to psychologise in apt temporal, thematic and narrative settings. Certainly none of the three historical horrors discussed herein can be said to have been indiscriminately located in period. Rather, they use their temporal and geographical location (Victorian/Edwardian England) to exploit audience preconceptions of the standards and mores of their chosen historical milieu (reserve, restraint and repression) to construct meaning and add resonance to the themes explored within the text. Moreover, the apparent 'distance' of the setting permits the safe expression of anxieties that are analogous to contemporary concerns. As characters forged in an age of social turmoil and moral retrenchment, both Mr Hyde and Jack the Ripper are cultural signifiers ideally suited to the socio-cultural turbulence of 1970s Britain, and it comes as no great surprise that both figures reappear so frequently throughout the decade.[14] Accordingly, stressing the connections between the transformation of British society in the late nineteenth-century and in the 1970s, Denis Meikle opines that "The battle of Red Lion Square on 15 June 1974, in which protesters were bludgeoned by mounted policemen, held echoes of the Trafalgar Square riot on 'Bloody Sunday', 13 November 1888."[15] More prosaically, in its depiction of Dr Marlowe's intravenous experimentation, *I, Monster* parallels modern drug culture and its negative impact on rates of crime.

---

[14] See not only *I, Monster* and *Hands of the Ripper*, but also *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (Roy Ward Baker, 1971), *The Ruling Class* (Peter Medak, 1972), 'The Gatecrasher' episode of *From Beyond the Grave* (Kevin Connor, 1973), *Murder by Decree* (Bob Clark, 1978) and the bizarre BBC docudrama *Jack the Ripper* (1973) in which PC's Barlow and Watt from *Z Cars* try to solve the 85-year-old mystery.

[15] Denis Meikle (2002) *Jack the Ripper: The Murders and the Movies* (Richmond, Reynolds & Hearn Ltd) page 130

On the subject of the cinematic use of psychoanalytic therapy, Janet Bergstrom suggests that we use the broader term 'psychology' in place of 'psychoanalysis' when discussing its depiction onscreen; because "the representation of psychoanalysis, even when named, is rarely, if ever, consistent with psychoanalytic theory."[16] For example, in *I, Monster*, Stephen Weeks' Freudian re-imagining of Jekyll and Hyde, analyst Dr Marlowe, seemingly dissatisfied with the slow rate of progress afforded by psychoanalytic free association, elects to expedite matters via a most unFreudian concoction of serums and potions administered intravenously to break down the barriers of the unconscious. Similarly, Dr Pritchard's therapeutic procedures in *Hands of the Ripper* more accurately call to mind Freud's early collaborations with Professor Charcot in the area of hypnotherapy than they do accepted psychoanalytic practice. The film also makes use of trance-inducing twinkling lights that seem more akin to theatrical Mesmerism. Dr Falkenberg's apparatus and methods are comparably Mesmeric in *Demons of the Mind* and, although employing unmistakeably Freudian concepts, are based on a spurious (and distinctly Jedi) principle that *"assumes the existence of a universal field, a force uniting all living things which this magnetic apparatus can harness to bring your innermost secrets to the surface, make them comprehensible, allow us to act upon them."*

"Nothing is in fact less cinematographic, because nothing is less visual, nor less susceptible to providing a material for a dramatic scene," argues Alain de Mijolla, writing of psychoanalytic technique: "Film directors have made no mistakes about this, and one cannot reproach them for having been more interested in Freud, the pupil of Charcot, than in Freud, the psychoanalyst."[17] The immediacy of hypnosis – the prompt lapse into sleep, the instantaneous recall of trauma, the awakening by the clicking of fingers, the cathartic release, the cure – has thus superseded the laborious, methodical psychological archaeology of actual analytic therapy; "the fumbling misunderstandings; the drawn-out silences; the sheer, staring-at-the-wall nothingness,"[18] described by Ryan Gilbey. However, despite the crudity and inaccuracy that has so often characterised the way in which psychoanalytic treatment

[16] Janet Bergstrom (1990) 'Psychological Explanation in the Films of Lang and Pabst' in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 164
[17] Alain de Mijolla (1993) 'Freud and the Psychoanalytic Situation on the Screen', paper delivered at 'Cinema and Psychoanalysis: Parallel Histories' conference organised by Critical Studies and the Human Sciences (UCLA), Los Angeles, 11-13 November 1993
[18] Ryan Gilbey, 'Psychiatrists on the Casting Couch' in *The Independent* (22 February 2002)

has been depicted onscreen, as Freud himself was to concede, "the poetic treatment of a psychiatric theme can turn out to be correct without any sacrifice of its beauty."[19] Whatever their respective dramatic virtues or shortcomings, the films discussed herein generally conform to his view, and serve as largely authentic enactments of the Oedipal conflicts and psychical processes discerned by Freud. Let us now explore each film in turn in rather more detail.

I, Monster (1970)

> *It's bad enough you practicing the ideas of this Dr Freud of Vienna, but* your *ideas they're even more dangerous!*[20]

I, Monster, from 22-year-old first time director Stephen Weeks, exploits British horror's literary heritage and presents an explicitly psychoanalytic interpretation of Robert Louis Stevenson's masterful and proto-Freudian (with its exploration of a double consciousness and divided self) Gothic novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).[21] Curiously, seemingly oblivious to the cultural cachet of its source text, producer Milton Subotsky's script for this otherwise strikingly faithful adaptation alters the names of the titular characters from Jekyll and Hyde to Marlowe and Blake.[22]

While his name may have changed, Jekyll's malady remains the same, namely his intermittent transformation into the bestial Mr Blake (née Hyde), an ineluctable 'return of the repressed' here openly expressed as an unrestrained creature from the primitive id, wont to give way *" to every blind impulse, every repressed desire, every secret wish."* Mining Britain's literary vein still further, the film borrows notions

---

[19] Sigmund Freud (1907 / 1990) 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' page 69

[20] Dr Lanyon (Richard Hurndall) warns experimental psychiatrist Dr Marlowe (Christopher Lee) of the risks of psychoanalytic inquiry in *I, Monster*.

[21] In the spirit of generic innovation, *I, Monster* was shot (but not released) in a flawed 3D process 'invented' by its producer Milton Subotsky. To achieve the effect of great depth, the viewer would have been required to wear sunglasses with one lens removed, thereby retarding the vision in one eye. But the effect, as well as being negligible, only worked for left-to-right movement. Christopher Lee remembers: "There was never any such thing as a static shot. And even in a close-up you had to move your head slightly, which became absurd. We got to the point where the camera started on two people who weren't talking while you heard somebody else talking off screen, and by the time the camera tracked onto the person who'd been talking off-screen, he'd be finished talking, and the others were now talking off-screen." Quoted in Alan Bryce (ed.) (2000) *Amicus: The Studio that Dripped Blood* (Liskeard, Stray Cat Publishing) page 75

[22] Likewise, the film is credited simply as being 'based on a story by Robert Louis Stevenson'.

from Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) – in which the portrait had served as an external conscience, corrupted progressively by Gray's immorality – and Blake's features grow ever more grotesque as his sins accrue: "*The face of evil is ugly to look upon. As the pleasures increase, the face becomes uglier.*"

> This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centred on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another; relentless like a man of stone.[23]

Stevenson's Hyde was a product of the repressive ethical demands of Calvinist doctrine as much as he was a rejection of the constrictions of Victorian society, as well as betraying a debt of inspiration to then recent Darwinian notions of regression and recidivism as espoused in *The Descent of Man* (1871) – "Man with all his noble qualities … still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin."[24] In his attempt to conform to the repressive sexual and moral expectations of Victorian bourgeois society, Marlowe permits his id separate licence, personified in the liberated, iconoclastic guise of Edward Blake.[25]

Paralleling Freud's classification of the psychical apparatus as comprising both an unconscious id and a conscious ego; the film chooses to delineate between, on the one hand, the spirited, exuberant, instinctual proletariat, partaking of bawdy and raucous revelry in the low inns of Soho, and, on the other, the rational, unemotional and asexual denizens of the patriarchal bourgeoisie, engrossed in sober philosophical discourse in the men-only environment of London's clubs (Marlowe, Lanyon, Enfield and Utterson are uniformly humourless, dispassionate bachelors). We soon learn, however, that Marlowe's position within this psychical and class divide is problematic and ultimately untenable, his transgressive tendencies signalled by a glimpse of his private collection of pornographic photographs. By thus contextualising the figure of Marlowe/Jekyll within this Manichean social framework, the film postulates that Blake/Hyde is as much a consequence of urban degeneration, class stratification and social alienation as he is the objectionable by-product of the suppression of sexual

---

[23] Robert Louis Stevenson (1886 / 1987) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Oxford, Oxford University Press) page 65

[24] Charles Darwin (1871 / 2003) *The Descent of Man* (London, Gibson Square Books)

[25] Although notionally Edwardian, set in 1906, the film's milieu is unmistakeably Victorian both aesthetically and thematically.

desire – as indeed was his real life contemporary Jack the Ripper, from whose popular image the film borrows its depiction of a fog-wreathed shadowy figure bedecked in top hat and cape.[26]

Incense for the Damned (1970)

> *- Did you know that vampirism is a sexual perversion? ...*
> *- Are you trying to tell me that a girl sucking blood from a man's neck can produce an orgasm?*
> *- ... You have voyeurs, transvestites, narcissists, bestialists. It's an odd world we live in. And by the same token, you also have masochistic vampires.*[27]

The generic adventurousness noted above as characteristic of the horror genre in Britain in the early 1970s is much in evidence in *Incense for the Damned,* from Simon Raven's novel *Doctors Wear Scarlet* (1960), which subverts many of the conventions of the genre with a tale that mixes psychogenic impotence with Gothic iconography, and postulates that vampirism is in truth a neurotic malady and not a supernatural sickness to be assuaged with garlic as had hitherto been widely supposed.

Richard Fountain (Patrick Mower), "*son of the foreign secretary and a brilliant Oxford don*," has disappeared in Greece while researching a book on Minoan rites. It transpires that Richard has fallen in with a cult of hedonists who partake of drug taking and sexual orgies under the watchful eye of the enigmatic Chriseis (*Carry on* regular Imogen Hassell). Richard is also sexually impotent – symptomatic of his sense of emasculation by the overbearing Provost of Lancaster College, Walter Goodrich (soon to be Richard's father-in-law), and by the stifling mental processes of institutionalised academia – and his libido has been sublimated into sadomasochistic phantasies and acts of vampirism.

Unfortunately, for the most part, the film is either unwilling or blithely unaware of the richness of its psychosexual themes; all too often proffering dramatic set pieces that,

---

[26] The association is taken a step further in the films *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and *Edge of Sanity* (Gerard Kikoine, 1988), with the real-life Ripper replacing the fictional Hyde as Jekyll's nefarious alter ego.
[27] Dr Holmstrom (Edward Woodward) and Tony Seymour (Alex Davion) discuss the sadomasochistic roots of vampirism in *Incense for the Damned.*

although eye-catching, explicitly contradict the film's avowed meaning. For instance, having hitherto rejected the time-honoured supernatural explanation of vampirism, in a ludicrous postscript our rationalist heroes suddenly decide they must now hammer a wooden stake through Richard's heart (in a sequence that gives the viewer a point-of-view shot from Richard's chest!).

Raven's novel had stressed the parallels between, on the one hand, Chriseis and the primitive religion of her vampiric cult, and, on the other, Goodrich and the restrictive, ritualistic life of Oxford's *"smooth deceivers in scarlet gowns, preparing as soon as they rise from this table to leech onto you."* Lest we miss the point, we are also treated to an anecdote wherein academic robes are likened to Dracula's billowing cape. However, director Robert Hartford-Davis elects to reverse this central relationship and to emphasise difference and conflict (scholarly British rationalism versus archaic Greek superstition), thereby leaving Richard marooned between diverging ideological forces and catatonic for most of the movie.[28] Consequently, rather than permitting the gradual revelation of his psychological state via performance and nuance – a scenario that would have been analogous to the arduous process of psychoanalytic enquiry itself – we learn of Richard's neuroses via 'explanatory' voice-overs and stilted verbal exchanges.

> *- Richard believes that Walter Goodrich caused his impotence? Can you imagine a don being castrated by the provost?*
> *- It's really metaphorical. You see, the provost to Richard is a symbol of the Establishment, and to Richard the Establishment destroys, castrates. For example, Richard's marriage to Penelope, or Goodrich's continual academic wheeling and dealing.*
> *- That's irrational.*[29]

Despite remaining surprisingly faithful to its source, Julian More's script has largely missed the point of Raven's novel and needlessly complicates the situation with extraneous detail; including musings on Greek mythology, Minoan rites and the roots of superstition, and a dash of international political intrigue. In addition to its thematic diversity, in which psychoanalytic explanation serves as but one attraction, the film is

[28] This scenario repeats that of Hammer's *The Devil Rides Out* (Terence Fisher, 1968), in which Patrick Mower was similarly entranced by the forces of darkness.
[29] Tony Seymour and Major Derek Longbow (Patrick Macnee) debate Richard's psychological well-being and sexual capabilities in *Incense for the Damned.*

formally eclectic, juxtaposing Gothic motifs with travelogue footage and wretched Greek muzak, and incorporating "sections you'd swear were edited in from either a psychedelic porno flick or an ITC two-fisted action TV show."[30] Obvious attempts have been made to foist cohesion onto this deliriously diverse post-modern patchwork in post-production, most notably the aforementioned voice-over that duly explains what will happen, what is happening and what has just happened, and thereby expunges any suspense that may otherwise have been created. In protest, a disheartened Hartford-Davis demanded that his name be removed from the film (while some prints are credited to the fictitious 'Michael Burrowes', others have no directorial credit at all); but post-production tampering cannot be blamed for the film's overall technical shoddiness, typified by Patrick Macnee's deadly encounter with blue Styrofoam boulders or the way in which Peter Cushing's hair changes colour from scene to scene.

Despite its flaws, there is much to admire in *Incense for the Damned*, most notably its uncommonly enlightened attitude to issues of race and sexuality. The film features a rare black heroic lead (Johnny Sekka) and makes virtually no reference to his ethnicity, aside from the suggestion that *"maybe Bob's African background has given him a sort of vivid imagination?"* Likewise, as well as William Mervyn's gay academic, Honeydew, the film features a decidedly homoerotic subplot in which Richard's bride-to-be, Penelope, and protégé, Bob, vie for his affections. On the other hand, the depiction of women as either lascivious vamps (Chiseis) or simpering damsels in distress (Penelope) is rather less progressive. Despite its manifold deficiencies, *Incense for the Damned* remains a brave but botched attempt to push the boundaries of Gothic horror into new psychological terrain. Its cerebral intentions were, however, seemingly wasted on its American distributor, Chevron Pictures, who chose to re-christen the movie with the lurid and childish title *Bloodsuckers*.

Night Hair Child (1972)

The inelegantly titled *Night Hair Child* owes a clear debt of inspiration both thematically and aesthetically to *Psycho* and presents an uncommonly explicit, not to

[30] Harvey Fenton and David Flint (eds.) (2001) *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s* (Guildford, Fab Press) page 35

mention sleazy, depiction of the classic Oedipus complex: young Mark Lester lusts after his (step)mother, Britt Ekland, and plans to murder his father, Hardy Kruger. The film, produced by the ubiquitous Harry Alan Towers, is also known as *What the Peeper Saw* or *Diabolica Malicia* and features a pan-European cast and Spanish locale that betrays the presence of European co-production finance. Critic Philip French mocked the film's pronounced international aspirations in a contemporary review that argued:

> The dialogue is risible and helped little by the stilted diction of the morose Herr Kruger and the leaden fröken Ekland, who presumably are someone's misguided idea of international box-office appeal. The only suspense resides in wondering when, and on what flimsy pretext, Miss Ekland will next remove her clothes.[31]

While most prints of the film cite James Kelly as the director, many European prints credit assistant director Andrea Bianchi (often anglicised as Andrew White) with the role. All the same, the overall tone, pace and formal style of the film is entirely consistent with Kelly's other's genre credit, *The Beast in the Cellar* (1970). Furthermore, although exhibiting a certain unrestrained 'European' attitude with regard to nudity, the film maintains a snickering and decidedly British prurience in matters of sex, and is suggestive of *Carry on* films, seaside postcards and British music hall traditions of innuendo and *double entendre*.

Night Hair Child elects to dilute the power of its central Oedipal premise, both by making the object of Marcus' desires his *step*mother and by depicting him as mentally deranged; a conceit reiterated by an advertising tagline that reassured the viewer that "Normally, good little boys don't love their mothers the way Marcus loves his – but Marcus isn't good, neither is he normal…" Trevor Preston's script also goes to great lengths to stress Marcus' myriad perversions, revealing that not only has his masochistic tendency led to his being expelled from school, but also that he murdered his biological mother (adding a further layer of complexity to the Oedipal scenario, albeit one that the film chooses not to explore). By stressing Marcus' singular abnormality the film contradicts unequivocally Freud's description of both the Oedipus complex, the nuclear complex of the neuroses, and unconscious incestuous

[31] Philip French, '*Night Hair Child*' film review in *The Times* (17 November 1972) page 11

phantasies overall as being universal phenomena. Even so, despite vulgarising the theme, by so graphically challenging the enduring aura of innocence with which adults like to invest the concept of childhood, the movie succeeds in awakening in the viewer the universal psychical horror of incest as discerned by Freud; as well as inducing many of the same feelings of revulsion and disgust (12-year-old Marcus groping mother's breasts) that greeted Freud's theories on the sexual psychology of children when first published.[32]

Demons of the Mind (1971)

> *This has nothing to do with your blood, the blood flowing in your veins. This is a hysterical disorder!*[33]

The use of recognisable Gothic motifs and horror film clichés (torch-bearing peasants of the kind that so often furnished a flaming finale in Universal's horror movies of the 1930s and '40s) as a means of exploring psychoanalytic territory also proves fruitful in Hammer's *Demons of the Mind*. Exploring incestuous phantasies, repressed desire, infantile trauma, Oedipal guilt and phobic anxiety amongst its myriad psychosexual musings, *Demons of the Mind* is a heady psychoanalytic cocktail.

This foray into 'family therapy' and the varied neuroses of a nineteenth century Bavarian baron and his dysfunctional clan began life as a rather more conventional tale of werewolves (hence why Baron Zorn's bloodlust dreams coincide with the full moon), but was rewritten at Hammer's behest.[34] The substitution of complex psychoneuroses for lycanthropy is itself revealing (as is the film's penny dreadful title) and exposes both an enduring and widely held dread of mental disorder and, more specifically, the familiar disquiet felt about the unpalatable teachings of psychoanalysis to which Freud himself was so often to draw attention. The selection

---

[32] On the subject of the hitherto overlooked significance of childhood sexual impulses, Freud argued, "One feature of the popular view of the sexual instinct is that it is absent in childhood and only awakens in the period of life described as puberty. This, however, is not merely a simple error but one that has had grave consequences, for it is mainly to this idea that we owe our present ignorance of the fundamental conditions of sexual life." Sigmund Freud (1905 / 1991) 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' in Anna Freud (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books) page 314

[33] Dr Falkenberg (Patrick Magee) disputes Baron Zorn's theories on hereditary evil in *Demons of the Mind.*

[34] Hammer's reluctance to dabble once more in lupine horror may well have been a response to the commercial failure of the studio's earlier *The Curse of the Werewolf* (Terence Fisher, 1960).

in *Hands of the Ripper* of Jack the Ripper, the iconic phantom of modern urban society, as the personification of the diabolical unconscious, and the corollary implication that unleashing unconscious desires is somehow comparable to Jack's reign of terror, is thus also highly significant. Indeed, in each of the films discussed herein, psychoanalysis is depicted as at best an ineffectual pursuit (Dr Falkenberg proves wholly incapable of curing the Zorn clan's complex neuroses, or of preventing his own demise), and at worst tantamount to opening Pandora's box (Dr Marlowe succeeds in unleashing *"the most dangerous human being on Earth: a monster!"*).

Baron Zorn (Robin Hardy) has kept his children locked in separate rooms of the family castle for much of their lives, believing them to be blighted by inherited evil and insanity (the concepts are here used interchangeably). Their incarceration, coupled with having witnessed their mother's suicide, has brought on severe psychological disturbance in both Elizabeth and Emil. Periodically, Emil is wont to escape from the castle and to murder women from the nearby village. In a last ditch attempt to cure his offspring, Zorn enlists the services of disgraced Viennese psychoanalyst Dr Falkenberg (Patrick Magee), who postulates that the psychoneuroses of the children are in truth a 'projection' of the neuroses and brutality of their father: "*Emil is an instrument of your lust! ...His impulses were yours. You made them come about. He did what your fears and dreams made you want to do but that your conscious mind could not do. They're extensions of your being in some grotesque way.*"

Zorn exhibits signs of severe persecution anxiety, which manifests itself as a pathological belief in the malignancy of his bloodline, and is beset both by psychogenic impotence and sanguinary phantasies of his deceased wife during sexual congress, childbirth and suicide (Sykes uses montage to replicate visually Zorn's psychical elision of these three bloodstained scenarios). Falkenberg's description of the 'projection' of Zorn's neuroses is true in the sense that his brutal and undemonstrative attitude, shaped by neurotic anxiety, has proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy by inhibiting the psychological development of his offspring. Furthermore, their isolation and confinement has denied them alternative objects upon which to focus their love. "Psychoanalysis has taught us that a boy's earliest choice of objects for his love is incestuous and that these objects are forbidden ones – his mother and

his sister."[35] In the role of Emil, Shane Briant uses mime, gesture and nuance to convey the character's childlike confusion and to suggest the psychical infantilism that Freud discerned as characteristic of neurotics.

As a child Emil was witness to his mother's suicide. The ambivalence of human emotions, the co-existence of contradictory emotional impulses towards the same object, decrees that Emil's response to this traumatic scenario will be one of satisfaction and desolation, perceiving the event as not only the loss of a cherished mother but also the removal of a rival for the attentions of his father. Emil has experienced unconscious satisfaction at the loss of his rival, coupled with corollary guilt that he cannot consciously explain. His murderous acts are an attempt to return to the initial trauma, and thereby to justify the guilt that is inexplicable to his conscious mind. In each case it is the aftermath of his mother's suicide rather than the act itself that is restaged, with the surrogate victim showered in red rose petals in the manner that his mother had been showered in blood.

Psychologically, Emil's ambivalent attitude to his mother has been split in two: while a succession of victims substitute for his mother as rival, his sister Elizabeth (for whom Emil has an obvious incestuous fixation) has assumed the role of mother as lover. Lest we miss the point, Sykes ensures that Elizabeth (Gillian Hills) and Emil's mother (Sidonie Bond) look alike. Significantly, Emil only murders Inge (Virginia Wetherell) after he learns that she is not Elizabeth, whom she has been impersonating as part of a supposed cure devised by Dr Falkenberg. Sykes intersperses shots of Inge's throes of agony with those of Elizabeth's sexual ecstasy, thereby re-uniting visually the two conflicting facets of Emil's attitude toward his mother.

Exploring a further layer of complexity within the Oedipal scenario, the film foregrounds how Emil both desires and identifies with Elizabeth (they possess an emotional or telepathic link). In other words, Elizabeth, having assumed the position of mother in the Oedipal triangle as perceived by Emil, has become a rival for the father's attentions and Emil thus wishes to supersede and replace her. His incestuous yearning for her is fundamentally a narcissistic object-choice. Emil desires what is on

[35] Sigmund Freud (1913 / 1990) 'Totem and Taboo' in *The Origins of Religion* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 13, page 70

the other side of the mirror that divides his cell from that of his sister: at once both Elizabeth and the image of himself. This is suggestive of a psychological failure to liberate himself from his infantile attraction to his mother. Moreover, such latent homosexuality, as exhibited by Emil, is a common psychical defence against paranoid anxiety, as here exhibited by his father. Elizabeth displays comparable incestuous craving, whereby Emil assumes the role of loving father in place of the emotionally distant and 'dead' Baron Zorn. Significantly, when later she escapes captivity, Elizabeth begins a relationship with floppy-fringed Carl Richter (Paul Jones), who resembles physically floppy-fringed Emil. Similarly, at the moment of her father's death, Elizabeth assumes his hysteria in what one might term a display of deferred obedience. The Zorn clan are nothing if not "a positive paragon of all the vices."[36]

Deftly paralleling the emotional ambivalence and neurotic conflicts of the Zorns, Peter Sykes structures his film as a series of debates between opposing perspectives and ideologies. For example, Zorn's belief in supernatural and hereditary 'evil' is contrasted with Falkenberg's psychoanalytic rationalism. Likewise, the primitive paganism of the village folk is at odds with the fundamentalist Christianity of Michael Hordern's agitating priest. However, narrative convention dictates that final resolution can come only when discord has been dispelled and harmony achieved, and the most explicit visual signifier of the crucial elision of hitherto antagonistic perspectives comes when Zorn is staked through the heart with a flaming crucifix; an act that, as well as satisfying generic requirements, unites Christian power with the pagan rituals enacted earlier in the film and signals the ultimate castration and emasculation of the Zorn family patriarch.

Although the plot is expounded in a manner that is somewhat confusing, director Peter Sykes and scriptwriter Christ Wicking have, with admirable skill, maintained the integrity of each individual case history. While perhaps biting off more maladies that it ultimately has time to chew, the film tackles the theme of 'passing on' neuroses from one generation to the next in a manner that is especially powerful.

[36] Sigmund Freud (1909 / 1990) 'Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy' page 179

Hands of the Ripper (1971)

> *In her trance any kiss would bring back the horror of the last image of her father. He would then possess her, he would make her kill!*[37]

Despite a title that suggests the pre-eminence of discourses of touch and manipulation, *Hands of the Ripper* presents a scopic exposé of a neurotic malady induced by childhood trauma. Arguably more sophisticated than *Demons of the Mind*, although comparably as bleak, the film explores Oedipal conflict and the fluidity and transience of psychical identification. As was noted in the previous chapter, director Peter Sasdy introduced into Hammer's horror output a psychological dimension that had generally been absent from the work of the studio's regular and defining director, Terence Fisher. Fisher's overarching morality had tended to ensure that characters were clearly delineated as either purveyors of 'good' or 'evil'. Conversely, Sasdy's films focus typically on the (destructive) emotional and psychical conflicts that exist within the familial community. For example, in *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1969) the Count had served as a beneficent father substitute, inspiring the children in gory revolt against their hypocritical biological fathers. Alternatively, *Countess Dracula* (1970) had showcased the horror of the perverse mother intent on consuming her offspring, at first metaphorically (by impersonating her daughter) and then literally (by plotting to bathe in her daughter's virgin blood).

Hands of the Ripper, from a script by L. W. Davidson, exposes Sasdy's recurrent preoccupation with the sins of the parent being visited psychologically on the child, with a tale that finds Jack the Ripper's daughter 'possessed' by her father's homicidal yearnings, in much the same way that Emil had been a projection of his father's lust in *Demons of the Mind*. The film opens in 1888 with a torch-wielding mob in pursuit of Jack the Ripper. Upon reaching the sanctuary of his home, Jack is confronted by his wife. Spying the bloodstains on his clothes, she cries out *"Its you, it's you they're looking for!"* before Jack forces her to the ground and stabs her death. This gory fracas is witnessed from her cot by Anna, their two-year-old daughter. Having thus justified his lurid sobriquet, Jack cradles Anna in his arms, kisses her and leaves.

---

[37] Dr John Pritchard (Eric Porter) describes Anna's neurosis in *Hands of the Ripper*.

After the opening credits, we resume the story fifteen years later and find Anna (Angharad Rees) providing the 'spirit voices' at the sham séances of Mrs Golding (Dora Bryan).[38] Anna, traumatised by the horrors of her childhood, is prone to homicidal rages, sparked by the dual memory-trigger of a twinkling light (reminiscent of the fire burning in the grate when her mother was killed) and a kiss (like that bestowed by her father). In one such fit, Anna stabs Mrs Golding with a poker, skewering her to an oak door, before lapsing into a catatonic trance. Dr John Pritchard (*"He's now become a follower of this man Freud. Calls himself a psychoanalyst."*) is intrigued by Anna's hysterical condition, adopts her into his home (and family) and undertakes to cure her. However, despite analysis, Anna's crimes continue to accrue. Eventually, Pritchard himself falls foul of the Ripper, is run through with a sword and fatally wounded. Realising his failure and culpability in covering-up her crimes, Pritchard convinces Anna to jump from the Whispering Gallery of St Paul's Cathedral into his embrace and to her death.

Let us now consider Anna's case history in more detail. From the womb-like safety of her cot she witnesses a hideous parody of the primal scene when her father penetrates her mother with his phallic blade. According to Freud, "such young children make no sharp distinction between sexual and aggressive acts, as they do later."[39] With Sasdy's camera favouring Anna's point-of-view, this atrocity acts as a literal dramatization of the child's (mis)conception of the primal scene; "the misunderstanding of the sexual act in a sadistic sense."[40] Sasdy compounds this ambiguity by photographing this coupling of bestial violation in a manner more befitting a scene of romantic congress (soft-focus, graceful tracking shots, peaceful freeze-frame interludes and Christopher Gunning's wistful musical accompaniment). Having performed his dirty deed, Jack embraces Anna, thereby rejecting his wife's affections in favour of those of his child. This opening scene is a dramatisation of Anna's emotional ambivalence towards her mother, disclosing the concealed hostility that lurks in her unconscious. Indeed, could it be that this sequence, separated from the body of the film by the opening credits, is in fact not a memory but an Oedipal phantasy, a screen memory, a repressed desire transposed to childhood?

---

[38] Dr Pritchard asserts that the Ripper has been dead fifteen years (although there is no way he could know this), setting the film in 1903; but Victoria is still Queen, situating the story no later than 1901.
[39] Sigmund Freud (1939 / 1990) 'Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays' page 317
[40] ibid

Appalled by the idea that she may have wished for her mother's gory demise, Anna takes flight from the maternal role that she so coveted into that of the father (the figure to lavish attention and affection on the mother) as if in recompense. Just as she once sought to replace her mother in her father's affections, so now Anna seeks to supersede her father, and to gain ascendancy over him by copying and outdoing him (as expounded by Freud in his psychoanalytic biography of Leonardo Da Vinci).[41] Consequently, throughout the film Anna re-enacts and repeats her father's atrocities and, significantly, while we witness only one of Jack's crimes, the film presents five instalments from Anna's reign of terror. Within the confines of the film-text at least, Anna has indeed gained ascendancy over her father.

Anna's replication of her father's crimes is also suggestive of what Freud called 'deferred obedience'. Anna's father-complex has recast Jack the exalted father as a personal god, and her transgressions are perpetrated in *his* name. Aptly, the film's finale in St Paul's Cathedral, where Anna hears her father's commands to kill, has the quality of a perverse religious annunciation. Such deferred obedience is also evident in *I, Monster* when Edward Blake – the primitive, unrepressed personification of Dr Marlowe's id – clubs a prostitute to death with his cane, repeating the manner in which Marlowe's brutish father had abused him as a child.

The psychical trauma of Anna's childhood has provided the indispensable prerequisite for the production of a hysterical disorder (as was the case with Elizabeth and Emil in *Demons of the Mind*), namely Anna's neurotic disavowal of an unbearable reality. According to Freud, "The most extreme type of this turning away from reality is shown in certain cases of hallucinatory psychosis which seek to deny the particular event that occasioned the outbreak of their insanity."[42] Anna has no conscious recollection of the perverse primal scene (evidence of infantile amnesia) and it is this initial horror that Dr Pritchard seeks to unearth via his quasi-psychoanalytic methods. Likewise, Anna has no recollection of the crimes she has committed. This is because each atrocity is a re-enactment of, and a return to, that initial 'forgotten' trauma. In addition, Anna's hysterical disorder has recast Jack as a projection of her hostile

[41] Sigmund Freud (1910 / 1990) 'Leondardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
[42] Sigmund Freud (1911 / 1991) 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' in *On Metapsychology* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 11, page 35

feelings towards her father. As part of the process of denial that rejects that one ever harboured feelings of animosity against a now departed loved one, the situation is reversed and the soul of the deceased adopts the hostile feelings instead, as well as the desire to put them into action; what Freud calls "the contract between conscious pain and unconscious satisfaction."[43]

The rakish Mr Dysart (Derek Godfrey) describes how Anna *"was possessed, her whole body was contorted!"* and, indeed, during her psychotic rages Anna's hands do appear mottled with scars similar to those evident on her father's hands and face (evidently some form of virulent and conceivably syphilitic skin disease).[44] They are literally the hands of the Ripper. Seeking to satisfy established generic conventions even as it encroaches on new psychoanalytic territory, the film is wilfully ambiguous (a trait that, whether intentional or otherwise, ideally mirrors the ambivalence of human emotions), proffering both a psychological debunking of demonic possession and a demonological explanation. Echoing Freud's *The Neurosis of Demoniacal Possession in the Seventeenth Century* (1923), the film explains away Anna's 'possession' as a pathological delusion in which her phantasies "have gained the upper hand – that is, have obtained belief and have acquired an influence on action."[45]

As in the Middle Ages, where psychological maladies were ascribed to demonic possessions, all but the analyst Dr Pritchard see Anna's hysterical symptoms as evidence of her possession by the spirit of her father. Pritchard is cast from the same heroic mould as Hammer's vampire-hunting Professor Van Helsing (as personified by Peter Cushing); a crusading figure of rational science, combating primitive superstition and irrational belief.[46] But whereas Van Helsing, fighting the corner of Christian morality, had been allowed to triumph, Dr Pritchard, by asserting that Anna's demons are not external, spiritual entities but internal "bad and reprehensible wishes, derivations of instinctual impulses that have been repudiated and repressed,"[47]

---

[43] Sigmund Freud (1913 / 1990) 'Totem and Taboo' page 117
[44] This repeats the conventional theory that an unwelcome dose of the pox caught from one of Whitechapel's 'unfortunates' was the reason for the Ripper being 'down on whores'.
[45] Sigmund Freud (1907 / 1990) 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva*' page 69
[46] As featured in the films *Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1958), *The Brides of Dracula* (Terence Fisher, 1960), *Dracula A.D. 1972* (Alan Gibson, 1972) and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (Alan Gibson, 1973).
[47] Sigmund Freud (1923 / 1990) 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14, page 383

can only save Anna by sacrificing himself; and thereby suppressing the 'dangerous' elements contained within psychoanalytic theory (further evidence of the distrust, fear and hostility described by Freud). Likewise, despite relying on Dr Falkenberg's explanations to lend meaning to its plot, *Demons of the Mind* undermines his theories by depicting him as a disgraced quack and an unethical and shameless self-publicist (*"Mankind is on the brink of understanding itself at last. Pure knowledge, with myself leading the hunt!"*). Falkenberg's 'heretical' psychoanalytic ideas are silenced finally when, having been assured that his branch of psychotherapy will be swiftly forgotten, he is shot dead. Dr Marlowe also suffers the ultimate price for daring to discuss the demons of the mind in *I, Monster*, and is consumed by the flames of a blaze started by his (self)destructive alter ego.

Anna's reprehensible wish, the source of her neurotic guilt, is the desire for her mother's death, subsequently satisfied by her father's actions. Freud asserts that psychologically we are not masters in our own house, and in Anna's case it is a house that Jack built. Plagued with a pre-existing sense of guilt that she cannot consciously explain, deriving from the partial fulfilment of the Oedipus complex, Anna acts to justify her guilt by restaging the brutal primal scene of her childhood.[48] Just as her mother was penetrated by Jack's phallic blade, so Anna penetrates her mother-substitute Mrs Golding, thereby assuming her father's position in the Oedipal triangle. Dolly the maid, dressing and tending Anna as would a mother to a child, is stabbed through the throat with a broken vanity mirror, again repeating the paternal violation. The prostitute Long Liz and the clairvoyant Madame Bullard each adopt a maternal persona in Anna's presence (although in the case of the former it has an explicit incestuous quality) and are both penetrated as a result – the former is stabbed in the eye with hatpins and the latter with her own eyeglasses. We will return to the obvious scopic implications of these attacks later.

While Anna's violent outbursts are evidence of her identification with her father, her subsequent catatonic trances suggest her re-identification with her deceased mother. The trance has the quality of a punishment. Freud explains:

[48] See Freud's discussion of criminals from a sense of guilt in 'Some Character Types Met With in Psychoanalytic Work' (1916 / 1990) in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14

> One has wished another person dead, and now one *is* this other person and is dead oneself. At this point psychoanalytic theory brings in the assertion that for a boy this other person is usually his father and that the attack (which is termed hysterical) is thus a self-punishment for a death-wish against a hated father.[49]

Anna has wished her mother dead, and indeed her mother has died. And now Anna must make recompense by dying, even if only symbolically. Each re-enactment of her mother's slaughter enables Anna not only to give reason for her pre-existing guilt (caused by the unconscious desire to usurp her mother in her father's affections) but also to punish herself by psychically assuming the position of the dead (her mother and mother-substitutes).

During each attack Anna not only possesses the hands of the Ripper but also becomes him (literally so during the final tussle with Laura, where Sasdy superimposes shots of Jack over those of Anna), and assumes her father's place in the Oedipal triangle. In this bisexual phantasy, Anna displays the multiple identities common to hysterics.[50] One should perhaps also note that Anna's cross-gendered identifications can be seen as analogous to the act of cinema-viewing itself. Laura Mulvey outlines how "Her oscillation, her inability to achieve stable sexual identity, is echoed by the woman spectator's masculine 'point of view'."[51]

'Woman' amounts to "an inexplicable enigma, a mask behind which man suspects some hidden danger," opines Claire Johnston. "Behind the mask of the enigma lies nothing but man's dread of the otherness of woman, his disavowal of sexual difference itself. For in the enigma rests the possibility of 'lack', the fear of castration."[52] Anna's penetrative atrocities serve as dramatisations of castration anxiety, and much of the film's 'horror' (for the male audience in particular) stems from Anna's appropriation of phallic power. However, in its desire for neat (and

---

[49] Sigmund Freud (1928 / 1990) 'Dostoevsky and Parricide' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14, page 447

[50] For example, Dora's trans-sexual identifications with her mother, Frau K and Herr K in Freud's 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (1905 / 1990) in *Case Histories 1* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 8

[51] Laura Mulvey (1990) 'Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*' in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 25

[52] Claire Johnston (1990) 'Femininity and the Masquerade: *Anne of the Indies*' in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 70

comforting) narrative closure, the film acts to deny this eventuality by finally re-feminising Anna via her own suicide. Sasdy stages Anna's self-murder, her 200-foot plunge from the Whispering Gallery, in slow motion, as if she were floating rather than plummeting into Dr Pritchard's romantic embrace. The film-text's final death scene is imbued with a graceful, feminine quality that the others lack, thus allowing the film to end having reassuringly removed the enigma and disavowed 'lack'.

By adopting Anna into his home and by urging her to *"learn to become one of the family,"* Dr John Pritchard serves initially as a substitute father (Jack's replacement). The similarity of their names, Jack and John, is significant. Dr Pritchard's caring, considerate manner ensures that he is the embracing Jack, the father that plucked Anna from her cot and kissed her, as opposed to the penetrating Jack, the father that slew her mother. (One might also note a physical similarity between Pritchard and Freud himself, the 'father' of psychoanalysis.) But the relationship between Anna and Dr Pritchard shifts gradually from being familial to something more sexual. Just as once her repressed desire to see off her mother had been satisfied, so her Oedipal sexual desire for her father (albeit his substitute) threatens to be similarly satiated.

Not only has Dr Pritchard installed Anna in the bedroom of his dead wife, but he also insists that Anna wear her clothes. Little by little his surrogate daughter is recast as a substitute sexual partner. According to Freud, "neurotics are dominated by the opposition between reality and phantasy. If what they long for the most intensely is presented them in reality, they none the less flee from it."[53] And so, when Pritchard eventually kisses her, signalling Anna's final substitution for her mother, she is at once both satisfied and repelled. Pritchard has become father *and* lover, an untenable situation invoking the full horror of incest, "the oldest and most powerful of human desires."[54] Moreover, the kiss breaches the ethical boundary between the analyst and the analysand. Deborah Linderman highlights how "the moment of contact is deadly, fatal: lest the point be missed, the analyst is terminated by the film text as a sign of the fact that … [the] analysis would otherwise be of the interminable sort."[55]

---

[53] Sigmund Freud (1905 / 1990) 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' page 151
[54] Sigmund Freud (1913 / 1990) 'Totem and Taboo' page 85
[55] Deborah Linderman (1990) 'Cinematic Abreaction: Tourneur's *Cat People*' in E. Ann Kaplan (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge) page 83

The incestuous wish, banished to the unconscious, is stronger in the neurotic, who invariably exhibits some degree of psychical infantilism. "He has either failed to get free from the psycho-sexual conditions that prevailed in his childhood or he has returned to them – two possibilities which may be summed up as developmental inhibition and regression."[56] The counterbalancing rejection or renunciation (the ambivalent attitude) is equally pronounced. Anna is at once both repelled and fascinated by the feminine roles ascribed to her (mother and daughter), and retreats to the paternal role as depicted in the parodic primal scene of her childhood. She re-identifies with Jack, the penetrating Jack, and skewers Dr Pritchard with a sword. In keeping with the fluidity of gender positions and identifications that characterise the Oedipal triangle, Dr Pritchard is feminised by the penetration, thereby accepting Anna's phallic power and bringing the movie to a castration complex climax. As noted, the remainder of the film offers a reassuring coda that acts to deny this 'lack'.

Consistent with a tale of a neurosis born of scopic trauma, time and again the film punishes the 'look', or more accurately those that profess to possess it. The prostitute Long Liz declares *"Let's have a little look at you then"* before being stabbed through the eye. *"Miss Anna, you're going to look lovely tonight. Everybody's gonna be looking at you,"* proclaims Dolly the maid before she too is stabbed. The clairvoyants Mrs Golding and Madame Bullard, who claim to be able to see into the hereafter, are also killed. Just as those that peer into the world beyond the grave are soon sent there, so too is Dr Pritchard, the psychoanalyst who seeks to probe the dark recesses of the unconscious. It is indeed ironic that these gory set pieces, whose purpose within the narrative is to punish those that *look* (just as Anna was punished psychologically by having *seen* the traumatic primal scene), also cater to the voyeuristic desires of the cinematic viewer, who has selected the film-text for the scopic thrills it promises.

By removing those that seek to scrutinize her, Anna achieves dominance over the phallic power of the penetrating gaze. Anna rejects her status as object, and refutes her position as 'Other'. She is at once both subject *and* object, in much the same way as she is able to adopt positions of both maternal *and* paternal identification. Elizabeth Cowie underlines how this function of human subjectivity is constituted in the mirror

[56] Sigmund Freud (1913 / 1990) 'Totem and Taboo' page 70

phase, "whereby the subject identifies with its own image *and* as one who looks. In so far as it does identify with its own look, it does so from the place in which the Other sees."[57] Anna is thus both looked upon and looking. The duality of the mirror, where one is both subject and object, is also reflected in Anna's palindromic name, and by the twofold nature of her personality – passivity versus homicidal activity – that itself suggests the *unheimlich* quality of the double, as explored by Freud.[58]

Mirrors are central to both the narrative and the mise-en-scene of *Hands of the Ripper.* As with Michael Powell's scopic masterpiece *Peeping Tom* (1960), "the mirror serves as an extension of the camera – the immutable gaze through which one is beheld and defined."[59] After killing Mrs Golding, Anna is found in a trance-like state clutching a small ornamental mirror. Not only does she now possess the mirror, but also she has briefly challenged the penetrating gaze by penetrating the gazer. Later, Anna rejects her status as object by smashing a vanity mirror (signifying female passivity as subject of the gaze) and transforming it into a phallic weapon with which to slash Dolly's throat.

Anna (the enigma) presents a challenge to the patriarchal gaze, an embodiment of the ever-present fear of castration. Freud notes how "no physical injury is as much dreaded ... as an injury to the eye," and postulates that, "anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the dream of being castrated."[60] Long Liz is punished (castrated) for her scopophilic pursuits when her eye is perforated with hatpins and Madame Bullard is killed with her own lorgnette, the instruments of looking. Indeed, the only character to survive despite having administered the lethal kiss is the blind girl Laura, who had earlier drawn attention to *"the mirror that no longer holds any interest for me at all."* Laura is devoid of castration anxiety, lacking a gaze of her own, and is immune to the dangerous 'lack' that Anna represents.

---

[57] Elizabeth Cowie (1991) '*Underworld USA*: Psychoanalysis and Film Theory in the 1980s' in James Donald (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan) page 111
[58] See Sigmund Freud (1919 / 1990) 'The Uncanny' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
[59] Ilsa J. Bick (1994) 'The Sight of Difference' in Wheeler Winston Dixon (ed.) *Re-Viewing British Cinema: 1900-1992* (Albany, State University Of New York) page 187
[60] ibid, page 352

Hands of the Ripper, with its obsession with mirrors and double identities, tells a tale that asserts that identity is scopic-dependent. In addition to the mirrors that are such a prominent feature of the mise-en-scene, characters and situations are also 'mirrored' in the narrative. For instance, the film draws parallels between Anna and Laura, both of whom have been adopted into Dr Pritchard's home and family. However, whereas Anna challenges the look, Laura will forever remain viewed and never viewer. Parallels are drawn between Anna and her mother, and Anna and her father. Anna's childhood recollections of her father, as both embracer and violator, are split and enacted by two Jack substitutes, namely Dr Pritchard and Anna's violent alter ego.

While the film has certainly 'sexed up' Anna's case history with supernatural trappings, this façade is quickly and easily explained away by psychoanalytic enquiry, just as such provisional psychological concepts as anxiety, dreams and demons have crumbled under the impact of psychoanalytic research. Although the clinical procedures performed by Dr Pritchard bear little relation to anything practiced by Freud, the facts of Anna's neurosis are expertly handled. Even more satisfying is the skilful manner in which director Peter Sasdy has incorporated the intricacies of Anna's Oedipal conflict into the texture of the film itself, both aesthetically and thematically. For example, we find the fluidity of identifications that characterise relations within the Oedipal triangle repeated in the symbolic mirrors that proliferate in the narrative and in the way in which the film mirrors characters (although Dysart and Pritchard are physically similar, they differ in their attitude to Anna) and situations (Mrs Golding's phoney séance, where Anna meets her substitute father Dr Pritchard, and Madame Bullard's authentic glimpse into the afterlife, where the identity of Anna's real father is revealed).

This duality, mirroring and oppositional ethos also manifests itself in the way in which the film permits two conflicting interpretations of Anna's condition; a demonological possession by an evil spirit (*"She is possessed!"*) and an hysterical neurosis (*"I believe that girl is suffering from a disorder of the mind, possibly brought on by some terrifying experience in her childhood, or maybe it was congenital, but it has divided her mind."*). And while certain aspects of Anna's condition cannot be explained by psychoanalytic enquiry alone (how can Laura hear Jack's voice in the final scuffle, and why do Anna's hands develop her father's scars?), and certain

information is furnished via unscientific means (Anna's parentage and the horror of the primal scene are revealed not through free association but by a psychic), the film never explicitly accepts or dispels either interpretation.

The same dialogue between the psychological and the demonological is expressed in *Demons of the Mind*. As discussed, here the narrative is structured as a conflict between, on the one hand, irrational primitive superstition, and, on the other, rational therapeutic science. Whereas both Zorn and the priest view Emil's malady as a manifestation of evil (*"We must destroy him according to God's law!"*), doctors Richter and Falkenberg proffer psychological explanations. As with *Hands of the Ripper*, what makes the film so rewarding is the expert way in which it balances these opposing perspectives to remain explicable on either level. Moreover, more generally, these narratives of opposition mirror the greater ideological polarisation of British society in the period, not merely politically (New Right individualism versus Wilsonian corporatism) but also economically (Labour's social contract versus the Tory free market) and culturally (increased social heterogeneity and ever wider sexual, racial and class division). In light of this, the way in which the narratives of these film-texts realize the harmonious resolution of seemingly intractable difficulties, or achieve the contented coexistence of hitherto antagonistic forces, smacks of cultural wish fulfilment.

The addition of psychoanalytic musings to the British Gothic horror genre was symptomatic of the sweeping change then affecting the British film industry, and its radical realignment in reply to fundamental social transformations. In the 1970s, in response to long-term audience decline, cinematic forms whose appeal was primarily or exclusively indigenous were allowed to wither. Henceforth, cinema would have to appeal to an audience larger than Britain alone could offer. The introduction into British horror cinema of psychoanalytic discourse, as had been commonplace in American cinema since the 1940s, was the beginning of a process of transatlanticisation that would lead ultimately to the rejection of Britain's established Gothic aesthetic (as discussed in the preceding chapter) in favour of attempts to replicate the contemporary iconoclasm and high-dollar production values of recent Hollywood horror hits; all in the name of giving the global audience what it appeared to want.

7.

Conclusion – The Riddle of the Seventies

> The British cinema has always been in a state of crisis. Occasionally, though, it has been a centre of excellence, the place where the best, the most exciting work is being done. Or, at least, where the films touched a social nerve, reflected the society in which we lived, even if obliquely, as in the great days of Ealing comedies. The last time that happened was in the early 1960s.[1]

The above comments from John Walker were made in 1985, at the end of the period under review in this thesis. Regrettably, this disparaging attitude to the mid-Atlantic aspirations that came to dominate British filmmaking in the 1970s and early 1980s remains the norm even today. My exploration in the preceding pages of the cinematic territory that Walker so readily dismisses leads me to contend that his summary of the period is both overly simplistic and largely wrong. For, while the Hollywoodesque films that ushered forth from EMI, Rank, Cannon and ACC are perhaps not the 'best' or the 'most exciting' movies ever produced in the UK, they certainly do reflect the society in which we lived, even if only obliquely.

It is important to see the resurgence of mid-Atlantic aspirations in British cinema in the 1970s in context, and as a consequence of the changing economic, industrial and social conditions with which these films were faced. Indeed, the very existence and abundance of such mid-Atlantic fare – the fruits of an economic strategy for survival that questioned the efficacy and viability of existing attitudes to filmmaking in Britain – exposes the fundamental shifts affecting the society in which they were produced.

These Hollywoodesque film-texts were responses to pressing socio-economic imperatives, and particularly the decline in UK cinema admissions that reached critical levels in the late 1960s and early 1970s (plummeting from 327 million in 1965 to 193 million in 1970, and reaching an all-time low of just 54 million in 1984). This meant that, henceforth, British films would either have to be very low budget if

[1] John Walker (1985) *The Once and Future Film: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Methuen) page 3

they were to hope to recoup their costs in the home market, or would have to appeal to a larger audience than Britain alone could offer. Predictably, as has so often been the case throughout Britain's cinematic history, British filmmakers looked at the large American market with envious eyes and perceived an eldorado just waiting to be plundered. What makes the period under review in this thesis so exceptional is the unparalleled fervour with which this mid-Atlantic production policy was pursued.

So as to replicate the surface gloss of mainstream Hollywood cinema, output was reduced and budgets increased. Ironically, this occurred at the very moment that 'New Hollywood' (following the demise of the Production Code) was rejecting glamour, glitz and cosy entertainment, and embracing opaque narrative structures without heroes or love interests, intentionally grainy visuals, semi-improvised performance styles and challenging counter-cultural politics. As has been discussed in the preceding chapters, British cinema in the 1970s was rather more conservative than its New Hollywood cousin, both formally and ideologically, and noticeably reliant on built-in audience familiarity and recognition. This somewhat cautious approach to filmmaking, minimising risk by mixing in 'proven' ingredients (adaptations of blockbuster novels, remakes of cinema classics, facsimiles of recent Hollywood hits and a predilection for well-known and 'star' talent), exposes the realisation that film-going had become an irregular and occasional activity; a special event whose role as the principal medium of mass entertainment had been usurped by television.

In the 1970s British cinema became reliant on other more popular media to sell itself – come see the film of the book, the film of the TV series, the film of the country and western song. Equally, it became dependent upon television to pay for itself, typically in the form of presales, particularly in the case of ITC. Even those few feature films aimed solely at the domestic market were, in large part, derived from television (exploiting TV talent, formats and shows) and were thus familiar to their target audience. For instance, I have no doubt that the cinema audience for ITC's *George and Mildred* (Peter Frazer-Jones, 1980) knew pretty well what to expect.

On the subject of Lew Grade and ITC, in *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* – a tome that mocks the apparent cultural 'rootlessness' of its subject matter with its very title – Alexander Walker argued:

> For one thing, hardly any of them dealt even remotely with things British – even the ones technically registered as 'British' by reason of their labour costs – and any attempt to reflect a changing British society through Lew's choice and treatment of stories is as foolish as it would be fruitless.[2]

But Alexander Walker is as wrong as was John. This thesis has outlined some of the ways in which these hitherto denigrated film-texts spoke both to and of the issues and anxieties that were affecting Britain at the time they were produced, even as they sought to appeal beyond British shores. Most explicitly, the recurring thematic structure of binary oppositions and polarities points to a society in turmoil and flux. In these films, as has been explored in the foregoing chapters, the political, economic and social upheavals that characterised Britain in the 1970s and 1980s are dramatised as a series of conflicts. For example: religiosity and superstition versus rationality and psychoanalysis; post-Imperial Britain versus nefarious foreign (economic) aggressors; and the radicalism of the young, the licentious and those with a gift for disaster versus the anti-permissive mores of the Establishment. Intriguingly, these binary polarities are mirrored by a series of debates then occurring within the film industry itself about the best way to counter its long-term decline; such as whether to pursue the national or the international audience, whether to persist with the customary period Gothicism of British horror or to embrace the contemporary iconoclasm of recent Hollywood horror hits, and whether to adopt the modernism of ITC or the nostalgia of Rank.

The charge of cultural rootlessness made against these intentionally international texts overlooks the point that, for the most part, they proved popular at the British box-office. They must, therefore, have articulated the values and concerns of the domestic audience at some level: indeed, rather more effectively than they did for audiences in the US where the films faired commercially less well (although one should also take into account issues relating to the distribution of these films in America).

However, I accept that, in the main, British mid-Atlantic cinema is not the place to find obvious discussion of the headline issues affecting the country, at least not at the level of narrative: whether it be the rights and wrongs of trade union militancy, the

---

[2] Alexander Walker (1985) *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Harrap) page 104

virtues or otherwise of ethnic diversity and an increasingly heterogeneous population, issues of national prestige or the cultural impact of feminism. The need to appeal to audiences in different national contexts meant that domestic concerns such as these were cloaked or pushed into the realm of allegory. It is certainly the case that the manifest picture of Britain painted in these films can hardly be described as realist. However, this sanitised depiction of the nation is significant, being at once both aspirational and wistful, as was 1970s British culture more generally, torn between nostalgia for a less troubled past (evidenced by an anti-permissive cultural backlash at the start of the decade and by a resurgence of neo-conservative morality at its end) and the desire to embrace the future (talk of modernisation, following on from white hot technological revolution). It is telling that the period witnessed the final end of empire (Zimbabwe, formerly Southern Rhodesia, achieved independence in 1980; and Belize, formerly British Honduras, in 1981) and the absorption in 1973 of Britain into the Common Market, with all its concomitant fears over loss of sovereignty. The fact that only two years later a third of the British electorate voted to come back out again underscores the point that the culture had not wholly embraced movement in either direction.

In short, the mid-Atlantic moviemaking discussed herein gives voice to the economic, social and political debates and dialogues that were taking place in crisis-hit 1970s Britain, as well as within and between the domestic and international cinema industries, and is the meeting place of divergent cultural aspirations. At the very least, it is clear that British filmmaking in the period 1970 to 1985 is unquestionably much richer and more complex than has hitherto been assumed or accepted. Moreover, it would appear that attempting to isolate the ways in which these films reflect British society might not be as foolish or as fruitless as Alexander Walker would have us believe.

My intention throughout has been to move away from the pithy but typically unsympathetic critical responses (like those of Alexander Walker) that have for too long stood in place of reasoned analysis, and always to return to the films themselves. I don't doubt that there remains much to be said about these texts (and others that I have not had space to include), particularly in the area of how they were marketed both at home and abroad and what this tells us about how filmmakers at the time

perceived their audience(s). That said, I propose that important first steps have been taken in the preceding pages.

The mid-Atlantic movies that dominated British cinema from the mid-1970s through to the early 1980s are far from being simply an inexplicable, tasteless aberration devoid of national relevance. Rather, they were a reasoned response to the socio-industrial complexities and anxieties then wracking Britain and British cinema more specifically. In view of the fact that many of these anxieties (regarding national identity, economic decline and the nation's role on the global stage) are still with us, born of the radical transformations in global culture that occurred during this most inscrutable and under-analysed of decades, it is clear that the meanings spoken by these films remain of relevance to us today.

Select Filmography

The Big Sleep (1978) ITC/Winkast Film Productions, distributed by ITC
Director: Michael Winner; *Producers*: Elliott Kastner and Michael Winner;
Script: Michael Winner, based on the novel by Raymond Chandler; *Editor*: Freddie Wilson;
Photography: Robert Paynter; *Music*: Jerry Fielding; *Starring*: Robert Mitchum, Sarah Miles,
Richard Boone, Candy Clark, Joan Collins, Edward Fox, James Stewart, Oliver Reed,
Diana Quick, Colin Blakely, John Mills, Richard Todd, James Donald, Harry Andrews,
Martin Potter, John Justin, Simon Turner

The Boys from Brazil (1978) Producer Circle, distributed by ITC
Director: Franklin J. Schaffner; *Producers*: Martin Richards and Stanley O'Toole;
Script: Heywood Gould, based on the novel by Ira Levin; *Photography*: Henri Decae;
Editor: Robert E. Swink; *Music*: Jerry Goldsmith; *Starring*: Gregory Peck, Laurence Olivier,
James Mason, Lilli Palmer, Uta Hagen, Steve Guttenberg, Denholm Elliott, Walter Gotell,
Jeremy Black, Michael Gough, Linda Hayden

The Cassandra Crossing (1977) International Cine Productions, distributed by ITC
Director: George Pan Cosmatos; *Producer*: Carlo Ponti; *Script*: Tom Mankiewicz and
Robert Katz; *Photography*: Ennio Guarnieri; *Editors*: Francois Bonnot and Roberto Silvi;
Music: Jerry Goldsmith; *Starring*: Sophia Loren, Richard Harris, Ava Gardner,
Burt Lancaster, Martin Sheen, O. J. Simpson, Ingrid Thulin, Lionel Stander, Ann Turkel,
Lee Strasberg, John Phillip Law

Death on the Nile (1978) Mersham Productions, distributed by EMI
Director: John Guillermin; *Producers*: John Brabourne and Richard Goodwin;
Script: Anthony Shaffer, based on the novel by Agatha Christie; *Photography*: Jack Cardiff;
Editor: Malcolm Cook; *Music*: Nino Rota; *Starring*: Peter Ustinov, David Niven, Bette Davis,
Maggie Smith, Mia Farrow, Simon MacCorkindale, Angela Lansbury, Lois Chiles, Jon Finch,
Olivia Hussey, George Kennedy, Jane Birkin, Jack Warden, Harry Andrews, I. S. Johar

Demons of the Mind (1971) Hammer, distributed by Anglo-EMI
Director: Peter Sykes; *Producer*: Frank Godwin; *Script*: Christopher Wicking;
Photography: Arthur Grant; *Editor*: Chris Barnes; *Music*: Harry Robinson;
Starring: Robert Hardy, Shane Briant, Gillian Hills, Yvonne Mitchell, Paul Jones,
Patrick Magee, Kenneth J. Warren, Michael Hordern, Robert Brown, Virginia Wetherell

The Dogs of War (1980) Juniper Films/United Artists, distributed by United Artists
Director: John Irvin; *Producer*: Larry DeWaay; *Script*: Gary Devore and George Malko,
based on the novel by Frederick Forsyth; *Photography*: Jack Cardiff; *Editor*: Antony Gibbs;
Music: Geoffrey Burgon; *Starring*: Christopher Walken, Tom Berenger, Colin Blakely,
Hugh Millais, Paul Freeman, Jean Francois Stevenin, Robert Urguhart, Winston Ntshona

The Eagle has Landed (1977) ITC/Associated General Films, distributed by ITC
Director: John Sturges; *Producers*: Jack Wiener and David Niven Jnr.;
Script: Tom Mankiewicz, based on the novel by Jack Higgins; *Editor*: Anne V. Coates;
Photography: Anthony Richmond; *Music*: Lalo Schifrin;
Starring: Michael Caine, Donald Sutherland, Robert Duvall, Donald Pleasence,
Jenny Agutter, Anthony Quale, Jean Marsh, Judy Geeson, Treat Williams, Larry Hagman

Escape to Athena (1979) Pimlico Films, distributed by ITC
Director: George Pan Cosmatos; *Producers*: David Niven Jnr. and Jack Wiener; *Script*: Richard S. Lochte and Edward Anholt; *Photography*: Gil Taylor; *Editor*: Ralph Kemplen; *Music*: Lalo Schifrin; *Starring*: Roger Moore, Claudia Cardinale, Telly Savalas, David Niven, Richard Roundtree, Stephanie Powers, Sonny Bono, Elliot Gould

Evil under the Sun (1982) Mersham Productions, distributed by EMI
Director: Guy Hamilton; *Producers*: John Brabourne and Richard Goodwin; *Script*: Anthony Shaffer, based on the novel by Agatha Christie; *Editor*: Richard Marden; *Photography*: Christopher Challis; *Music*: Jack Larchbury (arr.); *Starring*: Peter Ustinov, James Mason, Maggie Smith, Roddy McDowall, Diana Rigg, Denis Quilley, Colin Blakely, Nicholas Clay, Jane Birkin, Sylvia Miles, Emily Hone

Eye of the Needle (1981) Kings Road/Juniper, distributed by United Artists
Director: Richard Marquand; *Producer*: Stephen Friedman; *Script*: Stanley Mann, based on the novel by Ken Follett; *Photography*: Alan Hume; *Editor*: Sean Barton; *Music*: Miklos Rozsa; *Starring*: Donald Sutherland, Kate Nelligan, Ian Bannen, Faith Brook, Christopher Cazenove, Philip Martin Brown

Gold (1974) Avton Film Productions/Hemdale, distributed by Hemdale
Director: Peter Hunt; *Producer*: Michael Klinger; *Script*: Wilbur Smith and Stanley Price, based on the novel *Goldmine* by Wilbur Smith; *Photography*: Ousama Rawi; *Editor*: John Glen; *Music*: Elmer Bernstein; *Starring*: Roger Moore, Susannah York, Ray Milland, Bradford Dillman, John Gielgud, Tony Beckley, Simon Sabela

Hands of the Ripper (1971) Hammer, distributed by Rank
Director: Peter Sasdy; *Producer*: Aida Young; *Script*: L. W. Davidson; *Photography*: Kenneth Talbot; *Editor*: Chris Barnes; *Music*: Christopher Gunning; *Starring*: Eric Porter, Angharad Rees, Jane Merrow, Derek Godfrey, Dora Bryan, Marjorie Rhodes, Lynda Baron, Norman Bird, Margaret Rawlings, Elizabeth Maclennan

Hawk the Slayer (1980) Chips/Marcel-Robertson Productions, distributed by ITC
Director / Co-producer: Terry Marcel; *Script / Co-producer*: Harry Robertson; *Photography*: Paul Beeson; *Editor*: Eric Boyd-Perkins; *Music*: Harry Robertson; *Starring*: Jack Palance, John Terry, Bernard Bresslaw, Roy Charleson, Peter O'Farrell, Annette Crosbie, Shane Briant, Harry Andrews, Christopher Benjamin, Roy Kinnear, Patrick Magee, Ferdy Mayne, Graham Stark

I Don't Want to be Born (1975) Unicapital, distributed by Rank
Director: Peter Sasdy; *Producer*: Norma Corley; *Script*: Stanley Price; *Editor*: Keith Palmer; *Photography*: Kenneth Talbot; *Music*: Ron Grainer; *Starring*: Joan Collins, Donald Pleasence, Eileen Atkins, Ralph Bates, Caroline Munro, John Steiner, George Claydon, Hilary Mason

I, Monster (1970) Amicus/British Lion, distributed by British Lion
Director: Stephen Weeks; *Producers*: Max J. Rosenberg and Milton Subotsky; *Script*: Milton Subotsky, *based on the novel The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson; *Photography*: Moray Grant; *Editor*: Peter Tanner; *Music*: Carl Davis; *Starring*: Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Mike Raven, Richard Hurndall, George Merritt, Kenneth J. Warren, Susan Jameson, Marjie Lawrence, Aimee Delamain, Michael Des Barres

Incense for the Damned (1970) Lucinda Films/Titan International, distributed by Titan
Director: Robert Hartford-Davis (uncredited); *Producer*: Graham Harris;
Script: Julian More, based on the novel *Doctors Wear Scarlet* by Simon Raven;
Editor: Peter Thornton; *Photography*: Desmond Dickinson; *Music*: Bobby Richards;
Starring: Patrick MacNee, Peter Cushing; Alex Davion, Johnny Sekka, Madeline Hinde, Edward Woodward, William Mervyn, Patrick Mower, David Lodge, Imogen Hassall

The Internecine Project (1974) Lion International/Hemisphere, distributed by British Lion
Director: Ken Hughes; *Producers*: Andrew Donally and Barry Levinson; *Script*: Barry Levinson and Jonathon Lynn, based on the novel *Internecine* by Mort W. Elkind;
Photography: Geoffrey Unsworth; *Editor*: John Shirley; *Music*: Roy Budd;
Starring: James Coburn, Lee Grant, Harry Andrews, Ian Hendry, Michael Jayston, Christine Krüger, Keenan Wynn, Terence Alexander, Julian Glover, David Swift

Juggernaut (1974) United Artists, distributed by United Artists
Director: Richard Lester; *Producer*: Richard De Koker; *Script*: Richard De Koker;
Photography: Gerry Fisher; *Editor*: Anthony Gibbs; *Music*: Ken Thorne;
Starring: Richard Harris, Omar Sharif, David Hemmings, Anthony Hopkins, Shirley Knight, Ian Holm, Roy Kinnear, Clifton James, Caroline Mortimer, Freddie Jones, Jack Watson

The Lady Vanishes (1979) Hammer/Rank, distributed by Rank
Director: Anthony Page; *Producer*: Tom Sachs; *Script*: George Axelrod, based on the screenplay by Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder and on the novel by Ethel Lina White;
Photography: Douglas Slocombe; *Editor*: Russell Lloyd; *Music*: Richard Hartley;
Starring: Elliot Gould, Cybill Shepherd, Angela Lansbury, Herbert Lom, Ian Carmichael, Arthur Lowe, Gerald Harper, Vladek Sheybal, Wolf Kahler, Jenny Runacre, Jean Anderson

Lifeforce (1985) London Cannon Films, distributed by Cannon
Director: Tobe Hooper; *Producers*: Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus;
Script: Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby, based on the novel *The Space Vampires* by Colin Wilson; *Photography*: Alan Hume; *Editor*: John Grover; *Music*: Henry Mancini;
Starring: Steve Railsback, Peter Firth, Frank Finlay, Mathilda May, Patrick Stewart, Michael Gothard, Nicholas Ball, Aubrey Morris

The Long Good Friday (1979) Handmade Films
Director: John Mackenzie; *Producer*: Barry Hanson; *Script*: Barrie Keeffe;
Editor: Mike Taylor; *Photography*: Phil Meheux; *Music*: Francis Monkman;
Starring: Bob Hoskins, Helen Mirren, Eddie Constantine, Dave King, Bryan Marshall, Derek Thompson, Brian Hall

The Medusa Touch (1978) Bulldog/Citeca/Coatesgold, distributed by ITC
Director: Jack Gold; *Producers*: Anne V. Coates and Jack Gold; *Script*: John Briley, based on the novel by Peter Van Greenaway; *Photography*: Arthur Ibbetson;
Editors: Anne V. Coates and Ian Crafford; *Music*: Michael J. Lewis;
Starring: Richard Burton, Lee Remick, Lino Ventura, Alan Badel, Harry Andrews, Jeremy Brett, Michael Hordern, Marie-Christine Barrault, Gordon Jackson, Derek Jacobi

The Mirror Crack'd (1980) G.W. Films, distributed by EMI
Director: Guy Hamilton; *Producers*: John Brabourne and Richard Goodwin;
Script: Jonathan Hales and Barry Sandler, based on the novel *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* by Agatha Christie; *Photography*: Christopher Challis; *Editor*: Richard Marden;
Music: John Cameron; *Starring*: Angela Lansbury, Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, Kim Novak, Tony Curtis, Edward Fox, Geraldine Chapman, Charles Lloyd-Pack, Charles Gray, Margaret Courtenay

The Monster Club (1980) Chips Productions/Sword & Sorcery, distributed by ITC
Director: Roy Ward Baker; *Producer*: Milton Subotsky; *Script*: Edward Abraham and Valeria Abraham, based on the book by R. Chetwynd-Hayes; *Photography*: Peter Jessop; *Editor*: Peter Tanner; *Music*: Douglas Gamley, John Williams and Alan Hawkshaw; *Starring*: Vincent Price, Donald Pleasence, John Carradine, Britt Ekland, Simon Ward, Barbara Kellerman, Stuart Whitman, Richard Johnson, Anthony Valentine, Patrick Magee

Murder on the Orient Express (1974) G.W. Films, distributed by EMI
Director: Sidney Lumet; *Producers*: John Brabourne and Richard Goodwin; *Script*: Paul Dehn, based on the novel by Agatha Christie; *Photography*: Geoffrey Unsworth; *Editor*: Anne V. Coates; *Music*: Richard Rodney Bennett; *Starring*: Albert Finney, Lauren Bacall, Martin Balsam, Ingrid Bergman, Vanessa Redgrave, Jean Pierre Cassel, Jacqueline Bisset, Sean Connery, Richard Widmark, Anthony Perkins, Rachel Roberts, John Gielgud, Wendy Hiller, Michael York, Colin Blakely, George Coulouris, Denis Quilley

Night Hair Child (1972) Leander Film/Leisure Media, distributed by Rank
Director: James Kelly; *Producer*: Graham Harris; *Script*: Trevor Preston; *Photography*: Luis Cuadrado and Harry Waxman; *Editor*: Nicholas Wentworth; *Music*: Stelvio Cipriani; *Starring*: Mark Lester, Britt Ekland, Hardy Kruger, Lilli Palmer, Harry Andrews, Conchita Montez, Colette Jack, Ricardo Palacios

North Sea Hijack (1980) Cinema Seven Productions, distributed by CIC
Director: Andrew V. McLaglen; *Producer*: Elliot Kastner; *Script*: Jack Davies, based on his novel *Esther, Ruth and Jennifer*; *Photography*: Tony Imi; *Editor*: Alan Strachan; *Music*: Michael J. Lewis; *Starring*: Roger Moore, James Mason, Anthony Perkins, Michael Parks, David Hedison, Jack Watson, George Baker, Jeremy Clyde, David Wood, Faith Brook, Lea Brodie, Anthony Pullen Shaw, Phillip O'Brien, John Westbrook, Jennifer Hilary

The Odessa File (1974) Domino/Oceanic Filmproduction, distributed by Columbia
Director: Ronald Neame; *Producers*: John Woolf and John R. Sloan; *Script*: Kenneth Ross and George Markstein, based on the novel by Frederick Forsyth; *Editor*: Ralph Kemplen; *Photography*: Oswald Morris; *Music*: Andrew Lloyd Webber; *Starring*: Jon Voight, Mary Tamm, Maximilian Schell, Maria Schell, Derek Jacobi, Shmuel Rodensky, Noel Willman

Raise the Titanic (1980) ITC/Marble Arch Productions, distributed by ITC
Director: Jerry Jameson; *Producer*: William Frye; *Script*: Adam Kennedy and Eric Hughes, based on the novel by Clive Cussler; *Photography*: Matthew F. Leonetti; *Music*: John Barry; *Editors*: J. Terry Williams and Robert F. Shugrue; *Starring*: Jason Robards, Richard Jordan, Alec Guinness, David Selby, Anne Archer, M. Emmet Walsh, Bo Brundin, J. D. Cannon

Ransom (1975) Lion International/20th Century Fox, distributed by British Lion
Director: Caspar Wrede; *Producer*: Peter Rawley; *Script*: Paul Wheeler; *Photography*: Sven Nykvist; *Editor*: Eric Boyd-Perkins; *Music*: Jerry Goldsmith; *Starring*: Sean Connery, Ian McShane, Norman Bristow, John Cording, Isabel Dean

The Riddle of the Sands (1978) Worldmark Films/NFFC, distributed by Rank
Director: Tony Maylam; *Producer*: Drummond Challis; *Script*: Tony Maylam and John Bailey, based on the novel by Erskine Childers; *Editor*: Peter Hollywood; *Photography*: Christopher Challis and Arthur Wooster; *Music*: Howard Blake; *Starring*: Michael York, Jenny Agutter, Simon MacCorkindale, Alan Badel, Jurgen Andersen, Michael Sheard, Hans Meyer, Wolf Kahler, Olga Lowe, Ronald Markham

Saturn 3 (1980) ITC/Transcontinental Film Productions, distributed by ITC
Director / Producer: Stanley Donen; *Script*: Martin Amis; *Editor*: Richard Marden; *Photography*: Billy Williams; *Music*: Elmer Bernstein; *Starring*: Kirk Douglas, Farrah Fawcett, Harvey Keitel, Ed Bishop, Douglas Lambert, Christopher Muncke

The Sea Wolves, The Last Charge of the Calcutta Light Horse (1980)
Richmond Light Horse Productions (London)/Varius (Zurich)/Lorimar, distributed by Rank
Director: Andrew V. McLaglen; *Producer*: Euan Lloyd; *Script*: Reginald Rose, based on the novel *Boarding Party* by James Leasor; *Photography*: Tony Imi; *Editor*: John Glen; *Music*: Roy Budd; *Starring*: Gregory Peck, Roger Moore, David Niven, Trevor Howard, Barbara Kellermann, Patrick MacNee, Patrick Allen, Bernard Archard, Martin Benson, Faith Brook, Allan Cuthbertson, Kenneth Griffith, Percy Herbert .

Shout at the Devil (1976) Tonav Film Productions, distributed by Hemdale International
Director: Peter Hunt; *Producer*: Michael Klinger; *Script*: Wilbur Smith, Stanley Price and Alastair Reid, based on the novel by Wilbur Smith; *Photography*: Michael Reed; *Editor*: Michael Duthie; *Music*: Maurice Jarre; *Starring*: Lee Marvin, Roger Moore, Barbara Parkins, Ian Holm, Rene Kolldehoff, Gernot Endemann, Horst Janson, Gerard Paquis, Maurice Denham, Jean Kent, George Coulouris

The Thirty Nine Steps (1978) Greg Smith/Norfolk International, distributed by Rank
Director: Don Sharp; *Producer*: Greg Smith; *Script*: Michael Robson, based on the novel by John Buchan; *Photography*: John Coquillon; *Editor*: Eric Boyd-Perkins; *Music*: Ed Welch; *Starring*: Robert Powell, David Warner, Eric Porter, Karen Dotrice, Ronald Pickup, Donald Pickering, John Mills, George Baker, Timothy West, Miles Anderson, Andrew Keir

To the Devil a Daughter (1976) Hammer/Terra Filmkunst, distributed by EMI
Director: Peter Sykes; *Producer*: Roy Skeggs; *Script*: Chris Wicking and John Peacock, based on the novel by Dennis Wheatley; *Photography*: David Watkin; *Editor*: John Trumper; *Music*: Paul Glass; *Starring*: Richard Widmark, Christopher Lee, Honor Blackman, Denholm Elliott, Michael Goodliffe, Nastassja Kinski, Eva Maria Meineke, Anthony Valentine

Who Dares Wins (1982) Richmond Light Horse/Varius, distributed by Rank
Director: Ian Sharp; *Producer*: Euan Lloyd; *Script*: Reginald Rose; *Editor*: John Grover; *Photography*: Phil Meheux; *Music*: Roy Budd; *Starring*: Lewis Collins, Judy Davis, Richard Widmark, Edward Woodward, Robert Webber, Tony Doyle, John Duttine, Kenneth Griffith, Rosalind Lloyd, Ingrid Pitt, Norman Rodway

The Wicked Lady (1983) London Cannon Films/Dawn Property Company
Director: Michael Winner; *Producers*: Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus; *Script*: Michael Winner and Leslie Arliss, based on the novel *The Life and Death of the Wicked Lady Skelton* by Magdalen King-Hall; *Editor*: Arnold Crust [Michael Winner]; *Photography*: Jack Cardiff; *Music*: Tony Banks; *Starring*: Faye Dunaway, Alan Bates, John Gielgud, Denholm Elliott, Prunella Scales, Oliver Tobias

The Wild Geese (1978) Richmond Film Productions (West), distributed by Rank
Director: Andrew V. McLaglen; *Producer*: Euan Lloyd; *Script*: Reginald Rose, based on the novel by Daniel Carney; *Photography*: Jack Hildyard; *Editor*: John Glen; *Music*: Roy Budd; *Starring*: Richard Burton, Roger Moore, Richard Harris, Hardy Kruger, Stewart Granger, Jack Watson, Winston Ntshona, John Kani, Frank Finlay, Kenneth Griffith, Barry Foster, Jeff Corey, Ronald Fraser, Brook Williams, Percy Herbert, Patrick Allen, Ian Yule

Wild Geese II (1985) Frontier Films/Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment, distributed by TESE
Director: Peter Hunt; *Producer*: Euan Lloyd; *Script*: Reginald Rose, based on the novel *The Square Circle* by Daniel Carney; *Photography*: Michael Reed; *Editor*: Keith Palmer; *Music*: Roy Budd; *Starring*: Scott Glenn, Barbara Carrera, Edward Fox, Laurence Olivier, Robert Webber, Robert Frietag, Stratford Johns, Derek Thompson, John Terry, Ingrid Pitt

Bibliography

1. Selected Fiction

Blake, Patrick (1979) *Escape to Athena* (London, Fontana)
Buchan, John (1915 / 1966) *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (London, Pan Books)
Carney, Daniel (1977 / 1978) *The Wild Geese* (London, Corgi)
_____ (1982 / 1985) *The Square Circle* (London, Corgi)
Chandler, Raymond (1939 / 1979) *The Big Sleep* (London, Pan Books)
Chetwynd-Hayes, R. (1976) *The Monster Club* (London, New English Library)
Childers, Erskine (1903 / 1995) *The Riddle of the Sands* (London, Penguin)
Christie, Agatha (1934 / 1994) *Murder on the Orient Express* (London, Harper Collins)
_____ (1937 / 1993) *Death on the Nile* (London, Harper Collins)
_____ (1941 / 1993) *Evil under the Sun* (London, Harper Collins)
_____ (1962 / 1993) *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* (London, Harper Collins)
Cussler, Clive (1976 / 1977) *Raise the Titanic!* (London, Book Club Associates)
Davies, Jack (1979) *Esther, Ruth and Jennifer* (London, W. H. Allen)
Follett, James (1982) *The Tiptoe Boys* (London, Corgi Books)
Follett, Ken (1978) *Eye of the Needle* (London, Futura)
Forsyth, Frederick (1972 / 1995) *The Odessa File* (London, Arrow)
_____ (1974 / 1996) *The Dogs of War* (London, Arrow)
Gallagher, Steven (1980) *Saturn 3* (London, Sphere)
Greenaway, Peter Van (1973 / 1975) *The Medusa Touch* (St Albans, Panther)
Higgins, Jack (1975 / 1998) *The Eagle has Landed* (London, Penguin)
Katz, Robert (1977) *The Cassandra Crossing* (London, Pan Books)
Leasor, James (1978 / 1980) *The Sea Wolves* (published first as *Boarding Party*) (London, Corgi)
Levin, Ira (1976) *The Boys from Brazil* (London, Pan Books)
MacLean, Alistair (1961 / 1978) *Fear is the Key* (London, Collins)
_____ (1971 / 1983) *Bear Island* (Glasgow, Fontana)
Raven, Simon (1960 / 1966) *Doctors Wear Scarlet* (London, Panther Books)
Ross, Bernard L. (1978) *Capricorn One* (London, Futura)
Shew, Spencer (1971) *Hands of the Ripper* (London, Sphere)
Smith, Wilbur (1968 / 1998) *Shout at the Devil* (London, Pan Books)
_____ (1970 / 1998) *Goldmine* (London, Pan Books)
Stevenson, Robert Louis (1886 / 1987) *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Oxford, Oxford University Press)
Wheatley, Dennis (1953 / 1972) *To the Devil – A Daughter* (London, Hutchinson)
Wilson, Colin (1976) *The Space Vampires* (London, Hart-Davis)

2. Journal Articles and Conference Papers

Cannadine, David (1979) 'James Bond and the Decline of England' in *Encounter* (September 1979, pages 46-55)

Chapman, James (1998) 'Our Finest Hour Revisited: The Second World War in British Feature Films since 1945' in Burton, Alan and Petley, Julian (eds.) *Journal of Popular British Cinema* Issue 1, January 1998, (London, Society for the Study of Popular British Cinema/Flicks Books)

Clay, A. (1998) 'When the Gangs Came to Britain' in Burton, Alan and Petley, Julian (eds.) *Journal of Popular British Cinema* Issue 1, January 1998, (London, Society for the Study of Popular British Cinema/Flicks Books)

Coe, Jonathan (1996) 'Hammer's Cosy Violence' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 6, no. 8, pages 10-13)

French, Phillip (1965) 'Richard Lester' in *Movie* (Autumn 1965, no. 14, pages 5-11)

Gordon, David (1974) 'Ten Points About the Crisis in the British Film Industry' in *Sight and Sound* (vol. 43, no. 2)

Healy, Murray (1995) 'Were We Being Served? Homosexual Representation in Popular British Comedy' in *Screen* (issue 36, volume 3, pages 243-256)

Jameson, Fredric (1984) 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of late Capitalism' in *New Left Review* (July-August 1984, no. 146, pages 64-71)

Klemensen, Richard (1978) 'Hammer: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' in *Little Shoppe of Horrors* (April 1978, no. 4, pages 23-110)

Lovell, Alan (March 1969) *British Cinema: The Unknown Cinema* (BFI Education Seminar Paper)

Mijolla, Alain de (1993) 'Freud and the Psychoanalytic Situation on the Screen', paper delivered at 'Cinema and Psychoanalysis: Parallel Histories' conference organised by Critical Studies and the Human Sciences (UCLA), Los Angeles, 11-13 November 1993

3. Books

Aldgate, Anthony and Richards, Jeffrey (1986) *Britain Can Take It: The British Cinema in the Second World War* (Oxford, Blackwell)

Anderson, Benedict (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso)

Armes, Roy (1978) *A Critical History of the British Cinema* (London, Secker & Warburg)

Aspinall, Sue and Murphy, Robert (eds.) (1983) *Gainsborough Melodrama* (London, BFI)

Auty, Martyn and Roddick, Nick (eds.) (1985) *British Cinema Now* (London, BFI)

Barr, Charles (ed.) (1986) *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema* (London, BFI)

_____ (1997) "Before *Blackmail*: Silent British Cinema" in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)

Baston, Lewis (2000) *Sleaze: The State of Britain* (London, Macmillan/Channel 4 Books)

Bazin, André (1968) 'The Evolution of Film Language' in Graham, Peter (ed.) *The New Wave* (London, Secker & Warburg)

Beja, Morris (1979) *Film and Literature* (New York, Longman)
Bellour, Raymond (1990) 'Believing in the Cinema' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Bennett, Tony and Woollacott, Janet (1987) *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* (London, Macmillan)
Benson, Raymond (1984) *The James Bond Bedside Companion* (London, Boxtree)
Bergstrom, Janet (1990) 'Psychological Explanation in the Films of Lang and Pabst' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Berne, Eric (1964 / 1966) *Games People Play: The Psychology of Human Relations* (London, Penguin)
Bick, Ilsa J. (1994) 'The Sight of Difference' in Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.) *Re-Viewing British Cinema: 1900-1992* (Albany, State University Of New York)
Bilbow, Marjorie (1978) *The Facts about a Feature Film: Featuring Hammer Films* (London, G Whizzard/André Deutsch)
Biskind, Peter (1998) *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How the Sex 'n' Drugs 'n' Rock 'n' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood* (London, Bloomsbury)
Booker, Christopher (1980) *The Seventies: Portrait of a Decade* (London, Allen Lane)
Boot, Andy (1996) *Fragments of Fear: An Illustrated History of British Horror Films* (London, Creation Books)
Bryce, Alan (ed.) (2000) *Amicus: The Studio that Dripped Blood* (Liskeard, Stray Cat Publishing)
Buscombe, Edward (1976) *Making Legend of the Werewolf* (London, BFI)
Cartmell, Deborah and Hunter, I. Q. and Kaye, Heidi and Whelehan, Imelda (eds.) (1997) *Trash Aesthetics: Popular Culture and its Audience* (London, Pluto Press)
Cawelti, John George (1976) *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press)
Chapman, James (1999) *Licence to Thrill: A Cultural History of the James Bond Films* (London, I. B. Tauris)
Chibnall, Steve and Hunter, I. Q. (1995) *A Naughty Business: The British Cinema of Exploitation* (Leicester, Phoenix Arts)
Chibnall, Steve and Murphy, Robert (eds.) (1999) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Chibnall, Steve and Petley, Julian (eds.) (2002) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Clark, Alan (1998) *The Tories: Conservatives and the Nation State 1922-1997* (London, Phoenix)
Clover, Carol (1993) *Men, Women and Chainsaws* (London, BFI)
Cohen, Stanley (1972) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (London, MacGibbon & Kee)
Cook, Chris and Sked, Alan (1980) *Post-War Britain: A Political History* (Harmondsworth, Penguin)
Cook, John R. (1999) 'Adapting Telefantasy: The *Doctor Who and the Daleks* Films' in Hunter, I. Q. (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Cook, Pam (1996) *Fashioning the Nation: Costume and Identity in British Cinema* (London, BFI)
Corner, John and Harvey, Sylvia (1991) 'Mediating Tradition and Modernity: The Heritage/Enterprise Couplet' in Corner, John and Harvey, Sylvia (eds.) *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture* (London, Routledge)
Cosgrove, Patrick (1992) *The Strange Death of Socialist Britain: Post War British Politics* (London, Constable)

Coubro, Gerry (1995) *Hammer and Horror* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/Sheffield Hallam University)
Cowie, Elizabeth (1991) '*Underworld USA*: Psychoanalysis and Film Theory in the 1980s' in Donald, James (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan)
Curran, James and Porter, Vincent (eds.) (1983) *British Cinema History* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson)
Darwin, Charles (1871 / 2003) *The Descent of Man* (London, Gibson Square Books)
Davies, David Stuart (1976) *Holmes of the Movies: The Screen Career of Sherlock Holmes* (London, New English Library)
Davy, Charles (1938) 'Postscript: The Film Marches On' in Davy, Charles (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.)
Department of Trade (1984) *Film Policy* (Cmnd. 9319, London, HMSO,)
Derry, Charles (1977) *Dark Dreams* (New Jersey, A. S. Barnes & Co.)
Dickinson, Margaret and Street, Sarah (1985) *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the British Government 1927-84* (London, BFI)
Dixon, Wheeler Winston (1991) *Charm of Evil: The Life and Films of Terence Fisher* (New Jersey, Scarecrow Press)
Dobson, Christopher and Miller, John and Payne, Ronald (1982) *The Falklands Conflict* (London, Coronet)
Donald, James (1991) 'On the Threshold: Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies' in Donald, James (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Studies: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan)
Durgnat, Raymond (1970) *A Mirror for England* (London, Faber & Faber)
Eberts, Jake and Ilott, Terry (1990) *My Indecision is Final: The Rise and Fall of Goldcrest Films* (London, Faber & Faber)
Elley, Derek (ed.) (1996) *Variety Movie Guide '97* (London, Hamlyn)
Ellis, John (1996) 'The Quality Film Adventure: British Critics and the Cinema 1942-1948' in Higson, Andrew (ed.) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London, Cassell)
Eyles, Alan (1993) *ABC, the First Name in Entertainment* (London, BFI)
Eyles, Alan and Adkinson, Robert and Fry, Nicholas (1973 / 1994) *House of Hammer: The Complete Hammer Films Story* (London, Creation Books)
Fenton, Harvey and Flint, David (eds.) (2001) *Ten Years of Terror: British Horror Films of the 1970s* (Guildford, Fab Press)
Finney, Angus (1996) *The Egos have Landed: The Rise and Fall of Palace Pictures* (London, Heinemann)
Frank, Alan (1977) *Horror Films* (London, Hamlyn)
Freud, Anna (1986 / 1991) 'The Concept of the Unconscious – Introduction' in Freud, Anna (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books)
Freud, Sigmund (1901 / 1991) 'On Dreams' in Freud, Anna (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books)
_____ (1901 / 1991) *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 5
_____ (1905 / 1990) 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' in *Case Histories 1* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 8
_____ (1905 / 1991) 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' in Freud, Anna (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books)
_____ (1907 / 1990) 'Delusions and Dreams in Jensen's *Gradiva'* in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14

_____ (1907 / 1990) 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices' in *The Origins of Religion* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 13
_____ (1908 / 1990) 'Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1909 / 1990) 'Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy' in *Case Histories 1* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 8
_____ (1910 / 1990) 'Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1911 / 1991) 'Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning' in *On Metapsychology* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 11
_____ (1913 / 1990) 'Totem and Taboo' in *The Origins of Religion* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 13
_____ (1914 / 1991) 'On Narcissism: An Introduction' in *On Metapsychology* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 11
_____ (1915 / 1991) 'The Unconscious' in Freud, Anna (ed.) *The Essentials Of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books)
_____ (1916 / 1990) 'Some Character Types Met With in Psychoanalytic Work' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1919 / 1990) 'The Uncanny' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1923 / 1991) 'The Ego and the Id' in *On Metapsychology* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 11
_____ (1923 / 1990) 'A Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1928 / 1990) 'Dostoevsky and Parricide' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
_____ (1939 / 1990) 'Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays' in *The Origins of Religion* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 13
_____ (1940 / 1991) 'Some Elementary Lessons in Psycho-Analysis' in Freud, Anna (ed.) *The Essentials of Psycho-Analysis* (London, Penguin Books)
_____ (1942 / 1990) 'Psychopathic Characters on the Stage' in *Art and Literature* (London, Penguin Books) Penguin Freud Library 14
Friedburg, Anne (1990) 'A Denial of Difference: Theories of Cinematic Identification' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Friedman, Lester (ed.) (1993) *British Cinema and Thatcherism: Fires Were Started* (London, UCL Press)
Gibson, Pamela Church and Hill, Andrew (2001) ' "Tutte e marchio!" Excess, Masquerade and Performativity in 70s Cinema' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (second edition) (London, BFI)
Giddings, Robert and Selby, Keith and Wensley, Chris (1990) *Screening the Novel* (London, Macmillan Press)
Glover, D. (1989) 'The Stuff that Dreams are made of' in Longhurst, Derek (ed.) *Gender, Genre and Narrative Pleasure* (London, Unwin Hyman)
Golub, S. (1993) 'Spies in the House of Quality: The American Reception of *Brideshead Revisited'* in Reynolds, Peter (ed.) *Novel Images* (London, Routledge)
Gough-Yates, Kevin (1997) 'Exiles and British Cinema' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
Grade, Lew (1987) *Still Dancing* (London, Collins)

Grant, Barry Keith (ed.) (1984) *Planks of Reason: Essays on the Horror Film* (London, Scarecrow Press)
Hall, Stuart (1988) *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London, Verso)
Hall, Stuart and Critcher, Chas and Jefferson, Tony and Clarke, John and Roberts, Brian (1978) *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (London, Macmillan)
Halsey, A. H. (1995) *Change in British Society* (Oxford, OPUS/Oxford University Press)
Hardy, Phil (ed.) (1997) *The BFI Companion to Crime* (London, Cassell/BFI)
_____ (ed.) (1985 / 1996) *The Aurum Film Encyclopedia: Horror* (London, Aurum Press)
Harper, Sue (1987) 'Historical Pleasures: Gainsborough Melodrama' in Gledhill, Christine (ed.) *Home is Where the Heart is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film* (London, BFI)
_____ (1994) *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film* (London, BFI)
Harris, Thomas Anthony (1969 / 1995) *I'm OK, You're OK: A Practical Guide to Transactional Analysis* (London, Arrow)
Hawkes, Terence (1977) *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London, Methuen & Co.)
Haycroft, Howard (1974, revised edition) *Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective Story* (New York, Biblo & Tannen)
Hearn, Marcus and Barnes, Alan (1997) *The Hammer Story* (London, Titan)
Heath, Edward (1998) *The Course of My Life: My Autobiography* (London, Hodder & Stoughton)
Hennessy, Peter (2000) *The Prime Minister: The Office and its Holders since 1945* (London, Allen Lane/Penguin Press)
Hewison, Robert (1987) *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London, Methuen)
Higson, Andrew (1993) 'Re-presenting the Nation Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film' in Friedman, Lester (ed.) *British Cinema and Thatcherism* (London, UCL Press)
_____ (1994) 'A Diversity of Film Practices: Renewing British Cinema in the 1970s' in Moore-Gilbert, Bart (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge)
_____ (1995) *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford, Clarendon/Oxford University Press)
_____ (1996) 'The Heritage Film and British Cinema' in Higson, Andrew (ed.) *Dissolving Views: Key Writings on British Cinema* (London, Cassell)
_____ (2000) 'The Instability of the National' in Ashby, Justine and Higson, Andrew (eds.) *British Cinema: Past and Present* (London, Routledge)
Hill, John (1986) *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-1963* (London, BFI)
_____ (1992) 'The Issue of National Cinema and British Film Production' in Petrie, Duncan (ed.) *New Questions of British Cinema* (London, BFI)
_____ (1997) 'British Cinema as National Cinema: Production, Audience and Representation' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
_____ (1999) 'Allegorising the Nation: British Gangster Films of the 1980s' in Chibnall, Steve and Murphy, Robert (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge)
_____ (1999) *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford, Clarendon Press)

_____ (1999) 'Cinema' in Stokes, Jane and Reading, Anna (eds.) *The Media in Britain: Current Debates and Developments* (Basingstoke, Macmillan)

Hill, John and McLoone, Martin (eds.) (1996) *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television* (Luton, John Libbey/University of Luton Press)

Hollows, Joanne and Jancovich, Mark (1995) 'Introduction: Popular Film and Cultural Distinctions' in Hollows, Joanne and Jancovich, Mark (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)

Houston, Penelope (1963) *The Contemporary Cinema* (Harmondsworth, Penguin)

Hunt, Leon (1998) *British Low Culture: From Safari Suits to Sexploitation* (London, Routledge)

_____ (1999) 'Dog Eat Dog: *The Squeeze* and the *Sweeney* films' in Chibnall, Steve and Murphy, Robert (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge)

_____ (2002) 'Necromancy in the UK: Witchcraft and the Occult in British Horror' in Chibnall, Steve and Petley, Julian (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Hutchings, Peter (1993) *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)

_____ (2002) 'The Amicus House of Horror' in Chibnall, Steve and Petley, Julian (eds.) *British Horror Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Jarvie, Ian (1992) *Hollywood's Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade 1920-1950* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)

Jeavons, Clyde (1974) *A Pictorial History of War Films* (London, Hamlyn)

_____ (1975) 'The Unkindest Cuts' in Castell, David (ed.) *Cinema 76* (London, Independent Magazines (Publishing) Ltd.)

Jenkins, Keith (1991) *Re-thinking History* (London, Routledge)

Jenkinson, P. (1977) 'The Agatha Christie Films' in Keating, H. R. F. (ed.) *Agatha Christie, First Lady of Crime* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

Jessop, Bob (1989) 'From Social Democracy to Thatcherism: Twenty-Five Years of British Politics' in Abercrombie, Nicholas and Warde, Alan (eds.) (1992) *Social Change in Contemporary Britain* (Cambridge, Polity Press)

Johnson, Tom and Del Vecchio, Deborah (1996) *Hammer Films: An Exhaustive Filmography* (Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland & Co.)

Johnston, Claire (1990) 'Femininity and the Masquerade: *Anne of the Indies*' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Kann, Maurice (1938) 'Hollywood and Britain – Three Thousand Miles Apart' in Davy, Charles (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.)

Kaplan, Cora (1997) 'An Unsuitable Job for a Feminist?' in Ashley, Bob (ed.) *Reading Popular Narrative* (London, Leicester University Press)

Kaplan, E. Ann (1990) 'Motherhood and Representation: From Postwar Freudian Figurations to Postmodernism' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Keating, H. R. F. (1977) 'Hercule Poirot - A Companion Portrait' in Keating, H. R. F. (ed.) *Agatha Christie, First Lady of Crime* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

Knight, Stephen (1980) *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (London, Macmillan)

Korda, Alexander (1938) 'British Films: To-day and To-morrow' in Davy, Charles (ed.) *Footnotes to the Film* (London, Lovat Dickson Ltd./Reader's Union Ltd.)

Krzywinska, Tanya (2000) *A Skin for Dancing In: Possession, Witchcraft and Voodoo in Film* (Trowbridge, Flicks Books)

Laing, Stuart (1994) 'The Politics of Change: Institutional Change in the 1970s' in Moore-Gilbert, Bart (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge)
Landy, Marcia (1996) *Cinematic Uses of the Past* (London, University of Minnesota Press)
Leitch, Thomas (2002) *Crime Films* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)
Light, Alison (1991) *Forever England* (London, Routledge)
Linderman, Deborah (1990) 'Cinematic Abreaction: Tourneur's *Cat People*' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Longford Committee Investigating Pornography (1972) *Pornography: The Longford Report* (London, Coronet)
Longhurst, Derek (1989) 'Sherlock Holmes: Adventures of an English Gentleman 1887-1894' in Longhurst, Derek (ed.) *Gender, Genre and Narrative Pleasure* (London, Unwin Hyman)
López, Ana M. (2000) 'Facing up to Hollywood' in Gledhill, Christine and Williams, Linda (eds.) *Reinventing Film Studies* (London, Arnold)
Lovell, Alan (1997) 'British Cinema: The Known Cinema?' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
Lumet, Sidney (1995) *Making Movies* (London, Bloomsbury)
MacCabe, Colin (ed.) (1986) *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)
Manvell, Roger (1969) *New Cinema in Britain* (London, Studio Vista)
McCarty, John (1990) *The Modern Horror Film* (New York, Citadel Press)
McCracken, Scott (1998) *Pulp: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)
McFarlane, Brian (1986) 'A Literary Cinema? British Films and British Novels' in Barr, Charles (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays* (London, BFI)
_____ (1997) *An Autobiography of British Cinema* (London, Methuen)
McGillivray, David (1992) *Doing Rude Thing: The History of the British Sex Film 1957-1981* (London, Sun Tavern Fields)
Medhurst, Andy (1984) '1950s War Films' in Hurd, Geoff (ed.) *National Fictions: World War Two in British Films and Television* (London, BFI)
Meikle, Denis (1996) *A History of Horrors: The Rise and Fall of the House of Hammer* (Maryland, Scarecrow Press Inc)
_____ (2002) *Jack the Ripper: The Murders and the Movies* (Richmond, Reynolds & Hearn Ltd)
Metz, Christian (1982) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* (London, Macmillan)
Miller, Jeffrey S. (2000) *Something Completely Different: British Television and American Culture* (Minneapolis, University Of Minnesota Press)
Moore-Gilbert, Bart (1994) 'Cultural Closure or Post-Avantgardism?' in Moore-Gilbert, Bart (ed.) *The Arts in the 1970s: Cultural Closure?* (London, Routledge)
Moorhouse, Geoffrey (1964) *Britain in the Sixties: The Other England* (Harmondsworth, Penguin)
Mulvey, Laura (1990) 'Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by *Duel in the Sun*' in Kaplan, E. Ann (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Murphy, Robert (1983) 'Rank's Attempt on the American Market: 1944-49' in Curran, James and Porter, Vincent (eds.) (1983) *British Cinema History* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

_____ (1986) 'Under the Shadow of Hollywood' in Barr, Charles (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays* (London, BFI)
_____ (1992 / 1997) *Sixties British Cinema* (London, BFI)
_____ (ed.) (1997) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
_____ (2000) *British Cinema and the Second World War* (London, Continuum)
Nelmes, Jill (1999, second edition) *An Introduction to Film Studies* (London, Routledge)
Newman, Kim (1988) *Nightmare Movies: A Critical History of the Horror Movie from 1968* (London, Bloomsbury)
_____ (ed.) (1996) *The BFI Companion to Horror* (London, BFI)
Orr, John and Nicholson, Colin (eds.) (1992) *Cinema and Fiction* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press)
Osborne, Charles (1982) *The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie* (New York, Random House)
O'Sullivan, Tim and Hartley, John and Saunders, Danny and Montgomery, Martin and Fiske, John (1994, second edition) *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (London, Routledge)
Palmer, Jerry (1978) *Thriller: Genesis and Structure of a Popular Genre* (London, Edward Arnold)
_____ (1991) *Potboilers: Methods, Concepts and Case Studies in Popular Fiction* (London, Routledge)
Palmer, Scott (1993) *The Films of Agatha Christie* (London, B T Batsford)
Park, James (1990) *British Cinema: The Lights that Failed* (London, B T Batsford)
Parkinson, David (1995) *History of Film* (London, Thames & Hudson)
Perry, George (1974 / 1975) *The Great British Picture Show: From the Nineties to the Seventies* (St Albans, Paladin)
Petley, Julian (1986) 'The Lost Continent' in Barr, Charles (ed.) *All Our Yesterdays* (London, BFI)
Pirie, David (1973) *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (London, Gordon Fraser)
_____ (1980) *Hammer: A Cinema Case Study* (London, BFI)
Puttnam, David (1997) *The Undeclared War: The Struggle for Control of the World's Film Industry* (London, Harper Collins)
Pym, John (ed.) (1998) *Time Out Film Guide 1998* (London, Penguin)
Rattigan, Neil (1994) 'The Last Gasp of the Middle Class: British War Films of the 1950s' in Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.) *Re-Viewing British Cinema: 1900-1992* (Albany, State University Of New York)
Richards, Jeffrey (1984) *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain 1930-1939* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul)
_____ (1997) *Films and British National Identity* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)
_____ (2000) 'Rethinking British Cinema' in Ashby, Justine and Higson, Andrew (eds.) *British Cinema: Past and Present* (London, Routledge)
Riddell, Peter (1993) *The Thatcher Era and its Legacy* (Oxford, Blackwell)
Rigby, Jonathan (2000) *English Gothic: A Century of Horror Cinema* (London, Reynolds & Hearn)
Riley, Dick and McAllister, Pam (eds.) (1998) *The New Bedside, Bathtub and Armchair Companion to Agatha Christie* (New York, Unger Publishing)
Robertson, James C. (1999) 'The Censors and British Gangland' in Chibnall, Steve and Murphy, Robert (eds.) *British Crime Cinema* (London, Routledge)

Robertson, Roland (1992) *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London, Sage)
Rolo, Charles J. (1957) 'Simenon and Spillane: The Metaphysics of Murder for the Millions' in Rosenberg, B. and Manning White, D. (eds.) *Mass Culture* (USA, Free Press)
Ross, Andrew (1989) *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (London, Routledge)
Rubin, Martin (1999) *Thrillers* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)
Ryall, Tom (1995) *British Popular Cinema* (Sheffield, Pavic Publications/Sheffield Hallam University)
Rycroft, Charles (1968 / 1995) *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* (London, Penguin)
Sanders, Dennis and Lovallo, Len (1989) *The Agatha Christie Companion* (New York, Berkley Books)
Sanjek, David (1994) 'Twilight of the Monsters: The English Horror Film 1968-1975' in Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.) *Re-Viewing British Cinema: 1900-1992* (Albany, State University Of New York Press)
Schlesinger, Philip (1991) *Media, State and Nation* (London, Sage)
Shaw, Marion and Vanacker, Sabine (1991) *Reflecting on Miss Marple* (London, Routledge)
Short, Sue (1999) 'No Flesh Shall Be Spared: Richard Stanley's *Hardware*' in Hunter, I. Q. (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Silverman, Kaja (1988) *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Indiana, Indiana University Press)
Sinyard, Neil (1985) *The Films of Richard Lester* (London, Croom Helm)
_____ (1986) *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation* (London, Croom Helm)
Smith, Gary A. (1991) *Epic Films: Casts, Credits and Commentary on over 250 Historical Spectacle Movies* (Jefferson, North Carolina, McFarland & Co.)
Sontag, Susan (1966) *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York, Dell Publishing)
Stafford-Clark, David (1967) *What Freud Really Said* (Middlesex, Penguin Books)
Street, Sarah (1997) 'British Film and the National Interest: 1927-1939' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
_____ (1997) *British National Cinema* (London, Routledge)
_____ (2000) 'Stepping Westward: The Distribution of British Films in America, and the case of *The Private Life of Henry VIII*' in Ashby, Justine and Higson, Andrew (eds.) *British Cinema: Past and Present* (London Routledge)
Sutherland, John (2002) *Reading the Decades: Fifty Years of the Nation's Bestselling Books* (London, BBC Worldwide)
Swann, Paul (1987) *The Hollywood Feature Film in Postwar Britain* (London, Croom Helm)
Symonds, Julian (1959 / 1973) *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (London, Mayflower)
_____ (1969, revised edition) *The Detective Story in Britain* (London, Longman)
Threadgall, Derek (1994) *Shepperton Studios: An Independent View* (London, BFI)
Tinker, Jack (1980) *The Television Barons* (London, Quartet)
Tohill, Cathal and Tombs, Pete (1994) *Immoral Tales: Sex and Horror Cinema in Europe 1956-1984* (London, Primitive Press)
Trevelyan, John (1973) *What the Censor Saw* (London, Michael Joseph Ltd)

Tudor, Andrew (1989) *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford, Blackwell)
Turner, Adrian (1975) 'Rectangle into Square' in Castell, David (ed.) *Cinema 76* (London, Independent Magazines (Publishing) Ltd.)
Wagner, Geoffrey (1975) *The Novel and the Cinema* (London, Tantivy Press)
Walker, Alexander (1974) *Hollywood England: The British Film Industry in the Sixties* (London, Harrap)
_____ (1985) *National Heroes: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Harrap)
Walker, John (1985) *The Once and Future Film: British Cinema in the Seventies and Eighties* (London, Methuen)
Warren, Patricia (1983) *Elstree: The British Hollywood* (London, Elm Tree Books)
Watson, Colin (1971) *Snobbery with Violence* (London, Eyre & Spottiswoode)
Weeks, Jeffrey (1989) *Sex, Politics and Society* (London, Longman)
Whitehead, Phillip (1985) *The Writing on the Wall: Britain in the Seventies* (London, Michael Joseph/Channel 4 Books)
Wiener, Martin J. (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press)
Williams, Raymond (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London, Croom Helm)
Willis, Andy (1995) 'Cultural Studies and Popular Film' in Hollows, Joanne and Jancovich, Mark (eds.) *Approaches to Popular Film* (Manchester, Manchester University Press)
Wilson, E. (1957) 'Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?' in Rosenberg, Bernard and Manning White, David (eds.) *Mass Culture* (USA, Free Press)
Wood, Linda (ed.) (1983) *British Films 1971-1981* (London, BFI)
_____ (1997) 'Low-budget British Films in the 1930s' in Murphy, Robert (ed.) *The British Cinema Book* (London, BFI)
Wood, Robin (1979) 'Introduction' in Wood, Robin and Lippe, Richard (eds.) *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film* (Toronto, Festival of Festivals)
Wright, Bruce Lanier (1995) *Nightwalkers: Gothic Horror Movies - The Modern Era* (Dallas, Taylor Publishing)
Wright, Elizabeth (1991) 'The Reader in Analysis' in Donald, James (ed.) *Psychoanalysis and Cultural Theory: Thresholds* (London, Macmillan)
Wright, Peter (1999) 'The British post-*Alien* intrusion film' in Hunter, I. Q. (ed.) *British Science Fiction Cinema* (London, Routledge)
Young, Hugo (1990) *One of Us: A Biography of Margaret Thatcher* (London, Pan Books)
Young, Jock (1992) 'The Rising Demand for Law and Order and Our Maginot Lines of Defence Against Crime' in Abercrombie, Nicholas and Warde, Alan (eds.) *Social Change in Contemporary Britain* (Cambridge, Polity Press)