A Sociological Study of the British Independent Film Field: The Case of British-Asian Film Production 1976-1996

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ABSTRACT

This thesis performs a social mapping of the field of British-Asian independent film between 1976 and 1996. Through a practical application of Pierre Bourdieu's methodological approach to reading cultural production, this research examines a series of film production contexts as a means of revealing refracted homologies between particular texts, the cultural field and the broader field of power in Britain.

The empirical core of the thesis identifies and examines five different film practices: an excluded film practice, an institutional film practice, a theoretical film practice, a successful film practice and contemporary film practices. The selected films are primarily analysed as cultural "barometers" of the given social contexts, providing for each of the empirical chapters a basis from which to map the genesis of a particular film practice. By mapping the relations between cultural production, the key social events and forces for change as actualised within the films, each empirical chapter aims to reveal the dominant logic which informed given film practices. Ethnicity, instead of functioning as the essential object of analysis, provides this research with a starting point and the key sampling device to map the British independent film field.

In principal, this thesis examines the ways in which images of "ethnic minorities" in the British independent film field have been both liberated and regulated through the presence of dominant dispositions which have structured the field generating, and consecrating particular film-making practices over and above others.

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PREFACE

This thesis emerges out of a personal interest in the struggle between theory and practice. Although initially attracted to the critical insights of Cultural Studies, I became increasingly frustrated with the de-materialisation and de-contextualisation of much contemporary cultural analysis. The attempt in this thesis is to return to the materialist rigour of much classical European sociological analysis. The work of Pierre Bourdieu has provided me with the key tools and concepts with which to attempt this materialist analysis.

I see this current research as the beginning of a much larger exercise of mapping the actions of independent cultural practices within an age of mechanical reproduction. This thesis has sought also to provide an original methodological approach to the study of British-Asians, ultimately with the aim of historicising the presence of this cultural community as firmly British and Asian.

The experience of working as a film producer opened my eyes to the industrial realities of the field, but equally required that I think more clearly about this current research. As my interests as a film-maker became satisfied in the films which I produced, my interests as an academic required that I become more aware of the formal requirements of the thesis and maintain an even higher personal standard of critical analysis. I hope this thesis refracts some of that personal commitment to intellectual rigour and to the research process.

my advisor Dr. Alan Swingewood, Gareth Williams, Paul Sukhija, Richard Robinson, my brother Aamir Ghani. Sonia Verjovsky and Ali Moore deserve a very special thanks for all their patience in reading the entire manuscript.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents - Atiqual Mohammed and Jamal Ara Ghani - for all their love, commitment and support. May your food of life allow a thousand flowers to blossom.

Atif Ghani
Ilford-Essex, 19.4.1999

And nothing I write is what I want to write. For one doesn't choose one's subject: they impose themselves. Will I ever find mine? Will thee ever drop down from heaven an idea in perfect harmony with my temperament? Will I be able to write a book into which I put my entire self? It seems to me, in my moments of vanity, that I am beginning to glimpse something that will be what a novel should be. But I still have three or four to write before that one (which is as yet very vague); and at the rate I go it will be all I can do to write those three or four.

Letters of Gustave Flaubert (Steegmuller, 1982:122)

1.0   CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION....

> An analysis of art in the age of mechanical reproduction must do
> justice to these relationships, for they lead us to an all-important
> insight: for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction
> emancipates the work of art from its parasitic dependence on ritual.
> To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the
> work of art designed for the reproducibility. From a photographic
> negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for
> the "authentic" print makes no sense. But the instant the criterion of
> authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total
> function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins
> to be based on another practice-politics. (Benjamin,1969: 224)

The recognition by Walter Benjamin that we live in a period of mass
reproduction of art is an increasingly important insight within the
contemporary moment. The fact that we live in a world steeped in culture,
be that television commercials, clothing design, web pages, or coffee-table
art books, where the meaning of art is more ambiguous in terms of
understandings, practices and process, than ever before, is a significant
starting point for this current study. Art, like other forms of production, is
becoming increasingly industrialised, particularly as cultural production (and
consumption) becomes more and more significant in term of global
economics. We live in a world where there no longer exists any notion of
agreed aesthetics or "pure art". We live in a world where images, text and/or
art circulate for many hours of our conscious world, in which value
judgements of good or bad are an increasingly immediate, and quickly
forgotten process.

Within this media saturated world, there is a need for sustained reflection
and study of the contemporary processes of cultural production and the
production of value. This current study is an attempt at such a relational
assessment of a given field of cultural production and the ways in which
given cultural artefacts (films) have been produced out of particular social
relations and understandings. More specifically, this current study is an
assessment of particular film practices and how they have emerged at
particular points within the British independent film field, generating certain

types of work which refract the prevailing power relations and given logics of cultural production at particular moments within contemporary British history.

1.1   AIMS OF THE THESIS

This thesis looks to analyse a specific PROCESS of cultural production where the production of text of and/or by British-Asians is critically assessed as a mechanism to reveal the processes of British independent film production. In particular this thesis examines the ways in which the production of images of "ethnic minorities" within the British independent film field have been both liberated and regulated through particular social relations of production within the field and through the presence of powerful tastes and ruling class habitus.

Films are produced within given relations, understandings and limits of the film field. These limits of the field are manifest in the actual films themselves in the form of HOMOLOGIES between the field of power within the film text, the relations of production in the production of work, and the overarching field of power which encompasses the broader social world. Through the practical application of Pierre Bourdieu's theories as conceptual tools in the analysis of the "truth-claim" process within empirical research, this thesis aims to assess the genesis of given film practices in producing and reproducing the trajectories, strategies and limits of given cultural fields at particular moments.

The aim of this thesis is to generate a sense of this film field at particular moments and to develop "snap-shots" of the movement, relations and understandings within the field itself. The films themselves function as "lightning rods", "barometers" or "benchmarks" of the social relations, within which selected cultural works were produced. This current research attempts an historical overview of the field, a task which has not before been completed with reference to the study of British-Asian film-making. In this

way, this thesis sees itself as contributing to the emergent sociology of contemporary British history.[1]

In articulating a position with regards to cultural identity, this thesis suggests that if there is an underlying correlation which could be constituted between selected British-Asian films and key independent film moments, it is that of "British-ness" and what it has meant to be "British" at various moments within contemporary British history. This thesis does not aim to arrive at a coherent conceptualisation or visual strategy in relation to interpellating British-Asian-ness, but rather explores a range of British-Asian film practices. In this thesis, ETHNICITY FUNCTIONS AS A MECHANISM OF ISOLATING A BODY OF WORK, PROVIDING US WITH A STARTING POINT FROM WHICH TO BEGIN AN EXAMINATION OF A CULTURAL PROCESS, RATHER THAN AN END POINT. In principle the aim of such a study is to reveal the genesis of a given cultural practice and how the given relations of production enabled, as well as inhibited, the production of a given film. As a study of comparative practices, each of the practices explored in some depth was chosen as a case or model to reveal the limits and facets of the field of British independent film-making over the period 1976 -1996.

1.2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1.2.1 FILM

For the purposes of this thesis, film is defined in the broadest possible sense as any film, video, digital, or other technology involved in generating moving images.

The choice of film as the primary medium of cultural production for this current research stems from the recognition that film is representative as the art form of the 20th century. As a cultural practice, the level of

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[1] For more on emergent sociology of contemporary British society see Hebdige, 1979; Thornton, 1995; Back, 1996; Gelder and Thornton, 1997.

industrialisation required in the production of any given film is so intensive in terms of capital, that it is homologeous with any other equally industrialised production processes of the twentieth century (i.e. textiles, metalwork, assembly line production). As an art practice, film has the capacity to function on the level of mass communication, allowing for potentially large numbers of people to be involved in both the production and consumption of texts. As an art practice it draws on a range of other art practices including sound design, production design, cinematography, editing, along with requiring intensive amounts of co-ordination and planning of the various positions and skills (forms of cultural and social capital) which individuals will contribute in the realisation of a finished film.

The appeal of film to many lies in the manner in which, as an art form, it allows the artists the capacity to manipulate time and space so as to achieve a particular effect. Hence the attempt at telling the audience "something", however conceived, is always a key motivating factor in the production of any work of art. There is always a sense that even those films which promote solely "entertainment" have long-term effects on their audience's previously held beliefs and understandings. Films which deal with more overtly serious social and political questions are often hoping to challenge, change or affirm their audience's previously held beliefs and understandings. It follows then that the fundamental question facing a useful discussion of representational strategy emanates not solely from the nature of film-in-itself but from film's relationship with the wider social world in all its relational and institutional complexity.

The relationships which will be explored in this thesis involve individual films, their direct links to cultural production contexts and shared understandings which surround their production. In this way, this current research employs films as a type of social residue which crystallises, if only for moments, the given cultural relations of production in the realisation of a given film. This thesis looks to engage with the logics and the real networks of decision-making within the cultural production process, where the direct engagement

is with exploring and exposing power "in-use" within individual film
production processes.

1.2.2 INDEPENDENT

By independent this thesis incorporates individuals and institutions which
reside within the commercial, non-commercial, or British terrestrial film and
broadcast sectors. What this category includes is films with: theatrical
release, gallery and community centre screenings, independent television
productions, grant-aided work, and privately financed films.

Further to the actual modes of cultural production, independent does imply a
political dimension. Arguably, the articulation of Asian identities is in itself a
political act within the conventions of film language. This thesis is interested
in examining ways in which practitioners have engaged with "conventional
practices" in a political manner. At a minimum, independence has implied or
requires a politicised understanding of given cultural practices where,
formally and substantively, practitioners are required to push the boundaries
of their chosen field of cultural interest.

The interpellation of Asian identities is insufficient as an end in itself, but
rather needs to be only one element of a highly skilled craft or practice of
artistic production. For this current research independence does imply forms
of cultural practice which are actively working outside corporate,
hierarchically structured or "vertically integrated" structures of cultural
production, where the production of art is viewed as yet another investment
of capital.[2] In exploring the production of films outside of hierarchical
structures of production, one is looking to develop new modes of decision-
making within the creative project, drawing more intensely on the skills and
specialisation of the various members of the film production team.

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[2] There seems to be an homology in practices within the extremes of cultural independence and the extremes of commercial film-making. In that, an "Exploitation" film, as an extreme of commercial film-making, is also the extreme of independent film-making. A film such as WELCOME TO THE TERRORDOME (1995) reflects this homology.

The constant tension within independent film-making lies between the collective effort and the notion of the individual vision and an independent voice. The notion of the "Auteur" has often been used as the explanation for particular films being crafted with a very specific vision.[3] Increasingly Auteurism is much more a question of being able to manage and strategically draw on the cultural and social capital of the core production team members (i.e. heads of departments - camera, sound, art; producers; writers; etc.) to realise a project. Having suggested this, there are certain film-makers who hold to and control every stage of the film-making process, but they are very much in a minority. Alia Syed is one such practitioner who prefers to perform all of the roles in the production process. There does exist a plurality of possible film practices which a film-maker can employ in realising a given film; what this thesis is NOT suggesting is that films can be reduced to the understanding of one individual - historically the director.

A key defining factor in devising a working understanding of independent is the notion of constituting new audiences. In principle a key motivating aim of many independent film-makers is the attempt to constitute new audiences which are interested in consuming one's film. This contrasts with the more corporate production strategies which aim to affirm and reproduce existing audiences, with pre-determined demographic and viewing interests. These new audiences need not simply be preconceived audiences who attend cinemas, but equally may be audiences gained through other routes of dissemination such as video or television, or through new avenues of dissemination such as pedagogical or other teaching environments, performance and other arts spaces, internet broadcasting and other forms of digital image manipulation.

For the purposes of this thesis the notion of independent is proposed as an essentially contested concept which needs to be understood in a relational

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[3] For more on Auteur theory see Cahiers Du Cinema (Cook, 1993), and Bazin 1971.

manner.[4] As a "relational" concept, the notion of independent changes over time and over different social contexts. In principle, the current usage aims to target film and film-making practices interested in producing films with a distinctive political edge and a sense of a particular vision or perspective. A defining characteristic of independent films in this current research is that the work itself is produced outside of corporate structures of hierarchical production. Ultimately, through the use of independence, this thesis is suggesting work which desires to speak to audiences, either directly or indirectly, about the social world as a primary motivating factor in the production of a given film. Cultural independence for our purposes is situated in direct contras to the more corporate studio-based, revenue generating marketing strategies, such as the Hollywood "Star" system, which employ a factory-like structure for the mass production of films.[5]

1.2.3   BRITISH-ASIAN INDEPENDENT FILM

This thesis assumes that cultural identity is plural and that culture is in its essence syncretic (Said, 1993). This current research chooses to assess selected British-Asian independent film practices as examples of given film-practices, which emerged from particular configurations within the film field. Instead of attempting to analyse and assess the notion of "British-Asian" as a coherent, homogeneous cultural identity, this thesis chooses instead to employ the label "British-Asian" as a methodological sampling device, where the British-Asian films and the experiences conveyed by selective films need to be seen as part of a larger British cultural field. In this sense, it is not the British-Asian identity, which is of interest, but rather the broader process of identification.[6] In this way, British-Asian film practices are deployed as a means of isolating a given body of work and their affiliated cultural practices. The aim is not to arrive at a conclusion pertaining to British-Asian-ness, but

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[4] There is a parallel to the notion of Independent used in this thesis and Bourdieu's own usage of "Avant-Garde". Bourdieu notes: "Avant-Garde, is ESSENTIALLY RELATIONAL (in the same way as conservatism and progressivism are), and is definable only at the level of a field at a determined moment." (Bourdieu, 1995: fn.58, 386-387)

[5] For more on the Hollywood "Star" system and other elements of the Hollywood studio production approach see Finney, 1996.

[6] For more on identity formation see Derrida, 1974/76, Thompson, 1992, Hutcheon, 1990, Ghani, 1994.

rather to provide a means of revealing the power relations within given processes of cultural production.

An issue when isolating a field of social enquiry is that of the research sample. The actual films which have been chosen for detailed assessment in this current research need not be perceived as representative of the only independent film practices employed by British-Asian practitioners. In actual fact, the comparative practices, which have been chosen, are only a select few in a much larger range of artistic practices which have been employed by practitioners. Certain practices have been excluded from this current research including: films from the Bollywood film industry, British-Asian television serials (i.e. TANDOORI NIGHTS, FAMILY PRIDE), or the production of work for emergent Asian satellite channels (i.e. ASIANET, or ZTV). The specific aim of this research has been to isolate independent film practices which are representative of very different artistic practices and the social relations which inform the logics of that given cultural process.

For this current research the chosen film texts function as contextual "lightning rods" providing the reader with a locus from which to read the particular social contexts and power relationships within selected fields of cultural production. The use of racial subjectivities, then, needs to be seen not as an attempt at "discovering" the truth of particular cultural identities, but rather as starting points or a "cipher" through which one can uncover the relations of power which are functioning within particular cultural processes. In this sense this current study attempts a much more sociological approach to the assessment of culture than other more discursive, or literary approaches. Furthermore, the exploration of questions of identity formation, identification and regulation provide important avenues in revealing broader British social relations during the period of 1976 to 1996.

By British-Asian this thesis is referring to individuals who identify with a diaspora culture originating from the Indian Subcontinent, and as individuals currently living and working within a British national context. A structuring

characteristic of the British-Asian identity is the experience of "double consciousness" or cultural syncretism, where one is drawing on the cultural points of reference from at least two very distinct cultures.[7] The use of British-Asian needs to be perceived as a "western construction" similar to BEYOND DESTINATION curator Ian Rashid's usage of "South Asian". Rashid notes:

> It's interesting because one of the common responses to the exhibition has been it was not what they expected it to be, they had a different idea of what South Asian meant. When I actually pushed them on what their expectations were people have had a really hard time in answering. I think there is a confusion between South Asian, and Indian or Pakistani or Subcontinental, if you like. I think that the very word "South Asian" is in opposition to that. People who live in India are Indian, they are not South Asian. I THINK THAT SOUTH ASIAN IS A WESTERN CONSTRUCTION. That was one of the reasons why I choose not to select work by Indian or Pakistani artists, although we had a few submissions and they were quite interesting pieces. [8]

The sense of a "double consciousness" dual identity is central to the conceptualisation and articulation of a working notion of "British-Asian". In the past, the sense of the dual points of cultural reference was seen as a "problem"; this thesis sees the formation of new "syncretic" identities as a core element in the notion of "British-Asian", where the "British" and the "Asian" are equal in normative value. The frequency of respondents noting the influence of "double-consciousness" as an issue in relation to developing one's art practice is immediately prominent. Producer Khaled Hakim notes:

> What I envy, and what I see now, in the little film you have seen, and in the big film MASTERCLASS, is this hybridisation of these kids who are at home in both the Western world and their own world. When they go out they have these Brummy Asian accents. It was very important to me in my big film to get these kids, who I kept on hearing in the Central Library, they had Brummy, local accents with Punjabi accents mixed in, completely half and half. They would listen to bhangra music and they would listen to Madonna. It was the same thing. They would watch Indian action movies and they would watch Terminator 2 and they would adore Sylvester Stallone. It's just being absolutely at home in both worlds. In their own heads, the young lads

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[7] See Gilroy (1993: 126) from DuBois and his notion of "double consciousness".
[8] My emphasis. Interview with Ian Iqbal Rashid, 7 March 1994.

valuing home life and sitting in pubs drinking, and not having a headache about it. Like them, I was born into a very working class background, and that kind of, well in England it's called working class, that kind of background, you often have these incommensurabilities, these things which logically don't tie in.[9]

By British-Asian film this thesis is referring to work produced by film-makers of South Asian heritage; British work which interpellates British-Asian subjectivities; or others involved in the actualisation and realisation of British-Asian work. The term "black" will be used to signify official or institutional constructions of an African-Caribbean-Asian-Other political unity. Although the "black" cultural signifier has been used as a term for political mobilisation and as a concept for constituting new political identities, its understanding for our purposes will be delimited to official and institutional constructions of a common black-British and British-Asian identity.

The choice to look at the specificity of British-Asian independent film within a British context stems in part from the unique nature of "race relations" as a formative social force within British society. As settled Asian communities grapple with questions of cultural difference, their attempts at being fully recognised as "British Citizens" and to be brought fully into the historicity of British society reveals a "paper-trail" of absences, denials, frustrations and tangible victories and gains. This thesis will contribute to a critical process of reading the changes, the defeats, the victories that particular social movements/moments have initiated in incorporating cultural diversity as a core component of what it means to be British.

1.2.4   BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION

By the burden of representation one is referring to the requirement to "speak for" the "true", the "real" or "authentic" migrant, post-colonial experience. The burden of representation is premised on the belief that there exists an

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[9] Interview with writer, director producer Khaled Hakim. 1 October 1993.

easily knowable "other" which has been systematically excluded, and simply requires re-entry into existing means of representation. The burden of representation has been premised on the belief that cultural practitioners should be involved in the portrayal of "ethnic" and other cultural minority groups in a fundamentally positive manner. It also assumes that it is the responsibility of cultural practitioners to be involved in furthering the plight of disadvantaged people within a broader social context, and is based on the belief that issues such as good and bad conflict, character complexity and complicity by given minority groups to the dominant ruling order should be subordinated to the production of essentially positive characters and situational depictions.

The 1980s saw initial attempts at subverting the burden of representation by articulating a response from the specificity of one's individual circumstances and experiences, rather than the attempt to speak for the entire social category in which one's experience is constituted (Mercer; 1988:12). The classic example of such a 1980s strategy was MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1985). LAUNDRETTE actively set out to subvert the assumption that there exists an easily knowable British-Asian identity waiting to be inserted into British society. What LAUNDRETTE was able to do is mark a moment in which the Asian identity was revealed as contradictory and paradoxical, as well as firmly situated within current articulations or historicity of "British-ness".[10] As Nasser notes to Johnny, "there is no question of race in the New Enterprise Culture", squarely situating British-Asians alongside others "profiting" from Thatcher's New Britain.

Since MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDERETTE, film practitioners have continued the challenge of expanding the range of possible representations of Asians within film language. In part this is a response to the desire to pathologise "Asian" culture as "different" in an incompatible sense with "British". In a

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[10] The use of the post-script "-ness" is intended to suggest a process of "becoming" in contrast to some notion of "being". The emphasis here is in the notion of process and a way in which things become something, rather than simply are something. This conceptualisation was originally cited in Ghani, 1994.

way, the implicit focus of this current research is to explore the various strategies which have been employed by film practitioners to subvert and/or challenge the notion of "insider" knowledge (Gilroy, 1993:3). Equally, this current research assesses the manner in which film practitioners have become complicit in producing and reproducing dominant understandings of racial and ethnic identities at particular moments.

1.3   FILM AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

Unlike drawing, painting or writing, film is not a solitary practice, but rather an extremely complex and highly industrialised process which usually involves not only large amounts of capital (economic, cultural and social). Film-making, like any other industrialised process, requires significant amounts of co-ordination, planning, management of resources, as well as technical expertise in order to film a single image. Tunstall, in discussing the responsibility of television producers, suggests:

> If television is an art-form, it is a cumbersome and expensive one. If the producer is an Auteur or author, he [sic] is an author who needs the active involvement of thirty or forty other people, expensive equipment, studio space and - not least - a network to transmit the end-product. Few people who have not been involved in Television recognise how much work, energy and time in programme preparation go into polishing and refining small details; dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's is an elaborate undertaking in this thousands-of-pounds-per-minute medium. (Tunstall, 1993:6)

The materiality of completing a film will usually require a variety of individuals who possess very particular skills (directors, cinematographers, editors, writers, producers, electricians, sound mixers, art directors, sound designers, etc.) in relation to the production of a given film text.

The "making sense" of a film is an equally complex process. Film, like other processes of cultural production, has its own sets of codes and conventions that are used in conveying meaning to an audience. The discursive conventions within film language include: the narrative structures which allow for character development; the particular editing techniques such as

the 'shot-reverse-shot' which convey notions of points of view; the framing of particular images in terms of size, scope, composition and perspective as to convey a particular feeling or importance, etc. These and other aspects of the "technical" side of making a film rely on "certain kinds of social and cultural knowledge in order that we should be able to make meaning out of what is being said and what is seen." (Danino, 1988:11) Consequently, a sociological approach to film needs to recognise that there is nothing natural about the final series of moving images. As director Gurinder Chadha notes:

> Film is a very complicated, manipulative piece of work. Every element of it is a manipulation, every frame, every element, the way it's set up, all the different debates, everything.[11]

The finished film text is not an obvious simple mirror or reflection of a "real social world" or a simple reflection of reality as it is lived, but rather needs to be viewed as a carefully constructed series of identifications which allow for forms of understanding to be generated. This thesis will argue that Bourdieu's notion of REFRACTION provides an altrenative approach for arriving at critical readings of film to the commonly employed notion of "reflection" where film is often read as a "mirror" into a social world. The notion of refraction (like light refracting through a prism, generating a spectrum of colour) provides much more versatility in its denotation of actively constructed relations, which may not be fully obvious. In a similar manner, when looking at a film for certain practices, one can find certain elements, which are refracted from a given logic of film practice.

There is a need to recognise that individuals will and do hold different relations of power in the production and reception of particular films. Film-makers, cultural administrators, financiers, cultural critics, hold particular positions within the specifics of cultural production. In part, one position of power is revealed in the practitioner's ability to impact the perceptions of others. British film-maker Alia Syed notes her position of control and the use of her powerful relation to the final film text:

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[11] Interview with Gurinder Chadha, 31 March 1994.

> In FATIMA'S LETTER information is being given out in that film slowly
> through time, that goes back to the idea of creating characters and
> identifying somebody as belonging - somewhere.....That was an
> integral part of the whole process, that it was going to be difficult if not
> impossible to be able to read the whole story as a story. The
> meaning would be somehow disjointed. You get bits but you don't get
> other bits. And then you almost get bits, but because of the camera
> movement one is prevented from reading a certain bit until I, THE
> FILM-MAKER, CHOOSES THAT THAT PERSON WILL GET THAT
> BIT. [12]

Syed reveals the manner in which she actively controls the gradual
dissemination of information, reflecting a tangible example of power as it is
put into action. She clearly reveals the manner in which, as a film-maker,
she holds a particular position of power within the broader film field. The
issue which emerges is about developing a method which allows a sustained
critical engagement with the film text itself, the various positions of power
which exist in the production of the text, as well as the explicit and implicit
social understandings which are required or implied when reading the text. It
is the aim of this current research to map out relations of production and to
isolate positions of power which inform the final look, feel, tone, story, etc. of
a finished work. In principle, what is required is a relational understanding of
the process as it pertains to the production of films.

1.3.1   SOCIOLOGY OF FILM

This current study needs to be located in relation to previous social studies
of film. A significant body of academic scholarship has emerged since
roughly the early 1960s. The rise of film criticism, communication studies
and cultural studies courses throughout western academic institutions have
led to a rise in the output of moving image-related critical work.[13]
Having suggested the emergence of such a body of critical work, this
research would suggest that there is an acute shortage of analysis which

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[12] My emphasis. Interview with Alia Syed, 14 May 1993.

[13] Examples of sociological approaches to film include: critical-theoretical studies (Denzin, 1992, Wright, 1975), film history
(Allen & Gomery, 1985), Production process (Gitlin, 1983), Policy (Powell, 1996), Audience Research (Glasgow Media
Group, 1976, ITC Audience Research Report, 1996), Traditional sociology of film (Mayer, 1947).

engages with the actual material relations of artistic productions. Although materialist strategies are receiving renewed cultural value, the prevailing critical work has been dominated by discursive and textual approaches in the assessment of works of art. Recent analysis by critics such as Rosemary Hennessy (Hennessy, 1995, 1996), and Steven Seidman (Seidman, 1991, 1995) have been crucial in the re-exploration and re-conceptualisation of issues of historical materialist strategies as a means of conceiving action beyond the relativism of the "postmodern" paradigm.

This current study attempts to be different from previous studies in its prioritising of the actual material relations of production as a basis from which to view work as "important", to isolate and reveal deeper meaning both in terms of functioning metaphors and symbolism, but equally in assessing issues of quality and film-making proficiency. Within this field of cultural production individual producers are involved in developing and producing work through particular film-practices which are informed by the prevailing limits of the field but equally, through their work, producers are often interested in pushing the limits of the film field at given moments. An underlying assumption of this thesis is that films emerge from actual relations of cultural production, which have active individuals occupying positions within the field of film production. In this way, this current research suggests that films can be understood through refracted relationships to broader social processes. Hence in critically assessing film, we can retrospectively also read into the processes at work in the production of that given film.

1.3.2 SITUATING CULTURAL STUDIES

This current piece of research cannot help but engage with the tradition of Cultural Studies. In part this engagement emerges from a genuine desire to further the pedagogical aims of Cultural Studies, but also it is a direct consequence of the fact that certain key texts within the field have emerged out of discussions and conferences on issues of "Black Film British Cinema". (e.g. See ICA Conference of same name, ICA, 1988). Furthermore,

individuals who would have attended film or media studies courses since the late 1970s in Britain would have been exposed in some form or another to Cultural Studies.

Currently, a major shortcoming of this field of academic study lies in the lack of discussion centring on issues of methodology. What has not been developed significantly is issues surrounding research strategies to be employed in the analysis of cultural formations. Although publicly Cultural Studies is interested in the development of relational frameworks, where texts are situated as part of a broader social context, the relevant methodological tools have not been seriously developed as to allow for a such a relational analysis.

It can safely be suggested the aims of much Cultural Studies research has been an attempt to straddle what Bourdieu and others have referred to as external and internal analysis of text, but few studies have been successful in fulfilling a balanced analysis (Bourdieu, 1993). Instead, what usually emerges is a 'mixed-bag' of conceptual tools where the researcher reduces her analysis to the "real-world" condition of its production, such as Hoggart's USES OF LITERACY (1957/60), or Fiske's INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION STUDIES (1990), or is left reducing text to the internal dynamics of the text, such as Richard Dyer's HEAVENLY BODIES (1986) or Stuart Hall's ENCODING/DECODING (1980b). Kobena Mercer, an active Cultural Studies critic, suggests:

> There seems to be this textualization of everything and this weird sense in which the relational model from linguistics have both opened up whole areas of interpretable material, which is really great. On the other hand, there is de-materialisation. And so you get free-floating texts. And I am really disturbed by this new emphasis on performance - like in the work of Judith Butler. Because I think it is an attempt to shore up the linguistic without broaching social conditions. Any performance takes place in the context of its conditions. It is not unconditioned. It is in a theatre, there is lighting and sound, or you are going to do it in a car park, or something like that. I think that the

attempt to re-sociologise Cultural Studies with the study of cultural production is really what needs to happen.[14]

Mercer highlights a core aim of this current research, that is, an attempt to re-sociologise Cultural Studies through the analysis of cultural production. In principle, this thesis looks to utilise and develop, through empirical study, methodological tools which will elucidate the tensions, relations and movement of British-Asian independent film-making specifically.

1.3.3 LOCATING THE CURRENT RESEARCH METHODS WITHIN A BOURDIEUIAN FRAMEWORK

Although various cultural analysts have developed a range of methods in exploring issues pertaining to cultural production, Pierre Bourdieu has developed the most methodologically rigorous and theoretically relevant model for the purposes of this current research. Bourdieu's work is distinctive in its attempts to provide a socio-historic grounding to the study of cultural production. Bourdieu's emphasis is one of developing a relational approach to the study of cultural production. By exploring the inter-connections and inter-relations of a text, its production and a broader field of power, Bourdieu is able to extend debates of cultural production away from overtly internal textual analysis or overtly external contextual analysis of selected texts. Bourdieu follows in the tradition of Cultural Studies in that his approach corresponds with Stuart Hall's chief consideration of Cultural Studies as a method of analysis which:

> required us to think hard about the actual conditions for the production of knowledge, and to think about our own strategies in ways which - to use Gramscian terms - are necessarily 'organisational and connective'. (Hall, 1980a: 43)

In this sense, Bourdieu's approach can be seen as both an extension as well as a critique of existing Cultural Studies approaches. [15]

[14] Interview with Kobena Mercer, 5 September 1994.
[15] Bourdieu is cited in Graeme Turner's text BRITISH CULTURAL STUDIES (1993: 2-3), as having initiated his own strand of cultural studies analysis.

At the end of DISTINCTIONS (1984), Bourdieu discusses the ways in which the act of representation is a "real" or "integral" part of social reality. Bourdieu's theoretical orientation is one which does not place an emphasis on the symbolic over the material or vice versa, but rather sustains an on-going interaction and negotiation between the symbolic and the material. Ultimately, Bourdieu sustains a political perspective in his analysis of text, through his attempts at revealing the manner in which culture contributes to domination and social reproduction of prevailing power relations.

Bourdieu's approach to the analysis of cultural production looks to develop a critical methodology. Bourdieu develops what he calls a "Genetic Sociology" through the deployment of a range of theoretical tools including: field, habitus, capital, practice, trajectory, strategy, homologies, and refraction. In principle, Bourdieu's sociological approach is building a method that transcends the prevailing external or internal reading dichotomy:

> In defining the literary and artistic field as, inseparably, a field of positions and a field of position-taking we also escape from the usual position dilemma of internal ('tautological') reading of work (taken in isolation or within the system of works to which it belongs) and external (or 'allegorical') analysis, i.e. analysis of the social conditions of production of the producers and consumers which is based on the - generally tacit - hypothesis of the spontaneous correspondence or deliberate matching of production to demand or commissions. And by the same token we escape from the correlative dilemma of the charismatic image of artistic activity as pure, disinterested creation by an isolated artist, and the reductionist vision which claims to explain the act of production and its product in terms of their conscious or unconscious external functions, by referring them, for example, to the interests of the dominant class or, more subtly to the ethical or aesthetic values of one or another of its fractions, from which the patrons or audiences are drawn. (Bourdieu, 1993: 34)

At the heart of Bourdieu's Genetic Sociology are the core concepts of field and habitus, generating a third concept, that of practice. As an alternative to the prevailing structure-agency debate within sociology, Bourdieu proposes a new model for the conceptualisation of the relationship between action and

structures.[16] For Bourdieu the notion of field is very similar to the idea of a "field of play", in which there exist objective rules and positions in which movement occurs. In conceptualising Bourdieu's field theory, one needs to incorporate a model of internal and external hierarchisation: that there exist hierarchies between various competing fields (i.e. field of power, economic field and the cultural field), as well as competing hierarchies within given fields and sub-fields (i.e. within the film field there exist an commercial field, a corporate field, an educational field, etc.). Through the study of fields, the researcher aims to reveal homologies between different or related social fields. By homology, Bourdieu is referring to parallels in relations and structure between different fields. Equally, what is also of interest is the movement by a player from one field into another (i.e. as we see in Chapter 6 with Working Title Films and their shift from the commercial field to the corporate field), or the way in which dominant perspectives and understandings from certain fields will translate onto other fields (i.e. Chapter 4 where changes within the British field of power in 1981 are translated onto the cultural field quite promptly).

Bourdieu suggests that the central motivation for given actors/practitioners within the field is to accumulate maximum capital. One of Bourdieu's conceptual insights comes in his expansion of the notion of capital as being more than simply economics capital. Bourdieu isolated three very distinctive types of capital: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. A fuller discussion will be initiated on Bourdieu's reworking of capital, but suffice to say that the motivations for action within the field are driven by the accumulation of any one or a combination of the three types of capital.

By habitus, Bourdieu articulates a concept which is similar to the notion of shared "dispositions", that habitus functions as a set of subjective, learned dispositions and understandings. What Bourdieu is attempting to do through his concept of habitus is to transcend previous theories of consciousness,

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[16] For more on the structure agency debates see Mouzelis, 1991, Ritzer, 1988.

while maintaining a space for individualised understandings and conscious subjective action. Habitus cannot be reduced to an individual, and institutions and other social groups/structures can also hold particular habitus.

By practice, Bourdieu is referring to the actual process of thoughtful action by the player. Its is important to see practice as an interactive product of the habitus and field relationship. Practice provides us with a direct link with notions such as craft, skill, opportunity, and value. In developing a critical approach to the study of practice, the researcher is interested in revealing the logic of practice, the motivations and the underlying assumptions which directly (or indirectly) inform a given social practice.

1.4 A STUDY OF COMPARATIVE PRACTICES

This current research is a study of comparative film practices. Each empirical chapter maps the genesis of a particular film practice, locating each practice both within the representational strategies employed by film practitioners within selected films as well as an exploration of the broader social relations which enabled the realisation of these chosen films. Implicit with each empirical chapter is an attempt to reveal the underlying logic at work in the film production process.

In his work to date, Bourdieu is unclear on how historically specific contextual frameworks are meant to be analysed. Because he has not attempted much comparative analysis, Bourdieu is unclear about "how - or indeed, whether - he would make critical distinctions among epochs or types of societies or cultures." (Calhoun, 1993/95: 66) Because this current research is principally a historical overview of shifts and developments within a specific field of cultural production, the empirical core of this thesis is divided into five specific "case studies". Each case study initiates a particular assessment of the relations of production within the British independent film field, the dominant habitus, strategies employed in the production of work,

and homologies which exist between specific films and various fields and sub-fields providing the focus of each empirical case study. The core of the discussion within each chapter focuses around selected films. The choice of films lies not so much in their overwhelming recognition as works of "great art", but rather in the fact that they reveal insight into the powerful (or powerless) habitus, and the relations of production at particular moments of British independent film-making, and that they refract homologies between the various British national, social and cultural fields.

As "case studies", the breaks between practices and historical periodisation are not meant to be definitive, but rather homologous to significant developments and power shifts within the specific fields at particular moments. We will find that action, movement and force from one case study will impact and inform other cases. The use of the comparative case study model is intended to provide an interesting intersection of issues pertaining to cultural identity and the British independent film sector. The experiences, opportunities, understandings and debates which were waged within each of these periodisations will be the focus of each chapter. Chronologically, this thesis spans the period between 1976 to 1996.

Each of the core empirical chapters (chapter 3 through 7) reveal specific cases of the sub-fields of the broader field of British independent film production. There exists overlap between the sub-fields (i.e. the formation and existence of Channel 4 as impacting chapters 4 through 7). The aim of each chapter is to depict the particular genesis of each sub-field by revealing the relations of production, practices within each field and the rise and dominance of certain habitus as "dominant" or as the controlling habitus.

Chapter 3, "An Excluded Film Practice", explores both issues of exclusion experienced by practitioners in gaining access to the means of cultural production, and issues of exclusion experienced by members of "ethnic minority" community members within British society generally. The form of exclusion both within the cultural field and the field of power would reveal

itself in crude, overt forms of racial discrimination, as well as more subtle, complex forms of institutional and systemic racism. The chapter engages in a critical assessment of Horace Ove's PRESSURE (1976). This chapter isolates homologies between different fields of power (cultural field and British field of power during the mid to late 1970s), and discusses the ways in which exclusionary practices were widely manifest within British society at this time. What this chapter does attempt to tease out is a notion of a politicised habitus, as shared dispositions and understandings surrounding direct political engagement. More specifically, the direct attack on simplistic and one-dimensional treatments of particular character situations and motivations emphasises the importance of research within the creative process. Horace Ove is located as one of a group of film-makers involved in producing politically engaging work.

Chapter 4, "An Institutional Film Practice", examines the shifts onto the cultural field as a consequence of social unrest within the field of power and the subsequent rise of institutional relations and the emergence of particular institutional habitus as a dominant logic underpinning the producing work during the early to mid 1980s. The uprising of the summer of 1981, in 31 of Britain's inner cities, led to British social institutions becoming more sensitive to issues of cultural and ethnic difference. What is of interest in the study of the workshops is the manner in which institutions such as Channel 4, British Film Institute and regional arts boards were able to build inter-institutional relations. The chapter explores the works of the only British-Asian accredited workshop: Retake Film and Video Collective. What emerges through an analysis of Retake's work is a sense of an opportunity for cultural "liberation" which is highly "regulated" by the prevailing institutional habitus. This chapters aims to reveal the manner in which film produced by this generation of practitioners manifested the logic of an institutional habitus.

Chapter 5, "A Theoretical Film Practice", examines the genesis and subsequent rise to hegemonic power of theoretical issues within the independent film field. The chapter charts the growth and influence of

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"multiple identities position" from its early influences in Screen Theory and British Cultural Studies. The chapter argues that Stuart Hall's "New Ethnicities" lecture served as the key ontological basis for the "multiple identities position". Specifically, the chapter engages in a close reading of Pratibha Parmar's KHUSH (1991) as an example of a film which employs the "theoretical" habitus. The chapter argues that the "multiple identities position" had the net effect of channelling British-Asian independent film down a particular politico-critical line of film production and modes of consecration, which prioritised thoretical and academic affirmation in place of accessing larger popular audiences.

Chapter 6, "A Successful Film Practice" examines the genesis of a particular commercially successful independent film practice. The chapter begins with an exploration of Stephen Frears' MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1985), as a starting point for the growth and emergence of the most successful British independent film production company - Working Title. The chapter examines the ways in which the forces of art, politics and commerce collide in the process of feature film production in Britain, and the subsequent tensions which emerge within the field of commercial independent film-making. The chapter pays close attention to the commercial development of the production company Working Title and its shift from small-scale, low-budget independent features within the commercial film field, into the more capital intensive corporate film field through its purchase by PolyGram Filmed Entertainment in 1991. The chapter ends with an exploration of the forces at work in the corporate film field, and briefly discusses the dangers of the concentration of cultural power into fewer and fewer large corporate companies.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter 7, "Contemporary Film Practices", explores the shifts which have occurred within the funding and programming elements of the British independent film field, with the subsequent death of 'Black' arts funding and the rise of a new commercially oriented approach to film-making. The chapter explores the implication of the suggestion that the

strongest cultural argument is now the commercial argument. The chapter initiates a discussion around two core logics which are informing much of contemporary British-Asian independent film practice: deploying culturally specific stories with the aim of achieving a range of contemporary "British" stories which resonate on a more universal social level; and the option of internationalism as an alternative to producing British film for distribution solely in the United States. The chapter focuses on two films as examples of changing strategies within the field of British-Asian independent film production: DA BRATT PAC PRESENT....THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (1996) and BANDIT QUEEN (1994), as examples of current shifts in logic by contemporary film practitioners.

This current research concludes with discussions of some of the key issues, strategies and dominant habitus which have been active in the movement and development of the field of British independent film production. Within the conclusion, there is also a critical assessment of the tools of analysis as developed in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, and actively employed within the core empirical chapters of this thesis, along with suggestions on possible areas for future research.

1.5 METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The attempt with this particular piece of research is to gain insight into the field of independent British film production. As such, the aim is to build up an understanding of particular contexts, with reference to given film texts as a mechanism to locate those particular contexts of production. As with any piece of research, the decision by the researcher to choose his/her method of analysis is always contingent on the particular nature of one's chosen area of study. There is not a natural affiliation between any given realm or field of social scientific enquiry and a particular employed research method. Instead there are particular research questions that the social scientist will

pose within their chosen field of enquiry and appropriate methods and tools which will then be deployed.

In developing a thorough and rigorous understanding of the British film field, one is looking to reach moments of empirical understanding through the technique of methodological triangulation. By methodological triangulation, this research is implying the accumulation of a critical understanding of the cultural field by isolating various points of view and building up a holistic or "whole" picture. This whole picture is developed through "overlap" which emerges from the different perspectives on a given topic. Furthermore, discrepancies of perspective are also explored and incorporated into the analysis.

The project of attempting to map or trace a body of work requires the use of multiple methods: intensive analysis of the film text, extended discussion with individuals involved in the production of particular films, critical exploration into the responses and different forms of critical engagements which have emerged from the films themselves. Subsequently, a qualitative research approach is clearly most appropriate. This does not preclude the possibility of incorporating particular quantitative insights - comparative assessments of particular films in relation to total numbers of films produced during a particular period of time, comparative audience and financial figures, etc. - but rather these quantitative findings will be used as a mechanism for enhancing or embellishing emergent issues as isolated through qualitative methods.

This thesis suggests that the qualitative-quantitative division within sociology is a false divide. A key issue within the qualitative-quantitative research divide has been the issue of reproducibility of social finding from qualitative research. Increasingly, this is no longer the case as researchers are being provided daily with new tools to reveal the mechanism of social analysis. Tools such as NUDIST or atlas-ti provide interesting modes of revealing the analysis process within qualitative research, which in the past has been "left

to intuition". The current research context, through the assistance of emergent information technologies, allows the researcher the scope to deal with larger and larger data sets, be they qualitative or quantitative in nature. The point of social research needs to be the arrival of relative truths from within the chosen field of enquiry. Theory in this sense functions as a conceptual tool for analysis, a tool with which the empirical researcher is provided prior to entering the field.

The actual research process itself began in November 1992. Initially it included the viewing of work; making connection with the "fringe" elements of the sector and building up a rolling list of contacts; developing, piloting and assessing questions; beginning in-depth interviews with film-makers, cultural managers, and activists; attending 4 of 7 London Film and Video Development Agency focus group discussions on "Black and Asian Training"; reviewing 90 questionnaires regarding black and Asian training provisions in London; reviewing all relevant literature, attending workshops and seminars, and delivering conference papers (See Appendix 1 and 2 for full listing of research activities).

My activities as researcher within the field have also included: multiple publications within the area of Asian Diaspora film; acting as guest editor of a special issue of the British Film Institute's BLACK FILM BULLETIN on the Asian Diaspora; designing and co-ordinating the Birkbeck College course entitled "Diaspora Cinema: Film as Political Strategy"; curating a retrospective season of black-British and British-Asian film entitled "Roots 2 Routes" for the London Film-makers' Co-op (February 1995), developing a package of new British-Asian work entitled "New British Portraits" for the YYZ Gallery and Desh Pardesh South Asian Festival in Toronto, Canada (April-May 1995). My interest in gaining a fuller understanding of the industrial nature of film-making has led me to work as a producer for a 15 minute short drama, commissioned by Anglia Television, entitled THE DRIVE (1995), a 25 minute arts documentary called DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (1996), TOO FAST (1998) a 10

minute documentary-drama for BBC's 10x10 series, and DANCE WITH ME (1998) a short drama for Anglia Telvision.

My involvement within the independent film field initially as a critic, curator, writer and now producer of British-Asian work has provided me with additional insights and understandings of the field. This thesis is the culmination of several years of researching a body of work which has not been critically engaged with in any significant manner. It is important to reiterate that this current study, in attempting to historicise the presence of "ethnic groups" within the British film field, is clearly locating these given groups as British first and foremost. IN THIS THESIS ETHNICITY IS USED AS A MECHANISM OF ISOLATING A BODY OF WORK WHICH PROVIDES US WITH A STARTING POINT FROM WHERE TO BEGIN AN EXAMINATION OF CULTURAL PROCESSES, RATHER THAN AN END POINT. Lastly, this thesis aims to provide readers with a practical application of the materialist methodological strategies in the assessment of cultural production as outlined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. The next chapter (Chapter 2) will initiate a detailed exploration of the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu.

2.0   CHAPTER 2: METHOD

> The task of bringing authors and their environments back to life could
> be that of a sociologist, and there is no shortage of analyses of art
> and literature whose purpose is the reconstruction of a social "reality"
> that can be understood in the visible, the tangible, and the concrete
> solidarity of daily experience. But... the sociologist - close in this
> respect to the philosopher according to Plato - stands opposed to 'the
> friend of beautiful spectacle and voices' that the writer also is: the
> 'reality' that he tracks cannot be reduced to the immediate data of the
> sensory experience in which it is revealed; he aims not to offer
> (in)sight, or feeling, but to construct systems of intelligible relations
> capable of making sense of sentient data. (Bourdieu, 1992/96: xviii)

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to develop a thorough understanding of the key
concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu in his analysis of cultural production.
The chapter begins by locating Bourdieu's writings on culture as a response
to the internal-external criticism debate. The chapter will then discuss key
elements of Bourdieu's relational model of analysing cultural production in
the development of his "Genetic Sociology". The strength of Bourdieu's
theoretical approach lies in the developed set of critical tools through which
the researcher is able to map social relations and potential positions for
action within the field. Specifically, a central purpose for employing the
Bourdieusian framework is to reveal the logic of practice. In trying to
understand practice one is taking "ritualistic" activities and trying to make
sense of the logic of action (Bourdieu, 1990/82: 4). This understanding of the
logic emerges from a full understanding of the available relations and
positions within the field by "objectifying objective structures" (Bourdieu,
1990/82: 4). Through the use of Bourdieusian tools one is able to reveal the
networks of production and the relations of power within a field, the dominant
habitus which provide the logic for action, and larger relations between text
and the field of power.

This chapter will explore these key critical tools in relation to Bourdieu's extensive analysis of Gustave Flaubert's SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION (1869/1964), as outlined in Bourdieu's study THE FIELD OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION (1993) and THE RULES OF ART: GENESIS AND STRUCTURE OF THE LITERARY FIELD (1995).

2.2 APPROACHES TO READING CULTURE

Since the early 1970s Bourdieu has become a significant contributor in the study of cultural production. Bourdieu has developed an extensive set of critical tools and concepts in the analysis of the production, consumption, and assessment of cultural practices. In a period which has been dominated by various forms of formalist, structuralist, and post-structuralist analysis, Bourdieu provides a pragmatic and progressive alternative to dominant modes of analysing text and context. At the most basic level Bourdieu's analysis is an attempt to challenge the separation between internal (or formal) and external (or contextual) readings of text. Usually, these two opposites are posed to the researcher as the sole modes through which to engage with cultural texts. Bourdieu is critical of both internal and external approaches as limited and reductionist. Bourdieu's approach is different in suggesting that the researcher should emphasise the production process and attempt a reading of the conditions which generate the relations, positions and meanings of given texts. In a more general sociological sense, Bourdieu's work is an attempt to overcome some of the current oppositions (objective vs. subjective analysis, micro vs. macro analysis, structure vs. agency) that have characterised social theory, with the aim of developing a series of reflexive strategies for analysing the social world.

2.2.1 INTERNAL ANALYSIS

By internal analysis, Bourdieu is referring to the analysis of text as a self-contained, self-referential system. Bourdieu cites New Criticism as providing explicit expression to "the 'pure' reading of 'pure' literature based on the absolutization of the text" (Bourdieu, 1993:177). For Bourdieu, the internal

reading of text has two general tendencies: the discovery of "universal anthropological structures" conceived as ahistoric structures which function as the basis of poetic reason, and the emergence of structuralist analysis (Bourdieu; 1993:177). The former is concerned with finding the true "essence" of the poetic, the symbolic or metaphorical. Bourdieu cites Mircea Eliade's comparative methodology and Jungian or Bachelardian psychoanalysis as examples of the pure reading, where "critics seek to rediscover the universal forms of poetic or literary reason, ahistorical structures which are at the basis of a poetic construction of the world"(Bourdieu, 1993: 177-8).

A clear example of internal analysis as the latter, is the structuralist approach to film criticism as outlined by the French theorist Christian Metz. Drawing on the principle of structural linguistics, Metz argues that film operates like a language. Employing the Sassurian concepts of langue (language), parole (speech), syntagmatic relations (actual relations within a set structure), and paradigmatic relations (all possible relations within a closed structure), Metz argues that film can be read as a closed language system conveying some form of coded message (Metz, 1991). The core relationship which is of interest for Metz is the manner in which the language system within the text is working, implicitly exploring a relationship between text and the viewer. For Metz, film language or "Cinematographic language" is:

> first of all the literalness of a plot. Artistic effects, even when they are
> substantially inseparable from the semic act by which the film tells us
> its story, nevertheless constitute another level of signification, which
> from the methodological point of view must come "later". (Metz,
> 1968/91: 99)

For Metz and other structuralist film critics, the point of film analysis is to decode the various levels of meaning which are at play within given films. That meaning is to be arrived at within the closed symbolic system of given film texts. Through the work of Metz other structuralist approaches to the analysis of film were to emerge, including other semiotic approaches

(MacCabe, 1974) , psychoanalytic approaches (Mulvey, 1976, de Lauretis, 1987), and post-colonial approaches (hooks, 1988).

Bourdieu concedes that the structuralist mode of internal analysis is the more powerful mode of analysis between the two outcomes of internal analyses. But he is still critical of its closed, self-referential nature. Bourdieu describes the pure structuralist approach as that which:

> treats cultural works (language, myth and by extension, works of art) as structured structures without a structuring subject, which, like the Sassurian concept of LANGUE, are particular historical realisations and must therefore be deciphered as such, but without any recourse to an external hermeneutics, that is without reference to the social or economic conditions of the production of the work or the production of the producers of the work (such as the educational system). (Emphasis in original, Bourdieu, 1993:178)

For Bourdieu, the work of Foucault, along with certain early Russian Formalists like Jakobson, provided the "only rigorous formulation...of structuralism in relation to the analysis of cultural works." (Bourdieu, 1993:178) The strength of the Foucauldian model lies in the primacy which it places on relations. Where the Foucauldian model falls short is in its unwillingness to incorporate extra-discursive or non-discursive forces as a possible explanatory factor in the generation of discourses within the field.[17]

A central weakness of the structuralist approach lies in the failure to recognise that film or any cultural work of art has a relation to the real conditions of its conception, production and reception. The failure to take into account these material relations implies understandings that the text exists as a self-contained system, with in-built systems of understanding which are unaffected by contextual factors. This is a difficult assumption to hold as, at a minimum, films require large amounts of capital (economic, social and cultural) to produce, and the viewing of work needs to take place in some form be that in theatres or on video, suggesting that external factors have an impact on the production and consumption of texts. Bourdieu has

labelled this deduced closed reading the "short-circuit effect", arriving at conclusions on the meaning of a cultural work without taking into consideration the complete conditions of its literary production. Bourdieu in LOGIC OF PRACTICE (1993) states:

> Those who take the short cut which leads directly from each signifier to the corresponding signified, who dispense with the long detour through the complete systems of signifiers within which the relational value of each of them is defined (which has nothing to do with an intuitively grasped 'meaning'), are inevitably limited to an approximate discourse which, at best, only stumbles on to the most apparent signification. (Bourdieu, 1993: 4)

2.2.2 EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

In contrast to internal analysis, external analysis looks to develop a direct correlation between selected works and their social origins, either through study of their conditions of production, their author or their intended audiences. The cultural work of art is situated within the "real-world" of its production with an attempt at deducing an understanding of the "external" forces at work in the conception, production and reception of cultural works. Bourdieu cites analyses of the Marxist orientation (i.e. Goldmann, Adorno, Lukacs, Borkenau) which typify the tradition of external analysis where works are perceived as a mimetic reflection of their particular class interests:

> It is taken for granted in this case that understanding the work means understanding the world view of the social group that is supposed to have expressed itself through the artistic acting as a sort of medium. One ought to examine the presuppositions, all extremely naive, of these imputations of spiritual inheritance, which can always be reduced to the supposition that a group can DIRECTLY, as final cause (function), on the production of the work. (Bourdieu, 1993: 180-1)

Bourdieu is particularly critical of those perspectives which reduce cultural or literary texts to a given author. Bourdieu's approach completely rejects the ideology of the "man genius" which "seeks the explanatory principle of a work in the author taken in isolation", where the insight of the work lies in an

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[17] In his later works Foucault (1987) begins to explore issues of non-discursive forces. Unfortunately, his untimely death precluded the completion of this work, and hence the exposition required in developing the concept.

insight of the author (Bourdieu, 1993:192). As an extreme case, Bourdieu
cites Sartre's notion of the "internal coloration of the project" (Sartre,

1976:105). Within the "internal coloration of the project", Sartre employs an
approach which fuses psychoanalysis and sociology to produce a "social
psychology" of the individual. To illustrate his notion of the "internal
coloration of the project", Sartre refers to the life of Gustave Flaubert. In
reading Flaubert's life, Sartre suggests:

> As a child, Flaubert feels that he is deprived of paternal affection
> because of his older brother. Achilles resembles the father Flaubert;
> in order to please his father, Gustave would have to imitate Achilles;
> in surly resentment the child refuses to do so. When he enters
> college, Gustave finds the situation unchanged. Nine years later,
> Achilles, a brilliant student, has already won all the first places and
> earned the approval of the chief physician. If his younger brother
> hopes to win the esteem of his father, he must get the same grades
> for the assignment as his older brother. He refuses without even
> formulating his refusal. This means that an unrecognised resistance
> hampers him in his work. He will be an average student which, in the
> Flaubert household, is a disgrace. This second situation is nothing
> other than the first one further restricted by the new factor, which is
> college. Gustave's contacts with his fellow students are not dominant
> conditions; the family problem is so serious for him that he is not
> concerned about other relations. If he is humiliated by the success of
> certain of his fellow students, it is solely because their honours
> confirmed the superiority of Achilles (who took the prize for excellence
> in every class). The third moment comes when Flaubert consents to
> study law; in order to be sure of being different from Achilles, he
> decides to be inferior to him. He will hate his future career as the
> proof of this inferiority; he will launch into an idealist
> overcompensation and finally faced with becoming an attorney, he will
> get himself out of it by attacks of "hysteria". This third moment is an
> enrichment and a further restriction of the initial conditions. Each
> phase, isolated, seems to be a repetition; the movement proceeding
> from childhood to nervous breakdowns is, on the contrary, a perpetual
> surpassing of these givens. THE END PRODUCT IS GUSTAVE
> FLAUBERT'S COMMITMENT TO LITERATURE. (My emphasis,
> Sartre,1960/76:106-107)

For Sartre, the production of creative work is centrally motivated by
Flaubert's psycho-social personal history. With this form of external
analysis, creative works can be reduced to the particular dispositions of

given cultural practitioners. Furthermore, this approach has the tendency to place the importance of the solitary artist on an extremely individualised pedestal, where all creative and story-based elements are directly transposable to the experiences and understandings of one person - the Artist.

There is an homology between Sartre's approach, which reduced the individual work of art to the artists, and auteur film theory with the auteur as the single artist driving the vision manifest in his/her body of films. In auteur theory the finished film is seen as one pure expression of creativity and vision. For Bourdieu, this form of psycho-social reductionism must be directly challenged:

> we must completely reverse the procedure and ask, not how a writer comes to be what he is, in a sort of genetic psycho-sociology, but rather how the position or 'post' he occupies - that of writer of a particular type - became constituted. It is only then that we can ask if the knowledge of particular social conditions of the production of what I termed his habitus permits us to understand that he has succeeded in occupying this position, if only by transforming it. (Bourdieu, 1993:162)

Bourdieu suggests that it is not the psycho-social history which is of significance, but the individual's position within society, one's accumulated capital, and particular relations within the specific fields of cultural production which are of importance.

The example of reception analysis or audience research within communication and film studies is still regarded as a dominant methodological approach. Through its use of functionalist theoretical approaches, quantitative methodologies and consensual politics, both the medium of mass communication as well as the audience are viewed as the empirical objects of enquiry. Audience research has been employed very actively by companies and individuals involved in the promotion and marketing of films and television programmes. Most programmes or finished films will be screened to a preview audience to gauge their like or dislike of

the film. Often the collection of these audience interests and perspectives on the film will incorporate methods such as questionnaires, focus group discussions, telephone interviews, the electronic counting of selective individuals or family viewing patterns. In principle, reception analysis or audience-based research attempts to gain insights into audience needs, interests and likes (For more on audience research see Austin, 1989).

Bourdieu is equally critical of external approaches such as audience research or reception analysis which draw solely on quantifiable, statistical analysis to arrive at their conclusions on cultural production. For Bourdieu, statistical analysis is often tautological, in that it "applies to PRECONSTRUCTED populations principles of classification that are themselves preconstructed." (Bourdieu,1993:190) For Bourdieu, instead of an affirmation of the "already known" social scientists should study:

> the genesis of the systems of classification, names of periods, schools, genres and so forth that are actually the instruments and the stakes in the struggle. (Bourdieu, 1993: 190)

The case of reception analysis provides us with an example of one such pre-constructed principle of classification and a tautological relationship between audience dislikes and likings of work. Currently elements such as named stars and the use of special effects are drawing the largest film audiences. The tautology emerges in that interests and likes of viewers have been constituted largely due to previous films which have employed certain devices such as special effects. Hence special effects become an element of audience interest. Audience interest has arguably been constituted by the types of work which was previously available. Through audience research then, one is looking to affirm what is already known, and it is extremely functional in purpose – determining whether or not a particular film will or will not be a box-office success.

On a general level, Bourdieu posits an argument against any simplistic theories which reduce cultural works to mimetic reflections of an artist's

particular social experiences, the material condition for production at the moment of production, or other forms of affirmation for the "taken-for-granted" or common-sensical. The point then, for Bourdieu, is not so much to comment on and hence consolidate pre-existing structures and social relations, but rather, in a mapping sense, study and trace the development, rules, and boundaries of the fields of cultural production and how those limits have emerged over time. Cultural texts have very complex relationships to the social forces and contexts, which have generated them:

> The important fact, for the interpretation of works, is that this autonomous social universe functions somewhat like a prism which REFRACTS every external determination: demographic, economic or political events are always retranslated according to the specific logic of the field, and it is by this intermediary that they act on the logic of the development of the works. (Bourdieu, 1993:164)

In opposition to the conventional notion of "reflection", Bourdieu posits the notion of "refraction", where a given social text is clearly informed by both the internal issues of story, characterisation, form and genre as well as the external factors such as the time in which the work of art is produced, and the conditions of its production; but these influences cannot be simply reduced through elements which exist purely within the text. Instead, a complex approach recognises that a cultural text is the product of many influences, and that one should attempt to reveal the genesis of a cultural text. In attempting to develop an approach which incorporates the levels of complexity involved in the production of cultural goods and practices, Bourdieu develops the notion of "Genetic Sociology".

2.3   GENETIC SOCIOLOGY: A THEORY OF SYMBOLIC POWER

> A Genetic Sociology alone can grasp the essential, that is, the genesis and the structure of the specific social space in which the 'creative project' was formed. (Bourdieu, 1993:193)

In challenging the absolute division between internal and external analysis, Bourdieu develops a relational model of cultural analysis which he refers to as genetic sociology or genetic structuralism. By genetic sociology, Bourdieu is not looking to reduce cultural production to essential human -

genetic properties, but rather combines an objective assessment of position-taking in social structures with an analysis of the GENESIS (in a genealogical sense) of particular texts, individuals and groups. At the core of his method is a relational strategy of mapping and tracing the various networks, the position-taking, the articulations and dispositions which are produced and are manifest within the work of art.

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power is an active attempt to generate a revised notion of historical materialism. For Bourdieu, the production of any work of art is always contingent on the relations of its production. Although the work of art cannot simply be reduced to the conditions of its production, Bourdieu, like this current research, places an emphasis on the material relations and realities which produce given texts. Bourdieu suggests the notion of REFRACTION, where given social relations are refracted into the work of art. Unlike the notion of REFLECTION, which implies an element of mimetic relations, Bourdieu's deployment of refraction is intended to imply the existence of a relationship between text and the corresponding fields of production, which is to be systematically and rigorously unravelled by the researcher.

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power is rooted in three basic elements/levels, each of which are inter-linked and intra-related to one another. Each level grasps a particular level of social reality: i.) the first is the position occupied by the artistic or cultural field within "the field of power and the evolution of that position over time"; ii.) the second is the actual structure of the cultural field - the objective relations and positions held by individuals, groups or institutions in competing for legitimacy and power; and iii.) the development and trajectory of the different producers' habitus (Bourdieu, 1993:194). Through this prescriptive strategy, Bourdieu outlines a clear methodological approach to the development of a relational understanding of cultural production.

2.3.1 FIELD THEORY

In principle, the field concept works as a form of relational understanding where particular objects, individuals, institutions, rules and conventions are mapped across a specific social space and time. The notion of "Field" is grounded in an effort to gain both an understanding of the particular internal cultural logic which informs action and practice in a given area of cultural production, as well as to maintain an awareness of the specific groups, individuals and roles which generate both the cultural logic as well as the objects themselves. For Bourdieu, the relations between these various elements within the field are objective relations. Although any individual, group or institution may act in a subjective manner, individual action is still located within a field of objectively defined relations. Bourdieu notes:

> In analytic terms, a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (SITUS) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology. etc.). (Bourdieu, 1992: 97)

Within a Bourdieusian framework, the social world is composed of a series of related fields and sub-fields. Within each field there is a specific logic which determines the rules and regularities deemed acceptable. Individuals will then act in relation to their understanding of the rules or regularities within the field. In this way, Bourdieu's notion of the field functions very much like a field of play or as a game-field, where one's individual subjective decision to act is related to one's objective position within the field. Bourdieu refers to this as the "objectivity of the subjective" (Bourdieu, 1993/80: 135-141).

In understanding the notion of field, Bourdieu cites Max Weber's theory of the religious agent, and the role of "specialist" in providing technical or authorial interpretations and direction to religious doctrine. Yet, unlike

Weber, Bourdieu emphasises the social world, or social stratas, of which such religious specialists are part, the ways in which they may share a common educational or social knowledge base, which would result in intellectual worlds which "have their own structures and their own laws" (Bourdieu, 1993: 181). It is these resulting intellectual microcosms which Bourdieu refers to as fields, and whose general laws are deciphered through genetic sociology. [18]

One of the questions which emerge when employing Bourdieu's concept of field, is that of boundaries and the functioning capacities of the field itself. When questioned about the limits of the field, Bourdieu responds "The question of the limits of the field is a very difficult one, if only because it is always at stake in the field itself and therefore admits no a priori answer" (Bourdieu, 1992:100). Two issues emerge from this, the first pertains to issues of power and self definition, the second to the role and space of empirical inquiry. The first issue concerns the process of isolating a position of power within the field. From the Bourdieusian model, it would seem that those who hold positions which allow for the definition of a given field within the social world, say the Head of the Bank of England when she raises the interest rates, clearly holds a position which impacts on people and structures outside of her immediate social world. This suggests that she holds a very powerful position within the economic field: no only that her individual decisions to act will have an impact within the broader field, but also that these decisions will define the parameters of the field itself. [19] Bourdieu notes that the field is a:

> FIELD OF FORCES, but it is also a FIELD OF STRUGGLE tending to transform or conserve this field of forces. The network of objective relations between positions subtends and orients strategies which the occupants of the different positions implement in their struggle to defend or improve their positions (i.e. their position-taking), strategies which depend for their force and form on the position each occupies in the power relations [rapports de force]. (Bourdieu; 1993:30)

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[18] There is a similarity between Bourdieu's notion of field and Weber's "Autonomy of Spheres" and Gramsci's notion of hegemony".

[19] Similarity to Mouzelis' notion of "macro" actor, BACK TO SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY (1993: 39).

The limits of a given field then, are always in the midst of struggle and change, but do exist through their ability to impact, in some way, on the particular social structures and more directly the particular lives of actors.

In deliberating the limits of a given field, Bourdieu employs the device of binaries, or poles, which exist within the field. These poles serve the function of providing the extreme positions within the field. Like a positive and the corresponding negative charge, the poles function as the set of opposites within a given field. As mentioned above, the limits as well as the poles of the field are constantly changing and in the midst of negotiation at any given moment. Nevertheless, binaries do exist and function to structure the limits of a given field at a given moment. Bourdieu employs sets of binaries which include: dominant-dominated; objectivism - subjectivism; avant garde - consecrated; principle of internal hierarchization - principle of external hierarchization. With each pair, Bourdieu is suggesting a device through which the relations of power within a given field at a given moment can be mapped. As binaries, they are not intended as points of ultimate arrival or gradual discovery, but rather positions which will structure the field at a given moment, as well as positions which allow the researcher to reconstruct the given social relations of production at that moment. The field then, needs to be conceptualised as a space of activity in which the struggle for control of one's actions, and the strategising of one's actions are relative to one's position within the field and the existing parameters, rules and regularities of a particular field.

A core concept in discussing field theory is the notion of homologies, parallels and/or similarities between and within various social fields, the idea that there exist parallel social relations between very different social fields. In his examination of SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION Bourdieu isolates the notion of the emergent petit bourgeoisie and the homologies between the field of power in the text between certain characters, the relations of power within the literary or cultural field through the experiences of Flaubert himself, and the rise of the new petit bourgeois within French society during

the mid-19th century. Isolating homologies becomes a very powerful tool in isolating intended or unintended links and understandings between different fields, and provides a means of relating tendencies and relationships between various fields.

2.3.2 FIELDS OF POWER

Within Bourdieu's models, the field of power is that field which holds those relations which represent the structure of the decision-making class and/or ruling class. The field of power implies those social relations which possess hegemonic control of economic and political capital. Ultimately, the field of power is driven by economic capital. This is not to suggest that Bourdieu's models of analysis can be reduced to "taken-for-granted" economic realities, but rather, different forms of power and capital hold value ultimately in their capacity to be translated into economic capital. Unlike the Althusserian notion of "Ideology", Bourdieu is suggesting the relations of actual decision-making which inform or structure both action and the limits of the field in his notion of the field of power (Althusser, 1976). As Randal Johnson notes:

> Like Foucault, Bourdieu sees power as diffuse and often concealed in broadly accepted, and often unquestioned, ways of seeing and describing the world; but unlike Foucault, in Bourdieu's formulation this diffuse or symbolic power is closely intertwined with - but not reducible to - economic and political power, and this serves a legitimating function. (Ed. Introduction, Bourdieu,1993: 2)

Power is fundamental to Bourdieu, it involves domination and/or differential distribution. In other words, power is always USED, if sometimes unconsciously; it is not simply and impersonally systematic. (Calhoun,1993: 64) In this way Bourdieu's approach is clearly different from Althusser's notion of Ideology and Foucault's notion of discourse, in the active application of power by actual individuals who hold actual positions within a given field.

For Bourdieu, power is the struggle for "stakes" in the game, where one aims to be able both to accumulate capital but also to define the limits of the field.

Hence, power exists in all fields, as rules and individuals gaining benefit occur throughout social life.

2.3.3   CULTURAL FIELD

By cultural field Bourdieu is referring to that field of relations which has enabled the production and reproduction of particular cultural values through the production of cultural artefacts. Although the cultural field is seemingly defined through the production of cultural goods and artefacts, the significance of the cultural field lies in its capacity to produce and reproduce existing social meanings and social relations.   Bourdieu defines a literary or cultural field as:

> a space of objective relationships among positions - that of the
> consecrated artist and that of the ARTISTE MAUDIT, for example -
> and one can only understand what happens there if one locates each
> agent or each institution in its relationship with all others. It is this
> peculiar universe, this "Republic of Letters", with its relations of power
> and its struggles for the preservation or the transformation of the
> established order, that is the basis for strategies of producers, for the
> schools they found, in short, for their specific interests. External
> determinants - for example, the effect of economic crises, technical
> transformation or political revolutions - which the Marxists evoke can
> only have an effect through resulting transformations in the structure
> of the field. (Bourdieu, 1993:181-182)[20]

Unlike Adorno's notion of the "cultural industry" or Marx's general notion of superstructure, the cultural field implies a more micro series of relations in the production of culture, and implies a structure for production in which powerful positions will have the capacity both to generate culture as well as preserve and reproduce dominant modes of production, reception and understanding.

2.3.4   LITERARY FIELD

As a sub-field of the cultural field, Bourdieu develops the concept of the literary field which can be seen as the actual field of production for a given

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[20] For more on the Republic of Letters see Bourdieu, 1993:163.

Figure 1. Internal and External Hierchisation of The Cultural Field

Field of Power

Cultural Field

Literary Field

Film Field

Sentimental Education

My Beautiful Laundrette
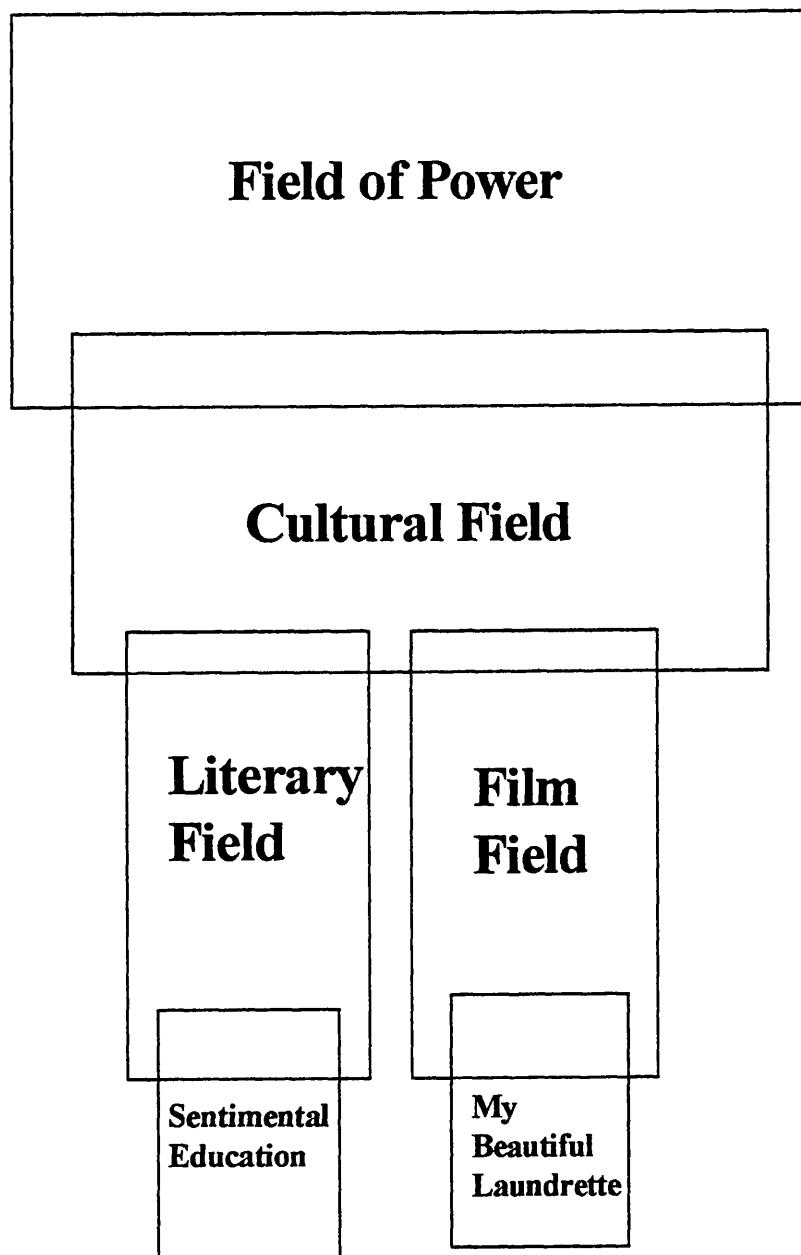
text. In his study of SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION Bourdieu constitutes the literary field as all of those production relationships involved in the production of the final text. For the purposes of this thesis we will be developing the concept of the film field which is meant to suggest the actual relational field of production for a given film. MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE is an example of a film which was produced within a particular configuration in the film field. What is all important in the concept of the literary field or the film field is the notion of a RELATIONAL production process, through which a discrete cultural form emerges. Although the production of a discrete cultural form may be a stage within yet another process, in the way a script is a part of the film field; but to write a script is in many ways a self-contained production process which can be examined on its own terms, as well as part of the film field itself, this in contrast to cinematography which is only ever an element within the film field.

2.3.5   HABITUS

Bourdieu develops the notion of habitus as a complementary concept to his notion of the field. Whereas the field reveals a series of objectively defined social networks and positions of power within the production process, habitus is intended as a concept to address the subjective perspectives and dispositions held by the agent, without being reduced to issues of individual consciousness, "free will" and intentionality. Bourdieu defines habitus as:

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is as principles which generate and organise outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organising action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1993/80: 53)

Similar to the concept of "consciousness", habitus is employed as a concept in understanding the logic deployed by an individual, institution or other agents, without reducing the particular logic to an individual understanding. The notion of disposition is useful here in understanding habitus. For

Bourdieu, the habitus functions as the awareness by the agent of the available positions for action, which are objectively available to it within the field, from which the agent chooses the relevant subjective action. By a durable set of dispositions, habitus is meant to incorporate embodied histories, internalised history, and forgotten history. Individual, group or institutional dispositions, which inform action within the field, come closest to an understanding of habitus. In principle, the habitus provides the core logic for practice.

The importance of the notion of habitus lies in conceptualising the relation between the agent and the social world where the relation is not between two separate types of being, but between two dimensions of the social. Bourdieu notes that the:

> source of historical action, that of the artist, the scientist, or the member of government just as much as that of the worker or the petty civil servant, is not an active subject confronting society as if that society were an object constituted externally. The source resides neither in consciousness nor in things but in the relationship between two stages of the social, that is, between the history objectified in things, in the form of institutions, and the history incarnated in bodies, in the form of that system of enduring dispositions which I call habitus. (Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993: 74)

Habitus is described in a practical sense, as a "feel for the game", a set of dispositions which generate practices and perceptions lasting through an individual's lifetime. Habitus is perceived as self-regulating in that the logics are contingent on that which is perceived as "appropriate" within the field, and changes as the parameters, limits and rules of the field change.

For Bourdieu, what links various habitus, is their individual aim of accumulating a maximum amount of capital (economic, symbolic and cultural). Hence an aim in both employing the notion of habitus and isolating various habitus within a given social field is to reveal the various "class habitus" which are at work: those sets of shared dispositions between actors who share a common position within the field. The aim is to reveal the

manner in which such shared positions are both produced, affirmed and reproduced with the field itself.

In principle Bourdieu's concept of habitus can be seen as an active attempt to move beyond the theories of consciousness and unconsciousness, beyond conventional sociological division of structure and agency. Through his use of habitus, the aim is to understand subjective human agency in relation to objective social conditions: to recognise that the Descartian "I", is located within objective social fields and/or networks and that the action by the "I" although apparently subjective in motivation, is located clearly within objective social structures.

2.3.6   PRACTICE

By practice Bourdieu is referring to actual action by an agent within a given social field, informed by an understanding structured by the habitus and clearly impacting on or relating to the field. Bourdieu's usage of practice incorporates notions of routine, regular vocation and intended action when conceptualising the notion of practice. The habitus provides the logic and understanding for action, the field is seen as the place where action would be located, practice then is the actual action manifest by the agent. It would be limiting to view practice then as determined by either the understandings and/or dispositions (habitus) or equally by the social conditions of its production (the field), but rather as an interactive engagement and product of forces which both impose on the agent, and informing action.

2.3.7   STRATEGY AND TRAJECTORY

Strategy and trajectory are another set of complementary concepts in Bourdieu's development of a Genetic Sociology. By strategy, Bourdieu is referring to the specific orientations held by agents and/or institutions that are engaged in the struggle to accumulate capital. As a product of the habitus, strategy is not simply the direct result of conscious calculation and decision-making, but rather a consequence of an unconscious disposition

towards practice held by the given artist at the time, which can only in hindsight, be viewed in a programmatic manner.[21] Strategy needs to be seen as a way of conceiving the decision-making process for the agent: the plan which is generated by the agent where it will engage with various practices within the field. A strategy can be seen as subjective in so much as it is driven by particular logics, histories and understandings.

For Bourdieu trajectory is a way in which to view an objective relationship between the agent and the field. It differs from Sartre's "internal coloration of the project" (Sartre,1976:105), in that it does not lead or trace an original moment within the biography of the artist, but rather reflects a:

> series of positions successively occupied by the same writer in the successive states of the literary field, being understood that it is only in the structure of a field that the meaning of these successive positions can be defined. (Editor's Introduction, Bourdieu, 1993: 18).

In contrast to strategy, trajectory can be seen as a series of positions occupied by the agent within the field over a period of time.

2.3.8   CAPITAL

Bouridue defines capital as providing the "in the last instance" the essential notion of value as well as the basic motivation for movement within field. The principle of accumulating maximum capital is assumed as the central motivational force for all action. For Bourdieu capital is viewed as a resource, or as a form of wealth, which yields power. (Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993: 69) In developing his notion of capital, Bourdieu is acutely thinking of Marx's notion of the labour capital:

> Capital is accumulated labor [sic] (in its materialised form or its 'incorporated,' embodied form) which, when appropriated on a private, i.e., exclusive, basis by agents or groups of agents, enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor [sic]. (Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993: 67)

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[21] Bourdieu on Flaubert, Bourdieu, 1993: 204.

Although Bourdieu draws a parallel to Marx's notion that agents will devise practices and actions with the active intention of accumulating maximum capitals, Bourdieu is able to escape the criticism of economic determinism by suggesting that capital is not to be understood as solely economic capital. Although all capital is ultimately reducible and translatable to economic gain, Bourdieu delineates capital into three very different, yet related forms of capital:

> ECONOMIC capital, in its various kinds; secondly CULTURAL capital or better, informational capital, again in its different kinds; and thirdly two forms of capital that are very strongly correlated, SOCIAL capital, which consists of resources based on connections and group membership, and SYMBOLIC capital, which is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate. (Emphasis in original, Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993: 70)

For Bourdieu, economic capital is that form of capital which can be readily converted into expendable money, unlike educational attainment which would be a form of cultural capital or connections within particular social networks which would become a form of social capital (Calhoun, 1993:70). For Bourdieu:

> Economic capital can be more easily and efficiently converted into symbolic (that is, social and cultural) capital than vice versa, although symbolic capital can ultimately be transformed into economic capital. In this way, Bourdieu appropriates Marx and places class at the centre of his analysis of modern society in a manner that allows for a material determination of culture and history. (Calhoun, 1993: 5)

Cultural knowledge is defined as cultural capital (e.g. knowledge of various languages) providing an individual with knowledge of, and access to, other points of cultural or social reference, which ultimately could be translated in a form of economic power. Social capital is that form of capital which emerges from knowledge of social networks and acquaintances, access to social networks which may inform or support cultural and/or economic activities.

2.3.9   CONSECRATION

Consecration suggests the affirmation and legitimation of a given work of art. In contrast to the artists, consecration takes place by individuals who are in a position within the cultural field to both realise, legitimate, and to profit from a given work of art. But the power to consecrate by non-artists is relative to the degree to which the non-artists themselves have been empowered or consecrated. Bourdieu suggests, through the example of the art dealer or "merchant of art" that he:

> is inseparably both the one who exploits the work of the artist by making commerce of his products and the one who, in putting into the market of symbolic goods through exhibition, publication or staging, ensures that the product of artistic fabrication will receive a CONSECRATION - and the consecration will be greater the more consecrated the merchant himself is. He contributes to "making" the value of the author he supports by the sole fact of bringing him or her into a known and renowned existence, so that the author is assured of publication (under his imprint, in his gallery or his theatre, etc.) and offered as a guarantee all the symbolic capital the merchant has accumulated. (Bourdieu, 1995: 167-168)

What is central in Bourdieu's usage of consecration is the processive nature of the term. Consecration suggests fundamentally the process of legitimation and subsequent accumulation of capital, rather than aesthetic absolutes.

2.4   BOURDIEU'S READING OF SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION

> A sociological reading breaks the spell. By interrupting the complicity that unites author and reader in the same relation of denegation of the reality expressed by the text, it reveals the truth that the text enunciates but in such a way that it does not say it, moreover, sociological readings A CONTRARIO bring to light the truth of the text itself, whose specificity is defined precisely by the fact that it does not say what it says in the same way as the sociological reading does. (Bourdieu, 1992/96: 32-33)

Having outlined certain key concepts within the notion of genetic sociology, this current section will be assessing these theoretical tools in relation to Bourdieu's analysis of Gustave Flaubert's SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION (1869/1964). In analysing SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION, Bourdieu reconstructs the fields of power and fields of production both from within the

text, and by locating text and Flaubert within a broader literary field. Bourdieu achieves this by isolating "Flaubert's Sociology" where he locates the various characters' positions from the text within their own field of power. Then Bourdieu develops a "Sociology of Flaubert" in which he initiates the process of locating Flaubert personally within the French literary field and the broader field of power from the 1840s and 1850s. By performing these two sociological readings, Bourdieu is able to build up a larger picture of the fields of cultural production as they pertain to Flaubert and SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION specifically.

Further to developing ways of mapping the fields, this section will pay particular attention to Bourdieu's notion of homology. By homology Bourdieu is referring to instances where there exist common occurrences and/or parallels within and between fields. The concept of homology provides the researcher with a clear device for correlating relationships between characters, motivations, logics and the limits of fields.

The focus of Bourdieu's approach has the aim of revealing the relational networks within the production and reproduction of cultural processes. For Bourdieu, the study of the literary or cultural field is in order to unveil homologies within and between fields of production:

> The science of cultural works has as its object the correspondence between two homologous structures, the structure of the works (i.e. of genres, forms, and themes) and the structure of the literary field, a field of forces that is unavoidably a field of struggle. The impetus for change in cultural works - language, art, literature, science, etc. - resides in the struggles that take place in the corresponding field of production. These struggles, whose goal is the preservation or transformation of the established power relationships in the field of production, obviously have as their effect the preservation or transformation of the structure of the field of works, which are the tools and stakes in these struggles. (Bourdieu, 1993:183)

Ultimately, homologies within and between fields allow the researcher a mechanism to arrive at sociological conclusions, without being limited to exclusively external or internal readings of the text.

In reading Flaubert's SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION, Bourdieu suggests that Flaubert's sociology provides us with a means through which to develop the sociology of Flaubert (Bourdieu, 1993: 161). By Flaubert's sociology, Bourdieu is suggesting a sociological understanding which is manifest through the specifics of the characters and their particular positions, their worlds, and their particular practices - put simply their own field of power and their particular habitus - which position their particular relation to the fictional social field. Even though these worlds are "only fiction", the generative structure of the text will imply a movement, and hence a logic to character action. A novel, like any work of culture can conceivably hold its own reasons for actions, limits and individual choices, its own internal logic - its own limits and its own fields:

> Thus only after characterising the different position within the literary field is the analyst able to confront the individual actors and the personal properties predisposing them more or less to realise the potential inscribed in their position. (Bourdieu, 1993: 201)

In attempting to decipher the fields and habitus which are at play within a given text, Bourdieu suggests that one should isolate the various poles which are structuring the field of power within the text. In the case of SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION, Bourdieu notes the poles of "art and politics", and "business and politics". Once the structuring poles have been isolated, Bourdieu locates the various characters in relation to these isolated poles. The story of SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION sees six young men, including Fredric our central character, interacting and existing within the field of power. What we find is that Fredric, is the lone individual who is able mediate between the two opposing poles. Their individual (and collective) actions not only define the limits of the field of power, but also the rules and regularities through which each character struggles for survival and the accumulation of capital. Bourdieu notes:

> In this game, the trump cards are the habitus, that is to say, the acquirements, the embodied, assimilated properties, such as elegance, ease of manner, beauty and so forth, and capital as such,

that is, the inherited assets which define the possibilities inherent in the field. The trump cards determine not only the style of play, but also the success and failure in the game of the young people concerned, in short, the whole process Flaubert calls EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE. (Bourdieu, 1993: 150)

Through a positioning of the characters within the field, through their actions and understanding of the limits of the field, and a recognition of the dominant habitus, Bourdieu is able to map the fields of cultural production within SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION and hence build up a notion of Flaubert's sociology.

2.4.1   FLAUBERT'S SOCIOLOGY

What is being revealed here are the specifics of Flaubert's sociology, as the artistic viewpoint from which the artistic work is generated (Bourdieu, 1992/96: 87). We are shown the particular social world which exists within the world of the text, and Flaubert's particular reading/writing of the objective social relations which characters will hold (dispositions) within the field of power. In developing his sociological understanding, Flaubert situates the characters as parallels or opposites to one another, with the aim of constituting a homology between the literary field and the field of power.

Bourdieu cites the example of Fredric who inherits possessions and Deslaurier who only inherits the desire for possessions, as characters for whom a parallel or an homology exists between their respective bourgeois and petit-bourgeois sensibilities (Bourdieu, 1993: 152). For the duration of the novel, Deslaurier attempts to become someone who acquires great wealth in an attempt to transcend his place in life, or position within the field. Such an urge to shift/raise one's position for that of a person above you, "to take oneself FOR another, lies at the very heart of petit-bourgeois pretension." (Bourdieu, 1993: 152) Here Bourdieu is constituting a direct homology between particular characterisation and French petit-bourgeois sensibilities in the 1850s and 1860s.

Figure 2. The Field of Power According to SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION
(Source RULES OF ART, p.6)
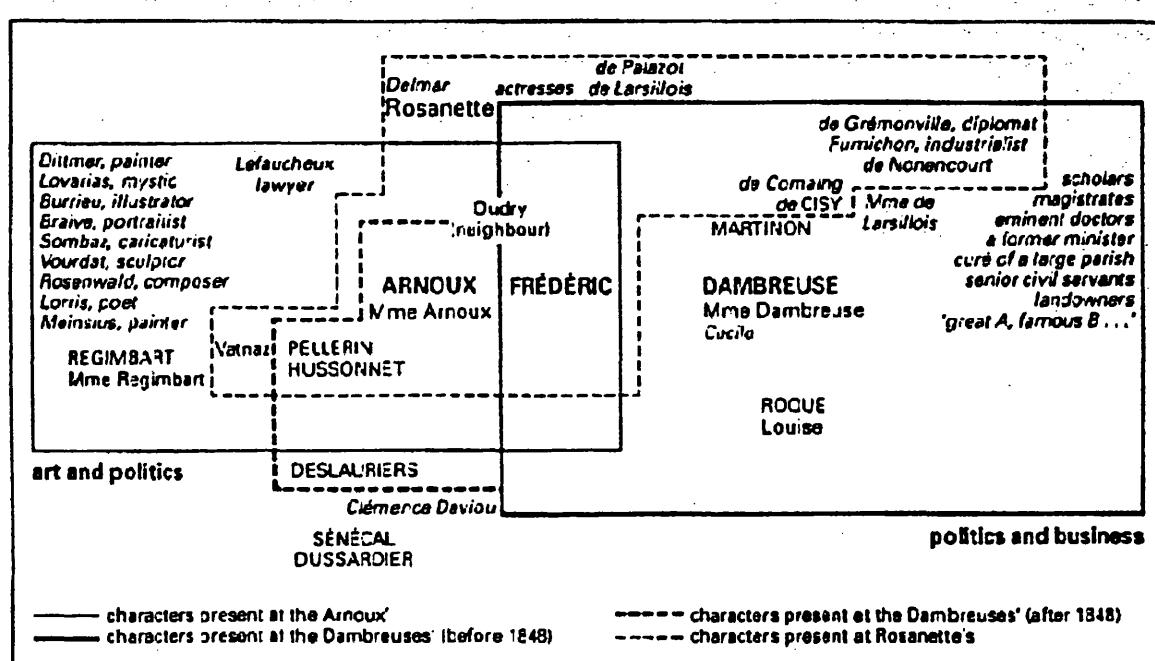
The use of the above example of the relationship between Deslaurier and Fredric is meant to reveal the way in which Flaubert's sociology is directly manifest within the text. What is of interest is the parallel or homology between the relationship between Deslaurier and Fredric within the text and the relation of petit-bourgeois and bourgeoisie in the field of power in France during the mid 19th century. Through the homologies between the world of the text and Flaubert's real lived social space, we are able to isolate the sociology of Flaubert.

Bourdieu is meticulous in delineating and outlining the various social relations which would have been influential in generating the various positions which characters occupy within SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION. He provided the reader with volumes of detail and examples of life during the mid-19th century, discussing in detail the usage of salons, the rise in prominence and business of the press, increase in number of individuals attempting careers as artists and writers, careers which before would have been exclusively the terrain of the nobility. (Bourdieu, 1996)

The question which immediately emerges, is one of intentionality and whether Flaubert had consciously placed these homologous relationships within the text. To this issue of intentionality Bourdieu responds:

> literary fiction is undoubtedly, for the author and his reader, a way of making known that which one does not wish to know. It is in this light that one should consider all those fictional conventions of the novel as a game which defines what we call REALISM. The appearance of reality which satisfies the need to know is in fact achieved by that semblance of reality which allows the reader to ignore the real state of things, to refuse to see things as they really are. The sociological reading of a text breaks the spell by breaking the tacit complicity that binds author and reader together in the same relationship of negation with regard to the reality indicated in the text. (Bourdieu, 1993:158)

What Bourdieu is suggesting here is that a sociologist should decipher and make explicit, connections (in the form of homologies) which the author may be denoting in a much more subtle and implicit manner. It is the author's conscious or unconscious strategy to tap into her audience's

understandings, instead of overtly reflecting a given reality. It is the way in which characters gain empathy from the reader, through a type of positionality, which Bourdieu is flagging as fertile ground for sociological analysis.

2.4.2   SOCIOLOGY OF FLAUBERT

> To understand Flaubert, Baudelaire, or any writer, major or minor, is first of all to understand what the status of writer consists of at the moment considered; that is, more precisely, the social conditions of the possibility of this social function, of this social personage. (Bourdieu, 1993:163)

The aim of this aspect of Bourdieu's approach is to locate the author, Flaubert, within the actual literary field in France during 1830-1850, with the aim of isolating potential homologies between the world of SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION and Flaubert's world. In mapping the field of cultural production in France between 1830 and 1850, Bourdieu isolates 3 key leading positions. At the dominated pole, are the advocates of "Social Art". Democrats, socialistsand libertarians who are situated at this pole hold the belief that art should fulfil a social or political function.

At the opposite pole are representatives defending "Bourgeois Art" or "consecrated" art. These writers primarily wrote for the theatre, and were closely linked in practices and values with the ruling elite in France. Artists situated at this pole were beneficiaries of both material success, as well as "tokens of success in the bourgeois world and, notably, the Academy" (Bourdieu, 1993: 199).

Certain artists located outside of these two opposing positions gradually constituted a third position called "art for art's sake", a position which Bourdieu argues was actively invented by the artists themselves (Bourdieu, 1993: 199). The position is constituted at a particular moment within the French literary field - the rise in the number of people attempting careers as artists and writers, the way in which the individuals who are part of the "art

for art's sake" position have a shared social trajectory in their common petit-bourgeois backgrounds. (Bourdieu, 1992/96: 85)

Bourdieu situates Flaubert as part of the "art for art's sake" position, representative of a new group, tradition or location of writers within the literary field. This new group of artists had to:

> invent that social personage without precedent - the modern artist, full-time professional, dedicated to his work, indifferent to the exigencies of politics as to the injunctions of morality, and recognising no jurisdiction other than the specific norm of art. Through this they invented pure aesthetics, a point of view with universal applicability, with no other justification than that which it finds itself. (Bourdieu, 1993: 199)

A homology exists between the invention of an "art for arts sake" position and the representational strategies employed by an author such as Flaubert. As an example, Flaubert provides us with a direct homology between new forms of love tied to new forms of love of art.

> Flaubert gives us a model of the different forms of love which were in the process of being invented, as one can see, for example, by reading LA VIE DE BOHEME, and he makes it clear that the historical invention of new forms of love, represented in the novel by Fredric's relationships with Madame Arnoux and Rosanette, is inseparable from the historical invention of new forms of love of art. A perfect homology exists between the forms of love and the forms of the love of art. (Bourdieu, 1993: 154-155)

In developing a sociology of Flaubert, one must employ a parallel method of analysing the relationship between fields and habitus (i.e. the earlier Fredric and Deslaurier example). What is now different is locating both text, its production, and Flaubert's position within the broader French literary field.

Analysing the text and the "actual life" of Flaubert within the same method - the discovery of homologies between text and real world, or vice versa – has become a central approach within a Bourdieusian analysis. Bourdieu notes:

if the work can reveal the deep structures of the social world and the mental worlds in which those structures were reflected, it is because the work of formalisation gave the writer the opportunity to work on himself and thereby allow him to objectify not only the positions in the field and their occupants that he opposed, but also, THROUGH THE SPACE THAT INCLUDED HIM, HIS OWN POSITION. (My emphasis. Bourdieu, 1993: 207)

2.5 THOUGHTS FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF FILM

[T]he main function of certain concepts, such as those of habitus and field, and of the theoretical elaborations to which I submit them is to bring to the level of conscious awareness the dispositions that define "the sociological eye," to raise them to the order of a METHOD, though I would not want the distinction between habitus and method to be used to create a new dualism: for if habitus, or craft (metier), becomes method through awareness, method turns into habitus, or craft, only through repeated and situated application. (Bourdieu in Calhoun,1993a: 271)

For the purposes of this current research there are three key methodological approaches into which Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power provides fundamental insights: reading the field, isolating the dominant dispositions (habitus), and reading the logic of emergent film practices. The use of Bourdieu's method is realised by firstly deciphering the sociology of a given film – by paying close attention to the structure of the story, the positionality of the characters, and how they have been constituted in relation to other characters within the films, and then within the field of power within the film. The aim of arriving at a sociology of the film is to arrive at a deeper reading of the film which reveals the limits of the social world refracted within the film text.

Secondly, selected films are located sociologically. Their relations of production are deciphered, the dominant positions within the film field at given moments are mapped in relation to particular film productions, and correlations drawn between given film fields and corresponding fields of power are read against one another so as to reveal any structural homologies. In locating a film sociologically, one is looking to map a film's

production in relation to other films and a broader social world of which it is a part.

This thesis examines a series of practices which emerged over a set period of time. The argument is less that these are the only practices which were prominent during this period, but rather that the films function as clear examples of particular film practices in action. The broader aim of this thesis is to provide both a sociological analysis of film grounded in a firm methodological and materialist approach, as well as providing detailed mapping of relations of power within the field and how certain films refracted a relationship to available positions within the film field.

Although Bourdieu seems to be gaining increased critical discussion within the academy, it is interesting that most comprehensive studies about Bourdieu engage with the epistemological basis from which the methodological concepts have been devised (i.e. Fowler, 1997; Calhoun,1995). Although individuals have been employing the occasional tool or concept [22] very few people are employing Bourdieu's concepts and testing the strengths and weakness of his tools, models and strategies, hence missing the core of Bourdieu's theory of practice:

> If you will allow me an image true to the spirit of my theory of practice (and this scientific practice), I blame most of my readers for having considered as theoretical treatises, meant solely to be read or commented upon, works that, like gymnastics handbooks, were intended for exercise, or even better, for being put into practice; that is, as books that put forth so many programs for work, observation, and experimentation. This way of conceiving scientific work (absolutely irreducible to the kind of pure "theoretical work" that has come back into fashion this past decade in American social sciences and in all the countries still dominated by it) was in perfect agreement with the conviction - which, from the very beginning, inspired my research strategies - that one cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality, historically situated and dated, but only in order to

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[22] Sarah Thornton, CLUB CULTURES (1995), employs and alters Bourdieu's notion of cultural-capital, deviating it by developing the notion of sub-cultural capital. Cultural capital is the only concept which Thornton uses from Bourdieu's approach to reading culture.

construct it as an instance (CAS DEFIGURE) in a finite universe of possible configurations. (Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993b: 271)

One needs to recognise that the value of social research lies in the use of critical tools so as to make greater sense of a given empirical field. The study of social relations within a Bourdieusian framework suggests the mapping of objective relations within a field, exploring the genesis of given practices and maintaining an acute awareness of power in use.[23]

Having discussed the core methodological concepts as outlined by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, this thesis now turns to an assessment of a range of British-Asian independent film practices. The proceeding five chapters will actively apply Bourdieu's methodological strategies in an effort to reveal the relations of cultural production and the underlying logic of practice within the British independent film field between 1976 and 1996.

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[23] By emphasising the notion of power in use, Bourdieu is part of a critical trajectory within social theory which includes the work of Althusser, Foucault, Derrida and Deleuze.

3.0   CHAPTER 3: AN EXCLUDED FILM PRACTICE

3.1   INTRODUCTION

An independent film practice which sought to address issues of "ethnicity" within a British national context emerged in the early to mid-1970s. This generation of practitioners would deal with issues of social exclusion experienced by individuals in establishing themselves as British. The work of this generation of artists was driven by the historical experiences of migration to Britain and the social processes of cultural conflict that they and earlier generations of migrants had experienced in attempting to become active members of the British field of power. The logic which informed the practice of this first generation of cultural practitioners was addressing basic social issues such as housing, employment, education as well as more complex issues such as criminality, inter-racial relationships, perceptions as the outsider, and inter-generational differences. From the outset, when British-Asian film-makers were given the opportunity to make films, political treatments of inter-cultural relations were always within view. In principle this group of early practitioners would lay the foundation, both thematically and practically, for future film practice interested in exploring themes of cultural identity within a British context.

The aim of this chapter is to clearly outline the habitus, themes and opportunities which were informing certain British-Asian film practitioners in the genesis of their independent film practice during the mid to late 1970s. Through a close reading of Horace Ove's PRESSURE (1976), this chapter will suggest that a homology exists between the experiences of exclusion encountered by Tony and Colin, the central characters of PRESSURE, and the lack of social opportunities for Britain's ethnic minority communities during the 1970s. The chapter argues that homologies exist between the poles situated within PRESSURE's field of power and corresponding poles within the field of power amongst British ethnic minority communities during the 1970s.

Released in 1976 to significant controversy and concern surrounding its "political contents" (Ove in Pines,1992:124), PRESSURE serves as an interesting testament to the social exclusion of young West Indian youth in 1970s Britain. PRESSURE suggests a very interesting homology between the relations of power within British street society in the mid 1970s and the actual experiences of dispossession amongst young West Indian youth in Britain's inner cities. Of interest is the prophecy of rebellion and protest, which PRESSURE overtly foreshadows, that was to become a reality in the Notting Hill riots/uprisings of 1976 and 1979, and then in Brixton and 30 other British inner cities during the summer of 1981.

As a particular manifestation of a logic of practice, PRESSURE refracts early political "black" British communities, constituted along race-class lines, which incorporated overtly excluded and dispossessed British "ethnic" communities. Although specifically about the experiences of particular West Indian youth, the politics of exclusion which PRESSURE directly addresses were read to encompass the resistance by "white" British, middle-class dispositions towards new migrant communities hoping to create a better life in Britain. In this sense, "ethnic minority" becomes a practical reference to many of the excluded communities within 1970s Britain. Horace Ove, the director of PRESSURE, is an embodiment of black-British and British-Asian unity. Although born in Trinidad, Ove is of South Asian ancestry, and has since completed films exploring both black and Asian diaspora issues.[24] The limits of any political "black" identity most likely began and ended with this first generation of diaspora film-makers.

Through PRESSURE, we find that the underlying consideration of the politics of race within the independent film field was that, in deploying "ethnic minority" subjectivities within a given film, one was involved in the production of a politicised art practice. The assumption which would be placed on the shoulders of these film-makers by the public at large and film-makers alike,

was that the work should be produced with the financial support of the state, and that the films themselves must speak to "social issues" as "social art" within a British context. From the earliest work, it is clear that the interest of British-Asian independent film practitioners was the examination of the experiences of particular cultural communities and their specific strategies of survival within new social landscapes.

3.2 MAPPING THE TRAJECTORY OF THE INDEPENDENT FILM FIELD DURING THE 1970s

In initiating a discussion around the British-Asian independent film field one needs to situate this particular sub-field within the broader field of independent film-making in Britain of the 1960s and 1970s. The British film field at the time was structured around two opposing practices: auteur-driven fantastical commercial film practice and a more politically engaged social realist film practice. As an example of the first pole one could cite the work of film-makers such as David Lean or Ken Russell, who were working at the largest possible scale of film production, producing individually imprinted works of art for mass theatrical distribution. In contrast to this pole lay a much more politically engaged film practice, which would often use social realism as its primary device for commenting on the state of British society. The most famous of such politically engaged film practices is what is known as the "kitchen-sink" dramas of the Free Cinema Movement of the early 1960s. These films expressed many of the concerns of the time - Britain's transition from a colonial empire, post-World War II reconstruction, issues of sexual liberation, an opening-up of Britain's repressive class structure and a transformation in the educational system. (Park, 1984: 24)

Between 1953 and 1968, the Free Cinema movement, through film-makers such as Jack Clayton, Tony Richardson, Lindsey Anderson, Karel Reisz, produced some of Britain's most politically engaging work which would lay

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[24] In 1995, Horace Ove was awarded and accepted the "Best Director" prize from the Asian Film Academy for his film THE QUALIZER (1995).

the foundation for politicised British film practices.[25] Free Cinema explored the "cultural specificity" of northern working-class English life in the 1960s, with its traditional industrial lifestyle, pub culture, social tensions along ruling-class and proletariat lines, situations set within the extended family, new housing environments, the emergence of television, Rugby League, and communism.

At the core of the Free Cinema film practice was an active engagement with the prevailing studio structures of production and a direct challenge to the exclusion of certain types of "British-ness" which were not being revealed within the film field. Aside from filming actual locations and in black and white, the Free Cinema movement was important in directly engaging with issues of cultural difference through the use of identifiable working-class communities and working-class (like cockney and various northern dialects) speech in contrast to the norm of "Received Pronunciation". This most clearly signified an engagement with the "other". Here a homology exists between the use of northern accents and the visualisation of "ethnic minority" subjects within film language. In both instances the effect is clearly to disrupt objective film language and to denote that cultural issues will be explored. Although British-Asian and other practitioners would be influenced by other politically engaged film practices (Third Cinema of emergent post-colonial nations, Parallel Cinema in India or Blaxploitation films in the United States), the Free Cinema movement provides a very interesting precursor to the practices and strategies, as well as some of the shortcomings, of exploring issues of culturally specific communities within a British context.

Free Cinema provides this current research with a clear model of a logic of British film practice which actually sought to challenge prevailing perceptions of given British ethnic minority communities. They employed social-realistic

25 Films included: O DREAMLAND (Lindsey Anderson, 1953), MOMMA DONIT ALLOW (Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, 1955), TOGETHER (Lorenza Mazzettii, 1955), ROOM AT THE TOP (Jack Clayton, 1958), EVERYDAY BUT CHRISTMAS (Lindsey Anderson, 1958), LOOK BACK IN ANGER (Jack Clayton, Tony Richardson, 1959) SATURDAY NIGHT, SUNDAY MORNING (Karel Reisz, 1960), THE ENTERTAINER (Tony Richardson, 1960) TASTE OF HONEY (Tony Richardson,

visual strategies as a mode of overtly challenging the prevailing film studio and television structures. Through its engagement with issues of cultural difference, Free Cinema functions as a clear precedent for a logic of practice which would be employed by an early generation of politicised ethnic minority film practitioners.

3.3   EXCLUSION FROM THE FILM FIELD

Finding opportunities within the British film field prior to and during the 1970s was extremely difficult for British-Asian cultural producers. For Asian and black actors alike, it was difficult to find challenging roles and opportunities, and for directors even harder to find any type of support for creative projects. Lloyd Reckord was a West Indian born actor/director who migrated to Britain in the late 1950s. Reckord wrote and directed two short experimental films 10 BOB IN WINTER (1963) and DREAM A40 (1965). His experience of discouragement seems representative for many early creative producers. Reckord recalls:

> My purpose in making these two films was not to win awards. I wanted to get into television and thought this was a way to do it – a way of showing the television companies that I could direct film. But it didn't work. I showed them the first film, then the second – because I felt that the second one was, in a way, a more ambitious effort – but they just weren't interested. I got the impression that they weren't hiring black directors. They fobbed me off with comments like 'Well, a film is all very well and good. But a television play, now that's different, you see, that takes a different intelligence. It takes this...and that...and so on'. (Pines, 1992: p.54-55)

By the late 1960s, Reckord had had enough of repeated discouragement and chose to return to his native Jamaica to establish and develop the National Theatre Trust. For many ethnic minority film-makers, the experience of both gaining entry to and/or producing for television was extremely difficult. As Mahmood Jamal of the Retake Film and Video Collective recalls, "at that time [1970s] even those amongst us who were film-makers could not

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1961), THIS SPORTING LIFE (Lindsey Anderson, 1963), MORGAN: A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT (Karel Reisz, 1966), IF... (Lindsey Anderson, 1968).

have dreamt of making a film of our own in Britain. Those rights were reserved for the white middle classes" (Jamal, 1994: 17).

Up until 1982 British television consisted of just two vertically integrated organisations: the BBC and ITV, each of which made the bulk of its programmes in its own factories (or studios), assembled their schedules and transmitted these programmes over a national network:

> In the case of television the studios were larger, but were still placed at the lower levels of buildings; above ground were the programme-makers' offices and on the top floor were the senior managers. British television was vertically integrated both as an industry and within its own buildings. (Tunstall, 1993:6-7)

The "vertically integrated" structures of the BBC and ITV provided producers with permanent access to resources to produce work. Unfortunately, opportunities to gain access into the BBC were extremely limited. The BBC is long known for having rigid "entry-gates" into its corporate structure, with many of their producers selected directly from university (Oxford being the most usual) and others as having significant experience in making and directing films before their mid-20s. The BBC continues today to be a space of extreme selectivity in taking on new members of staff.[26] Having gained a position within the fortress walls of the BBC or ITV, one can almost certainly be assured of employment for life.

The trajectory of television policy during the 1970s marked a peculiar turn. The early formation of BBC's "Immigrant Programming Unit" saw an emphasis on "education and instruction" (Hiro, 1992/71: 125). Film-maker Mahmood Jamal recalls "television was trying to settle the immigrants into this country with bits of nostalgic music and advice on how to negotiate the social security system and how to get legal help for their problems." (Jamal, 1994:17) The underlying assumption of such "education and instruction" programming implied positions which viewed new immigrants as the

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[26] For more on the BBC's hiring practices see Tunstall, 1993 re: documentary p.31; re: journalism p.49.

"problem", and as requiring the appropriate social and cultural capital to be inserted into a prevailing British field of power. For many early independent film-makers a clear goal was not only to have work screened on television but also to democratise the current state of British media industries more generally. Their demand was to increase access to the means of cultural representation, such that British media output increasingly reflected the diversity and varied perspectives of Britain in the 1970s.

Although black and Asian subjects have been part of British television programming from its inception, until 1982 these communities had been depicted as the object of social conflict, as opposed to the subject of specific regional or national British communities.[27] The late 1960s and early 1970s saw an explosion of multicultural programmes which set out to 'explain' different aspects of perceived immigrant life in Britain. Ethnic minority communities had thus become 'a problem' which certain programmes set out to elucidate for a particularised white audience. These programmes did demonstrate television's ability to operate in tandem with the state in 'managing' what was then perceived as the growing race relations crisis. (Pines, 1992:12)

3.4   COMMUNITY FILM & VIDEO SECTOR

The 1970s saw a period where film and video technology was seen as a way of informing and generally politicising the public. A key element within local community centre gatherings was the use of film and video technologies. Pervaiz Khan, who is now director of the DRUM Media Arts Centre in Birmingham and was active in programming screenings at the Vokani community centre in the early 1980s, notes:

> I screened a season of Indian films, whatever that was available on 16mm of Indian New Wave cinema from the 1970s. The season was

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[27] In 1964 Ismail Merchant and James Ivory produced their first film, SHAKESPEAREWALLAH, with Shashi Kapoor. In 1965, Waris Hussein directed a television adaptation of PASSAGE TO INDIA for the BBC. Asian and black characters also held roles in the police drama Z CARS: A PLACE OF SAFETY (1964) and the television play FABLE (1965), both written by John Hopkins, as well as John Elliot's 6 part BBC drama serial RAINBOW CITY (1967).

successful, with an average of 60 people coming to each screening. After each film, we would facilitate short discussions....People would come to the films because they were a different option to playing basketball. These films could not be seen on TV, they were not screened in theatres, there were no video shops then, we would hold these discussions, while trying to develop new ways of screening different work. The audiences would range from 250 to 6 people. Once people discovered the existence of this circuit, they wanted to buy into it.[28]

Out of these various community meetings emerged an informal film and video circuit or avenue for distributing work which otherwise would only have a single screening on television or no screenings at all. Nigg and Wade suggest:

A BBC programme on the National Front went round the youth club circuits, and to the Campaign against Racism. Another BBC Production - a film on the riots during the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival - was taken for discussion purposes in youth clubs as well. Everywhere the off-air material was used in an interactive way. People talked about the implications of what they had seen, which made it different from how they used to consume mass-media information. (Nigg & Wade, 1980:47)

It is significant to note that the notion of popular media was not as prevailing as it would become in the 1980s and 1990s. People had a different relationship with the media which were still limited (to three terrestrial channels and established film studios), and cultural activists were looking for new ways to employ the media both in terms of the production of films and the dissemination of ideas. In a pre-VCR world of the 1970s, this community centre circuit provided a basis from which work could be seen again by audiences, as well as discussed in an open public environment. Whether work was made specifically for the community film and video circuit or whether it was made for television or theatrical release, a significant range of films were making their way into this informal distribution circuit.

The community film and video movement of the late 1970s provided a strategy for many early film-makers to develop their craft as well as use film

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[28] Taken from interview with Pervaiz Khan, 14 January 1994.

as a mechanism for "spreading the word". But its scope and ultimate audience base was still very limited. In principle, there were limited opportunities to produce work which was not either made for television or for mainstream theatrical release. The focus for most community film and video projects was increasing public access to the tools of representation. A former member of West London Media Workshop recalls:

> So right from the start the video group had no intention at all to function as a specialised communications team producing polished consumer products, but was conceived of the necessity of ACCESS. They wanted to make the video skills available to as many individuals and groups as possible, so that a user group would develop around the equipment, capable of carrying out their own projects. (My emphasis. Nigg & Wade, 1980:p.41)

A film which was able to capture both this active attempt at political mobilisation as well as lobbying for the democratisation of the media is Colin Prescod's BLACKS BRITANNIA (1979). BLACKS BRITANNIA documents the growing sense of unease and displacement experienced by a new generation of migrant, inner city, working class youth, as Phillips suggests:

> a documentary which, incredible for the time, ceded editorial control to a committee of black radicals, and summed up their views and activities in the early 1970s. BLACKS BRITANNIA was a cult success which, before and after its release on TV, played in cinemas and community venues to black audiences all over the country. The film made TV executives fume, but it offered a rationale and a method to the internal campaign which lead to the establishment of access TV at the BBC. (Philips, 1992: 65-66)

It is worth noting that a film with the overt political edge of BLACKS BRITANNIA was not made for British television audiences. Instead it was the American public broadcasting station WGBH-Boston which financed the film. Due to certain copyright problems which BLACKS BRITANNIA encountered, it was never actually screened on American television.[29] Because of the limited access to film and video technology, general opportunities for ethnic minority British film practitioners during the 1970s

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[29] For more on issues of censorship in Public Broadcast policy and BLACKS BRITANNIA (1979) see Biskind's "BLACKS BRITANNIA: A Clear Case of Censorship" (1988).

were restricted. Nevertheless, when given opportunities to produce work, it is significant that independent film-makers took on political issues specifically of exclusion from and access to the means of representation as one of their central thematics.

It is clear that the 1970s were a period where the production of work existed within a very structured field of film production, in which practitioners had limited opportunities in producing films. Producers were required either to work within the vertically integrated frameworks of British television or the British studio film production structures. But in choosing to work within the confines of such rigid structures, producers were delimited in the types of substantive issues which could be explored, as well as the treatment of such issues. In working within the state-subsidised community film and video workshops, practitioners found that an emphasis was placed on issues of access to the means of representation, rather than prioritising the production of significant works of art. Furthermore, within such community film and video workshop structures, complete films were limited often to the informal screenings as the core audience for one's work. A film which straddles these two production poles is Horace Ove's PRESSURE. Produced with state funding from the British Film Institute, the film was initially screened at various informal community centre screenings, but would later be broadcast by Channel Four.

3.5   THE SOCIOLOGY OF PRESSURE

PRESSURE captures the general mood of frustration and the growing unease amongst West-Indian youth during the 1970s. PRESSURE explores the ways in which Tony, excluded from the white British working world and increasingly estranged from his parents, drifts into the street society of Notting Hill Gate, where political activism through the West London 'Black Power' movement provides Tony with a meaningful reprieve.

The importance of PRESSURE lies in its capacity to draw on the broader social misrepresentations of a growing youth militancy and youth-police

tensions which would manifest themselves in the social unrest of 1976, 1979, and 1981. In this way PRESSURE can be seen as refracting a clear relationship between the field of power within the film and the broader field of power in Britain during the 1970s. The film can be read as a social barometer of the experiences of exclusion, dispossession and militancy during the late 1970s and early 1980s. PRESSURE would initiate an extended black-British body of work on issues of criminality and policing.[30]

It is worth noting that the portrayal of black militancy in PRESSURE was the key stumbling block in having the film produced. When director Ove and writer Selvon initially approached television for funding, television companies were not interested in financing its production. Ove and Selvon eventually approached the British Film Institute, who after extended discussions and worries surrounding the content provided them with a very frugal £10 000 to make the film. The film was produced over the period of four years. Having found creative avenues to actually complete the film Ove recalls encountering difficulties in then getting the film released:

> The BFI didn't want to release the film because of a few scenes about police raids and Black Power, and the film was eventually banned for about three years. A few journalists who liked it started to write about it and sort of attack the BFI, and then it came out and got a release. There was a good reaction to it after that, because it was something new. It was dealing with something that was happening, and was exposing things which were being swept under the carpet at the time and which nobody was writing or talking about. (Ove in Pines, 1992:124)

The sense of worry by an institution such as the BFI in becoming identified with PRESSURE, which actively explores the rising tide of agitation and social unrest, is of interest. This initial hesitation on the part of the BFI, in releasing PRESSURE, suggests a very interesting assumption around the power of the filmic image, and the capacity of such images to both suggest particular political sympathies as well as directly inform individual action.

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[30] Other films included Colin Prescod's BLACKS BRITANNIA (1979), Melenik Shabazz's BURNING AN ILLUSION (1981), Imruh Caesar Bakari's RIOTS RUMOURS OF RIOTS (1981).

PRESSURE can be seen as clearly working within independent docu-drama, feature film, format. It is more closely linked to British social realism, although the ending does take the film more into the realms of the fantastical. What is of significance in PRESSURE is the attempt to provide a perspective from the position of the West Indian youth culture, looking out into the British mainstream. In this sense, PRESSURE can be seen as initiating a body of work which employs cultural identity as a means of politically engaging with the prevailing field of power, thereby providing a model of overtly militant film-making which would manifest itself repeatedly during the 1970s through to the 1990s with films such as Melenik Shabbazz's BURNING AN ILLUSION (1981), Stephen Frears' MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDERETTE (1985), Black Audio Film Collective's HANDSWORTH SONGS (1986) and Ngozi Onwurah's WELCOME II THE TERRORDOME (1994).

3.5.1   SYNOPSIS

PRESSURE begins with Tony's efforts to find gainful employment, only to be repeatedly confronted with rejection and disappointment. Over time, Tony shifts his energies from searching for work to spending more time with his street-wise friends. In hanging around the streets of Notting Hill, London, Tony finds a space of emotional and personal support and affirmation. Through several violent encounters with the police, Tony begins his own process of politicisation. Tony's position shifts from its directionless trajectory into a more actively politicised direction after he and his elder brother, Colin, are wrongly arrested during a raid of a local community meeting.

Accused of drugs trafficking, both Tony and Colin are arrested and physically interrogated. Tony is released, while Colin is held on suspicion of possessing drugs. Upon returning to the family home, Tony finds his parents very disturbed and their home completely plundered by the police in a futile search for drugs. This incident provides Tony with the ultimate motivation to commit fully to political activism and social protest and now involves himself

fully in the activities of the local Black Power group. The film ends with two contrasting sequences. One is a dream sequence where Tony is running through a country estate, naked;he enters the country home and then the bedroom holding a dagger. He proceeds to remove the covers from the bed, revealing a carcass of a dead pig which Tony proceeds to stab violently. This dream sequence is juxtaposed to the final sequences in which Tony and other members of the local Black Power group gather near Westminster to protest the violent and false arrest of Colin. The protest is dampened by heavy rains. The scenes of a "washed-out" protest provide the viewer with the last images of the film.

3.5.2 OUTSIDER-OUTCAST

PRESSURE provides a number of very pertinent themes and issues, along with some very interesting homologies in relation to how race was conceptualised within the prevailing field of power in Britain during the 1970s. The field of power within PRESSURE is structured around three key poles: assimilation; exclusion; and activism. Tony and Colin's position during the course of the film shifts in relation to these structuring poles. PRESSURE begins with Tony's family at breakfast, preparing him for the upcoming job interview. Tony is the younger brother born in Britain, and has been making sincere efforts to find gainful employment. Tony reveals that this will be his 10th interview, having encountered repeated negative responses from each previous interview. During the breakfast conversation between the two brothers, the elder Colin challenges Tony on his attempt at being too "English". Tony responds by saying "What's wrong with bacon and eggs, chips and Gary Glitter". It is clear that Tony's position is one, which is genuinely attempting to be seen as an inclusive member of British society, while trying to acquire the appropriate cultural and social capital required to assimilate into the mainstream of British society.

Upon reaching the office for the interview, his prospective employer is immediately surprised that Tony is black. The office manager proceeds to ask Tony questions such as "How long have you been in this country?",

"Have you ever had any problems with the police?", "Do you play sport, say cricket?". To each question Tony responds in a respectful, yet surprised manner. Although Tony clearly has the qualifications for the post (gaining qualifications in accounting), the office manager proceeds to ask Tony whether he would be willing to take on other jobs at a lower salary should they emerge. Although what exactly these posts are is left ambiguous, it is clearly a reference to cleaning and building maintenance work which may become available. This sequence highlights an active play with the (racist) ideology held by the office manager, in which a young black man immediately signifies trouble and inability. Out of these early sequences, it is clear that although Tony is making genuine efforts to be seen as an inclusive productive part of British society, he holds little cultural or social capital with which to realise his aims. The office administrator, on the other hand, situated in the inverse position, has access to capital and appropriate decision-making power within the company structure that enable him to enact his perceptions.

This analysis of a brute exclusion from employment opportunities is meant to refract a broader process of exclusion from the fields of power in 1970s Britain. A homology can be posited between the poles which structure the film field and the poles which structure the field of power in which young West Indian youth were being denied real social opportunities. Dillip Hiro's analysis suggests:

> The 1971 census revealed that while only a third of the national labour forces worked in manufacturing, about half of the coloured immigrants did so. In the service industry black and Asian settlers were to be found mainly in catering, public transport and the National Health Service. The disproportion could be gauged from the fact that while West Indian and Asian immigrants formed less than three percent of the national population in the mid-1970s, they supplied a quarter of the workforce in restaurants and cafes. They furnished about a third of hospital staff, a little over one-fifth of student nurses and midwives, and about one-sixth of general practitioners in the National Health Service of England and Wales. (Hiro,1992: 67)

From Hiro's figures, it becomes quite clear that the range of opportunities and the possibility of acquiring social capital for most of Britain's ethnic communities were limited with most of the available work being semi-skilled and un-skilled. Tony is no exception:having completed school, with solid grades, he finds that work is unavailable to him, while his white-British peers, who were placed well below him at school, are all successful in finding work.

3.5.3 CRIMINALITY

In his attempts to find some solace for his repeated rejections from a positive position within British society, Tony finds support and comfort with a group of Ladbroke Grove street kids. One of the first sequences where Tony meets his new peer group has them wandering through the Portobello Market looking for food to steal. It is clearly stated at the outset of their journey through the market that their choice to steal is directly linked to the desperation of hunger. Members of the group are explicit in suggesting that starvation drives their criminal activity. This theme is explored again when the gang enter a shop with the aim of stealing some tins of food. The crash of a few tins of beans foils the heist and a pursuit by the police of the young black boys ensues. During the chase one member of the gang is caught by the police, while the others are able to escape.

In either of these instances of "criminal" behaviour, the fact that they are involved in stealing foodstuffs is significant. Food becomes a central metaphor within the film: in all instances where food is involved, Tony is either being given food be that from his parents or friends or he is stealing it from stores or market stalls. There is a basic association between "criminal" activity and human survival. The position of each of the gang members in choosing the illegal act is a consequence of satisfying a basic human urge.

The exploration into issues of criminality within PRESSURE provides a strong example of how drama as a genre of film-making has the power to draw out the complexity of social life. Through the use of dramatic

conventions, Ove is able to reveal a greater depth of character in Tony and his friends, as well as provided a greater understanding of the motivations and situations which would have led to their involvement in criminal activity. More acutely, it can be suggested that Ove was directly addressing the one-dimensional stereotypes of West Indian youth which dominated British popular consciousness during the mid to late 1970s. Very clearly, Ove is revealing a complexity of character and situation as a counter to the "race as problem" discourse which was being employed by the extreme Right in their anti-mugging marches.

There is a clear attempt within PRESSURE, through its portrayal of "criminal" activity, to place an emphasis on "why" these individuals are involved in these behaviours. There is an attempt at flagging the denial of basic human rights and opportunities to many of Britain's ethnic minority communities. Early cultural activist Colin Prescod recounts how ethnic minority British communities were being denied some of the most fundamental of human rights and services including: "work, housing, health, education, banking, justice, police, dancing, music, haircuts".[31]

3.5.4 ACTIVISM

The theme of activism finds Tony journeying from one extreme of the film field, in his overt efforts to assimilate into the dominant majority of British society, only to shift into the pole of activism within the film's field of power. This is in direct contrast to Colin's position, which maintains a steadfast commitment to the pole of activism. From the first family breakfast conversation, where the mother says to Colin "This Black Power business is going to your head", we have an association between Colin and the pole of activism. Interestingly, through the course of the film all of Colin's family shift from a position of criticism of Colin's political position, to one which accepts that there may be no other way to change the plight of black people

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[31] This quoate is taken from Colin Prescod, at a lecture of the Diaspora Cinema course Birkbeck College, 14 February 1995. There exists a range of work, which attempts to "de-mystify" popular representations of "black youth criminality". Different deconstructive readings which include Cohen & Gardner (1982); Fiske (1990).

than to speak out and protest. Although critics have been critical of PRESSURE for its use of the simple binaries of assimilation and activism, the importance of the film lies in the political realisations reached by each of the central characters.[32]

Colin's position is homologous to the position held by many "black" community leaders during the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g. Darcus Howe and the Race & Class collective). The experiences of exclusion from much of British social life during the 1960s and 1970s began to generate a new tier of cultural worker who would function as part political representative and part social worker. This was based on very basic "help-ourselves" organisations which provided community members with practical help in areas of employment, housing, law and education. These individuals were being trained in social and political awareness and developing strategies to form a new generation of black-British and British-Asian "organic intellectuals".[33]

This new generation of politicised cultural workers were actively involved in facilitating political discussions and meetings, and building a social awareness within certain ethnic minority British communities. Influenced in part by the political organising and gains of the American 1960s Civil Rights movement, the 1970s Black Power movement, and the liberation movements of new post-colonial nations, this new strata of politically and culturally aware individuals were involved in directly struggling for the rights of black and Asian people, as well as feeding into a growing sense of consciousness-raising and political militancy. Groups of interested individuals would meet regularly at local community centres, youth clubs and churches to discuss and inform one another of particular political projects, histories, debates and political strategies.

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[32] Mercer has critiqued PRESSURE for its use of simple binaries to structure the narrative (Mercer, 1988).

[33] Quote taken from interview with Colin Prescod, 6 January 1994. Gramsci's notion of organic intellectual suggests that "[e]very social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (Gramsci in SELECTIONS OF FROM PRISON NOTEBOOKS, in Ransome, 1992: 188).

Colin's position throughout the film is involved in community activities and grass-roots politicisation. From selling copies of the Black Power magazine on the streets of Portobello Market, to organising discussions on the current ESN (educationally sub-normal) educational policies which "black" people were being channelled into, to raising funds for legal assistance for "brothers and sisters" in trouble with the law, Colin maintains a constant position in relation to the pole of activism.

Colin is often seen selling radical papers and generally "spreading the word" with a female American comrade. PRESSURE develops an interesting play with the imagery of vocal female black American radicals, such as Angela Carter and June Jordan, as well as a particular understanding of the American "Black Power" movement which as a political ideology had been transported from the United States[34]. This is most clearly revealed through the use of African-American women as the central spokespeople for the "Black Power" group.

There is a direct homology between actual occurrences in the Notting Hill area during the early/mid 1970's, and the raid on the community meeting at the end of PRESSURE. This raid which results in the false arrest and interrogation of both Tony and Colin, directly parallels actual raids by London police:

> The Mangrove episode in the early 1970s demonstrates the kind of collective confrontation to which this hostility could lead. A restaurant in Notting Hill, and a well known meeting place for black radicals, the Mangrove was subjected to repeated police raids on a variety of pretexts. According to one police officer giving evidence at a trial later, the restaurant so far as he was concerned was the headquarters of the Black Power organisation. When eventually a demonstration was organised to protest against these raids, some 150 protesters found themselves confronted by 500 policemen. A bitter clash

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[34] Gilroy's ship in Black Atlantic - movement of "black vernacular forms" through the black diaspora. See Gilroy, 1993.

occurred as the demonstration came to an end, and 18 persons later appeared before the courts, some charged with riotous behaviour (Wallace & Joshua, 1983: 53). [35]

What these various raids on community gatherings and political meetings suggest is not so much that black communities presented the state with different problems, but that these communities were being policed in a different way. Within the police force itself, evidence exists which suggests that police not

only hold many of the stereotypical – arguably racist – beliefs about black communities, but that:

> such assertions as black West Indian youth were 'estranged from their families', 'rejected approach by the police or West Indians' and comprised a 'sub-culture' which has a 'substantial criminal fringe' (Memo, Birmingham City Police, Select Committee 1972, Vol. II, p.446), certain laws and police methods have become particularly applicable to whole black communities. First in some cities the 'sus' law has become a definitive feature of policing black areas. In these and other areas not only is policing blacks denoted by frequent police over-reactions, but by road blocks, saturation policing and the use of the Special Patrol Group. (Wallace & Joshua, 1983: 54)

Conditions of social deprivation, conscious police maltreatment and political exclusion from existing British political and social relations, can be seen as core motivating factors in the British inner city riots of 1976,1979 and 1981. As a social document PRESSURE is interesting in that it foreshadows the riots of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The film attempts to provide some explanation of "why" political activism emerged out of the conditions in which young black West Indian youth were required to live. It goes even further in suggesting that the status quo will generate an impending violent explosion - as manifest in the dream sequence. The film foreshadows the hate and

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[35] Other controversial cases of police raiding black establishments and falsely arresting individuals include the METRO 4, in which the police raided the Metro Club in Notting Hill in the summer of 1971, the case of the SWAN DISCO 7, where the police raided the Swan disco in Stockwell in 1974, and CRINKLEWOOD 12, where the police raided the Carib Club in Crinklewood, North London in October 1974 (Wallace & Joshua, 1983: 59-60).

Figure 3. Field of Power in PRESSURE

Protest

ACTIVISM

Colin ●

Black Power
Movement

INTEGRATION

● Tony's
White
Peers

Violence

StealingFood

Ladbroke Grove
Gang ●

CRIMINALITY

Job
Interview

● **Tony**
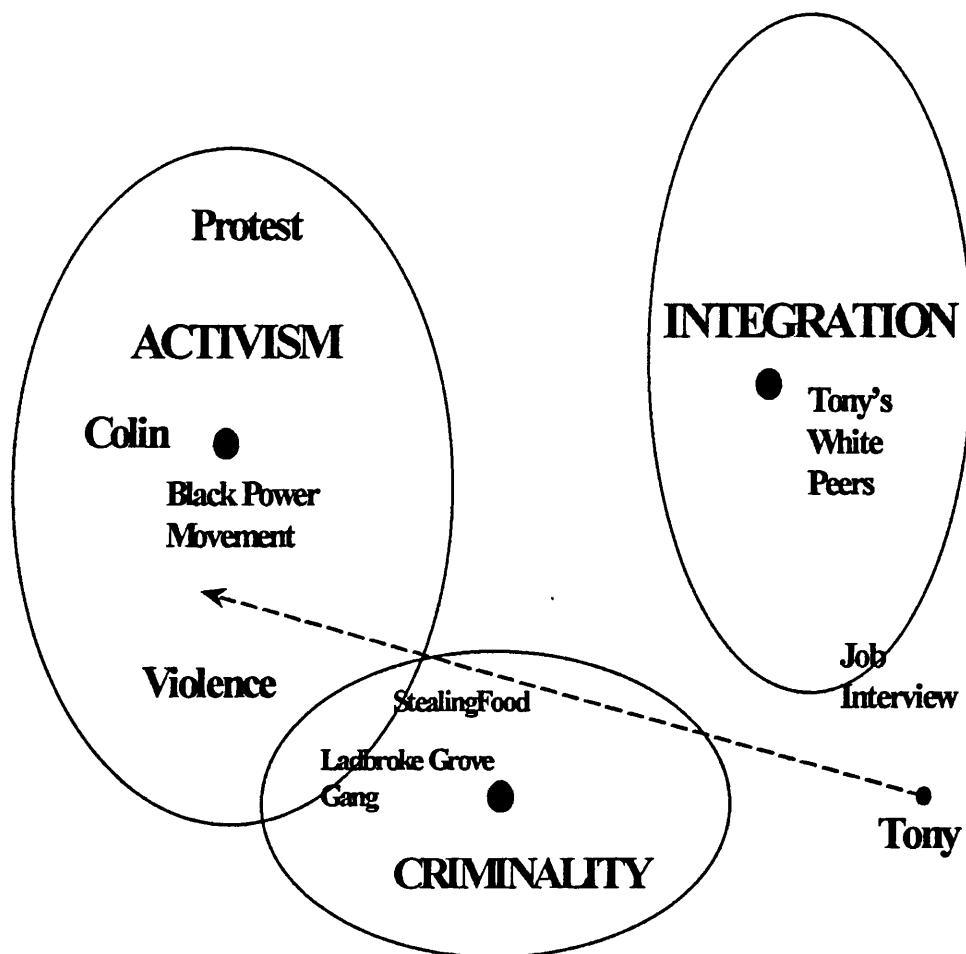
suspicion which was accumulating amongst the inner city youth against the police, which would erupt into something big. And so it did in the riots of 1981.

3.6   LOCATING PRESSURE SOCIOLOGICALLY

When attempting to locate PRESSURE within the 1970s British independent film field there emerge certain refracted homologies between the film's field of power and that of the social relations within British society during that same period. What is significant is Tony's character which refracts the genesis of the political "black" British subject. Dispossessed, treated unjustly, in full view of his sincere efforts to assimilate into British society, Tony is reduced to successive failures, and left with no option but to mobilise and "fight on the streets". This subject is not without its precedents or its broader field of power from which it has been constituted. Like Karl Reisz's Arthur character (played by Albert Finney) in SATURDAY NIGHT, SUNDAY MORNING, Tony is the classic loner, the outcast who is trying to find a "proper" position within British society but is unable to do so successfully. Through Colin, Ove is articulating a militant "black" position which would manifest within the cultural field as an overtly "political" position, as a struggle against racial discrimination, systemic discrimination, and racist physical violence against people.

The logic of Ove's work emerges from the perspective of the "dominated", attempting to constitute an overt political position, a position from an apoliticied habitus in contrast to a position from a ruling-class habitus. In this way, PRESSURE can be seen as part of a trajectory of British "social art", in which issues of social injustice need to be addressed directly. Although it goes beyond the focus of this current research, it is interesting to note that in musical forms where specific cultural communities are producing cultural works, this sense of inter-cultural conflict and injustice is usually the core thematic. One could suggest a homology between early African-American hip-hop culture through the music of artists such as Public Enemy,

Ice-T, NWA (Niggers With Attitude), and early reggae music of Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff and their suggestion of direct conflict and violence towards injustice and films like PRESSURE.

It is clear that a central aim of PRESSURE is to challenge prevailing social perceptions and understandings of ethnic minority British communities, particularly the excluded position of West Indian youth in 1970s Britain. For Ove the aim of making the film was to directly challenge dominant media representation of specific cultural communities:

> I get very annoyed with the media coverage. It is so superficial. They don't do proper research. That is why I made PRESSURE. I was tired of reading in the papers about young blacks hanging around on street corners, mugging old ladies. Nobody tried to find out why they were doing it . The same with HOLE IN BABYLON (about the hold-up of the Spaghetti House restaurant by three young blacks and the resulting siege). The men in the siege were represented as a bunch of hooligans. Nobody looked at their background. They never went into the fact that they had a political motivation, that they wanted to set up a centre. One of them was a medical student, one was a poet and writer, and one of them had a background of mental illness. (Ove, 1988: 52)

From the above quote, one of the key issues which emerges is an acute awareness of issues of research in developing and producing a work of art. Through research one is able to bring characters and their given situations to life, with depth and complexity. In this way, Ove shares affinities with Flaubert, who also emphasised on repeated occasions the importance of research in producing a believable story and empathetic characters. In one of many letters to George Sands, Flaubert writes "this book [SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION] requires tedious research. On Monday, for example, I visited, one after the other, the Jockey Club, the Cafe Anglais, and an attorney" (Steegmuller, 1982:106). In his letters, Flaubert frequently request specific information regarding characters' situations and detail for particular situations. Flaubert in one such request writes:

> The details you send me will be put (quite incidentally) into a book I am writing, in which the action extends from 1840 to 1852. Although

my treatment is purely analytical, I sometimes touch on events of the period. My foregrounds are invented, my backgrounds real. (Steegmuller, 1982: 110)

In much the same way PRESSURE is clearly a film foregrounded by a group of fictional composite characters, but the background to this story is clearly located within an actual 1970s West London backdrop. The value of PRESSURE hence emerges from this desire to speak genuinely and honestly about the denial of basic human rights which West Indian youth regularly suffered. As a social document which speaks to this period in contemporary British history, its insights and implicit suggestions around the need for change are frighteningly close to the reality of inner-city protest in 1976, 1979 and 1981.

3.7   CONCLUSIONS

In locating PRESSURE as part of a broader British film field, one needs to return to the poles which structured much of the field mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: Auteur-driven fantastical commercial film practice and a more politically engaged social realist film practice. From the close reading of the field of power it is clear that PRESSURE lies as part of the politically engaged social realist film practice. Following on from the Free Cinema movement and their attempts to rupture one-dimensional treatments of the British "way of life", Ove can clearly be seen as part of a then new generation of film-makers which would include Ken Loach, Mike Leigh, Nick Broomfield and Molly Dineen, who were active in their attempts to use film as a creative medium for challenging publicly held perceptions and directly informing social change. It can be suggested that this active engagement within a politicised film practice can be posited as the dominant logic to independent film production in the mid to late 1970s.

Although politics was at the core of much independently produced work, it is important to note that the actual size of the independent field was much smaller than at any point since. In the early 1980s new players enter the film field changing the prevailing relations within the field. Equally, as a

consequence of urban unrest in 31 of Britiain's inner-cities, there would result an opening up of many of Britain's social institutions, providing "new opportunities" for a range of individuals from given ethnic minority groups. These two factors would result in the formation of an institutional practice which would become the new dominant logic within British-Asian independent film-making. The next chapter explores the emergence of this new logic.

4.0   CHAPTER 4: AN INSTITUTIONAL FILM PRACTICE

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The 1980s British independent film field saw a dramatic increase of financial, intellectual, institutional and political momentum within a broadly based independent media arts movement. At the core of this new energy were a number of factors: the urban uprisings of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the emergence of a new generation of British educated media practitioners, a commitment to community film and video practices, sympathetic administrators moving into positions of decision-making within the British film field, and the emergence of a new player within the field: Channel 4.

As an alternative to the BBC and ITV, Channel 4 was founded on the principles of cultural diversity, with the explicit aim of providing access for independent producers to broadcast work nationally, and to support the needs of "minority" audiences. Jeremy Isaacs, the first Director of Channel 4, noted in a speech regarding the remit of Channel 4:

> I hope in the eighties to see more black Britons on our screens in programmes of particular appeal to them and aimed at us; more programmes made by women for women which men will watch; more programmes for the young, for the age group that watched television least partly because so little television speaks to them....We want a fourth channel that will neither simply compete with ITV1 nor merely be complementary to it. We want a fourth channel that everyone will watch some of the time and no one will watch all of the time. (Jeremy Isaacs at the 1979 Edinburgh International Television Festival, Docherty, et al, 1988: 5)

The early trajectory of Channel 4 needs to be located as part of a quantitative increase in the field of British film production, in contrast to any previous period. The shift from public entertainment to home entertainment accelerated during the 1980s with the mass production and purchase of video cassette recorders, personal computers; cable and satellite had the effect of quantitatively increasing media production, creating new media resources (PSI, 1990: 64-65).

Channel 4's emergence early in the 1980s was significant as it both fed into emergent mass media trends, as well as taking advantage of shifts and changes within the "entertainment" cultural fields. Channel 4's key contribution came in the form of nurturing a then small independent film and broadcast sector. Unlike the BBC or the ITV companies, Channel 4 actively worked against the vertically integrated approach to television programme production. A new emphasis was placed on independent productions, where Channel 4 was to function as a "clearing house" or "publishing house" for films and videos generated by independent production companies. Through the process of independent commissioning, Channel 4 was able to challenge the closed world of vertically integrated studio production strategies, shifting film and television production to a more de-regulated and public process.

Although Channel 4 provides us with a new institutional structure working outside of prevailing institutional practices, by having an overtly more plural and socially active mandate, and actively decentralising its own production base, Channel 4 still functions with a primacy on institutional approaches and a prevailing institutional habitus which became prominent in a post-1981 British cultural and political field. This chapter explicitly explores the genesis of an institutional film practice. By institutional film practice this chapter is referring to those production companies that were primarily funded through institutional or other grant-aided financial support, producing a body of work which engaged with issues and themes of revealing discriminatory practices against "black" communities. The 1982 "Workshop Declaration" is an example of one such institutional strategy, which had the effect of constituting an institutional film practice. In principle, the core feature of the institutional film practice was the deployment of the notion of "black" as an all encompassing term for a politicised black-British and British-Asian unity against discrimination and racism.

This chapter examines the genesis of an institutional habitus beginning with the Workshop Declaration, and the political and theoretical motivations which informed selective workshops. In particular, this chapter will conduct

a close examination of one such institutional film practice: Retake Film and
Video Collective. Formed in 1984, under the rules of the Workshop
Declaration, Retake was one of 20 accredited Workshops which emphasised
forging community links to produce "community" projects, and actively
engaged in campaign-based political film-making. In reading the work of
Retake, this chapter argues that there is a direct homology between the work
produced by the cultural workshop sector within the film field and the
institutionalisation of a "black" community politics within the broader field of
power. It will argue that this had the net result of regulating acceptable
political articulations of racialised political identities, and resulted in the
gradual ossification of the "black" identity as a term for popular political
mobilisation.

4.2   SOCIAL PROTEST AND THE INSTITUTIONAL "BLACK" IDENTITY

Any retrospective review of the early 1980s needs to begin with the
sustained political and social militancy levied against the prevailing relations
of power in Britain during the late 1970s and early 1980's. The summer of
1981 saw wide-scale inner-city unrest in 31 of Britain's major cities:

> that Bristol was no freak occurrence but rather symptomatic and
> expressive of the crisis which racial contradiction in the United
> Kingdom has now reached, racial and race related violence have
> since occurred in almost every city with a black population. Taking
> only major instances, the list would include Brixton, Finsbury Park,
> Peckham, Southall and Lewisham in London, Toxteth in Liverpool,
> Moss Side in Manchester; Birmingham, Leicester, Wolverhampton,
> and Bradford in 1981, and Brixton in 1982. (Joshua & Wallace, 1983:
> 1)

The violent protests were focused around the conditions of inner city,
working class life, as the protests themselves were located within various
inner city locales which were mixed in terms of their ethnic and racial
composition. Individuals such as Darcus Howe, who were clearly influenced
by recent civil rights gains in the United States and the victories of recently
independent post-colonial nations, were acting as community-
representatives for the urban protesters in 1981. Within the published

works of such community representatives, one frequently finds reference to a notion of the political "black" identity as a common political struggle against injustice and racism within British society (see Howe, 1977, 1978, Dhondy, 1978).

The violence was clearly targeting state institutions such as the police, which communities saw as actively excluding them from public debate and decision-making and actively limiting their rights as British citizens and under the rule of law. As Colin Prescod recalls:

> The riots of 1981 were not race riots - they were uprisings. They had a core of black working class, but they also had white working class people. The white working class were politicised too, they were living in the same mass. This is part of the success of 'black' politics. Our protests were protests on behalf of the whole class. (Interview with Colin Prescod, 6 January 1994)

What emerges from this reading of the 1981 riots is a position which emphasises a complex reading of the "black" identity. For some it was an issue of black-British and other dispossessed peoples (i.e. working class, British-Asians, and other non-white communities) who were experiencing systemic exclusion from the British field of power. For others it was an issue of constituting a new political position located within a more complex matrix of race and class fields of power. Colin Prescod further notes:

> That "black" in Britain, free of being black in the USA has had such dynamic possibilities, it has moved in every which way....It was race and class by the early 80s. It was a 'blackness' that was engaging with white working class-ness, for those were not race riots but inner city riots, they were uprisings, with black sectors of the class at the core. (Interview with Colin Prescod, 6 January 1994)

Although the highest black-British arrest rate at any one of the riots was never above 33%, the riots themselves were publicly labelled "race riots" (Gilroy, 1987/92: 32). The failure to signify these moments of political unrest as more complex manifestations of race and class identifications would come to represent the limiting scope of emergent British "race relations" discourse of the 1980s.

As a consequence of the unrest in many of Britain's metropoles, the state initiated the Scarman Report as a means of explaining and remedying the current situation. In a general sense the state needed to be seen as responding to the virulent outcry by many of its citizens. As the Scarman report notes:

> The Government believes, however, that, if the aim of equality of opportunity for all members of society is to be achieved, SPECIAL HELP WILL OFTEN BE NEEDED FOR THOSE WHO START FROM A POSITION OF COMPARATIVE DISADVANTAGE. The ethnic minorities are one group for whom there is a need to redress existing imbalances. One way in which the Government already recognises this need is through the grants which are available to local authorities under the provision of section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 to meet the needs unique to the ethnic minority communities. (My emphasis. Secretary of State for the Home Office, 1982: 4)

Soon after the unrest of the summer of 1981, the state began a process of opening up its previously restrictive social institutions such as local councils, universities and colleges, the police force, banking institutions, art galleries, BBC, and other cultural and political institutions. New opportunities were established for "black" community members, as a direct response to the violent protests from the summer. As Mahmood Jamal from Retake recounts:

> Small grants were made available to placate the increasingly vocal black minority and Asians were included as the 'disadvantaged' with women and Afro-Caribbeans....There was at that time a growing sense amongst the black population, of making sure that we got our fair share of everything and the whites were pretty scared, especially after the Brixton riots. (Jamal, 1994: 17)

This initial opening up of the British institutions caught the "organic intellectuals" off guard, and brought a new generation of what Gramsci refers to as "traditional intellectuals" or institutional intellectuals into positions of power within the field of power (Ransome, 1992: 189):

> At this point, the political intellectuals who emerged from the riots stepped back from the authority they used to have. The new voices

which emerged were those voices which could speak from powerful institutions, established institutions, academics, social workers - they became the new cultural leaders, the new "black" film-makers.[36]

What was implemented as a conscious public strategy during the aftermath of the 1981 unrest was the institutional concept of the "black" social identity. This was to function as an inclusive identity for both black-British and British-Asian people within British social institutions and new projects were initiated on the basis of this common political "black-ness". This label assumed an Afro-Asian-Other unity based on the common experiences of racism by and within popular British social, cultural and political fields. In so much as a common "imagined community" was envisaged through the shared experiences of racism by black-British and British-Asian people, this term served also to deny the particular historical and specific cultural experiences of given communities of people, and hence a denial of elements of full social identification (i.e. religion, language, etc.). Jasmine Ali notes a particular instance in which the failure to address the specifics of a given community led to farce:

> The BBC had co-opted a section of the Asian middle class into local radio and television without addressing the question of whether their new staff were representative of the communities to which they were broadcasting. The results were sometimes to broadcast programmes in one 'community' language to a local audience made up largely of speakers of another language. (Ali, 1991: 203-204)

Madood has suggested that the overarching "black" identity impacted on the British-Asian community even more negatively, because British-Asian did not necessarily self-identify as "black". Furthermore, considering the British-Asian population is nearly double that of the black-British population the specificity of language and religion of British-Asian communities was particularly limiting through the use of the overarching "black" political identity (Madood, 1992). There were other problems in the use of an inclusive political "black" identity including the way in which cultural identity was being defined as a "problem". That people's cultural background

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[36] Taken from interview with Colin Prescod, 6 January 1994.

constituted in itself a problem for social institutions, is what is commonly referred to as the "problem-oriented discourse" around race. (Findley, et al, 1982). The great irony of the post-1981 period lies in "the beginning of the end" for any real Afro-Asian-Other political unity.

A consequence of this new opening up of the social institutions to new "black" practitioners was the rise of an institutional habitus as the dominant logic to social action and social movement during the 1980s. Individuals who were capable of playing the institutional field fared well in this time of new opportunism. It is worth emphasising that the new opportunities, which emerged during this period, were located solely within British social institutions that were required to function in the "public interest" (e.g. Greater London Council and the declaration of 1983 as the year of anti-racism).

Bourdieu suggests that change within the field of power is translated into new relations within sub-fields, including the cultural field. The urban unrest of the summer of 1981 had a near immediate impact on the institutions of British television. Facilitated by particular players and their specific dispositions, change within the field of power most clearly reveals a process of social reproduction, in which the values and meanings from other fields are transposed onto the cultural field. Bourdieu states:

> The most decisive of these changes are the political ruptures, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations at the heart of the field (thus, the 1848 revolution reinforces the dominated pole, determining a provisional shift of writers towards 'social art'), or the appearance of new categories of consumers who, having an affinity with the new producers, guarantee the success of their producers. (Bourdieu, 1996: 253)

The 1981 SCARMAN REPORT is very significant, as it required other fields to change and provide new "opportunities" to previously excluded ethnic community members. What is of interest is the manner in which the changes and requirements from the field of power are translated into changes to the relations of power within other corresponding social fields and that there is a process of translating from the field of power onto the cultural field.

Specifically, what is of interest is the manner in which the institutions made efforts to begin accommodating "black" voices, perspectives and representation, generating new modes of consecration and new relations within the dominant - dominated relationship.

4.3 CHANNEL 4: THE NEW PLAYER IN THE FIELD

> In 1980 the independent production sector in London was focused on commercials, feature films and promotional films; there was almost no independent production for television. By 1990 some one thousand companies claimed to be independent TV producers. In the year 1991 Channel Four made programme payments to 668 separate production companies. (Tunstall, 1993: 159)

Prior to Channel 4 the notion of the independent production was non-existent. The emergence of Channel 4 was premised on a commitment to support independent British work. As Pier Wilkie notes "Previous to Channel 4 you either worked for BBC or you didn't work"[37]. Channel 4 as a new player within the British film field would have an immediate and a more long-term impact on the field. Channel 4 forged new roles for cultural activists/theorists moving into positions as policy-makers, programmers and general cultural managers (e.g. Alan Fountain, Head of Independent Film and Video, was previously head of Independent Film Association). The emergence of Channel 4 was an interesting moment for people to realise the political, social and pedagogical possibilities that the media provided as a tool for social change. Channel 4 was crucial in defining an innovative understanding of "Minority Programming" in Britain:

> Channel Four from 1982 onwards represented perhaps one large stride towards commercialism, but it also represented another large stride towards renewed producer autonomy. Its commissioning editors shunned efforts to maximise the audience; instead, they focused on their legal obligations in the direction of 'distinctive', 'innovative' and 'minority' programming. Many independent producers found themselves in highly autonomous control or highly innovative (or eccentric) programme projects. (Tunstall, 1993:158)

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[37] Taken from interview with Pier Wilkie, 4 June 1993.

With Channel 4, there was a new mandate as well as a new approach to television. The 'Channel-4-as-publishing-house' model accelerated the development of a previously embryonic independent film field.

The commissioning process is centred around a team of commissioning editors, each addressing a specific area of programming or audience - drama, arts, music, sport, education, with a separate post for youth programming and multicultural programming. The editors are arranged in three groups under the Controller of Arts and Entertainment, the Controller of Factual Programmes, and the Head of Drama, all reporting to the Director of Programmes. Each editor has a specific budget to allocate and a sense of the airtime and slots at their disposal, and responds to proposals from potential producers or sometimes invites proposals for a specific strand of programming. If the editor likes an idea, she or he might commission development work - a full script, a treatment, a research visit to a foreign location - or may wish to proceed straight to a commission. (Channel 4, 1995: 4)

The commissioning process actively employs a decentralised form of film production in which in-house production is reduced to a minimum. Aside from certain telecine and other transfer facilities, Channel 4 provides no "in-house" services, but rather commissions independent producers, having best satisfied a public tender for a program idea, to produce work for the channel. This is in contrast to most other British terrestrial broadcasters who rely heavily on package deals, output guarantees or (primarily) pre-purchases as a principal vehicle to produce programming for its respective channels. The Channel 4 model for the commissioning process has since its inception become something of a new model for television production strategies. Even the vertical production structures of the BBC have been influenced by the decentralising practice of independent commissioning. Since The Broadcast Act 1991, the BBC is now required by law to independently commission 25% of all its programming.

As much as Channel 4 was a new opportunity for independent practitioners to produce work, equally it was the beginning of a particular relationship to a significant British media institution. It is worth recognising the manner in which institutions devised working relations between one another. The Workshop Declaration as a major agreement within the field (discussed in detail later in this chapter) is a tangible example of the inter-institutional links which were being formed during this period. The Workshop Declaration had Channel 4, the British Film Institute, Association of Cinematography and Television Technicians and the Greater London Council all as signatories to the agreement. During this period of rising inter-institutional relations, an understanding of the dominant institutional habitus enabled the agent the freedom of movement within this moment within the field.

4.4 NEW CULTURAL MANAGEMENT: AN INSTITUTIONAL HABITUS

As mentioned earlier, the rise of Channel 4 needs to be located in a general period of opening up of social institutions within the British field of power and the rise to power of an institutional habitus as the dominant logic. Concurrent with these new opportunities available to minority communities emerged the rise in power of new cultural managers in key decision-making positions. The particular power of such cultural managers lay in their capacity to directly or implicitly regulate the "proper" interpellations of the institutionally recognisable "black" subjects as guided by the cultural manager's particular understanding and empowered through their position within the cultural field.

From the protests of 1981, there was a steady increase in the new "managerial class" which took advantage of new openings provided by the state leading Colin Prescod to suggest:

> At a popular living level there has been an ethnicising of politics since 1981, with Thatcherism gradually having its effects on and in what used to be "black-ness". For a lot of people this opportunity becomes opportunism, that opportunity to make new space was also a space of opportunism. Inside of it, people were willing to play the

ethnic ticket in order to gain funds. Even when they thought they
would be able to do what they wanted, they got compromised by it.[38]

In principle, what emerges is a valuable form of cultural capital in the
capacity to play the institutional field and the rise of the institutional habitus.
What is significant here is that this new institutional understanding of "black"
issues was held by individuals who were positioned in senior, powerful
decision-making positions within universities, local government, and cultural
management. In most instances this dominant habitus is able to manifest
particular understandings and dispossessions into actual strategies, policies
and programmes. Sue Woodford, Channel 4's first Commissioning Editor for
Multicultural Programming from 1981 to 1984 provides an actual case of
such a dominant habitus. Woodford notes her understanding of "race" as a
problem:

> I am not saying that all individuals who are working in television are
> racist - in fact the vast majority would say that they are not. They are
> thoroughly good liberal people who don't discriminate against women
> or blacks. But if you look at the reality of the situation those groups
> are not part of the broadcasting system, therefore their views never
> get expressed. So it is perfectly reasonable to say that it is as sexist
> as it is racist. (French, 1982:95)

Here we see a clear manifestation of the type of dominant "liberal pluralist"
understanding, as it pertains to issues of social inequality. The failing here
lies in over-simplistic understandings of racism and sexism. Racism and
sexism should not be reduced to individual acts of essential cultural
differences, but as sympathetic manifestations of (re)produced relations of
inequality and injustice perpetuating both social inequality and delimiting
individual liberties.

When asked how Woodford sees things changing within mainstream
television, she replies:

> Well, it is very difficult to know, but it seems to me that unless there
> are more black people in positions of power, nothing very much will
> change....I think there should be more black governors at the BBC,

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[38] Taken from interview with Colin Prescod, 6 January 1994.

and there should be more black people at the IBA [Independent Broadcasting Authority] both among the officers and members. I am sure that if you just got a few more black representatives inside the IBA, the whole thing would change in almost no time at all (French, 1982: 101-102).

The solution to social inequality for Woodford is the simple insertion of more "black" faces in existing social institutions. The question which needs to be asked is if a field has excluded equal representation of certain groups of individuals over a period of time, will the simple addition of those excluded people immediately produce changes within a given field? Will the addition of "black" people to key decision-making structures change the relations of a given decision-making structure? The questions that emerge relate to whether, after 12 years of increasing numbers of "black" faces, any substantive changes have occurred within the process of given decision-making structures.

Woodfood's position on issues of cultural identity is significant in that she is in a position of power to realise her understandings in action. As Woodford notes:

> Under the Act which set up Channel Four, the channel has a specific commitment to reflect the different cultures and different communities that actually make up the country we live in. It is up to me as to how that is done. (French, 1982: 98)

Although one cannot generalise Woodford's disposition on cultural identities onto all cultural managers, what does need to be recognised is the way in which she occupies a position of power within the film field. Woodford's comments reflect the general tone which was being affected by her and other institutional administrators. She holds a very simplistic perception of society tied to one-dimensional liberal stereotypes and a faith in social integration. But her power to realise her perceptions is directly manifested in her capacity to commission certain programme ideas over others. What is of significance is the direct role that she as a cultural manager plays in the realisation of projects. More indirectly, she holds a position which implicitly regulates the interpellation of certain or acceptable "racial identities" over

others. Other such cultural managers positioned as to regulate "correct" political identities included: Alan Fountain (Channel Four), Rod Stoneman (Channel Four), Rodney Wilson (Arts Council of England), Dave Curtis (Arts Council of England), Colin MacCabe (British Film Institute), Ben Gibson (British Film Institute).

4.5 THE WORKSHOP AGREEMENT

The Workshop Declaration is an agreement between the BFI, Channel Four, the Regional Arts Associations, the Independent Film and Video Association and ACTT which ensures ACTT approval for properly funded and staffed production units who want to engage in non-commercial and grant-aided film and tape work. Those who seek to work under the Declaration should have a track-record of activity in the grant-aided and independent sector. Workshops must also be democratically controlled by those who work within them and any surpluses earned must be used to further Workshop production. Their programme of work should cover a range of activities grouped around production and aim to develop audiences, research, education and community work in the widest sense. (ACTT, 1984: 1)

The "Workshop Declaration" was an example of a new institutional initiative that was formed during the early 1980s between various British film institutions as a conscious strategy to provide "special help" to previously excluded communities. Signed in 1982, the Declaration's aim was to develop and support producers located within the grant-aided sector and to nurture a relationship between television and the grant-aided sector. In many ways the "Workshop Declaration" was the product of the workshop-community film and video sector which existed during the 1970s. In principle the early 1980s saw certain key activists (e.g. Alan Fountain) who were prominent in the independent film sector in the 1970s, taking on leading roles to solidify structures for alternative film production. For many in the sector, the shift to film was a natural progression from the type of "social services" which they had been involved in as community activists, campaigning for community rights and opportunities.

The Workshop Declaration established clear guidelines on the proposed structure and remit of the franchised workshops. Franchised workshops would be contracted for a period of one to three years. The Declaration required groups working within its remit to be non-profit and organised along co-operative lines. Each workshop would retain full copyright and rights of exploitation in all the cultural material that they would produce. It was specificied that the workshops must not carry out more than twenty percent of straightforwardly commercial work, and must pay a reasonable salary (£10 088 per annum in 1981) to all its members. The Declaration requires a franchised workshop to have no less than four full-time staff who are concurrently engaged in production and training initiatives (Pentley, 1989: 8).

Although in many respects the workshops were extremely heterogeneous, they did exhibit certain common features: the affirmation of co-operative working principles; the search for finance through non-market mechanisms such as public grants or other forms of subsidy; a commitment to the local community, and to pressure groups such as trade unions, feminist organisations and anti-racist bodies; the provision of equipment and facilities to the largest possible practitioner base; and the integration of production, distribution, non-theatrical exhibition, and education (Pentley, 1989: 6).

Great stress was placed on the importance of integrated practice. By integrated practice the Declaration was referring to those activities which "may include exhibition, education, distribution, administration, research or any other activity seen as necessary but supplementary to the central activities of production" (ACTT, 1984: 6). The concept of integrated practice revolved around the idea of "skill-sharing", where workshop members would not only be involved in producing films, but they would be involved in facilitating discussions, becoming de facto "hands-on" film instructors, furthering the aims of many community film and video initiatives from the 1970s. The work which emerged from the workshop sector was intended in part for television broadcast, but equally for small audience and community

discussion forums. Ken Fero notes the principle behind such community

centre screenings:

> We don't make just to be shown on television, we take work to
> different screenings, community groups, all the time. In some ways if
> you show it to 300 to 400 people and you have some type of
> communication your message is going to get across much stronger
> than if you have 3 million people watch this piece on television. You
> have to operate on both levels. [39]

The Declaration actively sought to forge a relationship between Channel 4

and the community grant-aided sector, in such a way as to allow for the

production of politicised community-based work, which would then be

screened on television:

> The Declaration proposed a framework for the workshops that would
> enable television money not tied to the production of specific,
> individual programmes to enter the independent sector. In return, the
> Channel [Four] would receive not less than 52 minutes of
> transmittable television programming each year from each of the
> workshops it funded (and also a measure of proof that it was fulfilling
> its statutory duty to be innovative and experimental) (Pentley,
> 1989: 8).

Early Channel 4 slots where many of the works produced by the workshop

sector were shown included: THE ELEVENTH HOUR, IRELAND THE

SILENT VOICE(1983), WOMEN ON FILM (1983), VIDEO 1-5(1985),

DAZZLING IMAGE (1990). By 1989, there were 20 franchised workshops

and 150 non-franchised through out the United Kingdom.[40]

The growth of workshops was directly linked to a number of factors: the

success of individual workshops; the increase in recent graduates from

media, art, and cultural studies courses from British universities; the

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[39] Taken from interview with Ken Fero, 25 March 1993.

[40] A "Provisional Franchise" was recognised by the Workshop Declaration signatories as "where there is real difficulty in obtaining adequate funding but the Union is satisfied that the constitution, personnel and programme of work are in line with the Declaration, then the Union may at its discretion grant a PROVISIONAL FRANCHISE which means that the Union approves the proposals, subject to the applicants raising funding." (ACTT, 1984: 2) Workshops could be awarded a "Full Franchise" once public funding had been secured: "When the Union is satisfied that the application meets the principles and practices in the Declaration, it will recognise the Workshop by granting it a franchise to operate. This is called a FULL FRANCHISE" (ACTT, 1984: 2).

availability of cheaper video equipment; and due to institutional bodies such as local authorities who entered the funding field for the first time in the 1980s:

> This process was begun by the Metropolitan County Councils and the Greater London Council, most of which were controlled by Labour and were abolished by the Conservative Government in 1986. These councils' willingness to engage in issues such as culture, race, gender at a local level, and in particular their commitment to the development of local "cultural industries", made them natural partners for the workshops and their ethos. Simultaneously, trade unions, pressure groups, ethnic communities and many other campaigning organisations began to discover the enormous potential of film and video for informational, educational and agitational purposes and to turn towards the workshops as a production and distribution base (Pentley, 1989: 8).

4.6 LOCATING "RACE RELATIONS" FILM-MAKING SOCIOLOGICALLY

Retake Film and Video Collective, the accredited film and video workshop, provides us with an example of an institutional film practice which would later take on the label of "Race-Relations" film-making. (Dhondy in Pines, 1992: 171). By "Race-Relations" one is referring to a positive community approach to film-making, where the film functions as a community document, speaking to issues of social injustice and inequality which the community may have faced, often employing raw, realist strategies of "telling it like it is". Within the "race-relations" film-making practice is a link between some notion of the "organic-ness" of these community films to the actual lives and histories as they were lived by the agents. Often the aim of such activist film strategies was to counter issues of "misrepresentation", thereby challenging popular perceptions of particular communities, providing "community" perspectives on influences, grass-roots mobilising, and links with regional and local government in a more positive manner.

It is important to recognise that in shifting into the cultural realm, local government and other state institutions initiated a process of dependency

and control which would be difficult for organisations like Retake to detach themselves from. James Snead comments that the independent field was paradoxically very dependent on the public sector for financial survival (Snead, 1994: 25-26). Maureen Blackwood, a member of the Sankofa Film and Video Workshop, reveals this sense of sustained dependency on public sources of funding for its survival:

> It is a struggle, it really is. We try to keep up and move along, move ahead. But as you can see, our offices are hardly what you'd call posh. We can only survive here because the British Film Institute pays the rent on our offices and production facilities. It's very fragile, very tenuous. This support is absolutely essential to our work...We're struggling here (Dixon, 1995: 134).

This direct institutional involvement in the cultural field would invariably have an impact on the type and quality of projects produced. As Kobena Mercer notes, it was not a simple act of shifting into the institutional sector:

> the GLC experiment attempted to re-mobilise alliances around a socialist program WITHIN the institutional spaces of the local state. The shift was important because of its symbolic and material resources invested in local government as an apparatus of the state, but by the same token it proved impossible to translate the connections between the various elements once they were "inside" the bureaucratic machinery of "representative democracy" (Emphasis in original. Mercer, 1990: 46).

Retake was the first British-Asian film and video collective to be fully franchised under the Workshops Declaration. Initially based in the London Borough of Camden, Retake had been "producing films and videos with close community participation since 1982" (Channel 4 Publication, 1986:n/p). In 1984, having been recognised as an accredited workshop, Retake would receive support from Channel 4 which would sustain four full-time salaried workers. Retake would maintain an active involvement within the workshop sector, regularly producing work for Channel 4. In 1988 Retake would win the British Film Institute's Award for Independent Film and Television Achievement. Mahmood Jamal, producer and founding member of Retake, recalls the early aims of establishing the collective:

It was at this time that cultural awareness amongst Asians was at its highest and I, with my brother Ahmed Jamal and a few others, formed Retake Film and Video Collective. My interest in film was a result of writing poetry and wanting to do nothing else, but life was getting very tough and I needed to do something that could give me an income. On the artistic level, I felt that perhaps film with its compressed form was a good parallel to poetry. Little did I realise that I would end up making documentaries (Jamal, 1994: 17).

Recognised under the Workshop Agreement, Retake was required to involve non-production based activities in their work. To such ends, Retake attempted to build a skill-sharing component into their activities:

Retake has a fully equipped film and video editing room, a 16mm ARRI SR camera and Nagra with radio microphones, video camera and Portapak. Two well-attended production courses were held last year and more are planned for the future. In the last year seven trainee attachments were taken on during various productions (Channel 4 Publication, 1986:n/p).

In producing their works, Retake did receive funding from a range of sources. Channel 4 provided both a regular payment for programmes along with regular slots to screen completed programmes nationally. Retake also received funding from the London Borough of Camden, the London Borough Grant Scheme, the British Film Institute, and the Greater London Arts Association. Due to their explicit "community" focus and "contacts", Retake were successful in establishing solid relationships with local government and other institutional funders:

As a result of our policy of community-based production, Retake was the first group to obtain production funding from Camden Council's Race Committee and the Ethnic Arts sub-committee of the GLC. Our documentaries have been produced as a response to the needs of local people, involving community consensus from the research stage to the final programme (Channel 4 Publication, 1986, n/p).

As an accredited workshop, Retake's film production included: MAJDHAR (1984), LIVING IN DANGER (1984), AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIGNITY (1985), SANCTUARY CHALLENGE (1987), WHO WILL CAST THE FIRST STONE (1988), HOTEL LONDON (1988). Substantively many of Retake's productions explored issues of specific "black" communities and their

conflicts and crisis with the policies and services of local and national governments, and the direct experiences of racism. Retake projected themselves as a workshop with "real" links into the "black" community:

> LIVING IN DANGER, produced by Retake Film and Video Collective and funded by Camden Council is a film that confronts these issues head–on. It is a unique experiment in film-making. All those groups and individuals who participated in the film were shown the rough cut several times and their views incorporated at each stage. This gives the film a certain richness and authenticity. Based on interviews with black tenants, council officers, community groups, the police and some other concerned individuals, the film examines and raises some very serious questions about the Council's housing policies and the role of the police (LIVING IN DANGER Flyer, 1984:2).

For Retake these direct "black" community links, and access to real experiences from members of the community were achieved by using an all "black" crew. They were able to establish an understanding and a rapport with the tenants they interviewed:

> It is not easy for many black people to talk freely about racism to white people however sympathetic they might be. Many local groups and tenants gave their support because they felt that the members of the crew could identify with their problems and that the film would speak for them. We have tried to incorporate as many points of view as possible including the police and the bureaucracy at the Town Hall. In this way we were able to illustrate the gulf that exists between those who suffer and those in authority in our society (LIVING IN DANGER Flyer, 1984:2).

The direct links with Camden Council in funding their projects and the faith in the community film and video realist aesthetics, are recurrent elements in several of Retake's productions. AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIGNITY (1985), funded by Camden Council, examines social issues impacting the elderly within the London Borough of Camden. In many ways, Retake were playing a "public service" role for the councils by producing public information about communities which resided in the Borough:

> Local authorities like Camden have begun to gather information about these elders whose growing numbers will require a rethinking and restructuring of many of the services that the Council provide. Many services have been provided on the basis that what is good for the

majority must be good for the minority. This lack of cultural sensitivity by service providers leads to misery and loneliness for many elders from ethnic minorities. AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIGNITY produced by Retake Film and Video Collective and funded by Camden Council, examines issues such as housing, diet, and leisure provisions for elderly people and points out the shortcomings of local authorities (Retake, N/D: 2).

With their film HOTEL LONDON (1988), which deals with an Asian family who become homeless and are placed in a bed and breakfast accommodation by the local authority, there is again an attempt to reveal the lives of particular individuals and the (racist) conflicts that they encounter in gaining support. The aim of such films is to reveal the difficulties and injustices which specific communities are encountering. With each of these films there exists a homology between the political plight and individual campaigning by individuals within particular films, and the use of films produced by Retake as simply another form of campaigning politics for change within the general field of power.

From the above description of Retake's films, it is clear that there exists a very dependent relationship between Retake and institutional funders such as Camden Council and Channel 4. Implicitly, one can not help finding a reciprocal relationship between a particular type of film practice as manifested by a workshop such as Retake and the general affirmation of given institutional policies. This shared concern around issues of "black" people and their exclusion from institutional opportunities such as council housing, reveals a faith in realist "community film and video" aesthetics, where simply revealing the problem to the public is the beginning of a politicised response. Clearly a reciprocal relationship emerges between institutional funder and film practitioners, such as that which existed between Retake and Camden Local Council, where both parties stood to gain some additional cultural capital by being able to produce and help finance a film which they saw as part of the struggle against inequality.

4.7   THE SOCIOLOGY OF MAJDHAR

MAJDHAR (1984) was the first feature produced by the Retake Film and Video Collective. Directed by Ahmed Jamal and produced by his brother Mahmood Jamal, with MAJDHAR, "Retake was the first group or individual to make a feature length film funded mainly by grants which was then later bought by Channel Four" (Jamal, 1994: 17). Jamal recalls that MAJDHAR was:

> probably the cheapest film made in the eighties and was a huge success considering the budget etc. It was shown at the London Film Festival and other festivals around the world. We had arrived. It also gave a novice like me a chance to learn the ropes (Jamal, 1994: 17).

MAJDHAR is about a young Pakistani woman, Fauzia, brought to England for an arranged marriage, who resists pressure to return home when her husband leaves her. She is left both pregnant and a stranger tp the city of London. Her choice to terminate the pregnancy is the beginning of her survival strategy. As the film progresses, Fauzia begins to develop relationships with a range of new acquaintances, both male and female, enabling her to become more politically and sexually aware of her surroundings. Near the end of the film, Fauzia runs into her ex-husband, revealing the extent to which her life has changed.

The field of power in MAJDHAR is structured by two opposing poles, at one end traditional Muslim values which are portrayed as the "other" on the margins of society; at the other end lies the pole of mainstream "western values" from mid-1980s British society[41]. The story centres on Fauzia as she makes the journey into personal realisation and fulfilment, journeying from the traditional values of her upbringing and past into the more modern western value system of her current and future life. Having taking control of her life by choosing to have the termination, and by proving to those around her that she can survive in the lonely world of London on her own terms, Fauzia functions as a positive role model for personal empowerment.

The film itself is extremely issue - heavy, refracting much of the "campaigning" politics which was dominant at the time of the film's production. In a particular scene Fauzia's friend approaches her and asks her to come to the current protest at the local council chambers. Under the guise of social realism, the film contributes directly to a liberal notion of positive representation. Through the personal journey of Fauzia, the film suggests a position for "black" people as active members of society who can stand up for their rights and empower themselves. Fauzia is meant to function as an example of such a positive role model of someone, who has succeeded at empowering herself, 'turning her life around'. Through the character of Fauzia and her particular journey to the mainstream there exists a perfect homology between the film's field of power and the relations of power within the institutional field. As the Time Out reviewer notes:

> The film is an interesting 'worthy' experiment by Retake, an Asian collective anxious to redress the media stereotype image, etc. As collective efforts go, this is not bad. The plot is rich and full of possibilities, but the script is unfortunately thin and full of missed opportunities. Embarrassingly awkward (as opposed to meaningful) silences are broken by laborious and unnatural dialogue, which is rescued slightly by Ustad Imrat Khan's moving music. Both Wolf and Feroza [Meera] Syal (playing her friend) are good, but more experienced direction would help (Time Out, 1995:p.444).

Ultimately, MAJDHAR suffers from a lack of elemental technical film-making skills from basic story to character empathy and continuity problems. There is asense that there was no script, as character motivations are confused and contradictory, there is no real sense of movement or shape to the film as to given characters which seem completely unmotivated. The performances by the various characters are inconsistent and awkward, revealing the inexperience of the director. The extreme lack of film-making competence suggests that the film was something of a training exercise for Jamal and others of the Retake collective trying, and failing, to produce a coherent piece of work.

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41 The Urdu word "majdhar" translates to "middle of the stream" or "mainstream".

Figure 4. Field of Power in MAJDHAR

Mainstream British Society

Traditional Muslim Society

Fauzia's Arrival

Confronting Ex-Husband

New Friends

Husband Leaves

Attending Demonstrations

Abortion
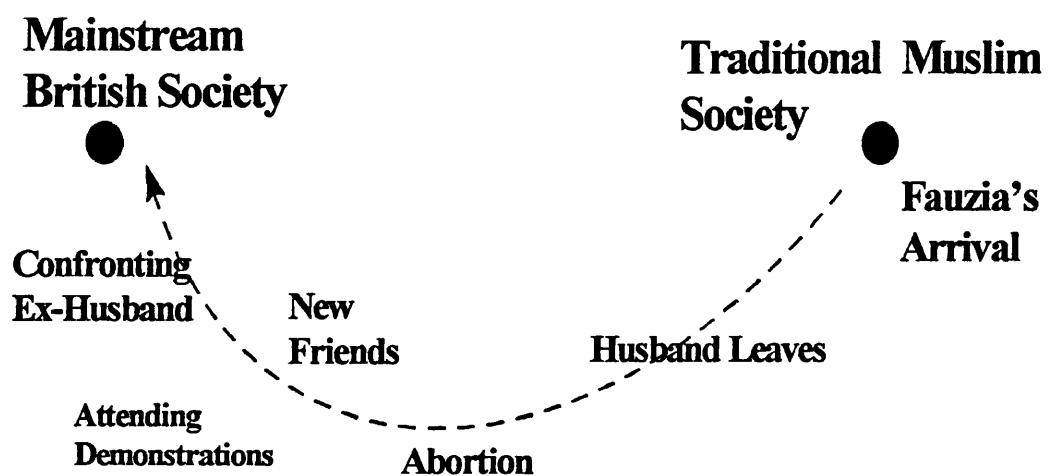
There exists a series of arguments around the production of "no-budget" work in which the lack of any engagement and the poor quality of film-making on show are exempt when a production is made on no budget. The successful completion of a film under conditions of duress is considered in itself sufficient, regardless of the quality and film itself. Granted, the Jamal brothers were given an opportunity to experience the "pains and pleasures" of feature film-making, but the film has very limited audience appeal, and was unable to achieve anything close to a return on the principal investment in the film (i.e. labour costs, film stock, processing costs). MAJDHAR provides a very real example of how such "no-budget" films, instead of being renegade and radical, are really often wasteful and self-indulgent.

4.8   PROBLEMS WITH THE WORKSHOPS

> From the 1930s on, the 'political' tendency had never shown much interest in aesthetics. It had generally been content to accept a simple form of realism. An official acceptance of community art ideas of the 1960s, with their insistence that authentic representation could only be achieved by oppressed groups themselves further strengthened these characteristics (Lovell, 1990:104).

Although the workshops were weighed down by certain idealistic beliefs, the work overtly reveals the manner in which it was heavily structured by the expectations of funders. As a refracted relationship to the dominant habitus, the work which was produced by Retake specifically and the sector more generally was caught in a series of positive/negative imagery debates. Realist strategies often imply the notion of simple misinterpretation, where the exclusion of a given perspective simply requires inclusion in a prevailing set of relations.   Ultimately, it is the lack of audience for this body of work which is most telling of its insular relationship between practitioner and funder.

In articulating the relationship between the shifts to the field of power and the new strategies emerging within the film field there emerges a symbiotic relationship between film practices and the production of an aesthetic for social issues driven by the needs of mid-1980s British social institutions

involved in film financing and production (i.e. local councils, British Film Institute, Art schools, etc). As a consequence of this symbiotic relationship between practitioners and financiers, a new dependency emerged between these funders and selected film-makers. As the films themselves are not cost-effective in their capacity to generate an audience base and provide a return on the initial production investment, the production of this body of work emerges more as a means for the various institutions to articulate given positions on institutional injustice and the need for change, than as a genuine effort to support the production of art.

Although a range of particular problems and inter-personal conflicts could be explored as a basis from which to comment on shortcomings with the Workshops, there were three significant issues: i.) The total lack of an audience base; ii.) the failure to implement any form of integrated practice; and iii.) the subsequent production of a highly ghettoised and institutionally driven body of work.

4.8.1 LACK OF AN AUDIENCE

One of the most serious condemnations levied against the Workshop sector was their inability to make any links to any audiences whatsoever, thereby questioning the entire basis for the scheme and all capital invested in the various projects. The workshops were active in reproducing the institutional understandings around conflict and treatments on issues of race, which held cultural and social capital but little popular appeal. Rod Stoneman, then Assistant Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video, suggests his thoughts on the death of the workshops:

> A strong factor in this turn from earlier preoccupation with formal difference was that there had been no discernible resonance or support for the radical formal project from either audience or critic. This is not stated as a question of moralism or betrayal but objectively: this dimension of independent practice would not have become so weak and assailable if there had been evidence that it could connect with anyone at all (Stoneman, 1990: 141).

The workshops as an initiative by the funding bodies to address emergent questions around representation within social institutions, have the initial result of constituting some notion of success, but as the funding ran out, the initial infrastructure was gradually dismantled and "black" film-makers were in a slightly worse off position than before the Workshops had happened. Fundamentally, the workshops failed to generate any links with any type of audience. As Justin Lewis notes: "The VIDEOACTIVE REPORT discovered that in the independent sector 'the average number of copies (of videotapes) sold was only 14 percent, and 80 percent of the titles sold 5 copies or less" (Lewis, 1990: 58).

In part this was due to the overall low-budget, poor quality of the work being produced, in part it was a consequence of very particular types of representational strategies which were being employed in interpellating specific "black" subjects. As Lewis states:

> The general aims of the public investment in video have been rather confused. The 1985 BFI YEARBOOK talks about the 'original and often radical' work of the publicly subsidised sector, reflecting a dominant strain of thought that saw the sector as an alternative to the mainstream, both in ways of working and in the products itself ("integrated practice"). Investment in such production, it was thought, led to a diverse audio-visual culture. The problem with this approach is that it asserts the values of cultural diversity and innovation for their own sake, rather than putting the cultural context of most people's lives (Lewis, 1990: 59).

This extreme lack of any connection with any audience base whatsoever begs the question of why and for whom were the workshops producing this work. Another substantial failing was the inability to develop critical tools and positions from which to engage and assess the films on substantive and formal levels. As a consequence, the Workshops became the source of much contempt and frustration by many film-makers not directly associated with the workshops who began to feel excluded as well as limited financially and aesthetically by the workshop sector. As director Pier Wilkie recalls:

It must have been wonderful, they were paid a basic salary just to be there, and then they were paid further to make the films. And that was just unheard of, amongst any groups. It was unfair and it was bound to get in trouble, by the late 80's the question of who watches your films anyways, and that you are getting paid to do this emerged to the forefront. There was always a bit of jealousy, within the independent sector as a whole, about the workshops and the sorts of work they did. And that they were getting paid money to do it as well.[42]

The net result was the formation of an independent sector which was completely dependent on public and Channel 4 funding for its survival. It is estimated that Channel 4 was funding each Workshop 80 to 90 percent of its total company income. Although the Workshop Declaration required the workshops to be only involved in institutionally funded work, the workshops never managed to connect with other commissioning areas, other British broadcasters or any private funders (Stoneman, 1990: 136-137). As Lewis states:

This places most of the work of the "independent" or "workshop" sector much closer to the cultural values of the art establishment: an 'alternative' culture created and viewed by the educated middle class. Who, after all, watches THE ELEVENTH HOUR slot (the TV showcase for independent productions) on Channel 4? Who actually goes to most of the video screenings held up and down the country? The same people, who, on the whole, have the cultural competence to enjoy contemporary art, theatre, and the other various pleasures of the art world (Lewis, 1990: 59).

In the end a direct dependency had formed between the existence of the given workshops and direct funding from institutions. 1988-89 saw the end of the workshops with the Independent Film and Video department ring-fencing the

£2 000 000 which was reserved for the workshops to develop the 'Television With A Difference' scheme which ran for two years, but was abandoned in 1991 (Stoneman, 1990: 137).

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[42] Taken from interview with Pier Wilkie, 4 June 1993.

4.8.2   FAILED INTEGRATED PRACTICE

For one reason or another the implementation of the goals of "integrated practice" was never achieved. The notion of skill-sharing by workshop members simply did not materialise on a regular basis. The conflict seems to have been one of the limits of idealism contrasted with the need to develop collective, skill sharing and development strategies. There were clearly instances where the requirements of collective decision-making resulted in personal conflicts between workshop members and the sense of the loss of artistic autonomy (Dixon, 1995: 136-137). Again Stoneman, from Channel 4, notes:

> The examples of the much vaunted 'integrated practice', combining production with exhibition, distribution, and training, working well in workshop structures were rarer. The balanced relation of production to the other connected activities was undermined and distorted by Channel Four's intervention itself. Quite quickly funded groups prioritised production for television and neglected their training and resources commitment (Stoneman, 1992: 135).

As a direct consequence, the workshops themselves became indistinguishable from other conventional production companies producing programming for Channel 4. Stoneman suggests that:

> despite the relative stability of community funding and closer relations with the communities in which they were situated, there were very few films or tapes which showed this in discernibly different ways from those of other independent production companies (Stoneman, 1992: 135).

Furthermore, many of the "black" only training schemes were viewed very unsympathetically by potential employers. Ainlay, in her recent study of black and Asian journalists, found that:

> In the early 1980s the National Union of Journalists' Race Relations Working Party (as it was known then) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) called for a "blacks-only" journalism course. In 1983 the Polytechnic of Central London (now Westminster University) began the first such course, helped by the CRE and the Manpower Services Commission....In 1983 the PCL had 150 applications for 20 places. In 1988 the BBC had 800 applications for its 20 places.

However, only 9 per cent of respondents in this research favoured these courses. One long term objection was that media employers see "blacks-only" courses as second rate and some respondents had experienced this perception (Ainlay, 1995: 5).

4.8.3   GHETTOISATION

The body of work which did emerge out of the workshops had the tendency to be ghettoised both internally by members of the film field and by the general audience as work which failed to explore the lives of "black" people in any complexity aside from as victims of discriminatory practices and violent racism. This ghettoisation on a substantive film level was further accentuated through their over-dependent relationship with the state through institutional funding in the production of work. This thesis suggests that it is this interdependent relationship between creative independence and financial dependence which is at the core of the institutional habitus. The workshops allowed for funding bodies such as the British Film Institute to choose which representations of "black-ness" would be profiled over others. As Pier Wilkie suggests, the Workshops:

> allowed the BFI to say "we've done it for Black people now, you have your workshops there". And also they were quite happy with the sorts of work they were producing. They were issues about race, or all the right issues. HANDSWORTH SONG went down very well. The loved that, and it held other film-makers in that frame and that's what they wanted to see from "black" film-makers.[43]

What was placed onto the shoulders of a select group of Workshop practitioners was the "burden of representation". A constituent element of the various "black" schemes was the weight to positively and realistically represent communities to which a practitioner was sympathetic. As Farrukh Dhondy, writer/director and past Commissioning Editor for Multicultural programming at Channel Four comments on "Race Relations" film-making:

> Make women strong; it doesn't matter if they are weak. Make them speak in tones that will raise some cheers among two-and-a-half feminists. Make Asians look as though they are broadly integrated

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[43] Taken from interview with Pier Wilkie, 4 June 1993.

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into the managerial structure of the National Westminster Bank -
rather than hanging out....These people make two mistakes. One,
that art should explain blacks to whites, which is no purpose of art at
all. Two, that it should deal in positive images, so that people will
come to respect, willy-nilly, the black community. If I wanted to do
that in television, I would turn my entire budget over to Saatchi and
Saatchi. If they can make a good job of Mrs. Thatcher's image, they
could, for a little more money, make a good job of the West Indian
and Asian image (Robinson, 1985: 16).[44]

It is significant that the film field of this period involved the movement of
sections of a dissident cultural intelligentsia into television, carrying the
political values of late 60s radicalism and 70s film theory into the
broadcasting of the Thatcher years (Stoneman, 1992: 133). Many of these
political positions would structure and regulate the types of representations
of "black-ness" which would manifest themselves onto film as television
programmes. There was a real sense that one's "political angle" (as cultural
capital) determined in many ways whether or not one would receive any
funding: "Cultural nationalists, class, race, sexuality had to have a cultural
political angle or they would not be able to get funding".[45]

The overall consequence of the initiatives such as the Workshop Declaration
was the institutionalisation of a radical politics, thereby further fragmenting a
fragile political coalition from the late 1970s and early 1980s. Whereas
previously most community-based activities existed outside of formal or
institutional structures, the "opening-up" of the state institutions to "black"
people saw these groups as having to function within the confines of
"officialdom":

> What happened when the two came face to face was that
> expectations about equal participation and representation in decision-
> making were converted into sectional demands and competing claims
> about the legitimisation of different needs. The possibility of coalitions
> was pre-empted by the competitive dynamics of who would have
> priority access over the resources (Mercer, 1990: 46).

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[44] There is an implicit irony in Furuk Dhondy's statements around the lStalinism of the mindl of "black" film-makers in
developing projects and ideas for television, for he continued to commission many of these simplistic readings of race-
politics in Britain in various episodes of Black Bag and Bandung File, during his tenure as Commissioning Editor for
Multicultural programmes at Channel 4.
[45] Taken from interview with Pervaiz Khan, 14 January 1994.

In examining the relationship between Left initiatives and new social movements they both share problems made symptomatic in terms of 'identity' and yet there was "no vocabulary in which to conduct a mutual dialogue on the possibility of alliances or coalitions around a common project, which is the starting point for any potentially hegemonic strategy" (Mercer, 1990: 45).

4.9 CONCLUSIONS

What this chapter has sought to chart is the genesis of a film practice from the institutional wants of having more "black" people within the film field. In many ways, the workshops are seen as the "renaissance" of "black" film-making, in that it provided a whole generation of previously excluded practitioners with the means of representation. The great failing came through the directly dependent relationship between the funder (usually an institutional agent) and given collective film-makers who emerged through the new schemes which were available for "black" film-makers. This production process generated a very particular type of ghettoised, "race relations" film-making. The dominant logic of the institutional agents seems to have been "give a camera to a group of unemployed "black" film-makers and they will be able to go out and produce works of art" (John Akomfrah in Julien's BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOUR, 1992). Unfortunately, the production of art requires more than the means of production, although it is a start.

The rise of an institutional habitus as a dominant habitus, where the capacity to play the field of given institutions, would manifest itself most acutely in the rise of theoretical understandings as the dominant mode of consecration of "black" film-making. The next chapter will assess one such theoretically driven film practice and assess the manner in which theory holds value in the form of cultural and social capital, often at the expense of audience.

5.0   CHAPTER 5: A THEORETICAL FILM PRACTICE

5.1   INTRODUCTION

> The mass media are concrete historical phenomena socially created
> as part of the general development of industrial capitalism and their
> shifting function can only be understood within that context. If study
> of those media is to amount to anything more than the study of media
> artefacts in ways that are merely reinforced by pandering to the
> particular cultural tastes of specific social groups (this is the tendency
> of the avant-gardism of SCREEN), then it needs to tackle the central
> historical questions surrounding the development of these
> phenomena (Garham, 1990: 60).

As practitioners of a creative art form which requires a method to one's
actions, film-makers will often engage in theoretical discussions and debates
as to inform their own practice. Theory as insight and support for one's
method of practice is often of extreme value in clarifying and developing
one's art practice. Yet, these are significantly different positions from a film
practice which is directly informed by solely theoretical considerations. In the
latter sense, theory can become extremely limiting and exclusive, where only
those who "read the book" can understand the film. It is this latter approach
which this current chapter looks to assess. During the mid–to–late 1980s,
the British independent film field saw the rise in influence of a particular film
practice which employed theory as the core logic for a particular type of film
practice. By deploying theory this research is suggesting theory would inform
decisions on choosing a substantive field of exploration, the treatment of
such a theme, deploying social capital in the access to networks where such
a theoretical approach would be translated into cultural and economic
capital. Rather than a more layered emotional engagement with an
audience, there is a tendency for overly theoretical film practices to become
slightly self-indulgent in the affirmation of one's perspective through a
coherent theoretical argument thereby ossifying the structures of creative
and aesthetic expression in the name of theoretical engagement.

This chapter explores the genesis of the "multiple identities position" as a particular theoretical approach which was actively employed by practitioners as a logic from which to generate their work. The genesis of the multiple identities position within a British context begins with theories of the subject within film language posited by theorists associated with the British Journal Screen Education and their critique of Hollywood narrative cinema and its construction of perfect points of view. For the SCREEN theorists, the aim was a radical film alternative—practice that could be achieved through the production of "anti-narrative" work, work which actively sought to reveal its own modes of production and to emphasise the materiality of film production.[46] Through these new film approaches, it was thought that new identifications would emerge, along with new pleasures in the consumption of texts.

Another key theoretical force within the genesis of the "multiple identities" position came from the field broadly known as British Cultural Studies, in particular its studies of language and identity.[47] Unlike the philosophy of language of a thinker such as Wittgenstein, a distinctive feature of British Cultural Studies has been its attempts to overtly engage with issues of changing cultural practices. Isaac Julien, the prodigal son of British Cultural Studies, notes that the focus of his work has been on "enacting a translation of cultural studies into cultural politics" (Mercer,1994:251).

The aim of this chapter is to explore the genesis, influence and movement of the multiple identities theoretical position in its rise to a position of dominance within the independent film field. The chapter begins with an analysis of the genesis of multiple identity position as influenced by 1970s SCREEN theory and British Cultural Studies during the 1980s. With Stuart

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[46] One could posit a film such as Vertov's classic MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA (1928) as a foundational work in relation to an anti-narrative approach to film-making. This would be in contrast to a D.W. Griffith's BIRTH OF A NATION (1915), with its emphasis on linear narrative story-telling, that can be located as a foundational text in the genealogy of narrative Hollywood cinema.

[47] British Cultural Studies includes but should not be limited to the work from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Other groups and individuals are key in the development of British Cultural Studies (ie. Glasgow Media Group, Richard Dyer, Homi Bhabha, Enesto Laclau and others).

Hall's "New Ethnicities" thesis, presented at the "Black Film, British Cinema" conference in 1988, the multiple identities position is provided with its ontological foundation.

The rise of theoretical film practices spurned an entire sub-field of debate and discussion, particularly in the United States.[48] An example of one such theoretically informed film practice is the work of Pratibha Parmar. In her films, publications, seminar presentations and interviews, Parmar is clear about her interest in employing theoretical insights through concepts such as: oppression, patriarchy, victimisation, silencing, class, colonialism, "the other", "de-centring". This chapter will be performing a close critical reading of Pratibha Parmar's KHUSH (1991).

KHUSH (1991) is structured by the two opposing poles: homosexuality and heterosexuality. The film functions as a clear example of the multiple identities position, revealing both the logic informing action as well as its conceptual shortcomings. In employing the multiple identities position in informing the core of one's film practice, the tendency emerges to base one's practice on intuition and didacticism over rigour, method and rationality. In particular the use of simple strategies of inversion, ahistorical and decontextual analysis, form part of a broader failure to emphasise that cultural production occurs under real material conditions and under actual social relations. KHUSH reveals the short-sightedness of much contemporary liberal identity theory. The net result would see a further fragmentation and individualisation of existing radical British political culture. It would be "selling-out" the political possibilities of a connective or coalitional politics grounded in radical democracy in place of a consolidation of personal positions of power in the form of further accumulated social, cultural and economic capital within the cultural field .

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[48] It is common practice in the United States and Canada to teach the "New Ethnicities" thesis within cultural studies and related disciplines as a key theoretical and ontological text. Also see Cornell West 1992, Gina Dent 1993.

Many of the films which emerged during the late 1980s and early 1990s employed discourses of individual oppression and marginality, with the aim of developing a new radical film language. A core strategy which was employed was the use of the "marginal" position as the basis from which to claim a "right" to make sweeping claims about social relations. In such films there exists an element of self-imposed marginality or "other-ness" where the premise of the work is from the position of a "marginal" film-maker, speaking from the "margins". This self-imposed marginality resulted in a series of tensions with the notion of authority and authenticity, but paradoxically served to constitute a new "centred subject" from which a position of "marginality" could be argued. It will be suggested that the multiple identities position, while maintaining the possibility of radicalism, also holds a deep contradiction which this research calls "closeted essentialism". By closeted essentialism this study is positing a concept in which the de-centred or "multiple identities" subject position is employed only to have another set of essential generalisations (often through personal understandings and intuition) constituted by practitioners in the production of a new essentially centred and "common-sensical" subject position.

5.2 ENGAGEMENTS WITH THEORY

There is a long tradition of film practitioners engaging with prevailing theoretical debates. Film-makers who have written critical volumes about film-making include: Dziga Vertov, Sergei Eisenstein, Maya Deren, Satyajit Ray, Jean-Luc Godard, Tony Richardson, Akira Kurosawa, Stan Brakage, Spike Lee. There exists an equally substantial number of key movements within world cinema which engaged directly with theoretical issues: Free Cinema, French New Wave, Structuralist-Materialist Cinema, Parallel Cinema, Third Cinema. In each of these instances of theoretical-critical writing, the aim is as much to explore and isolate the epistemological and ontological assumptions of one's work as it is to develop a radical film practice which challenges mainstream, corporate production.

The writing of the aforementioned artists and movements is different from the type of film theory and film criticism which would emerge during the 1970's. As film studies, film criticism, media studies, communication studies, women's studies and cultural studies began to achieve a level of growth within universities, college and secondary school within Britain and North America, there emerged a vacuum in critical writings around film which could be used for pedagogical ends. Hence the growth and spread of the British Film Journal SCREEN EDUCATION and its articles by key film critics (e.g. Christian Metz), from independent film-maker's (e.g. Alan Fountain) as well as aspiring critics and academics (e.g. Laura Mulvey, Colin MacCabe). What is significant about 1970's SCREEN EDUCATION is that it provides a moment of convergence for various 1970s film practitioners engaging with film theory and production issues. Many of these individuals during the 1980s and 1990s would go on to become key cultural mangers within the film field (e.g. Alan Fountain), and/or critics and academics who would be responsible for crafting a position for the study of film and popular culture within British and American academic environments.

In a separate yet related manner, the study of popular culture and language was gaining increased exposure in the 1970s, due to the sustained output of the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). Under the guidance of Stuart Hall, the CCCS was able to make significant gains in establishing the study of culture as a genuine basis for academic enquiry. Together SCREEN EDUCATION and British Cultural Studies would provide the generation of 1980s and 1990s film-makers with foundational theoretical approaches and cultural debates around art criticism and art practice, which would subsequently inform their own art practices.

5.2.1   SCREEN THEORY

Intensive debates and critical readings of film would emerge from the British Film Journal SCREEN EDUCATION (SIFT) between 1974 through to the late-1980s. Officially the journal was involved in the promotion of media

education, but during the mid to late 1970s SCREEN was very active in developing radical readings of cinema, engaging with post-1968 political philosophies, film advocacy and the development of alternative film practices. It is significant to note that film studies as an academic discipline was very much in its infancy during this period. In many ways, the debates within the pages of SCREEN were as much about developing new canons in methods of film analysis as they were about promoting media education.

Central to SCREEN were the debates around the production of the subject. As Turner notes:

> SCREEN's concern with semiotic explanations of the relation between language and the subject, and its interest in Lacan's view of subjectivity as an empty space to be filled through language, led it to foreground vigorously the role of representation and thus of the text, in constructing the subject (Turner, 1996: 99).

SCREEN theory saw the process of INTERPELLATION[49], the way the individual subject is 'written into' the ideologies of his or her society through the acquisition of its language systems, as the central focus of film and television studies. Texts are discussed in terms of "theory capacity" to place or "position" the viewer, inserting or "suturing" him or her into a particular relationship to the narrative and into an uncomplicated relationship to dominant ideological positioning other than accepting it; in SCREEN theory, texts always irresistibly tell us how to understand them. (Turner, 1990/96: 99)

A specific focus of the journal was a radical critique of "classical realist cinema" (MacCabe, 1974). In principle, MacCabe argues that classical realist cinema can be seen as a pure form of the Althusserian notion of ideology, where the subject is constituted within ideology. Realism provided

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[49] By interpellation, Althusser is suggesting the mechanism through which systems of relative meaning constitute people as subjects. He is also suggesting our ability to articulate our own subjectivities and have them understood by others. The key feature of interpellation is not only the "hailing" by the powerful "other" ("Hey you;" the policeman hails the pedestrian in Althusser's example), but equally important is the process of recognition by the interpellated subject; a recognition which attests to the dual mechanism of subjection and subjectivity. For more on subjection and subjectivity see Althusser, 1973/94; Hunt & Purvis, 1993; Ghani, 1994.

SCREEN theorists with a clear example of ideology in action. For MacCabe
the use of film devices in the production of a perceived reality was of
significance, realism was any "system of expression, any narrative
procedure which tends to make more reality appear on screen." (MacCabe,
1974: 9) At the core of the device of realism lies the notion of a film reality
which is more real than simple recording:

> The play on the notion of 'real' and 'reality' which is involved in
> Bazin's conception (the artist produces a reality more real than reality)
> is also a central feature of empiricism. In READING CAPITAL
> (London, 1970:35-36), Louis Althusser locates the specific feature of
> empiricism not in the confrontation between subject and object which
> is postulated as anterior to any knowledge (though to be sure
> empiricism relies on this), but rather in its characterisation of the
> knowledge to be defined by the object of which it is knowledge.
> Althusser writes: 'The whole empiricist process of knowledge lies in
> that operation of the subject named abstraction. To know is to
> abstract from the real object its essence, the possession of which by
> the subject is then called knowledge' (MacCabe, 1974: 10).

Here Althusser is called upon to support the homology between realist
strategies of film-making and the empiricist interpellation of a subject within a
given ideology. In both instances the production of knowledge relies on
"common-sensical" systems of production which generate the subject of
knowledge without the appearance of generating such a subject.

A film-making device which MacCabe isolates as part of the production of
classical realist cinema is "the production of a perfect point of view" where
audiences have no choice but to accept the perspective which is ascribed to
them by the structure of the film (MacCabe, 1974:12-13). MacCabe cites
Lucas' AMERICAN GRAFFITI (1973) as an example of clear ideological
manipulation through its production of a homogeneous point of view:

> To understand a film like AMERICAN GRAFFITI, its reality and its
> pleasure - the reality of its pleasure, it is necessary to consider the
> logic of that contradiction which produces a position for the viewer but
> denies that production. To admit that production would be to admit a
> position, and the position that has been produced is the position of
> the point of view, promising, as Bazin wished, that the event is
> sufficient to itself and needs no illumination from angles or the special

position of the camera - promising, in short, a supra-positional omniscience, the full imaginary relation. (MacCabe, 1974: 17-18)

In addition to critical readings of film, MacCabe along with other SCREEN theorists, sought to develop alternative film practices and representational strategies. In particular, the SCREEN theorists advocated a move towards demystifying the film process by employing anti-narrative devices, rupturing the sanctity of the pure point of view, as well as revealing actual elements of the film-making processes within the film text itself. MacCabe reminds us that during the early period of film history, particularly prior to synch-sound film technologies, realism was not necessarily the dominant mode of film production:

> In a film such as the Dziga-Vertov Group's WIND FROM THE EAST a set of political discourses and images are juxtaposed to that, although what the Second Female Voice says is what the film-makers read as politically correct, it neither subdues the images, as in the documentary, nor is judged by them. None of the discourses can be read off one against the other. There is no possibility of verification, no correspondence between sound and image enabling the spectator to enter the realms of truth. This dislocation between sound and image focuses attention on the position of the spectator - both in the cinema and politically. These juxtapositions make the spectator constantly aware of the discourses that confront him as discourses - as, that is, the production of sets of positions - rather than allowing him to ignore the process of articulation by entering a world or correspondence in which the only activity required is to match one discourse against the realm of truth (MacCabe, 1974: 11-12).

The SCREEN theorists were advocating the production of new film languages. In principle the aim is twofold: the development of radical approaches to the reading of film text, and further, the development and affirmation of alternative approaches to film-making. In advocating new film languages MacCabe states:

> My aim is to introduce certain general concepts which can be used to analyse film in a determined social moment. That the breaking of the imaginary relation between text and viewer is the first pre-requisite of a political questions art has, I would hold, been evident since Brecht. That the breaking of the imaginary relationship can constitute a political goal in itself is the ultra-leftist fantasy of the surrealist and of much of the avant-garde work now being undertaken in the cinema.

In certain of their formulations this position is given a theoretical backing by the writers of the TEL QUEL group (MacCabe, 1974: 21).

There are a number of issues which emerge from the SCREEN experience as significant for British independent film-making. One is the attempt to bridge issues of theory and practice. The aim of the SCREEN theorists was to advocate a radical film criticism which could translate into radical film (and other cultural) practices. The 1970s saw a significant push by practitioners to produce SCREEN influenced Avant-Garde and experimental British film (e.g. Malcom LeGrice's AFTER LEONARDO (1973), Mulvey and Wollen's RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX (1977), Lis Rhodes' LIGHT READING (1979)).

Another significant consequence of the 1970s SCREEN debates and approaches to film was the consolidation of certain individual theorist and film-makers as they accquired positions of power as academics and cultural administrators within British cultural institutions during the 1980s. Former members of the SCREEN Editorial board and regular contributors such as Colin MacCabe, Laura Mulvey, Alan Fountain, Edward Buscombe, Sylvia Harvey and Paul Willemen would go on to hold positions within universities, local government, the British Film Institute, Channel Four and other affiliated institutions within the cultural field. As much as this group of 1970s radical theorists attempted to bring radical theory into British film institutions, equally these individuals would gradually relinquish the attempts at radicalising said institutions in exchange for a consolidation of their own positions of power within the field. As concept artist Hans Haacke suggests:

> I am sure we gain by the presence of intellectuals in managerial positions. But I am also fully aware that the goal of management is to assure a smooth operation rather than reflection and critique. These are contradictory responsibilities. I have witnessed the radical and, no doubt, inevitable change in people from the art world, when they move from the critique to the curating of exhibitions or the management of institutions (Bourdieu & Haacke, 1995:68-69).

5.2.2   BRITISH CULTURAL STUDIES

Initially British Cultural Studies and SCREEN Theory began as two discrete
critical-theoretical formations. Although both modes of cultural analysis
often examined film, Cultural Studies had a tendency to emphasise the
analysis of television over film. Furthermore, certain Cultural Studies
theorists, such as David Morley, were actively critical of what they saw as
SCREEN's over-textualization of film analysis (Morley, 1980).
Nevertheless, both British Cultural Studies and SCREEN Theory shared a
number of elements which would converge in Stuart Hall's seminal lecture
"New Ethnicities" (Hall, 1988). Three key areas were shared between the
two trajectories of theoretical enquiry: language as a key site of analysis, an
interest in issues of ideology, and the attempts at translating cultural theory
into cultural practice.

From its inception, British Cultural Studies was an "engaged" set of
disciplines, addressing issues about contemporary western society and
culture with a specific view of culture as practice (Hall, 1980). The study of
language was one of several foci at the Birmingham University Centre for
Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). British Cultural Studies was actively
engaging with emergent continental philosophy. The CCCS was actually
one of the early sites actively working through and translating into English
the works of the TEL QUEL group, Habermas, Foucault and others. Some of
the earliest English translations of Barthes' and Eco's work were made
available in the CCCS publication WORKING PAPERS IN CULTURAL
STUDIES.[50]

There are a number of factors leading to the growth of British Cultural
Studies during the 1980s: the increase in individuals entering British
universities generally with the opening up of institutional structures to ethnic

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[50] Early English translations include: Barthes (1970) "Sociology and Socio-Logic", in SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION, an
early CCCS publication, and Eco (1972) in "The Media Issue", WORKING PAPERS IN CULTURAL STUDIES, No.2. For
more see Hall, 1980c.

minority issues; the growth of cultural industries as a key site of production within western economies, the rise of media literacy as a dominant left agenda issue. It is important to note that this recent interest in culture happens concurrently with the rise of new "black" or equal opportunity initiatives at universities and colleges which see the increase of ethnic minorities attending British and North American academic institutions in the early 1980s. This resulted in a net increase in the numbers of individuals being exposed to critical approaches to reading culture, but further an even greater number of individuals attempting to bridge the cultural theory - cultural practice divide. Many film practitioners were actively involved in the theoretical debates and discussions, as John Akomfrah of Black Audio Film Collective recounts:

> What was being debated was the value of a Left political culture and how one represents its culture in discourse theory. Gramscians had an interest in it because they had come to the conclusion that political power and cultural symbolic power were organised around consent. In terms of a black interest - on one level a number of collectives, including ourselves, were familiar with the semiologic activities of Parisian intellectuals. So all those currents inform how the collective was set up. Four years ago in England you couldn't sit through a discussion, a film meeting, without representation coming up about fifteen million times" (ICA, 1988:60).

Clearly, theoretical engagements were a key element in the development and representational strategies employed by practitioners like Akomfrah. During the mid-1980s a range of films would be produced which explicitly explored the tension between cultural theory and cultural practice, where race was explored in a very theoretical manner. These films included: TERRITORIES (1984), THE PASSIONS OF REMEMBRANCE (1986), HANDSWORTH SONGS (1986), DREAMING RIVERS (1988), LOOKING FOR LANGSTON (1988). Certain contemporary black-British and British-Asian film-makers acknowledge the importance of British Cultural Studies to the production of their own work. With reference to Isaac Julien's film THE ATTENDANT (1993), Kobena Mercer suggests:

> the film articulates theory and practice not in terms of didactic prescription but in terms of enacting a translation of cultural studies

into cultural politics. The reflexive enactment of cultural theory is implicit in the role played by Stuart Hall in the film, who performs the voice-over narration, as his presence suggests that the intellectual practice associated with British Cultural Studies now informs Julien's filmic practice as a black gay Auteur (Mercer, 1994: 251).

5.2.3   NEW ETHNICITIES ONTOLOGY

In his keynote address entitled "New Ethnicities" at the "Black Film, British Cinema" conference in London, 1988 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Stuart Hall brought together certain core theoretical trajectories of SCREEN theory and British Cultural Studies. In many ways, the contributors to the conference signified a convergence of these two previously separate theoretical trajectories.[51] In this key text Hall outlines an ontological rationale for the multiple identities position, as it pertains to the interpellation of the "black" identity in Britain. This is not to suggest that this position did not exist prior to Hall's articulation, as the work of critics such as Derrida and Lyotard in the early 1980s was clearly suggesting the emergence of the "de-centred subject"[52]. But rather, it was "New Ethnicities" which most clearly revealed the link between 1970's British SCREEN theorists' claims for a new film language as well as outlining a coherent ontological explanation for many 1980s strategies in interpellating the "black" subject.

In his address, Stuart Hall suggested that a distinct shift in the conception, articulation and consumption of the "black" subject had taken place. Hall's reading suggested that a change was occurring from "a struggle over the relations of representation to a politics of representation itself" (Hall, 1988: 27). For Hall, the "relations of representation" revealed the lack of power of "black" people to represent themselves as complex human subjects, through their lack of access to the relations of productions. Hence the "struggle" during this early period was to gain entry and access to the means of representation. The "relations of representation" as initial attempts at

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[51] Individuals presenting papers at the "Black Film, British Cinema" included: Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Colin MacCabe, Coco Fusco, Judith Williamson, Alan Fountain, June Givanni, James Snead, and other interviews, reviews and letters (ICA, 1988).
[52] For more on the de-centred subject see: Derrida 1976, Hall 1992b, Lyotard 1989, Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau, 1988.

redressing this "black" absence often employed assimilationist tendencies. Early strategies set out to:

> show that Black people were really like White people thereby eliding differences (in history, culture) between Whites and Blacks. Black specificity and particularity was thus banished in order to gain White acceptance and approval....these Black responses rested upon the HOMOGENISING IMPULSE that assumed that all Black people were really alike - hence obliterating differences (class, gender, religion, sexual orientation) between Black peoples (Emphasis in original. West, 1992: 27).

In PRESSURE or in MAJDHAR, the "black" cultural communities revealed in both films employ essentialist conceptualisation around ethnicity, where given cultural groups, West Indian youth or British-Asian women, are constituted under a banner of cultural and political unity. But for Hall, this initial attempt at representing the "black" identity was ineffective as it remained very much within the same logic that dehumanised "black" people to begin with. By arguing for the disclosure of a hidden racial presence, it also implied knowledge of the "real black experience", thereby perpetuating notions of a fixed, knowable "black" subject (Hall,1988:27).

For Hall, the "politics of representation" signalled the end of the essential, fixed "black" identity, and the emergence of a more fluid and dynamic subject. The "black" subject needed to be conceived as essentially a politically and culturally constructed category, with no fixed transcultural or transhistorical points of reference. Cultural difference then, which differentiates the "black" subject position from other subject positions, is dislodged from primordial common-sensical referents, and replaced by the notion of difference as constituted within particular fields and given dominant/dominated relations.

As an example of such a new ethnicity, "black" was articulated as an inclusive concept for African, Caribbean, Asian, and other "non-white" cultural communities. The value of the subject here lies in its discursive formation, that culture is learned and hence cultural value lies more in the

acculturation of ethnicity and less in natural notions of race. The "black"
identity is conceived then of not simply waiting in "nature" to be arrived at or
discovered, but rather "black" is about the interpellation and identification of
identities and the strategic construction of imagined communities. In this
sense, the new ethnicities thesis was an extension of the project of radical
democracy in which marginalised and subordinated groups affirmed their
rights to representation within political society, and employed the
reappropriation of language as a core political strategy (e.g. "queer" as
being reappropriated by lesbian and gay politics from the 1970s). These
marginalised groups became living models of new political subjects.[53] What
is of interest here is that in 1988, Hall provides the theoretical explanation
for the notion of political "black-ness"[54] which had already been
institutionalised within the field of power by British media and governmental
institutions.

For Hall, films such as PASSIONS OF REMEMBRANCE (1986),
HANDSWORTH SONGS (1986), MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1985)
and SAMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID (1988) all signified the displacement of
the innocent, essential "black" object, and the emergence of a much more
complex, de-centred "black" subject (Hall, 1988: 28). For Hall, the above
films were successfully employing new representational devices and
subsequently effective in constituting new radical film languages. The
emergence of new film languages in which "black" subjects are located in
radically different positions than conventional film language, is homologous
to the suggestion by SCREEN theorists for a radical film criticism which
could translate into a radical film practice. In many ways, Hall's "New
Ethnicities" thesis was the convergence of prevailing critical "race relations"
discourses with SCREEN theory as to articulate the ontological basis for the
"multiple identities" position.

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[53] For more on new political subjects and radical democracy see Laclau & Mouffe, 1985; Laclau, 1988; Laclau, 1993; Mouffe, 1988; Mouffe, 1995.

For many film practitioners, the new theoretical emphasis on identity was significant in the development of individual practices. Many practitioners were active in publicly debating issues of identity by attending forums and screenings, delivering papers at conferences, and publishing articles. Between 1986 and 1993 there was an international explosion of conferences and publications which explicitly explored issues of "black" film-making. They included: THE QUESTION OF THIRD CINEMA (1989) from Edinburgh Film Festival; FRAMEWORK (1987) from Birmingham 3rd Cinema Focus Film Festival; IDENTITY: ICA Document 6 (1987) from ICA conference; UNDERCUT: Cultural Identities (1988) from Institute of Commonwealth Studies confernece; BLACK FILM, BRITISH CINEMA (1988) from ICA conference; SCREEN "Last Special Issue on Race" (1988); 10*8 "Critical Decade" (1992); BLACK POPULAR CULTURE (1993), "Race-ing Home: Race and Cultural Identity", special issue of CINEACTION: RADICAL FILM CRITICISM AND THEORY (1993).

5.2.4   MULTIPLE IDENTITIES POSITION

The radicality of the multiple identities position lies in its suggestion that political and social identities are formed through a range of particular social subject positions. A given political identity cannot simply be assumed to exist as a core, essential identity, but rather identities are multiple and are socially and culturally generated. The new social movements which have gained prominence within contemporary Western political culture – feminist, black struggles, national liberation, gay and lesbian, anti-nuclear and ecological movements – have had the effect of destabilising the classical Marxist view of the stable industrial working identity as the chosen revolutionary agent of historical change.[55] What these various "new" social movements share is not a common "identity", but rather a faith in plurality through the notion of "difference":

> In a sense the 'newness' of these struggles consists precisely in the fact that such differences cannot be coded or programmed into [the]

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[54] The use of the postscript "-ness" suggests an emphasis on process of identity formation, rather than the recognition of a new fully formed, stable identity. In this way the emphasis is on becoming rather than being.
[55] For more on "New Social Movements" see Touraine, 1977.

same old formula of Left, Right and Centre. The proliferation of differences is highly ambivalent as it relativises the "Big Picture" and weakens the totalising universal truth claims of ideologies like Marxism, thus demanding acknowledgement of the PLURAL sources of oppression, unhappiness and antagonism in contemporary capitalist society (Mercer, 1990: 44).

The multiple identities position argues that the "new" political identities which are formed within contemporary political culture should be seen as models or as new ways of conceptualising political subjects and "imagined communities" at large. With reference to the "black" lesbian and gay movement Kobena Mercer suggests:

> rather than conceptualising our politics in terms of "double" or "triple" oppression, it should be seen as a hybridised form of political and cultural practice. By this I mean that precisely because of our lived experiences of discrimination in the exclusion from the white gay and lesbian community, and of discrimination in and exclusion from the black community, we locate ourselves in the spaces BETWEEN different communities – at the intersections of power relations determined by race, class, gender, and sexuality. What follows from this is a recognition of the interdependence of different political communities, not completely closed off from each other or each hermetically sealed like a segregated bantustan but interlocking in contradictory relations over which we struggle (Mercer, 1994: 239).

Within the multiple identities position emerges a sense of importance in the process of naming "new" political identities. The basic claim is that historically, different terms or "signs" have been used at various moments to name given political identities. Over time, these "signs" have been altered, rearticulated and reappropriated to generate new forms of political identities and new imagined communities within particular social contexts. An example of such redefining of a given sign would include the way in which terms such as "black" or "Queer", as examples of socio-cultural signifiers, have held various meanings within various historical contexts, and currently hold real political resonance.

Yet, within the New Ethnicities deconstructive ontology lies a deep contradiction. In principle this contradiction lies in the form of generating new stable subject positions from generalisations, personal experiences and

intuition. The tendency is one of unsettling a given stable subject position in place of another "centred" subject. bell hooks is one of the most prolific contemporary cultural critics who actively employs the multiple identities position as a cornerstone to her analysis. Within much of her analysis, hooks reveals this core contradiction of the multiple identities position: in deploying her deconstructive strategies, she relies heavily on her "taken-for-granted" understandings of social relations and on her personal generalisations which are abstracted, and then universalised. In a recent review of Larry Clark's film KIDS (1996) hooks writes:

> This film could have been called "white kids." Indeed, the primary subjects of the film, the characters we hear the most from, are two white male teenagers, Telly and Casper, and a teenage white female, Jennie. Their favourite topic to discuss is fucking. When they are not fucking or talking about fucking, they are into scoring drugs, hanging out, getting high, and partying. Much of their language and manner of dress is appropriated from vernacular street culture, mostly the styles of black people and other people of colour. Frankly, few people would find this film shocking or even mildly disturbing if its primary subjects were inner-city teenage black kids....The kids' appropriation of black street culture is mediated, however, by the heavy-handed racism expressed by the two "star" white boys (hooks, 1997: 61-62).

Within hooks' analysis, KIDS simply reproduces the pre-existing racial, gender, class and social stereotypes – through the deployment of the simple tropes of black and white. Within hook's work there is a recurrent use of discrete categories of analysis like black and white placing individuals into discrete, common-sensical social categories. In deploying such rudimentary tools for social analysis hooks reveals her lack of rigorous critical approaches. Her analysis becomes too reductive to hold valuable critical insight, and becomes instead patronising and condescending to the reader.

Her analysis of KIDS is problematic, considering the group of young characters in the film is significantly racially mixed, refracting a reality of many young urban street communities. hooks' assumption that most of the urban culture is appropriated from urban black culture reveals yet another gross generalisation. In fact, the street wear which is used in the film is very much drawn from skateboard fashion – characters in the film wear baggy

skate pants, and t-shirts which blaze the name of skateboard companies such as Independent. These are clear signifiers of a different type of street culture, from the easy generalisation of appropriated black street culture.

The claim that if KIDS was about black youth, no one would bother much with the film is yet another extreme overgeneralization. Unfortunately, hooks misses the point of Clark's project, which is actually very simple and quite effective - KIDS aims to function as a very blunt public service message about unsafe sex and the dangers of AIDS.[56] Clark, in a very daring move, uses the most vulnerable within our society – kids to explore the issue of AIDS. One has only to look at the title of the film to realise that KIDS and AIDS are only one letter apart.

It is hooks' assumptions around race, in a static, very taken-for-granted manner, in which she as a black woman has access to the "real" black experience, which can be posited as holding a deep contradiction of the multiple identities position. Clearly, from her above assumptions surrounding being "black", she has not employed any level of substantive research, but rather has simply assumed that her understanding of black working-class culture is true. It is this analysis, based on personal understandings which is projected to be both correct and universal, which reveals hidden notions of essentialism. As this current research attempts to reveal, race needs to be conceived as a starting point for analysis, not the end point. The study of processes and acculturation needs to be prioritised, not common-sensical understandings which are abstracted as universal. It is exactly this type of analysis which employs deconstructive tendencies, and yet ultimately draws on personal insight and "common-sense" generalisation which this current research posits as "closeted essentialism".

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[56] KIDS revolves around a group of New York City street kids, some of whom have been inflected with the HIV virus and know it, and others who are infected and who don't know. The film depressingly reveals situations where innocent (virgin) children are infected with HIV.

5.3   PRATIBHA PARMAR

What the first part of this chapter has attempted to do is to map the genesis of the multiple identities position - an understanding which suggests that identities are plural and that each of those elements of our 'self' have value as a basis for personal understanding and action in and of themselves. This chapter has attempted to trace the development of the multiple identities position beginning with its links with Screen Theory, the notion of the perfect point of view and the homogenous subject, the rise of British Cultural Studies, specifically Hall's "New Ethnicities" thesis, leading to positions which suggest that our individual identities are plural and/or multiple. This chapter now shifts to a critical reading of the work of Pratibha Parmar, as an example of a theoretical film practice which draws heavily on the multiple identities position, but equally feeds into the position through her films, lecturing and publishing work.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s Parmar completed a graduate degree at the Birmingham CCCS, where she was an active part of the Working Group on Race and Ethnicity. This group would produce one of the seminal books of the Centre, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. [57] Within the collection, Parmar's article "Gender, Race and Class: Asian Women in Resistance" (CCCS, 1982) revealed her concern with developing a position of British-Asian identities as a convergence of various social identities. Since this first publication, Parmar continued an active involvement in the debates on identity by regularly contributing interviews and articles to journals, readers and anthologies.[58] Throughout she has maintained an interest in issues relating to women, and specifically issues dealing with the intersection of race and sexuality. Parmar was part of a movement to pluralise the prevailing static conceptualisations of early 1980s "gay politics". As Seidman recalls:

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[57] For more on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, see Hall in Turner, 1990/96: 337.
[58] Parmar's personal filmography states: "Pratibha Parmar has contributed several chapters and articles to anthologies and magazines and many of her writings are used widely in universities and college courses on women, race and representation."

Hitherto excluded sections of the lesbian and gay community - people of colour, sexual rebels, Third World gays, working-class gays, butches and fems - protested their silencing and marginalisation by the gay mainstream. They exposed the repressive politics entailed in asserting a unified gay subject. Rebelling against the disciplining effects of a politics of identity, a new celebration of multiple, composite identities became the rallying cry for a queer politics of difference (Nicholson & Seidman, 1995: 4-5).

For Parmar, the exploration of issues of multiple identities implies the exploration and "discovery" of new representational strategies for British minority communities. Parmar states:

The photographic work by black women has been a significant part of emergent black cultural practice. It has sought to rework and reinscribe the language and conventions of representation, not simply to articulate our cultural difference, but to strive beyond this and develop a narrative that is wholly encased within our terms of reference. This entails creating identities as black British women not 'in relation to', 'in opposition to', 'as reversal of', or 'as a corrective to'...but IN AND FOR OURSELVES (Emphasis in original. Parmar, 1990: 101).

Parmar began her involvement in film through two modest projects on video - EMERGENCE (1986) and SARI RED (1988). SARI RED is about the brutal racist murder of young British-Asian women in Brick Lane, London. SARI RED was subsequently purchased by the Museum of Modern Art (New York), and the Pompidou Centre (Paris). Between 1986 and 1996 Pratibha Parmar completed 14 films. All but one have been within the documentary genre, ranging in length from 4.5 minutes to an hour. MEMSAHIB RITA (1995) was Parmar's first short drama, produced as part of the 4-part Siren Spirits, a BBC/BFI co-production. This was a series of films by "black" women, screened nationally in January 1995. From her earliest work, her deployment of the multiple identities position has been a central basis of her cultural practice.

Parmar reveals the beginnings of a core tension within "identity" film-making: the tension between self-proclaimed marginality and material dispossession and inaccessibility to British cultural production. Interestingly, she has been

able to access academic and artistic institutions as a solid basis from which to have her work disseminated and consecrated, further accumulating cultural, social and economic capital.

5.4 THE SOCIOLOGY OF KHUSH

KHUSH (1991) examines the thoughts and experiences of 12 South Asian individuals living and working in Canada, the United Kingdom and India, and explores their understandings of being lesbian or gay. The film attempts formal experimentation with the documentary form, and moves between talking heads of individual respondents and studio based non-synch sequences. There are a series of studio sequences, one where a dancer in an orange costume is moving about the set. Another staged sequence has two Asian women watching archive footage of an old Indian film of women dancing in a brothel. Parmar notes:

> In the film KHUSH, which I made for Channel Four's lesbian and gay series OUT ON TUESDAY, one of my strategies was to use a diverse range of visual modes. So, for instance, my reworking of classical dance sequences from an old Indian popular film utilises the strategy of disrupting the given heterosexual codes. In the original film, the female dancer's act is intercut with a male gaze, but for KHUSH I reedited this sequence and took out the male gaze. I reused this sequence with scenarios of two Asian women watching and enjoying this dance. The gaze and the spectator become inverted. (Parmar; 1993:p.10)

The film focuses on issues of sexuality by comparing and contrasting issues of "normal" South Asian lesbian and gay positions on experiences of being homosexual in contrast to the implied heterosexual social norm. The core representational strategy is the attempt at shifting away from a minority/majority position, into issues of cultural equivalences.[59] The film is constituted through the use of two poles whch structure the film: homonormativity and heteronormativity. The interviewees provide an exploration of the multiple identities position by locating their responses at

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[59] See Laclau, 1993 on the notion of "equivalences". In principle it is a form of conceptualizing the notion of cultural difference from an A:non-A position to an A:B position of cultural equivalences.

the pole of homonormativity. Along with issues of sexuality, the respondents discuss issues of class, religion, nationality, and inter and intra-cultural conflict:

> Daily racism was starting the moment we arrived. It started almost instantly. We moved into the suburbs of Vancouver and we had everything happen to us in the first 3 months (Canadian-Asian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

> There were very few Asian women a few years ago, but they have come out over the past couple of years. That there are Asian lesbians out there enjoying themselves (Scottish-Asian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

> Feeling schizophrenic, about having to choose between being Indian or being lesbian (Indian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

Heterosexuality is a theme which was discussed both through its absence and its presence. Respondents expressly spoke of family pressures to get "married". Other respondents made links between heterosexuality, masculinity and colonialism, as bringing with it Western value systems and moral codes:

> Having to face racism in isolation, because Asian community does not easily accept the fact that he is gay. Marriage as a serious problem (Indian man, KHUSH, 1991).

> The construction of heterosexuality, colonialism as linked with masculinity (Indian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

> The British Raj as imposing concepts of morality (Indian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

Although many respondents recognised the presence of homosexual acts within traditional Indian art, several respondents spoke of perceiving homosexual tendencies as being incompatible with living in India. Respondents spoke of modelling their support practices on Western (lesbian and gay) strategies. There is clearly a danger in the uncritical usage of Western strategies, and subsequently becoming complicit in a dominant Western position which sustains the prevailing political-cultural hegemony:

The blackmail, the police, there is always the threat of persecution (Indian man, KHUSH, 1991).

Not sure whether I could be in India and be a lesbian (Indian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

The Coming Out groups in the West as providing models for the subcontinent (Indian man, KHUSH, 1991).

An issue which emerges from the film is that of racism within the mainstream "Western" white gay and lesbian communities. This sense of racism emerges as respondents speak of individuals "exoticising" their Asian-ness, and other complaining of the lack of any coverage of Asian issues within the gay and lesbian press:

Talking to other Asian lesbians and gays they felt objectified, orientalised within the lesbian and gay community. They were the exotic other to be consumed (Scottish-Asian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

The lesbian and gay press are failing to recognise the existence of lesbian and gay Asian people, or if recognised, it as the problem (British-Asian woman, KHUSH, 1991).

The film constructs a common perspective and shared experiences between the interviewees, which is then abstracted to refract the South-Asian lesbian and gay experience. The sense of unity emerges less from a shared conceptualisation of sexuality and more from the common experiences of victimisation. As a consequence of this victimisation, an interviewee spoke of the need to create a "safe space" within which to support one another – SHAKTI, a South-Asian lesbian and gay organisation which exists in England and Canada. Through the experiences of victimisation, there is a tendency by the interviewees to speak in the plural as a "we" or "us":

What I do I enjoy most about being gay? Two things: one is sex, the other is solidarity, brotherhood and sisterhood (Indian man, KHUSH, 1991).

"SHAKTI" the only "space" where gay Asian men can get together and feel safe as Asian people and as gay men (British-Asian man, KHUSH, 1991).

On the gay white scene you lose your sense of identity. SHAKTI - as
providing a reminder of one's ethnic identity (British-Asian man,
KHUSH, 1991).

It is in this sense of shared identity, and the manner in which the film edits

the responses as to constitute a sense that these are generalisations rather

than simply personal insights and experiences, that the film becomes

representative of all South-Asian lesbian and gay individuals. The film

constructs a new "centred" lesbian and gay subject.

5.5 LOCATING KHUSH SOCIOLOGICALLY

In locating KHUSH sociologically, there emerges the tendency to structure

the assumptions and premises of the film on personal insight and

didacticism, over rigour and method. Ironically, there is a direct homology

between MacCabe's critique of AMERICAN GRAFFITI and its construction of

a perfect point of view and Parmar's shared perspectives of liberation and

victimisation of South Asian lesbian and gays. MacCabe's critique of Lucas

was that the audience is given no other positions but those very definitely

sutured for them in identifying with the characters, the pleasures and pains

of AMERICAN GRAFFITI. MacCabe is critical of the employed film language

for being a form of pure ideological manipulation where the system of

expression employed in the film makes "more reality" appear on the screen

than in the lived world. There is a perfect homology between the audience

position available in AMERICAN GRAFFITI and in KHUSH as the viewer is

provided with a very fixed position of identification for South Asian lesbian

and gays. Parmar constitutes a position, which suggests that there exists a

common community and perspective between individuals who are lesbian or

gay that reside within various Asian diasporic locations. Both the idealised

world of 1950s America and the shared solidarity between South Asian

lesbians and gays is pure cinematic fabrication.

The construction of a "common community" of South Asian lesbian and gays

is the core shortcoming of KHUSH. This construction of community is the

product of three key conceptual and practical weaknesses: strategies of

Figure 5. The Field of Power in KHUSH

HOMONORMATIVITY

Victimization

Homophobia

Exoticised

Coming-Out
Groups

Safe-Space

Racism

Imperialism

HETERONORMATIVITY

Marriage
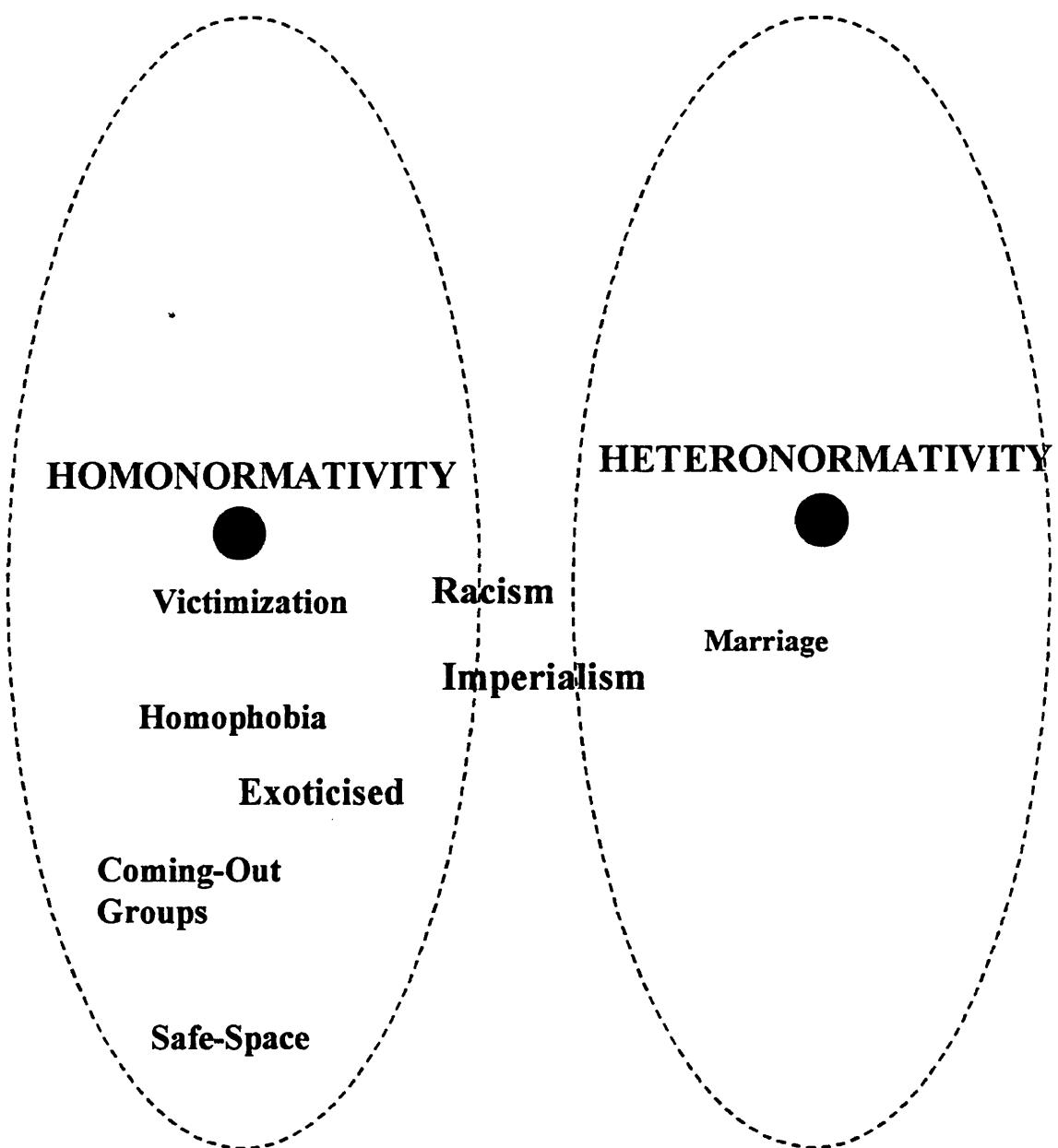
inversion, ahistorical and decontextual analysis, and the broader failure to recognise the real social relations and conditions which underpin cultural production. It is the suggestion of this thesis that the shortcomings within Parmar's theoretical articulation are homologous to the shortcomings of much contemporary cultural criticism that employs the multiple identities position. KHUSH functions as a particular case where the multiple identity position is used to prioritise understandings of a given cultural identity (i.e. a South Asian lesbian and gay identity), instead of revealing the complex process of interpellation and identification (i.e. revealing the relations of power which constitute given lesbian and gay perspectives). In this sense, KHUSH is guilty of what was described earlier as "closeted essentialism".

5.5.1 REPRESENTATIONAL STRATEGY OF INVERSION

By reflecting on my own working practice as a film-maker and video artist, and in unfolding my personal and historical context, I hope to contribute to the ongoing development of a general theoretical framework for discussing the cultural and political significance of black arts in postcolonial Britain. It is a framework which differs from previous forms of cultural critique because of the way in which it seeks to centralise the black subject and our experiences of difference. The more we assert our own identity as historically marginalised groups, the more we expose the tyranny of the so-called centre. (Parmar, 1993: 4)

One of the core weaknesses in KHUSH lies in its attempts at de-centring the heterosexual norm and simply replacing it with an inverted yet homologous notion of the homosexual norm. The above quote, with its use of the strategic "we" and "our", clearly reveals this practice of inversion at work. Parmar deploys homonormativity in the position of dominance within the field of power, resulting in the replication of same relations within the field. In constituting a homosexual norm, Parmar misses the radicality of the multiple identities position, that cultural identities are socially and culturally constructed. By simply positing a homosexual core subject, Parmar is implicitly suggesting that she has access to "the real homosexual subject", further suggesting the existance of a "real" homosexual subject (Nicholson & Seidman, 1995:29).

KHUSH functions as an example of a particular strand of queer film-making, which employs simple inversion in a normative manner, resulting in the portrayal of the "good homosexuals" as incorporated into the dominant ruling relations - like the incorporation of the gay couple as the "good homosexuals" in FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL. The sense that emerges from viewing a film like KHUSH is one of misunderstanding. That homosexuality is something which can simply be "accepted" by popular society, becuae the popular consciousness has excluded this voice and simple requires its reinsertion into society. As a consequence, KHUSH implies a strand of soft liberalism that misses the full radical insight of the multiple identities position. Parmar, like other contemporary queer theorists, fails to take into consideration that the material conditions of one's position has a significant impact on the formation of a politicised identity[60]. Explicitly, class in its full contemporary complexity is never seriously addressed. Again Hennessy suggests that the consequence is a:

> kind of "false consciousness" that attends to queer theory. Despite
> its radical intentions, the structure of queer theory never really
> escapes a certain middle-class or "bourgeois individualism." CLASS
> IS THE ABSENT REFLEXIVE MOMENT IN QUEER THEORY. (My
> emphasis. Nicholson & Seidman, 1995: 19).

For Hennessy, queer theory never gets beyond a preoccupation with analysing and problematising subjectivity and cultural representations. Whether it is queer theory's deconstruction of the gay or lesbian subject or Queer Nation's "visibility" actions, it is the surface of society - the realm of subjectivity, cultural image, or social appearance - that is the object of analysis or political intervention. Like Seidman, Hennessy criticises queer theory and politics for neglecting the relation between identity and symbolic politics and the sociohistorical conditions making queer subjects and visibility possible. However, for Hennessy, it is a specific articulation of the social that drives her critique: "Queer Theory has failed to incorporate in any serious way a materialist theory of society - that is a framework which

links identity to class, capitalism and patriarchy" (Nicholson & Seidman, 1995: 19).

Hennessy is critical of Judith Butler, Diana Fuss, and Teresa de Laurentis for never going "beyond a critical discursive analysis of questions of subjectivity, identity and representation" (Nicholson & Seidman, 1995:19)[61]. As a consequence, contemporary lesbian and gay cultural formations are seen to fit quite nicely into global capitalist niche marketing strategies. Without the connection between identity formation and institutional and historical contexts, queer resembles Avant-Garde movements, from Dadaism to the Situationists, whose "radical" cultural project of aestheticising daily life or performatively parodying "the natural," fit all too well within current niche marketing strategies of corporate capitalism:

> This fetishising of appearance and an active subjectivity conceals and legitimates the underlying social relations of class and gender domination that remain at the core of capitalist patriarchy. By remaining at the level of "the sphere of circulation" or engaging in a form of "opposition" that ironically perpetuates the illusion of freedom in commodity culture while concealing the material reality of domination and oppression (Nicholson & Seidman, 1995: 20).

KHUSH misses the potential radicality of queer theory and its emphasis on the socially and culturally constructed nature of identities. Instead, a set of binaries are simply inverted - homonormativity and heteronormativity. Within KHUSH there is still a sense that there are clearly demarcated, almost "natural" actions, feelings and experiences as gay and lesbian South Asians. Parmar alludes to this sense of a natural "lesbianism" when she asks film-maker Joy Chamberlain:

> Pratibha: How do you create empathy with lesbian characters?

> Joy: Well, not by thinking this is a lesbian character and she has to be an ideal character. When you create a character who has all good qualities and doesn't have any complications, then you've created a boring character whom no one will identify with and think, "Oh, that's a lesbian character." Whereas if you have a character who convey the

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[60] Other Queer Theorists who do not take into substantive consideration the material relations of production include Judith Butler (1992), Teresa de Laurentis (1984), Richard Dyer (1986), Isaac Julien (1992).
[61] For more on Hennessy's critique of Judith Butler see Hennessy, 1996: 21-29.

richness of a whole person, who has conflicts, then people become interested. That also allows them to transcend the label. They're not thinking, "This is a lesbian character." They're thinking, "That's a character." (Chamberlain et al, 1993: 43)

One could posit the suggestion that the surface treatment of cultural identity has the net effect of contributing to a growing individualisation of society. One might propose that such an identity politics actually complemented Thatcherism's attempts at individualising the British field of power during the 1980s and early 1990's, rather than opposing it.

5.5.2   ANALYSIS AS AHISTORICAL AND DECONTEXTUAL

KHUSH creates a false sense of community between lesbian and gay South Asians. It implies that there exists a type of common experience - a shared perspective or point of view, for individuals who identify as South Asian lesbian or gay. This false sense of community and shared liberation and victimisation is achieved through decontextualising the responses of the various interviewees. As a consequence, KHUSH as a critical examination of issues of cultural identity never gets beyond issues of individual subjectivity and given cultural representations. It has little to no basis from which to examine real networks and relations of power.

A significant problem with KHUSH is that only the perspectives of 12 individuals are discussed over the duration of one film, and these are universalised into a common South Asian lesbian and gay persective. There is a sense that there has been a process of selecting interviewees who would provide very particular types of responses. What is surprising is the shared middle-class, "Western" educated background of most of the respondents who were chosen as "representative" of a South Asian lesbian and gay perspective. There is a dangerously close link between the sampled responses and the film-maker's perspective.

As a fiction film-maker, you can say what you want to say through your characters, whereas with documentary you've got the subject matter but you've also got the subjects, and you can't put words in

their mouths. Sometimes I find that frustrating, because I want to put words into their mouths (Chamberlain et al, 1993: 48).

In KHUSH the issue of sexuality within the context of the subcontinent cannot simply be reduced to a "universalised" (western) understanding. According to the film, the ways in which people relate to sexuality within the sub-continent cannot be simply translated into a western political paradigm. What emerges as supposedly a critique, actually functions as an empty polemic:

> As one of the founding members of the first black lesbian group in Britain in 1984, it was invigorating finally to find a community of lesbians of colour where we could talk about our common experiences of racism and isolation within a white lesbian and feminist community, as well as share cultural similarities and a sense of integration. The collective empowerment that came as a result of this coming together was crucial for our political visibility. The key point here was that my experiences as a woman, as a lesbian, and as an Asian person were not compartmentalised or seen as mutually exclusive; instead it was the ways in which I/we located ourselves within and between these differing subjectivities that gave us a sense of integration. This was against the duality that was constantly being either self-imposed or externally imposed upon us, so that the much-asked question of whether we were going to prioritise our race over our sexuality was made redundant (Parmar; 1993: 8).

At the core of Parmar's position on community is the notion of victimisation, and that all lesbians and gays throughout the Asian diaspora experience a type common victimisation because of their sexual preference. A study of interest would have been if Parmar were to have assessed the processes of victimisation as they manifested themselves within various living contexts. But instead, KHUSH posits an argument where all lesbians and gays within the Asian diaspora experience a common form of victimisation, which functions as the principle formative element in their shared collective identity. There is a real need to analyse the formation of cultural communities within their precise socio-historical context and in relation to institutional and political forces which inform them:

> it is not enough to point to the general instability, heterogeneity, and character of identity categories. We need to analyse simultaneously

the precise historical context and the economic, political, and cultural forces which are intertwined with identity categories and politics. "Identities are complex and multiple and grown out of a history of changing responses to economic, political, and cultural forces, almost always in opposition to other identities " (Appiah in Nicholson & Seidman, 1995:15).

When the shared experiences of victimisation as a consequence of one's cultural identity becomes the only foundation from which to build any sense of coalitional politics, the difficulty which emerges is that one's cultural identity then becomes, or is perceived as the "problem", rather than as the basis of shared living experiences and undrestanidngs.

Explicitly or implicitly, there is a lack of an awareness of the material conditions and/or relations which have foregrounded contemporary lesbian and gay politcs. As a consequence, one is left with only surface analysis of social experiences, and an implicit affirmation of the status quo. As Hennessy reminds us: "In failing to historicise the material mythic effects of cultural representations, they help to keep these social arrangements in place" (Hennessy, 1996: 9). There is clearly a need to emphasise the historicity of given categories and the subsequent means through which these terms terms hold meaning for people. Categories of identity should be understood within particular social relations and social networks, as opposed to ahistorical post-structralist analysis which theorises identity in relation to a reified notion of language, or a pre-set notion of Freudian psychoanalysis.

5.5.3   KHUSH AS PRODUCED WITHIN REAL CONDITIONS

KHUSH premiered in the "Out on Tuesday" slot on Channel 4 in March 1991. Parmar from the earliest days draws on the existence of gay and lesbian and "black" film slots and schemes as a way in which to make films:

> it was Out on Tuesday, Channel 4's gay slot that gave her (sic) first real chance: "I'd had no formal film training, so everything I've learnt by doing," she explains. Working for them gave her a chance to create with proper budgets and to experiment with the craft of film-making. (DIVA, 1995: 26)

Technically, KHUSH suffers from distorted sound recording quality, very conventional cut-aways and talking-heads sequences, and redundant studio-based sequences. There is no real movement within the film – either through the editing of the talking-heads sequences or the staged sequences which aim to construct a new type of "female gaze". KHUSH was part of a whole body of work which lacked demonstrable film-making ability. As Rod Stoneman, former Assistant Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video, writes:

> The independent sector produced several examples of the 'textual film': an eventual legacy of this formative genre for many film-makers was that when television offered new budgets and the possibilities of wider audiences they were initially struggling to find appropriate forms either to utilise mainstream 'grammar' with adequate control and precision or even to counter the dominant mode of representation in a conscious, elegant and successful way. Ideologues of the television industry constantly utilise a concept of professionalism to justify exclusion, but the term could be redefined as 'serious in interest and deliberate in realisation'. To shoot a scene hand-held, 'badly' or edit it with jump cuts should then be a result of a determined strategy rather than incidental ineptitude. (Stoneman, 1992: 138)

If KHUSH, as one such "textual film", suffers from actual in film-making ability, one needs to ask why such films were produced in the first place. In response to this question, one needs to recognise the growing importance which issues of "multiple identities", and the "New Ethnicities" ontology generally, were receiving within critical-political-academic networks from the late-1980s into the early-1990s. Parmar with her previously published work and knowledge of contemporary debates was able to tap into this cultural currency and accumulate further cultural, social and economic capital from her understandings. Parmar is open about the importance of various festival and university circuits in North America to the dissemination of her work:

> having my work seen on the lesbian and gay film festival circuits, especially in the US, has been an absolute lifeline. The feedback has really kept me going, and winning the Audience Award for KHUSH as the Best Documentary Short at the Frameline Festival in San Francisco in June was a thrill. All the nightmares of shooting illegally in India suddenly became distant memories when I watched the film with the audience at that festival. It was a very special moment. To

get that validation from your own peer group mattered much more than getting a great review from a critic. That kind of nurturing is very important. It's what's kept me going. But it's only in recent years that we have had access to television audiences. (Chamberlain et al, 1993: 53)

Parmar found a receptive base for her work from Women's Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Cultural Studies departments throughout North America and England. Due to Parmar's persistence in exploring issues of multiple identities within her work she has become typecast as a very particular type of film-maker. Even Parmar notes:

"Oh Pratibha Parmar, she's the one who makes those PC, right-on, women's issues, lesbian issues documentaries," she says mimicking some short-sighted TV executives, "That's not how I see myself or my work but that's how you get pigeon-holed." (Parmar in DIVA, 1995: 25)

There is a need to recognise that the theoretical film practice which has been discussed in this chapter employed emergent post-marxist critical discourses in the institution of academia within Britain and North America as a new mode of consecration. A film like KHUSH was able to gain a place within many a Cultural Studies classroom, because it actively aimed to visualise many of the key theoretical tenants of the discipline. Ironically, when individuals would critically engage with films such as KHUSH, instead of assessing the film on formal film-making basis, individuals would engage with the film as yet another theoretical discourse exploring issues of "multiple identities", "de-centred subjects", "new ethnicities", etc. Implicitly there is a sense that much of the theoretical debate within film criticism during the late-1980s and early 1990s revolved more around new attempts at constituting a canonical approach to the reading of film and less the political possibilities of practice-oriented theoretical approaches.

A film such as Robert Crusz's INBETWEEN (1992) is an overt attempt at synthesising certain critical theoretical concepts[62] into a personal journey of life experiences in Ceylon-Sri Lanka and migration to Europe. For Homi

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[62] Homi Bhabha outlines his notion of 'inbetween' or interstil spaces that people holding multiple identities will occupy. Bhabha (1992, 1993)

Bhabha, at his inaugural Psychoanalytic Forum at the Institute of
Contemporary Art , when he refers to Crusz's INBETWEEN and the value of
his film-making, one cannot help but think that the modes of theoretical
production and the modes of consecration become one. Interestingly, as a
consequence of such a close communion between academia and certain
types of independent film practices, other film practices were ignored in
favour of certain consecrated theoretical approaches. Alia Syed notes:

> Last night, Robert Crusz had his work shown because he is part of
> Sankofa. And that's the reason why his work got shown. They don't
> realise that there are other people working doing equally interesting
> work, that is equally important, and it is not getting shown and it is not
> getting discussed. It is interesting how Sankofa and Black Audio Film
> Collective have marketed themselves so that people looking for black
> work will go to them and they will not go to anyone else. Their ideas
> of film-making, they have a specific agenda which is fine, but if you
> don't happen to fit into their agenda, then you happen to get left out,
> and marginalised even more. So the fact that those workshops are
> there is a way for those workshops and people like Homi Bhabha,
> equally, to use but misuse and not explore other avenues.[63]

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter and in the previous chapter, many
of the film-maker's and theorist from the 1970s would go on to hold
significant positions within academic and cultural institutions such as
broadcasting and publishing. Many of these individuals would were
sympathetic to the radical possibilities of the "multiple identities" position,
and would have enabled the production of such work, or been part of the
consecration of this body of theoretically informed work. There is a sense of
a dominant-dominated relationship at work here where the paternalism of the
British class system results in the regulation of the appropriate limits of
creative practices by, New Left activists:

> I think that's where you get into the paternalism of the English class
> system and the way in which cultural capital circulates, because with
> people like MacCabe, there was a sense of pride that Black British
> film-makers got a really good reception in the United States also in
> the Caribbean, in Cannes, places like that. So in other words they've
> given another lease on life to that new-new Left. But it was that

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[63] Taken from an interview with Alia Syed. 14 May 1993.

knowledge in a very patronising way and I think you can look at the relationship of MacCabe and Julien in YOUNG SOUL REBELS in a weird sort of father/son sort of identificatory anxiety going on. Although there was a sort of celebratory element to it, somehow I don't think the films were properly valued in a way and when you talked about art administrators and those who really have the power.[64]

Yet, one of the outcomes of this period of production saw many of these cultural managers "selling-out" the radical political-connective possibilities of post-Marxist strategies such as the multiple identities position, in exchange for consolidating their particular position within the given field of cultural production. Kobena Mercer suggests:

I think something very weird happened with people like Colin MacCabe,... Jacqueline Rose, all the big guns, which is that they traded the political possibility for positions of authority. So instead of a cultural politics of possibility that will be based on networking between the university and film groups, artists centres, and the marketplace, they went for the canon.[65]

Ultimately, theoretically informed film practice from this period suffered most from not tapping into much larger, more significant audiences. This body of work was produced by a particular cultural elite with the aim of viewing and consecrating this body of work by a similar cultural elite. In producing BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA, Kevin Loader notes:

I think that the trouble with the way some of these other works, like YOUNG SOUL REBELS (1991) have been marketed is to the detriment of finding the largest audience that they could have done. A lot of this stuff has been very ghettoised by its own definition. By the fact that it is coming out of what is perceived to be a minority culture. It's not even a racial minority culture, sometimes it's a minority culture of the British Film Institute, which in itself, is a kind of ghetto of cultural product, which has nothing to do with racial politics or liberal politics, but has to do with aesthetic criterion and approach. We very unashamedly set out to make something that as many people as possible would watch and enjoy.[66]

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[64] Taken from an interview with Kobena Mercer, 5 September 1994.
[65] Taken from an interview with Kobena Mercer, 5 September 1994.
[66] Taken from an interview with Kevin Loader, 2 February 1994.

5.6   CONCLUSIONS:

> Overall the contradiction between an attachment to an aesthetic of
> concepts and an aesthetic of deconstruction was never resolved.
> Even if a film is an appropriate vehicle for exploring theoretical
> concepts (I doubt very much it is), how can it at one and the same
> time explore theoretical concepts and undermine the codes which are
> being used to conduct that exploration? Programmes which attempted
> this like the PICTURES OF WOMEN - SEXUALITY (Channel 4, 1984)
> series, or more recently OUT ON TUESDAY (Channel 4, 1989), only
> succeeded in making their formal strategies (arbitrary tracking shots,
> unexpected angles, disrupted images) into an often irritating and
> intrusive form of decoration. (Lovell, 1990: 104)

In positing a notion of a theoretical film practice, this chapter has sought to

map a particular trajectory for a very particular body of work. Unlike the

previous chapter where the genesis of the particular film practice was clearly

linked to an emergent institutional logic, this chapter has sought to reveal an

example of a logic of film practice primarily informed through another

institutional force, that of contemporary cultural theory. Unfortunately, as the

above quote suggests this did not frequently make for engaging cinema, but

rather often served as a veiled attempt by individuals to accumulate further

cultural and social capital within specific elite networks. In devising a

successful film practice one looks to achieve a certain level of popular

appeal where the devices of film are employed as to capture the imagination

of audience members and critics alike. The next chapter explores the

genesis of one such successful film practice, and the subsequent pressures

that inform its logics of action, in the study of the British production company

Working Title Films.

6.0   CHAPTER 6: A SUCCESSFUL FILM PRACTICE

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will isolate the elements and the functioning logic of a successful film practice within the British independent film field during the late 1980s and early 1990s. It completes a close reading of the production company Working Title and pays particular attention to their first feature film, MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1985).

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE raises many issues about the gradual social and economic decay of British society in the mid-1980s. The film locates issues of ethnicity within a position of contradiction and complexity, overtly engaging with the emergence and new hegemony achieved by New Right economics within the field of power in Britain. To its credit, the film actively shifts the terms of prevailing debates on interpellating British-Asian characters away from simplistic positive and negative imagery debates into a broader project of historicing the presence of Asians in Britain as British.

The first part of this chapter analyses the field of power in MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE, with the aim of isolating the homology between Thatcherism as the dominant trajectory within the field of power during the mid to late 1980s and its impact on the British cultural field. The core structuring poles in this reading are that of "the new enterprise culture" and "defeatist socialism" as the dominant and dominated poles within the film's field of power.   What is of interest in MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE are the ways in which British-Asian characters are employed as BRITISH subjects from whose perspective Thatcherite British society is revealed. The film challenges stereotypical, simplistic representations of British-Asian life by positing British-Asian characters within a complex, sinister and often paradoxical social world. The significance of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE is its attempt at complexity and providing depth (be that through irony) to an Asian perspective into Thatcher's Britain.

The second half of this chapter explores the elements and relations in the production of a "successful" British-Asian independent film practice. It explores the relations of power within the film field by examining the genesis of a particular commercial independent film production company - Working Title. Elements of Working Title's "successful" film practice included: generating work with a sense of political integrity and "niche market" interests; successful release of films within American theatrical markets; and persevering in British film production during a period of extreme resistance and limited growth within the British film field.

This chapter will attempt to map the genesis of Working Title, revealing the manner in which this once small independent production company would shift a small scale commercial film practice to a larger corporate film practice. This shift begins with the full (100% ownership) purchase of Working Title Films by PolyGram Filmed Entertainment in 1991. This corporate film practice is most clearly manifest in the production of the hugely successful FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (1994). Elements of this film practice included: access to significant cashflow, marketing and distribution strategies particularly for American audiences, and the concentration of media ownership and decision-making structures within a small group of powerful producers. The focus of the second part of the chapter is a close examination of Working Title as relevant player shifting from the commercial to the corporate film field. This section ends with a brief discussion on the production of a mediocre, yet technically proficient film practice as the core logic to British corporate film-making.

This chapter suggests that the Working Title films MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE and FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL refract relations between the film field, the cultural field, and the field of power. Both films clearly reveal the changes and shifts within the film field itself as the priorities of a small commercially-driven film company shift to the economies of scale, and the pressures for financial returns, of a multinational corporate

cultural producer. This chapter ends with a brief exploration of issues surrounding the tendency for power to become concentrated within corporate practices.

6.2   MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

Released in 1985, MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE is a model independent film success story. Conceived as a film for television or a television play, it was able to tap into a social awareness of mid-1980s Britain, in a climate of social decay, privatisation, and the rise of the Thatcherite belief in "rampant individualism" (Hutton, 1996: 28). Written by Hanif Kureishi, and directed by Stephen Frears, MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE was able to deploy British-Asian characters as examples of Thatcher's "good entrepreneurs". Instead of a congratulatory position, the British-Asian characters reflected the complexity and potential conflicts associated with the intensive individualisation of British society. MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE features a community of nouveau riche Pakistanis, thriving from the decay of South London. The film revolved around a story of two friends, Johnny, a white working-class National Front supporter, and Omar, a listless, lower middle-class British-Asian. Omar's uncle, Nasser, gives him a dilapidated laundrette to manage and the friends, who are long-lost lovers, decide to make it the most successful laundrette in south London. To finance their plans Omar steals money from his cousin Salim's drug smuggling operation.

Through a play with issues of sexuality, sinister business ethics, and extraordinary social and political affiliations, Kureishi is ablenot only to actively subvert the stereotypical image of British-Asians as victims of "white society" or popular British society, but also to situate a British-Asian perspective at the core of the emergent New Right hegemony. In this way, Kureishi is able to historicise and locate Asians in Britain as "British", with equal ferocity and responsibility in determining the direction of a "social" Britain. According to Frears and Kureishi LAUNDRETTE was an:

ironic salutation to the entrepreneurial spirit in the eighties that
Margaret Thatcher championed, as her government transformed the
post-war socialist state into a "nation" courting and supported by
private capitalistic enterprise. (Barber, 1993/96: 221)

The film is clearly steeped in an awareness and active engagement with
both broader changes to the British state as well as awareness of protest
politics. The film actively refers to various key developments and
occurrences within British political culture. Within the film there are direct
references made to the "Labour party", "Mrs. Thatcher", "NF marches
through Lewisham during late 70s and early 80s", and marches against
"muggings".

The play with sexuality and politics suggests an active attempt to bring
apparently irreconcilible differences together. The homosexual relationship
between Johnny, a National Front sympathiser, and Omar, an emergent
Asian-entrepreneur, is an extremely witty subversion of expected racial and
sexual relations.

The severity of Kureishi's treatment of the characters in the film, and the
active play with opposing, apparently incommensurable positions clearly
suggests Kureishi's attempt at social comment and criticism. Kureishi talks
about his influences and the desire to reflect the complexity of his upbringing
in his work:

> In LAUNDRETTE, we were thinking, people expect Asian people to
> be this and to be that, and we can play with that and turn it
> around...all the Rock Against Racism campaigns, the growing Asian
> youth movement and then, how all that died down in the 1980s. We
> had a very self-satisfied, Thatcherite existence in the 1980s which we
> were all part of in some way. Now we've come out the other side, and
> are expressing those "experiences" through our work. (Chua, 1994:
> 18)

As an artist of British-Asian heritage, Kureishi signified a new generation of
politically engaged cultural practice calling for a differently conceived Britain.
But the opening of institutional spaces (as discussed in Chapter 4) had the
intention of liberating "black" communities from powerless-ness, but often

served only to regulate and limit acceptable expression of cultural difference as the "victim" of social evils within British society. At a minimum LAUNDRETTE was able to raise issues with regards to the types of character treatments which were acceptable within the British film field. Kureishi would consequently uphold the pole of plurality and complexity of character against claims of solely refracting British-Asians in a positive light.

6.3 THE SOCIOLOGY OF MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

The film's field of power is structured between the poles of a "new enterprise culture" and a "defeatist socialism". These poles are characterised within the attributes of Nasser, the entrepreneurial uncle, and Papa, the sick former journalist/political activist, brothers who provide the narrative with characters which function as perfect opposites.

The central story of the film finds Omar, the son of Papa, becoming increasingly involved in Nasser's business activities. Nasser agrees to let Omar fix his run-down laundrette as a favour to Omar's father. The entrepreneurial forces within the film exploit whomever, in a ruthless manner as to accrue maximum profit. The dominant ideology of New Right economics or "Thatcherism" provides the principle homology between the film's field of power and the field of power in Britain during the mid-1980s. Thatcherism facilitated and affirmed certain types of social principles: the rise of rampant individualism, free market principles, the individualisation of social responsibility - "survival of the fittest" ethos, the gradual shifts from public to private and commercial to corporate. Thatcherism covered just about every aspect of British society:

> crime, especially juvenile crime; violence, personal and political; industrial militancy and public disorder; flouting of the rule of law; loss of parental control, of authority generally; the decline of learning and discipline in the schools; divorce, abortion, illegitimacy, pornographic display, four letter words on television; the DECLINE OF MANNERS. (Barber, 1993/96: 222)

It is the spread and subsequent rise to a position of hegemony of the New

Right economics that MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE sets out to critique

and actively engage with.[67] As a consequence of the rise of Thatcherism,

Britain saw the formation of a new "underclass", new marginal and sub-

cultural communities.

6.3.1   NEW ENTERPRISE CULTURE

From supporting the National Front, to "dope" smuggling and dealing, to the

exploitation of other family members, many sinister elements are revealed as

positions within the new entrepreneurial ethos. Nasser reveals one of the

most significant lines in the film when he states: "But we're professional

businessmen. Not professional Pakistanis. There's no race question in the

new enterprise culture" (Kureishi, 1986: 82). Nasser and nephew Salim

most clearly refract the pole of "new enterprise culture". Kureishi's overt

strategy is to reveal British-Asians as integrally a part of the emergent

Thatcherite hegemony:

> Our cities are full of Asian shops. Where one would want black
> united with black, there are class differences as with all groups.
> Those Pakistanis who have worked hard to establish businesses, now
> vote Tory and give money to the Conservative Party. Their interests
> are the same as those of middle-class business people everywhere,
> though they are subject to more jealously and violence. They have
> wanted to elevate themselves out of the maelstrom and by gaining
> economic power and opportunity and the dignity it brings, they have
> made themselves safe - safer. They have taken advantage of
> England. (Kureishi, 1986: 30)

Kureishi begins this homology right from the opening sequence of the script:

Salim and his wife, Cherry, along with four Jamaican men, remove Johnny

and other squatters from one of their properties. Outside the property on the

boarded up windows is painted "Your greed will be the death of us all' and

'We will defeat the running wogs of capitalism" (Kureishi, 1986:49). Here

we have an instance of clear and direct referencing to Thatcher: through the

use of the negative epitaph "wog", Asians are constituted as representative

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[67] It is of interest to note that all of Kureishi's fictional work directly engages with the emergence or presence of Thatcherism and the impact of New Right economics on the British state.

of the emergent entrepreneurial ethos. In response to Omar's new job washing cars in Nasser's car park, Salim notes to Omar: "Your uncle can't pay you much. But you'll be able to afford a decent shirt and you'll be with your own people. Not in a dole queue. Mrs. Thatcher will be pleased with me" (Kureishi, 1986: 55).

Ruthlessness and the impulse to accumulate economic capital at all costs inform the logic of Nasser, Salim and increasingly Omar's actions. In one sequence, Johnny confronts Salim on his drug-pedalling in the local area:

> JOHNNY: (Eventually, and tough) Salim, we know what you sell, man. Know the kids you sell it to. It's shit, man. Shit.
> SALIM: Haven't you noticed? People are shit. I give them what they want. I don't criticise. I supply. The laws of business apply.
> (Kureishi, 1986: 101-102)

Even Omar gradually takes on the persona of ruthlessness. In an exchange between Omar and Johnny, he states:

> I want big money. I'm not gonna be beat down by this country. When we were at school, you and your lot kicked me all round place. And what are you doing now? Washing my floor. That's how I like it. Now get to work. Get to work I said or you're fired! (Kureishi, 1986: 92)

It is clear that Kureishi aims to locate the ruthlessness of Omar, Salim and Nasser as homologous to the "rampant individualism" which New Right economics affirmed and imposed onto the British state for a total of 18 years (Hutton, 1996: 28).

6.3.2   DEFEATIST SOCIALISM

At the other pole, situated as an opposite to Nasser's "new enterprise culture", is Omar's father and Nasser's older brother, Papa, who refracts the pole of "defeatist socialism". We are informed that Papa was a "leftist communist" journalist (Kureishi, 1986: 61), in England and in Pakistan, but has since become a heart-broken "lost-spirit". Our first image of Papa, he is seen as "thin as a medieval Christ: an unkempt alcoholic. His hair is long;

his toenails uncut; he is unshaven and scratches his arse shamelessly. Yet he is not without dignity." (Kureishi, 1986: 51) Papa has seen his efforts at "world revolution" destroyed with the arrival of a New Right agenda with the election of Thatcher. He has seen his efforts at collective action and social responsibility appropriated by the Fascist Right. As Omar notes angrily to Johnny:

> What they were doing on marches through Lewisham? It was bricks and bottles and Union Jacks. It was immigrants out. It was kill us. People we knew. And it was you. He saw you marching. You saw his face, watching you. Don't deny it. We were there when you went past. (OMAR is being held by JOHNNY, in his arms.) Papa hated himself and his job. He was afraid on the street for me. And he took it out on her. And she couldn't handle it. Oh, such failure, such emptiness. (Kureishi, 1986: 84)

Papa's defeatism is clearly manifest in the portrayal of his actual imagery within the film, as sickly and bed-ridden. More substantively, it is revealed during the film that Papa is in despair about the way Fascist movements were able to appropriate the traditional Left's strategies of working class mobilisation. Papa is acutely disappointed by the personal failures of both Omar and Johnny. In an exchange with Johnny, he notes:

> PAPA: What has it made you? Are you a politician? Journalist? A trade unionist? No, you are an underpants cleaner. (Self-mocking) Oh dear, the working class are such a great disappointment to me. (Kureishi, 1986: 94)

It is clear that the film's field of power employs Papa's character as a refracted perspective around the demise of the traditional Left in Britain in the late 1970s and early 1980s, both in terms of a sense of general disappointment as well as a more significant sense of hopelessness and despair. The dreams of British socialism complete with public ownership of the means of production, entrenched rights for trade unions, universal health and the welfare state had been lost with the rise of Thatcher's hegemony over the British state, and the new belief in laissez-faire economics and individual 'survival of the fittest' social logic.

6.3.3   NEW UNDERCLASS

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE maps a third position within the field of
power, that of a new underclass. Within the contemporary British context,
new marginal or sub-cultural communities premised on social and economic
exclusion and dispossession were created. Although the film explores the
formation of uneasy personal and political alliances, there is clearly the
formation of a new "underclass" of unemployed young people. This new
underclass, is most clearly revealed through the character of Johnny and his
fascist friends, Genghis and Moose. The group is initially introduced with
imagery of them selling right-wing newspapers. Traditionally seen as
"working-class", but with no viable "left" alternative seeming to exist at the
time, the new strata of unemployed people are seen as gathering
collectively to feel a sense of purpose and take part in jingoism. Although
Omar and Johnny clearly have a "past", it is mostly the prospect of work
which motivates Johnny to help Omar with the laundrette. Johnny reveals
this most forcibly in an exchange with Genghis:

> GENGHIS: Why are you working for them? For these people? You
> were with us once. For England.
> JOHNNY: It's work. I want to work. I am fed up of hanging about.
> GENGHIS: I'm angry. I don't like to see one of our men grovelling to
> Pakis. They came here to work for us. That's why we brought them
> over. OK? (Kureishi, 1986:78)

Although the Fascist crowd of Genghis and Moose become the butt of jokes
and violence levied against them by Johnny, their characters refract the
homeless-ness and jobless-ness of an emergent British underclass. The
report of the Commission on Social Justice (1994) notes how over the past
40 years the British job market shifted from full employment (for men) to high
and lasting levels of unemployment, with the last twenty years seeing a drop
of 3.4 million men from full-time employment (p.33). Although unemployment
rates have increased for all men, the worst hit has been for those without
any qualifications. Less than twenty years ago 9 out of 10 men who had left
school without qualifications were in employment, but by the early 1990s it
was well below 7 out of 10 and falling, with long-term unemployment

Figure 6. Field of Power in MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

NEW ENTERPRISE CULTURE

Salim   Nasser

Bubbles
Laundrette

DEFEATIST SOCIALISM

Papa

Omar

Johnny

NEW UNDERCLASS

Moose & Genghis
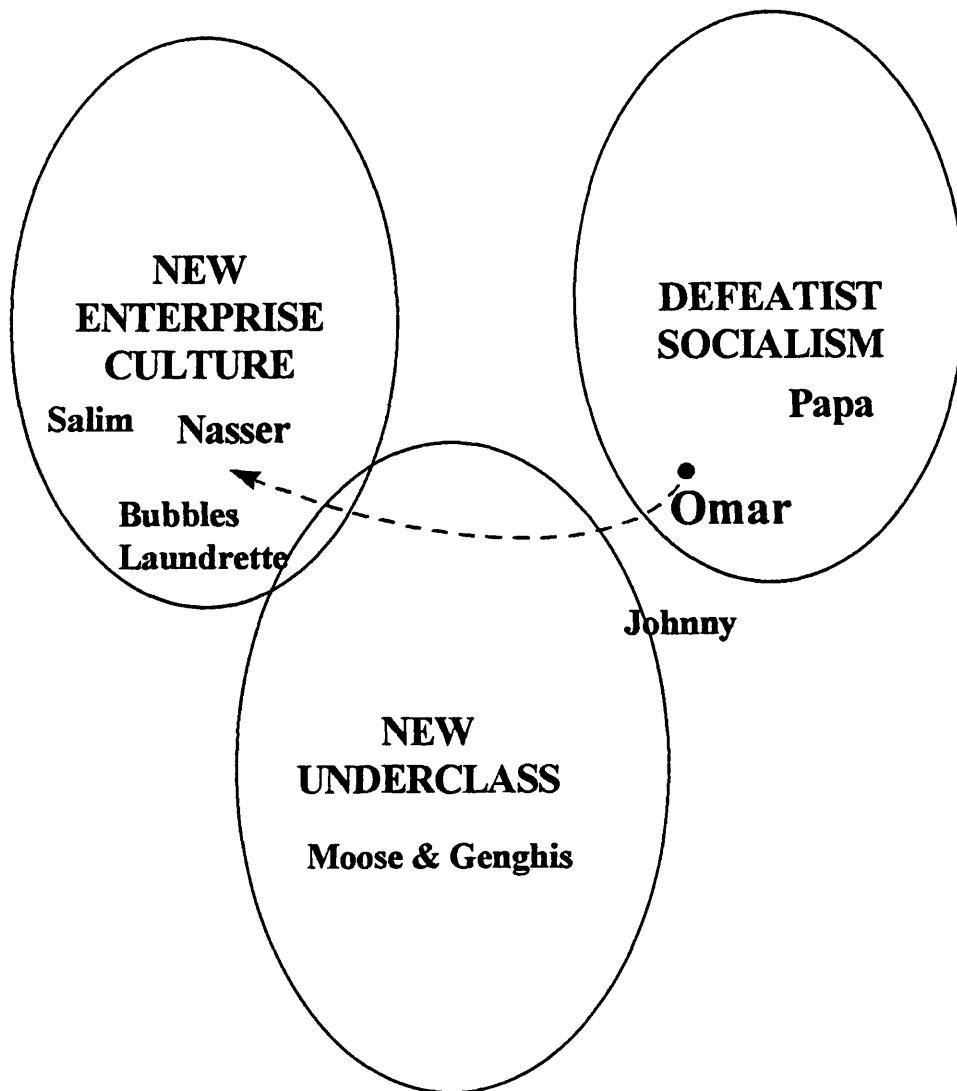
becoming a chronic problem within the British state (p.35-36). The report is equally revealing on issues of sub-standard living conditions and outright homelessness, with an estimated half a million people homeless (most of whom were long-term unemployed men), over a million people living in homes which were officially unfit for habitation, while 800,000 homes stood empty (p.11). Within the film's field of power Genghis and Moose provide a homologous relationship to this emergent underclass.

6.4 "Dirty Linen"

> For most of us who cannot afford washing machines or expensive laundry bills, the laundrette offers an imperfect but useful alternative. The more sensitive amongst us prefer to wash our dirty linen at home and bring only our less soiled garments into the public gaze. However, those who are in positions of power and control, and can bear the experience of laundries (paid for by their employers), always come out neat and clean. They need no defending even if an occasional stain shows on their otherwise immaculate image. (Jamal, 1988/87:21)

The attempts by Kureishi and others to subvert the position of British-Asians as victims, and to propose a more complex depiction of a British-Asian presence, was not wholeheartedly embraced. Following MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE a series of debates emerged around issues of "positive/negative representation" or the "Dirty Linen" debate. The "Dirty Linen" position is critical of showing British-Asian people in a negative and non-affirming manner. Mahmood Jamal, from the Retake Film and Video Workshop, first articulated the "Dirty Linen" position.[68]

For Jamal, Kureishi's attempts at subverting and challenging the prevailing stereotypes and portraying British-Asian people within the complexities of a given field of power, was to constitute yet another, potentially more damaging, stereotype. As Jamal notes:

> We should not hesitate to challenge those who like to sling mud at us in the name of 'artistic' freedom...In some ways the film [MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE] is an example of what Asian film-makers

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[68] First published in ArtRage no.17,Autumn1987, later reproduced in BLACK FILM, BRITISH CINEMA 1988.

should try to avoid: the caricature and the reinforcing of stereotypes of their own people for a few cheap laughs. (Jamal, 1988/87: 21)

From Jamal's statements and from the treatment of his previous work (through Retake, Chapter 4), the role of art is clearly intended to function as some form of "social art". Jamal is representing the pole of the argument which suggests that fundamentally art has the responsibility of communicating between people, and the direct capacity to educate and inform. Implicitly this position rests on a direct and full belief in realist strategies of art production. By realist strategies and aesthetic criteria Jamal is suggesting that art, particularly that which explores fictional worlds through British-Asian characters, needs to be a direct reflection of the actual social world. Furthermore, a critique which usually emerges through this line of enquiry is one which requires an equal representation of all minority positions. [69]

The reliance on "realist" reading strategies resulted in many people feeling uneasy about the film. Many were angered by the misrepresentation of actual relations within and between Asian communities in London. Their critiques longed for more accurate depiction of the way things are within given communities. Keith Vaz, then prospective Labour Party candidate in Leicester, at a television interview with Hanif Kureishi put it as follows:

> There were no poor Asians in the film, Asians living on the margins of poverty, which is what we have in this country. The Asian-community was portrayed as being very wealthy, in the best houses (even the father had his own house didn't he?) which is not true. There is mass overcrowding in the inner city areas where the Asian community is. [Originally in SATURDAY REVIEW BBC2 16 November 1985] (Henriques, 1988:p.19)

Implicitly, Keith Vaz's position, along with the position of many others, is that art must have a social responsibility to speak "truthfully" for certain character positions. In his view, art holds some type of social responsibility within the broader field of power. Interestingly, this burden of representation is often

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[69] It is interesting how Jamal's position parallels Bourdieu's notion of "social art", that practice which overtly requires art production to fulfil a social or political function. For more on "social art" see Bourdieu, 1996: 72-75.

levied at work which is addressing issues and subjects beyond the conventional or dominant mainstream. Addressing British-Asian work specifically, and their general absence in British film and popular media, requires from those few selective images the responsibility of interpellating Asian communities in a truthful manner, while engaging audiences.[70] This is the idealised position, for it implies a community simply lacking a voice which requires insertion within an existing field of power. This "unified voice" does not exist; furthermore, simply adding a position to the prevailing relations of power within the field will have a limited effect in actually changing relations of decision-making within the field.

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE is clearly working at a "fantastical" level of realism, rather than on a common-sensical level of social reality. The premise of the film, with its homosexual relations between a National Front supporter and Omar, all suggest that Kureishi is actively attempting to create a world which cannot be reduced to a simple reflection of reality. There are numerous instances within the film which refract the extraordinary nature of social relations within the film's field of power, including: a sequence at Nasser's house where Nasser's elder daughter Tania reveals her breasts to Omar; the abrupt end to a racist skin-head attack on Omar, Salim and his wife as Omar approaches Johnny who is part of the skin-head group; a sequence where a skin-head gang member jumps off the roof of the laundrette and lands standing on his feet. There is a particularly fantastical sequence where Nasser's wife Bilquis casts spells on Rachael, Nasser's mistress:

> OMAR: It's heavy, man. Bilquis is making magical potions from leaves and bird beaks and stuff. She's putting them on Rachael.
> (JOHNNY watches TANIA groping for leaves in amazement)
> JOHNNY: Is it working?
> OMAR: Rachael rang me. She's got the Vicar round. He's performing an exorcism right now. The furniture's shaking. Her trousers are walking by themselves. (Kureishi, 1986: 94-95)

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[70] For more on the lack of British-Asians within British Broadcasting see the ITC report ETHNIC MINORITIES ON TELEVISION: AN ITC CONTENT ANALYSIS (1996).

There is a real danger of constituting a position which reduces the specificity and the plurality of "British-Asian" experiences to one, essentially positive, perspective. For Jamal and others, it is the responsibility of those involved in the interpellation of "non-white" subjects to depict them in a positive and ethically responsible manner. The real danger in the Jamal position is the denial of a range of subject positions and/or plurality of social perspectives for British-Asians, and ultimately a lack of depth to character understandings and responses.

What is of interest is how Kureishi is able to achieve success, particularly in relation to other work which is situated within the realist paradigm, by employing the device of story-telling and film-making. Henriques notes:

> What is interesting about LAUNDRETTE is how it shows the kind of effects that can be achieved once the move is made out of the realist tradition. The film was funny and serious at the same time. To me it was saying something about both the joys and the fears of living in mid-1980s Britain. There are not many films that do that. One that clearly failed in this respect was MAJDHAR. Though with similar Channel 4 low budget finance, comparable themes and actress Rita Wolf in common, MAJDHAR served only to illustrate the crippling weakness of realism for coming to terms with contemporary issues. When the film is taken as a transparent medium for the reflection of real social problems very little filmic communication is possible. (Henriques, 1988:p.19)

The above quote notes how LAUNDRETTE is successful in capturing the imagination of a popular audience which a film such as MAJDHAR (as discussed in Chapter 4) was unable to do. Interestingly, producer of MAJDHAR Mahmood Jamal, who first coined the popular phrase "dirty linen", clearly failed in the eyes of Henriques as well as this current research, which proposes a film practice which could positively portray cultural communities and yet maintain a popular level of engagement.

The debates which circulated around MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE in terms of "dirty linen" are significant because the very same debates continue

to haunt film-makers today.[71] Within this position there is an implicit belief that there exists an easily knowable, common-sensical capacity to speak for and of all "British-Asian" communities. From this position, there is a real danger of individuals building personal positions of power through their ability to regulate or censor "good" or "bad" art. Self-proclaimed community leaders who are *de facto* art critics, have taken it upon themselves to determine the acceptable limits of art production. BHAJI ON THE BEACH (1994) is an example of one such film, which although exploring a range of women's issues – Asian women, violence against women, inter-racial relationships, neglected housewives – was still critiqued by self-proclaimed "community leaders" as a bad influence on young Asian youth:

> Members of the militant Hindu organisation Arya Samaj have written
> to MPs, Peter Brooke, the Heritage Secretary, and the British Board of
> Censors claiming the film degrades Indian culture. They have the
> support of Harry Greenway, Conservative MP for Ealing. (Chaudhary,
> 1994: 5)

Through a heavy reliance on realist strategies of analysis, there clearly emerges a very dangerous and reactionary position, in which all art production needs to be representative of "actual" social relations. In attempting to reveal "actual" social relations one loses the possibility of emotionally engaging with audiences: as one does in employing dramatic devices (melodrama, character conflict, genre structure) to speak of social issues while engaging with audiences. The great strength of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE lies in its ability to speak to significant British political and social issues. The boldness of the film is immediately apparent with its mixed cast and extreme relations between characters and their idiosyncratic dispositions. The film succeeds in achieving a non-apologetic treatment of British society from a "British-Asian" point of view.

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[71] THE DRIVE (1995) screening at IKON Gallery in Birmingham (August 1996), where questions were raised around portraying Asian street characters as involved in criminal activities.

6.5 LOCATING MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE SOCIOLOGICALLY

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE was one of several new British independent films produced during the 1980s which were employing overtly politicised and agitational elements within their particular film practice, resulting in a body of work which could be viewed as "not so great" British films. LAUNDRETTE along with other films such as BRITANNIA HOSPITAL (1982), BUSINESS AS USUAL (1987), EMPIRE STATE (1987), EAT THE RICH(1987), and THE LAST OF ENGLAND(1987), sought to engage actively with the demise of British society during the 1980s. The logic of production for this body of independent films was significantly different from the 1980s studio driven films produced by companies such as Merchant Ivory and Goldcrest. Interestingly, films such as TESS (1980), CHARIOTS OF FIRE (1981), GHANDI (1982), PASSAGE TO INDIA (1985), and ROOM WITH A VIEW (1986) sought overtly to relive and re-historicise Britain during a time of great glory and colonial rule. The scale of these productions and the types of thematics that they explored provided a definite counter-practice for the 'not so great' British films. In terms of the production of LAUNDRETTE, Kureishi notes that the film:

> was shot in six weeks in February and March of 1985 on a low budget and 16mm film. For this I was glad. There were no commercial pressures on us, no one had a lot of money invested in the film who could tell us what to do. And I was tired of seeing lavish films set in exotic locations; it seemed to me that anyone could make such a film, providing they had an old book, a hot country, new technology and were capable of aiming the camera at an attractive landscape in the hot country in front of which stood a star in a perfectly clean costume delivering lines from the old book. (Kureishi, 1986: 43)

Kureishi is clear that LAUNDRETTE, despite its references to unemployment and Thatcherism, was intended as a modern form of irony, deploying a strategy of "commenting on bleakness and cruelty without falling into dourness and didacticism." (Kureishi, 1986: 43) A trajectory of British social irony exists in television, as part of which LAUNDRETTE clearly looks to locate itself: the television play, which historically aimed to present serious

contemporary drama on television for a wider British audience. Kureishi

notes that work of writers like Alan Bennett (much of his work was directed

by Stephen Frears), Dennis Potter, Harold Pinter, Alan Pater and David

Mercer were of great influence to him in conceiving of his own art practice

(Kureishi, 1986: 41). It is important that Kureishi's artistic practice be

located as part of an extended genealogy of politicised British film practice.

Many at the time were quite critical of this new body of agitational films.

Professor Norman Stone of Oxford University was one such critic who

initiated a series of critical engagements in British newspapers in 1988[72].

Upon viewing some of the "not so great" British films, Professor Stone was

overtly hostile to the tendency to depict Britain in a state of decline. Stone

states:

> Theirs is a flat, two-dimensional ideology. Yes, there are nasty
> patches in modern Britain, and parts of our great cities are in
> disgrace....But the vision of England that they provide has nothing to
> offer an overwhelming majority of the potential audience. They
> represent at best a tiny part of modern England, and, more likely, a
> nasty part of their producers' brains. (Stone, 1988: 23)

Stone dismisses LAUNDRETTE for revealing the established order as

"imperialist, racist, profiteering, oppressive to women and other minorities",

and is critical of the manner in which it speaks directly to broader British

social issues (Stone, 1988: 22). Not only does Stone not recognise the long

trajectory of British politicised social drama, of which many of these films are

part, but suggests that films of a more "traditional kind" such as PASSAGE

TO INDIA, ROOM WITH A VIEW and HOPE AND GLORY "show what can

be done" (Stone, 1988: 23). Interestingly, the position which Stone occupies

is one which is homologous to that of the "dirty linen" position, in which the

role of art is simply to generate positive imagery and affirm an imagined

social cohesion.

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[72] See Professor Stone's review in THE SUNDAY TIMES 10 January 1988 and Kureishi's response in THE GUARDIAN 22 January 1988. Both are reprinted in BLACK FILM BRITISH CINEMA, ICA Documents 7, 1988: 22-25.

What LAUNDRETTE is able to do is clearly reveal new situations of social decay and demise, which were generating new social positions within the field of power such as the demoralisation of the traditional British left and the formation of a new social underclass. In a response to Stone's review Kureishi notes:

> The decision is not one about a small group of irrelevant people who can be contemptuously described as "ethnic minorities". It is about the direction of British society. About the values and how humane it can be when experiencing real difficulty and possible breakdown. It is about the respect it accords individuals, the power it give to groups, and what it really means when it describes itself as 'democratic'. The future is in our hands. (Kureishi, 1986: 38)

It is clear from the above statement, as well as the above analysis of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE, that the logic of Kureishi's art practice relates to the broader engagement with the changes and subsequent decay of British society. The deployment of British-Asian characters feeds into this sense of the conflicts and contradictions of living within British society during the 1980s. In this way, Kureishi is successful in locating an Asian presence as part of the historicity of British society.

The core logic of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE needs to be recognised for initiating an historical project of Asian communities in the position of affirming and perpetuating New Right economic values. The film constitutes an homology between the film's field of power and the dominant/dominated relations within the field of power under the prevailing New Right British hegemony. As a consequence, the film's logic is about locating a British-Asian presence as part of the historicity of contemporary British society. One could suggest that there exists a parallel between Kureishi and Flaubert in the articulating of an "art for art's sake position". Kureishi, like Flaubert, emerges within the cultural field where on one pole is commercial bourgeois art, in the form of the various "Great British Films" (i.e. PASSAGE TO INDIA, ROOM WITH A VIEW, CHARIOTS OF FIRE, etc.); on the other pole is "social art" like that of Jamal and the Retake Film and Video Collective. In this way, Kureishi occupies a similar position to Flaubert, in that they both

share a position which denies both of the above poles, yet they look to produce art which is rigorous, engaging and pushing audience expectation of what is acceptable. Arguably, the production of work from the "art for art's sake" position refracts a process of maturity of specific cultural communities.

6.6 WORKING TITLE'S COMMERCIAL FILM PRACTICE

Hanif Kureishi and the production of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE need to be credited with the growth and subsequent rise of Working Title Films as one of the most successful film production companies in British film history. As Working Title's first feature film, it was very much initiated and realised by Hanif Kureishi. Prior to scripting LAUNDRETTE, Kureishi was already a relatively well established young theatre writer. Kureishi was approached by Karin Banborough of Channel Four to write a project for Film on Four. Remarkably, for his first feature script, Kureishi was nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay. This launched both the individual career of Kureishi as a consecrated artist, and the commercial career of Working Title Films.

It is worth noting that MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE was conceived as a television play or movie solely for television. The prospect of a theatrical release was very much outside its initial conception and imagined audience. For Kureishi, Film on Four had taken over from the BBC's Play of the Day as an outlet for television plays which engaged with current British social issues. Through discussions with Channel Four Kureishi approached Stephen Frears as a director for LAUNDRETTE. Frears, who previous had completed various projects for British television and had directed several television plays for other writers, was immediately interested in LAUNDRETTE. In choosing a production company with whom to produce the film, Frears suggested working with Tim Bevan and Sarah Radclyff, producers with whom he had recently completed pop-promos. Although Working Title Films began solely as a pop-promo production company under the name Aldabra, with MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE the company

changed its name and set up as a film and television production company. Between 1985 to 1991 Working Title Films would be active in producing a range of low to mid-budget British feature films including: MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (1986), PLAYING AWAY(1986), WISH YOU WERE HERE (1987), SAMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID (1987), A WORLD APART (1988), THE TALL GUY(1989), FOOLS OF FORTUNE (1990), DAKOTA ROAD (1990), DROP DEAD FRED (1991), ROBIN HOOD(1991), and LONDON KILLS ME(1991).

During the 1980s the success of Working Title is immediately apparent. The fact that they were able to produce more than a film a year between 1985 and 1991 is a clear sign of their successful commercial practice. Arguably, it was this very focused production capacity and a growing library of films which attracted PolyGram to purchase Working Title Films in 1991.

There are a series of factors which directly led to Working Title's commercial success. They include: producing work with political integrity and subsequently functioning as a niche market supplier; successfully targeting American markets; and persevering in the production of films during a period of very low output from the British film field.

6.6.1   POLITICAL INTEGRITY

From the preceding analysis of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE, it is clear that Working Title Films began by producing work with political integrity. In 1986 Working Title would produce Horace Ove's television feature PLAYING AWAY and in 1987 they produced another Kureishi and Frears project with SAMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID. It is worth noting that of the 11 Working Title films prior to their formal purchase by PolyGram in 1991, 3 of the 11 were films with the active involvement of Hanif Kureishi, the third of which, LONDON KILLS ME (1991), was written and directed by Hanif Kureishi. Working Title was one of a few companies engaged in actively producing "political" television and cinema release drama. Sarah Radclyff notes:

After A WORLD APART I'm looking for things that are more than just a flippant comedy or something. For me it's going to be something that I'm prepared to spend a minimum of a year of my life working on." Radclyff seems to be true to her word in that LAUNDRETTE, SAMMY AND ROSIE and A WORLD APART are probably three of the most politically-oriented commercial features released in this country over the last few years. (Pietre, 1991:104)

An homology exists between Working Title's production of a particular niche of politicised work and the concurrent activities of the workshops and their production of a very particular type of politicised film practice. Yet, unlike the workshops who usually had one single institutional funder which provided all their financial support, Working Title was able to forge durable commercial relationships with various financial bodies (banks, broadcasters, distributors, etc.) so as to produce a particular type of work on a regular basis.

The commitment to "politics" as an integral part of their commercial film practice had become known; they had a particular style and reputation for film-makers who had political projects to realise, but also they became producers for a particular type of low to mid-budget work which was able to tap into niche television and cinema distribution circuits. In devising a company identity and a house style, they were able to provide work for avenues of distribution which they initiated with MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE.

6.6.2   SUCCESS IN ACCESSING AMERICAN AUDIENCES

As mentioned earlier, MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE was always conceived as a project with a television audience. The fact that the film was released in the theatres came as a pleasant surprise to all involved. Senior Commissioning Editor for Fiction David Rose recalls:

when we went into production, I don't think anyone at Channel 4 or on the production team doubted that this was a film for television and that's why it was shot on 16mm. Well, we all got it wrong. It wasn't

> until I saw the fine cut that I talked to the Edinburgh Festival and they put it into the programme. (Kent, 1987: 262)

Not only did LAUNDRETTE do well in Britain, where it was first released at the Edinburgh and London film festivals, and then onto mainstream distribution: the film also had a very favourable release within selected cinemas throughout the United States. The film's nomination for an Academy Award only helped its viewing figures in the United States and around the world. The release of a film in the United States will often determine the film's ultimate profitability. Because of the size of the American market, the advanced nature of the distribution and promotional structures in place, and the continuing strength of the American dollar, accessing the American market is a crucial consideration for any British film producer. Only recently with SHALLOW GRAVE (1994) have producers been able to generate cinema revenues which exceed the costs of production solely within the British market. Even today, considering that the majority of work produced in Britain is in English, succeeding in the American markets is the most viable way being financially successful with one's film

Through LAUNDRETTE's success in the United States, Working Title Films was able to gain interest and financial support for their emergent projects. "I am not saying for a moment that the Americans are pouring money into our films", Working Title Films producer Sarah Radclyff notes, but American involvement "is helping to maintain a level if not of twenty then of sixteen or seventeen films" (Kent, 1987: 263). Working Title was very fortunate in achieving a level of relative success with LAUNDRETTE in the United States, as it served to further the company's capacity to actually realise the production of films.

6.6.3 PRODUCING WORK DURING A TIME OF LOW BRITISH OUTPUT

One of the factors in Working Title's successful practice came simply from the perseverance in film production within the British film field during the

mid- 1980s through to the early 1990s.   Between 1979 and 1992 Britain produced an average of 46 feature films per year. In 1991-92, 51 British feature films were produced, yet 11 films (nearly a quarter) were unable to find a distributor, and hence never received any theatrical distribution. In relation to other European nations:

> the UK has been roughly on a par with Spain and behind Germany, Italy and France in the league table of European producers. The pattern was repeated again in 1992, when Spain produced 52 films, Germany 63, Italy 127 and France 155. (BFI, 1994: 19-20)

The largest budgets are incurred in Hollywood, whose output provides British films with their strongest competition, even among British audiences. With studio pictures in 1994 costing on average $28.8 million (US) - more than nine times the average British budget - the competition is heavily biased towards Hollywood film production (BFI, 1994: 19-20). The failure of Goldcrest during the mid-1980s with the huge money-losing projects REVOLUTION (1985) , THE MISSION (1986) and Palace Picture's ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS (1986), critically damaged the possibility of crafting a relationship between British film production and City investors.

What Working Title was able to do is develop a film practice which, through creative financing and low-budget film strategies, was able to maintain a steady production of work over a period of extremely limited British film production. This feeds directly into the position in which British film producers were located during the mid-1980s and early 1990s, which was one "concentrating on specialist niches that can be filled by low-budget exploitation or art films." (BFI, 1994: 20) As Duncan Pietre notes:

> The commercial popularity of British cinema in the eighties was rooted in its sense of comic iconoclasm. The British cinema represented by films such as MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE and A ROOM WITH A VIEW displayed a sense of eccentric and eclectic vitality which proved popular with young, largely middle-class audiences, in much the same way as the French New Wave had been twenty-five years previously. But as money became scarcer, the already-established tendency to 'play safe' by conforming to commercial demands

solidified and the stylistic and thematic innovation of the early eighties began to evaporate. (Pietre, 1991: 208)

To this end, Working Title was able to devise a particular niche market film practice which maintained their commercial viability while sustaining the regular production of films.

6.7 SHIFTING TO A CORPORATE FILM PRACTICE

In 1991 Working Title shifted their film practice from a commercial to a corporate film practice. Through a deal struck by Eric Fellner in 1991, Working Title was fully purchased by the Dutch multinational music producer PolyGram, as part of its strategy to establish PolyGram Filmed Entertainment and enter the film field.

PolyGram Filmed Entertainment was established in 1991, after acquiring 100% of Working Title Films, 100% of Propaganda Films and a 51% stake in Interscope Communications (formally distributed by Disney). It has since established output deals with Jodie Foster's Egg Pictures and with Tim Robbins, and has set up a co-venture marketing and distribution company with Universal Pictures called Grammercy. In 1994 it acquired Island Pictures and in January 1995 bought ITC Entertainment Group's film and television catalogue and world-wide television distribution operations (Merrill Lynch Capital Markets, August 14, 1995). Although each company is owned in part or in full by PolyGram, PolyGram employs a "label system" where the specific identities of various types of cultural producers are maintained, but the core source of economic capital, promotional and distribution support comes from and returns to the same central corporate source - PolyGram Filmed Entertainment. [73]

For Working Title, its new owner, provided a range of new elements to its film practice, such as access to regular cashflow, and new structures for marketing and distributing its films. Through the new corporate relationship

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[73] For more on the corporate benefits of the "label system" see Willman, 1997.

between Working Title and PolyGram, Working Title was able to shift from the field of small-scale (commercial) modes of production to a large-scale (corporate) mode of production. The deployment of these new corporate structures is most clearly manifested in Working Title's hugely successful film FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (1994).

6.8 BRITISH FILM HOLLYWOOD STYLE

In 1994, Working Title Films released a film which is the clearest example of its shift from a small-scale commercial practice to a large-scale corporate film practice. Produced for less than $4 million (USD), drawing finances from PolyGram Filmed Entertainment and Film on Four, FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (1994) is the most popular British film ever grossing $244 million (USD) in world-wide sales, $52.7 million (USD) at the American box-office, and $25.5 miillion (USD) in the United Kingdom. Unlike some of Working Title's more recent films produced in the United States, such as BOB ROBERTS (1992), POSSE (1993), DEAD MAN WALKING (1995) or MALLRATS (1996), which sought to tap into niche American independent distribution markets, FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL unashamedly set out to draw in the largest possible audience share, particularly in the United States.

6.8.1 THE SOCIOLOGY OF FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL

Among other elements, the success of a film like FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL stems from the simplicity of the story and the conflicts of the heart which primarily motivate character action. The core story hinges on whether or not two upper-class characters - the Englishman Charles (played by Hugh Grant) and the American woman Carrie (played by Andie McDowell) - will find true love in each other's arms. Along with an ensemble cast of friends, roommates, deaf brothers, husbands, and ex-girlfriends, the film has Charles and Carrie bumping into one another at four different weddings and a funeral, as their relationship develops. To its credit, the film is very well scripted, and on the whole is technically very well executed.

For our purposes, the film is interesting in that it refracts a very clear example of Working Title's shift from a commercial practice to a corporate practice. The film employs elements of other "formula" films, which tap into broader social myths and universalised understandings of love (e.g. PRETTY WOMAN (1990) and its underlying CINDERELLA, myth structure). In FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, the device of an imminent love affair between Charles and Carrie and their brief encounters at the emotionally charged spaces of weddings and funerals functions to preserve the safety and general accessibility of the film. This needs to be seen in contrast to the backdrop of London, with the experimentation and direct political engagement in a film such as MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE.

The British field of power which is revealed within FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL is one of an aristocratic world which is lavish in scale yet traditional in the structure and outward appearance of its social institutions, such as weddings and funerals. There is a clear sense that the world of this "leisured class" has been generated less as some type of insight into the way British people live, and much more as a conscious device to tap into the American public imagination and their fantasies of a "white", aristocratic, leisured British class. Here the imagery of Diana and her huge reception in the United States, events such as Ascot, the Home Counties and Chelsea emerge as the signifiers of "gentile" contemporary Britain. Within this debutante society there also exists space for the deaf brother, as well as the gay couple who attend the weddings along with the rest of the selected gentry.

The imagery of British life is counterbalanced with the presence of the self-made American country girl, Carrie, whose sexual promiscuity is in overt contrast to Charles' sexual insecurities. During an exchange between Charles and Carrie, she reveals that she has had 33 different sexual partners, and in one instance slept with the father and then the son. The

play-off between the opposites of Carrie and Charles works to structure the core tension within the film.

The film has no actual black, Asian or other ethnically identifiable characters. The weddings and funerals are all "white" affairs, with two very condescending references to cultural difference. In one, a member of the touring wedding party speaks of going to India to see "the tea plantations", and in another, where a statue of a pygmy warrior is on sale for £4 000 as part of the selected wedding gifts, the attendant at the boutique asks Charles if he's "Going for the pygmy".

What FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL employs is an imagined British "white-ness" ready for exporting, not for actual cultural exchange, but for clear economic profit. The rationale is to build a fantasy Britain for those American audiences with British ancestry - a window into what life in the imagined "white" ancestral home is like. Unlike other treatments of British life which have gained success in the United States (e.g. the BBC television series ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS) there is no sense of irony or engagement with this world of leisure, but rather it wallows in its sense of style and glamour.

6.8.2   MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURES

Through extensive experience within the music industry PolyGram has developed very established marketing and distribution strategies for their produced cultural works. Unlike most commercial independent film-makers who must sell their finished films to distributors who will then market the film for them, PolyGram provided an established structure for the promotion and distribution of its finished films. In principle, this implies a pluralisation of the film-making process which incorporates the production of soundtracks, merchandising affiliated with the film, advertising strategies in the United States and worldwide, as well as maintaining high profile press tours of stars and key crew as part of the film-making process. Eric Fellner, Producer at Working Title states:

When I was on my own making films as an independent producer and saw the one to third-party distributor, everything that happened from the minute I finished the film had nothing to do with me or the director. They made all the decisions; they decided what the poster was going to look like; they decided who it was going to go out to; they decided how much money was going to be spent on it; they decided what the marketing campaign was; they decided if it would get released at all; when, how and where it would get released. But once you have some control you can then dictate how your film is released and how it's going to work. It's just a learning process, you've got to look at it as a career. I'm in the film business, I'm a producer and that's my career and I'm going to do it for twenty years or whatever. (Johnson, 1997: 122)

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL actively employed devices such as a rigorous marketing strategy, merchandising and heavy promotion of the soundtrack as ways of accessing the American movie-going audience. It is estimated that PolyGram invested over $15 million to promote the film in the United States. The film opened there in the spring-summer of 1994 with the clear objective of tapping into the American summer box-office figures. The film actually received its initial release in Britain during the fall of 1994 and was actively promoted as "America's summer hit".

The film's title track, a cover version of the Trogg's 60s hit "Love Is All Around" by the British recording artists WetWetWet, went straight to number 1 in the UK charts for 15 weeks, the longest period ever achieved by any British act, becoming the second biggest-selling single of all time in the process. The single also picked up a few awards, including best soundtrack award from the ITV Movie Awards. The title song provides an interesting example of the way in which a corporate film practice expands into other media for marketing and promotional purposes. Clearly a reciprocal relationship existed between the film and the single, one either directly or indirectly promoting the other. The end result for both is the same, the gain of the largest possible market share in order to accumulate maximum profits from the cultural works.

Distribution is where a corporate film practice makes its money, and is seen as crucial to a film's success. In the United States the major studios all control distribution of their own product, both for cinematic and, to a lesser extent, other forms of release. Lack of effective distribution and undercapitalisation are probably the most common causes of failure in the movie production business, aside from outright bad film-making. After a film is produced it is released in different media at different points in time. These release windows represent the film distribution cycle. Table 1 gives an indication of the approximate timetable for the American film distribution cycle as it is the most important, and most other countries use a similar cycle.

Table 1: Film Distribution Cycle

Market place	Months after initial release	Approximate period
Domestic theatrical	-	6 months
Domestic Home Video	6 months	6 months
Domestic Pay TV	12-18 months	12-24 months
Domestic Network TV	30-36 months	30-36 months
Domestic Syndicated TV	30-36 months	30-36 months
International Theatrical	-	4-6 months
International Video	6-12 months	16-18 months
International TV	18-24 months	18-30 months

Source: PolyGram Filmed Entertainment

The major players in the movie industry have historically accounted for roughly one-third of all productions, or two-thirds in terms of value. The independents (including PolyGram Filmed Entertainment), make the remaining two-thirds of films, and have traditionally suffered from lack of investment, struggling to complete high quality projects in a very competitive market.

Film distributors incur marketing costs, which can easily be in the region of $10-15 million (US), and therefore companies like PolyGram often take the route of sharing the responsibility and costs of distribution. The long term aim is to increase the distribution control, and one of the ventures designed to further this aim is PolyGram's agreement with Universal in the US, called

Grammercy, which can release films on up to 1,000 screens. On general release one usually needs to distribute to 2,000 to 2,500 screens, i.e. in order to recoup costs on a $40 million (USD) movie. PolyGram also has an agreement with MGM, where MGM handles distribution, and PolyGram keeps the video rights or sells onto a third party. As a rough guide, films gross 80% of their costs at the US box office, and the distributor keeps 40%. Timing of the revenues varies, but typically, a film generates all revenues within the first five years of its life, with the majority in the first two years (Merrill Lynch Capital Markets, August 14, 1995).

For PolyGram, the production of cultural goods is an issue of capital investment with the aim of achieving significant returns on the given investment. Corporate film practice views film-making as a business. Multinational corporate companies such as PolyGram function on a larger "economy of scale" where the production of cultural goods, their promotion and distribution all aim to access the largest possible audience share. In embarking in the film field, PolyGram was able to fill the prevailing vacuum within the European film industry, becoming the largest unofficial European studio.

6.8.3   CORPORATISM

Prior to entering the film field, PolyGram's principal activities were the creation, production, acquisition and distribution of recorded music. The group's recording labels include: Motown, Mercury, Polydor, Vertigo, Fontana, A&M, Island, Def Jam Decca/London and Phillips Classical. In locating its position within the global music field, PolyGram is dominant in Europe where it has a clearly established franchise; it has smaller positions in North America and Asia, but they have grown steadily (Financial Times Analysis, 21 May 1996). Through their established position within the recorded music industry, PolyGram has been able to harness available cashflow to finance growth into filmed entertainment, with the aim of becoming the dominant film studio in Europe, paralleling their dominance of the European music scene.

Phillips (Electronics) NV holds a 75% share in PolyGram which represents 58% of Phillips market capital, but only contributes 27-30% of total earnings. Phillips' is the world's largest TV manufacturer, and the third largest consumer electronics company. New technologies (i.e. widescreen TV, CDI, Networking TVs, interactive TVs, DVD) and new markets (China, Latin America) are key to future growth (Financial Times Analysis, 21 May 1996). The Phillips-PolyGram corporate relationship provides a very interesting case for such a "total integration" approach with the production of hardware by Phillips, and the production of software by PolyGram and its various music, filmed entertainment and multimedia subsidiaries. Ms. Premila Hoon, director of entertainment finance at Guinness Mahon, notes:

> The US studios have very sound business underpinned by huge libraries. They are vertically integrated corporations with interest in property, theme parks and television. They produce between 25-30 films a year, each of which spread the risk. There might be five dogs, but then you get a TERMINATOR and that will carry the failures. The portfolio effect is crucial. (Buckingham, 1996: 26)

What is clear from these large corporate conglomerates is how important it is to have a "direct consumer link" through the sale of everyday consumer goods (i.e. video games, alcohol, foodstuffs, etc.) which cashflow the production of "software". Common through the entire corporate production structure is a value placed on marketing and the sale of goods directly to consumers. These conglomerate corporate entities are increasing their control of cultural production, technological developments, distribution, even modes of consecration (e.g. film review programmes becoming "the making of (X Film)") as a result of economic capital made available from one side of the corporation maintaining the corporate scale of production and the promotion of various goods. Gary Levinsohn, international financier and project consultant, notes:

> For real players such as Phillips, PolyGram, Marubeni and Toho - the kind of companies that would invest $4-$8 billion to launch a satellite - production financing risk is relatively low in order for them to secure programming for their hardware. (SCREEN, 1996: 36).

The underlying danger of corporatism lies not in purely the scale of its production, but rather the tendency for larger corporate bodies to increasingly merge into large mega-media companies, thereby concentrating decision-making structures. The strategic alliances between "large" multinational corporations reveal the beginnings of this concentration of decision-making processes. The easy movement of key executive staff between supposedly competing corporate companies, reveals the manner in which decision-making processes have the tendency to converge within corporate practices.[74]

> The last three years have seen an unparalleled level of corporate activity in this media sector, both in Europe and in the United States. The key feature of this corporate activity has been the consolidation in the ownership of key groups of media assets. The mergers of Reed International and Elsevier NV and of United News and MAI in Europe, and those of Paramount, Blockbuster and Viacom, and Disney and Capital Cities ABC in the US, to name a few, have all been linked as one factor. (Abn Amro Hare Govett (1996) "Carleton - Company Report". The Investext Group, 1996.)

Apart from Segram's acquisition of 80% of MCA, all the big corporate deals in the US media sector this year are about marrying content with distribution capability. In particular, the three acquisitions announced over the summer of 1996, Disney/Capital Cities ABC, Westinghouse/CBS and Time Warner Turner, are about achieving vertically integrated businesses with the television industry. This is meant to be a good thing because the business can then ensure its product is strongly promoted and given good 'shelf space' on the airwaves, and furthermore all the value flowing from the programming rights will remain in the company. (SBC Warburg (1995) "European (Continental) Media Monthly - Industry Report". The Investext Group, 12 October 1995.)

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[74] Staff Writer, "Marchand To Make Move to Warner Bros": "Xavier Marchand - currently Vice President of International distribution at PolyGram Film International - is understood to be moving across to Warner Bros, where he is expected to take a high-level position within the company's European distribution operations" (SCREEN INTERNATIONAL. Number 1055. April 26-May 3, 1996:4).

Table 2: Recent Multinational Media Acquisitions

Acquirer (s)	Target	Value
Baby Bells (Sbc, Bell South Ameritech) million	Joint Venture w/t Disney	$500
MCI Communication years	News Corp (20% stake)	$2bn 4
Segram	MCA	$5.7 bn
Disney	Capital Cities/ABC	$19 bn
Westinghouse	CBS	$5.6 bn
Time Warner	Turner Broad Sys.	$7.5 bn

By embracing a corporate film practice, one is most interested in accessing the largest possible audience share. In principle, this is done in order to maximise profits and to ensure the largest possible return on a given investment. In this way, the film business is like any other business.

6.9 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has mapped the genesis and trajectory followed by Working Title in the development of its film practice. This chapter has set out to clearly reveal the transitions in film practice which Working Title underwent as it shifted from a commercial to a corporate film producer.

In principle, the reading of Working Title's film practice, and specifically the close reading of MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE and FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, is meant to convey an insight into the refracted relations between various social fields. There exist clear homologies in action and practice resonating between the field of power of given films, the relations within the film field which generated these films, and the broader field of economic/political power.

The underlying irony is that a company which began by directly engaging with the effects of Thatcherism on the British state would prosper so handsomely under the new rules of Thatcher's Britain. Working Title clearly reveals a case of an independent film production company which shifted its position within the external hierarchisation of fields when it shifted from the

tier of commercial independent film-making into the tier of corporate film-making:

> But the grip or empire of the economic over artistic or scientific research is also exercised inside the field itself, through the control of the means of cultural production and distribution, and even of the instances of consecration. Producers attached to the major cultural bureaucracies (newspapers, radio, television) are increasingly forced to accept and adopt norms and constraints linked to the requirements of the market and, especially, to pressure exerted more or less strongly and directly by advertisers; and they tend more or less unconsciously to constitute as a universal measure of intellectual accomplishments those forms of intellectual activity to which they are condemned by their conditions of work (I am thinking, for example, of fast writing and fast reading, which are often the rule in journalistic production and criticism) (Bourdieu, 1995: 345).

7.0   CHAPTER 7: CONTEMPORARY FILM PRACTICES

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The conditions of the contemporary field have seen a significant increase in players, film practices, and funding sources for the production and reception of work. Not only have the structures which emerged during the 1970s and 1980s matured and survived a period of extreme difficulty[75], the 1990 BROADCASTING ACT fully de-regulated the television production field. New players have also entered the field, bringing with them new economic capital and new expectations surrounding the economic feasibility around producing work. These new players have included the National Lottery, multi-channel digital broadcasting, cable television, and the internet. Some of these new players have brought economic capital in the form of new government subsidy for the arts (i.e. National Lottery) and others the financial cashflow and access to avenues of distribution of a corporate industrial practice (e.g. Microsoft's recent investment in Web-Television).

As a consequence of current changes to the film field, the logic of contemporary film practice requires that practitioners become increasingly aware of the commercial realities and pressures of producing work, which fundamentally translate into clear strategies on audiences. Issues such as targeting one's audience, tapping into existing audiences, and cross-over work between different audiences thereby constituting new audiences are more important now than ever before. Although there is no agreed definition of discrete, homogeneous audiences, there are ongoing deliberations around generating work which must hold an audience. Hence the commercial argument requires that producers must think very clearly about the notion of audience and ways in which their work plans to tap into existing film and television audiences or to generate new audiences. Be that through work which motivates individuals to attend the cinema, rent a particular video

or to watch a specific programme on television, audiences are the keystone to contemporary practices.

The cultural argument surrounding issues of ethnicity and cultural difference within the logic of contemporary film practice requires that it too must be firmly located as a commercial argument. It is no longer acceptable for the cultural arguments around the lack of British-Asian players within British film field, whether as subjects or the producers of work, to form the core logic for the production of a given film without taking into serious consideration the notion of the audience for the given piece. Producing work which is speaking only to audiences which have been excluded and hence hold some form of "insider" cultural knowledge, or work which serves to inform audiences of experiences of exclusion or active discrimination, is no longer an acceptable basis for the production of work in and of itself. What the contemporary field reveals is the rise of new cultural arguments, which posit a sense of cultural specificity with a clear notion of resonating onto universalized conflicts, and identifable paradoxes and understandings.

This current chapter examines two films which reveal an attempt at locating particular stories and characters within specific cultural worlds, while allowing for the broadest possible identification by drawing on universal social themes and issues. DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (1996), directed by Paul Sukhija, functions as an interesting example of this shift within film and production strategies.[76] DA BRATT PAC is a fly-on-the-wall documentary about a Bhangra music promoter 'Smuj' and his efforts to put on a successful show. Although the film is set in the specific world of Bhangra music, the film's field of power does not attempt to explain "what Bhangra music is" (which so many previous films have attempted). Instead the film assumes people may (or may not) have an

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[75] Of the 262 feature films screened in the United Kingdom between 1 April 1990 and 31 March 1991 only 29 were produced in the United Kingdom. Taken from the British Film Institute Film and Television Handbook, 1992, p.29.
[76] Please note that the current researcher (Atif Ghani) was the Producer of this programme. Although the chapter speaks of DA BRATT PAC from a 3rd person position, personal insight and personalized assumptions around the production are employed in generating this current analysis of DA BRATT PAC.

understanding of the musical form, and refracts the more universalized conflicts and tensions of a music promoter. The poles which structure the film are those of a successful show or an unsuccessful show. DA BRATT PAC reveals a clear shift in British-Asian independent film practice, shifting away from the politicised "black" schemes which dominated the 1980s and early 1990s, into a more culturally specific strategy, while attempting to tap into broader, more popular audiences. This use of cultural specificity with a universal resonance is what is referred to as cultural ethnography. By cultural ethnography, this research is suggesting a film-making practice in which the film-maker "closely observes, records, and engages in the daily life" (Fischer and Marcus, 1986: 18) of a given cultural community, with the aim of telling stories which resonate to audiences beyond those with insight into chosen communities.

In locating DA BRATT PAC within the field, it is significant as one in a twelve episode arts documentary series – Marquee, for Anglia Television. As the only British-Asian film in the series, DA BRATT PAC marks a shift in commissioning practices with commissioning editors conceiving of issues of cultural difference as part of general programming strategies and hence opening up British-Asian stories to popular British audiences. At the core of this chapter is a discussion around audiences and the ways in which a new emphasis on targeting films within the film production process has taken on the central logic of contemporary film practice.

The second film which this chapter examines is BANDIT QUEEN (1994), directed by Shekhar Kapur. The film provides a different example of a work employing a culturally specific context while attempting to refract a woman's struggle on a more universalized level. BANDIT QUEEN is the (unauthorized) dramatization of the life of Phoolan Devi, a woman who became a folk hero as the leader of a group of outlaws in Northern India. Through the specifics of Devi's story, the setting of Northern India and the use of Hindi as the spoken language of the film, the film is clearly situated within very specific cultural boundaries. The film's field of power taps into

universal social issues and themes as a way of making Devi's story accessible to "foreign" audiences. In principle, the poles which structure BANDIT QUEEN are those of submission and survival as manifest through Devi's experiences of brutal rape and equally brutal revenge. In locating it within the broader film field BANDIT QUEEN is interesting in its attempts at speaking to an international audience, transcending the limits of particular national film audiences. As a film production,its links to Britain lie in the form of funding, in that all of the production financing for BANDIT QUEEN was provided by the British broadcaster Channel 4. Again, television provides us with interesting insights into nurturing new links and types of work which satisfy existing audiences while aiming to constitute new audiences.

7.2 THE RISE AND FALL OF "BLACK" FILM PRODUCTION

During the 1980s and early 1990s there existed a range of "black" film production funds and initiatives which were intended to cater for "black-British" practitioners. The underlying programming strategy behind these initiatives and other "black" programming - "black" news (BLACK ON BLACK, EASTERN EYE), "black" investigative journalism (BANDUNG FILE, BLACK BAG), "black" comedy and drama (TANDOORI NIGHTS, DESMONDS, REAL MCCOY, PORK PIE, GET UP STAND UP) - was to build a critical mass of "black" material. But the strategy was also to create clear positions within the weekly programming schedule where viewers could go and find a "black" programme.

These "black" programmes were part of a broader 1980s multiple identity politics which was being affirmed and realized by a range of individuals gaining positions within film institutions such as Channel 4. Alan Fountain, the first Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video at Channel 4, provides us with a clear example of a 1970s radical occupying a key decision-making position within the film field. From the types of slots and series which he commissioned, it is clear that a particular type of political engagement was being constituted. The series for which he was directly

responsible included: OUT, SOUTH, CINEMA FROM THREE
CONTINENTS, FIRST SEX, 11TH HOUR, CHANNELS OF RESISTANCE,
PEOPLE TO PEOPLE [77].

One of the first overtly "black" initiatives was the Arts Council of England's
Black Arts Film and Video Project (BAFVP), which commissioned its first
series of five films in 1989 and its final series in 1995. This scheme was a
non-broadcast film and video production documenting the "black arts" in
Britain and how given "black" artists were engaging with political and
aesthetic debates within their chosen medium. The quality of subsequent
films was extremely variable in form, content and film-making capacity,
ranging from conventional documentaries such as Pervaiz Khan's
UTTERANCES (1990) on the music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, to formally
experimental films such as Ruhul Amin's RHYTHMS (1994), a drama-
documentary around the use of music within a specific East-London Bengali
family, to Smite Malde's abysmal IDENTICAL BEAT (1993), an extremely
basic documentary about four British-Asian youths using the Headspace
music project to develop their skills and further their own careers.[78]

There were a number of serious misgivings with regards to the BAFVP.
Initially the scheme did not have a broadcaster as a co-production partner,
which resulted in the absence of a definite final viewing outlet for the
completed films. This resulted in a real range of type and quality of films
produced, as film-makers were immediately put in the difficult position of
having to imagine an audience which they may never have. The quality of
many of these films was so poor that it would be difficult to find audiences for
the work. The scheme itself would later change and work with Channel 4 for
one season of Black Traxx, five programmes on "black" music. Other
schemes would also emerge, including Syncro, a scheme of five-minute
"black" short films co-financed by the Arts Council of England and Carlton

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[77] For more on the specific genesis of the "black" production initiatives see earlier Chapter 4: Institutional Film Practice and
Chapter 5: Theoretical Film Practice.
[78] Malde was able to re-pitch the same group, who had now become the band Asians Dub Foundation, to the Arts Council
and Carlton in 1994 to produce the five minute short STRONG CULTURE (1994) for the Syncro Projects.

Television; Siren Spirits, a series of four short films by "black" women co-financed by the British Film Institute Projects fund and BBC2; Crucial Tales, a series of "black" shorts for BBC2 produced by Lenny Henry's production company Crucial Films; and Black Screen and the initiative to establish a "black" Screen Two.[79]

Aside from certain cinema programmes and small packages of films, most of these films remain hidden away in various film libraries.[80] A real problem with these "black" film schemes is that there is a very limited audience interested in viewing this work. This is in part an issue of quality, but also confusion around the assumption of a "black" film leaves the viewer in a problematic position of identifying "who is 'black' and who is not". Another real problem lies in the false association between "black" film initiatives functioning as "training" schemes for "black" practitioners. Although there was usually no direct training element attached to the scheme (with the exception of the Syncro Project), there was a sense, possibly due to the poor quality of output, but partly because it was a "black" targeted scheme, that the scheme would function to train a selection of new "black" practitioners. In the end, few individuals in decision-making positions within the film field viewed work out of these schemes very seriously.[81] These schemes, and the film-makers who produced them, would gain little in terms of building their own film careers. Individuals would find themselves moving between one scheme and another, unable to move into more significant productions with correspondingly more significant budgets. Ultimately the schemes failed to target any audience at all:

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[79] Black Screen is interesting in terms of the hype within the ethnic press and the arts press by individuals attached to the scheme. Although a slate of films was expected from 1996, and at least one was shot and completed in 1996, FLIGHT, it was finally broadcast in January 1998 in a late night slot.

[80] The ROUTES2ROOTS cinema programme of British-Asian and black-British work held a special day (Thursday 23 February 1995) as a "Black Arts Focus: Best of The Black Arts and Syncro Projects", held at the London Film-makers' Co-op Cinema. Ruhul Amin's RHYTHMS was selected as part of the NEW BRITISH PORTRAITS programme of work for the YYZ Gallery in Toronto in April-May 1995, as well as being screened at the National Film Theatre in April 1995

[81] The lack of seriousness paid to the Black Traxx series is revealed in their collective screening in a graveyard slot on Channel 4 of 12:30 am till 3:00 am on Thursday 18 December 1997. Particular responses to the the London Film and Video Agency "Black and Asians Training Report" from 1995, revealed a general sense that respondents found Black schemes as ghettoising, both in terms of audience and gaining opportunities for further commissions.

At the start of the 1980s there was a cry from the black community for proper representation in the media. Eventually they managed a few token faces here and there. The door was open. It is ironic now that not only is the door open but the guard at the door is black. He welcomes you with a smile and lets you out with a smile but empty handed. You cannot protest. He is black. There are a few black arts schemes trying to satisfy the needs of black artists, which is fine. Something is better than nothing. But I don't think anyone should be confined to that. Art is not confined within black and white. We should be part of the mainstream. Is there any reason why not? (Malik, 1994: 21)

7.3   CURRENT SHIFTS IN PROGRAMMING POLICY

Within the short film and television production sub-field, the contemporary moment has clearly seen a shift in strategy in producing and broadcasting work which explores issues of cultural identity. This has been in part brought on by new personalities entering and gaining positions within the field, but also a new maturity and approach to addressing issues of cultural identity within programming policy. The arrival of new individuals in key decision-making positions in cultural institutions such as Channel 4 seems to have had an immediate impact. In 1995 Stuart Cosgrove, an independent producer, music journalist and academic, would replace Alan Fountain as Commissioning Editor for Independent Film and Video. His impact on the channel would be immediate and dramatic.

Unlike Fountain, who maintained a strategy of discrete "identity" driven slots, Cosgrove sought to develop "Zone" programming and regional links, where issues of cultural diversity were to be incorporated as an element within the series commissioning process. Cosgrove initiated a range of "Zone" programming - beginning with the "Red Light Zone" - 21 hours of programming over 7 consecutive Saturday evenings.[82] Although Cosgrove can be criticized for over-exploiting sex as a theme to sell Channel 4's advertising space, the "Zone" programming strategy allowed for a range of

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[82] Other "Zone" programming included: Pot Night, Techno Trip Zone, Science Fiction Zone, the Blue Light Zone, Latino Nights and Dyke TV.

positions (British and international) to be located as part of an entire evening of programming. As Cosgrove notes:

> because Channel 4 is a product of the early Eighties, the remit
> became frozen in a moment of isms: multiculturalism, feminism, etc.
> But they are not enshrined in the law anymore than bareback riding.
> What we are expected to do is offer experiences to audiences who
> are not served anywhere...The Red Light Zone goes out to 'view
> social tensions through a prism of sex'. (Staff Writer Guardian Guide,
> 1996:12)

Cosgrove is an example of a new generation of film and television commissioning editors who are attempting to tease out the notion of diversity within a particular series of commissioned programmes. In hindsight it seems sensible that "British-Asian" work be located and compared against other work which is exploring similar thematics, formally comparable, produced within and under similar constraints (i.e. funding, length, format, time slot, etc.) as opposed to a series of films all of which deal with issues of the "black" community – however that community is defined. This chapter now turns to a close reading of a programme produced for Anglia Television's Marquee Arts Documentary series, entitled DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (1996). DA BRATT PAC is of interest as an example of the recent shift in broadcasting strategy, but also for the manner in which it locates a very particular personal story within a specific British-Asian cultural context and yet refracts universal social conflicts and paradoxes which allow for a broad audience base for the film. This play-off of the culturally specific with a corresponding universal resonance is defined within this current research as a strategy of cultural ethnography.

7.3.1   THE SOCIOLOGY OF DA BRATT PAC

DA BRATT PAC is a fly-on-the wall documentary of the promotion industry within the world of British-Asian Bhangra music. Through the character of Smuj, a promoter, the film explores the tensions and energies required to promote a successful 'Daytimer' Bhangra show. The film spends five days with Smuj and his (Da Bratt Pac) gang as they race against time to organize

a successful show. The field of power within the film is structured between two basic poles, whether the show is successful or unsuccessful, and drives the film forward. The film begins with Smuj at a rehearsal of one of his new Bhangra acts. A text card informs the viewer that Bhangra shows can attract audiences of up to 3000 people. The film then begins a journey with Smuj and his crew as they travel from Asian grocer, Paan shop, and video shops dropping off tickets, arranging flyers and putting up posters. With each approaching day we observe Smuj's anticipation building along with his worry around ticket sales, violent conflict emerging at the show, and reflective thoughts on the music promotion industry generally. The film ends on the day of the show, revealing Smuj's last-minute worries about fake tickets and car accidents - but ultimately the organized daytimer is a success.

DA BRATT PAC explores the specifics of the British-Asian music industry with its informal distribution and promotional structures, primarily located in Asian specialty shops. This cultural specificity is further accentuated through the music itself, which is a very particular British-Asian sound. Although traditional Bhangra originates from festival music from the Punjab region of the Sub-continent, the hybrid variation of Bhangra explored in the documentary is specific to Britain, and has its origins in a band called Alaap from the Midlands from the late 1970s and early 1980s. In effect, what the film is able to do is firmly locate a British-Asian cultural industry within the confines of contemporary British history, revealing the dissemination of information and the processes of exchange required to sustain a sub-cultural musical form.

This particular British-Asian Bhangra musical form (which has now been exported back to the Sub-continent and throughout the Asian diaspora) is also historicised as a specific British musical form comparable to drum & bass music, trip-hop, amyl house, or acid house. The nature of the event such as a "Daytimer" is also quite unique as a particular British-Asian musical form. As the name suggests, a "Daytimer" is a show held in the

daytime usually during school hours, in which young British Asians, often as young as thirteen and fourteen, skip school, change clothing, and attend the show during the day. The show would end by late afternoon so that parents would never know that their children had been to a club that day. Amongst most British-Asian youth attending a "Daytimer" is something of a rite of passage, as many parents are not easily willing to allow their children out to attend dances and other evening social events. Hence the choice of a "Daytimer", as the focus of the programme, has the added value of historicing this very particularized British-Asian musical form.[83]

Although the film is set in the world of Bhangra, it does not actually explore the background to the music in any great depth. Instead, emphasis is placed on following the promoter, accessing his worldview on promotion and his attempts to realize a successful show. Through his identifiable activities of flyering, putting up posters, worrying about ticket sales, Smuj reveals all of the elements which a promoter may confront when organizing a show. In this way the audience is informed of a particular British-Asian cultural form while being given clear avenues for identifying Smuj in the clearly recognizable position of promoter. The project of historicising this particular cultural practice squarely within a British context is further affirmed through the use of music within the film. Not only is Panjabi MC's number one Bhangra track of 1996, "Summertime", a key track within the film, but a range of music is prevalent throughout the film including tracks from The Fugees 1996 number one album The Score and other music ranging from Method Man to Badmarsh, from the Ballistic Brothers to Alaap. This range of music provides added depth to the British-Asian musical world, while simultaneously locating Smuj's daytimer within the British summer of 1996.

7.3.2   LOCATING THE DA BRATT PAC SOCIOLOGICALLY

DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER is structured by the poles of a successful or unsuccessful show, deploying the device of

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[83] For more on Bhangra as a particular musical form see Huq, 1996, Oliver , 1990.

Table 7. Field of Power in DA BRATT PAC

Ticket
Flyposting Sales Car Accidents

Car Accidents

Violence

Smuj

**SUCCESSFUL
SHOW**

**UNSUCCESSFUL
SHOW**

Profit

Lost Capital
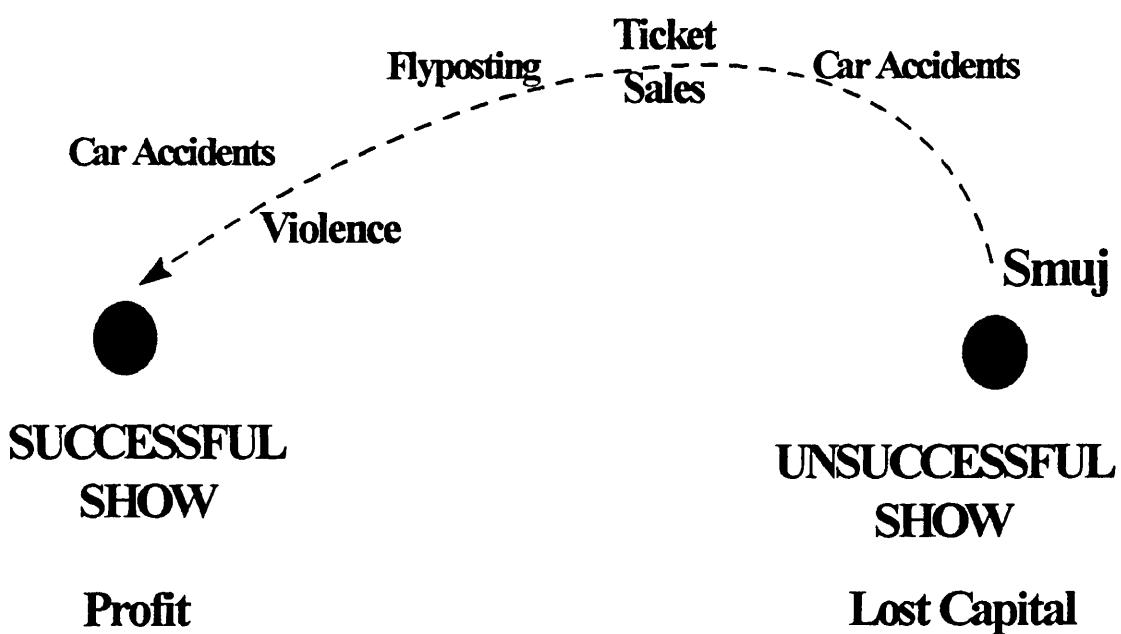
cultural specificity, while allowing the actual events of the film to resonate on a universal level. This particular method of cultural exploration is what this current research refers to as cultural ethnography. By cultural ethnography, this research is suggesting a very particular strategy of establishing the specifics and detail of a given cultural world, while allowing audiences who may be unfamiliar with this world's ways to identify with characters and their particular situations. Examples of other practitioners who have utilized cultural ethnography as a key device in their film-making practice include the work of Woody Allen and his portrayal of the middle-class Jewish community, or urban African-American communities in the work of Spike Lee, or "gangster" Italian-American communities within the work of Martin Scorsese. In work of each of these film-makers the detail of given cultural communities provides the background where action takes place, while in the foreground are character conflicts which are more universalised. As a form of pseudo-interpretative anthropology, the concept of cultural ethnography "provides accounts of other worlds from the inside, and reflects about the epistemological groundings of such accounts." (Fisher & Marcus,1986:26)

If DA BRATT PAC refracts a relationship to maturing ethnic communities in Britain, then it certainly refracts a current change in the commissioning and programme-making strategy of producers. As one of twelve programmes independently produced for Anglia Television's Marquee arts documentary series, DA BRATT PAC is an example of the shift away from ghettoized "black" film production and the shift towards refracting a plurality of British-ness within a given programme series. Although substantively different from other programmes in the series, it is important that a programme such as DA BRATT PAC is compared to other programmes which composed the series, as each would have been produced at roughly the same time, with similar resources, and completed for a similar audience. This is in contrast to "black" schemes which would have variable budgets, no agreed notion of audience and a basis of comparison which would have to do with the intensity of one's political argumentation and portrayal of dispossession.

What DA BRATT PAC reveals, which many "black" films and other programmes on British-Asian music lack, is a solid grounding of conclusions about the field in actual research into the chosen field of enquiry. The treatment of many previous documentaries on British-Asian music are usually satisfied with a programme which is about British-Asian artists and their exclusion from the mainstream, easily correlated with racism within the industry.[84] What many of these previous programmes sorely lacked is an emphasis on solid research at the pre-production stage. There seems to be a hidden assumption that for an Asian researching a British-Asian issue, personal insights are a sufficient research basis from which to arrive at the understanding needed as to structure the arguments around given programmes. This position is extremely limited and flawed.

DA BRATT PAC clearly reveals a depth of research into the field: from the selection of an animated core character, knowledge of types of pressures which a promoter would be facing, strategies around filming "on-the-fly", and the capacity to get beneath the surface of Smuj and to tap into some of his core human conflicts. As a documentary shot on film as opposed to videotape, it reveals a discipline and knowledge of the film-making process which many video tape-based documentaries often lack because the production is able to work at a significantly higher filming ratio, thereby filming "everything" instead of completing the pre-production research and being clear about what and when to film.[85] Fundamentally, DA BRATT PAC reveals a genuine recognition of the limits and possibilities for creative expression through the medium of film. As the documentary which embellishes its "filmic-ness", like the work of Molly Dineen or Nick Broomfield, it employs devices of communication through film which aim to engage the interested viewer. The film may provide slightly more insight to individuals who are familiar with the "Daytimer Bhangra" scene, or someone who understands Punjabi or has access to the world of the West London

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[84] See IDENTICAL BEAT, or the BBC Series East who completed a factual programme on New Asian music in 1996.
[85] The filming ratio in DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS or total length of film shot to total length of the programme, was 8:1. It is not unusual for shooting ratios for a half-hour tape-based documentary to be as high as 30:1.

"rude-boys" of which Da Bratt Pac are a part; at the same time, however, the film aims to engage with audiences who are simply interested in being provided with a window into this world. In this sense, DA BRATT PAC is a genuine attempt at programme-making which caters to British-Asian audiences who have not previously been appropriately targeted,[86] yet equally tries to develop a mainstream audience base, and hence build a dialogue within and amongst various British and international audiences.

7.4   NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The current state of British feature film production is ripe with new financial opportunities to enable future production. The current surge in available economic capital for film production is the direct result of a number of different factors: the general rise in worldwide attendance at the cinema due to the rise of new multiplexes[87]; the recent box office success of certain British productions (e.g. FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL, SHALLOW GRAVE and TRAINSPOTTING); the changes to the television industries and new technologies (e.g. new digital technology) and an increase in available channels (i.e. the rise of cable, multi-channel digital and internet broadcasting); all have been contributing factors in the new opportunities available within the film field. As the SBC Warburg 1996 financial report states:

> Film is a growth industry. The argument is that as more channels are formed and as more delivery mechanisms are made available there will be an increasing demand for software (programming), both from the consumer and from the owners of the channels. Specifically there are two new delivery mechanisms which should drive growth, digital video disks and video-on-demand. We believe that film industry revenue growth will exceed 10% p.a. over the next five years compared to music at around 7% p.a. (SBC Warburg, 1996)

This current interest in the film field has also seen traditional investors in British film production, British broadcasters, increase their financial

[86] The recent Independent Television Commission reports "Television: Ethnic Minorities' View" and "Ethnic Minorities on Television" both published in 1996, revealed a serious lack of programming catering for British-Asian audiences, and equally an acute absence of Asians in British television generally.

investment in the industry. In early 1996 the ITV companies announced that they would invest an additional £100 million in feature film production over the next five years. This is in addition to the BBC and Channel 4 who maintain their role in funding features such as FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL(1994), and BROTHERS IN TROUBLE (1996). The overall investment in feature film production has risen from just over £130 million in 1993 to £310 million in 1995 (Buckingham, 1996:26).

A new player within the film field in 1995 is the National Lottery. In its first year of investing in the British film field, the National Lottery awarded over £8.75 million to 19 different productions, an average of £460,000 per production with the largest award at £1 million and the smallest award of £9,461[88]. Almost immediately, concerns were raised regarding the National Lottery's allocation of public funds to various productions, most of which did not receive significant theatrical releases. As the British Film Institute Handbook suggests:

> In the commercial world, the fear is that a new pot of non-commercial cash will only encourage the production of more films which have no audience in view. As we have seen, a significant proportion of British film production is not getting released theatrically, while the performance of those films that are released is mostly very poor (BFI, 1996: 52).

In an effort to alleviate these and other concerns, two official reports were produced by the government: The Spectrum Report for the Arts Council and the report of the Advisory Committee on Film Finance chaired by Sir Peter Middleton. Both reports made similar suggestions with the formation of a series of commercial franchises and non-commercial franchises which would directly support film in Britain with an investment of £100 million over 5 years with a corresponding £200 million from private investment. By commercial franchise the Middleton report suggested that the government should establish 3 virtual mini-studios (as no actual studio would be built) with

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[87] For more on rise in recent cinema attendance see Rawsthorn, 1997 and BFI Handbook 1997, p.42.
[88] The National Lottery Awards in 1995, are a combined figure for awards granted by the Arts Council of Scotland, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the Arts Council of England. The figure is taken from the BFI Handbook, 1997, p.53.

National Lottery money which would eventually evolve into one studio that would rival the existing American studios. As Sir Peter Middleton recommends: "The aim would be for the studio to develop over time into a major international film-making and distributing company" (Glaister, 1996:6).

The goal of such a virtual British studio would be to enable producers to develop projects, produce films and distribute them internationally in direct competition with the American studios. At the core of the reports is a recognized lack of economies of scale within the British context, in contrast to the Hollywood studio structure. In principle the Hollywood structures are able to maintain their extreme control of the feature film industry by spreading the risk of a given film development, production and other associated costs (e.g. marketing and promotion) over a slate of 15-25 films per year released by each of the big American film studios. Sir Peter Middleton states:

> We're not trying to replicate Hollywood. There's nowhere near
> enough money for that. But we would like to adopt the principle of
> doing things on a large scale and spreading risks for investors.
> British film-makers have traditionally asked investors to back a single
> film, but this makes no economic sense because of the risks involved.
> We [BZW] would never invest in a single film, but we would invest in a
> studio that was, say, handling 12 films because the risk is spread
> (Glaister, 1996:6).

The Middleton report has suggested a structure which is homogenous with the current Hollywood studio structure but without the full economic, cultural and social capital of the existing Hollywood studios. Although the National Lottery has economic capital available for investment within the film field, its planned £100 million investment over 5 years, initiating a total investment of £460 million and producing an estimated 90 British feature films, is still significantly less than Warner Brothers annual investment of $1 billion (USD) per annum in the development, production and marketing of its feature films. (BFI, 1996:19) Hollywood hold a serious advantage when it comes to a working infrastructure for film production. Within the corporate production practice of the Hollywood studios is a monopoly on distribution and

exhibition, an established industrial process geared around the marketing of films, their merchandising, and the production of other media formats, soundtracks, CD-ROMs, etc.[89]. When compared to the Hollywood film field, the British film field is still a "very small cottage industry," and the attempt to build a production process which actively competes with the American model seems destined to be a waste of public funds.[90]

What is required is a more targeted expenditure of public funds to support very specific aspects of the film production process (i.e. capital available for co-financing, script development, producer training, distribution, marketing and promotion of completed films) with the aim of building a solid British market which maintains a certain level of return (be that through a successful theatrical release or pre-sales on television rights) within Britain. There is a definite need for the financial markets to play a more and more significant role in the financing of British films. Unfortunately, the experience of Goldcrest Films Ltd. with the huge financial failure of REVOLUTION(1985), THE MISSION (1986), and Palace Picture's ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS (1986) during the mid-1980s shattered the confidence of the City to invest in the British film field. Unfortunately, the current suggestions of the Spectrum Report and the Middleton Report do little to boost investor confidence in the British film field.

The core shortcoming of current policy which aims to emulate a studio structure similar to that of Hollywood or Bollywood, is the failure to recognize that the success of American and Indian film studio structures stems from the strong domestic audience markets which are able to determine the success or failure of films. A key factor which has been largely ignored has been then relative size of the domestic British audiences. Films require audiences to justify their being. Film-making is about the ability to speak to audiences. It is the art of drawing an audience, into a story which one has conceived, with the aim of making a connection on some emotive level. For those

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[89] For more on the power of corporate modes of cultural production, see Chapter 6 – A Commercial Film Practice.
[90] Ms. Premila Hoon, Director of Entertainment Finance at Guinness Mahon in Buckingham, 1996: 26.

individuals who make films, there is an acute recognition that the "dream-machine" of film, if unable to resonate with audiences becomes an extremely self-indulgent, tiresome exercise. Although film-makers often speak of projects where simply getting the film "up and running" in terms of crew, equipment, locations, is a successful (often learning) experience in and of itself, generally, film-makers conceive and produce films with the aim of having the finished work seen by audiences. Although SHALLOW GRAVE (1994) provides the film field with a new model of a film whose box office returns in Britain recouped its production costs, as a model it is still the exception and not the norm.

7.5   INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

At the core of the Middleton Report is the suggestion that Britain should build a film industry which functions through an economy of scale that looks to rival the Americans, and ultimately tap into the huge American film-going audience base. In principle, the dominance of the American market can be reduced to the power of the American consumer, they have the strength of existing avenues of distribution and American dollars to spend. Yet in accessing the American market, one needs to recognize that the cultural industries in the United States are still heavily regulated and actively structured through the concentration and control of the "mainstream" avenues of distribution. Although the American cult or independent market may be more powerful than many national audiences, there is a need to recognize that American films with American stars, speaking in American dialects, set in American locations will always be able to maintain a majority share of the American cinema-going audience.

In contrast to developing a film strategy which simply replicates an American model, another strategy would be the affirmation and active support of international co-productions. By international co-productions, this chapter is referring to film projects which actively involve the economic, cultural and/or social capital of Britain and at least one other partner country. Some of the most critically and economically successful British films have been

international co-productions from STAR WARS (1977) to GANDHI (1982) , from SALAAM BOMBAY!! (1988) to LAND AND FREEDOM (1995) and THE ENGLISH PATIENT (1996). Britain has a strong track record in supporting work either through technical expertise or in the form of direct financing for a given project. In contrast to building a studio system which attempts to rival the Americans', the aim of taking what limited economic capital that is available and deploying it to tap into matching funding from other national film production financiers and broadcasters surely seems a viable strategy in the production of future work.

Corporate and national film industries are not emphasizing enough the production of work which "crosses borders". There is a need to conceive of "international" audiences, not only in an effort to challenge the hidden xenophobia of a particular type of "British-ness" which is on sale to the Americans[91], but rather with the aim of having one's work well received throughout the world. Currently, shifts are occurring in terms of thinking around industrial production as culture becomes more "global" and less identifiably "American". There is increasingly a recognition, at least with many corporate and multinational practices, of the power of international markets - Indian Subcontinent, China, South East Asia, Latin America, Africa. As the SBC Warburg Report notes:

> Over the past few years the studios have discovered the importance of international markets (for example, international now contributes on average over 40% of a movie's box office, against about 25% ten years ago), and with the overseas broadcasting and cable industry relatively underdeveloped compared to the US this importance should continue to grow. The beauty of international distribution in a relatively fixed cost activity such as programme production is that additional revenues flow straight through to the bottom line. News Corp., with its near global empire built around Fox in the US, BSkyB in the UK and Star TV in Asia, is the paradigm that all others are trying to imitate. (SBC Warburg, 1995)

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[91] For more on British-ness for American markets see discussion on FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (1994) in Chapter 6: Commercial Film Practice.

The emergence of a new, powerful and demanding middle class in many developing nations will have direct influence on social values and relations of cultural production in the near future. It has been suggested that the new frontier of the economic world still resides with the "Big Five" who will redraw the global field of power in the future. The World Bank reports that the "Big Five" – Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Russia – are "projected to fundamentally change the way the world does business." It suggests that these five nations, which currently account for 50% of the world's workforce less than 10% of the world's output in trade, will surge to in excess of 50% more world trade than Europe's trading balance by 2020 (Denny, 1997:1). This is a strong cultural and economic argument which suggests that Britain needs to nurture work which will resonate within these markets. There is a need for contemporary film practitioners to begin taking seriously the possible audiences of these "developing markets". This chapter will turn to one such international co-production, BANDIT QUEEN, and explore the logics which inform its practice and the logics of the film field from which it has been produced. BANDIT QUEEN provides this current research with a positive model for strategies which have been employed in the production of work attempting to access audiences that exist outside of domestic British and American markets.

7.6 BANDIT QUEEN

The field of power within BANDIT QUEEN (1995) explores the life experiences of Phoolan Devi, one of India's most wanted outlaws, between 1979 and 1983. The film is structured by two opposing poles: submission as reflected in the three on-screen rapes experienced by Phoolan, and survival, ultimately realized with her vengeful massacre of 22 higher caste Hindu men raising her to a popular cult figure status within Indian society. BANDIT QUEEN is important for the way in which a very culturally specific personal story which uses submission and survival as structuring poles is used to constitute a more universal story of a woman's process of empowerment and

self-realization. The film is also interesting in that it was primary produced for a non-Indian audience (because of its scenes of nudity and rape, the film would not receive any type of mainstream theatrical release in India).[92] As a film fully financed by Channel 4, BANDIT QUEEN is a relevant example of a film consciously attempting to generate new international audiences.

7.6.1   SYNOPSIS

The film begins with a prepubescent Phoolan, one of six children from a poor sharecropper family positioned in the lower tier of India's rigid caste and class system, being married off to a man three times her age. An abusive man, he beats and rapes her until she is forced to run away to her natal village. Back in the parental home, her cousin Maiyadin usurps her father's meager land with the help of the land-owning Thakurs, who keeps the tillers of the soil impoverished and the family in their place. Finally divorced, Phoolan has less status than ever before; she is framed for a robbery, and her bail is offered by upper-caste men who expect sexual favors in return for her bail. Phoolan (played by Seema Biswas) is by now in her later teens or early 20s and is a woman of violent rage and deep wounds. Maiyadin also masterminds the rape and abduction of Phoolan by a gang of outlaws as she attempts to defend her father's meager property rights. By the time she is kidnapped by this gang of bandits, she has already become such an outsider that kidnapping is seen as a rise in her social position within society – especially when she is befriended by Vikram (Nirmal Pandey), the only man in the film who treats her with any respect.

In the rough world of banditry her gradual transformation occurs, from a violated child to a tough outlaw. With her lover Vikram Mallah, also from an oppressed caste, she forms a gang of outlaws robbing from the rich and waging a class warfare against the vested interests of the landed Thakurs. Increasingly, the press is fascinated by Phoolan's boldness, the way she

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[92] It is nevertheless interesting that Shekhar Kapur would win the "Top director" prize at the Indian Film Awards 1995.

disguises herself as a policeman, her practice of befriending young girls and interrupting the weddings of children. But her life is not a fairy tale, and after Vikram is killed by jealous upper-caste bandits, her existence becomes increasingly desperate. As her fame grows, her gang shrinks and her influence fades.

The cold massacre of 22 Thakurs in the little known district of Behmai just south of New Delhi, allegedly by Phoolan and her bandits as a revenge for the killing of her lover Vikram Mallah and where she was gang raped by the Thakurs, will live on in infamy and ultimately crown Phoolan Devi as India's "Bandit Queen". Indira Gandhi's government was much beholden to the Thakurs for the block votes to keep the Congress Party in power, and it embarked on a hunt for the Phoolan gang. The gang successfully eluded their quarry for 3 long years, and began to gain significant folk status. For the underclass of the Chambal valley, unaffected by media frenzy, Phoolan Devi became a populist cult figure, albeit a vigilante liberator, of their class struggle toward social justice. The film ends with Phoolan agreeing to a negotiated surrender, beaten down by converging forces from three different Indian State Police. Yet her surrender in 1983 was on her own terms, to the cheers of 10,000 supporters. The end titles inform us that she was released 10 years later.

7.6.2   THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BANDIT QUEEN

From childhood, Phoolan suffers extreme indignities and injustices. From her childhood, the film establishes the poles of submission and survival as the core binaries which structure her life. She struggles from a position of submission as a child, into her teens. It is only as she is taken prisoner by the bandits, unable to fall any further in lost dignity and personal self-respect, that she begins her process of personal growth and empowerment. As the co-leader of the band of bandits, she begins a strengthening of character which ultimately leads to the revenge of the murder of her lover Vikram and her repeated rapes and public humiliation by ordering the murder of 22 Thakur men.

The use of rape as a device of physical patriarchal power is clearly significant as a manifestation of submission, but also functions as a very brutal refracted visual metaphor of male control over women. Kapur notes that Phoolan Devi's life becomes a clear metaphor for an exploration of the position of Indian women within the caste system:

> "there was a huge fear in both [Channel 4 commissioning editor] Farrukh Dhondy's and my mind that the audience would miss the relevance of the caste system." Vehemently opposed to such explanatory devices as voice-over, he took the risk instead on a truthful portrayal of the appalling reality of the lives of Phoolan Devi and her family, to provide non-Indian audiences with at least a notion of the oppressive nature of this odious social structure. (Prasad, 1995:16)

Through the visualization of Phoolan Devi's life within the film, Kapur is balancing a comment on social relations within Indian society with story-telling at a much more universal level. Although Kapur can be criticized for being excessive in his protrayal of Phoolan's brutal rapes, objectifying her as a sexual object, and constituting the position of men within this world as one-dimensional, for our purposes it is the manner in which Kapur succeeds in refracting social relationships to audiences who on the whole would be unaware of Phoolan's story prior to viewing the film, and the way in which Phoolan's story refracts a relationship to the Indian caste system.[93] The underlying irony with the BANDIT QUEEN lies in Phoolan Devi's attempts to disassociate herself from the film. Whether this was motivated by her then current attempts at political office in India or the supposed fabrication of her life story by Kapur, is up for debate.

7.6.3   LOCATING BANDIT QUEEN SOCIOLOGICALLY

BANDIT QUEEN's significance as a British-Asian film lies in the fact that the film was fully financed with Channel 4 money. Although produced on a

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[93] It is worth noting that Kapur is currently working on another female personal story in his current Working Title Film production of the life of Elizabeth I, set for a 1998 release. Clearly his ability to reveal the complexities of a womanis story have led to his involvement with other projects along similar thematic trajectories.

Table 8. Field of Power in BANDIT QUEEN

Revenge -
Massacre of
22 Thukar Men

Death of
Lover

Rape (x3)

Persona of
a Bandit

Marital Violence

Phoolan

SURVIVAL

SUBMISSION

Freedom

Jail
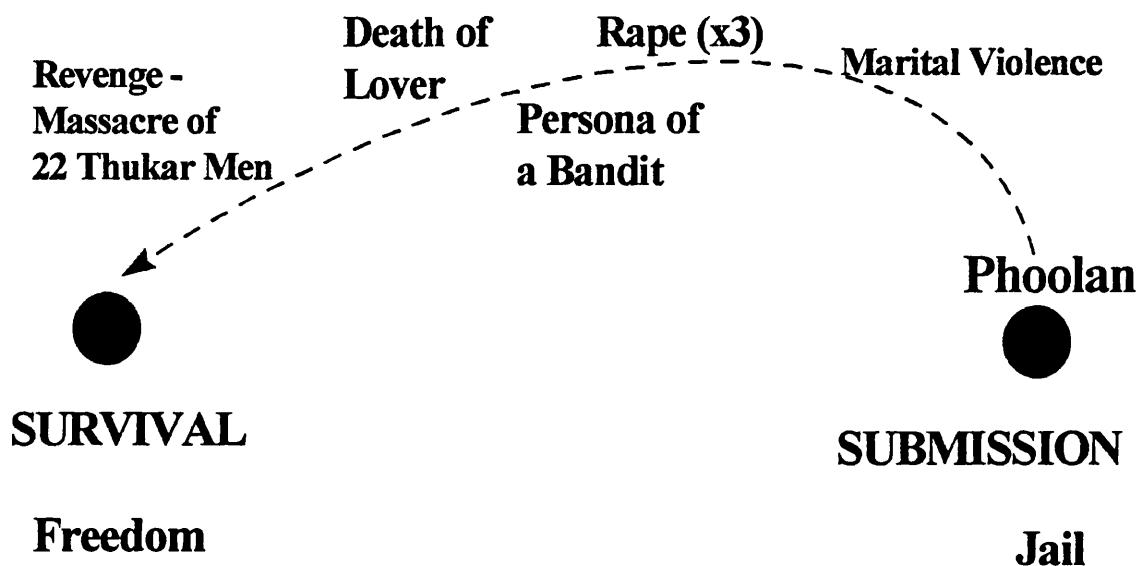
television budget (an estimated £500 000) as Udyan notes: "To his credit Kapur has not allowed a television budget to cramp BANDIT QUEEN's style. That may be because you get a lot more for your pound in India than in Britain" (Udyan, 1995: 17). Interestingly, the script and the book, both written by Mala Sen, were sent to Kapur by the Multicultural Commision at Channel 4 for him to consider directing. BANDIT QUEEN is not Channel 4's first Indian production targeted at non-Indian markets, other films included: SALAAM BOMBAY!! (1988), ELECTRIC MOON (1992), IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (1992) TRAIN TO PAKISTAN (1997), and KAMA SUTRA (1997). Even films such as MASALA (1991), WILD WEST (1992), MISSISSIPPI MASALA (1992) and BHAJI ON THE BEACH (1993) although exploring issues within various diaspora Asian communities, are aiming to tap into international markets, be those specialist or mainstream theatrical markets. BANDIT QUEEN, considering the size of its production budget, has done quite well at the UK box office: £268,055 in the UK and $399,748 (USD) in the American box office. (BFI, 1996: 39)

Films such as BANDIT QUEEN are able to find audiences by deploying the strategy of cultural ethnography, telling stories which may be located in particular cultural communities but employ the devices of universally recognizable social relations, human paradoxes or understandings. Gurinder Chadha, director of BHAJI ON THE BEACH, another Channel 4-financed production, recalls the manner in which people were able to identify with refracted relationships within her film although it too was set within the confines of a particular group of Asian women from the Midlands on a day-trip to Blackpool:

> What people respond to, which has been the most fantastic thing, is
> when the film has been shown people come up to me, women come
> up to me and say "she was like my mother, that was mother, God, that
> bitch is just like my auntie", people really identify with the story line.
> Particularly women, it's a women's film on that level. People are
> identifying with the sensibilities of it. That's one type of response.
> The second thing that happens, every country has migrant groups.
> Or each country is made up of migrants, such as America. So even
> though people don't know about the Asian experience in this country,

people know about tradition and people know about change. For example, in Italy the film has been doing well, because it's such a community where women are controlled around tradition and Catholicism. So every community where there is that sense of tradition, it appeals to that community.[94]

BANDIT QUEEN, like other contemporary film practices employing issues of cultural difference, is able to target and tap into audiences which were not necessarily from the world of the film itself. What is significant in positioning BANDIT QUEEN within the British independent film field, like other films mentioned in this chapter, is its direct link with British television - specifically Channel 4. Through the success of its Film on Four, Channel 4 has become one of the key players within the British film field. Channel 4 and PolyGram Filmed Entertainment are two key players who are now able to employ an economy of scale which the Middleton Report found lacking within the current production context. As David Aukin noted in the autumn of 1995:

> Channel 4 had some twenty films in production - that is, films that were either actually shooting, in active pre-production or in post-production. We are finally achieving "critical mass", by which I mean that the minimum number of films are being financed to allow for the real possibility of some successful films. And while strike rate in Hollywood is one in nine, ours is higher. (David Aukin in Petrie, 1995:3)

What is important in developing a slate of films, which Channel 4 is now able to do, is to make sure that there are a range of perspectives being explored within the commissioned films. Also new audience markets and constituting new audiences should still be valued over simply producing images of "English-ness" for American consumption.

If looking for success stories within the field, one has to look at the success of Channel 4 in nurturing the contemporary independent film field. Unlike the Middleton Report's suggestion that Britain needs to build a new film studio to rival Hollywood, it is Britain that needs to build on its current

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[94] Taken from an interview with Gurinder Chadha, 31 March 1994.

strengths. Clearly, Channel 4's involvement in a film project is a step towards its realization.

7.7   CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this chapter has been to examine two recent films as examples of contemporary film practices. In assessing DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS....THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER and BANDIT QUEEN two key considerations emerge: the importance of audience and the representational strategy of cultural ethnography. This chapter has argued that clearly conceiving of audiences is a crucial element within contemporary practice, but equally the attempt at constituting new audiences which transcend prevailing national audience structures is of importance. This new emphasis on popular audiences is seen in contrast to the "black" production schemes of the past, which were heavily weighed down by political expectations, a film training element and usually a very limited notion of viewer. The analysis of DA BRATT PAC is intended to reveal the ways in which programme commissioning processes have changed, and how a new emphasis is emerging around a range of cultural positions within given programme series, as well as new strategies to address issues of cultural specificity.

This chapter has proposed the notion of cultural ethnography as revealing the specifics of a given cultural community, while allowing the story and the human relations to resonate on a more universalised level. Both DA BRATT PAC and BANDIT QUEEN employ the strategy of cultural ethnography in their portrayal of specific personal stories, in such a way as to allow for a broad base for character empathy. Whether one is working in the purely corporate world or within a community film and video context, the notion of practice is still significantly informed by having one's work viewed by audiences, to enable the affirmation of completed work and the production of future work. Although there is a current flourish of British film-makers bringing with them a range of practices, there is still an acute shortage of

quality work produced by and/or set within British-Asian communities. As cultural industries gain further recognition and acknowledgment as a worthy

social career, then gradually we will see the increase of British-Asian work. For the time being, industry activists need to affirm the production of work by this sector, but equally must aim to reach a point of critical mass in which a real range of film practices are both affirmed and resourced.

8.0   CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

In their article "Conceptualising Racism" Back and Solomos (1994) suggest that a new approach to research is required for the study of racism. For them, simplistic definitions of racism are hard to sustain, what is required is for:

> racist discourses to be rigorously contextualised. This means that racism needs to be situated within specific moments. The effects of a particular racist discourse needs to be placed in the conditions surrounding the moment of its enunciation. This means irrevocably crossing the analysis of racism with other social relations surrounding gender and sexuality or the culture of institutional politics. (Back & Solomos, 1994:156)

The overall aim of this thesis has been to respond to this call for a new approach to the study of racism and discrimination within a given empirical field. What I have attempted to do in this thesis is develop an approach to the study of text and context which aims to reveal the relations of production at the moment of interpellation, thereby revealing power in use. What emerges from this type of historical sociology is a reading of the limits of given fields of inquiry, the practices available for action and a revealing of the dominant and dominated dispositions. As such, the use and study of "British-Asian" has been conceived more as a sampling device to select the core data and limits of this particular field of empirical inquiry, than as the principle object of study. In this way, this research aims to function as a prototype for new modes of analysis which employs "cultural identity" as a mechanism with which to map chosen fields of cultural production. Be those fields the film field or other media fields (BBC, Hollywood, Bollywood, etc.), or completely different formal cultural fields (novel, newspaper, visual art, etc.), the emphasis throughout this analysis is one of process, and the relations of production which enable certain positions to emerge as dominant.

A central focus of this research has been to shift the prevailing debate surrounding cultural identity away from settled, and often essentialist discourses of "identity" into a discussion around "identification". By making a separation between "identity" and "identification", I am suggesting that we should shift our attention away from trying to understand given identities as pre-established objects of study, and emphasise instead the processes through which individuals recognise given identity positions as familiar. In this way, this research is part of a particular reading of the "New Ethnicities" ontology (discussed in chapter 5) which prioritises cultural differences and notions of radical democracy. This is in contrast to readings of the "New Ethnicities" thesis which constitute a hierarchy of oppression, where one is searching to constitute and consecrate the label of "most oppressed".

Another key focus of research has been to respond to the tendency for analysis to de-contextualises and de-materialises text from its relations of production and reception. In such instances text is used as the sole object of analysis and its fictional reality is abstracted into conclusions about the social world generally. What I have proposed is a grounded social mapping exercise, where the dynamic relationship between text and context is rigorously sustained, and where one is attempting to isolate the structural overlap or homologies between fields.

The third principle focus of this current study has been the comprehensive application and assessment of the methodological tools and approaches, in the study of cultural production, as developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. In utilising Bourdieu's concepts and approaches, I have tried not to "pick and choose" elements of his methodological strategy, but attempted a comprehensive application of his framework. Although a number of questions can be raised regarding his approach, I would maintain strong support for the comprehensive-ness and rigour that Bourdieu's historical sociology enables.

In the following conclusion, I revisit these three structuring principals of this research, further detailing these core assumptions, suggesting ways in which the analysed empirical chapters have an insight into contemporary fields of power, as well as suggesting areas for further research and deliberation.

8.1   A SHIFT FROM IDENTITY TO IDENTIFICATION

This current study has not been a study of racism, but rather it has attempted to explore the inclusion and exclusion of given cultural practitioners from the cultural field as an example of power in use by dominant dispositions. In this way, I have sought to avoid the pitfalls of a study caught in a "race as problem" discourse, and proposed in its place a process-oriented study of the production of cultural identity and identification.

For many, the study of culture is another site to reveal the manner in which the dispossession of given communities is both produced and reproduced. In this type of analysis, one begins from the position that certain groups are situated in a disadvantaged position compared to others, where the object of analysis is to reveal examples of sustained disinterest in given subject positions and to show how the status quo is maintained. What often emerges from this type of analysis is a compartmentalising of oppressions against a listing of various disadvantaged subject positions. Unfortunately, what is usually informing such an analysis is the replacement of one stable subjective understanding with yet another equally stable subjective understanding. Lola Young provides us with an example of such a closeted essentialist critique:

> In previous chapters, I pointed out that white men have
> conceptualised themselves into a position of narrative centrality.
> Perhaps a question to be asked of black film-makers is, whether -
> having apparently seized control of the right to look - their films will
> replicate the conventional relations of power between women and
> men. (Young, 1996:136)

Further to the reductionism of one's (creative) practice to one's gender as a cultural identity, this approach plays off different cultural identities as to achieve some position of "most oppressed", often only to speak with the legitimacy and consecration of being the "most oppressed". The problem here is that oppression and victimisation still function as central structuring principles within this understanding of "identity". Herein lies the great danger of generating a notion of community based on a group's common experiences of victimisation. This is not to suggest that people are not victims and that extreme injustice somehow does not exist; rather, victimisation is not a basis from which to develop either solidarity between people or a notion of a functioning, living community of people.[95]

In this research "British-Asian" has been developed as a relational concept, whose understanding is completely contingent on the context within which a given piece of work is being produced or particular actions within the field of power. My usage of "British-Asian" has actively attempted to be different from other racially determined, "taken-for-granted", settled understandings around racial groups. There is nothing natural about affinities between groups of people who may share a certain shade of skin colour as a basis for reading the field of power. As Avtar Brah reminds us:

> The 'housing needs' of a working-class Asian living in overcrowded conditions on a housing estate, for instance, cannot be the same as those of a middle-class Asian living in a semi-detached house in suburbia. (Brah, 1992: 129)

Although agreeing with Brah's suggestion, I would propose that the study of working-class Asian housing, while limited in speaking of "Asian housing" generally, can provide an insight into issues of homelessness, overcrowding, and other conflicts within contemporary British housing policy and practice. This abstraction from the specific into the general (which is not contingent on ethnicity but actual living experience) is the manner in which "British-Asian"

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[95] The exceptions which comes to mind, is those individuals in group therapy (i.e. Alcoholic's Annonymous) where such support groups become a structuring element to one's new identity.

and/or other specific cultural communities can elucidate knowledge of the British field of power. Ultimately, my personal interest in issues of cultural identity should not be seen to advocate a position which aims to arrive at a determined understanding of a given "type" of people. Instead it is the practice of research, the richness of actual people's lives and the art of storytelling which I ultimately look to affirm.

This research has taken the position that there exist new opportunities for those identities which have been perceived as the "other", marginal or as subcultural, as possible sites for the expression of radical new culture. In part the radical nature of these communities lies as much in their ability to construct new shared points of reference within a common group of people. The importance emerges from the notions of process and the articulation and identification of new cultural types, positions and artefacts. Here the "New Ethnicities" thesis developed by Stuart Hall and others is of significance in understanding the radical possibilities of these new communities. The great possibility lies in their fundamental recognition of, and willingness to accept, cultural differences as the basis of the contemporary field of power. On the other hand, notions of "sameness" which would have structured Modernist notions of community, nation, culture and even language, are increasingly being superseded by a move towards a cultural syncretism and heterogeneity as a norm. The political principle within the New Ethnicities position is the notion of radical democracy and notions of cultural difference, which incorporate differences as equivalences rather than in a hierarchical manner. Chantal Mouffe notes:

> Radical democracy demands that we acknowledge difference - the particular, the multiple, the heterogeneous - in effect, everything that has been excluded by the concept of Man in the abstract. Universalism is not rejected but particularised; what is needed is a new kind of articulation between the universal and the particular. (Mouffe, 1988: 36)

What is being proposed then within the more radical trajectory of the New Ethnicities thesis is a new valuing of new universal structures through positions located within the detail of actual living communities. Here the

recognition of social processes and universal human experiences are as significant as the communities themselves. This reading of the New Ethnicities thesis is close to what I have termed "cultural ethnography". By "cultural ethnography" I am developing a concept in which contemporary practitioners aspire for cultural specificity, while projecting recognisable universal social themes.

It is through concepts such as New Ethnicities, where the process of interpellation and identification are valued over agreed, settled notions of identity, that diaspora communities have the space to directly inform dominant culture. And as local and national markets become global markets, there is evermore reason for emergent international culture to learn to speak freely throughout the world rather than simply being designed, produced, and consecrated in the United States.

8.2   A GROUNDED APPROACH

This study is about power, and actual examples of power in use. I have examined the ways in which given dispositions and understandings, out of the plurality of possible understandings and conceptualisations, emerge as dominant. Integral to this type of analysis is awareness of political-economy issues, where the conditions of production, the production of value and the emergence of given dispossessions as dominant, structure the study of the cultural field. As a starting point, one needs to ask questions from the plurality of possibilities about why it is that certain practices are affirmed resulting in the production of certain types of work.

It is my position that as an academic discipline Cultural Studies has failed to develop adequate models for critical investigation, functioning instead, in the affirmation of culture generally or specific cultural artefacts, as a "legitimate" field of social inquiry. Considering the growth of the cultural industries into conceivably the most dominant industries within the global marketplace,

there is even less reason to question the study of culture as the basis of academic study, and much greater reason to develop the tools of analysis which ask methodological questions of how to study culture.

This thesis emerges as a response to the tendency of some contemporary cultural analysis, often from the perspective of a pseudo-psychoanalytic analysis, to read text and arrive at generalisations about the social world. Lola Young in her analysis of black-British representation within British cinema notes:

> I have analysed and discussed films on the basis that a cinematic text cannot be attributed exclusively to those directly involved in its production but should be analysed as part of a complex web of interrelated experiences, ideas, fantasies and unconscious expression of desire, anxiety and fear that need to be located in their historical, political and social contexts (Young 1996:175).

With psychoanalytic readings of text, limitations lie in the selection of films, and the assumptions surrounding correct "psychoanalytic knowledge" or interpretation. This type of internal analysis values certain codes and signifiers over and above the actual film-making practice. Because the psychoanalytic approach does not attempt any type of mapping exercise where text and context are interrelated or where structural homologies are sought out and noted, psychoanalytic readings of films can lead to personal generalisations articulated as social fact. When the psychoanalytic assumptions are questionable, then the analysis reads more like personal opinion than scientific knowledge. Lola Young in reviewing the film MONA LISA (1986) notes:

> Despite the film's self consciously anti-naturalistic style, and the many references to other fiction genres, the pastiche of film noir and the detective thriller, the narrative and the visual style work to reinforce contemporary ideologies of white, middle class masculinity which are deeply destructive in undermining the recognition of responsibility, and which deny the need to work together for social change based on interdependence and respect (Young, 1992: 208).

The central problem with Young's analysis of MONA LISA is that it suffers from a sense of "racial" reductionism, where an overbearing prerogative to

solve the "race issue" gets in the way of character motivation and action, and the details of the seedy Soho sex industry. Furthermore, what emerges from this type of analysis is a compartmentalising of oppression where critical authority emerges from one's identification with the most dispossessed identities. Implicit within Young's analysis is an assumed importance around "Realist" responsibilities of creative works, that should speak to particular social issues, in a creative or "real" manner. This would be in contrast to the creative and formal opportunities which would "normally" be assigned to a given practitioner. This burden to resolve the "Race Question" in a satisfactory manner is an unfair (if not unusual) basis from which to critically judge a film, considering that a character's particular cultural identity is but one element within a wide range of elements available in the production of a work of art.

In this research, I have used films to sign-post and locate positions in the process of mapping particular fields of cultural production. Each film functions as a form of "social residue", holding within it the actual social relations which were enacted in realising that film. As a mapping exercise, the aim has NOT been to generate definitive readings of a particular configuration of powerful positions, then abstract those relations onto fields as a universal tendency. Quite the opposite, the current exercise attempts to reveal power in use. The focus is to generate models for revealing actual relations of power and the movement of power, and to enable practitioners to become aware of similar patterns of use and abuse of power in devising a cultural practice. Although these powerful relationships are being read through the films and the emergence of a certain type of film practice, the focus has been in developing a grounded approach which maps the genesis of the dominant and dominated dispositions.

In each of the previous empirical chapters this thesis maps a particular reading of power in use within their particular configuration and the recognised limits of that field. The "excluded film practice" (Chapter 3) explores the positions and the practices which emerged with agents who

experienced extreme exclusion from basic rights of citizenship. The aim of the chapter was to reveal the process of exclusion and reveal in homologous situations how certain types of angry political practices would emerge. This chapter emphasises the production of culture under conditions of dispossession, more than it does any "common-sensical" understandings of the "black" exclusion. In this way, it looks to provide new methodological approaches and critical insights to other groups experiencing dispossession (i.e. refugees, asylum seekers, homeless people, people unable to read or write) as much as it is attempting to complete a historical mapping of particular communities of people.

In the chapter "An Institutional Film Practice" (Chapter 4) the emphasis is on revealing a process of institutionalisation and the translation of power between the field of power and the cultural field. The chapter explores the ways in which powerful institutions (local councils, Channel Four, British Film Institute) within the field responded to actions (i.e. racist violence, social unrest symptomatic of more serious structural problems within the field of power), by implementing a series of soft liberal gestures of action ("race relations" film-making). We must be diligent in revealing instances of ineffective action under the banner of political change. In reading the contemporary usage of the political "black" identity, I continue to see agents advocating for types of institutional change which can "colour-over" broader structural positions of inequality and powerlessness. [96]

The chapter "A Theoretical Film Practice" (Chapter 5) reveals the ways in which knowledge of theory and positions of "theory production" are forms of cultural and social capital which can be translated into power. There is something highly suspicious about a situation where the basis for the

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[96] I am thinking here of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and its homologous position to the Scarman Report, where an institutional discourse emerges as "dealing" with "institutional racism". There is a need to recognise that racism is "symptomatic" of broader structural inequalities, which transcend "skin colour". Interestingly, both the MacPherson Report and the Scarman Report were about "policing" as a specific institution, and yet in both instances the debate is shifted to one of "race" and having more "Black and Asian" police officers on the Metropolitan Police.

production of a given work and the consecration (be that in the availability of funding or the screening of work to selective audiences) share a common base and purpose. In this way theory as a tool and approach to provide insight into the world is exchanged for prescribed, polemical readings of the social world, in which those who have "read the theory" have access to the real politics. Furthermore, there is the entire associated issue of the academy functioning as a site for "official" consecration (e.g. an example of the rise of the academic field as the principle site of consecration within the national field power would be a field such as "bio-technology"). Increasingly, as academic research and business are becoming ever more closely linked through funding, we must be careful when the site of conception and development is the same as the subsequent site of consecration.

The chapter entitled "A Successful Film Practice" (Chapter 6) reveals practical political-economy issues around British independent film-making. It explores those elements which made Working Title the most successful British independent film company thus far in British film history. It explores the elements of its success and the ways, in which it was able to produce work within a commercial marketplace, successfully screening work to audiences in the UK and internationally. What this chapter does is reveal the ways in which the small to medium size independent production company, as it gains a feel for works of scale, may shift from a commercial into a corporate film practice. This process of the corporate field engulfing successful commercial practices is an on-going concern which I would raise, and advise requires further reflection and study.

The final empirical chapter "Contemporary Film Practices" (Chapter 7) reveals some of the current tendencies within the British independent film field, and outlines suggestions for a way forward. Further to shifts within the independent film field, the two principal issues which I feel are significant for the field in the contemporary moment are a genuine valuation of international film and television markets, and the increased use of "cultural ethnography". By cultural ethnography, I am suggesting a practice which

searches beneath "surface culture" and maps a series of relations and understandings, through the detail of actual living communities as the basis of narrative construction and interpellation of British-Asian and other cultural identities. In emphasising the international marketplace, I am trying to alert individuals of the trend of producing work geared towards mass consumption in the United States, and to recognise that the international marketplace is a significant area of growth within the film and television sector.

8.3 USING BOURDIEU

In this thesis I have attempted to apply Pierre Bourdieu's concepts in a coherent, consistent methodological manner. In using the work of Bourdieu, many previous critics have either selectively employed certain concepts which Bourdieu has developed or critiqued Bourdieu on epistemological and/or ontological grounds.[97]

In his writings Bourdieu has been explicit in the fact that his works are aimed at generating an approach to the sociological method by sharpening one's "sociological eye" (Bourdieu, 1993a: 271). His work is intended as methodological handbooks, providing instruction and insight into ways that the individual researcher can become better at researching (Bourdieu in Calhoun, 1993b:271). Bourdieu's methodological encouragement for change is by example, and by providing interested researchers with models and examples with which to apply a critical materialist analysis of a researcher's chosen field of inquiry. This thesis has sought to provide one such example of a rigorous application of Bourdieu's approach.

The strength of Bourdieu's sociological framework lies in the dynamic "process-oriented" approach to the analysis of cultural production which enables objective historical readings while emphatically valuing the probability of chance in the actual living subjective moment. Although the

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[97] Examples of deploying a particular selection of Bourdieu's concepts include the work of Thornton, 1995; as example of critiquing his work on epistemological and ontological grounds see Fowler, 1997; Calhoun et al., 1993; Garnham, 1990a.

approach can at times become frustratingly circular in its emphasis on process, by maintaining a focus on process and objective mapping of the field, Bourdieu is successful in revealing actual powerful relations as examples of power in use. Instead of a crude form of "finger-pointing", a Bourdieusian analysis allows for the study of social maps, networks and formations which result in certain types of work and certain forms of consecration. For Bourdieu the mapping of social relations within the field, and revealing the genesis of dominant dispositions are the central objects of critical inquiry.

At a basic level, I see Bourdieu's approach as a practical revisionism of historical materialist strategies of analysis. By emphasising relations of production, a differentiated notion of capital, and creating ties between Bourdieu's notion of habitus and Marxian understandings of "class consciousness", there are clearly a number of grounds on which homologies can be drawn between Bourdieu's approach and the trajectory of historical sociology in the spirit of Marx and Weber. Like Marx and Weber, Bourdieu maintains a commitment to historical (almost archaeological) analysis as the basis for his genetic sociology. For Bourdieu, like Marx, the core issue is one of the relations of production, which structure the basis of action and human relations generally (Zeitlin, 1987:79). Bourdieu's approach continues in the trajectory of Marx and Weber, as all three theorists maintain an ultimate commitment to the details of the specific, with the aim of scientifically reading the particulars with which given groups of people, within particular moments in time, maintain their given existences. In exploring Marx and Weber's historical-sociological method Zeitlin notes:

> So far as social-science research is concerned, the really important lesson to be learned from Marx and Weber is the importance of history for an understanding of society. Though they were certainly interested in grasping the general and the universal, they concerned

themselves with the concrete circumstances of specific periods, and the similarities and contracts of diverse geohistorical areas. They clearly recognised that an adequate explanation of the social facts requires a historical analysis of how the facts came to be; they recognised that comparative-historical analysis is indispensable for the study of stability and change (Zeitlin, 1987:160-161).

In developing his own practical tools in the study of historically changing fields and other fields (or aspects of society), Bourdieu has developed a number of specific concepts which feed into a contemporary reading of historical sociology. A central concept which is employed by Bourdieu is the notion of "position-taking" in mapping the field. Through an emphasis on positions, Bourdieu maintains the all important "relational" in his relational mode of analysis. Another concept which Bourdieu employs with insight is the notion of homologies in the search for structural parallels between and within fields. Homologies function very similarly to the practical concept of "methodological triangulation", where one is looking at a given process from a number of different positions with the aim of isolating overlap and structural parallel. Refraction is a concept which Bourdieu posits in contrast to mimetic theories of "reflection". What Bourdieu is successful in positing with this concept is an active awareness of the elements which become the corresponding elements of the process of production, rather than a mimetic theory which assumes the work of art is a reflection of a given life or groups of communities as lived. Again the strength of refraction (like light refracting through a spectrum) is the emphasis on the actual material relations which inform production, rather than notions of simple reflections and mirrored effects.

8.3.1   SHORTCOMINGS AND PROBLEMS

In critically assessing Bourdieu's concepts a number of issues remain unresolved. The use of habitus is still a very difficult concept to actually state and describe within an empirical study. Because habitus is not reducible to an individual person or institution, but rather is conceived as a set of shared dispositions, a 'feel for the game', it is often difficult to employ the term when

discussing certain shared perspectives. Although it is clearly a very powerful concept, particularly when seen as informing the logic of practice, thereby providing a very practical solution to the reductionist theories of "consciousness" and individual "free-will", it is nevertheless very difficult to pinpoint the notion of habitus within the specifics of a given empirical study.

In "An Institutional Film Practice" (chapter 4) the notion is developed of an institutional habitus in which institutional considerations are used as the basis of informing a given film practice. Although the chapter maps the field so as to reveal positions and discusses emergent films which are the consequence of certain understandings, the chapter does not try to actually locate the institutional habitus within a given individual or institution. The key weakness here is the inability to ascribe an element of responsibility for given dominant habitus to specific agents.

In employing Bourdieu's field theory one is constantly involved in constituting certain fields and sub-fields. Two issues emerge from this: the constitutions of sub-fields themselves; and assessing how agents (as in actors and/or institutions) shift from one field to another. This current research has a three tier field structure: the cultural field - the film field - the independent film field. Although the British-Asian independent film field could have been constituted as another sub-field, it has not been the intention of this thesis to do so. Rather, British-Asian has been employed as a sampling device, as a way of providing a legible structure to the independent film field. The issue here is one of atomisation of the field in which sub-fields could be reduced to the very specifics of its particular elements. Constituting sub-fields in a consistent manner is an issue which requires further deliberation.

A related concern is one of agents shifting between fields. Clearly, as this research has revealed, the existence of different (often competing) practices suggests the existence of a range of possible fields and positions. The issue is one of movement. Can one suggest that in changing one's practice, one is involved in shifting from one field to another? In the second half of chapter 6

- "A Successful Film Practice", we explore the manner in which Working Title shifted from a commercial to a corporate film practice. In suggesting a shift in practice, this thesis assumes a corresponding shift in field, from a commercial field to a corporate field. Although it is dangerous to constitute rigid rules to the production of fields and sub-fields, discussions on some of these practical issues as they pertain to the application of Bourdieu's approaches would be of value.

Having isolated some of the issues in applying Bourdieu's concepts and approaches to the assessment of an empirical field, one is constantly reminded of the great value of theory and its ability to enable the researcher to make greater sense of the chosen field of empirical inquiry. This is in contrast to the use of theory as a conceptual tool which requires an emphasis on consistent and logical coherence at the expense of the raw data from the empirical field. Ultimately as researchers, we should constantly remind ourselves that our archival, genealogical and genetic work must be driven by a desire to make clear our field of inquiry, rather than to simply affirm pre-existing theoretical approaches which result in practices which provide "correct visions" of the future. To those who expect sociology to "provide them with 'visions' what can one say, except, along with Max Weber, 'that they should go to the cinema'?" (Weber in Bourdieu, 1965/90: 10).

APPENDIX 1: PRIMARY RESEARCH LISTINGS

1993

22 January 1993 - Interview with Ken Fero, company director with Migrant Media, London.

2 February 1993 - Meeting with Raj Patel from Star Productions. Talked about British-Asian film and theatre during the 1980s. Assisted him in filming a promotional item for Pakistani Television.

14 April 1993 - Interview with Sulman Bhucher, Production Manager, Assistant Producer, Retake Film and Video Collective.

14 May 1993 - Interview Alia Syed, Director, independent film-maker, London.

4 June 1993 - Interview with Pier Wilkie, Director, independent film-maker, London Video Access, London.

9 June 1993 - Interview With Tony Warcus, curator and arts administrator London Film-makers Co-op, London.

18 June 1993 - Interview Sonali Fernando, Director, independent film-maker, London.

30 September 1993 - Interview Angela Kingston, Chief Curator IKON Gallery, and Michelle Calvert Assistant Curator discussion about BEYOND DESTINATION, IKON Gallery, Birmingham.

1 October 1993 - Interview with Khaled Hakim. Director-Producer independent film-maker, Birmingham.

1994

6 January 1994 - Interview with Colin Prescod, Director-Producer independent film-maker, London.

14 January 1994 - Interview with Pervaiz Khan, Cinema curator, Director independent film-maker, Islington, London.

2 February 1994 - Interview Kevin Loader, BBC Producer of BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA, BBC House, London.

6 March 1994, Interview with Ian Rashid, writer and cinema curator, London Film-makers Co-op, London.

31 March 1994 - Interview with Gurinder Chadha, Director independent film-maker, London.

7 May 1994 - Panel Member "Necessary Inventions", Desh Pardesh: South Asian Visual Arts Festival/Conference, Toronto, Canada.

5 September 1994 - Interview with Kobena Mercer, Cultural Critic, London.

28 September 1994 - Interview with Dave Curtis, Senior Film and Video Officer, Arts Council of England, London.

Fall/Winter 1994 - Guest Editor, "Navigations: Special Issue on The Asian Diaspora", BLACK FILM BULLETIN, Autumn 1994, Volume 2, Issue 3. British Film Institute. London.

1995

February 1995 - Cinema Programmer, "Routes2Roots" Cinema programme of British-Asian and black-British work. London Film-makers Co-op Cinema.

7 March 1995 - "The Cultural Workshops", John Akomfrah, Director with black Audio Film Collective, London Film-makers' Co-op/Birkbeck College Diaspora Cinema Course.

16 March 1995 - 1st London Film and Video Development Agency focus group discussion. Part of Black and Asian Training Research. Chair Atif Ghani.

21 March 1995 - Interview with Pratibha Parmar. Director, independent film-maker, London.

9 May 1995 - 2nd London Film and Video Development Agency focus group discussion. Part of Black and Asian Training Research. Chair Henry Martin.

16 May 1995 - 3rd London Film and Video Development Agency focus group discussion. Part of Black and Asian Training Research. Chair Inge Blackman.

May - October 1995 - Producer for THE DRIVE (1995) for Anglia Television's First Take Series.

1996

May - September 1996 - Producer for DA BRATT PAC PRESENTS...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (1996) for Anglia Television as part of The Marquee, arts documentary series.

9 November 1996 - Interview with James Van Der Pool, Film and Video Officer. Arts Council of England. Also held a viewing of recent Black Traxx and Black Arts Film and Video Projects.

APPENDIX 2: RESEARCH EVENTS LISTINGS

1993

22 November 1993 – "Trinh T Minh–ha in Conversation With Homi Bhabha". Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

8 March 1993 – Edward Said Lecture, "Adorno as Lateness", University College London. London.

21 March 1993 –Conference on Racism and Fascism in Eurpoe, Migrant Media/L'Agance France as having a public screening of SWEET FRANCE. London.

25 March 1993 – "Panel Discussion on Malcom X". At the BLACK AND THIRD WORLD BOOK FAIR, guest speaker:June Jordan. London.

29 April 1993 – "History as Repetition Talks – OVERVIEW", workshop facilitator: Homi Bhabha. Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

6 May 1993 – "History as Repetition Talks – IDENTITY", workshop facilitator: Homi Bhabha. Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

13 May 1993 – "History as Repetition Talks – RACE", workshop facilitator: Homi Bhabha, . Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

27 May 1993 – TERRITORIES & PASSIONS OF REMEMBERANCE, London Film-makers' Co-op, Programme: Margins of Resistance, London.

18 to 20 June 1993 – London Film-makers' Co-op, London Electronic Arts and Cinenova Distribution Showcase.

29 September 1993 – Day Conference South Asian Visual Arts Festival, Midlands Arts Centre. Birmingham.

September to October 1993 – BEYOND DESTINATION at IKON Gallery, Birmingham

6 October 1993 – ICA "History as Repetition"– day sessions, panel discussions and Homi Bhabha and Judith Butler. London.

13 October 1993 – Central TV "Short Film Conference", Birmingham.

14 October 1993 – IKON Gallery "Discussion with Alia Syed: FATIMA'S LETTER". Birmingham.

31 October 1993 – ICA "Doing It In Colour", Conferences on Race and Sexuality. Organised by Ian Iqbal Rashid.

9 November 1993 – Talk "Black TV: Positive to Exploitative Images", Colin Prescod, London School of Economics and Political Science.

29 November 1993 – ICA "Bad Language", evening talk Race, Language and poetry.

1994

7 January 1994 – Preview Screening of "Bhaji on the Beach". National Film Theatre, London.

21 January 1994 – "Film–making and Co–operativity: Discussion with Pier Wilkie", Working Group In Cultural Strategies, London Film-makers' Co-op, London.

4 February 1994 – "Exploring the Notion of Co–operativity", Working Group In Cultural Strategies, London Film-makers' Co-op, London.

April 1994 – London Film-makers' Co–op Review. Interviews with all staff, produce summary report for the Executive Committee. London.

22 April 1994 – "Writing on the Wall" Les Back, Goldsmith's College, Working Group In Cultural Strategies, London Film-makers' Co-op, London.

3–5 May 1994 – Desh Pardesh South Asian Arts Festival, Toronto, Canada.

7 May 1994 – Presentation "Politics of Identity in Buddha of Suburbia", Desh Pardesh, Toronto, Canada.

13 June 1994 – Paper "A New Cultural Politics of Difference", delivered at Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association Meetings. University of Calgary, Canada.

29 June 1994 – Guest Lecture "Reading Identity in Krishna's MASALA", Film Studies Department, Queen's University.

24 July 1994 – Viewing "Disrupted Boarders", first Gallery show of INIVA. Photographer's Gallery, London.

6 August 1994 – "Scene and Heard: Power and Sexual Imagery" Presentors: Ian Rashid, Kobena Mercer, Ajuma. Camerawork Gallery, London.

23 to 27 August 1994 –"The Babysitter", Part of the Short Film programme. Edinburgh Film Festival, Edinburgh.

14 September 1994 – "Critically Analysing Chadha's 'Acting Our Age'", Working Group In Cultural Strategies, London Film-makers' Co-op, London.

14 to 22 October 1994 – "Black & Asian Television Drama Focus", 10th Birmingham International Film & Television Festival.

21 October 1994 – Presentation, "Radical Democracy: Methodology or Ideology", Anarchist Gatherings, London.

24 October 1994 – "Literary Theory: What Has It Done for Us?", ICA. Panelists: Edward Said, Christopher Hitchens, Marrianna Warner, Terry Eagleton.

1995

4 January 1995 – Opening Application for Arts Council of England's Lottery Applications.

12 January 1995 – "Tongues Untied: The Work of Marlon Riggs" Kobena Mercer, London Film-makers' Co-op, London.

14 Febuary 1995 – "Early Representation of Black–ness", invited guest:Colin Prescod, London Film-makers' Co-op Diaspora Cinema Course, London.

21 February 1995 – "Black Images on British Television", invited guest:Sarita Malik, London Film-makers' Co-op Diaspora Cinema Course. London.

14 March 1995 – "New British Imaginings", invited guest:Alia Syed, London Film-makers' Co-op Diaspora Cinema Course. London.

21 March 1995 – "Exploring Issues of Identity", invited guest: Ian Rashid, London Film-makers' Co-op Diaspora Cinema Course. London.

26 March 1995 – "In Conversation With Pratibha Parmar", National Film Theater. London.

28 March 1995 – "Exploring the Popular", Gurinder Chadha, London Film-makers' Co-op Diaspora Cinema Course. London.

18 April – 18 May 1995 – Curator, "New British Portraits", Films: A FAMILY BUSINESS, INDIAN TALES, DARWISH, MEMSAHIB RITA, RHYTHMS. YYZ Gallery, Toronto, Canada.

19 April 1995 – "Asian Out of Asia: Where Are We Know", National Film Theater, Panel Discussion, Gurinder Chadha, Paul Mayer–Burgess, Asif Kapadia, Ian Rashid, Taniqa Gupta. London.

May 1995 – "MIRAGE: Enigmas of Race, Difference and Desire". Exploration into the work and influences of Franz Fanon. Institute of Contemporary Art, London.

15 June 1995 – "Culture Shock? Explaining the Bradford Riots", guest speaker: Kenan Malik, London School of Economics and Political Science, Campaign Against Militarism. London.

1 July 1995 – "Peter Sellars is Dead", BBC Television – Developing Asian Comedy: Paul Sharma, Nina Wadia, Sanjeev Bhaska, Nitin Sawhney. London.

31 August to 7 September – British Short Film Festival, "The Best of British Short Film 8". The Plaza, London

23 September 1995 – "BODY OF A POET" Preview screening. As part of series/season "Dyke TV". Sonali Fernando Director, Arts Council large award Channel 4 Co–production.

28 October 1995 – Metab Theatres "Madhuri I Love You" & "Not Just Another Asian Babe". Oval Theatre House, London.

28 November 1995 – "Black to the Future: Discussion on Multicultural Programming in Britian". Fresh Blood. London.

9 December 1995 – "Isolating Black and Asian Training Needs Conference", Institute of Contemporary Art & London Film and Video Development Agency. London.

1996

24 January 1996 – Guest Lecture, "Black and Asian Identities within Independent British Cinema", Central Saint Martin's School of Art and Design, Foundation in Cultural Studies.

February 1996 – "Black on White TV", Programme of black–British imagery on British television. National Film Theater, London.

February 1996 – "Kiss My Chuddies", Oval Theatre House. Sanjeev Bhaskar and Nitin Sawhney. London

10 February 1996 – "British Asian Film FestivalPlanning Meeting", St. George's Hall, Conference Room. Asian Arts Access, Luton Borough Council & Eastern Arts Board. Luton.

10 April 1996 – "Production Finance". The New Producers' Alliance. Royal College of Art, London.

July 28 1996 – Panellist "New British–Asian Film", IKON Gallery, Birmingham.

APPENDIX 3: FILM LISTINGS (Director's Name, Year, Country)

THE BIRTH OF A NATION (D.W. Grifth, 1915, USA)

MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA (Dziga Vertov, 1928, USSR)

DREAMLAND (Lindsey Anderson, 1953, UK)

TOGETHER (Lorenza Mazzettii, 1955, UK),

MOMMA DON'T ALLOW (Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, 1955, UK)

ROOM AT THE TOP (Jack Clayton, 1958, UK)

EVERYDAY BUT CHRISTMAS (Lindsay Anderson, 1958, UK)

LOOK BACK IN ANGER (Jack Clayton, Tony Richardson, 1959, UK)

SATURDAY NIGHT, SUNDAY MORNING (Karel Reisz, 1960, UK)

THE ENTERTAINER (Tony Richardson, 1960, UK)

THIS SPORTING LIFE (Lindsey Anderson, 1963, UK)

TEN BOB IN WINTER (Lloyd Reckford,1963, UK)

TASTE OF HONEY (Tony Richardson, 1963, UK)

SHAKESPEARE WALLAH (James Ivory, 1965, India)

DREAM A40 (Lloyd Reckford, 1965, UK)

MORGAN A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT (Karel Reisz, 1966, UK)

IF... (Lindsay Anderson, 1968, UK)

BALDWIN'S NIGGER (Horace Ove, 1969, UK)

REGGAE (Horace Ove, 1970, UK)

THE HARDER THEY COME (Perry Henzell, 1971, Jamacia)

AFTER LEONARDO (Malcom LeGrice, 1973, UK)

AMERICAN GRAFFITTI (George Lucas, 1973, USA)

A PRIVATE ENTERPRISE (Dillip Hiro, 1974, UK)

PRESSURE (Hoarce Ove, 1976, UK)

NETWORK (Syndey Lumet, 1976, USA)

STAR WARS (George Lucas, 1977, USA)

HERE TODAY, HERE TOMMOROW (Zia Mouyedin, 1977, UK)

RIDDLES OF THE SPHINX (Laura Mulvey, Peter Wollen, 1977, UK)

HOLE IN BABYLON (Horace Ove,1979, UK)

LIGHT READING (Lis Rhodes, 1979, UK)

TESS (Roman Polanski, 1979, UK/France)

BLACKS BRITANNIA (Colin Prescod, 1979, UK)

MIRROR MIRROR (Yugesh Walia, 1980, UK)

CHARIOTS OF FIRE (Hugh Hudson, 1981, UK)

BURNING AN ILLUSION (Menelik Shabbazz, 1981, UK)

SWEET CHARIOT (Yugesh Walia, 1981, UK)

GANDHI (Richard Attenborough, 1982, UK/USA)

BRITANNIA HOSPITAL (Lindsay Anderson, 1982, UK)

LIVING IN DANGER (Ahmed Jamal, 1984)

MAJDAR (Ahmed Jamal, 1984, UK)

TERRITORIES (Isaac Julien, 1984, UK)

THE BOSTONIANS (James Ivory, 1984, UK)

MAURICE (James Ivory, 1984, UK)

PASSAGE TO INDIA (David Lean, 1984, UK)

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE (Stephen Frears, 1985, UK)

REVOLUTION (Hugh Hudson, 1985, UK/USA/Norway)

AN ENVIRONMENT OF DIGNITY (Ahmed Jamal, 1985, UK)

HANDSWORTH SONGS (John Akomfrah, 1986, UK)

A KIND OF ENGLISH (Ruhul Amin, 1986, UK)

PASSIONS OF REMEMBERANCE (Maureen Blackwood, 1986, UK)

A ROOM WITH A VIEW (James Ivory, 1986, UK)

SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT (Spike Lee, 1986, USA)

THE MISSION (Roland Joffe, 1986, UK)

MONA LISA (Neil Jordan, 1986, UK)

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS (Julien Temple, 1986, UK)

PEOPLE'S ACCOUNT (Caesar Bakari, 1987, UK)

SUPERSTAR (Todd Haynes, 1987, USA)

BUISNESS AS USUAL (Lezli-An Barrett, 1987, UK/USA)

SANCTUARY CHALLENGE (Ahmed Jamal, 1987, UK)

THE LAST OF ENGLAND (Derek Jarman, 1987, UK)

PERSONAL SERVICES (Terry Jones, 1987, UK)

WISH YOU WERE HERE (David Leland, 1987, UK)

PLAYING AWAY (Horace Ove, 1987, UK)

EMPIRE STATE (Ron Peck, 1987, UK)

EAT THE RICH (Richard Peterson, 1987, UK)

SAMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID (Stephen Frears, 1988, UK)

WHO WILL CAST THE FIRST STONE (Ahmed Jamal, 1988, UK)

HOTEL LONDON (Ahmed Jamal, 1988, UK)

LOOKING FOR LANGSTON (Isaac Julien, 1988, UK)

A WORLD APART (Chris Menges,1988, UK)

SALAAM BOMBAY!! (Mira Nair, 1988, UK/France)

SARI RED (Pratibha Parmar, 1988, UK)

THE TALL GUY (Mel Smith,1989, UK)

I'M BRITISH BUT....(Gurinder Chadha, 1989, UK)

DO THE RIGHT THING (Spike Lee, 1989, USA)

POISON (Todd Haynes, 1990, USA)

PRETTY WOMAN (Gary Marshall, 1990, USA)

PAPERHOUSE (Bernard Rose, 1989, UK)

CHICAGO JOE AND THE SHOW GIRL (Bernard Rose, 1990, UK)

DAKOTA ROAD (Nick Ward, 1990, UK)

ONE FALSE MOVE (Carl Franklin, 1991, USA)

YOUNG SOUL REBELS (Isaac Jullien, 1991, UK)

UTTERANCES (Pervaiz Khan,1991, UK)

MASALA (Srinivas Krishna, 1991, Canada)

LONDON KILLS ME (Hanif Kureshi, 1991, UK)

SAM AND ME (Deepa Metha, 1991, Canada)

KHUSH (Pratibha Parmar, 1991, UK)

BOYZ N THE HOOD (John Singleton, 1991, USA)

INBETWEEN (Robert Crusz, 1992, UK)

LATIFA AND HIMILI'S NOMADIC UNCLE (Alnoor Delweshi, 1992, UK)

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Jamil Dehlavi, 1992, UK)

ELECTRIC MOON (Pradip Krishen, 1992, UK)

BLACK AND WHITE IN COLOUR (Isaac Julien, 1992, UK)

MISSISSIPPI MASALA (Mina Nair, 1992, USA)

ABSOLUTELY FABOLOUS (1992, Bob Spiers, UK)

FATIMA'S LETTER (Alia Syed, 1992, UK)

SEVEN SONGS FOR MALCOM X (John Akomfrah, 1993, UK)

WILD WEST (David Attwood, 1993, UK)

SHAKTI (Sonali Fernando, 1993, UK)

MASTERCLASS (Khaled Hakim, 1993, UK)

REMAINS OF THE DAY (James Ivory, 1993, UK)

DARKER SIDE OF BLACK (Isaac Jullien, 1993)

IDENTICAL BEAT (Smita Malde, 1993, UK)

BUDDHA OF SUBURBIA (Roger Michell, 1993, UK)

SAMPLING LONDON (Ranjana Sharda, 1993, UK)

SALAMANDER (Tanya Syed, 1993, UK)

RHYTHMS (Ruhul Amin, 1994, UK)

IQBAL: TWO OR THREE THINGS I KNOW ABOUT HIM (Nasser Aslam,1994, UK)

SPEED (1994, Jan de Bont, USA)

SHALLOW GRAVE (Danny Boyle, 1994, UK)

BHAJI ON THE BEACH (Gurinder Chadha, 1994, UK)

THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE (Nicholas Hytner, 1994, UK)

INDIAN TALES (Asif Kapadia, 1994, UK)

SWEET AND SPICY (Keith Khan,1994, UK)

STRONG CULTURE (Smita Malde, 1994, UK)

FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL (Mike Newell, 1994, UK)

WELCOME II THE TERRORDOME (Ngozi Onwaruh, 1994, UK)

THE COLOUR OF BRITAIN (Pratibha Parmar,1994, UK)

BIDESHI (Francais-Anne Soloman, 1994, UK)

DARWISH (Shafeeq Vellani,1994, UK)

BODY OF A POET (Sonali Fernando,1995, UK)

DEVIL IN A BLUE DRESS (Carl Franklin, 1995, USA)

SAFE (Todd Haynes, 1995, USA)

BANDIT QUEEN (Shekhar Kapur, 1995, UK)

LAND AND FREEDOM (Ken Loach, 1995, UK/Spain/Germany)

THE EQUILIZIER (Horace Ove, 1995, UK)

MEMSAHIB RITA (Pratibha Parmar,1995, UK)

THE DRIVE (Paul Sukhija, 1995, UK)

TRAINSPOTTING (Danny Boyle, 1996, UK)

KIDS (Lary Clark, 1996, USA)

FARGO (Joel Cohen, 1996, USA)

SECRET AND LIES (Mike Leigh, 1996, UK)

ENGLISH PATIENT (Anthony Minghella, 1996. UK/USA)

KAMA SUTRA (Mina Nair, 1996, UK/India)

FLIGHT (Richard Pillia, 1996, UK)

BROTHERS IN TROUBLE (Udayan Prasad, 1996, UK)

DEAD MAN WALKING (Tim Robbins, 1996, USA)

TRAIN TO PAKISTAN (Pamala Rooks, 1996, UK)

DA BRATT PAC PRESENT...THE ULTIMATE DAYTIMER (Paul Sukhija, 1996, UK)

TOO FAST (Paul Sukhija, 1998,UK)

DANCE WITH ME (Carol Salter,1998, UK)

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