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THE ART OF DAVID LEAN:
A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF AUDIO-VISUAL STRUCTURE

BY

CATHERINE MORAITIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

The aim of the thesis is to place under scrutiny four of the formal/structural elements in eight of David Lean's films. These include the sound track (sound and music), and two aspects of the mise-en-scene (black-and-white cinematography and colour). It examines the ways in which they are used and manipulated within the narrative context as to promote the dramatic effect, how they interact with other formal and structural components and, finally, how they contribute to the understanding of the director's stylistic approach. The analyses do not contain themselves to the examination of narrative instances in isolation from the broader narrative framework in which they occur, but are mostly conducted in a manner that closely adheres to narrative order, as this method is believed to better elucidate the evolving and constantly altering function of the formal/structural devices under consideration.

The approach to the analyses is not aimed at abiding by a particular theory or theories, since such a methodology would constrict the scope of investigation. Instead, it follows a flexible approach that accommodates the examination of a multiplicity of factors and issues that are considered as fundamental in the shaping of the artistic end product.

Additionally, the thesis addresses issues of history and culture that provide the background against which the films were made and which, on many occasions, assist in better understanding

the rationale behind the utilisation of the specific formal/structural elements within them.

To my father

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Last but not least, my deepest gratitude and love must go to my family and dearest friends - each and every one of them - who believed in my ability to carry forward with my ambitions, who bore with me through the rough times and who shared my joy when this thesis was finally completed. I am as much indebted to them as to David Lean who made me fall in love with cinema and in so doing, filled my dreams with boundless possibilities.

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1. INTRODUCTION: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

A friend of David's recently said: "One of the mistakes people make nowadays is thinking that a film unit is a democracy. It's not. It's a Kingdom. And everyone nurtures the wishes of the King."

Jack Lemmon¹

David Lean has only made sixteen films in a career that spanned a little over four decades. Despite his limited output when compared to his most celebrated British counterparts, such as Michael Powell who made fifty-nine films, or Carol Reed who had an equally long career with thirty-three films, he was the most commercially successful British director, both in his own country and abroad. The very demanding and exceedingly difficult to conquer world of Hollywood became his artistic and financial base after a long and illustrious career in his native land. Some have attributed his limited productivity to an overriding sense of perfectionism as regards production values, a persistent and meticulous attention to detail in every phase of production, as well as a careful choice of subject matters that, especially during his international period, involved the placement of his intricate fictional characters within vast and complex foreign settings, and in circumstances that demanded a painstaking consideration of chronology and an effort towards historical accuracy. However, technical expertise alone cannot account for his notorious commercial and, often, critical success. From the

¹ Jack Lemmon, in closing the ceremony of the American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991.

beginning of his career, Lean's approach to filmmaking has been centred on the prudent communication of plot with the visuals as the essential means to sustain narrative clarity, continuity and coherence. In his films, the generation of the dramatic effect resides in their mutual implication, whereby each element of cinematography, sound design, dialogue and mise-en-scene enhances its power of expression through its interaction with all the other formal/structural elements. Very often, the subtlety and unobtrusiveness with which the various aspects intermingle renders the elaborate process of their communication difficult to discern on first viewing, giving the initial, but fundamentally erroneous impression, that their parallel utilisation is an effortless and straightforward procedure. It is precisely the purpose of this thesis to uncover the convoluted processes of certain structural and aesthetic elements of his films, and exhibit the manner in which they become indispensable tools in achieving smooth narrative progression and, ultimately, establish a tangible and eloquent stylistic whole.

Throughout the years Lean has been quoted as being the director who gave meaning to the word 'picture-maker.' For many, his contribution to the art of cinema has been thought to rely, for the most part, on the composition of striking images that overpowered the other audio-visual fundamentals of his films. Yet, as Martin Scorsese has rightfully maintained:

Max Ophuls once said: "The camera exists to show things on the screen that cannot exist anywhere else; on stage or in life. Aside from that, I've no use for it. I'm not interested in photography." I always thought that may apply to David Lean, as well. He is a great picture-maker. His images stayed with me forever. But what makes them memorable isn't

necessarily their beauty - that is just good photography. It is the emotion behind those images that's meant the most to me over the years. It is the way David Lean can put feeling on film. The way he shows a whole landscape of the spirit. For me, that is the real geography of David Lean country, and that is why in a David Lean movie there is no such thing as an empty landscape.²

Given that, the forthcoming analysis will aim at examining what lies behind the merely iconic; that which turns the image into meaning, and that which connects a series of images in order to construe their presence within a narrative framework.

For many years, most analyses relating to the Lean films have almost exclusively concentrated on elements of his *oeuvre*, thus adopting the mainstream auteur method of critical appreciation as was articulated in the 1950s by prominent critics of the French monthly journal *Cahiers Du Cinema*. Consequently, there have been many pensive studies pertaining to the mental constitution of his male and female heroines, issues of madness, heroism, self-destruction, the personal and the public, as well as class origin and class conflict. There have also been extensive references to the organization of the narratives around love triangles, cultural diversity, issues of pantheism and other recurrent motifs such as trains, the moon, and so on and so forth. While all these are relevant in acquiring a wider knowledge of the director's intellectual interpretation of the world and the convolutions of human relationships, they say very little, if anything about his stylistic approach and his artistic aptitude or ingenuity.

² Martin Scorsese paying tribute to David Lean during the ceremony for the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Film Institute. CBS (March 8, 1990)

Similarly, and contrary to the early polemical auteur theory, the current analysis does not intend to decipher recurrent preoccupations based on the principle of intent. Such a method would constitute a limited and flawed approach in that it would disengage the final product from the structural complexity that effectuates it. Rather, the deductions from the systematic scrutiny of each individual film hinge on the interlacing of various formal elements that are fundamental to the organisation and distribution of the work to the spectator. Occasionally, there are references to the director's comments that reflect his intent at the time his films were made, but these provide only supplementary pieces of information for the educated scholar, and they cannot override the independent conclusions drawn from the close examination of the individual films. For one, the structure of a narrative may implicitly diverge from the director's intent. For another, the viewer is an autonomous agent who continuously adjusts to new socio-cultural circumstances. The films are firmly placed in history and the viewer is the mercurial critic and receptor of the product through the course of time. As Kristin Thompson comments:

Because the work exists in constantly changing circumstances, audiences' perceptions of it will differ over time. Hence we cannot assume that the meanings and patterns we notice and interpret are completely there in the work, immutable for all time. Rather, the work's devices constitute a set of cues that can encourage us to perform certain viewing activities; the actual form those activities take, however, inevitably depends on the work's interaction with its and the viewer's historical contexts.³

³ Thompson, Kristin. Breaking the Glass Armor: Neo-Formalist Film Analysis. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), p.25

Therefore, the forthcoming analyses will not aspire to provide absolute truths regarding the function of the interactive formal devices, but rather the possibility of an independent and broad appreciation based on the author of the thesis' cognition of the films in question. For that reason, there will be no systematic adherence to any specific theory or theories, since such a method would severely impair the scope of the issues that can be investigated and the methodology that can be applied. However, occasional references to theoretical postulations will be made, both for historical purposes, and in cases where the analyses find such readings informative and constructive.

One question that eventually arises is why the ensuing thesis proclaims to be a study of David Lean's style when his name is not directly connected with the formal/structural devices under consideration. Is such an approach an authorship study? It is generally accepted that the making of a feature film is an essentially collaborative process, whereby each individual artist and technician is assigned to carry out a very specific task. When all the elements are put together, the film becomes a reality and, on occasion, an important and influential work of art. However, precisely because the medium requires the collaboration of a large group of people, it demands discipline and a strict organization that centres on the preservation of stylistic uniformity. This instructive and central role has been traditionally ascribed to the director. He or she has to maintain the unity and add his personal touch so that the end result will be characterised by coherence. Such a view has been the basis of auteur theory, but also an inevitable role that has been assigned to the director

within an industrial system that demanded and still demands an internal meritocratic *modus operandi*. David Lean has made a veritable assertion regarding the director's role as the chief co-ordinator in any given film:

In the early stages I suppose the director is, as it were, a shaper of the film. And then, of course, as the shooting gets nearer, he takes more and more responsibility. One tends to put one's point of view over through the actors. And so, a kind of personal taste or touch will come out. Above all, the director chooses what the audience sees, and when.⁴

The thesis examines four aspects of formal structuring in eight of David Lean's films. Sound (dialogue, sound effects), music (diegetic and non-diegetic), lighting (black-and-white cinematography), and colour. Though Lean was never the sound designer, composer, or cinematographer of his own films, his position as a director and the power that accompanied his prestigious post gave him the licence to exercise his absolute authority and inculcate his own cinematic and ideological principles in the making of his films. That is not to say that the team which surrounded him did not contribute in terms of technical expertise and artistic input, but it was up to the British director to embrace his crew's recommendations or trust his intuition. Ronald Neame who worked on many early Lean films as screenwriter, director of photography and producer, has said many years later: "He's completely and utterly single-minded."⁵ Similar comments were made by composer Maurice Jarre, with whom Lean

⁴ Phillips, Gene.D. Major Film Directors of the American and British Cinema. (London: Associated UP, 1990), p.177

⁵ Ronald Neame interviewed by Melvyn Bragg for the Southbank Show. 'David Lean: A Life in Film'. LWT. 17 February 1985.

collaborated in his four last films. In fact, in spite of Lean's lack of musical knowledge, he had the French composer write the musical themes many times over, until he was satisfied with the result. David Lean was known in the British and American film industries as a tough negotiator, an autocrat with a detailed vision and an unyielding passion for absolute control. Hence, it will not be misguided to consider the study of the formal elements in question as bearing the mark of Lean's own breadth of view.

The choice to scrutinise these four particular formal/structural devices is deliberate. Rarely have there been extensive discussions about their stylistic value or narrative function, perhaps because Lean has always been known as a highly competent craftsman - a derogatory term for someone who conceives himself as a sophisticated artist. Hence, the purpose of this study will be to explicate their paramount significance in elevating the filmic edifice to a unified and forceful whole and, at the same time, examine their inherent qualities of expression.

Each chapter is constructed along very precise lines. Firstly, there is a presentation of the historical background against which Lean moulded his artistic personality and which enabled him to improve and perfect his techniques. It is important to stress, at this point, that neither the film product nor its designer are treated as entirely detached from the socio-economic environment from which they spring, but are evaluated as a complex and interchangeable commodity that involves a combination of the artist's own ingenuity and the circumstances that determine certain aspects of the product's fabrication. In this way, the analyst has access to facts that help him/her ascertain whether a

film conforms to or deviates from the cultural norms of the era during which it was made. Consequently, it provides valuable information as to the degree of originality, or what Thompson prefers to call 'defamiliarisation,'⁶ and access to the filmmaker's artistic evolution within history.

The textual analyses that occupy the main part of the thesis are organised in such a way as to deal with narrative occurrences in sequential order since the structure of the Lean films necessitates such a linear approach. Isolated instances, no matter how impressive or complete they may be in their stylistic essence, do not acquire the fullness of their meaning and effect outside the narrative context within which they are placed. Every narrative climax or anti-climax is always supplemented by the appropriate formal elements of sound, music, lighting and colour, amongst others and, just as the narrative line progresses and transforms the fictional characters, so do the formal elements under consideration become the catalysts of transition and transformation.

Finally, the choice of films has also been deliberate. In order to foreground the process of artistic evolution, each chapter contains the analysis of two films that belong to different genres and historical periods in Lean's career. In this way, the analyst is in a position to accrue further evidence of his artistic constancy or digression, as well as valued information on his embracing of technological development.

⁶ Thompson argues that: "Art defamiliarises our habitual perceptions of the everyday world, of ideology, of other artworks, and so on by taking material from these sources and transforming them. The transformation takes place through their placement in a new context and their participation in unaccustomed formal patterns." Thompson, Kristin. Breaking the Glass Armor: Neo-Formalist Film Analysis. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1988), p.11

2. SOUND

*I try to write sound and music into a script.
I try to describe what I hear in my imagination.*

I'm always telling the sound people:

*"Don't be too realistic with sound. The audience
has got to think it's realistic, but use it like an orchestra".*

David Lean¹

INTRODUCTION

Although film has been established as an art form since the mid-1890s, it was not until 6 October 1927 that the audience at Warner Theatre caught the first infamous words in film history. The film was Alan Crosland's The Jazz Singer, a drama involving the son of a Jewish Cantor who has aspirations of becoming a famous Jazz singer on Broadway. Despite the fact that the film did not receive particular accolades for its dramatic merits it, nonetheless, became a milestone in the history of cinema by means of introducing sound as an integral part of the film's narrative process. The words of Al Jolson in the film "You ain't heard nothing yet" became prophetic. Soon after, the American film industry, as was true of all film industries around the world, would undergo dramatic changes both in economic, cultural and, most importantly perhaps, aesthetic terms. There had been several attempts to introduce sound several years prior to the release of The Jazz Singer, but all of them were so disappointing that the

¹ Lean, David. Conversation with the students of the American Film Institute. *American Film*, March 1990, p.52

studios became more inclined towards adhering to the familiar techniques of the silent cinema. The consensus was that neither the public nor the industry needed sound, especially as audiences were still under the spell of the moving image alone and the studios were enjoying the profits of this popularity. However, Warner Brothers was convinced that the introduction of sound would both revolutionise the medium and increase its appeal to the public. Their gamble quickly paid off as every studio in America converted to sound. Within a decade of its introduction, the 'talkie' became standard studio practice. The silent films - for all their art and visual beauty, their pace and excitement - had become redundant. Such a revolution, of course, did not come about without harmful consequences for some people in the industry. Actors who achieved fame and popularity during the silent period were forced into early retirement by means of what were thought to be voice impediments. Corinne Griffith, for example, who had a long and illustrious career, was considered too nasal and, hence, unsuitable for the talking film. Similarly, another big star of Hollywood, May McAvoy, went into early retirement because she was discovered to have a strong lisp. At the same time, film introduced a language barrier. Until then, images alone were capable of being communicated in any and every language. The inclusion of a few captions that needed translation was a method that was both cheap and easy to perform. Yet, with the introduction of sound, the Hollywood films could not be exported worldwide without the need for highly skilled translators and substantial funds to carry out this process.

It was precisely at this time of innovation and revolution in the art of film that David Lean joined the British film industry. In many respects, his employment at British Gaumont was

propitious in that the large British studio was one of the few that quickly adapted to the new needs of the industry. Apart from building new sound-proofed studios, it developed its own sound system, British Acoustic. On the contrary, the wake of the sound revolution found several smaller studios unable to raise the necessary funds in order to modernise their production facilities and, as a result, having to declare bankruptcy. For all the initial enthusiasm regarding the coming to sound in Britain, there were several problems that had to be solved before the film industry would comfortably deal with and master the new technology. Duncan Petrie pinpoints some of the initial complications that were encountered:

The coming of sound had a fundamental impact on all aspects of film production. Films could no longer be made side by side under a single roof, with live musical accompaniment to provide 'mood' and action orchestrated by a megaphone-wielding director. Studio buildings had to be soundproofed and absolute silence maintained during 'takes'. Meticulous rehearsals for actors and technicians alike became a necessary part of the process, slowing production down. Location shooting became extremely problematic due to the bulkiness of the early recording equipment and the difficulties of controlling extraneous noise and consequently sound productions were confined to the studio whenever possible.²

David Lean who, by the time Gaumont converted to sound, was an already accomplished editor of newsreels, was quick to learn the many intricacies of sound technology and, more particularly, the synchronisation of sound and picture. His first experience with a British sound film was at the newly sound-proofed Gaumont studios at Lime Grove in 1929. The film was Maurice Elvey's futuristic drama High Treason, and Lean's post was that of

² Petrie, Duncan. The British Cinematographer. (London: BFI, 1996), p.21

assistant director. The experience may have been highly informative, but Lean was extremely disappointed with the end result. Like many of his counterparts who had the aspiration of becoming directors, he found the imposition of the new technology rather crude and limiting. For Lean and, more pressingly, for the already established directors, the prospect of making a sound film was seen as a way of curtailing their ability to exercise their artistic vision and a means to limit the dramatic potential of their films. As Kevin Brownlow points out:

By their nature, talking pictures were obliged to give first place to dialogue. Since the techniques of recording sound were guarded by technicians as closely as the formula for a nuclear device, it was difficult for directors to override them. Sound men cared nothing for the art of cinema; they wanted their dialogue and effects recorded to proper technical specifications. If actors had to pause in front of a flower vase, in which was hidden a microphone, then so be it. Cameras made a racket, so they had to be imprisoned in booths. Tracking dollies squeaked, so booths had to be immobile. Stage directors were brought in who were familiar with dialogue but not with camera. For a while, a talking picture was liable also to be a tedious one.³

Lean's dismissive attitude towards the sound film was propelled by the fact that his original fascination with the silent films relied on the way editing gave meaning and dramatic impetus to the succession of images on the screen. Sound *did* reduce the pace of the films and, for a while, it did appear as if it had lost its momentum as an art form. Not surprisingly, Lean decided to return to the cutting room and pursue his career as an editor. As he stated in his autobiographical notes: "Reprieve came along in the form of talkies... I made a dive for the cutting rooms."⁴

³ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.62

⁴ *ibid* p.60

Lean's repugnance to the new form of filmmaking was shared by many prominent European filmmakers. Sergei Eisenstein, Vsevolod Pudovkin and Grigori Alexandrov in August 1928 published a joint statement criticising the coming of synchronised sound as an invention meant to transform the course of cinematic expression from aesthetic (montage), to non-aesthetic (naturalistic). According to this 'manifesto', sound would render the montage piece inert by reclaiming the autonomy of the photographed object. In addition, films would become slower in tempo and the use of speech would increase the naturalistic effect of the medium. Additionally, the French director, René Clair, had gone one step further in this direction, denouncing the talking film as "a barbaric invasion."⁵ As Clair concludes in his article *The Art of Sound*: "Through such 'progressive' means the screen has lost more than it has gained. It has conquered the world of voices, but it has lost the world of dreams."⁶

Despite his initial misgivings, Lean soon realised that the technical innovations would alleviate the problems with sound. It must be taken into account, at this point, that Britain was lagging behind Hollywood in terms of technical expertise and access to funds. British audiences were not too enthusiastic about films, and the government was rather indifferent towards the potential that sound cinema had to offer. Despite the quota act of 1927 which ensured that a certain number of films would have to be produced in Britain, thus giving incentive to the native filmmakers to embark upon more new projects, progress was slow, production values mediocre, and artistic ingenuity sparse. Hence, while the first sound films were making their appearance

⁵ Clair, René. 'The Art of Sound' in Weis, Elizabeth and Belton, John, ed. *Film Sound: Theory and Practice*. . p.92.

⁶ *ibid* p.95.

as late as 1929 in Britain, Hollywood was already perfecting its adjustments to the new needs of the medium. As early as 1930, it had succeeded in combining the new techniques with the silent film aesthetics. When Lean saw Lewis Milestone's classic All Quiet on the Western Front (1930), he was pleasantly surprised by the manner in which the images combined with sound created a very powerful dramatic effect. To his mind, sound film had aesthetic potential after all. Yet, Lean continued his career as a film editor for another decade, waiting his big break into directing.

When Lean co-directed with Noel Coward his first feature In Which We Serve (1942), the sound film had already achieved such a degree of sophistication and technical perfection that the problems of the previous decade became extinct. The country was at war with Germany, and the industry was willing to fund projects that promulgated Britain's war effort. Lean was mostly in charge of the action sequences of the film, although he made equally significant contributions to the shooting script and the editing that involved a sophisticated intercutting technique between present and flashback scenes. Since one of the main purposes of the film was to emulate the real conditions of British men at war, the utilisation of sound had to be equally realistic. This was done with skilled intensity by the sound department under the supervision of Lean who had managed to bring together the dynamic visuals and the shattering sounds of warfare.

His next film, This Happy Breed (1944), would deal with issues revolving around the lives of an ordinary British family across a span of three decades. Britain was still at war, and the aim of the film, on a symbolic level, was to promote the notions of virtue and indestructibility of the British nuclear family.

The use of sound in this film is realistic but not as evidently dramatic as in In Which We Serve. The film emulates a stage ambience since it mostly takes place within restricted settings. Consequently, the use of sound reflects the dominant tone of domesticity that pervades the picture. The same 'theatricality' is also prevalent in his next film, Blithe Spirit, which is, in fact, an adaptation of a theatrical play written by Noel Coward. The utilisation of sound centres on the dialogue that, through its sharp and witty innuendo, formulates the essentially comedic character of the film.

Lean's most challenging project in both aesthetic and thematic terms was his subsequent film Brief Encounter (1945). The elaborate employment of sound along with the prudently structured mise-en-scene was instrumental in the creation of a conspicuous and ill-fated atmosphere within which the two adulterers experience their brief romance. The use of the voice-over became a tool through which the narration acquired added force and a means to set up a mechanism through which the audience came to identify with the female protagonist. Michael Anderegg comments on the importance of sound in the film:

This is a film in which sound is used self-consciously and with great subtlety. The place names themselves - Milford Junction, Ketchworth, Churley, Longdean, Perford - conspire against the lovers: it would be hard to imagine more chilling-sounding locales for the playing out of romantic agonies. The concerto allows Laura to drown out the other sounds, the everyday noises that threaten romance. But ordinary sounds cannot be drowned out; they, too, pervade Laura's consciousness and become a part of her secret, romantic world. Sounds contribute only one element to the tension between romantic and a pervasively anti-romantic atmosphere.⁷

⁷ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.32

By the time Brief Encounter was released, psychoanalytical methods for the analyses of films were widely employed. This was the era of Freudianism and the woman's film both in Britain and the United States. Films like Stella Dallas (1937), Rebecca (1940), Daisy Kenyon (1947), The Wicked Lady (1945), They Were Sisters (1945) and others, depicted the movement of women towards self-discovery, while they also addressed notions and definitions of femininity and sexuality through the female perspective. Several film theorists thought that the workings of patriarchy have left women without a voice in the cinema and that women's films, like the aforementioned, were seeking to reclaim it. At the same time, the psychoanalytical method of analysis was trying to elevate the nature and function of sound in motion pictures. If the woman protagonist was seeking her voice, then the psychoanalytical approach was offering a plausible explanation of how this could be achieved through the utilisation of sound.

Mary Ann Doane, for example, in employing a psychoanalytic approach to the study of sound, exalts its significance by raising it to primary status through reference to the pleasure of hearing:

Beyond the added effect of 'realism' which sound gives to cinema, beyond its supplement of meaning anchored by intelligible dialogue, there is the pleasure of hearing a voice...At the cinema, the sonorous envelope provided by the theatrical space together with techniques employed in the construction of the sound track works to sustain the narcissistic pleasure derived from the image of a certain unity, cohesion, and, hence, an identity grounded by the spectator's fantasmatic relation to his/her own body. The subordination of the voice to the screen as the site of the spectacle's unfolding makes vision and hearing work together in manufacturing the 'hallucination' of a fully sensory world.⁸

⁸ Doane, Mary Ann. 'The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space.' *Yale French Studies*, no. 60, 1980 p.45

However, Doane's discussion of sound does not limit itself to the pleasure of hearing. She carefully examines ways in which sound extends cinematic space. She gives particular emphasis to the role played by the acoustical space of the auditorium as an essential ingredient of the cinematic experience, while she also asserts that off-screen sound or voice-off, as she prefers to call it, expands the space of the diegesis beyond that of the frame. The screen frame is limited by definition, while the world of the diegesis exceeds that which is represented on the cinema screen. Consequently, the diegetic world is broadened and sound acquires powers of representation that the image alone cannot attain. As she claims:

The voice-off is a sound which is first and foremost in the service of the film's construction of space and only indirectly in the service of the image. It validates both what the screen reveals of the diegesis and what it conceals.⁹

Although Lean was undergoing psychoanalysis at the time Brief Encounter was made and continued to have therapy sessions for many years following its completion, it is doubtful whether he consciously employed standard psychoanalytic methods in order to explore and display the inner workings of his female heroine. Similarly, it is uncertain whether he employed sound in a manner that was adhering to psychoanalytic theoretical postulations, although he may have been aware of the extensive discussions on the subject. Nonetheless, the film offers itself for such a reading, being exemplary in its manipulation of the voice-over narration technique.

⁹ Doane, Mary Ann. 'The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space.' *Yale French Studies*, no 60, 1980, p.43

Following the momentous commercial and critical success of Brief Encounter, Lean embarked upon an even more ambitious project. With the war ended and the country reeling from its effects, he chose to recapture some of the British literary glory of the past by adapting two of Charles Dickens' most famous novels, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. The two films were made within a span of two years from each other (Great Expectations (1946) and Oliver Twist (1948)), and have often been acclaimed as the most faithful and artistically intelligent adaptations of Dickens. Lean was profoundly influenced by the German Expressionist cinema of the 1920s, and he thought that expressionism was the apposite stylistic approach that would render the images more powerful and, through them, the narrative more forceful and dramatic. Therefore, when it came to the employment of sound in both these films, he formulated an equally expressionist aesthetic. Just as the set designs featured occasionally oblique vistas, forced perspectives and larger-than-life characters, so did the sound feature elements of hyperbole and amplification that reinforced the protrusion of the expressionistic principles that permeated through the visuals. Several years later, he would apply the same sound structures and techniques in Hobson's Choice (1954), but this time towards creating a comedic effect, hence exhibiting in an intelligent fashion the diverse narrative functions of expressionism.

Following the Dickens adaptations, Lean would return to the directing of two women's films, The Passionate Friends (1949) and Madeleine (1950). The former film is highly redolent of his earlier Brief Encounter, but it gave him the opportunity to further explore the structure of the flashback and the use of sound for constructing an intricate dramatic effect through means

of voice-over narration, while the latter makes subtle use of sound to generate suspense.

His subsequent film, The Sound Barrier (1952) was another technical and artistic challenge. The narrative centres on the efforts of one man to conquer the world of civil and military aviation by being the first to produce an aeroplane that is capable of breaking the barrier of sound. In the process of vanquishing competition and reaching new frontiers, he faces a personal drama. He loses his son and his son-in-law, while he unwillingly estranges his daughter. As the title suggests, sound is an essential thematic and technical component of the film, but its utilisation exceeds the realistic principles that demand a truthful rendition of the conditions under which one man's ambition is realised. The personal tragedy mingles with the attainment of technical triumph and sound, through its objective and subjective employment, becomes an effectively engineered vehicle in connecting the two concurrently presented thematic concerns.

The making of Summer Madness (1955) presented Lean with the opportunity to film exclusively on location in Venice. This would be the first time that the director had the chance and, at the same time, was faced with the challenge of recording the natural sounds of a foreign setting for the purpose of enhancing the feel of the location, and use them as constructive and indispensable elements in the development of his fictional characters' psychology. The same would be repeated in his remaining international films The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957), Lawrence of Arabia (1962), Doctor Zhivago (1965), Ryan's Daughter (1970) and A Passage to India (1985).

The case of The Bridge on the River Kwai is of particular weight as it marked Lean's first experimentation with stereophonic sound - the greatest innovation in this particular field of technology since its advent in 1928. Being shot in a foreign and exotic location, the film and the revolutionary technical apparatus that supported it gave him the opportunity to improve upon the audible exploration of the setting by means of increasing the scope and diversity in the recording of the natural sounds. The utilisation of sound, however, did not constrain itself to a faithful rendition of reality, but was manipulated in a way that was consistent with his thematic considerations that revolved around issues of freedom and captivity, as well as sanity and madness.

While on location during the making of A Passage to India, Lean made clear how important sound was in his films. "Of course I'm terribly conscious of the soundtrack, which is almost as important as the pictures."¹⁰ Although his comment seems to point towards his deprecating remarks early in his career that wanted sound to be at a level below the moving image, through the years, he had made maximum use of its technical and dramatic potential. One of his most characteristic traits as a filmmaker was his knowledge of and adaptability to new technology, as well as his awareness of the fact that in order to be creative and innovative, one had to use the technology in one's hands to the best advantage without ever betraying the artistic vision that encompasses it.

At this point, it would be essential to refer to the ideological disregard with which film sound has been occasionally

¹⁰ Lean, David. 'Return Passage.' *Stills*, March 1985. p.32

treated in textual analyses of films. Only a very small number of books have been written on the subject and, similarly, there has been limited debate over its importance as a stylistically central cinematic component. Essays and articles discussing and dealing with the issue of sound often limit themselves to superficial historical accounts of its technological evolution without considering the various ways in which it has transformed and keeps altering the nature of the medium in structural, ideological, and stylistic terms. Hence, very often, there are exhaustive accounts of the technology behind the invention of the cameraphone, vitaphone, magnetic sound, stereo sound, Dolby surround, Dolby Digital, DTS, THX, etc, or the specific dates of their emergence, without reference to the power and weight that their implementation has on multiple layers of individual films. On the other hand, however, we cannot bypass the fact that detailed accounts of the various technologies invented for, or applied to cinema, give us an insight into the culture that produces them. In order to understand the nature of the medium, one has to be aware of the cultural transformations taking place throughout the course of history, transformations that constantly re-shape film's volatile identity. In the closing decades of the twentieth century, for example, cinema's technical advancement (particularly in mainstream Hollywood productions) has reached such a degree of proficiency that sheer production values have become a primary source of attraction of audiences into cinema theatres. This phenomenon is especially evident in the 1980s and 1990s 'action' films where the interaction between the computerised and highly impressive visuals and the ingenious, effective and almost exclusively digital sound effects, excite the notice of even the most unresponsive viewer. At the dawn of

the third millennium, technical evolution has often been criticised as having taken precedence over aesthetically creative attainment. The inflation of visual and sound effects has stripped, in many cases, cinema of more intricate artistic structures, ones that reveal intuition, complex thought and clarity of vision on the part of the various artists and craftsmen involved in the making of a motion picture. It has been contended by many that, today, the use of sound profoundly reflects the world we live in - a world of hyperbole, inflation of consumerism and frantic living rhythms where the easily digestible and the highly technical are commonplace, reflecting our lifestyle and tastes. Hence, cinema in our current age and time has all the advantages and disadvantages of the cultural apparatus that produces it. Sound, being an integral part of the art of cinema does comply to the rules that necessitate, to a greater or lesser degree, a certain style of use. Walter Murch better exemplifies the current mainstream film production ideology in his foreword of Michael Chion's book 'Audio-Vision':

The danger of present day cinema is that it can crush its subjects by its very ability to represent them; it doesn't possess the built-in escape valves of ambiguity that painting, music, literature, radio drama, and black-and-white silent film automatically have simply by virtue of their sensory incompleteness - an incompleteness that engages the imagination of the viewer as compensation for what is only evoked by the artist. By comparison, films seem to be 'all there' (it isn't but it seems to be), and thus the responsibility of filmmakers is to find ways within that completeness to refrain from achieving it.¹¹

In closing this introduction, it is essential to take into consideration the work of one of the leading sound experts in the

¹¹ Chion, Michael. Audio-Vision: Sound On Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994, pp. 19-20

world today, Michel Chion. The well-known French critic, composer and filmmaker was the first person to try and synthesise an extensive, discerning and coherent sound theory based on his lengthy and time-consuming research on the subject. Unlike his predecessors in the field of film sound, Chion attempts to examine in detail the interaction of sound and image as an intricate and complex structure with no pre-existing rules guiding the precise form of this interaction. His book, 'Audio-Vision', is a testimonial of his vehement attachment to this view. As Walter Murch states:

The essential first step that Chion takes is to assume that there is 'no natural and pre-existing harmony between image and sound'- that the shadow is in fact dancing free...The challenge that an idea like this presents to the filmmaker is how to create the right situations and make the right choices so that bonds of seeming inevitability are forged between the film's images and sounds, while admitting that there was nothing inevitable about them to begin with. The 'journey' is the film, and the particular 'acquaintance' lasts within the context of that film: it did not preexist and is perfectly free to be reformed differently on subsequent trips.¹²

Along these lines, Chion tries to find as many possible varieties of interaction and, consequently, categorise them by forging different groups and giving them original names that give the educated and non-educated critic alike the opportunity to make specific references by using standardised terms. Previous attempts at this had very limited appeal, primarily due to their confined and narrow field of theoretical or critical scrutiny. While David Bordwell refers to the fundamentals and dimensions of film sound, Altman to the history and the aesthetics of sound within a broad socio-cultural apparatus, Weis and Belton to the

¹² Chion, Michael. Audio-Vision: Sound On Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.17

ideology and technology that supports and propels its use in the cinema, Chion succeeds in offering the broadest possible classification and thus, a wider scope for investigation and criticism. Though the book presents a standardised model for the analysis of sound in any given narrative film, thus narrowing to an extent the scope of the textual scrutiny to specific guidelines, it nonetheless offers a practical manual for those who seek to better evaluate the application of sound, without being involuntarily forced to adhere to theory and theorising.

The rationale behind electing, in the subsequent textual analyses, to refer more extensively to Chion than any other academic who has dealt with the aesthetics of sound, has been based on his commodious and comprehensive terminology that, as mentioned above, facilitates to an adequate degree the process of the sound breakdown of any given film.

The main incentive for choosing the two specific David Lean films for analysis regarding their use of sound (The Passionate Friends (1949), and The Bridge on the River Kwai (1957)), has been based on the principle of their variety and diversity, as it will be shown later on. First of all, they belong to different genres. Secondly, they represent two different historical periods in sound technology. The former utilises 1940s practices, while the latter makes subtle use of stereophonic sound. In addition, the examination of their diversity of purpose and affect will hopefully prove the paramount significance that sound can play in establishing form, mood and character and, at the same time, make manifest the technical awareness and stylistic ingenuity of the filmmaker in question.

THE PASSIONATE FRIENDS (1949)

It has often been contended by critics that the making of The Passionate Friends was a kind of sequel to Lean's earlier and very successful film Brief Encounter in that, like its predecessor, it involved a love triangle with the husband at the receiving end of the deception but also the figure of sanity and stability, the wife as the confused initiator of the romance and, finally, the lover as the symbol of the wife's hidden desires and passions.

Actually, Lean did not want to make this particular film, believing that the subject matter was too reminiscent of Brief Encounter and that, consequently, both critics and audiences would make comparisons between the two, favouring the former picture on grounds of superior narrative and stylistic values. However, the pressure from J.Arthur Rank who was eager to make more women-oriented films was so overwhelming that the members of Cineguild who depended on the financing of their projects from the Rank Organisation were practically forced to find a story that was in tune with the thematic requirements of the production company. Eventually, it was Ronald Neame and the author Eric Ambler who decided upon choosing H.G. Wells' 1913 novel *The Passionate Friends*. Although both men knew that it was an extremely difficult story to film since it involved intricate plot situations and multifaceted philosophical parentheses they, nonetheless, insisted on taking the gamble by going ahead with its production. The challenge became even greater when Neame decided to direct it, with Ambler writing the script and producing it. Neame had made his directorial debut with the thriller Take My Life (1947) and, despite its very moderate

appeal to audiences, was feeling confident enough to embark upon the exploration of a more complex theme. According to Eric Ambler, Neame's decision to take over the exigent assignment as director was partly influenced by his desire to prove that he could be as good as or even better a director than David Lean when it came to the filming of love stories. As Ambler later admitted to Kevin Brownlow:

David was learning to write for the screen. It was a very odd time. David didn't say it, but it was understood that what he wanted to get away from was Brief Encounter. Whereas that was what Ronnie had been aiming for - I suspect he wanted to make a better love story than David. What David really wanted to get away from was Noel Coward. He wanted to get away from the writing authority.¹³

For Lean, who had raised his reputation in the film industry after the tremendous critical and financial success of his two Dickens adaptations The Great Expectations and Oliver Twist, the prospect of making a film that would unavoidably be compared with Brief Encounter and Noel Coward did not seem very bright. In fact, Lean was practically forced to take over as director of The Passionate Friends when Ronald Neame proved to be ineffective in that post.¹⁴

Despite his initial misgivings about the film, Lean was not disappointed with the end result regardless of the fact that it was a very moderate box-office success and a relative critical failure. One critic of *The Evening Standard* who had several objections regarding the film's narrative structure, wrote: "Mr.

¹³ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.252

¹⁴ Ronald Neame, though frustrated with his inability to carry through with the film as director, was happy to act as producer for David Lean, a job that he had successfully maintained for the two Lean classics, Great Expectations and Oliver Twist. Though Neame and Lean had a fruitful collaboration that went as far back as Lean's first film as co-director in In Which We Serve, The Passionate Friends proved to be the swan song of their professional association.

Lean has a brief encounter with inflammation of the flashback".¹⁵ However, The Passionate Friends gave Lean an opportunity, for the first time, to take his film unit to a foreign location (the Swiss Alps) for the shooting of a number of scenes. It also offered him a chance to audibly explore the inner self, the mental frustration and anguish of the characters in a manner more complex and intricate than in Brief Encounter. Robert Murphy has pinpointed that "The Passionate Friends is an extraordinarily powerful film, but much more cerebral than Brief Encounter and The Seventh Veil".¹⁶ Others have taken a less enthusiastic view of the film without, however, failing to point out its narrative merits and production qualities. Gerald Pratley, for example, proposes an ostensibly favourable reading of the film, while maintaining his reservations when he attempts to draw comparisons with Brief Encounter:

Technically, David Lean has pursued his intentions once again to the limit, resulting in a dazzlingly photographed, fast moving, sharp, incisive and delicate study of tangled emotions, loneliness and longing. While the characters are not exactly warm or attractive, their feelings are tensely conveyed in this lyrical study set in white Alpine sunshine and snow. There is guilt here too, but not humiliation. However, it is not the uncertain Mary Justin who will be remembered by audiences but the genuine Laura Jesson.¹⁷

Another asset of the film was the signing up of Ann Todd as the female protagonist of the film. Even before The Passionate Friends was released, she was already one of the biggest stars in Britain, often compared with Greta Garbo both in looks and overall mysterious demeanour. Having had enjoyed great popularity

¹⁵ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. Chapter 20. p. 263

¹⁶ Murphy, Robert. Realism and Tinsel: Cinema and Society in Britain 1939-49. (New York&London: Harrap, 1992), p.117

¹⁷ Pratley, Gerald. The Cinema of David Lean. (New York: Tantivy, 1974), p.89

and success in her two previous roles as the psychologically tormented pianist Francesca Cunningham in Compton Bennett's The Seventh Veil (1946) and as Gay Keane in Alfred Hitchcock's courtroom melodrama The Paradine Case (1947), her assignment as the protagonist of The Passionate Friends presented Lean with the chance to exploit her appeal to the public in a role that suited her enigmatic persona. At the same time, her presence in the film was thought to endow it with a considerable degree of prestige and commercial potential. She was soon to become Mrs David Lean and act in his subsequent films Madeleine and The Sound Barrier (1952). The same was true for Claude Rains who was her co-star in the film. He was already a well-established star in Hollywood and although he lacked the sex appeal of some of his counterparts in the industry, he was collectively considered as one of the major character actors during that period. His starring roles in several Hollywood classics such as Frank Capra's Mr Smith Goes to Washington (1939), Michael Curtiz's Casablanca (1942), Irving Rapper's Now Voyager (1942), and Alfred Hitchcock's Notorious (1946), made him exceptionally popular with, and admired by audiences.

The film's sound designers were Stanley Lambourne and Gordon K. McCallum who had previously worked with Lean on Brief Encounter, as well as on his Dickens adaptations. Although the film does not present enormous challenges relating to the use of sound effects, a great deal of the narration relies upon the structurally careful and thematically instrumental use of sound. As the forthcoming analysis will demonstrate, sound becomes more than a means of narrating the story through the intricate utilisation of the voice-over. Rather, it converts itself into a figurative tool that assists the spectator/listener in

comprehending the intricate psychological traits of the fictional characters and how these traits define the nature and course of their relationships.

ANALYSIS

The film situates the female heroine (Mary Justin) at the centre of the narrative both by having her tell her story by means of voice-over narration, subjective point-of-view, and by objective means of narration - the filmmaker presents the events in her life as an outside observer. The other characters in the film serve primarily as Mary's points of reference. Michael Anderegg, in considering the film's use of the camera, emphasises the significance of the argument made above by claiming that: "Lean seems to abdicate his responsibility for the narrative while asserting his control over it".¹⁸ On the other hand, however, he also states that: "an image (a series of images) can be simultaneously subjective and objective, part of the discourse and a comment on the discourse. The flashback is Mary's, but it is as well the film's (Lean's)".¹⁹ This latter contention, though having its merits, falls into the theoretical trap of the 'Who narrates the story' philosophical discussion which will not be taken into consideration here. Henceforth, the analysis will adhere to a viewpoint that is in tune with Anderegg's former argument rather than with the latter.

If there is a formal case for the use of subjective and objective use of the camera in The Passionate Friends, the same can be said to hold true for the use of sound in the film. Very often, it belongs to Mary by means of the voice-over or by more indirect approaches such as rendering or transforming an objective, visualised sound into a subjective one, hence, reflecting her inner consciousness. The analysis of the last

¹⁸ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p. 67

¹⁹ *ibid* p. 67

sequence of the film that will be considered later, is a good example of how this occurs in the film. Throughout the picture, there is interplay of sounds and visuals, each accenting the narrative force and potential of the other.

At this point, it would be appropriate to concentrate on the sophisticated way in which sound is used in order to reflect Mary Justin's confusion and frustration in having to choose between love and security in the film. The opening sequence provides a characteristic example. It begins with a flashback, followed by Mary's voice-over narration. As she gives the audience/spectator an account of her trip to Switzerland, the objective and the subjective are brought together. Hence, while we hear Mary saying that she was not aware that her ex-lover (Steven Stratton) was in the adjoining room of the hotel she was staying in, the subsequent images confirm Steven's arrival and settling in a room next to hers. This is the first instance of discrepancy between sound and image and one that, consequently, reflects Mary's belated frustration in not being able to meet Stratton though, as she says in her voice-over narration, she was thinking of him. At the same time, and while in her voice-over she expresses the desire to be able to see his face and hear his voice, in actuality, there is total silence from Stratton as he steps out onto the veranda of his room. Michael Anderegg believes that:

in a sense, the camera - though technically violating her literal point-of-view - completes Mary's thought process, 'acts out' what she is thinking, enacts her desire, anticipates the direction of the narrative.²⁰

²⁰ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p. 67

However, the element of frustration lies in the fact that the enactment of her desire remains strictly attached on the realm of daydreaming which, subsequently, enhances a sense of unrequitedness that comes to be associated with Mary on the level of reality. Occasionally, in this initial sequence of the film, there is coincidence of Mary's voice-over with the sounds and visuals that accompany it. At one point, Mary narrates that she heard "a faint murmur of voices" coming from the adjoining room, while at the same time, the spectator/listener hears rather subdued voices emanating from next door. In this instance, the narration becomes objective. However, the objective parts of her narration do not, in any way, help her materialise her desire since they do not coincide with the presence of Steven Stratton on either a visual or an audio level. Anderegg is right in pointing out that the initial sequence is suggestive of the direction the narrative will take. On one level, it will certainly concentrate on the impossibility of the Stratton-Justin love affair actually materialising for a third time.

The next sequence of the film that constitutes another flashback initiated by Mary's voice-over, takes us nine years back, this time the location being the Royal Albert Hall. On this occasion, the subjective is largely subordinated to objective narration. Mary and Howard Justin, as well as Steven Stratton and his girlfriend Pat, are celebrating New Year's Eve. Mary is on the dance floor talking to Steven. The noise that comes from the surrounding space drowns out the conversation between the two past lovers. When Steven asks Mary if she is happy, the first time she does not hear him, while when he repeats the question, she replies "Don't I look it?" One could assume that her response implies two things: a) That her initial inability to hear the

question is suggestive of her problematic relationship with her husband who will appear shortly afterwards and, b) that her second response refers to her pleasure in being with Steven on the dance floor. This difficulty in communication between the two is further emphasised when, as Mary walks away from Steven, he asks her "How can I reach you?" Mary replies that she will phone him, but this time it is Steven who does not hear what she says. Thinking, falsely, that he has heard her, Mary walks up to the box in order to join her husband. While in the initial sequence of the film it was the incongruity between what was seen and what was heard that reflected the unattainable, in this second sequence, it is the noise and reverberation stemming from all parts of the hall that renders Mary's and Steven's communication problematic. Yet, Lean in his capacity as objective commentator on the narrative's unfolding further accentuates the gap between them by employing some audio-visual devices. When Steven says to Pat that Mary is "here somewhere" and looks around in case he sees her, the lights are suddenly dimmed and it becomes impossible for him to see anyone in the distance. Another significant point that has to be mentioned here is the fact that while the dialogue between Mary and Steven is impeded by noise, the ones between Mary and Howard, as well as between Steven and Pat, are clearly audible. Clarity is congruous with stability, and as the narrative will demonstrate, the forces of stability will prove to be more powerful than those of passion.

Yet, this second sequence does not only demonstrate the way in which the two ex-lovers' interaction is hampered by noise, but also focuses its attention on the emotional distance between Mary and her husband. While Mary is in the box with Howard and he comments and criticises the dancing couples on the floor, she

replies that "It's difficult to pick out anybody in particular", when at the same time the image track, through Mary's point-of-view, reveals Steven and Pat dancing. Once again in the film, there is a discrepancy between what is seen and what is heard. The symbolism of this audio-visual counterpoint is very evident: Mary's relationship with her husband is based on systematic deception and unfaithfulness.

Another sequence that deserves consideration takes place as the Justins drive back from the New Year's Eve party. When Howard closes his eyes and falls asleep, Mary finds the opportunity to drift back in time and cast her mind back to the days when she and Steven were a couple. These reminiscences are in the form of sequences of flashbacks. The first one shows them by a pond, their faces reflected on the water. Steven asks Mary: "Will you always love me Mary?" to which she replies "Always." Then, suddenly, Mary is brought back to reality by the screeching, annoying sound that the car she is in makes. The same thing happens soon after, as the car starts moving again. This time, the flashback takes us by the side of the lake with Mary and Steven holding hands and declaring their love for each other. Once again, the joyful reminiscence is cut abruptly when the car comes to a stop and Mary's door opens. The specific application of sound in this case, is intended to stress the mental frustration of Mary in not being able to relive her desire and emotional fulfilment. The constant interruptions that bring her back to the reality of her marriage to Howard are intensely exasperating, and as they continue throughout the film, they serve as indicators of Mary's increasingly deteriorating mental state. In fact, most of these audio interruptions (on and off-screen), will take place when Mary and Steven are together, thus

suggesting the lack of satisfaction, as well as the desired but unattainable privacy they both want so much. Examples of this are abundant in the film. Thus, when they are depicted eating together in a restaurant, the waiter interrupts their cosy conversation. Similarly, when they decide to break up for a while because Howard is coming back from his trip, Lean cuts to a close-up of the wheels of the plane that carries Howard back to his home. At the same time, he also employs a sound close-up of the piercing sound that the wheels make, thus providing a subtle commentary on the imminent and unavoidable interruption of their romantic interlude.

Another sequence that is of particular interest as far as the application of sound is concerned takes place half way through the film when Howard Justin, having learned from his wife that she acquired theatre tickets to see a musical comedy in the company of her ex-lover Steven Stratton, becomes emotionally distracted and disturbed. The scene that takes place at his home with him and his secretary present involves his dictating a letter to her and the realisation that his wife has forgotten the theatre tickets at home (they lie next to the telephone). As Howard sits down on a comfortable armchair, he starts dictating a business letter to Mrs. Layton. His voice is steady, and the tempo in which he utters the words is stable. However, when the camera shifts from him to a close-up of the theatre tickets left behind (not from his point-of-view), there is absolute silence. Speech is momentarily and abruptly discontinued, while the silence that accompanies the visuals, reflects Howard's emotional paralysis. As the sequence unravels, there is a constant repetition of the audio motif that initiated the scene (steady speech followed by silence), but with Howard's silences becoming

longer, and with the camera further closing in on the image of the two tickets. This audio-visual concurrence leads the spectator to assume that Howard's suspicions regarding the activities of his wife at that point in time are increasingly tormenting him. Bela Balazs stresses the pertinence of the 'application' of silence in sound cinema. He asserts that:

The presentation of silence is one of the most specific dramatic effects of the sound film. No other art can reproduce silence, neither painting nor sculpture, nor literature nor the silent film could do so.²¹

Indeed, Howard's silences achieve a dramatic effect much more powerful than could be accomplished if there was a manifest show of frustration, including words and actions to that effect. The internalisation of discontentment and anguish through means of silence, become a tool in heightening the complexity of the inner drama.

However, the culmination of Howard's frustration is manifested towards the end of the sequence when he completes the dictation of the letter to Mrs. Layton. Howard utters the final sentence of the letter: "Throughout this conversation with him, I had the impression that his earlier protestations had been quite insincere." Immediately after his last word, the camera cuts to a photograph of Mary in a picture-frame lying on the table. Eventhough Howard's words reflect the contents of the letter, they also mirror his mental exasperation, as the following shot of Mary's picture suggests. The word 'insincere' functions as a metaphorical sound bridge between the two shots, exemplifying the

²¹ Bela Balazs. *Theory of the Film: Sound*. In Belton John, and Weis Elizabeth. Film Sound: Theory and Practice. (New York: Columbia UP, 1985), p.117

way in which Howard's initial foreboding about his wife's conduct has become a conviction as the sequence draws to a close.

In conclusion, it could be argued that the significance of the sequence lies in its ability to have Howard Justin 'express' his mental state without uttering a single sound or word that would serve as a direct outward declaration of his fears, frustrations and apprehensions regarding his wife Mary. This is achieved through a) silence: the occasional absence of his voice from the sound track in correlation with the synchronous images provides a directorial comment on his psychological disposition and, b) language connotation: the last sentence of the letter he dictates to his secretary and, more specifically, the last word ('insincere') though uttered within a different context, when in combination with the subsequent shot of his wife's photograph, attains a new meaning.

The last sequence of the film, which leads the narrative and the drama to a memorable climax, owes a great deal of its emotional impact to the use of sound that reinforces the intensity exerted by the visuals. The sequence commences when Mary finds herself in the London underground following a bitter and harsh reception she got from her husband who, moments before, had thrown her out of their home. As Mary steps towards the ticket machine, there is virtual silence. Nothing is audible, apart from the clanking sound her heels make as she walks. This is a moment of intense audio-visual isolation imposed on Mary. Underground stations, while functioning as locuses of mass transportation, are also places of human gatherings and exchanges - symbols that represent human co-existence and interchange. They are usually noisy and bustling with life. Henceforth, the chosen timing of her presence in the underground (very late at night)

when human 'traffic' is naturally sparse, and the realisation that she is practically all alone, appears as further augmenting the sense of Mary's physical seclusion, as well as signifying her emotional detachment from the world. The sign 'WAY OUT' that appears on the foreground of the frame and which points to a direction opposite to that of Mary's movements further operates as a supplementary indicator of her psychological insulation and aggressive negation of order and normality. When Mary stops in front of the ticket machine, presumably in order to get anywhere away from 'home', she hears off-screen the sound of an approaching train - a sonorous thud and protracted reverberation that envelops the audio track. She suddenly turns pale and becomes anguished. The visual manifestation of her reaction to the sound activates the viewer's audio-visual memory of the film and, in combination with the images and the sounds that just preceded this shot (her predominantly physical isolation), lead the spectator to contend that, in Mary's mind, her previous nearly attempted suicide on the rails before a passing train²², is coming back to haunt her. Therefore, while for Mary dread is emanating from an audible source, for the spectator/listener, it is Mary's physical, visualised reaction to the sound she hears that propels reminiscence and, hence, anxious anticipation.

The shots that follow exemplify in a masterful way the manner in which passive off-screen sound can become subjective-internalised.²³ As Mary continues to hear the sound of the passing

²² This near-tragedy happened when Mary discovered that her impending divorce with Howard would also involve Steven Stratton and, consequently, ruin his happily and meticulously organised marital life. When her lawyer advised Mary not to see Stratton in order to avoid complications in the divorce proceedings, and while being desperate and feeling guilty, she momentarily considered committing suicide by throwing herself on the rail tracks as the train was approaching. The sound of the approaching train and the fear it generated in Mary, are identically duplicated for this latter sequence under discussion.

²³ Michel Chion describes subjective-internalised sound as that which reflects the inner mental voices of the characters. Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia, 1994), p.76

train down below, and as the current that its crossing generates blows gently on to her face, her fear disappears and in its place there is solid determination. Mary becomes drawn to that sound which, as the seconds elapse, becomes louder and louder. It is this systematic increase in loudness that renders the sound unnatural for the spectator and which lead him/her to assert that it now reflects Mary's state of mind, that is, her conviction that suicide is the ultimate solution to her problems. The argument as put forward here, is further reinforced by the way Mary responds to the persistent sound she hears. When she moves towards the descending escalators, the ticket inspector (not seen previously), asks her for her ticket and she does not respond. In a sense, she has violated the law but is indifferent as to the consequences because, to put it simply, to her mind, this act of defiance bears no meaning whatsoever. The sound of imminent death is all too powerful and has such a magnetic appeal to her that all other sounds stemming from humans appear to be trivial, insignificant and inconsequential. On a visual level, the contra-flow movement (passengers on their way out versus her on her way in), adds to the overall feeling of desperation and forcefully implies her mental segregation from life and humanity. Hence, Lean constructs a perception of gradual psychological deterioration on Mary's part. Whereas in the first part of the sequence there is a dominant feeling of physical and mental loneliness, enhanced by the absence of any sounds and images of humans, in the second the perturbation caused by the sound of the passing train accelerates the erosion of any signs of sanity left within her. Even the 'entrance' of humanity, both audibly and visually, into hers and the viewer's picture frame, does not

alter the circumstances of her mental existence, other than corroborating her isolation.

The next shot in the sequence constitutes the first climactic point in this, the final part of the film. Mary, while descending the electric escalators, remains motionless as if ready to meet her fate - her body and mind fixed onto the sound of the train. The camera is on a close-up of her face, her eyes staring into a void, while the noise the train makes, increasing in loudness and proximity, eliminates all other possible sound sources from the audio track. On this particular occasion, Mary's identification with death is complete. There is no possibility of either mental or physical escape from her demons.

As she reaches the platform, the sound dies down since the train has nearly left the station. It is interesting to see, however, how Lean manages to engage in a manipulation of the spectator's anticipation and expectations through means of transforming the ideological qualities of the audio track. He shifts from rendering actual off-screen sound as subjective (the inner, mental voice of a character), to restoring it in its actuality. That is exactly what happens with Mary when she steps on to the platform. There is practically silence when one, given the progressive element of suspense that has been engineered throughout the sequence, would expect her to go straight on and jump on top of the rails. Instead, it seems that in the absence of that characteristic sound, her compelling force driving her to put her life to an end is temporarily suspended. It is only, therefore, in the presence of an actual sound of a passing train, that Mary has the capacity to internalise it and bring about self-destruction. Furthermore, in the midst of this virtual silence on the practically vacated platform, the

spectator/listener hears and sees in the distance the station-master whistling away to a happy tune. Given Mary's emotional fragility, the whistling functions as a point of contradiction and as an ironical comment that is bolstered by the rapid succession of the visuals. Hence, while the whistling is heard off-screen, the camera cuts to a medium shot of Mary - her gaze fixated as she's lost in thought. Consequently, there is a close-up of the rail tracks, presumably from her point-of-view. As the next shot closes in on Mary, establishing in this manner a sense of increasing apprehension, the sound of the whistling retains its initial level of loudness and sustains its rhythm, thus creating a discrepancy between reality and Mary's state of mind. The irony lies in the fact that, while Mary can actually hear the melodious tune that is connotative of carelessness and psychological well-being, the images we see on the screen and which are indicative of her mental disintegration (the close up of the red light which marks the imminent arrival of the next train, the extreme close-up of the rail tracks, the fixation of the camera on Mary's face), are pointing towards another direction. In addition, it could be argued that the whistling further aggravates her condition by setting up the possibility of an alternative approach to life - one that Mary is not in a position to return to. The sound of the whistling is masked when the train finally makes its appearance on the platform. Though the train itself is never seen but instead the camera concentrates on Mary's reaction, the spectator gathers from her expressive visual contortions that it is coming towards her. As she moves forward and gets ready to jump, she is held back by Howard who shows up at the critical moment saving her life. At this most climactic point of the whole sequence, the sound that

is heard off-screen is that of a harsh metallic squeak (that of a train's brakes bringing it to a halt). While this occurs on the sound track, on the visual track we see Howard and his wife embracing. Hence, it would be fitting to suggest that this particular audio-visual concurrence works its way as a subtle metaphor regarding Mary's psychology. The protracted high-pitched sound originating from the train, resembling a human scream, reflects Mary's ultimate cry of desperation, as well as relief in being returned to the safety of her relationship with her husband.

While the sequence continues with Howard trying to console his wife and make sure that everything is all right, an old lady breaks up their conversation and asks the couple whether there could be anything she could do to help them. This audible interference by means of interrupting dialogue momentarily disrupts the couple's effort to establish a mental rapport, but also, once again, such a disruption can be said to imply a number of things based on the narrative's unfolding up to this moment. Throughout the length of the film the spectator/listener has witnessed the way in which Mary and Steven were constantly interrupted by audible sources, on and off-screen, while they were trying to create a romantic set-up. As has been discussed in the analysis of the film's opening scenes, it is precisely the inability of the ex-lovers to re-establish intimacy that is constantly surfacing in the presentation of the narrative. Therefore, the intrusion of the elderly lady into a moment of nearness between Mary and Howard - their first true one-insinuates two things: a) The future of their relationship will possibly be problematic, as was the case with Mary and Steven and b) that though problems may arise in their marriage, the

relationship will not again be one based simply on security and freedom to lead separate lives, but will instead build its foundations on a sense of belonging, love "of the romantic type" which Howard previously denounced in a fit of jealousy directed at his wife.

Michael Anderegg takes a different view of this last section of the sequence:

The film ends ambiguously. What does Mary feel in that final close-up? We cannot really know. Her narration, which might answer the question, has abruptly ended. The film could not contain her viewpoint and so had to abort her narration. The Passionate Friends thus carries us beyond Mary's consciousness, but it posits nothing in its place.²⁴

As it is hoped the above analysis has demonstrated, the film, contrary to what Anderegg has to say, does not end ambiguously. Of course, it does not offer definite answers as to what will happen to Mary's life, but it provides some clues. The use of sound throughout the sequence, but even more so towards its end, offers subtle indications that Mary will return to her husband, while the framework of their relationship will change for the better, without ruling out the possibility that it will not be the best possible. Additionally, it should be stated that a very clear-cut ending to the film would betray the principles around which the narrative was constructed and presented to the viewer. In other words, the enigmatic character of the female heroine would fade, and the complexity of her emotional relationship to the two male characters, which is the driving force of the narrative, would be oversimplified.

²⁴ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.68

The closing sequence of the picture, therefore, is a perfect example of how a film may carry the narrative forward and even intensify its power of representation without having to resort to the implementation of dialogue, but achieve the desired effects, primarily through the sophisticated usage of sounds and images.

THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI (1957)

The Bridge on the River Kwai, being David Lean's first fully international venture, presented a plethora of artistic and production challenges to the British filmmaker who, up until the making of this film and with the exception of Summer Madness, was almost exclusively operating within the bounds of the British studio system. Although there were small but daring moves on his part in the past involving shooting on location outside Britain, initially with The Passionate Friends²⁵ and subsequently with Summer Madness, these efforts were still completed under strict budgetary limitations imposed by an increasingly declining British film industry. The case of Summer Madness offers a characteristic example of the fiscal crisis that Lean's native film industry was in. In order to secure funds for shooting entirely on location in Venice while under contract with British Lion, David Lean had to seek the financial assistance of Lopert Film Productions, associate company of the American United Artists, which raised the necessary \$1,000,000 for the completion the project.

Hence, it is not surprising that when Lean was offered the chance to make The Bridge on the River Kwai with an independent and powerful producer like Sam Spiegel for three times the budget that he worked for on Summer Madness, he instantly warmed to the idea. His relationship with J.Arthur Rank and Alexander Korda in his previous films was always cordial, and Lean was given creative freedom and considerable financial assistance in order to organise and complete his films. Nevertheless, he did not feel

²⁵ The film was shot partly on location in the Swiss Alps despite objections from the studio.

that either of the two producers had the kind of artistic inclination that some of their American counterparts possessed²⁶, or that they were fervently committed to any specific project. On the other hand, Sam Spiegel was the archetypal American-bred producer who had very high aspirations, a keen sense of artistic wisdom, and an overpowering will. Although Spiegel had many differences of opinion with Lean on how the film should be shot and on many other production details, it was a collaboration that proved to be extremely successful and fruitful. Spiegel was a stern believer in the idea that good things in films arose out of confrontation over issues regarding artistic creativity. When the film was completed after a shooting schedule of ten months on location in Ceylon, it got seven Academy Awards including one for Sam Spiegel's production and one for Lean's direction. To this day, it stands as one of cinema's indelible classics and an exemplary action film. Furthermore, this was the first time that a British director would win in this category, and it paved the way for even more ambitious projects with the financial blessing of the American studios and the guidance of Sam Spiegel. Not surprisingly, five years later, the collaboration between the two men would lead to another triumph, this time with Lawrence of Arabia (1962).

Apart from the influential figure of Sam Spiegel, there were significant changes taking place in the American film industry at the time Lean decided to take on the making of The Bridge on the River Kwai. It must not be overlooked that it was in the early 1950s that some of the most revolutionary innovations were taking

²⁶ Lean had particular admiration for the work of David O. Selznick at MGM. For him, Selznick represented the daring producer who knew the art and craft of film, and who was willing to totally commit himself to the projects that he envisaged without being afraid of taking risks.

the world of filmmaking by storm. Widescreen cinema, introduced in 1953 (The Robe), gave greater scope to the visual field while another novelty, stereophonic sound, shifted a great deal of attention to spatial designation through accentuating points of audition. Ira Konigsberg points out the increasing necessity for the employment of stereophonic sound:

Stereophonic sound became a more significant part of film with the rise of wide-screen motion pictures, when the greater scope of the picture called for a distribution of sound along the screen, especially from the extremities.²⁷

David Lean, already established in Britain as a master craftsman with a meticulous attention to detail, embraced the new techniques in an effort to explore their artistic potential. The opening sequence of the film, as it will be discussed later, stands as testament to both the stylistic wisdom and evolution of the artist Lean, as well as to the fundamental impact which this new technique had in dictating the feel of the location and the impact it had on the characters surviving and entrapped in it.

One of the most important aspects of the film was the script that enhanced the narrative's drama and gave a fuller dimension to the fictional characters. Pierre Boulle's book *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was first published in France in 1952. A couple of years later, the English version of the novel appeared in the United Kingdom and was picked-up by Carl Foreman who turned it into a script. Spiegel immediately got hold of Foreman and acquired the rights to the script which he sent to Lean in Venice while he was still shooting Summer Madness. Lean, however, was

²⁷ Konigsberg Ira. The Complete Film Dictionary. (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), p. 350

hardly enthusiastic with Foreman's efforts, although he was very drawn to the story itself. Consequently, he and Norman Spencer decided to write a treatment while Spiegel was looking for another writer. Eventually, Calder Willingham was brought in but, due to Lean's instant dislike, he was quickly dismissed. It can be argued that this was an odd decision on his part since only a few months earlier Willingham had written a script for another known and celebrated anti-war movie, Stanley Kubrick's Paths of Glory (1957). Yet, Lean's opinion overrode everyone else's, and they had to abide by his decision. In the end, both Lean and Spiegel agreed on the assignment of Michael Wilson who was blacklisted at the time and who, as a result, did not get screen credit although he was foremost responsible for the shooting script. Instead, the writing credit went to the author Pierre Boulle who, apart from writing the novel, had nothing to do with the film. It was only several years after the film's first release that Michael Wilson and Carl Foreman were reinstated as the sole writers of the script.

Casting was an important issue for the makers of the film. While the story had only male characters in it, Columbia Pictures insisted upon the inclusion of women for commercial purposes. Under great pressure from the production company, Lean had to find narrative instances whereby the inclusion of women would be justified. Hence, he had to incorporate a few scenes with Siamese women bearers escorting the team assigned to blow up the Kwai bridge, as well as a short romantic interlude between Private Shears (William Holden) and a nurse (Ann Sears) during his recuperation at a British hospital after having successfully crossed the jungle. Columbia's demands were not limited to the presence of women in the film, but extended into the casting of

the principal fictional characters. They believed that in order to secure public exposure and audience interest, they had to hire a popular American star and create a part for him in the film. After long deliberations, Lean and Spiegel decided that William Holden would be ideal in the role of Shears, the American Navy officer who defies the odds and escapes from the prisoner-of-war camp. Holden was eventually hired at a staggering fee that exceeded the \$1,000,000 mark, thus making him the highest paid star in the history of cinema until then. Lean had discovered that the constraints imposed by the American studio system were even more pressing than those of the British film industry, but he was willing to compromise, especially as he was guaranteed a budget of nearly \$3,000,000, thus making The Bridge on the River Kwai one of the most expensive films of the 1950s.

The remaining major parts went to Alec Guinness²⁸ (Colonel Nicholson) who collaborated with Lean in his Dickens adaptations, to Sessue Hayakawa²⁹ (Colonel Saito), a famous silent film star, and to Jack Hawkins (Major Warden), an accomplished British actor with whom he would team up again in Lawrence of Arabia.

The sound engineers were Jon Cox and John Mitchell with whom Lean had worked previously during the making of Hobson's Choice and The Sound Barrier. Their technical expertise and Lean's vision were merged in order to produce the final result that, as the forthcoming scrutiny will reveal, uses the new technology to the best dramatic advantage in the film.

²⁸ Alec Guinness would win an Academy Award for Best Acting as the overbearing and occasionally tyrannical Colonel Nicholson.

²⁹ Sessue Hayakawa was nominated for the male supporting role but lost to Red Buttons in Sayonara.

ANALYSIS

The film opens with a shot of a hawk flying in the clear blue sky with its wings at full extension. As the camera tilts and pans following the bird's every movement, and as each of its graceful and commanding manoeuvres is accompanied by an exaggerated sound effect of practically thrusting through the air like a howling wind, the spectator is instantly compelled to make a specific audio-visual association as put forward by the filmmaker. In this particular instance, we do not simply have a charming spectacle of a majestic bird of prey, but a subtle metaphor achieved fundamentally through means of 'rendered' sound which, in turn, gives added value to the image on the screen. Michel Chion defines 'rendered' sound as an essential constituent of metaphoric sound and attributes to it the effect of "making a sound more real than it would appear in reality."³⁰ In other words, to use the specific example mentioned above, a hawk alone, despite its natural ability for both hovering and darting flights, would never in reality make such a powerful audible impression as that offered in The Bridge on the River Kwai. Hence, it is through carefully engineered and employed technical means that the filmmaker achieves the desired effect. By visually isolating the hawk and by enhancing its power of presence through a combination of an amplified sound close-up, as well through the establishment of monophony, that is, the elimination of any sound source on the track other than that emanating from the movements of the bird on the screen, Lean strives to consolidate its command and predisposes the viewer as to what will follow.

³⁰ Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), Foreword xix

Consequently, this initial seven-second shot functions a) as an establishing shot: the spectator vaguely grasps the locale in, or around which the forthcoming action will take place. It is certainly not a city, a suburb, or even the countryside in its serene and temperate manifestation. The presence of a solitary scavenger bird suggests a much rougher and isolated physical environment where human life, if any, would seem to be precarious and subject to the rules of wildlife, and b) as an 'establishing thought', whereby from the onset of the film the notion of nature's assertion over human life is briefly, but emphatically suggested.

The shot that follows is of equal length with the first (7 seconds), and has a double designation. On the one hand, it visually confirms the surmise of the viewer that the locale for the forthcoming action is indeed the jungle. On the other, it audibly re-enforces the intensity of the initial metaphor, with the passive off-screen sound³¹ of the hawk further establishing its power of presence despite its visual absence, thus enhancing its connotative potential. Lean manages to accomplish this through careful usage of the audio tracks. The shot begins with an aerial view of what looks like a very dense, almost impenetrable forest lying far down below. Although the shot seems to be taken from the hawk's point-of-view (the spectator generally tends to visually associate with the previous image he/she has seen), it is soon realised that the camera does not simulate the bird's movements but, instead, slowly tilts down in order to display to the viewer the vast expanse of the jungle. In

³¹ Passive off-screen sound according to Michel Chion's definition is a sound "which creates an atmosphere that envelops and stabilises the image, without making us look elsewhere or to anticipate seeing its source". Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.85

this case, Lean strives to make a visual commentary by showing us the disparity between the solitary and autonomous bird in the sky (shot 1), and the distant and threatening jungle on the ground (shot 2). A similar directorial commentary takes place on the sound track. The soaring sound the hawk produces, though it no longer exclusively dominates the auditory track since it is now mingled with the indiscriminate sounds emanating from the jungle, still commands our attention through means of sustaining a level of loudness above the one that originates from far below. A direct consequence of this auditory discrimination in favour of the scavenger bird is to generate an aura of superiority, distancing and freedom, in the sense that one single bird that is culturally associated with symbols of power, independence and liberty³², dominates thousands, maybe millions of other wildlife creatures and very possibly humanity as well.

Jonathan Sanders makes an interesting comment regarding the metaphorical significance of the hawk's presence:

Matching all the mundane madness in the jungle below is the hawk, a symbol of natural freedom which soars through the sky in the opening and closing shots of the film (an example of Lean's liking for circular structures), imprisoned neither physically nor by military codes of conduct.³³

³² The more characteristic symbolism of the bird of prey (more commonly the eagle) in western culture can be found in the seal of the President of the United States, under the motto "E pluribus unum" which translates in English "From many one". The Bridge on the River Kwai is not the only David Lean film in which the eagle of prey makes its presence as a metaphor. In A Passage to India as Doctor Aziz escorts Miss Adela Quested to the Marabar caves riding an elephant and heading a long procession of servants, he exclaims: "I feel that I'm journeying back into my past and that I'm a Mongol Emperor. Sometimes I shut my eyes and dream. I have splendid clothes again and that I'm riding into battle behind Alamgir. He too rode an elephant". As doctor Aziz completes his short speech which for him constitutes a daydream that fills him with contentment, the camera cuts to an eagle that flies above the caves, making a powerful and very distinct sound that completely dominates the sound track and eliminates all other sounds. The reverberation of its crow along with its elegant flight serves as a metaphor in that it echoes the feelings of Aziz's temporary identification with his distinguished ancestors. In this particular instance, actual visualised sound becomes subjective internal sound. In other words, a mental voice is manifested through the crow of the eagle.

³³ Sanders, Jonathan. *Arts Lab Programme*. October 6, 1982. p.23

Therefore, the first two shots of the opening sequence of the film establish through both visual and auditory processes the primary concerns of the narrative that will be firmly established as the film unravels. Issues of freedom versus captivity are generically inherent in any prisoner-of-war film, but even more so in The Bridge on the River Kwai where notions of power and freedom are very often clashing, positing that form of collision as the driving force of the narrative.

The third shot of the opening sequence is considerably longer than the previous two (over 39 seconds) and involves an extended tilting and panning of the camera through the forest, overgrown with thick tropical vegetation. Whereas in the previous shot the spectator got a remote glimpse of it, in this, the third shot, he/she is abruptly introduced to life 'on the ground down below'. The cut appears to be more sudden than one might expect and the reason for this is the use of sound. As the camera is at a low angle displaying the huge trees that practically obliterate any view of the sky above, the loud hissing, trilling and chirping of the various birds, insects and other wildlife creatures which are audibly omnipresent but visually indiscernible, sustain a cacophony that comes to command the sound track and provide a powerful auditory contrast with the preceding shots. In place of the soothing sound of the hawk's flight, there is now a meshing of discordant sounds that seem to emerge from all areas of the screen, creating a sense of unease and watchful anticipation. As mentioned earlier, Lean was eager to quickly master the new techniques of stereophonic sound and widescreen cinema that first emerged in the early 1950s which he believed would give greater scope and audacity to his novel endeavour with large scale film-making on exotic locations.

Stereophonic sound involved the "use of four magnetic tracks on the same piece of film as the picture, three for speakers behind the screen and one for speakers in the auditorium."³⁴ Therefore, aside from providing the audience with an abrupt initiation to life in the jungle, the filmmaker also relishes the thought of manipulating the modern and contemporary sound tools at his disposal to impress the viewer and attract his/her attention from the very beginning of the film. While doing this, however, Lean does not deviate from a commitment to rendering reality as it exists in the Burmese forests, a fact which becomes clearer as the sequence continues. As the camera tilts down and starts panning, revealing what Rubin describes as "the untouched, unyielding mass of vegetation that one can almost smell on the screen"³⁵, the spectator witnesses the ghastly sight of wooden unmarked graves which instantly imply that human life in these adverse conditions is perilous, if not synonymous with a death sentence. Furthermore, what is more important regarding this specific part of the sequence, are the two types of ironical comments that are brought forward by Lean on the audio-visual track. Firstly, on a visual level, the revelation of human graves is concurrent with the opening credit titles of the film and, more specifically, with the names of the actors who are going to portray the male protagonists in the movie (William Holden, Jack Hawkins and Alec Guinness). Two of them will be dead by the end of the picture, while the third (Jack Hawkins) will be injured but still survive. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the filmmaker subtly forewarns of the fate of the main characters in the film. This irony may not be easily

³⁴ Konigsberg, Ira. The Complete Film Dictionary. (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), p.350

³⁵ Rubin, Jay. Combat Films. 1945-70. (Jefferson: McFarland, 1981), p.143

discernible at first glance, functioning more as a subliminal message to the possibly unsuspecting viewer. However, the visual irony comes to be extended and reinforced by an auditory one. Up until the moment when the graves are revealed, the spectator has been accustomed to the hearing of constant, distinct, realistic and loud noises stemming from various creatures but from unidentified visual sources in the jungle. In formal sound terminology, what the audience experiences is what Michel Chion refers to as the 'superfield', that is, "the space created in multi-track films by ambient natural sounds."³⁶ However, as the graves come into full view, the sound of one specific wild creature, most possibly a bird, (the spectator does not necessarily have to rely on that assumption since he/she does not see it), comes to monopolise the audio track. The sound it makes is high-pitched and strongly reminiscent of human laughter and, more particularly, laughter of an extremely sarcastic nature. It is as if nature, in its ominous disposition, has the 'last laugh' over humanity and its will to conquer the wild by violating its laws of existence.

It is, therefore, through the amalgamation of sound and image that Lean manages to achieve this unnerving effect. The images of the jungle and the graves taken separately from the sounds that accompany them and vice versa, would never accomplish their specific purposes. This conclusion brings us to the consideration of vertical perspectives on audio-visual relations. Chion, argues that:

In current parlance the idea of the soundtrack derives from a purely mechanical analogy with the image track; the latter is indeed a valid concept. The image track owes its being and its unity to the presence of a frame, a space of the images

³⁶ Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p. 150

in which the spectator is invested. By stating that there is no soundtrack I mean first of all that the sounds of a film, taken separately from the image, do not form an internally coherent entity on equal footing with the image track. Second, I mean that each audio element enters into simultaneous vertical relationship with narrative elements contained in the image (characters, actions) and visual elements of textures and settings. These relationships are much more direct and salient than any relations the audio element could have with other sounds... In the simplest and strongest relation, that of off-screen sound, the confrontation of sound with image establishes the sound as being off-screen, even as this sound is heard coming from the surface of the screen. Take away the image, and the off-screen sounds that were perceived apart from other sounds, purely by virtue of the visual exclusion of their source, become just like the others.³⁷

Returning to the analysis of the film's opening sequence, it is soon discovered, as this progresses, that Lean also uses sound as an editing tool. Following the exposition of the graveyard, the camera pans further to the right unveiling the presence of rail tracks in the midst of the wilderness. The spectator sees more human graves by the side of the crudely laid tracks, but the sustained cacophony that up until that moment prevailed through the sequence, is now abruptly transformed into a very lucid and sharp rhythmical pattern emanating from a bird, or group of birds hidden in the jungle. The aim of this transition from sound discord to pulse and tempo serves as a means to smooth over the imminent passage of the locomotive that carries British prisoners-of-war. To make the point clearer: the pitch of the vocal tones the birds and insects make reaches a point where it unmistakably resembles the metallic retort of the train that is heard approaching off-screen, while the rhythm of their utterance bears a formidable likeness to the systematic pounding of the toothed wheels as they mesh with the rack rails. Henceforth, the emergence of humanity via its association with technology (the

³⁷ Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.40

characteristic sound of the locomotive) does not enter abruptly into the picture. In this context, we have the equivalent of an optical dissolve whereby an image gradually fades out as the subsequent one fades in, with a certain amount of overlapping between the two images. In sound terminology, the optical dissolve's equivalent is the sound dissolve, or cross-fade as it is sometimes called, linking two sounds originating from separate sound tracks with one fading out as the other fades in. Like its optical counterpart, the sound dissolve serves to soften the impact of the entrance of a new sound into the audio-visual field. In this way, Lean aims at attracting the spectator's attention by heightening his/her auditory perception. The spectator/listener, though aware of the discrepancy between the two sounds, that is, the mechanical versus the natural, is momentarily drawn to assess the extent of the affinity between them. Nevertheless, this moment of analogy and closeness stands only as a very brief interlude in the antithetical relationship between humanity and nature that permeates through the film.

The next shot 'restores', one could say, the order of things and marks the beginning of the second part of the opening sequence. As the locomotive approaches and enters the frame from screen right, the sound of the steam engine and the screeching of the wheels on to the rusty rail tracks efface the sounds emanating from the birds. It appears as if all types of wildlife have gone into a silent hiding, waiting what will happen next. As the sequence continues, the spectator sees a Japanese soldier on the roof of the train holding on to his machine gun. When the train comes to a halt, the spectator observes a group of British soldiers who, in their subservient capacity as prisoners of war, perform some menial type of manual labour under the blazing sun.

What has previously been assessed as a cacophony of nature's wildlife creatures now becomes a cacophony of man. The whistling of the train is intermixed with the sounds of the pickaxes and hammers in the hands of the POWs who relentlessly but reluctantly repair the metal rail tracks. Even as the British soldiers gather in order to be transferred to their camp, the audible unruliness continues. As they march through the dense jungle, all that can be heard on the sound track (apart from the music that now covers part of the audio strip)³⁸ is a meshing of indistinct voices and the occasional shouts from the Japanese soldiers, presumably egging on their captives to speed up their movements. What is even more significant about this prolonged second sequence is that, all throughout it, there is no sound of any wildlife creature heard. All audible information stems from either mechanical sources (the train, the pickaxes, the hammers), or humans (sounds of exhaustion from the British soldiers and high-pitched yells from the Japanese ones).

This fact brings us back to what has been previously mentioned about the antithetical relationship between humanity and nature in the picture. As it has become evident from the close scrutiny of the opening sequence, this can be divided into two parts: the first one entails three shots (the flight of the eagle, the view of the jungle from the sky and finally, the panning through the densely forested jungle). In all three shots, sounds of nature whether exaggerated by means of sound effects or rendered as faithful to reality, totally dominate the audio track. Omnipresent and omnipotent, they suggest wildlife's monopoly over all other forms of existence. As it has been argued

³⁸ The music commences as the locomotive reaches a dead end and the camera exposes the British soldiers, and stops at the end of the sequence when the camp where the captives are going to spend their time comes into full view.

previously in the analysis, the revelation of human graves further serves to validate this argument. There is no human presence other than a reminder that where there once was, there is not anymore. The second part of the sequence starts with the passing through of the Japanese locomotive and includes a total of thirteen shots, most of which concentrate on the marching of the British prisoners of war through the jungle. On this occasion, there are no other sounds apart from those directly related to humans and to mechanical sounds generated by humans' actions. Though the jungle envelops a large section of the image track, its wild inhabitants are nowhere to be seen or heard. Hence, at the very beginning of the film, the viewer is introduced, at least on a sonic level, to the idea that where wildlife exists there is no space for humanity and vice versa. Yet, we are also aware of the fact that the narrative is going to unfold in a space where the wild and the 'temperate' will have to forcibly co-exist and it is precisely that prospect which, amongst others, creates a feeling of weary anticipation on the part of the spectator/listener. What perpetuates this sense of apprehension is what has been referred to above as the omnipotence and omnipresence of wildlife creatures. Generally speaking, audiences are accustomed to visualised sound "a sound accompanied by the sight of its source or cause."³⁹ In other words, the spectator/listener feels at ease when he/she can see what he/she hears. It is very often the case with horror movies and suspense thrillers that there is a deliberate and constant lack of visualised sound, as well as the presence of acousmatic sound⁴⁰ that generates eeriness and a sinister atmosphere. That is

³⁹ Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.72

⁴⁰ *ibid.* p.71 Chion refers to acousmatic sound as "sounds one hears without seeing their originating cause".

not to say that The Bridge on the River Kwai is a suspense thriller, whereby the wildlife proves to be the most direct threat to humanity or, for that matter, the driving force of the narrative. The role of nature is more that of the mere bystander, threatening on occasion, but never explicitly so. Colonel Saito's first speech to the newly arrived British prisoners, heightens the feeling of apprehension of both the spectator who has sensed the potential menace of the jungle in the opening shots of the film, as well as of his captives. His 'welcoming' speech to them (dialogue being itself an essential component of the audio track) warning them against attempting escape, is very characteristic. He says: "A warning to you about the escape. There is no barbed wire, no watchdog. They are not necessary. We are an island in the jungle. Escape is impossible. You would die." A similar aura of unease is sustained when Shears escapes from the camp and reaches a little Burmese village in very bad physical shape. The spectator immediately assumes it has been so because of the hardships he had to go through while crossing the jungle and he/she is instantly reminded of Colonel Saito's words. Finally, it is also inferred from the conversations between the soldiers that many of their comrades have died from diseases associated with living in the wild, i.e. beriberi. On the other hand, as becomes blatantly clear at the film's closure, it is human conflict that brings about destruction and oblivion rather than humanity's battle with the natural elements and wildlife. In fact, the attempted escape of a group of POWs is doomed to failure *not* because of wildlife's deadly intervention, but due to their shooting by the Japanese guards who hide in the jungle.

In closing the discussion of the film's opening sequence, it would be essential to sum up a few points made during the

analysis, and explain why so much attention has been given to it on an auditory level. As has been demonstrated above, David Lean has used sound in a multiplicity of ways, each time achieving a different effect. He has used sound effects to render a metaphor more effective (the sound of the flight of the scavenger hawk), he has used natural sound as a metaphor but in ideological juxtaposition to the image (the crow of a bird against the view of the human graves). Additionally, he manifested how sound can be used as an editing tool, carrying one shot into the next by manipulating two of sound's fundamentals: loudness and pitch (the sound of the locomotive approaching bearing persuasive resemblance to the trill of the off-screen birds). Furthermore, the opening sequence shows how the interchange of silence with noise can have a subtle but lasting effect on the viewer/listener, as well as on the way it shapes expectation. (Where the wild is in command, there is absence of human auditory presence, and where the emphasis is on humanity there is a persistent lack of wildlife's sonic presence). Additionally, the interplay of on-screen sound (sound emanating from humans) and off-screen sound (that which springs from the animal kingdom), cultivates a sense of anticipation, that is, a certain psychological plateau from which the spectator will be called to adjust to the narrative as it unfolds. Last but not least, Lean in a vein of showmanship, explores and applies to their full extent the potential that the advent of multi-track stereophonic sound, as well as the widescreen process have to offer. He constructs a grand introduction to his film through the omnidirectional springing of sounds from all parts of the frame and, consequently, the cinema screen and the theatre auditorium. David Lean does all that with intensity and absolute prudence,

never swaying from the need to have the narrative move smoothly forward, and without suspending the action for solely artistic purposes. The opening sequence of The Bridge on the River Kwai is a prime example of the director's knowledge of his craft and his artistic ingenuity. Though this is not the first or the only of his films that leaves a lasting impression on the viewer as regards its opening sequence, it is by far the most intricate, carefully thought out and complex on an audible level.

A close examination of the Lean films reveals that, unlike other directors of mainstream cinema who have an inclination towards initiating the narrative via conventional means and methods including the simultaneous usage of recorded music along with images which serve as establishing shots, or with the initiation of dialogue from the first seconds of the narrative, he very often avoids these set-ups and strives instead on concentrating on the intermingling of image with sounds other than dialogue. Characteristic examples of this can be found in many of his films, including Great Expectations, Oliver Twist, The Sound Barrier and Hobson's Choice.

One sequence that is worthy of note and which bears a direct relationship with the opening sequence is that covering Shears' escape from the prison camp. Early on in the film, we see Shears along with a couple of British soldiers trying to flee the camp at dawn in the midst of the dense jungle. While the two British prisoners-of-war are immediately caught and killed on the spot, Shears succeeds in escaping (though he is shot at and wounded), by falling off into a river laying several feet below. For several minutes, the narrative abandons Shears' efforts in order to return to the camp where Colonel Nicholson is imprisoned in a wooden hut under adverse living conditions. This intercalated

sequence involves the unsuccessful attempts of the POWs to build Saito's bridge under the command of the Japanese officers⁴¹, and Saito's clash of wills with Nicholson based on grounds of principle and stubbornness with Major Clipton acting as an intermediary between the two. When the desperate Clipton confesses his frustration and quiet desperation by saying to the Japanese guard: "Are they both mad, or am I going mad, or is it the sun?" the camera cuts to the image of the blazing and blinding sun. Though it is initially assumed that the view of the sun is from Clipton's point-of-view, it is soon realised, first on an audible and, subsequently, on a visual level, that the narrative (through the application of a visual editing device - the sun), has moved back to the Shears adventure which, from that point onwards will run as a parallel narrative to the main one unfolding at the camp. Hence, as the spectator sees the sun, he/she hears the sound of something metallic trailing on a solid surface. Immediately afterwards, the rugged and burned-out figure of Shears emerges on the screen from below like an apparition. The employment of sound in this transitional shot is of paramount importance to the narrative's cohesion and intelligibility. During these three seconds that the sound coming from an unidentifiable source is heard off-screen, the spectator's anticipation is heightened (what is this new sound, where is it coming from?), and he/she is given the time to acknowledge the passage from one sequence to the next whilst the visual referent

⁴¹ The lack of communication between the British soldiers and the Japanese officers is very important to the film, and it largely has to do with the language barrier between them. The orders are given in Japanese, while the British who do not understand the commands, respond dissentingly in English. Most analyses of the film attribute this absence of correspondence to the fervent dedication and loyalty of the British soldiers to their commanding officers who are imprisoned. Although this psychological aspect plays a pivotal role in their relationship with their captor, the linguistic wall that is erected between them is similarly noteworthy. Let us not forget that dialogue is an essential constituent of sound in the cinema and should be given the attention it deserves. Therefore, the discrepancy between the two nationals is, as much the result of the attitude of the groups, or individuals involved, as it is of the language/aural barrier between them.

(the sun) remains unchanged. In other words, the additional element that links the two sequences is acousmatic sound which, within a matter of seconds, becomes visualised (the camera shows Shears crawling on the ground dragging along the empty flask of water). If Shears were to suddenly emerge on the frame of the shot, the spectator would be confused as far as spatial relations are concerned. Hence, while the usage of the image of the sun as a tool to smooth over the transition from Clipton at the camp to Shears who is hundreds of miles away functions as a visually ingenious and economical way of linking the two stories, it is the implementation of off-screen sound that ensures the narrative's unravelling without a moment's hesitation or confusion on the spectator's part. It will be later on, when the acousmatised sound will become visualised and given audible primacy over other sounds that it shall function as a metaphor. The exaggerated loudness accompanying the image of the empty water-flask lugging behind Shears will come to imply the man's fight to survive and the hardship he has gone through in order to attain his freedom.

Steven Spielberg⁴² commented on that opening part of the sequence by stressing its artistic significance and its structural necessity:

Lean did amazing visual and audio transitions in all of his movies...There's a marvellous transition in The Bridge on the River Kwai, where James Donald looks up into the sun and Lean cuts to a magnificent point-of-view of the round yellow orb and William Holden steps into the shot of the sun and he's a hundred-and-fifty miles away dying of thirst in the middle of the jungle, with his little canteen being dragged behind him... Transitions like this in a movie show that a movie is

⁴² The special tribute to Lean was transmitted on LWT on 17 February 1985 with the title 'David Lean: A life in Film'. It was edited and narrated by Melvyn Bragg for his fortnightly program 'The South Bank Show'.

thought out deeply. Somebody knew what he was doing. Somebody kept the story moving along.⁴³

Later in the sequence, the spectator/listener comes across one of the most memorable moments of the film - a series of nine shots - the power of which lies in the combination of subtle sound effects and visuals, with the sound effects being most impressive. As Shears lies down debilitated by the destitution he experienced while crossing the jungle, he hears the all-familiar sounds emanating from hawks (off-screen). Here, indeed, we have an obvious connotation in knowing that birds of prey devour weakened or dead flesh. Shears is as strong as a dead man and, hence, subject to attack. As he looks up into the sky in utter terror, the camera cuts to a group of crowing scavenger birds, thus confirming their presence at the locale. While Shears collects his strength and starts moving forward, the off-screen sound stemming from the birds is temporarily suspended and all audible and visual emphasis is diverted towards the empty, dragging canteen that, as mentioned above, is suggestive of Shears' penury. It is towards the end of this shot that non-diegetic music is inserted, adding an aura of suspenseful expectation to the forthcoming action. Following that, there is a series of six shots, all presented in quick succession, that culminate the drama. Shears falls down to the ground once again,

⁴³ This is an extract of the Steven Spielberg interview for Melvyn Bragg's *The Southbank Show*. 'David Lean: A Life in Film.' He also praises Lean for one audio transition in Doctor Zhivago: "There is a wonderful transition which is very, very subtle. It doesn't mean very much and it's not symbolic, and you can't really analyse it, except it smooths over the cut. It's what an editor like Lean would do to make a cut less abrupt. Sometimes an abrupt cut is very important because it's the shock value there, other times you want to smooth transition. I remember a scene in Doctor Zhivago in the lab when young Dr. Zhivago is learning from his teacher and his teacher has a smear glass and he tosses the smear-glass into a cylinder, into a glass cylinder and it makes a high-pitched clinging sound and there's a sudden cut and a wonderful, low clanging sound which is the cupplings on a Moscow trolley-car, moving away on rails. I just recall that transition as being rather amazing. No real reason for it but it suddenly brought you from the lab into the streets of Moscow."

unable to carry on. While being down, he feels, and the spectator sees a large shadow of what looks like a giant hawk flying over his head. When he looks up petrified, the camera cuts to what we immediately recognise as a kite attached to a piece of string. Yet, the sound that accompanies it is not verisimilitudinous to the image on the screen. Instead, what is heard on the sound track is the sound of a crowing hawk. Michel Chion refers to such instances as points of 'audio-visual dissonance or audio-visual counterpoint, whereby there is a setting-up of an "opposition between sound and image on a precise point of meaning".⁴⁴ The weight of this counterpoint, therefore, lies in its connotative power insofar as it reflects Shears' deteriorating mental state. Whilst the spectator/listener is instantly capable of recognising the audio-visual disparity, Shears is not because he has become delusional. Hence, the actual sound we hear on the screen is, indisputably, a subjective internal sound reflecting Shears' desperate condition, a fact that is explicitly suggested in the subsequent shots. Shears tries to run away from the bird/kite, only to fall down again, while the kite that is visually simulating the actual movements and sounds of an attacking hawk, soars towards the camera (Shears' point-of-view), filling the frame with its presence and with its loud noise enveloping the audio track. It is in the final shot of this sequence that the kite and Shears appear together in a confrontational showdown. The American soldier, still not having realised that what comes towards him is not an actual hawk, screams in ultimate mental devastation - his scream being almost identical to the one he envisages as stemming from the bird/kite both in loudness, pitch and timbre. Therefore, it could be argued that this moment of

⁴⁴ Chion, Michel. Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen. (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.38

'confrontation' is also one of realisation, when Shears comes face to face with his own internal anguish and resolves it by screaming at it, hence, fighting it back. In fact, as he finally goes silent, the camera zooms out to reveal a child pulling the kite away from him and a bunch of friendly villagers who rush to bring the camp fugitive to safety.

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of this particular part of the sequence bring us back to what has been mentioned before in this chapter about the supposedly confrontational relationship between humanity and wildlife. Throughout the film, it is sounds rather than images of wildlife that command a considerable portion of the audio-visual track. It has been previously argued how the omnipresence and omnipotence of nature's beings has a) been established both visually and audibly, and b) created a sense of unease to both the spectator and the characters in the film. It has also been contended that death, destruction and oblivion are predominantly brought about by the conflict and contest between humans (individuals and groups: Nicholson versus Saito, Nicholson versus his men, Saito against Nicholson and his own self, the American versus the British, etc). Therefore, when Shears confronts the bird/kite, all he actually does is to confront his own fears and apprehensions. His expressed dread of the hawks proves to be unjustified since no scavenger bird comes anywhere near him. It is more a fear of going mad in the middle of nowhere, fear of being captured by man, fear of the unknown (as exemplified in wildlife's presence/absence).

The conclusion of this sequence carries us back to the end of the previous one when an officer, Clipton, raised the question of human absurdity and madness arising in detrimental living

conditions.⁴⁵ The fact that his words are immediately preceding the image of a dishevelled and debilitated Shears could be said to also function as a way of commenting on the American's temporary bout of insanity in his attempt to escape from the camp, as well as echoing the spectator's contemplation throughout the sequence with the kite/bird. Later on in the film, when Shears finds himself at a British training camp, he confesses to an inquisitive Major Warden that the only reason he managed to escape and survive was because: "I was out of my head most of the time."

Finally, it is essential to briefly consider another scene that employs natural sounds as metaphors. It takes place towards the end of the film when British commandos along with Shears are back in the jungle on a mission whose ultimate goal is to blow up the bridge over the River Kwai. During a brief interlude from their strenuous trudge through the jungle, the commandos and their Burmese guides are bathing. The scene is almost idyllic; the sound and image of the crystal clear waters along with the aimless and carefree flight of the birds over the group of men and women lead the spectator to be carried away and envisage the locale as a tropical paradise. Here is the jungle in its most placid manifestation, both visually and audibly. There is no noise, no anxious anticipation but only pleasant sounds originating from visible sources (the water flowing and the birds flying). Suddenly, a Japanese patrol makes its appearance and peace is disrupted when hand grenades and machine-gun fire are exchanged between the British and the Japanese. At the moment

⁴⁵ Clipton acts out as the voice of logic and reason in the film. He is the one who tries to reason with both Nicholson and Saito, and he is also the one who often assumes the spectator's position insofar as he reflects his/her intellectual understanding of the situation as it unfolds on a narrative level.

when the first grenade explodes, Lean cuts to the image of thousands of birds flying off, frightened. Ken Dancyger has commented on this particular instance of the film:

As the noise of murder grows louder, the birds of the area fly off frightened, and as Lean cuts visuals of the birds in flight, the sound of the birds drown out the machine guns. At that instant, nature quite overwhelms the concerns of the human present, and for that moment, the outcome of human conflict seems less important.⁴⁶

While the point Dancyger makes is interesting and astute it, nonetheless, offers only one explanation of this filmic moment's utility: that of a metaphor. However, it can also be sustained that it functions as a means to suspend narration at a very critical point. The cut to the sounds and images of the birds intensifies the expectation on the part of the spectator by means of suspending all audio and visual information stemming from the armed engagement on the ground. The spectator knows neither what happens, nor how it happens. No human is seen and no human is heard. There is no information on whether the challenging and arduous expedition has reached a bloody end with grave consequences for Shears and Warden or not. Hence, the combination of sound and image, in this case, can be said to create a multiplicity of effects on an intellectual and emotional level depending on the viewpoint from which it is approached.

The final shot of the film is the one that carries the utmost significance on an intellectual level. In a very subtle way, it sums up the ideological concerns of the narrative and the spectator's pervading feelings of waste, madness and futility. In reproducing the initial shot when the hawk was flying over the

⁴⁶ Dancyger, Ken. The Technique of Film and Video Editing. (Boston: Focal, 1993), pp 91-92

jungle, Lean makes one significant change by omitting the use of diegetic sound altogether and introducing a brief soothing musical motif. By doing that, he aims at two things: a) he withholds from the spectator any diegetic sound referent that would even remotely associate the presence of the hawks with what has taken place on the ground far below. The birds are spatially isolated and human death is of no consequence to their existence. This visual and auditory detachment from the forces of annihilation leads the spectator to reflect upon the events of the narrative and contemplate the outcome for all the characters involved and its wider implications regarding human nature and, b) he provides his own comment on the narrative by instigating irony. The placid musical tones are in sharp contrast to the death and destruction that has taken place at the camp. The scavenger birds are presented as the ultimate winners. They are just going to pick up on what is left and feed well. Like nature, they are offered as timeless. Humanity is expendable. In concluding the film, Lean returns to its beginning when the human graves were exposed scattered in the jungle, and with the vultures observing the incessant process of birth, life and death.

Kevin Brownlow recalls the attitude of the crew and filmmaker as to how the relationship between the wild and humanity should be portrayed in the closing moments of the film:

The scene which closes the picture is taken from above, looking down on the shattered bridge and the wrecked train; the tiny figure of the doctor can be seen on one side of the river, and as the camera pulls back the five figures of the commando team are visible on the other. The script called for the camera to be in a helicopter, pulling up into the sky. 'David wanted to replicate the idea of the bird, the hawk which opened the film', said Peter Newbrook. 'The idea was

that it was the bird looking down at these lunatics - the bird's free and everyone else is either killed or captured.⁴⁷

Although this account appears to put emphasis on the issue of freedom as opposed to captivity in their basic designation within a prisoner-of-war film framework, the overwhelming sensation is that of senselessness and oblivion. Yet, on an emblematic level, freedom is synonymous with life and captivity to death, and those who are possessed with the negative, self-destructing qualities that lead to their own demise are the humans of the film.

In concluding the analysis of sound in The Bridge on the River Kwai, it must be stressed that the number of scenes that present the analyst with valuable information regarding the application and signification of sound are countless in the film. However, the ones that have been chosen for analysis are those that better exemplify the mastery and complexity with which David Lean has used sound in order to achieve the desired result, that is none other than rendering reality within an intellectual context.

⁴⁷ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.380

3. MUSIC

"The moments you remember in movies are not often dialogue. They are images; pictures with music and sounds that move you; it is emotions and not spectacle that make a picture big."

David Lean¹

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of film history, academic and critical endeavours regarding the significance and intellectual value of film music have been relegated to secondary status. The moving image and, consequently, the techniques directly identified with it and employed to manipulate and enhance its powers of representation, such as editing, framing, lighting, etc, were the ones to attract the attention of academia's majority. Occasionally, there have been pensive and systematic studies that emphasised the importance of narrative film music either in its capacity to represent the way in which a capitalistic system of production operated (Eisler & Adorno), or in the case of Eisenstein as an element, a tool for montage construction, but on the whole, considering the volume of academic contribution to the understanding and knowledge of film, research in this specific field of study has been rather sparse and unsophisticated.

Nonetheless, film music has embellished the vast majority of narrative films since the advent of the medium. During the silent film period, its use was considered by many historians to

¹ David Lean quoted by Gregory Peck during the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony on 8 March 1990. (CBS)

be chiefly utilitarian. The rationale behind its employment was twofold: It was meant to cover up the noise that was emanating from the projectors and from the audience in the theatre auditorium, as well as to alleviate the fears of the spectators who were not accustomed to the silence originating from the screen or the darkness of the theatre. Yet, not all music in the silent era was aimed at smoothing over the artificiality and the mechanics of the medium. The musical accompaniment to the moving pictures on the screen by a piano or a whole orchestra was also employed as a means to complement the rhythm of editing and movement on the screen with the intention to generate meaning. According to Eisenstein:

Musical and visual imagery are actually not commensurable through narrowly 'representational' elements. If one speaks of genuine and profound relations and proportions between music and the picture, it can only be in reference to the relations between the *fundamental movements* of the music and the picture, i.e., compositional and structural elements, since the relations between the 'picture' and the 'pictures' produced by the musical images are usually so individual in perception and so lacking in concreteness that they cannot be fitted into any strictly methodological 'regularities'.²

It should be stressed, however, that Eisenstein's formalist aesthetics regarding the function of music did not only reflect the value of some silent cinema practices. Instead, his theorems had found ground for exploration and application in the works of filmmakers long after sound and recorded music were introduced as novelties in the motion-picture industry. Additionally, the formalist approach to music analysis of films became increasingly useful as it provided critics with the possibility to examine very exact correlations between sound and image and consequently,

² Eisenstein, Sergei. The Film Sense. (London: Faber, 1986), p.128

avoid arbitrary evaluations of the music's emotive quality. David Lean, for example, who embarked upon his directorial career when sound cinema was firmly established, very often used music as a formal element of the narrative. Brief Encounter is but one characteristic example whereby music fuses with the highly stylised composition and sequential arrangement of the visuals. As the subsequent analysis of the film will attempt to exhibit, the utilisation of Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* becomes a tool through which the internal rhythms of the mise-en-scene are emulated in the music and vice versa. An even better example is Hobson's Choice where there is, on occasion, full correspondence between the movement of the musical piece with the actual movement of the fictional characters, giving an impression of a carefully and pliantly choreographed work. Lean, on several instances, disclosed his admiration for the work of Charlie Chaplin whose films' palpable comic effect was largely contingent on the precise and absolute correlation between the musical and the visual tempo. The broad caricature of Henry Hobson in Hobson's Choice whose exaggerated mannerisms and distinctly larger-than-life presence, is nothing more than a subtle tribute to the much celebrated antics of Charlie Chaplin. Similar formalist elements in the utilisation of music can be found in all of David Lean's films in that the psychological effect they produce resides largely in the attainment of absolute audio-visual correlations.

While the silent era enhanced music's dramatic and formal potential, the coming of sound in the late 1920s reduced its power of affect. The need for a convenient realist aesthetic

demanded an emphasis on dialogue and source music³. It was thought that sound in the form of dialogue would put an end to the qualms that the audience would have in relation to the images projected on the screen and, simultaneously, the processes of identification and illusion would be reinforced. However, this attitude towards film music was to change slowly from the mid 1930s onwards, when a number of significant changes took place relating to its function. It was soon realised that if dialogue was enhancing realism, music could intensify emotional affinity between spectator and diegesis. As Brown states:

If film music became dramatically motivated, it did so to fulfil another need, and that was to heighten the emotional impact of the significant moments of a given show, thereby distancing audiences even further from their own thoughts and fears (of silence or whatever) by involving them more deeply in the movie.⁴

Indeed, the employment of music for dramatic purposes became exceptionally popular with audiences. As a direct result, the need for more new scores became imperative and the film industry confronted this problem of supply and demand by custom-tailoring film music, making it more of an industrial product. Thus, it was during the period between 1935-1950 that musical formulas such as the main title music, the love theme or leitmotiv, the underscorings for natural phenomena, amongst other things, became common practice and led many to assert that film music was no 'art'. Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno, for example, maintained that the purpose of music in films under advanced capitalism is to serve as a means to rationalise the irrational,

³ Source music is music that emanates from a visible source; that is, music, which is part of the diegesis.

⁴ Brown, Royal. S. Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music. (Los Angeles: California UP, 1994), p. 15

to represent the non-representational. For Eisler and Adorno, music as the art form most detached from the world of materiality, evokes the most instinctive and esoteric feelings in the listener. In other words, it aims at reaching and touching the human soul. The ear being the most passive of the sensory organs, and the process of ordinary listening being the most 'archaic' in the sense that it has not kept pace with technological advancement, is in direct opposition to the eye (the most active organ) and seeing, which in its ability to be extremely selective "has become accustomed to conceiving reality as made up of separate things, commodities, objects that can be modified by practical activity."⁵ Therefore, the 'intrusion' of music (the non-representational, pre-capitalistic, direct art form) into film (the representational, the rational, the indirect and highly technical-made art form), has rendered music as a means for the production and consumption of industrialised culture. Hence, for Eisler and Adorno, film music *par excellence*, has ceded part of its autonomy and its archaic character for the sake of becoming an indirect means to serve the technology of the moving image and the cultural apparatus that supports it. In this way, music attains a double status as both modern and archaic. As they claim: "It seeks to breathe into the pictures some of the life that photography has taken away from them."⁶

Roy Prendergast, on the other hand, defends the motion-picture industry and its attitude towards the film music department by arguing that an alternative practice would be practically impossible. He also shields the hired composers from the common accusation that they were slaves at the hands of big

⁵ Adorno, Theodor & Eisler, Hanss. Composing for the Films. (London: Athlone, 1994) p. 20

⁶ *ibid.* p.59

studio officials by addressing the issue of the uniqueness and hence, value of each individual score. In his words:

Even if unimaginative and unoriginal, it is the only one of its kind. Second, an examination of the best scores created during this period will establish the fact that they carry the imprint of their composers just as surely as the best films have always borne the marks of their producers and directors. Third, there was never an assembly-line technique in the creation of a film score, but only in its reproduction as images on the edge of a roll of film. From the composer's point-of-view, the artistic life of his score is finished as soon as it has been recorded.⁷

Although Eisler and Adorno refer to the capitalist practices of the Hollywood studios in the 1940s, the same could apply to the British film industry of the time. Many historians have described the era as the finest in British cinema. The presence of foreign producers such as Alexander Korda and Filippo Del Giudice gave a cosmopolitan air to the industry, the output of films increased dramatically, while the highly industrialised system of production resonated its American counterpart:

Every country in Europe was affected by Hollywood's dominance, but Britain most of all. As by far the largest source of foreign revenue, it attracted the presence of several powerful American distribution companies, and indeed for all practical purposes was part of Hollywood's home market. Given this relationship, it was natural that the British film industry should more closely resemble its American counterpart.⁸

Equally, the composing of music for the films of that period was following the basic rules of the American studio system. Highly industrialised and part of a larger assembly line, film composing

⁷ Prendergast, Roy, M. *Film Music: A Neglected Art*. (New York: Norton, 1992), p. 38

⁸ Drazin, Charles. *The Finest Years: British Cinema of the 1940s*. (London: Andre Deutsch, 1998), p.7

was relegated to inferior status. However, even within the British music world, there were differing views regarding its worth. Muir Matheson, who conducted the music for Lean's This Happy Breed, Blithe Spirit, Oliver Twist, Madeleine, The Sound Barrier and Hobson's Choice, believed that writing music for films gave great potential to young composers:

To the young composer there is another important aspect involved in film music. Not only is the film a satisfactory outlet for talent, but the fact that film composition provides an income is also significant. Traditionally, composers are supposed to live on high ideals and fresh air, but as history repeatedly shows, this has never been practicable.⁹

Naturally, there have been certain changes in the course of film music history: the imitations of late Romantic era scores gave way to extravagant, over-orchestrated pieces. In the 1940s, with the rise of the film noir and the psychological thrillers, the employment of musical dissonance became common practice. David Lean started his directorial career at a time when film music was becoming increasingly industrialised, and composers were more involved in the chain of production, rather than operating as individual artists who produced high-minded art. However, Lean saw the great dramatic potential of music and, consequently, aimed at substantially distinctive projects that would support his individual creations. Music for him was not a mere embellishment to the film but the generator of dramatic intensity through the very precise and detailed interaction of the films' audio-visual components. His collaboration with Richard Addinsell for two of his films, Blithe Spirit and the

⁹ Muir Matheson. 'Developments in Film Music.' *The Penguin Film Review*. October 1947, p.44

Passionate Friends, is but one characteristic example of his daring approach. When Addinsell was hired to compose the music for the former film, he was already credited as the composer of fourteen films. Highly specialised in musical arrangements for essentially dramatic films, it was unlikely that Lean would feel comfortable with his assignment for a comedy that demanded a different approach to style to musical composition. However, the end result of their collaboration proved appealing and successful as it proliferated the ambience of the narrative and enhanced its humorous effect. However, the most striking example of Lean's daring with composers came when it was time to find a score for Oliver Twist. Although the experienced Muir Matheson suggested the appointment of a distinguished composer for such an ambitious and expensive British film, Lean opted instead for the talented but unfamiliar with film composing, Sir Arnold Bax. He relied on Bax's musical ingenuity to bring forward the dramatic elements of the film, but gave him limited freedom of expression, as he was very precise about the how, when and where music should be applied in order to achieve the desired effect. Lean has commented on his view pertaining to film music's significance, as well on his relationship with composers:

I can't read or write a note of music. But I know where and when it should be used in a film, and what it should express. I used to be very tentative about talking to a composer, but now I'm not. I think a composer must be told what to do. Very often the music supplies half the emotional and dramatic effect. Seeing a film before music is added, an observer might think, "Well, that shot's completely unnecessary." But with the music he will see the reason for it.¹⁰

Lean's methodological approach confirms the prevailing attitude of the industry in the 1940s with its hierarchical chain of

¹⁰ Pratley, Gerald. The Cinema of David Lean. (New York: Tantivy, 1974), p.187

command, situating the composer assigned to do the score in a dependent position, largely accountable to the director or the producer of a motion picture. However, where Lean differed from other less insistent directors was in giving great emphasis to music's dramatic, formal and emotional potential, striving to include it as an indispensable constituent of the film and not as insipid background accompaniment. Consequently, he also demanded intelligent musical pieces to sustain and augment the drama inherent in the narrative and the visuals that support it.

The 1950s, which were marked by technical innovations such as the widescreen process and stereophonic sound, introduced demands for stupendous new scores to support the enhanced visuals, while the 1960s propelled the scheme that wanted the scores written for films to have potential in the music market and stand as works of art on their own. Lean's first collaboration with Malcolm Arnold for Hobson's Choice was a demonstration of the latter's musical diversity and aptitude in creating a subtly humorous score. In many ways, the music written for the film was reminiscent of Sergei Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* that presented the characters in the story through pointing out the different instrumentations. With Hobson's Choice it is the careful structural placement of the fictional characters and the mutual implication of narrative logic and non-diegetic music that inform the film. Muir Matheson spoke with excitement about the challenges that film scoring presented to the composer:

As Ralph Vaughan Williams said: "Film composing is a splendid discipline, and I recommend a course of it to all composition teachers whose pupils are apt to be dawdling in their ideas, or whose every bar is sacred and must not be cut or altered." For the film composer works to a plan determined by the picture, and it is very often interesting to have to compose within a close framework of time when one has to keep an eye

on the stop-watch and work to a second. It is also a fascinating problem to follow the dramatic ebb and flow of a sequence and at the same time to attain a musical continuity and a musical logic.¹¹

Three years later, Arnold would get an Academy Award for his work on The Bridge on the River Kwai. The vivacious and booming soundtrack perfectly evoked the character of the film, while Lean's utilisation of the music in correlation with the images further augmented its power of representation. Similarly, in the 1960s the scores written by Maurice Jarre for Lawrence of Arabia and Doctor Zhivago, apart from becoming an integral part of the narration, were met with considerable commercial success and official recognition.¹² Doctor Zhivago's record album sold over two million copies, and as Prendergast confirms, "it spent seventy weeks on the charts."¹³ Therefore, it can be asserted that Lean's success over a span of three decades was due both to his inventiveness and perfectionism as a director, but also to his astuteness in identifying and adopting new stylistic modes of filmic expression. Never distancing himself from his principal thematic or formal concerns, he also found room in his films to accommodate the continuously evolving technical needs and aesthetic requirements of the British and American film industries. His adoption of new musical forms and styles within an incessantly shifting context was but one very characteristic example of his power of adaptability.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the cinema saw the emergence of minimalism and New Age Music. Lean, who only made two films in

¹¹ Matheson, Muir. 'Developments in Film Music.' *The Penguin Film Review*. Vol 4, October 1947.

¹² Both films were nominated and won the awards for Best Substantially Original Score by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

¹³ Prendergast, Roy M. Film Music: A Neglected Art. (New York: Norton, 1992), p.147

this period - Ryan's Daughter and A Passage to India, was beginning to feel the pressure of an industry that was thematically and stylistically challenging the very principles of his filmmaking. The slaying of Ryan's Daughter by the critics was a sign that Lean was distancing himself from the industrial and artistic requirements of the period. In fact, the absence of Maurice Jarre's name from the Oscar nominations for Best Original Score in 1970 adequately reflects the disdain for the film. His highly charged score with its lush romantic overtones may have been appropriate and indeed suited to the narrative framework, but since the film was considered outmoded, so did the score suffer as a result.¹⁴ However, Lean's return to filmmaking with his swan song A Passage to India had reinstated his reputation within both his native and the American film industries. Andrew Higson attempts to locate the socio-cultural underpinnings of Lean's triumphant return:

The critical celebration of the revival of British production in the mid-1980s was in part an acknowledgment that British films were once more forces to be reckoned with in the international marketplace. While the obligation to succeed internationally requires to some degree an effacing of the specifically national, certain films have used the national itself - or at least, one version of the national past - as their prime selling point. Images of Britain and Britishness (usually, in fact, Englishness) became commodities for consumption in the international image market.¹⁵

Higson's argument pinpoints the significance that notions of supply and demand have on the evaluation of the cinematic product. A Passage to India came out at a time when British films

¹⁴ The Oscar for Best Original Score went to Love Story. Although the film was generically situated along Ryan's Daughter, its low-budget and its painting of a realistic approach to romance proved exceptionally popular.

¹⁵ Higson, Andrew. 'Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film.' Friedman, Lester, ed. British Cinema and Thatcherism. (London: UCL P, 1993), p.10

with essentially British themes were popular cinematic exports. Dealing with the issue of Imperialism and the personal conflicts that it instigated, it quickly became very popular with audiences and critics alike. Similarly, the music of the film that reflected this tension was awarded accordingly. Maurice Jarre got his third Oscar for his subdued and effective score that, as in all his films, is used either as a correspondent or a counterpoint to the action.

In closing this introduction, it is important to return to the question posed earlier about how music for silent film was used as a means to mollify the unaccustomed spectator. One question that eventually arises is why should music - which is not synonymous to spoken language - have such a placating effect on the spectator not only in silent but also in sound film, and how the merging of the iconic with the non-iconic avoids tension and confusion on the part of the audience. The answer lies in the essence of cinema. Although the moving image is supposed to be the most representational of arts, it is also a fantasy - an illusion of reality. The fact that the screen has demarcated borders does not automatically imply that the space of the narrative does not exceed them. The process of identification between the spectator and what he/she sees on the screen provides the basis for cinema's daydream character. Therefore, logic and reality become temporarily suspended, giving way to a process of hallucination. Music, consequently, in being the art most removed from reality, conspires with the moving image in reinforcing that illusion without, however, perpetuating the feeling of angst. That is due to music's facility in curtailing the audience's resistance to the narrative's fantasy structure. As Claudia Gorbman explicitly states:

The bath of affect in which music immerses the spectator is like easy-listening, or the hypnotist's voice, in that it rounds off the sharp edges, masks contradictions, and lessens spatial and temporal discontinuities with its own melodic and harmonic continuity. It lessens awareness of the frame; it relaxes the censor, drawing the spectator further into the fantasy-illusion suggested by filmic narration.¹⁶

Additionally, Gorbman goes even further in suggesting that the non-representational nature of music reimburses the spectator/listener for the emotional profundity that cannot be as powerfully expressed in the visuals or the dialogue. It, thus, supplies that dimension that transgresses the narrative's aim at precise explication and intelligibility. Hence, it could be argued that the understanding and mental registering of music in all narrative films, including those of David Lean, does not rely exclusively on the principle of formal correspondence or counterpoint between image and music. Instead, it goes even further to envelop the audience/spectator into a dream that constitutes the cinematic experience, whereby aural perception and musical impact may exceed the exactitude of narrative intentions.

The rationale behind selecting Brief Encounter and Lawrence of Arabia for analysis of the deployment and function of music has been based on clear and definite objectives. The former relies exclusively on an established musical source piece, while the latter makes its mark through the utilisation of a powerful original score. Furthermore, the use of music in these two films reflects in a very distinct manner the different periods during which they were made and, consequently, the cultural demands of the films' contemporary audiences. Brief Encounter is a small-

¹⁶ Gorbman, Claudia. Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987), p.6

scale picture of the mid-forties, while Lawrence of Arabia is a characteristic example of the epoch when large-scale filmmaking was exceptionally popular. The score in the latter case is used to both reflect the power of the spectacle and accommodate the more intimate personal moments of the fictional characters while, in the former, the employment of a distinct, unmistakable piano concerto encapsulates the atmosphere and feel of the film through a series of very precise audio-visual correlations and dissonances. In both cases, however, the function of music is of paramount importance as it strives to establish itself as an indispensable device for narrative intelligibility and a paragon of artistic potentiality.

BRIEF ENCOUNTER (1945)

The studio release of Brief Encounter in November 1945 came at a very significant time in British, European, and World history. It was only a few months previously that Germany had surrendered to the Allies and the Second World War was finally over. Britain was still reeling from the effects that the tragedy of warfare left behind it and, consequently, it was highly unlikely that a film like Brief Encounter, which dealt with an adulterous love story between two British middle class citizens, instead of with a theme related to the war, or set in the wartime period¹⁷, would have any chance at the box-office. As David Lean himself put it:

We defied all the rules of box-office success. There were no big star names. There was an unhappy ending to the main love story. The film was played in unglamorous surroundings. And the three leading characters were approaching middle-age.¹⁸

Yet, despite Lean's initial misgivings about the film's potential, it became an unparalleled triumph and, ultimately, a classic. Brief Encounter won the Critics' prize at Cannes and even more significantly, it got three Academy Award nominations for Direction (David Lean), Actress in a Leading Role (Celia Johnson), and Original Screenplay (Anthony Havelock-Allan, David Lean, Ronald Neame). It was the first time in David Lean's career that he would be nominated for the prestigious Oscar award, and the first occasion whereby a British director would be included

¹⁷ Films such as Millions Like Us (1943), The Gentle Sex (1943), and Two Thousand Women (1944), which portrayed the British women's collective war effort were particularly popular with wartime audiences.

¹⁸ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.204

as a contestant in the highly esteemed category of direction for a motion-picture. Nonetheless, what is more astonishing about this specific film is the fact that it got recognition from all around the world although it essentially dealt with a small-scale British theme. Kevin Brownlow attributes the extent of the film's financial success and critical accolades to the intimacy of the theme on one level- a woman's mental anguish triggered by the inner clash between conventional morality and desire- while on another, to the very high standards of applied technique. As he states: "Brief Encounter was an example of 'cinema', as opposed to a filmed play - its technique of flashbacks and sometimes flashbacks - within - flashbacks still seems audacious today."¹⁹

The composition of the film score for Brief Encounter was initially assigned to Muir Matheson, but it was Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto*²⁰ that was finally chosen to musically embellish the film. David Lean was always negatively predisposed to the use of musical material from a pre-existing established source. All of his films had original scores written for them, but there were a few notable inclusions from popular and well-known musical pieces: Summer Madness, for example, included Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra*²¹, while The Bridge on the River Kwai became famous, amongst other things, for its *Colonel Bogey March* by Kenneth J. Alford - the same composer whose *Voice of Guns* was incorporated in Lawrence of Arabia. Lean's fear was essentially emanating from his conviction that music from an established source would: a) betray the originality of his vision; that is,

¹⁹ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books), p. 205

²⁰ Sergey Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto* was composed in 1901 and was dedicated to his psychiatrist, Nikolay Dahl. The writing of this concerto marked the resumption of his musical creative activity. Its distinctive melodic character has made it the most popular of his longer works.

²¹ Gioacchino Rossini composed *La Gazza Ladra* (known in English as *The Thieving Magpie*) in 1817. Although a semi-serious work, it was met with great enthusiasm in Milan when it made its first public appearance.

an established musical piece had the potential of calling attention to itself through means of cultural familiarity as well as possible conflicting audience associations and, consequently, distract the spectator from the unfolding of the narrative, and b) present difficulties in fitting into the way the film was cut and structured. In other words, the scenes that called for the incorporation of Rachmaninov would have to be adjusted to the concerto's intricate structure rather than the other way around (music serving the images' arrangement and assembly). Lean had always written the musical passages into his films' scripts. More often than not, the British director would ask his composer to arrange musical material that would support and enhance the carefully constructed visuals. Hence, the inclusion of this particular, highly charged concerto which was Rachmaninov's best known and most popular with music lovers around the world long after it was composed, would present problems as far as visual composition was concerned. In fact, it was due to Noel Coward's insistence that it was eventually included in the film. It was decided by Coward that this melodious, romantic musical composition would designate elements of the female heroine's personality and convey the psychological reciprocation that her actions would have on her. According to Coward: "She listens to Rachmaninov on the radio, she borrows her books from the Boots Library and she eats at the Kardomah."²² Lean and Matheson's initial misgivings were not completely thwarted but they reluctantly agreed to go along with Coward's suggestion. To their surprise, the integration of Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* would have a catalytic influence on the film's overall effect and

²² Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.202

enhance its worldwide popularity. As Muir Matheson admitted: "No specially composed score could have been so effective as that Rachmaninov."²³ However, as the ensuing analysis will demonstrate, it is not the mere addition of the emphatic score that promulgates the film's effectiveness, but the manner in which visual and narrative structure in combination with the score propound the film's unity, integrity and efficacy.

²³ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p. 203

ANALYSIS

Some critics, though not the majority, have in the past launched a relentless onslaught on Brief Encounter's employment of music. According to some, Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* magnified the tawdriness of the subject matter and its treatment on the screen. As Michael Anderegg has pointed out, many speculated that this particular musical piece was chosen "to provide the film with a spurious romantic colouring the filmmakers were unable to summon up by other means."²⁴ Additionally, it has to be said that this particular type of harsh criticism was partially induced as a reaction to the attitude that prevailed throughout the 1930s, when it was customary to produce narratives that dealt with the the lives of famous composers.²⁵ For that type of subject matter, the composers' original concerts and other musical works would be employed in the films. As Prendergast explains:

In order to bring some of the famous works in line with the dramatic needs of the story, great works of musical art had to be severely cut. But the music for this type of film, however great on its own merits, was really the antithesis of good film music, for it was certainly not conceived with the dramatic requirements of the picture in mind.²⁶

Though Brief Encounter utilises the work of a famous composer it, nonetheless, engages in depicting a love story between two common middle-class people. Hence, otherwise unavoidable comparisons between the composer of a musical piece and the treatment of his

²⁴ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.31

²⁵ A few characteristic examples include Alfred Hitchcock's biography of Johann Strauss, Jr, Waltzes from Vienna (1933), and Paul Stein's Blossom Time (1934), a film dealing with the life and times of Franz Schubert.

²⁶ Prendergast, Roy. Film Music: A Neglected Art. (New York: Norton, 1992), p.70

creation on the screen are not applicable in this specific film. On the contrary, the musical work is disengaged from its architect and attains a new meaning in a wholly different context.

Music, as mentioned earlier, exists to be absorbed by the listener who interprets it according to his/her own inner mental processes. In Brief Encounter the interaction between music and the visuals is so powerful and so carefully constructed, that the audience/spectator is practically forced to interpret the music while following the director's imagination. Thus, the non-representational becomes represented to a considerable degree, and pure music becomes narrative film music. Yet, there is always space left for the cultivation of diverse emotions since, no matter how forceful audio-visual associations become in the film, musical phrases retain part of their autonomy and their ability to string different mental chords in each individual's mind. George Burt maintains that:

Music in its very nature is expressive of subjective values. It invariably evokes or suggests something of an implicit nature when combined with a picture. Thus, in most cases, the distinction between explicitly and implicitly related music is to some extent a matter of degree, not an either/or proposition.²⁷

The employment of Rachmaninov's music in the film oscillates between extremes: on the one hand, it becomes a very exact, explicative narrative tool while, on the other, it retains its life of expression outside norms. When Chekhov wrote about the life of music, he argued that it is "neither life as it is, nor

²⁷ Burt, George. The Art of Film Music. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), pp.7-8

life as it ought to be, but life as we see it in our dreams."²⁸ David Lean strives, therefore, to engage the audience in the film by bringing music into play both narratively (music as an essential explicative narrative element), and emotionally (music as abstract feeling), that is, outside strict narrational practices and procedures.

If one attempts a close scrutiny of the film, one will realise that the most popular Rachmaninov piano concerto is employed in such a manner by David Lean that it moves away from standardised and stereotypical practices relating to the usage of musical material from an established source,²⁹ and tries, instead, to use and manipulate it in order to set up a series of contradictions on various levels. Consequently, there are oppositions between the real and the imaginary, the objective and the subjective, the diegetic and the non-diegetic, the representational and the non-representational, the conventional and the unconventional, amongst others. Nonetheless, in order to justify the above postulations, it is essential to examine the way in which music in the film formulates, and where it allocates these series of contradictions. Additionally, it would be more appropriate to study the application of music in the film sequentially rather than in isolated fragments for the simple reason that the meanings extrapolated from the study cannot always be fully acquired independently from the narrative order in which they appear.

The film begins with a still night shot of Milford Junction while a whistling steam train passes by. When the sound of the train fades, music is introduced as the credits roll up and the

²⁸ Braun Edward. Meyerhold on Theatre. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), p. 85

²⁹ Music as mere musical accompaniment to the visuals.

audience/spectator is informed that what he/she is hearing and shall hear for the remainder of the film is Sergei Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto*, conducted by Muir Matheson and with Eileen Joyce as the piano soloist. Thus, the first musical instance in the film is non-diegetic, giving the initial impression that its function in the film will be essentially as background accompaniment to the unfolding action in the narrative. Yet, there are two major points of divergence from standard practices in the application of music to be noticed in the film's introduction. The first has to do with its initial designation as the film's title music. It was very common in the Thirties and Forties but also in subsequent decades, to use a particularly impressive main theme in order to attract the audience's attention and, consequently, arouse its curiosity and expectation as to the forthcoming narrative. Given that, the use of the leitmotiv that would be repeated many times over in the course of a film and was usually associated with a particular character or situation, was a helpful and practical means towards ensuring the audience's active engagement from the very beginning of the motion picture. Yet, in Brief Encounter the musical introduction points towards another direction by being identical to the opening of Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* that involves the progression of eight chords that swing to and fro like a giant pendulum. Hence, in refraining from adopting an exceptionally impressive musical section from the concerto but opting instead for a subtler and less stirring one, Lean achieves a fundamental objective that is crucial to the development of the narrative: the employment of music in the film will be shaped in accordance with the rules pertaining to its narrative construction. Thus, there will be a slow but progressive build-up of dramatic action,

and much like Rachmaninov's Concerto, this will involve a series of subtle moments followed by a number of salient climaxes and anti-climaxes till it reaches its closure.

The second, and more emphatic point of divergence from the norm consists in the sudden and unexpected interruption of the music during the film's opening sequence. Hence, before the initial musical phrase follows a natural cadencial progression³⁰ or decrescendo, the overwhelming thundering sound of a passing train completely obliterates it, and the main title musical accompaniment is precipitously terminated. This approach is not particularly characteristic of filmmaking practices of that era that favoured a smooth closure to the initial incorporation of music into the film. However, this interruption, apart from impelling the audience/spectator to drift away from the world of dreams and enter into the realm of the narrative, thus disturbing their harmonious co-existence, will also prove of supreme metaphoric significance as the film will unfold. As will be exemplified through the analysis later on, there will be several occasions in the narrative whereby music - more usually subjective (reflecting Laura Jesson's innermost thoughts and wishes) - shall be suspended every time there will be an intrusion of an on-screen or off-screen sound. Music, in this way, in combination with and contradiction to other sounds, will become a narrative tool in manifesting frustration and mental anguish on the part of the female heroine, much as it does in the opening sequence with the audience/spectator, placing him/her at the receiving end of this psychological distress.

³⁰ George Burt, in his book *The Art of Film Music* (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), describes the cadencial progression as "a succession of chords approaching a structural down-beat or arrival point; occurs at the end of a section or phrase". p. 255

Finally, as Richard Dyer has pointed out in his analysis of Brief Encounter:

The fact that the well-known pianist Eileen Joyce is announced in the credits as the soloist, that she provided the playing (including part of the same concerto) for an even greater success of the same year, The Seventh Veil, and that both the latter and Love Story (a year earlier) centre on the emotional turmoil of a woman pianist, all give a particular female inflection to the music.³¹

Dyer's contention is an informed assessment based on the historical context of the film and, as such, it does not lack credence. One must not forget that cinema like other arts, reflects the socio-cultural environment to which it belongs, and its form and function is as much determined by the film-makers' artistic preoccupations, as from the needs of the audience that 'consumes' the 'product'. Therefore, it is apposite to assert that the choice of a female piano soloist for the rendition of the film's music is in tune with the generic and cultural conventions of 1940s British melodrama, and more specifically with the woman's film.³²

In summary, it can be clearly contended from the scrutiny of the film's opening sequence, that Lean shifts from adopting convention to exposing it. He adopts cultural convention by choosing to present the film from a feminine angle, a type of film very popular in Britain in the mid-1940s. On the other hand, he exposes convention by refusing to endow the film with a musically emphatic opening that would call attention to itself

³¹ Dyer, Richard. Brief Encounter. (London: BFI, 1993), p. 17

³² Landy states that: "The realist films of the early 1940s were trying to provide a more faithful reflection of common experiences than British fictional films had hitherto provided". According to Landy, women's position in society was significantly altered after the Second World War. Their active participation in the war effort led to changes in their domestic life and their status in relation to men. Hence, it was hardly surprising that the British film industry would invest a great deal of its production effort for the depiction of women's stories. Landy, Marcia. British Genres. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), p.206

and heighten expectation on the part of the audience. Similarly, he defies the norm by electing to deprive the initial musical phrase of closure, thus brusquely suspending the commencement of the audience's/spectator's reverie and unveiling the structural processes of the narrative.

The ensuing insertion of music into the film justifies the point made above regarding the repeated interruption of music by on-screen or off-screen sounds. It occurs when Laura Jesson, after having parted with Alec Harvey in an ungratifying manner, finds herself in the train that will take her back home with Dolly Messiter - the woman who without her knowing it has, in a slightly obnoxious manner, prevented the two lovers from expressing their, one would guess, emotional farewells. As Laura drifts away from the tiring conversation with the ever-babbling Dolly and engages herself in voice-over narration, Rachmaninov's concerto re-emerges. Yet, every time Laura slips into a musically embellished reverie, Dolly's high-pitched voice momentarily suspends it. Initially, she penetrates into Laura's mind by asking about Alec whom she has seen earlier at the train station, while on the second occasion, she gossips about another of her female acquaintances. However, the third and final interruption of Laura's daydreaming is by far the most important in the sequence, at least on a symbolic level. While Laura inwardly expresses her despair and depression that is accompanied by the melodious Rachmaninov tune, she is once more brought back to reality by the sound of the train's screeching wheels and, subsequently, by Dolly who reminds her that she has reached her destination and must get off. At this point, the audience's minds are cast back to the initial shot of the film when the non-diegetic music came to a halt with the passing of a train, and it

may accordingly be inferred that Laura has perhaps control of the narrative from the very beginning of the film.

Another point of significance pertaining to this sequence with Dolly and Laura in the train, regards the notion of subjectivity. This time, though still non-diegetic, the music becomes subjective. Though the content of Laura's voice-overs does not necessarily appear to reflect the character and atmosphere evoked by the music, one can, nonetheless, speak of subjectivity since the surfacing of Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* is fervently attached to, and triggered by Laura's voice-over narration. This is the first instance amongst many in the film, whereby Laura drifts into a voice-over narration that is enfolded in Rachmaninov's music. In this way, Laura 'adopts' to a large extent the music as her own inner voice that cannot be otherwise expressed in words. Therefore, in her first two voice-overs, and in what appears to be a sometimes slight or more emphatic discrepancy between the tone and character of the music and Laura's words, we find a perfect example of the masterful and implicit way in which music's subjective potential is employed. While Laura tells herself and the audience how she wished Dolly was not a mere gossiping acquaintance but a true friend, the tone of the musical phrasing is particularly melodic and romantic, though somewhat subdued. However, there is no indication that the music is in tune with Laura's desperation in being alone and having nobody to turn to for emotional support. During the same sequence, when Laura engages in a second voice-over, her words reflect an increasingly aggravated mental state. She momentarily wishes that Dolly was dead and that she would stop bothering her with her endless chattering. Once again, however, the musical accompaniment to her voice retains its melodious and slightly

melancholic character, hence, being in sharp contrast to the anger that fills her mind. In her third voice-over, after being left in peace by Mrs. Messiter, Laura expresses her sadness and unhappiness. As she admits to herself:

This can't last. This misery can't last. I must remember that and try to control myself. Nothing lasts really; not happiness, nor despair. Not even life lasts very long. There'll come a time in the future when I shan't mind about this any more; when I can look back and say quite peacefully and cheerfully how silly I was. No, no... I don't want this time to come ever. I want to remember every minute. Always, always... till the end of my days.

In this instance, the music which has by now increased in loudness on the sound track poignantly reflects the bleakness and gloominess that dominates her mind, while its romantic inflection points both towards the unrequited nature of her relationship with Alec, as well as the deep emotions of love that have arisen within her. It has to be made clear, at this point, that although the nature of Laura's relationship with Alec has not yet been made explicitly lucid, it has already been implicitly acknowledged by the audience/spectator through the visuals and the verbal insinuations.

Yet, how does one account for the discrepancy between speech and music in her previous two voice-over narratives? Similarly, another pertinent question that eventually arises is: how can we speak of subjective music when there seems to be 'dissonance' - to use a common musical term - between itself and Laura's narration? George Burt has commented on the associative power of music by claiming that:

There is no question that when we see pictures and hear music at the same time we invariably make a connection, if only on

an unconscious level. The quality and language of music are vital aids in breaking down the objective explicitness of certain pictures where there is a need to redefine them in a way that is consistent with the intentions of the story.³³

Hence, while Laura's voice-over narration in coalescence with the images of Dolly suggest that there is a feeling of frustration and unease on Laura's account, the music does indeed break down the objective explicitness of speech and image by giving a supplementary and, at the same time, more profound insight into her inner world. In other words, the employment of the romantic and melancholic melody informs us that while Laura is obviously annoyed and distracted by Dolly's presence, these feelings can in no way supersede those that are associated with her 'brief encounter' with Alec. It is precisely these feelings that consume her, and their power and resonance is accentuated by the fact that though consciously (as suggested by her voice-over) she is irritated by loud and unwanted company, subconsciously (through the application of music), she contemplates the emotional consequences of her relationship with Alec. The third and final voice-over within this particular sequence functions in such a way as to make the point explicit. Laura, now freed from the burden of having to listen to Mrs. Messiter, lets her subconscious thoughts rise to consciousness and be known to the audience/spectator. Hence, what was previously not represented becomes outrightly representational (Laura shares with the audience/spectator her innermost thoughts).

The next instance where music is inserted into the film, is when Laura reaches her home and puts Rachmaninov on the radio in order to relax and reminisce about her love affair with Alec. As

³³ Burt, George. The Art of Film Music. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), p.10

Richard Dyer has rightly pointed out: "When she (Laura) looks for some music on the radio, she chooses Rachmaninov over dance music or French speech."³⁴ On this occasion, the *Second Piano Concerto* becomes source music, hence diegetic, emanating from the radio. It is this music that will make her mind drift back into what she has gone through, and it is from that point onwards that the film will switch into flashback. Therefore, in the first thirteen minutes of the film, Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* has been employed in three modes: a) as objective non-diegetic music (the opening sequence), b) as subjective non-diegetic (voice-over narration in the train), and c) as diegetic music (originating from the radio at the Jesson home). This scheme pertaining to the usage and function of music mirrors the structure of the narrative that will constantly fluctuate between the present as actually experienced to the past with Laura's thoughts and voice-over narration connecting the two, sometimes with flashbacks within flashbacks.

However, the significance of this particular sequence lies more in its power to express and articulate irony. When Laura chooses Rachmaninov over other musical pieces on the radio and asks her husband if he minds, he replies that he rather enjoys music. Yet, what he does not know is that this particular piano concerto is the one that is identified with Laura's adultery and emotional betrayal, as has been evidenced in the preceding sequence in the train. Hence, while the camera focuses on Fred who is absorbed with the *Times* crossword puzzle and the music fills the sound track, the audience/spectator is instantly aware that Laura's husband is at the receiving end of a deception by

³⁴ Dyer, Richard. Brief Encounter. (London: BFI, 1993), p.17



his wife. The irony is further accentuated by Laura's internal monologue which constitutes a form of apology, as well as a guilt trip. Thus, she conspires with the audience/spectator on two counts: a) her narration gives privileged access of information to him/her as regards her feelings and, at the same time, exposes Fred's ignorance of the facts, and b) the source music which is by now familiar to him/her and has been established as a referent of Laura's fervent emotional attachment to Alec, despite being diegetic, imbues the visuals with subjectivity and reinforces the irony of the situation. Consequently, it can be maintained that the audience/spectator is driven into an involuntary identification with Laura, as he/she is sharing with her the sinfulness and the fraudulence that is expressed by her words and amplified on a subconscious level by Rachmaninov's music. Accordingly, through the process of identification with the female heroine, the audience/spectator becomes increasingly subjectified and emotionally controlled by Laura's thoughts.

As the sequence draws to a close, Laura begins to narrate the history of her encounter with Alec as if she is reading a page out of her autobiography. She says: "It all started on an ordinary day in the most ordinary place in the world. The refreshment room at Milford Junction," at which point there is a dissolve to Milford Junction. Throughout this transitional shot from the present to the past, the diegetic music stemming from the radio is heard and, apart from functioning as an editing agent linking the two locales, it also performs its duty in establishing Laura as the sole narrator of the events that took place and altered her life. The music that carries briefly into the next shot is in the possession of Laura and, as such, it filters and will filter in the course of the narrative her chaste



fantasies and her emotional state of mind. The power of the visuals in this transitional shot is of paramount importance to the structural unfolding of the narrative. The dissolve itself seems to take forever, and the aim of this delay in the shift of surroundings is explicitly stated and imprinted on the images. Just before the dissolve commences, Laura is depicted sitting on an armchair with her back to the camera, presumably looking at Fred. As the subsequent shot of Milford Junction's refreshment room emerges, Laura can still be seen at the bottom right of the frame in the same position she held in the previous shot, as though she is actually present in the new locale observing the people who move and talk around her. In this manner, Lean ensures that identification with Laura is not essentially restricted to aural associations, but to audio-visual ones. Hence, while the audience/spectator shares her feelings through her voice-over narration and *her* music, he/she will also see the unfolding action through her eyes as she is depicted watching herself. It is at this point in the narrative, through the merging and foregrounding of the stylised representational elements (image and speech) with the non-representational (music) into a unified whole, that the audio-visual manipulation of the spectator reaches its first emphatic climax.

The ensuing two sequences that involve the utilisation of Rachmaninov are quite ambivalent as regards the music's function. The first occurs following Alec and Laura's first encounter in the refreshment room of Milford Junction when he rushes to help her get a piece of grit out of her eye. Laura has already acknowledged the doctor's good looks in her voice-over narration preceding this unfortunate incident, but after it is all over and she steps back on to the platform to catch the train home, the

music along with her voice-over narration re-emerges. As she says: "I completely forgot about the whole incident. It didn't mean anything to me at all. At least, I didn't think it did." Her negation of having any initial romantic thoughts concerning Alec is in sharp contrast to the presence of the Rachmaninov melody that has already been associated with her emotional attachment to him. Some critics have argued that on this occasion the music functions as mere accompaniment to the visuals - a comment by the film-maker on the initiation of the love story. However, it could be argued that the music is indirectly subjective. To clarify the point: as it has already been established, Laura narrates her story from the living room of her house after having been through her relationship with Alec. Therefore, what at the time did not seem a particularly fascinating meeting with him, now that it is recounted, acquires a new meaning. Consequently, the present inflects the past through the employment of music.

A similar musical treatment of the action takes place in the following sequence when Laura is depicted walking on the streets of Milford and entering Boots in order to change her library book. On both a visual and aural level, there is nothing of particular interest happening, other than a summarised description of her routine Thursday outing. As she says at the beginning of her voice-over: "The next Thursday I went into Milford again as usual. I changed my book at Boots." Yet, the opening of the sequence is enveloped into Rachmaninov's music - a theme in *allegro scherzando*³⁵ - which efficaciously contradicts Laura's walking pace on the street and the content of her narrative. This blatant discrepancy serves one specific purpose:

³⁵ An *allegro scherzando* can be described as a fast and usually exciting piece of music.

rather than being an untimely and unjustified intrusion of music into the visuals, it functions as a means of heightening audience anticipation. In the next few seconds of the film, Laura, will accidentally meet Alec outside the chemist's for a second time since her narrated flashback has commenced. Once again, Laura, who is narrating the story at the present, embellishes her recent history with a note of nostalgia and romanticism, and leads the audience/spectator through *her* music to expect what was unexpected for her in the past; that is, a second meeting with Alec. Had the film not been structured up to that point in such a way as to place Rachmaninov's music in the 'custody' of Laura, its incorporation in this sequence would seem as a rather unsophisticated piece of background musical accompaniment, or as a narratively misplaced musical quotation. However, with Laura in command of the music, fantasy and reality are closely bound together into a romantically modulated reminiscence that emotionally affects the responsive audience/spectator.

The scene at the Kardomah restaurant that constitutes Laura's and Alec's third incidental encounter is of paramount significance, not so much for its use of diegetic music but, predominantly, for the manner in which the ladies' orchestra brings to the forefront of the discussion between Laura and Alec, notions of character, class and intellectualism. After having been properly introduced, their conversation is interrupted briefly by the somewhat musically violent irruption of a ladies' string orchestra. They both laugh at the amusing and slightly ludicrous cellist. As Alec points out: "There should be a society for the prevention of cruelty to musical instruments." From that point onwards, their *tete-a-tete* shifts towards a discussion concerning musical knowledge, and more specifically to Laura's

aptitude for playing the piano. This particular choice of instrument for conversation one must not contemplate as being mentioned accidentally in the narrative since it is the one that musically adorns Laura's romantic reveries. While Laura admits that she was forced to learn it in her youth, she, nonetheless, implies that she had to give it up because her husband "isn't musical at all." Alec responds positively to her election to abandon it, since he does not believe it suits her style and milieu. "You are too sane and uncomplicated," he tells her. Initially, Laura seems to be modestly offended by Alec's remark, but she is quickly placated by his assurance that her lack of musicality is not an indicator of dullness.

A lot of information can be extrapolated from the close scrutiny of Laura and Alec's discussion at the Kardomah. For one, it becomes ostentatiously clear that both of them have a fundamentally middle-class mentality. They have a common view of the world, common demeanours, and equally insipid goals and aspirations. Laura's idea of fun is synonymous with a Thursday outing at Milford, involving lunch at the Kardomah and an evening at the pictures. The same holds true for Alec who humbly declares that he is an ordinary general practitioner. It is precisely this socio-cultural affinity that will bring the two together. On a musical level, Laura's limited fantasy world is communicated to the audience/spectator via a reverie that takes place while she is in the train, and which follows her realisation that she has fallen in love with Alec. In it, she sees both of them impeccably dressed, dancing the quintessentially romantic waltz, while she also fantasises their being together in Venice (the archetypal city for signifying romance), under the melodic and geographically as well as culturally 'appropriate' sound of the

mandolin. What then of Rachmaninov? As it has become clear from the analysis so far, Rachmaninov pertains to Laura's emotional transcendence. The fact that the highly artistic *Second Piano Concerto* is embedded in the sequences depicting Laura's affair with Alec *after* the affair has ended, suggests that Laura has experienced something extra-ordinary. Hence, the admission stemming from her voice-over earlier on in the film when she is at home with Fred, and just before the film drifts into flashback: "I'm an ordinary woman. I didn't think such violent things could happen to ordinary people" implies that Rachmaninov becomes the audible manifestation of the violent and the amazing, while her husband, who does not happen to be 'musical', becomes associated with the dull and the banal that is manifested through the playing of the ladies' orchestra. Additionally, the flashback structure brings to the fore yet another expression of irony that saturates the scene in the Kardomah. While Alec claims that playing the piano would not agree with Laura's social standing and overall demeanour, the audience/spectator is already aware through her voice-overs that he has instigated a forceful transformation in herself - a transformation that, in including the colourful and emotionally potent piano harmonies, exceeds the socio-cultural perception of her own self. Consequently, Alec's statement appears to attest to his ignorance regarding her potential for emotional and social contravention. Thus, although the Rachmaninov concerto is never heard in the Kardomah, it is ever present through inference.

This scene at the Kardomah takes place shortly before the one when Laura will fall in love with Alec and, as such, it is structurally well placed in the narrative because it will heighten the momentous occasion when she will give way to

emotional ecstasy and surrender her middle-class morality. Michael Anderegg commented on this fourth encounter between Laura and Alec that will ignite the flames of passion:

When Alec tells Laura of his 'special pigeon', preventive medicine, his enthusiastic recital of various kinds of coal dust is accompanied by the concerto's swelling strains. The comic effect depends on our awareness that we are sharing Laura's response to Alec. But the effect is not merely comic: we are equally compelled to realise the extent to which Laura can ignore commonplace reality in her yearning for a transcendent experience.³⁶

Apart from the obvious discrepancy between words and music, this scene that takes place thirty minutes into the film (one third), allows for the emergence of the famous and popular leitmotiv that is the trademark of the Rachmaninov concerto. Hence, the concerto's first resounding climactic point coincides with Laura's transcendence and the genesis of the romance. Another significant point has to be made about this instance in the film: Rachmaninov's commanding melody sweeps the images and the sounds, never allowing what was previously possible; that is, the intrusion of other sounds into the narrative. Michael Anderegg makes further assertions regarding the interplay of music with sounds in the film by asserting that:

Rachmaninov offers a sharp contrast to the other sounds by which Laura and Alec are constantly surrounded: the clatter of passing trains (sometimes so loud as to make conversation virtually impossible), the warning bells, and the steam whistles are all signs of both the precariousness and the peculiarly public nature of their romance.³⁷

³⁶ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.32

³⁷ *ibid.* p.32

Thus, Laura is at once in her private world where sounds other than those echoing her feelings (music) are non-existent, and at the same time, in public surroundings where any display of affection is potentially damaging. Yet, in this particular sequence, the music overtakes all sounds, including the bell announcement which suggests that Alec has to catch the train home and part with Laura.

Following this incident at Milford's refreshment room, the love story will unfold, musically imbued by crescendos and decrescendos, just as Laura's and Alec's romance will alternate between moments of exhilaration and despair. Therefore, immediately succeeding Laura's conscious recognition that she has become amorously attached to Alec come the first negative thoughts. Consumed by guilt and jealousy, Laura tells the audience/spectator in her voice-over narration how she imagines Alec being at home with his wife and children, and how she must put an end to what looks like a doomed relationship. The sombre and melancholic Rachmaninov notes accompanying the expression of her innermost thoughts wholly reflect her troubled state of mind. On the contrary, in her next two meetings with Alec, worrying will give way to joyous anticipation and emotional contentment when they first meet at the station, or when they go for a boat ride in the Botanical Gardens. The sweeping and soothing melody of the piano concerto mirrors Laura's happiness and her emotional release from tension and apprehension.

However, as the narrative carries forward, forceful interruptions and intrusions into her private life, will increasingly make this romance look impossible and predestined for failure. The first characteristic example of this shift in the emotional context of the narrative takes place when Alec and

Laura kiss for the first time. Before Laura and, consequently, the audience/spectator has the time to digest this first intimate physical contact, both are forcefully taken back to the present, listening to Fred asking Laura to turn down the music because "it's deafening." Thus, while the music was reaching a melodic crescendo, Fred's voice interrupts it by entering Laura's thought processes. Furthermore, Fred's comment on the loudness of music has a double meaning: on a strictly diegetic level, it indicates his lack of tolerance for music that exceeds its designation as background easy listening and, subsequently, exposes his non-musical personality. On a symbolic level, the blaring melody emanating from the radio reflects Laura's intensity of feeling associated with the reminiscence of her first kiss with Alec. Either way, Fred's voice intrudes into the process of narration, becoming a noise like all the others that have previously prevented Laura from fully articulating her innermost thoughts or obstructed her communication with Alec.

Similarly, Laura's having to lie to her husband about the person she has been at the movies with, hers and Alec's accidental running into Mary Norton and her friend at the restaurant where they were having a romantic dinner, her hasty escape from Stephen Lynn's flat when he unexpectedly shows up and thwarts Laura's and Alec's only chance at consummating their relationship and, finally, Dolly's imposition on the day they are supposed to bid each other emotional farewells, all function to impede Laura's avenue to happiness. The music that enfolds these sequences ranges from the melancholic to the tormenting and, in certain cases, tunes that have been previously heard in the film under different and more positive circumstances, now attain negative dimensions.

One such rather striking example, as briefly mentioned above, can be found in the sequence following Laura and Alec's haphazard encounter with Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Rawlings at the restaurant Royal. Laura, visibly shaken by the fear that her relationship with Alec may become known to her acquaintances, makes an escape to the countryside with Alec on his insistence. While the natural surroundings (Laura and Alec are on a small bridge overlooking a stream) are beautiful and serene, thus endorsing in themselves romantic get-togethers, Laura cannot respond freely to Alec's gracious amorous advances. While they finally kiss on the bridge, the leitmotiv surfaces for the second time in the film. However, this melodic and romantic non-diegetic theme that has been previously associated with Laura's spiritual transcendence and her plunge into a whole new world of sensations, now seems to be 'infected' with inhibition and uncertainty on her part. Whereas before she has transgressed emotionally, now this overstepping becomes physical (she kisses Alec because she is madly in love with him). This evolution from mental to carnal affects her psychologically, as she becomes far more cautious of her actions than before. While the swelling chords of the concerto convey an intensely romantic atmosphere, her words repudiate this overwhelming sensationalism that embraces the sequence on a musical level. Although this occasion is but one of many in the film whereby Laura's words will come to contradict the music that reflects her deeper emotions, this particular sequence constitutes a high point of tragedy for her - a tragedy that resides in the deep internal conflict between conscious and unconscious, reality and illusion, conformity and non-conformity. As she claims a few seconds later when she and Alec drive back to Stephen Lynn's flat: "I remember feeling as if

I was at the edge of a trespass. I think Alec felt that too. You see, we both knew how desperately we loved each other." From the discussion of the foregoing, it can be understood why for the remainder of the film, the music that will envelop the narrated events will be of a particularly solemn character. Laura has reached the edge of a trespass. The agony of actually breaching the connection with her own past and indulging in the pleasures of the present will be wedged in her thoughts and actions until the matter will be resolved in her mind.

Accordingly, shortly afterwards when Laura, suffering from guilt pangs for having contemplated consummating her relationship with Alec and having almost been caught by Stephen Lynn who returned to his flat earlier than expected, rushes out of his apartment and into a telephone booth to call her husband and inform him that she will not be home for dinner because something unexpected came up. In this instance, the audience/spectator becomes witness to the mastery with which David Lean merges convention and highly skilled technique for ascribing the music with very specific dramatic narrative and visual qualities. As Laura runs helplessly on the streets under the falling rain, the rhythm of her movements mimics the tempo of the musical piece, thus providing this part of the sequence with a mickey-mousing effect, that is, the split-second synchronising of musical and visual action. This effect, though particularly popular in the silent cinema as a partial substitute for the lack of sound, as well as an essential sound component of animated cartoons, does not deprive the visuals of dramatic motivation. Instead, it heightens the scene's emotional impact since it compels the audience/spectator to identify with Laura on both a visual scale (her quick and rhythmic movements being almost identical with the

fast temp of the music), and on a subconscious register (her desperation is implied through the unnerving piano chords). As the sequence progresses and Laura enters the phone booth in order to call her husband, the music retains its characteristically distressing quality evoked by means of the employment of trillie³⁸, while Laura is practically motionless. Hence, Laura's near physical paralysis which is proclaimed in her voice-over "I ran until I couldn't run any longer," is sharply contrasted to the musical tempo but, at the same time, functions as an agent in pinpointing her increasingly turbulent mental state. While Laura waits for her husband to pick up the phone, the music gradually reaches a natural decrescendo, thus allowing her words to be intelligible on the screen. Yet, more significantly, it indicates an emotional anti-climax, as her fear of what she might say to Fred gives way to her determination to carry forward with her lame excuse for being late and have him believe her lie. Therefore, this sequence elucidates the masterful way in which the narrative adapts itself to the structural demands of the *Second Piano Concerto's* second movement, without betraying the film's dramatic concerns, and that is achieved through the highest degree of coalescence and fusion between the images, the narrative and the non-diegetic music.

The last scene of the film is rather ambivalent where the employment of music is concerned. It begins with a cut from Laura standing in the doorway of the refreshment room at Milford Junction, to her house's living room where she is depicted still sitting on an armchair while Fred is still engrossed in his crossword puzzle. As Laura looks disoriented and far away, her husband approaches her, knowing that her daydream must have been

³⁸ Trillie is the fast, repetitive and consecutive sonority of two neighbouring sounds.

a sad one. He tells her: "Whatever your dream was, it wasn't a very happy one, was it?" at which point he goes even further, implying that he was aware of Laura's affair with Alec all along. His sentimental exclamation: "You've been a long way away. Thank you for coming back to me," is followed by Laura's bursting into tears as they embrace, and by Rachmaninov's leitmotiv that we have previously been associating with climactic points in Laura's affair with Alec. Yet, at the film's closure, the great romantic theme embraces the Jessons' reunion. Hence, for the third and final time in the narrative the leitmotiv attains an entirely new significance. Its use does not insinuate that Laura's embrace with Fred is of the same romantic, incredible sort that it was with Alec. Fred has been presented throughout the narrative as a very average and unexciting character, and it would be simple-minded to ascribe to him at the end of the film a wildly romantic nature. The explanation can be found in Laura's transformation, or rather, her return to commonplace reality. Silver and Ursini believe that:

As Laura might well have defined her uncomplicated, middle class notion of love as 'hearing beautiful music all the time', so then, within the context of her recollection, it is appropriately present on the track.³⁹

Hence, the beautiful music that was previously filling her mind with unlimited possibilities, now becomes the pleasant music that confines her to her home and her family, but it also provides a sense of release since 'home' is the only place she can feel secure. The music, although it happens to be diegetic, is

³⁹ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p. 40

subjectified by sounding louder than it normally should (Fred previously asked Laura to turn the volume down because the music was deafening). It reflects both the resolution to her inner conflict and the sense of security that Laura feels in the arms of her husband, while it provides a rather sad and anti-climactic closure to the film whereby the objective and the subjective merge into a return to the average and the routine. Silver and Ursini rightly point out that:

Ultimately, the passion which she and Alec develop in their wanderings, however spontaneous and natural it may be, is not strong enough to overcome either moral or social convention.⁴⁰

The film also exposes - within its narrative context-cinematic conventions of the previous decade during which era the film's narrative is supposedly taking place. During two of Laura's and Alec's outings, they go to the pictures. As they enter the cinema and relax in their seats, the camera concentrates on the cinema's screen, revealing the unsophisticated manner in which theatrical trailers are presented to the audience. The music is loud and bombastic, while the epithets that accommodate the visuals are equally overstated. Hence, by making a direct audio-visual reference to the mainstream but second class cinematic product of the 1930s, Lean achieves two goals: a) he provides the narrative with historical accuracy but, more importantly, b) he implicitly exposes some of the poorest cinematic practices of the past by unveiling their overall effect that appears to lack in artistic wisdom. While Laura and Alec watch a movie, the spectator, too, watches a movie

⁴⁰ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p. 41

within a movie, and is hence driven to make comparisons between past and present (the present being Brief Encounter itself). By inflecting the past with mediocrity, Lean aims at elevating his own product to higher status. In another occasion when Alec and Laura enter the cinema in order to see *The Flames of Passion*, the camera cuts to the emergent organist who starts playing Schubert's *Military March* as an introduction to the forthcoming film. Laura and Alec instantly recognise the woman playing the organ as the cellist who performed while they were in the restaurant. Their bursting into laughter is partly associated with the 'menial' job this woman is assigned to do. Playing the organ in the film auditorium seems as ridiculous a trade as playing easy-listening music in some nameless, ordinary restaurant. In other words, their laughter functions as a commentary, as much on the woman herself, as on the convention that calls for an organist to play before the film's screening. Furthermore, the film Laura and Alec are about to see, and which involves a passionate love affair, is presented in such a superficial way as to elevate the depth of *their* romance to a level above the ordinary or the garish. In short, Lean manipulates and extends the function of his fictional characters beyond the strictly narrational process by placing them as agents echoing his own appreciation of what can be loosely called 'second rate cinematic experience.'

So far, the analysis has concentrated on the employment of music in the film. However, the absence of music in certain instances is as equally imperative as its occurrence. For a film like Brief Encounter where music virtually embraces the whole narrative, the moments when Rachmaninov's music is omitted from the sound track stand out as exceptions and, at the same time,

fulfil very specific narrative and symbolic purposes. Hence, while Laura's encounters with Alec are usually enveloped in the melodic tunes of the *Second Piano Concerto*, her discussions with her husband are rarely accompanied by music. Accordingly, when Fred and Laura are seen together for the first time, he is trying to solve a crossword puzzle while she increasingly drifts into her inner world of thoughts and emotions and barely responds to his questions. Again, when Laura comes home after her second meeting with Alec, Fred announces to her that their son has been mildly injured and elation is substituted by apprehension. As they both sit down in the living room and discuss the potential of inviting Alec for dinner, Fred seems once again totally uninterested, preferring instead to carry on with the Times crossword puzzle. During these few sequences when Laura and Fred are together there is absence of music. Fred's only association with Rachmaninov is on a diegetic level, as the latter's piano concerto emanates from the radio in the Jesson home. Even on these occasions, however, Fred either shows his indifference to the music, or complains to Laura about its loudness, never being able to emotionally absorb it, at least not in the way Laura does. Fred's identification with the lack of music functions, therefore, as an emphatic counterpoint to Laura's absorption by it. Whilst in Fred's case, music stands as nothing more than a cultural signifier, for Laura, Rachmaninov has deep emotional overtones. Additionally, since the film is narrated from Laura's point-of-view, she entrusts Alec with her emotional transcendence (hence the music), while she assigns Fred the role of the dull, unimaginative husband who, through his 'lack', echoes the commonplace situation around which his and her lives were revolving before she met Alec.

The absence of music is not solely associated with Fred in the film. When Laura and Alec speak openly about their feelings for each other, there is no musical accompaniment to their conversations. During these moments in the narrative, whereby the subconscious becomes conscious, the implicit explicit, and the unspoken verbalised, we have what Burt refers to as 'dialogue stating the case'.⁴¹ It must not be forgotten that the music of the film is in the possession of Laura, and in this capacity, it is manifested as an expression of her subconscious thoughts that cannot be otherwise expressed in words. Therefore, when there is emotional explicitness in the dialogue, the need for musical escorting is nullified.

Additionally, it is not surprising that while Laura's and Alec's love affair is enfolded by music, the parallel love story between the barmaid and the station guard that takes place inside Milford Station's refreshment room, is devoid of it. Rachmaninov is not utilised as a universal signifier for love. It is exclusively attached to Laura and her account of *her* romance with Alec. Therefore, the significance of having a parallel love story to that of Laura and Alec is twofold: on the one hand, it provides socio-cultural information. Albert and the barmaid are archetypal working class people and the staging of their romance is evocative of their social standing, while Laura and Alec act as representatives of the middle order of society. On the other, the absence of music in the former case makes the audience/spectator aware of the effects that the implementation of music has in the depiction of the romance between Laura and Alec. As Silver and Ursini claim: "Rachmaninov's wistful *Second*

⁴¹ Burt, George. The Art of Film Music. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), p.206

Piano Concerto is played over scene as an equivalent to the lovers' emotions and as a contrast to the dismal visual reality of 'ordinary' concerns."⁴² For Laura, in particular, the love game between the two employees at Milford Junction is part of ordinariness - not entirely disagreeable, but painfully mundane. Thus, the music that overtakes Laura's mind provides the extraordinary in comparison.

In the penultimate scene of the film, when Laura, after having parted with Alec, goes out onto the platform and nearly throws herself on the rails before the approaching express train, there is no dramatic music underscoring her mental ordeal. The absence of music in this case is explained and justified by Laura's words in her voice-over narration: "I had no thoughts at all. Only an overwhelming desire not to feel anything ever again". Hence, the emotional void in her life at that point in the narrative is vigorously promulgated through the absence of music.

In closing the analysis of Brief Encounter, it is important to reiterate the point made at the beginning of the analysis concerning the manner in which David Lean manipulates the audio-visual material in order to set up a series of oppositions with the sole purpose of enhancing the affective power of the narrative. As has been demonstrated, the interplay between the implicit and the explicit, the conscious and the subconscious, the possible and the impossible, all assist in enunciating the psychological complexity of Laura and reveal the intricate structuring of the narrative. However, Silver and Ursini, in discussing the film's narrative structure and visual style have

⁴² Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.40

contended that: "In bracketing the narrative with overt effects that defy misreading, Lean alerts the audience and enhances its opportunity to perceive the more subtle effects".⁴³ The same could be argued to hold true for the employment of music in the film. While Rachmaninov's *Second Piano Concerto* is excessively used in Brief Encounter, sometimes in an overtly representational fashion that, like the visuals, purports negation of misreading, it nonetheless, intentionally so to speak, leaves room for the viewer/listener to absorb the subtler effects of the music which belong to a realm that cannot be explicated or analysed by the structure of audio-visual associations alone. In other words, the psychological effects of the employed music transcend the stringently coherent organisation of the narration and aim at directly touching the soul of the spectator, establishing what Leonard Rosenmann calls a 'supra-reality'. Borrowing the term from Rosenmann, Burt refers to 'supra-reality' as:

The music that interacts with the intrinsic meaning of the sequence, as distinct from a surface-level meaning; it is addressed to what is implicit within the drama, not to what is explicit (such as visual action), that is, to what you cannot see but need to think about.⁴⁴

Hence, aside from the potent mental associations that tug the spectator along Laura Jesson's viewpoint, there is space for the viewer/listener to psychologically interpret the resounding musical ambience that enfolds the film according to his/her own codes of receptivity and consequently, inflect the narrated events in a profoundly individual manner. In this way, the film

⁴³ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.37

⁴⁴ Burt, George. The Art of Film Music. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), p.7

without losing its sense of purpose or its power of affect, is further enriched by the emotional input of the spectator.

LAWRENCE OF ARABIA (1962)

Following The Bridge on the River Kwai's commercial and critical success, David Lean was once more reunited with Sam Spiegel in 1960 in an effort to bring the Arabian adventures of the legendary T.E. Lawrence to the screen. Previous attempts by producer Alexander Korda have been unsuccessful due to negative political reactions⁴⁵, as well as to T.E Lawrence's blatant disregard for the cinema. In a letter to Robert Graves⁴⁶, Lawrence clearly expressed his views regarding the cinematic art:

My rare visits to the cinema always deepen in me a sense of their superficial falsity... The camera seems wholly in place as journalism; but when it tries to recreate, it boos and sets my teeth on edge. So there won't be a film of me.⁴⁷

Yet, Lawrence's sudden and tragic death in 1935 led to a series of chain reactions. Initially, the rights of his book 'The Seven Pillars of Wisdom' were passed on to his brother, Professor Arnold Walter Lawrence who, as T.E's literary executor, allowed the general publication of the book and even considered selling the rights to Sam Spiegel for the purpose of making a film out of it. Although Professor A.W. Lawrence shared to a considerable degree his late brother's misgivings about the cinema, he was, nonetheless, willing to negotiate with the mighty Hungarian producer the amount for the transaction after seeing and becoming impressed by the quality of the draft screenplay written by

⁴⁵ Kevin Brownlow mentions that "the Korda film collapsed just as Hurst was about to leave for Jerusalem because the British Governor of Palestine had refused to permit any large assembly of Arabs". A subsequent attempt by Korda also failed. According to Brownlow: "This time , the Turks objected - and since Britain wanted Turkey as an ally in the event of a war with Germany, Korda cancelled it".Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.406

⁴⁶ Robert Graves was a scholar and author whom T.E. Lawrence took as his protege during his years at Oxford University.

⁴⁷ *ibid* p.405

Michael Wilson.⁴⁸ Meanwhile, David Lean who was always fascinated by the idea of turning one of his boyhood heroes' lives into a film, was ecstatic. He knew that Sam Spiegel, a tough negotiator and a cunning manipulator, could and would get his way once he was committed to a project. Spiegel finally managed to convince Professor Lawrence to sell the rights to the book for a mere \$22,500. With an initial budget set at \$3,000,000, the production cost soon reached a high of \$13,000,000. David Lean was convinced that this ambitious venture would be the first of its kind in the history of cinema. This film, unlike the ones of the same genre⁴⁹ that have preceded it, would involve the combination of spectacle and a very intimate theme that would concentrate on the obscure and perplexing personality of Lawrence. He wanted Lawrence of Arabia to be an 'intellectual' epic.

The film also marked the beginning of a long association between David Lean and composer Maurice Jarre. Jarre was brought in when previously invited composers such as Malcolm Arnold who made the music for The Bridge on the River Kwai, Sir William Walton, Benjamin Britten and, finally, Aram Khatchaturian backed down at the last minute, leaving the new and relatively inexperienced⁵⁰ French composer to write the score within a brief time-span of five weeks. In fact, Jarre composed all of Lean's

⁴⁸ Michael Wilson was later replaced by Robert Bolt as screenwriter. The feud as to who was actually responsible for the writing of the screenplay went on for a number of years. When Bolt received an Oscar for his work on the film, Wilson reacted demanding equal recognition from the American Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences. His plea went astray, only to resurface during the restoration of Lawrence of Arabia in 1989. This time too, Bolt was given exclusive screen credit.

⁴⁹ Lawrence of Arabia has been loosely characterised as an 'epic' film. Ira Konigsberg provides a definition: In film, the term 'epic' generally applies to a work of great scope, spectacle, and action that features plot more than character and heroic action more than heroic virtue. The hero, like his literary prototypes, is a great figure, a noble warrior, and an intense lover; like them, he is larger than life, but with particular Hollywood simplicity, sentimentality and unreality, and without much universal impact. Konigsberg, Ira. The Complete Film Dictionary. (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), p. 103

⁵⁰ When Maurice Jarre was summoned to compose the music for the film he was only 35 years old. Up until then, he was a pupil of Arthur Honegger and worked primarily in theatrical productions, documentaries and minor feature films. Jarre was naturally elated to find himself as the sole composer of the original dramatic music for the film.

subsequent films (Doctor Zhivago, Ryan's Daughter, and A Passage to India). It was an association that proved to be fruitful and rewarding for both men. Jarre would get three Academy Awards out of an equal number of nominations (Ryan's Daughter being the only of his compositions that would not be acknowledged by the American Motion Picture Academy). What is more important, however, is the fact that these memorable melodious tunes would be embedded in the audiences' memories, hence, contributing to the films' immortality. Additionally, it should be stressed that in many occasions, but most profoundly in the case of Doctor Zhivago, the main musical themes he composed for Lean's films were as commercially successful as the films themselves. Doctor Zhivago has gone down in history as one of the most popular film music albums ever.

When Lawrence of Arabia was released in December 1962, it was met with mostly rave reviews. There were occasional harsh criticisms specially pertaining to the length of the film. Some critics believed it was too long and, accordingly, too tiring for the average audience. David Lean, swayed by the persistent commotion regarding the film's duration and Spiegel's insistence, was eventually persuaded to cut twenty minutes and re-release it.⁵¹ The film was so successful, both commercially and critically, that the cutting of some sequences left it practically unscathed. The restoration in its original form in 1989 brought it back to the forefront of cinema, and firmly established it as an indelible classic.

⁵¹Lean was always extremely apprehensive of critic's reactions. When Ryan's Daughter was released in 1970, the critics trashed it. Lean was so distressed by the reception that he decided to abandon film-making. It would be fourteen years before he would return to motion-pictures and provide his swan song with A Passage to India.

Steven Spielberg's comments on the film are perhaps the best way to sum up the film's momentous achievements and its lasting influence:

Lawrence of Arabia gives me the same source of inspiration now, and thanks to the restoration, its inspiration can be for all of us perpetual. We have to look back so we can keep looking forward, and whenever I turn around I only see Lawrence. Every tool used to make movies was used in the making of Lawrence of Arabia; used and fused, sometimes past what we might have thought possible: The performances, the editing, the score, the costume design, the production design, and Robert Bolt's screenplay which, as far as I'm concerned, is the best ever written. All these elements were put together by David Lean with consummate brilliance and absolute economy. There is nothing extraneous in Lawrence of Arabia or in any Lean picture. There is nothing ever wasted. Every shot is a clue that unlocks the plot, and every image is an echo of the heart. So, for me, Lawrence of Arabia is somewhere between a cornerstone and a grail. I was inspired the first time I saw it, it made me feel puny, it still makes me feel puny, and that is but one measure of its greatness.⁵²

The film's score is one of the most memorable in the history of cinema. According to the *Monthly Film Bulletin* it is "a score that skilfully blends Eastern and Western harmonies".⁵³ A great deal of discussion has been centred around the extent to which the music for the film is good enough to hold on its own merits alone, or whether it has achieved its fame due to its association with the narrative and the spectacle that embellishes the film. As it is true with most film music, musical moments that have significance when dubbed to picture can sound odd heard in isolation. Their purpose of existence is to draw on their expressive power in order to enhance the effect that the director desires to achieve in a precise instant in the narrative. Jarre

⁵² Steven Spielberg's speech was given in honour of Sir David Lean when he received the Lifetime Achievement Award by the American Film Institute on 8 March 1990.

⁵³ *Monthly Film Bulletin*. Vol 9, no 5, February 1963.

himself has defended his choice in writing music for films by arguing that:

People ask me if I write *serious* music. They don't realise how serious my film music is to me. If the audience is conscious, however, of the music it probably is not as interested in the film as it should be. I have always tried to avoid self-indulgence in scoring a film. I would rather be successful in helping the director capture the proper mood in a scene on the screen than capture the attention of the audience for my music.⁵⁴

George Burt, in defining the essence and purpose of music composition for epic films has maintained that:

Epic films generally require more music than usual, especially when they contain a preponderance of scenes with broad scope such as landscapes, ceremonies, troop movements, and riots or protests of some sort. In such instances, particularly when dialogue and plot development have been suspended momentarily, music is often needed to maintain a sense of dramatic connection.⁵⁵

Lawrence of Arabia is both a characteristic and a particular example of the utilisation of music in the epic film. As the ensuing close scrutiny of the film will attempt to demonstrate, there is a constant oscillation between the most common musical methods applied for epic films, and the more intimate subjective renderings that are in tune with classical psychological dramas that centre on the exposition of the individuals' mental states. Therefore, on the one hand, there are several moments in the film where dialogue is temporarily suspended and gives way to the visual representation of expansive vistas and action scenes whereby the utilisation of music becomes necessary as a means to

⁵⁴ Interview of Maurice Jarre for ABC television, November 1989.

⁵⁵ Burt, George. The Art of Film Music. (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1994), p.4

uphold dramatic continuity and enhance the spectacle. On the other, however, there are constant musical shifts that put the emphasis on the intimate personal drama, hence, foregrounding the possibility of parallelism or counterpoint between the innate psychology of the characters and the commanding presence of the sweeping landscape.

One critic has commented on the film by arguing that: "imagination is let down with a thud by the score, with its insistent themes."⁵⁶ However, as it will be proved in the forthcoming analysis, each hearing of the various themes reveals more fragments of already heard tunes in a kaleidoscope of guises. The application of the film's three leitmotifs, rather than simply functioning as trademarks of specific persons corresponding to clearly identified emotions, evolve along with the characters themselves and, through their interaction and occasional mutual implication, provide constant points of reference for dramatic narrative climaxes.

⁵⁶ *Monthly Film Bulletin*. Vol 30, no 349, February 1963.

ANALYSIS

Lawrence of Arabia is the only David Lean film that begins with a pre-credit overture - a highly uncommon cinematic practice. This musical synthesis for full symphony orchestra, (which is repeated in the interval as an entr'acte) is one of the most dramatic pieces composed to be heard in the history of cinema. It begins with a savage percussion flourish that leads to a complete statement of the 'Lawrence' theme - slow and imposing. Another shattering burst from the percussion leads into the 'Arab' theme - unrestrained and brutal. Order is restored by the pomp of a typical British military march before all these divergent musical elements complete in a climax of barbaric energy. Martin Scorsese in recalling the film's opening has stated that: "It is one of the great cinema experiences - seeing the curtains open, hearing the overture and then being in the presence of a masterwork"⁵⁷. In fact, the precise purpose of having a pre-credit overture is to heighten the viewers' expectations, to implicitly reveal the feel of the film and to point out its geography through cultural coding. In other words, the audience that is yet to become the spectator is tantalised by the very prospect of having the first images revealed to him/her. By denying the spectator any kind of initial audio-visual correspondence, Lawrence of Arabia defies the classical Hollywood norm that demands music accompanying the opening titles and images rather than preceding them and, hence, calls attention to itself as something out of the ordinary. Similarly, by employing particularly emphatic musical tunes, it magnifies the audience's

⁵⁷ Interview of Martin Scorsese for ABC television, November 1989.

attentiveness and creates an aura of both majesty and mystery as to what is about to follow.

The opening-title sequence begins with an overhead shot of Lawrence repairing and preparing his motorcycle. While the viewer follows Lawrence's movements, his/her attention is more attached to the sound faculties of the sequence and, more specifically, to the persistent alternation between two themes on the sound track. On the one hand, there is a slow but temporally emphatic 'Lawrence' theme which is rendered via a considerably bombastic and stately utilisation of strings, brass and percussion while, on the other, there is what Maurice Jarre himself called the 'home' theme, a vibrant and swift musical theme that utilises essentially Western musical scales. What is particularly interesting about this opening sequence is the counterpoint between image and music. While the image is static and vague insofar as it does not provide the spectator with location specifics or action particulars and keeps Lawrence in distant view, the music is animated and grandiloquent. The implications of such a counterpoint are distinct: the music clearly indicates that the image precedes or follows events that have, or will, take place in the narrative. As the sequence draws to a close, the music comes to an abrupt and suspenseful end when Lawrence puts his foot on the clutch and starts his motorcycle ride across what will later be revealed as the English countryside - a ride that will prove fatal. The title sequence also functions as an anti-climax to the preceding overture that predisposed the audience for a grand opening to the narrative. Instead, the devoid of action first shot perplexes the viewer by negating him/her emotive correspondence between sound and image, thus amplifying the sense of expectation on his/her part. In fact, the

interplay between anticipation and realisation, major and minimal action, as well as between the presence of music and its absence in critical moments in the narrative pervades much of the film, making it complex and unpredictable in its development, instrumental in establishing specific associations, and critical in forging identifications.

The first time that music resurfaces in the narrative is fifteen minutes after the opening sequence with a stately rendition of the 'Lawrence' theme. Its utilisation becomes more emphatic through its correlation with the imagery. Lieutenant Lawrence, discontented with his menial job at the British High Command in Cairo, manages to persuade General Murray and Mr. Dryden of the Arab Bureau to allow him to go into the desert and sound out the Bedouin chief, Prince Feisal, in an effort to assess the possibilities for uniting the various Arab tribes in a revolt against the common enemy - the Turks. Lawrence, elated at the prospect, expresses his conviction to Dryden that his experience in the desert is 'going to be fun'. As he blows a match, the camera cuts to the sun creeping in the horizon. The musical theme builds, swells, and finally comes to a crescendo as the Arabian desert comes into view in all its natural splendour. The two diminutive figures that emerge in the far distance on camels - one of whom is Lawrence and the other his guide, Tafas - are in visual oblivion when compared to the sheer immensity of the primitive landscape that dominates the frame. When, in the next shot, there is a much closer view of Lawrence having a discussion with Tafas, the music drowns momentarily and gives way to the dialogue, only to resurface in the next dissolve whereby the two figures appear in long shot riding across the desert. The theme will reach another crescendo in the subsequent shot when

Lawrence and Tafas are depicted in extreme-long shot continuing their trip across the vast expanse of the rugged desert land. Yet, as the camera cuts to a medium shot of Lawrence who confidently rides his camel and admires the unveiling landscape, the 'home' theme that, too, was previously heard in the title-opening sequence, re-emerges. Hence, despite being depicted in a surrounding that is infinitely dissimilar to the one he has previously been seen in (the English countryside), Lawrence is still associated with his homeland. To the mind of the spectator, he is the British soldier seconded to the Arab Bureau on a special strategic mission that will serve specific British interests. At this point in the narrative, his connection to the desert is purely superficial. It stands as nothing more than the physical hurdle between his point of departure and his point of destination. Therefore, the utilisation of the home theme exploits to the fullest music's ability to manipulate the audience/spectator's perception so as to convey Lawrence's degree of mental disassociation with the desert. To further reinforce the sense of identification on a musical level between Lawrence and Britain, the rhythm of the home theme mimics the tempo of the camel's movement and vice versa. This antithetical mickey-mousing effect creates a sense of irony since there is a discrepancy between what is seen on the screen and what is heard on the sound track. Additionally, in the subsequent medium shot of Tafas, the music takes a distinctly Arabian colouration. This direct and culturally informed musical correspondence serves as a point of reference and comparison for the spectator. It foregrounds the affinity between the Arab and his natural environment and, in so doing, it implicitly magnifies Lawrence's remoteness from it.

Lawrence's inauguration to life in the desert even takes a comical dimension as he receives special instructions from Tafas on how to ride a camel. When Lawrence hits the camel a bit too violently with his whip, it starts a manic ride that eventually leads to his ungracious fall from it. Throughout the duration of this shot, the music that accompanies the images assumes a comedic nature that reflects the images projected on the screen. Once again, the mickey-mousing effect is in evidence as a further means to complement the impression made on the visual track. However, apart from the obvious parody, the shot functions as an additional indicator of Lawrence's ignorance and lack of familiarity with his new surroundings. Rather than projecting Lawrence's acclimatisation with the desert, the music serves to pinpoint his difficulty in achieving it.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the foregoing close shot scrutiny. What is clear at this initial stage is that what will later be designated as the 'Lawrence' theme does not initially belong to Lawrence. All the shots that include this specific theme foreground the enormity and the beauty of the setting rather than Lawrence himself. His understated presence serves to elevate the desert as the prime visual referent. Additionally, none of these shots are from his point-of-view, hence, forbidding the possibility of them reflecting his own perception of Arabia. Instead, the theme can be said to mirror the spectator's observation and mental registering of the surrounding scenery. On the other hand, however, the theme itself is a blend of Eastern and western melodies, composed by a Westerner. Though the basis of the theme is Arabic in that it is totally in unison with no harmony but with embellishments on the same melodic line, the orchestration

and the choice of instruments (i.e. violins) attests to a western approach to an eastern theme. In this way, it favours a fundamentally western reading of a landscape of the East, and it is intended as such since, as the title of the film suggests, this is a story of an Englishman's adventures in a foreign land. Accordingly, the persistent foregrounding of magnificent desert vistas, apart from displaying elements of stunning photography, corroborates the fact that the film is essentially aimed at western audiences whose familiarity with the narrative backdrop has to be firmly established before it can move on. Given that, although there is no direct correlation between the musical theme and Lawrence, there are cultural implications that function as catalysts in forging implicit associations between him and the non-diegetic music. As the preceding shot-by-shot analysis has clearly demonstrated, on a musical level Lawrence is portrayed as the odd figure within that canvas, occasionally treated with parody, and at other times as a foreign body within it. This depiction is to be expected as it reflects both the fictional character's and the spectator's initiation into another kind of life within a geographical context that bears no similarities to the one he/she has been accustomed to. Hence, a degree of sympathy for and identification with Lawrence is established. On the other hand, there is absolute correspondence between the projection of Tafas and the subtle, if momentary, rendition of an Arab tune that aims at clarifying the distinctions between east and west. Therefore, the musical introduction to the desert is as much Lawrence's as it is the spectator's and the music serves to amplify that notion. The further the narrative will advance, the more both Lawrence and the spectator will come to grips with the new realities of the plot and will inhabit the fictional

universe, while the altering set of circumstances will be reflected in the increasing blending of the various musical themes.

An interesting sequence takes place during Lawrence's first night in the desert. While lying down, he looks at the star-filled sky. The musical theme that embellishes the image is a variation of the Lawrence theme that undertakes a marked Eastern timbre. Furthermore, this is the first shot since Lawrence entered the desert that is taken from his point-of-view. The combination of music and image serves to inform the spectator about Lawrence's first visual impressions of the majestic natural setting, and offer an insight into his inner thought processes. Robert Bolt provides a description that accurately reflects Lawrence's spiritual disposition:

We all inhabit the terrifying cosmos. Terrifying because no laws, no sanctions, no mores apply there; it is either empty or occupied by God and Devil nakedly at war. The sensible man will seek to live his life without dealings with this larger environment, treating it as a fine spectacle on a clear night, or a subject for innocent curiosity. At the most he will allow himself an agreeable frisson when he contemplates his own relation to the cosmos, but he will not try to live in it.⁵⁸

Lawrence, who has yet to deal with Arabia and his inner self, treats his being in a new environment with a romanticism that characterises the young and the impressionable. Thus, he gazes at the starlit night sky and reposes on the sand without a care in the world. The 'Lawrence' theme that is rendered in a slow and dreamy tone becomes audible as there is a cut to the night sky. This marks an instance in the film whereby the theme

⁵⁸ Bolt, Robert. A Man for All Seasons. (New York: Random House, 1962), p.16

comes to designate Lawrence's pseudo-intellectual appreciation of the Eastern landscape. Although he claims to Tafas that he is different from other Englishmen, his utterances and his manners suggest the opposite. When he is asked by Tafas if he rode on a camel on his way from Cairo, he replies in a rather affected manner: "No, thank heaven. It's nine hundred miles. I came by boat." Similarly, much like a tourist on his first trip to an exotic location, he is hesitant when Tafas offers him Bedou food as a gesture of trust and friendship. The music that backs this narrative incident has a facetious character, in that it reflects Lawrence's cultural distinction from Tafas. Hence, *his* adornment of the Lawrence theme with an Arabic melody is conspicuously unsophisticated at this stage of the film. It expresses more of his desire to get to know Arabia and the Arabs than an actual blending with them. Soon afterwards, when Lawrence, after spending the night in the desert in the company of Tafas and establishing a degree of closeness and friendship offers him his gun, the musical theme that accompanies the action becomes an alternation of the Lawrence and the Arab themes. The two are still distinct from each other, but as they intertwine on the soundtrack, they hint at Lawrence's growing attachment with his guide. Silver and Ursini emphasise Lawrence's mingling with the surroundings on an exclusively visual scale:

The "fact" that this Welshman is out of place here is never visualised. Rather Lean catches him reclining contemplatively in front of the bleached branches of a tangled, windswept bush. Already, with his dusty tan uniform and his sand-flecked hair and skin, he has begun to blend with the natural surroundings. Exteriorly his figure is camouflaged or lost in the panoramic long shots where Lawrence and his guide become specks in the desert tides. Internally he senses the

beginning of something: "I am different," he assures Tafas. He discovers a destiny.⁵⁹

While it is certainly true that Lawrence's non-conformity with the surrounding landscape is never visualised on the level of colour function, it is certainly accoustatised as the foregoing analysis has demonstrated. The presence of visual correspondence on the one hand, but sound disparity on the other, encourages the spectator to ascribe to Lawrence a limited degree of naturalisation within the new environment. It is the slow evolution of the narrative and the transformation of the musical themes that will make this possible. Therefore, Silver and Ursini's postulation that Lawrence discovers a destiny at such an early stage in the narrative appears extremely hasty and unjustified.

The following major musical instance in the film is diegetic. After the murder of Tafas and his first encounter with Sherif Ali, Lawrence refuses his assistance in escorting him to Lord Feisal's camp. He is left to his own devices and his only guide - in the absence of a human one - is an army compass. Lawrence, in defiance and in a British bravado manner, rides along the desert singing "The man who robbed the bank of Monte Carlo." While passing by an uneven cliff formation, he listens for his echo. The pleasure of hearing his own voice reverberated in the middle of nowhere gives him the feeling of being in total command of the cosmos, and momentarily alleviates any fears he might have had regarding his uncertain voyage through a barren and unfamiliar landscape. Sherif Ali's words of warning to him in the previous sequence seem to be losing momentum: "Wadi Safra is

⁵⁹ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and His Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p. 155

another day from here. You will not find it, and not finding it, you will die." Instead, singing a British tune becomes Lawrence's way of exorcising his fear and it is also the audible means through which he will first make contact with another British officer sitting on a ledge at the foot of the cliffs - Colonel Brighton who will eventually lead him to Feisal.

The first distinct rendition of the Arab theme occurs soon after Prince Feisal and his group of soldiers are forced to move south to avoid the attacking Turkish planes. The fighters are depicted moving at night and at dawn on foot across the desert, having no artillery and no other weapons except their swords. This visual depiction reflects Feisal's admission to Lawrence: "You understand Lieutenant Lawrence, my people are unused to explosives and machines. First the guns, and now this." The Arabs are perceived as a nomadic people who move from place to place subject to circumstance. So far in the narrative, the comments made about the Arabs by the British officers were of a distinctly denigrating nature. When Colonel Brighton first meets Lawrence and hears his account of how Tafas was murdered by Ali by virtue of his belonging to a different Arab tribe, he refers to them as "bloody savages", while earlier, in a derogatory remark, General Murray says to Mr. Dryden: "Any time spent on the Bedouin is time wasted. They are a nation of sheep-stealers." Equally, for Murray the possibility of organising a Bedouin army would be "a side show of a side show." However, it is Lawrence more than anybody else who pinpoints the root of the Arab problem when, in a display of anger, he challenges Ali's principles: "So long as the Arabs fight tribe against tribe, so long will they be a little people, a silly people - greedy, barbarous and cruel." At the same time, however, the presence of a subtle and solemnly

rendered Arab theme that emerges for the first time in the film and accompanies the images of the fleeting Feisal army, serves a very specific purpose: it highlights the prospect of unity of the different Arab tribes under Feisal. It must not be forgotten that both Tafas and Ali were willing to escort Lawrence to Feisal's camp. In fact, Ali - much to Lawrence's surprise - participates in the closed meeting at Feisal's headquarters in an advisory capacity. Prince Feisal represents both the political and spiritual figure that stands as the only hope of Arab unification. When Lawrence and Brighton have a brief conversation with him in his tent, Feisal emerges as a clever and eloquent man who comprehends the political and military complexities that are involved in an uprising against the Turks, as well as the degree and purpose of the British intervention in Arabia. His introduction to the narrative, therefore, provides the necessary means that will justify a sense of 'Arabness' and will give credence to the possibility of an Arab revolt, as this will be organised by Lawrence in the subsequent stages of the narrative. Feisal's commanding and authoritative figure also dismisses to a great degree the rather simplistic assumptions that have been drawn earlier on by the British High Command officers in Cairo. Hence, the introduction of the Arab theme becomes both inevitable and necessary as it paves the ground for what will follow. Once again, the combination of music and image is from an objective (the spectator's) point-of-view. The narrative before entering into a process of more direct and specific identifications maintains the perspective of the culturally informed neutral observer and prepares the geographical and cultural canvas against which it will evolve.

Soon after the meeting with Brighton and Ali ends, Lawrence stays behind and has a brief discussion with Feisal. The verbal exchange between the two men is both intriguing and indicative of their attitudes. Lawrence is very much how Feisal described him earlier to Brighton: "He is a young man, and young men are passionate." Feisal, on the other hand, is more pragmatic in his approach but is, at the same time, captivated by Lawrence's vision of an Arabia that will once again be great after nine centuries of oblivion. Though their intellectual affinity is obvious, there is scepticism for each other's commitment in trying to find ways to make the Arab revolt possible. When Feisal tells Lawrence that in order for it to be successful he will need "what no man can provide - a miracle," Lawrence walks out of his tent in order to work out his miracle. The camera follows him as he unflinchingly walks along the dunes with the howling wind trouncing his face and body. His contemplation, being a mental process, is never verbalised but its intensity is rendered via the forceful application of non-diegetic music and diegetic sound. Maurice Jarre has commented on this specific sequence:

It begins with the cord dangling in front of Feisal's tent and continues with Lawrence going into the desert with the two kids and spending the night thinking. Musically, you have to show how his decision came about intellectually. I thought of a passacaglia⁶⁰ because it is a musical form which fits the intellectual process.⁶¹

The desert landscape with its ribbing of sand dunes provides the perfect setting for Lawrence's meditative process. There is no

⁶⁰ The passacaglia is a musical form that was particularly popular in the Baroque period. It is in triple meter time, and employs a characteristic recurring harmonic pattern or actual bass line of four or eight bars.

⁶¹ Morris, Robert L, and Raskin, Lawrence. Lawrence of Arabia. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p.144

physical barrier to be crossed and no human distraction. At the same time, the sound of the wailing night wind in combination with the repetitive string chords in the sound track provide an air of mystery and expectation, while they also assist in making Lawrence appear as a growingly integral part of the landscape. Lawrence's absorption into his own thoughts does not waver even when Farraj and Daud appear over the crest of a dune and, in trying to capture his attention, let a little stone roll downward and hit him gently in the back. Instead, Lawrence picks it up and continues his quest for a solution. The musical passacaglia comes to a crescendo as the day breaks and the sun is seen through the sand haze. Finally, it comes to an abrupt end as Lawrence resolves the matter in his mind. "Akaba. Akaba from the land" is the single phrase he utters in the presence of the bewildered Farraj and Daud. Silver and Ursini emphasise the significance of the sequence in thematic terms based upon primarily visual referents:

Again his position is visually understated: a high angle shot flattens him against a wall of rippling sand, the thin form of a minor British functionary arrayed against the currents of natural and historical force. Lawrence ponders this dilemma through a night of wind and dust, wandering in long shot, until morning lights his crouching silhouette, and a close-up as he breathes the decision to himself: "Akaba." Akaba, or Jerusalem, or Mecca - Lawrence pronounces it like a shrine. For in this scene of ordeal in the desert, in the creation of Feisal's "miracle", Lean and Bolt begin to extend the image of a mortal facing personal cataclysm to include messianic analogies and religious symbols.⁶²

However, it is through the utilisation of the persistent musical form that the images are brought together as a unified whole and attain a heightened level of prominence. In addition, music, far

⁶² Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), pp 156-7

from simply functioning as a means of furthering the degree of visual unity and linear progression, imbues the sequence with Lawrence's complex mental explorations which become of essence to the sequence since the evolution of the narrative will be largely contingent on his resolutions. Lawrence's physical presence may not be visually eminent, as Silver and Ursini rightly point out, but his mental constitution dominates the sound track that, through its direct correlation with the images, comes to dictate the mood of the sequence as a whole.

After barely convincing Ali that the only way to reach Akaba is from the landward side, and keeping it a secret from Colonel Brighton, Lawrence sets out to cross the Nefud desert with fifty of Feisal's men, hoping that through the long and dangerous expedition others will join in the charge against the Turkish stronghold. The music that complements the sequence is a mixture of an Arab military tune and a variation of the Lawrence theme that is based on the rhythmical and pompous application of percussion instruments that, in turn, provide a sense of urgency and enthusiasm. This time, however, the rendition of the Lawrence theme is yet again in a different context from the previous ones. While, formerly, it indicated the spectator's or even Lawrence's perception of the Arabian landscape, it now becomes the theme that the filmmaker and, by consequence, the spectator ascribes to Lawrence as the defiant and committed warrior who leads a group of men through "the worst place God created" - the Nefud desert. The constant interaction between the Arab and the Lawrence theme give prominence to the idea of the common cause that unifies the group of soldiers. Lawrence, slowly but steadily, begins to be assimilated in the Arab cause. In so doing, he rebukes Feisal's earlier assumption that he could not possibly be loyal to both

his homeland and Arabia: "To England and Arabia, both? And is that possible? I think you are another of these desert-loving English." The same parallelism between images and music will transpire later when Lawrence, after meeting Auda Abu Tayi of the Howitat, will convince him to join forces with the men of Feisal's army in order to get hold of Akaba.

The eight-minute long sequence that covers part of Lawrence and Feisal's troops' perilous journey across the Nefud desert is one of the most classic examples of how non-diegetic music is applied in a large-scale film in the absence of dialogue or exceptional dramatic action. Its suggestive beats, rhythms and tonalities permeate through the visuals and enhance their effect by bringing to the fore elements within them that have psychological implications for both the fictional characters and the spectator. Hence, the utilisation of a solemn theme that accompanies the very long shot of the treacherous and vast-looking desert introduces the spectator to the enormity of the task ahead. This is followed by a slow and repetitive combination of strings and percussion instruments that reflect the toll that the heat and tiredness have on the fighters. Their energy and enthusiasm is sapped, and they fall into a slow, ponderous and trance-like ride. Subsequently, an apprehensive cluster of string notes is employed as they can see a violent sand storm in the distance. The music is momentarily brought to a halt when Lawrence drifts with the tedium, to be sharply awoken and rebuked by Ali. However, soon after, the music switches to a brief statement of the home theme when Lawrence, to the amazement of the Arabs, has his much-needed shave. Echoes of his old lifestyle carry into the new realities and remain an essential part of his daily routine. Intellectually, Lawrence still fails, or refuses

to admit that the crossing of the Nefud is more than just a 'side-show.' As the army moves further along the desert, a distinctly suspenseful theme erupts on the soundtrack. The land is covered by black rocks that make the crossing difficult, while the blazing sun turns the ground into a fiery furnace "This is the sun's Anvil" says Ali to Lawrence in order to make him understand the hazards attached to the hardest part of the crossing. When Lawrence finally gets Ali's confirmation that their long journey is almost over and that they are fast approaching the wells, there is a very brief and understated utilisation of the Lawrence theme, only to be abruptly suspended when one of the camels appears moving along besides them without a rider on its hump. The Lawrence theme acquires additional weight through its direct correlation with Daud's words of thanks for his master's⁶³ stupendous achievement. However, its sudden suspension cancels out the moment of rejoicing and triumph that both the spectator and Lawrence are longing to feel, while the forceful employment of a tensile theme reinstates the pattern of apprehension and expectation that saturated much of the trying expedition through the desert. It is through this interplay of musical suspension and repetition that the narrative accomplishes its goal of generating a sensation of deferment that temporarily thwarts the potential for resolution and catharsis.

The following sequence is one of the most remarkable in the film both in musical and thematic terms. Lawrence after realising that one of his men - Gasim, has fallen off his camel and has vanished in the midst of the desert, takes the initiative to bring him back, but his resolve is challenged by Ali who accuses

⁶³ In an earlier sequence, two young boys - Daud and Farraj become Lawrence's servants. Ali protests against their extremely servile manner by saying to Lawrence: "These are not servants. These are worshippers."

him of tempting his fate. Ali staunchly believes that it was God's will that helped them cross the Nefud, but for Lawrence, much like his previous conviction that involved the plan for the conquest of Akaba, "it is just a matter of going." For Ali, Lawrence is a "British blasphemer" since he feigns deific powers and qualities. To his mind, the British officer is both ungrateful to Allah and arrogant, insofar as he thinks he can achieve anything he sets in his mind. On a musical level, the sheer size and drama of the mission is emphasised through the alternating application of rhythmical low-pitched percussion tones as the camera follows Gasim's last-ditched effort to move along and remain alive in the desert, and the high-pitched strings that accompany shots of the blazing and blinding sun. This audio-visual depiction justifies Ali's designation of the Nefud as 'the sun's anvil.' Lawrence, despite everyone's predictions, returns with Gasim exhausted but alive, and the Lawrence theme emerges triumphant through the emphatic application of percussion and strings. The circle is completed and final resolution is achieved: the Nefud has been successfully crossed without the loss of human life in the process. The trepidation that was previously felt with its abrupt suspension has been resolved through its current full and extensive application on the sound track. At the same time, the theme itself acquires new attributes. Whereas it has been previously employed to promote the idea of Lawrence as the audacious warrior, its current utilisation elevates Lawrence's qualities to those of proficient strategist, saviour, and great humanitarian. Therefore, it can be asserted that each utilisation of the Lawrence theme unveils different aspects of his personality, and the more the audience/spectator gets accustomed to him and his

actions within a narrative context, the more variant characteristics it attaches to the theme that has, by now, come to be associated with him. Given all his newly acquired traits, it comes as no surprise that he becomes El Aurence instead of Lawrence, that his British uniform is burned and in a brief ceremony he becomes Sherif of the Beni Wadji, while getting the appropriate robes to go with his new title. As far as the Arabs are concerned, he has become one of them both in spirit and in outlook.

The capture of Akaba presents yet another elucidating variation of the Lawrence theme, especially in its interweaving with the Arab theme. While the images narrating the attack are sans music, as soon as the Arab troops consolidate their position in the Turkish-held seaport with its green gardens and elegantly constructed homes, a variant of both the Lawrence and Arab themes dominate the soundtrack, with particular emphasis given to the latter. Thematically, this intermingling insinuates the joint effort in achieving the common goal. Hence, the Lawrence theme celebrates his role in leading the Harith and the Howitat into a victorious march and the liberation of Akaba, while the percussive Arab theme pays tribute to the accomplishments of the different tribes that have temporarily surpassed their feuds and have come together in an effort to oust the Turks. Their motives for getting hold of Akaba vary: the Howitat desire it for the gold that is kept there, while the Harith see it as a cornerstone in their quest for freedom from slavery. When earlier Auda was propositioned by Lawrence to commit his forces in the service of the Arab revolt, he appeared hesitant: "The Arabs. The Howitat, Aliji, Rala, Beni Saha; these I know. I have even heard of the Harith, but the Arabs? What tribe is that?" Thus, the current

utilisation of the Arab theme serves one essential purpose: to give prominence to the sense of Arab unity under Lawrence's command.

While Akaba is ransacked by the Arabs, Lawrence is depicted riding in solitude along the shore reflecting on his success, while full of self-doubt because he has sensed in himself an enjoyment in the slaughter. Set against a backdrop that includes the sea, Lawrence and the setting sun, the Lawrence theme makes its presence felt in the soundtrack. Its subtle but reticent rendition points towards the contrasting feelings that he experiences. There is a deep sense of satisfaction for accomplishing the miracle that he promised to Feisal, but the psychological ambiguity attached to the pleasure he took in the killings, placates his earlier enthusiasm. As Silver and Ursini appropriately advocate:

Here Lean extends his colour metaphor, adding to the burning orange of the sun which seems to set fire to the water, the red of the wreath which Ali throws to the conqueror. Both characterise Lawrence's dynamism; but the wreath is also the colour of blood. For as fearful he is of killing and of the unanticipated pleasure he felt when he shot Gasim, it is too late for Lawrence to put off his heroic robes, to avert his fate.⁶⁴

Furthermore, it is the first time in the film that this theme accompanies images that do not include the desert landscape. In place of the barren and parched stretch of land, there is the moist and colourful panorama of the sea. That foremost differentiation from the first shots of Lawrence in the desert when the theme was linked to the setting terminally cancels any

⁶⁴ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and His Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.163

further associations with it on a strictly visual scale. As the narrative has evolved, so did the theme increasingly become Lawrence's own. He has been transformed from the naïve but adventurous British soldier, to an accomplished warrior admired and respected by all Arab tribes and their leaders. He has acquired disciples in the young and susceptible Daud and Farraj, he has challenged fate but, most importantly, he has now become the triumphant but ambiguous conqueror who assumes some of the cultural and psychological traits of the Arabs. The barbarity he has accused them of when he has first witnessed a tribal death has evolved into something of an acquired taste for him. Accordingly, the Lawrence theme has followed his psychological transformations in its application: from dignified and majestic to triumphant, and from vigorous to solemn and guarded.

One of the sequences that deserves consideration is the one that takes place halfway through the film, and whose audio-visual characteristics cannot be found in any other part of this motion picture. The sequence under scrutiny, follows the one when Lawrence, while crossing the Sinai desert, loses one of his two devoted guides (Daud) to quick sand, and it involves Lawrence and Daud's brother Farraj reaching a vacated building which, as the images indicate, has been previously under the command of the British Army. Though Farraj is enthusiastic at the sight of the first signs of 'civilisation' after the long trip through the ferocious and sun-baked desert, Lawrence seems lost and dejected following the unjustified death of his young guide and companion. The sequence is easily distinguishable from the others in the film through means of the persistent oscillation between clusters of low and high-pitched tones emanating from percussion and string instruments, sounds from natural elements (the sound of

the gushing wind), as well as from the noise made by some of the objects that are present on the screen frame (wooden doors banging against their frames, screaming window panes, and the sound of barbed wire pulling on the wooden poles).

Eisler and Adorno extensively discuss the coalescence of music and noise. As they contend:

Of course, it is often necessary to mingle music and noise, because noise alone might produce an effect of dullness and emptiness. But in such cases noise and music must be mutually adjusted. In terms of music, this means that it has to 'keep open' for the noise, which is to be integrated into it. The function of noise is twofold: on the one hand, it is naturalistic, and on the other, it is an element of the music itself, with an effect that can be best likened to the accents of the percussion instruments.⁶⁵

In this particular scene, the mutual adjustment of music and noise produces an effect of weariness. The long and strenuous journey through the Sinai desert has drained Lawrence who does not react to the welcoming site of the evacuated British army barracks. The monotonous and repetitive rhythms on the sound track have a dream-like quality that points towards Lawrence's mental drifting. It is only when he hears the sound emanating from the funnel of a cargo ship that the cyclical alteration of noise and music is interrupted and Lawrence's sense of reality returns. Hence, as he slowly walks towards the edge of the cliff and sees the Suez Canal, a variation of the home theme emerges on the sound track. It is a triumphal moment for Lawrence who has successfully crossed the vast desert. The implication of the home theme's utilisation is twofold: it projects Lawrence's contentment in returning to a familiar environment but, more

⁶⁵ Eisler Hans, and Adorno, Theodor. Composing for the Films. (London: Athlone, 1994), p.102

significantly, it insinuates that his temporary 'home' in the absence of his native land is the city of Cairo which is under British rule. Hence, it can be argued that in this instance, there are echoes of British imperialism embedded in Lawrence's mind. Similarly, the words of Ali who before Lawrence left Akaba told him: "In Cairo you will put off these funny clothes. You will wear trousers and tell stories of our quaintness and barbarity, and then, they will believe you" appear to be gaining momentum. Lawrence, despite his effort to become an integral part of the Arab way of life, and still mentally confused by his own actions, experiences the satisfaction in returning to the placid and 'cultured' environment in the company of his own people.

Upon his arrival at the British military headquarters with Farraj by his side, Lawrence amazes everyone with his announcement that he has taken hold of Akaba. General Allenby summons him to his office to enquire about the events that have taken place. Following Lawrence's account of the military expeditions, Allenby proposes Lawrence's promotion to Major and congratulates him for a "brilliant bit of soldiering." Lawrence's initial hesitation to return to the depths of Arabia is gradually being discarded through Allenby's appeal to his narcissism and his vanity. Kenneth Alford's *Voice Of Guns* makes its triumphant entry into the sound track as Lawrence parades glorious and victorious through scores of admiringly gazing British soldiers. The employment of this particular score reflects both the soldiers' appreciation of Lawrence 'the exceptional British combatant', as well as Lawrence's own sense of pride. Being in a totally different environment, and with his ego boosted by the exaggerated flattery coming from Generals and politicians alike, Lawrence succumbs to his own glorification. In this narrative

instance, he finds solace within the depths of his 'Britishness.' His fellow peers have not only managed to appeal to his vanity - they have also been successful in dismissing his sense of guilt regarding the killings he enjoyed performing. "Rubbish! Rubbish. You know that you are tired" is what Allenby tells him. Lawrence is susceptible both to flattery and to suggestion, and Allenby's comments on this psychologically pressing issue help him to temporarily subdue his inner demons. After concluding his meeting with Allenby and having secured British military and monetary support for the revolt, Lawrence stands alone in his Arab robes by a fountain. As the many soldiers look at him like a curious spectacle, he openly manifests his propensity to impress and consciously tantalise his fellow men by means of attracting attention to himself. Accordingly, he momentarily fakes an Arab identity, performs an affected and almost theatrical arrangement of his robes, as well as an arrogantly proud walk. In other words, he engages in what earlier Allenby referred to as "amateur theatricals."⁶⁶ Henceforth, the Arab melody that accompanies this 'Arab staging' belongs to Lawrence and functions both as a kind of self-mockery and a shameless showing off. However, when he enters the passageway of the main building, the theme swiftly changes to a British military tune as the other officers see through his guise and begin to embrace him, and concludes with a brief statement of the Lawrence theme which insinuates that Lawrence's destiny is ultimately linked with the Arabs and the Arab revolt. On a more symbolic level, it advocates the notion that the whole pompous masquerade in Cairo is the real stage for his "amateur theatricals," while the life in the desert amongst

⁶⁶ When General Allenby takes a good look at Lawrence in his Harith robes, he says to him: "What do you mean coming here dressed like that? Amateur theatricals?"

the Arabs, with all its positive and negative implications, is the only real life for him.

Lawrence's return to the desert inaugurates a transition in the Arab military operations. Having persuaded the generals in Cairo that the success of the Arab revolt depends on their supply with guns and ammunition by the British, Lawrence embarks upon a ferocious campaign of destruction and annihilation of the enemy. The romantic warrior who dreamt of a free Arabia, has now been transformed into an aggressive authoritarian with illusions of grandeur. His earlier admission to Allenby that he enjoyed the killings he performed becomes evident in his increasingly arrogant and rather fierce demeanour. Thus, following the detonation of a charge that derails a Turkish military train and the human carnage that results, Lawrence climbs on its roof and the Lawrence theme erupts as he starts his victorious walk. Framed against the sun, his shadow cast on the sand, and with the crowds rhythmically pronouncing his name, Lawrence assumes a godly dimension. The emphatic and ostentatious rendition of the theme that accompanies the images testifies to Lawrence's absorption into his own vanity, and to the conception of himself as a modern prophet. Up until this point in the narrative, and as has become evident in the foregoing analysis, the utilisation of the Lawrence theme has gradually evolved into a celebration of the many and various attributes of Lawrence 'the man' and Lawrence 'the soldier.' This example presents a climactic, though extremely ambiguous, point in its psychological designation. Lawrence is both a hero and a sacrilegist. He thinks he can conquer fate: "They can only kill me with a golden bullet" he says to the mesmerised Bentley. As Michael Anderegg points out:

A hero in the eyes of the Arabs, he appears vain and childish in ours. The film, at this point, credits Lawrence's debunkers... Being a god means sacrificing merely human bonds.⁶⁷

From that point onwards there is no self-illusion that can exceed that of conceiving oneself as a god. Lawrence has reached the highest plateau of his delusion, as well as of reverence from his followers. Thus, it comes as no surprise that when the Lawrence theme surfaces again for the penultimate time in the narrative, it has a very different designation, and stands both as a self-criticism of his previous arrogance, and a salient denouncement of his exceptionally heroic perception. Lawrence, after being captured and violated by the Turkish Bey in Deraa, is thrown by his entourage of soldiers into a pool of mud. His staunch belief that he is both invisible and invincible is thwarted by his intimidation in the hands of his enemy. His falling into the mud visibly refutes his earlier declaration that he loves the desert because "it's clean." Lawrence, visibly humiliated, retreats into his own world of remorse and self-pity. While Ali tries to soothe his mental wounds by appealing to his essentially human side "You have a body like other men", the slow and subdued application of the theme points at Lawrence's realisation of his humility and his ordinariness. His falling from greatness is the realisation that will lead him to Jerusalem to seek "his ration of common humanity."

When Lawrence informs Ali that he intends to return to Jerusalem so that he can be amongst his own people, the camera cuts to a British military band playing an appropriate tune. Lawrence, for the first time since he has entered the desert, appears in an official British uniform that, by his own

⁶⁷ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.111-12

admission, is borrowed. However, despite trying to be jovial and converse about futile matters with his fellow officers, he does not really fit in with his immediate surroundings. As a British officer confides to a friend: "He lays it on a bit thick." Yet, despite his misgivings about going back to the desert, Allenby once again appeals to his pride and conceit, and convinces him to return for a final charge against Damascus. The presence of the diegetic British theme on the sound track stands as Lawrence's last effort to persuade himself that he belongs with the British and that his connections with the Arabs and Arabia have been severed. However, his illusions of grandeur that have purposefully been reinstated by Allenby "I believe your name will be a household word when you'll have to go to the War Museum to find who Allenby was. You're the most extraordinary man I've ever met," and his hunger for revenge against the Turks who have inflicted him with physical and mental wounds cannot keep him away from the desert and from its Arab inhabitants. His yearning for retribution surpasses his sense of humiliation, and his passion overrides his common sense. As he admits to himself: "The best of them won't come for money; they'll come for me".

The Lawrence theme turns up for the final time when Lawrence drives away from the desert, never to return. A triumphant leader and a beaten man, Lawrence senses his own ambiguity. His feelings for the desert are mixed insofar as they offered him moments of exhilaration and greatness, but also by that they have brought to the fore the most violent and self-incriminating aspects of his volatile personality. Ultimately, Lawrence has been betrayed by both his allies - the Arabs and the British. Prince Feisal, in whose name he initiated the Arab revolt, is willing to negotiate a joint government with the British, while Allenby has violated

his earlier promise to Lawrence that the British would have no interest in Arabia once it freed itself from Turkish rule. Feisal's cynical statement to Allenby: "We are equally glad to be rid of him," resonates the degree of Lawrence's betrayal by his 'friends'. Hence, as he passes by Bedouins on camels, he takes one last look at the desert of the many passions. A diegetic British military tune is heard as a truck full of British soldiers heads for Damascus. This very brief musical interlude coincides with his driver's effort to enthuse him at the idea of his finally going home, but it quickly gives way to a slow and almost elegiac variation of the Lawrence theme. Since the utilisation of the theme has been closely associated with Lawrence for the most part of the narrative, this final slow and melancholic rendition keeps the ambiguity alive. It can both be said to reflect Lawrence's melancholy in leaving behind the most precious and interesting part of his life, or it may echo his dejection in realising his human failings. This is a most appropriate audio-visual closure to the narrative. As Lawrence's face is obscured by the car's dusty windscreen, so does the music put the accent on his authoritative but perplexed personality. Lawrence is on his way to becoming a myth and belong to history.

As mentioned in the beginning of this analysis, the employment of music in the film is as important in establishing mood as is its absence. In fact, while the duration of the film is 221 minutes, only 57 minutes of it are embellished in music. What is more intriguing, however, is that some very important action sequences are devoid of music, an element which is rather uncharacteristic of films of the scale and the spectacle of Lawrence of Arabia. The beginning of the charge against Akaba, for example, is not imbued with musical tunes that would magnify

the surging passion of the moment, especially as this has been the first major goal of the Arab revolt against the Turks and a major turning point in the narrative. Instead, the shots that range from panoramic vistas of the charging Arab army to the closer views of the massacre rely solely on the sounds of the gunshots, the lashing swords, the galloping horses and the screams of the soldiers for creating a compelling effect. This raw and brutal depiction of battle aims at attracting the audience/spectator's attention to the realities of warfare, rather than attempting a romanticisation of the attack as a gallant operation that has no emotional impact other than the elation of conquest. Its sheer ferociousness and realism are reflected in Lawrence's mental disposition that alters quite dramatically following the bloody battle of Akaba. As he later admits to the generals in Cairo: "We killed some; too many really. I'll manage it better next time. There's been a lot of killing, one way or another." The charge against Akaba is Lawrence's introduction to the Arab way of fighting. Although he has earlier impressed Prince Feisal with his academic knowledge regarding the Bedouins' military traditions "The Bedu go where they please and strike as they please. This is the way the Bedu always fought. You are famed throughout the world for fighting in this way, and this is the way you should fight now", the realities of their ways provide him with the painful realisation there is nothing glorious about slaughter, especially to a refined Englishman who has had a very limited experience of the Arabs and of the nomadic life in the desert. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when, at the end of the sequence, and as the Lawrence theme surfaces in the form of a concluding statement on what has been seen and absorbed by the spectator, the overall

mood is controlled and subdued when compared to earlier renditions of the same theme.

The same pattern of absence is employed in the Deraa massacre. Lawrence, after being physically abused and emotionally tattered by the Turkish Bey, organises his retribution by engaging his army into a relentless slaughter of the retreating Turkish army. The bloodbath that ensues stands as testament to Lawrence's fading sanity and his absorption into his own mental torments. The absence of music hints at Lawrence's lack of feeling, while it magnifies the degree of the naked aggression by giving prominence to the dramatically violent visuals. The spectator cannot establish any degree of identification with the instigator of the slaughter, nor can it ascribe to the projected images any emotional impetus other than shock. It is precisely the sensation of perturbation and disbelief that is reflected on the screen through the absence of music and the deliberate amplification of silence in its bloody aftermath.

While the analysis of the aforementioned sequences demonstrated how the absence of music is utilised in foregrounding the effect of realism or the suspension of identification, there are also several examples whereby the lack of music lays emphasis upon the suspenseful elements of the narrative. The doomed effort of Lawrence to save Daud from the quicksand, as well the execution of Gasim at the hands of his own saviour, provide excellent examples of how this absence operates as the generator of suspense and enhances the narrative's effect. In both cases, the drama inherent in the images and the dialogue is enough to transmit significant messages to the spectator. It does not require explication or magnification through musical means, as this would betray the economy of the narrative. In

other words, the utilisation of a theme that would generate suspense on top of an already overwrought moment would act as a narrative overstatement that would diminish its psychological impact.

However, the most renowned example of how silence in correlation with the images can build suspense occurs in the scene when Sherif Ali emerges in the distance out of a mirage. The spectator notices a dark and unidentifiable figure that approaches Lawrence and Tafas who stand by the well. They, like the spectator, are bewildered by the slowly emerging figure in the horizon. Neither of them says a single word and both await Ali's next move. The protracted length of the silence in combination with the visual indistinctiveness of the figure, purport a feeling of expectation and uneasiness. Accordingly, there is no music to psychologically orient the audience/spectator - to prepare him/her for the events that will follow. Thus, the sound of the gunshot that kills Tafas breaks the long silence, shakes the audience/spectator, and provides for Ali's dramatic and brutal introduction to the narrative.

Lawrence of Arabia's bath of affect extends beyond the mere entertainment that is provided through the ingenious amalgamation of the dramatic story line with an often-stunning set of visuals. It poses the question of individuality within and against a large historical canvas. The role of music in foregrounding notions of individualism as well as conventionality is pivotal to the film. The various themes, as the analysis has demonstrated, are never ideologically static or emotionally detached from the narrative framework within which they are employed. In other words, they do not exist as mere embellishments of the visuals. Their continuous intricate permutations and occasional interweaving augment the

perplexities that are integral to both the action and the characters. Essentially, the uniqueness of the music in Lawrence of Arabia lies in its ability to accommodate both the spectacular and the mundane, the public and the personal in a unified whole. It is an intellectual synthesis without convolutions in its structure, but with multiple inferences on a narrative level.

4. LIGHTING

Our sight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance, and continues the longest in action without being tired or satiated with its proper enjoyments.

Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*

INTRODUCTION

David Lean's black-and-white films occupy the first half of his directorial career that can be termed as his British period, starting in 1942 with In Which We Serve and ending with Hobson's Choice in 1954, while there is also his international period commencing with Summer Madness, and reaching its closure with A Passage to India. During the former, Lean made a total of ten films, only two of which were produced in colour. It was during this period that he established himself as a major film director within the bounds of his own country and made his name known abroad. A great deal of his success and his reputation was established on the grounds of his intellectual approach towards filmmaking and his choice of subject matters. The aim of the forthcoming analysis will be to first study the historical and technical background against which he formulated and perfected his lighting techniques, his choice of colleagues and, then, to examine the utilization of lighting in two of his films from the

British period that perfectly elucidate the value of his aesthetic approach towards black-and-white filmmaking.

The earliest function of film lighting was to provide visual clarity for the spectator who was experiencing something totally new in the form of the moving image. The Lumiere brothers in France, Birt Acres in England and Thomas Edison in the United States, were the first to experiment with the new technological device by shooting actuality subjects usually consisting of a single shot. Emphasis was laid upon exhibiting the distinctive mechanical features of the medium rather than its artistic potential. As early as 1898, however, short fiction films that incorporated multiple shots were becoming increasingly popular and paved the way for the emergence of the feature film.¹ At the same time, British filmmakers were taking the first steps towards the exploration of the many possibilities that cinema had to offer by engaging in an investigation relating to the manufacturing of special effects and sophisticated editing techniques. As Bordwell states:

The English cinema was innovative and internationally popular for several years early in the history of motion pictures, though it would soon weaken in the face of French, Italian, American, and Danish competition.²

¹ Bordwell comments on the meaning of the word 'feature film': "In the early years of the century, 'feature' simply meant an unusual film that could be featured in the advertising. During the nickelodeon boom, when the one-reel length became standard, 'feature' still had the same meaning. But the term also came to be associated with longer films. Before 1909, these were typically prize-fight films or religious epics and were often shown in legitimate theatres rather than nickelodeons. Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.37

² *ibid* p.19

However, for the most part, the adolescent British film industry would remain focused on shooting shorts or longer actuality subjects, using natural or very basic artificial light as the means to bestow them with a great degree of authenticity. Although the first film studios were in place since the early 1900s, they were organized in such a way as to give prominence to the mastering of the new technology and to the training of the studio personnel. Furthermore, although there was assistance from foreign technicians coming from France and Italy, countries that were already mastering the many composite elements of the new art, this was principally reserved for enriching industrial knowledge and proficiency. The ideology of the British film industry was revolving around the principle that in order to master the techniques of filmmaking, a great deal of scientific expertise was needed before the trained personnel could embark on more daring artistic moves. As Rachel Low asserts:

Stock, lighting and the choice of camera angle occupied less of the cinematographer's attention than the camera design and photographic devices and tricks like fades, dissolves, slow and quick turning, reversing and model work.³

In the meantime, the American studios were developing a complex system of artificial lighting that involved the use of mercury vapour lamps, carbon arc flood lights, as well as natural sunlight in order to enhance the dramatic and artistic potential that the new medium was offering. Hence, as early as 1908, D.W. Griffith was emerging as a major film director, and by the mid

³ Low, Rachel. The History of the British Film: 1918-1929. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), p.250

1910s American filmmaking had already worked out a system of formal principles that relied on analytical and continuity editing - a system which came later to be defined as the 'classical Hollywood cinema'. Similarly, other European film industries were fast developing a well-thought out organisational system of film production and exhibition. The French film industry was the first to become vertically integrated, while the Italian was the foremost proponent of multi-reel historical films presented in theatres built for the exclusive exhibition of films. Similarly, the infant German film industry, although not financially robust, pioneered an expressionist aesthetic that was to influence world cinema in subsequent decades.

The end of the First World War brought many changes to the international scene of filmmaking. The British film industry, crippled by the war, was facing a deep economic crisis. The studios were equipped with primitive camera and lighting stock, and production costs were so high that there was a very limited yearly output of films. Most films were imported from the United States and, as a result, many prospective filmmakers were forced out of business. Consequently, there was a dramatic lack in production values, since neither the government nor the public displayed any particular interest in films. While the art of cinema was largely met with cultural disdain in Britain, it flourished in several other European countries. Germany was the most characteristic example of a country that invested in the potentialities of the medium. Having outgrown the contempt of intellectuals at the beginning of the century and having had the support of the government from the days of the war, it aimed at

developing its own style which predominantly involved the manipulation of artificial light for the creation of enhanced dramatic effects. Similarly, in the Soviet Union there was the foundation of a 'Montage cinema' that explored the dramatic function of editing techniques. In fact, Bordwell attributes the growth of national cinemas and alternative cinematic styles as a form of resistance to American cultural imperialism:

There are many reasons for such intense, varied activity in this period. One of the most important involves the new prominence of Hollywood cinema as a stylistic and commercial force... After the war, widely differing situations existed in other producing nations, but all faced one common factor: a need to compete with Hollywood.⁴

In the mid-1920s, Britain was lagging behind both the other European film industries, as well as the American one. At best, it aimed at imitating the latter, but there was lack of inspiration and financial resources. Even when the Americans saw the potential of expanding their sphere of influence by building their own film production studios in London, things did not improve drastically despite a marked upgrading in production standards. One notable exception was Gainsborough Films that, under the ingenious guidance of Michael Balcon and Graham Cutts, produced features with artistic merit. The two men were also the first who, in an effort to resist American competition, embarked on a venture of co-productions, primarily with their German counterparts. This collaboration was extremely fruitful, as it familiarised the British film community with an industry that was establishing its

⁴ Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.83

very own, highly intellectual aesthetic principles. A very characteristic example of the profound German influence was Gainsborough and Alfred Hitchcock's The Lodger (1926), which has been hailed for its sophisticated camera and lighting techniques.

David Lean's first acquaintance with the British film industry was when he was hired as a runner-cum-tea boy at Gaumont British in 1927. In those days, the studios at Lime Grove had still not particularly sophisticated equipment, nor very artistically inclined personnel, but the time was ideal because the quota Act of 1927 gave the opportunity to studios to hire new people and ensured that there was a guaranteed yearly output of British films. As Duncan Petrie mentions:

The British Government in 1927 implemented a mild form of protectionism in the guise of a quota act, which set minimum annual levels of British films for domestic renters and exhibitors. This measure further boosted the confidence of the production sector and helped to attract unprecedented levels of investment to British production.⁵

British Gaumont, despite not being the forerunner of artistic invention, was one of the two major studios that established vertical integration in Britain. Furthermore, in an effort to raise both the production and the artistic standards, it employed major figures from abroad, such as the German camera operators Mutz Greenbaum and Curt Courant, as well as the Austrian Gunther Krampf, and the Frenchman Georges Perinal.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, many of the foreign technicians working in Britain had to leave the country

⁵ Petrie, Duncan. The British Cinematographer. (London: BFI, 1996), p.15

and, hence, gave the opportunity to their young British counterparts to exercise their aptitude and creativity in all aspects of cinematography. Amongst them were Guy Green and Robert Krasker with whom David Lean would collaborate on several occasions. Green, who in the 1930s worked under the supervision of Gunther Krampf and Mutz Greenbaum, learned and appreciated many of the aesthetics of German expressionism and applied them in his work on films, while Robert Krasker was familiar with both cinematic impressionism and expressionism.

During the 1930s, Lean was offered quota quickies to direct, but he resisted the idea because of the relatively cheap production values and the very short shooting schedules. From very early on, he had set his mind on bigger and more artistically inclined productions. As he said many years later:

I worked on a lot of bad pictures, and bad pictures are very good for one's ego, because the worse they are, the more chance you have of making them better. And I started to think, as numerous people who work with me think, that I could do better than they could - and that gave me a real urge to do something in the way of direction.⁶

Acquiring experience as an editor for such accomplished artists as Anthony Asquith and Michael Powell⁷ proved a superior alternative until he broke into directing.

When Lean co-directed his first feature film with Noel Coward, Ronald Neame was hired as the director of photography, while Guy Green was the camera operator. Both men were very

⁶ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.85

⁷ Lean edited Asquith's Pygmalion (1938) and French Without Tears (1939), as well as Michael Powell's 49th Parallel (1941) and One of Our Aircraft Is Missing (1942), before shifting to directing.

experienced technicians but, more importantly, they were innovators in their fields. Ronald Neame had worked as Hitchcock's assistant on Blackmail (1929) and, like the great British director, was profoundly influenced by the European art cinema. Before his work for In Which We Serve, he was often engaged as lighting technician in several quota films of the 1930s and was acknowledged as an inspired and innovative artist. As Ossie Morris, a fellow cameraman and film photographer admitted:

Ronnie came to Wembley and transformed the place. He had wonderful ideas on lighting and it was there that I started to take an interest in lighting.⁸

Neame's work on In Which We Serve was acknowledged for its dramatic visual impact. Though much of the film was shot in the documentary tradition that was establishing itself as an art form in Britain through the work of Humphrey Jennings, he provided added dramatic impetus through his lighting techniques that served to effectively foreground the differentiation between the action sequences of men at war and the naturalistic sequences of family life away from the battlefields.

From the beginning of his directorial career, Lean was particularly keen on working in partnership with accomplished technicians who, like him, had a strong urge towards perfectionism and who understood the core, but also the details of his artistic vision. Hence, it is not surprising that, following their initial fruitful collaboration, Neame was once again employed as the director of photography in the subsequent Lean productions This

⁸ Petrie, Duncan. The British Cinematographer. (London: BFI, 1996), p.130

Happy Breed, and Blithe Spirit. This would be the first time that Lean would experiment with three-strip Technicolor and it proved as much a welcomed challenge, as an arduous task. Duncan Petrie quotes Neame who describes the lighting procedures involved in the production of a Technicolor film in the 1940s:

Technicolor films needed eight times as much light as for black-and-white when working at full aperture. This in turn had a bearing on the constraints under which the cameraman worked. Neame describes lighting for Technicolor as "rather like drawing with a piece of charcoal after having got used to a very fine pencil."⁹

Brief Encounter presented an even bigger challenge for Lean, for it was a daring return to black-and-white cinematography. The film combines theatricality, realism and what Dyer calls 'the filmic.'¹⁰ Within this multi-layered context, the utilisation of lighting is of vital importance in creating specific and dramatically powerful effects. There is constant tension between the surface realism that is primarily reflected in the visual treatment of locations, and the more subjective instances whereby lighting becomes a means through which the fictional characters' world informs the spectator.

This would be Lean's first and last collaboration with Robert Krasker. Krasker was an accomplished Australian photographer who had trained both in France and Germany before joining Alexander Korda and London Films. Having already worked on both black-and-white as well as Technicolor films, he adopted a

⁹ Petrie, Duncan. The British Cinematographer. (London: BFI, 1996), pp.42-3

¹⁰ Dyer describes 'the filmic' as 'the use of the techniques specific to film as a medium.'
Dyer, Richard. Brief Encounter. (London: BFI, 1993), p.53

style that was heavily influenced by his continental counterparts. His work for Brief Encounter would only be his third as solo lighting cameraman, but only the first of his major artistic accomplishments in a long and very successful career.

Lean and Guy Green's biggest artistic challenge came at the time Great Expectations and Oliver Twist were produced. Lean was presented with the chance to break new ground in the field of screen translations of literary classics by directing two of Dickens' most famous novels. The power inherent in the novels' images and their intricate themes were the driving forces that led him to undertake such a venture. Both films were approached in the same stylistic mode. The application of lighting was particularly effective in both, and it paid tribute to the expressionistic style of the early German cinema of the 1920s, adopting many of its aesthetic formulae and artistic preoccupations.

Lean continued his collaboration with Green on two more women's films, The Passionate Friends and Madeleine. Once again, there would be a combination of realism with occasional touches of expressionism, but for all their technical excellence, neither of the films would reproduce the dramatic intensity of the Dickens adaptations. The employment of lighting in both pointed towards Lean's ever increasing concern with technique, to the point where some critics believed that it overpowered the drama inherent in the stories.

For the making of The Sound Barrier, Hobson's Choice, Summer Madness and The Bridge on the River Kwai, Lean formed a creative partnership with Jack Hildyard. Hildyard was primarily known for his work as a camera operator on several Technicolor films during

the 1940s, including Henry V (1944), and Caesar and Cleopatra (1945), and then as a cinematographer in minor films up until he got his big break with The Sound Barrier. The film has often been said to display "astonishingly dramatic use of the camera,"¹¹ as well as subtle utilisation of lighting for the creation of a visually potent drama. In Hobson's Choice Lean would return to the expressionistic principles of the Dickens films, albeit in a comic mould, while with The Bridge on the River Kwai, both Lean and Hildyard would reach the first triumphant moment in their careers. Lean would become the first-ever British director to win an Academy Award for his direction, while Hildyard would win in the category of Best Cinematography. The film's photography masterfully combines the colourful jungle settings as integral parts of the action sequences, while it also accommodates the more intimate moments of the main characters.

Starting with Summer Madness and for the remainder of his career, Lean would work outside the bounds of the British film industry. In the 1950s and 1960s, Britain was once again trailing behind its major competitor - Hollywood. The revolutionary advent of widescreen cinema and stereophonic sound was giving greater scope to filmmaking, and Lean who was already involved in the making of bigger, more expensive and technically sophisticated films, found in Hollywood the ideal ground for exploring these technical innovations to their outmost artistic potential. Although his collaboration with Jack Hildyard was particularly fortunate and rewarding, he sought an even more adept cinematographer. For such a daring transition, he needed the

¹¹ *Films in Review*. July, 1952, p.23

insight and experience of an artist who was familiar with his British mentality and background, as well as the American know-how. Hence, he would team up with Freddie Young, one of the most knowledgeable and accomplished cinematographers in the British and American film industries. Before collaborating with Lean, he established his reputation through his work for Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger in Contraband (1940) and 49th Parallel (1941), in Carol Reed's The Young Mr Pitt (1942), as well as in many Hollywood productions alongside prestigious directors like John Ford, Joseph Mankiewicz and George Cukor. Young would be Lean's cinematographer for Lawrence of Arabia, Doctor Zhivago and Ryan's Daughter. With Lean, he set out to further inquire into a familiar Lean thematic preoccupation: the accommodation of the personal drama within vast and spectacular landscapes, the aim being to allow the mingling of the two for the purpose of putting the accent on their mutual information. Their long partnership proved extremely successful and brought many prizes and accolades for both men, including Oscars for Cinematography in all three films, and the Best Picture and Directing Awards for Lawrence of Arabia.

For his last film, A Passage to India, Lean would collaborate with Ernest Day, Freddie Young's camera operator in the Lean films since Lawrence of Arabia. Young was getting too old, and Lean wanted someone whom he could trust and who shared his artistic inclinations. Having had the experience from the previous films and a stylistic attitude to filmmaking that was echoing the director's own, Day found the offer challenging. The visual and thematic approach to the subject matter was in the same mould with the prior films, so Day did not have to adapt to novel methods or

practices. Lady Sandy Lean offers an insight into the two men's artistic affinity:

David worshipped Ernie. Ernie was a brilliant camera operator, the absolute best. And David felt that he and Ernie had this amazing synchronism of taste. I remember him telling me about this game they used to play: David would zoom into a composition, then deliberately change it and pass the camera to Ernie. And Earnie always ended up framing precisely the same composition.¹²

The ensuing scrutiny of Great Expectations and Hobson's Choice will aim at manifesting the manner in which Lean manipulates the technical expertise of his cinematographers and his own detailed vision in order to achieve varying but very subtle narrative effects. Both films demonstrate how realist and expressionist principles of filmmaking can co-exist and enhance the dramatic effect of the narratives. During the course of the analysis of Great Expectations, there are occasional references made to the original Dickens text. The purpose of this approach does not aim at providing a comparison between the film and the novel in the form of a value judgement, but rather to demonstrate the manner in which Lean borrows the information provided by the written word and translates it into a series of commanding images. In this manner, the original text is treated more as a point of reference than a critique of either the author or the filmmaker. On the other hand, Hobson's Choice has also been chosen for scrutiny, since it provides the thematic antipode of Great Expectations while, at the same time, it utilises the same or similar lighting techniques to the former film. This

¹² Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.666

correspondence and antithesis between the two films is useful in extrapolating valuable information as to the diversity and potential that the employment of lighting has in both comedy and drama.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS (1946)

When Great Expectations was made, Britain was slowly coming to grips with the economic destitution precipitated by the detriment of the Second World War. The rise to power of a Labour government in 1945 reflected the people's pressing need to redirect the state's priorities towards issues of social equality and justice. Equally, one would expect that cinema audiences would demand from the British film industry a prolific immersion in themes befitting the existence of ordinary men and women and their effort to reconstruct and better their lives following the war drama. However, Gerald Pratley offers a different and yet credible perspective to audience predilections and desires at the time:

That it (Great Expectations) had nothing to do with the postwar problems which beset Britain after peace had arrived was deliberate. There had been enough drabness, tragedy and heartache during the war years. Here was a form of intelligent escapism rooted in British character, tradition and literary achievement. It was like revisiting old friends or discovering them anew.¹³

However, there was more to Lean's and Neame's determination to rediscover and make a film out of a celebrated literary classic than to provide some sort of escapist entertainment to a psychologically, socially and economically tormented audience. Their newly formed Cineguild, operating under the umbrella of the J. Arthur Rank organisation, was a consistent and a deliberate effort to break away from Noel Coward and seek other forms of artistic expression that would be wider in scope and more daring

¹³ Pratley, Gerald. The Cinema of David Lean. (New York: Tantivy, 1974), pp.66-67.

in their approach to subject matter. The adaptation of Dickens to the screen seemed an auspicious proposition. It has often been argued that Dickens is the most cinematic of novelists in that his settings are frequently salient and spectacular, while his characters stand out through their physical appearance, their occasionally exaggerated gesticulations, as well as their idiosyncratic costuming. *Great Expectations*, being one of the most profoundly eccentric of Dickens' novels, gave Lean and his collaborators the opportunity to cinematically explore the striking visuals inherent in the novel and endorse the narrative with an unprecedented forcefulness. There had been previous attempts to adapt Dickens to the screen both in Britain and the United States, but all were moderate or dismal failures both critically and commercially. As Anderegg suggests, the cinematic version of Oliver Twist (1934)¹⁴ failed because it aimed "at naturalising his (Dickens') characters, turning them into more or less 'ordinary' people."¹⁵ On the other hand, the American version of David Copperfield (1935) directed by George Cukor, and Alberto Cavalcanti's Nicholas Nickleby (1947) tended to overstate the intrinsic eccentricities of the stories to the point of rendering the themes and their presentation on the screen redundant.

Surprisingly enough, there had not been a screen version of *Great Expectations* in Britain up to the point when Lean decided to undertake the ambitious project. There had been, however, two previous adaptations for the big screen by American filmmakers. Yet, both the silent version of 1917 and Stuart Walker's 1934 film

¹⁴ There have also been another six versions of Oliver Twist during the silent period (1909, 1912, 1916, 1920, 1922), but none of them ever got particular attention from the audience or critical acclaim.

¹⁵ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.39

went largely unnoticed by the public. The lack of a prior stupendous cinematic achievement in the field of Dickens adaptations gave Lean extra impetus and an incentive to break new ground in the visual and thematic representation of the work of one of the most reputed British literary figures.

By the time Lean was organising the details of the film's production, the influence of Orson Welles' Citizen Kane (1941) had already taken the film world by storm. His ingenious manipulation of narrative techniques, the employment of forced perspectives and the deep-focus cinematography was at once paying tribute to German Expressionism of the 1920s, while it was also becoming a standard reference film for prospective or established filmmakers who wished to endow their motion-pictures with a certain degree of intellectualism and artistic ingenuity. Lean was convinced that Great Expectations was the perfect vehicle for an experimentation with Expressionism, and for that reason he and Ronald Neame decided upon hiring Robert Krasker to be in charge of the film's photography. Lean was particularly impressed with Krasker's work for Brief Encounter, but he soon had to sack him since he proved inadequate for the particular needs of Great Expectations. In David Lean's words:

I was devastated by the first two or three lots of rushes because the photography hadn't got the guts I wanted for Dickens. It's no good having those outsize characters, convicts and crooks and God knows who, in polite lighting. It doesn't work. If you're going to do Dickens you have to have very strong photography, black shadows and brilliant highlights. Bob's rushes were flat and uninteresting.¹⁶

¹⁶ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.213

Given Lean's dissatisfaction with Krasker, Guy Green was appointed in his place at the suggestion of Neame who particularly admired his previous work. Green was no stranger to Lean, either. He had already worked as a camera operator for two of his previous films, In Which We Serve (1942) and This Happy Breed (1944). As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Green was an accomplished film technician, having earned his apprenticeship alongside Gunther Krampf and Mutz Greenbaum, and having worked as a cameraman for Carol Reed's The Way Ahead (1944), and as a second unit photographer on Anthony Asquith's The Way to the Stars (1945). However, his assignment as Director of Photography was a bold and daring move on Lean's part, for he was entrusting a camera operator with a difficult task in a post that he had not the chance to hold before in the making of a feature film. Any fears that Lean might have had prior to Green's assignment were quickly cast aside by his skilful work on the film and his understanding of the director's detailed vision of it. In fact, their collaboration was so successful, that he remained in the same post for the next three Lean films, Oliver Twist (1948), The Passionate Friends (1949), and Madeleine (1950).

The production cost of the film was set at an initial budget of £392,568, being Lean's first large scale venture in celluloid and a big financial gamble considering the substantial economic indigence of the British Film Industry. The financial and artistic risk finally paid off as Great Expectations turned out to be a huge critical and commercial success both in Lean's native land, as well as throughout Europe and the United States. It got numerous awards from the British Film Academy, while it also

received five Academy Award nominations including those for Best Picture, Best Direction and Best Adapted Screenplay. It finally got two, one of which was for Guy Green's black-and-white cinematography, and one for John Bryan's art direction. Most importantly, the success of the film helped establish Lean as one of the foremost British directors, joining the ranks of Carol Reed and Michael Powell. Sue Harper attempts to pinpoint the causes of the film's astounding success:

Great Expectations was successful on a popular and critical level for a number of reasons... Its visual style is a refined expressionism, more respectable than Gainsborough's and less idiosyncratic than Powell and Pressburger's. John Bryan designed the production, and his customary interest in asymmetry and the picturesque inform the whole film. The visual narrative of Great Expectations offers the audience a wide variety of pace and texture, it does not attempt to replicate the novel via the mise-en-scene. Rather, the film's style reinterprets the Dickens text, and makes it more markedly Gothic.¹⁷

The ensuing analysis will attempt to examine the manner in which lighting is employed by Lean in the film in order to embellish its pictorial qualities and bring to the fore its thematic implications. Additionally, it will investigate the way in which lighting interacts with all the other graphic elements of the film in an effort to accomplish a sense of a unified whole characterised by consummate structural intelligence, dramatic intensity and visual splendour.

¹⁷ Harper, Sue. Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film. (London: BFI, 1994), p.163

ANALYSIS

The opening sequence of the film is one of the most extensively discussed and closely scrutinised in the history of narrative cinema, for it brings together all the tools in the making of a film in such a way as to create a very powerful visual and dramatic effect. In fact, the initial sequence of shots created such a catalytic effect on audiences that Lean decided to provide a similar opening for his subsequent Dickens adaptation, Oliver Twist.

It begins with an extreme long pan shot of young Pip running through marshes and over mounds towards an unspecified destination. The sound of the blustery wind complements the bleak setting that includes a vast expanse of flat wilderness with dykes and gibbets alongside a horizontal stretch of land. The use of low-key¹⁸ lighting makes the boy's figure appear almost in silhouette, while it also augments the visual dominance of the portentous-looking sky with its dark clouds set against a clear horizon, seemingly hanging over him creating an, at once, inhospitable and ghostlike setting for the unfolding of the action. The exaggerated interplay of light and darkness for this introductory visual illustration, in combination with the enhanced sound effects, provides a forewarning of the ensuing narrative events and an exercise in generating dramatic intensity through the subtle implementation of audio-visual means. As the camera dissolves to Pip who enters the nettle-covered graveyard and

¹⁸David Bordwell defines low-key lighting as the "illumination that creates strong contrast between light and dark areas of the shot, with deep shadows and little fill light." Bordwell, David. Film History. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.821

places a bouquet of flowers on his parents' tombstone, a magnified creaking sound makes him instantly apprehensive of his immediate surroundings. When he turns round, he realises that the persistent high-pitched scratching noise comes from the tree's branches that swing violently against the wind. Yet, while he is temporarily comforted by the realisation that the sound source is natural and harmless, on a visual scale, the low-key lighting makes the branches look like extensions of crooked and menacing hands ready to grab him, thus enhancing his sense of consternation and, through him, that of the spectator's. A similar shot pattern ensues with the boy looking off, and the camera cutting to a closer shot of the tree trunk. However, Pip's second more intimate look at the huge and ancient tree intensifies his fears, in that it comes across more as being a sinister and ghastly human figure than an innocuously positioned plant. The underlighted,¹⁹ slightly low-angle shot of it brings it into such a degree of visual prominence that it almost bursts forward and out of the frame, while the low-key side lighting creates a sense of volume that brings to the forefront its creased texture, marking, in this manner, its ugliness and decay. Hence, as Pip's vivid imagination overwhelms him to the point where he feels the urge to rush off the grounds, he runs towards frame left where he comes across the dark and threatening figure of an escaped convict whose physical appearance dominates the shot. Like the bare tree branches that preceded his entry into the narrative, his long, strong arms reach out and grab Pip, thus turning the boy's previous effervescent

¹⁹ Underlighting is defined as "illumination from a point below the figures in the scene." Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.824

imagination into a nightmarish reality. Immediate mental and visual associations are made between his representation and that of the tree. The convict's (Magwitch) face is cast in shadow, allowing his rugged facial features to become forcibly apparent and resemble the tree's furrowed wood, while the underlighting that previously elevated the trunk to visual prominence is now implemented to make him appear larger than life, grotesquely unpleasant, and imminently threatening. Additional associations are forged through the identical positioning of Magwitch and the tree. They both occupy the left of the frame that has been the centre of Pip's consistent gazing. In this fashion, the degree of visual parallelism and mental correlations between the animate and the inanimate become persuasively discernible through the subtle manipulation of the film's mise-en-scene.

Contrary to Magwitch, the young Pip has a key light²⁰ illuminating his face suggesting, on a metaphorical level, that he is a clean, clear and innocent figure as opposed to the dirty, aggressive and obscure convict who threatens his life. On a strictly visual level, the implementation of this kind of lighting allows the spectator to witness the weight of the young boy's astonishment at the site of the fugitive and register his reaction as a powerful mental image through which his/hers degree of identification with him is further underscored.

Therefore, the dramatic and suspenseful introduction to the narrative gives the impression that the spectator is about to witness the unfolding of a horror film. Everything, from the

²⁰ Key-lighting is "the brightest illumination coming from the scene." Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.821

isolated and magnified sounds of the creaking branches to those of the sweeping wind, creates an atmosphere of trepidation and imminent danger. The initial absence of dialogue is essential in consenting to the elevation of the visual track to prominence that, in turn, relies on the employment of lighting and mise-en-scene to communicate a certain measure of anguish to the spectator. Hence, while the expressionist lighting with its compelling interaction of light and shadow provides the sinister background setting against which the narrative will unfold, the use of point-of-view shots immerses the spectator in the process of identification with Pip and, through this forced subjectivity, the setting becomes inhabited by the spectator in the same manner that it informs Pip's world. Consequently, the sudden and aggressive entry of Magwitch into the narrative "leaping out, posed with Pip against the hoary trees, assuming less of a human than a preternatural dimension,"²¹ becomes even more persuasive, in that it occurs at a point where identification with Pip has been firmly established. Magwitch is, at once, an extension of Pip's whimsical but menacing enterprise and a real figure that poses a direct threat to the young boy's life. It is precisely in this dubious coalescence and mutual information between the real and the imaginary that the element of mystery and horror attains its most forceful expression and sets the narrative in motion.

When Pip returns to his home in utter fear and disillusionment following his unpleasant encounter with Magwitch at the churchyard, he has to face his authoritarian sister, Mrs

²¹ Silver Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.46

Joe Gargery, who reprimands him for his unauthorised leave from the home grounds. After whipping Pip several times, she stands opposite him with her hands on her waist telling him that "if it warn't for me you'd have been to the churchyard long ago, and stayed there." On this occasion, the use of a key-light on her face and body generates a very different visual and psychological impression on the spectator's part than with Pip previously. The hard lighting that distinguishes her figure from the surrounding space that remains mostly in soft focus, brings to the fore the stern look on her angular face, while it also casts a huge shadow on the wall that, on a figurative level, comes to imply her domineering position as the tyrannical head of the Gargery household. At the same time, the differential utilisation of lighting in the scene serves to highlight her segregation from Pip and her husband Joe - the blacksmith - who comes forward as rather sympathetic to Pip's indulgence and as a man who is himself in fear of her. The lighting on his face is much softer, never allowing sharp edges to become visible or his shadow to be cast as an intimidating contour on the surrounding walls, thus rendering him instantly as an agreeable figure on both visual and narrative terms. Additionally, the aspect of separation between the fictional characters does not solely fall back on the mode of lighting utilisation and manipulation, but is rendered even more emphatic through the mise-en-scene that visually pronounces the physical separation between them. Mrs Gargery normally occupies the right edge of the frame while Joe and Pip occupy the far left, thus, creating a spatial distance and a mental line between them

that can lead to physical jeopardy for either of the two men if violated.

What becomes particularly important about this specific scene is the way in which information regarding the utilisation of lighting can be extracted through its comparison with the previous sequence and, more particularly, in the manner through which psychological terror is infused through differential modes of lighting techniques. In the opening sequence, the dark and menacing figure of Magwitch instigated fright through his visual obscurity, achieved through the effective use of low-key underlighting. Yet, in the current scene the exposition of visual dread is realised through the induction of harsh, direct and high-key lighting that optically flattens the character and mentally renders her bereft of any sentiment, except that which makes her appear prone to mental and physical cruelty.

As Pip lies in bed thinking of the events that have taken place earlier on at the churchyard, he takes a fainthearted look out of his window and sees nothing but thick mist covering the marshes and a huge branch of a tree protruding very close to his window - a symbol of Magwitch's omnipresence. Once again, there is the utilisation of low-key lighting creating a sharp contrast between the very dark branch and the almost white and indistinct background, thus reconstructing, to a large extent, the prior visual depiction at the churchyard and regenerating the mental anguish that accompanied Pip's unexpected encounter with Magwitch. The deliberate visual prominence of the branch, its proximity to Pip's window, and its setting against the brightly illuminated but misty backdrop, creates in Pip an acute feeling of distress as to

what lies beyond his immediate surroundings and, similarly, serves to project his innermost fears. Whereas previously he tried to overcome his trepidation by rushing out of the graveyard, this time he hides under his blanket in an effort to cast away the nightmare that is spawned in his troubled mind. However, the powerful imagery is too importunate to be eliminated from his thoughts. Rather, it acquires a further degree of mental forcefulness and cogency through the employment of Magwitch's voice-over on the soundtrack. The resounding continuous threat that Magwitch poses torments young Pip: "A boy may be warm in bed, he may pull the clothes over his head, but that young man will softly creep his way to him and tear him open." The overwhelming emotion of consternation eventually leads him to the point where he jumps out of bed and out of his room. It is this fear of being chased and torn apart by what he considers to be a monster of a man that compels him to rush back to the marshes and make sure he fulfils the promise he has made to the strange and odd-looking convict. Consequently, he creeps through and off his house, taking with him food, drink and the necessary file and whittles to help Magwitch free himself from the chains. However, after seeing him for the second time, the initial frightful impressions are progressively blunted. Magwitch comes across as a desperate and frightened man whose only desire is to remain alive in the cold dampness of the marshes. Dickens provides a detailed description that is truthfully replicated in the film:

I was soon at the Battery, after that, and was the right man - hugging himself and limping to and fro, as if he had never all night left hugging and limping - waiting for me. He was awfully cold to be sure. I half expected to see him drop down

before my face and die of deadly cold. His eyes looked so awfully hungry, too, that when I handed him the file and he laid it down on the grass, it occurred to me he would have tried to eat it, if he had not seen my bundle.²²

During this second encounter, the exploitation of lighting endows the scene with a very different emotional resonance than previously, and serves diverse thematic purposes. As the camera cuts from Pip watching Magwitch gobbling down his food, to Magwitch putting it away like a frightened and famished animal, the lighting on both remains almost analogous. Pip still has a key-light illuminating his face, giving the spectator the opportunity to attentively monitor his every reaction to Magwitch's words and gesticulations. On the other hand, however, the dark shadows that have formerly elevated the coarseness of Magwitch's features to prominence are eliminated and, in their place, the diffused and fill-light²³ allows for a better, far more temperate look at him. While his face still exhibits his marked physical rigidity and corpulence that only just previously rendered him as an immensely menacing figure, it also exposes, for the first time, the signs of the duress and hardship he has been subjected to. The induced visual clarity renders him more humanly accessible by means of putting his vulnerability on view. Furthermore, the uniformity of lighting on their figures, while being realistic insofar as it projects the natural conditions in which the scene is shot (the thick mist softens the edges and permits the more even spreading of the light), implies two things

²² Dickens, Charles. Great Expectations. (London: Penguin, 1985), p.49

²³ Fill light is the "illumination from a source less bright than the key-light, used to soften deep shadows in the scene." Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison:McGraw,1994), p.821

on an emblematic level. On the one hand, it provides a subtle comment on both Pip and Magwitch. They cope with similar emotions and, by a twist of fate, are dependent on each other for their very existence. On a very basic plane, they are equally guilty for committing different crimes: Magwitch for escaping from the prison, and Pip for stealing food from his sister and assisting a criminal in evading justice. On the other, it reflects Pip's gradually more compassionate look at a man who is in great physical and emotional distress, thus discovering a kinship between his own feelings of dread in having to face and come to terms with a potentially violent convict, and Magwitch's own qualms regarding his fate. This growing compassion and the mutual emotional infiltration will be later verbalised as Pip, while following the soldiers on the convicts' tracks, will admit to Joe: "I hope Joe, we shan't find them." As for Magwitch, the extent of his gratitude will become evident much later and rather unexpectedly in the course of the narrative altering its predicted course and, in so doing, it will provide exoneration for Magwitch and, ultimately, catharsis for Pip.

Therefore, the second scene at the churchyard becomes pivotal in formulating a special, if rather awkwardly initiated, affinity between the two characters. Similarly, the meticulous and symbolic utilisation of lighting, as explained above, is of paramount importance in implicitly informing the spectator about the shifting ideological implications of the story and the emotional consequences these will have for the two fictional characters during the remainder of the film.

The chase to capture the escaped convicts presents yet another demonstration of the masterful way in which lighting is applied in order to create suspense and enhance the dramatic effect of the narrative. By the time the sergeant and his soldiers appear on the door-step of the Gargery household, Pip, partly out of fear of getting caught for rushing to the aid of a criminal, and partly because of his growing pity for Magwitch, develops an instant dislike for the soldiers. On a narrative level, this is manifested through Pip's guilty silence while, on a visual plane, the direct and bright key-light on his face makes him the centre of the spectator's attention. It is through the focalising of light on his facial expressions that his apprehension and disquiet become evident and infuse the scene with a considerable degree of anxious anticipation. Dickens provides an emotional account of Pip's thoughts at the sight of the soldiers:

As I watched them while they all stood clustering about the forge, enjoying themselves so much, I thought what terrible good sauce for a dinner my fugitive friend on the marshes was. They had not enjoyed themselves a quarter so much, before the entertainment was brightened with the excitement he furnished.²⁴

While the extended stay, the drinking bout, and the vulgarity of some of the men that belong to the armed group of soldiers is never elaborated in the film, the lack of empathy for them becomes blatantly clear in their visual representation while they set out to capture the two prison escapees in the dampness of the dusk. In this venture, they are accompanied by the worrisome but

²⁴ Dickens, Charles. Great Expectations. (London, Penguin, 1985), p.64

concurrently excited Pip, Joe and Mr Wopsle who was a dinner guest of the Gargerys. The soldiers' commanding visual presence is achieved through the expressionist utilisation of lighting, deep-focus cinematography and prudent camera placement. Their staging extends into a wide diagonal line, while the camera remains on almost ground level. The ensuing low-angle shot of them emerging into the frame, renders them larger than life and instantaneously grotesque and intimidating. Additionally, the acute low-key lighting casts them as silhouettes against the brightly illuminated evening sky and physically indistinguishable from one another, thus purporting a sense of gloomy expectation. While Pip and Joe are equally treated on a lighting scale as sharp reliefs against the line of the horizon, what renders them divergent and detached from the other group is the fact that instead of guns they are holding each other's hands. In this manner, their innocence and status as mere bystanders becomes a visual point of reference for the spectator and an element of ideological comparison with the rest of the men involved in the find-and-capture operation. Additionally, the non-diegetic music that fills the sound track does not possess a bombastic character that would justify an understanding of the military expedition as a potentially triumphant moment for the representatives of law-enforcement, but retains a solemn character that reflects the apprehension and worry regarding the fate of Magwitch that is deeply embedded in Pip's mind. While the determined band of soldiers are evenly spread along the marshes, they occasionally fall in the murky waters, or jump like locusts over fences and from one place to the next. Consequently, they now and again

appear, through the deployment of the extreme low-key lighting and the very long shots, as an indistinguishable part of a landscape that is infested with insects that leap and feast on the muck of the land. When - prompted by the sounds of the physical fighting that has ensued between them - they finally reach the site where the two fugitives are located, they throw themselves in the mud and ultimately succeed in capturing them both. Silver and Ursini attempt to present Magwitch as an integral element within a generally hostile natural environment that is further enhanced through the utilisation of lighting techniques and shot structure:

Lean substitutes the dynamic image of the struggle on the mud flats, in which Magwitch sinks into the marsh and literally becomes an extension of it. In the two dimensions of the black-and-white frame Magwitch merges with the ground; in contrast Pip and Joe, who stand watching this, are in sharp relief against the sky and distinctly detached from the natural elements within the shot.²⁵

While Silver and Ursini are accurate in pointing out the assimilation of Magwitch by the natural setting and Pip's segregation from him on a visual level, it has to be clearly stated that, as demonstrated above, Magwitch is not the sole figure to whom such a visual and figurative 'value' can be ascribed. If Magwitch merges with the unfriendly natural environment, so do the soldiers who apprehend him. On a thematic level, that holds even truer for the latter group since there is no point in the narrative where Pip establishes any degree of verbal understanding or mental communication with them. Rather,

²⁵ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.47

Pip's first encounter with the sergeant possesses all the panic and unexpectedness that characterised his first meeting with Magwitch. Pip, terribly frightened at the prospect of his sister finding out about the missing pork pie and terrified of having to confess to her about its fortune, rushes out of the front door of the house - an action reminiscent of his attempted hurried leave from the churchyard. Yet, like previously, his attempt to evade the potentially hostile environment that, in this case, is his own home and the majority of his senselessly babbling relations (his sister along with her family and friends) is distinguished by yet another dismal failure. Pip bumps into the stout figure of the sergeant who puts his hands on the boy and rather sternly says: "Son, where do you think you're off to?"²⁶ Although the deployment of lighting is not comparable to that of the scene at the marshes with Magwitch in which the dark shadows combined with the eerie sounds provided a gloomy and menacing ambience it, nonetheless, creates its own aura of consternation through its applied harshness, rendering the figure of the sergeant as flat and as intimidating as it did with Pip's sister in an earlier scene. His huge shadow that is cast on the door as he enters the premises becomes a painful reminder of its prior registration as a symbol of authority and oppression in the narrative.

The departure of the two fugitives aboard a small boat in the watchful company of their captors is treated in such lighting terms so as to suggest that that they are never going to resurface

²⁶ On this occasion, the script departs from the original Dickens text that reads as follows: "But I ran no further than the house door, for then I ran head foremost into a party of soldiers with their muskets: one of whom held out a pair of handcuffs to me, saying, 'Here you are, look sharp, come on!'" Dickens, Charles. Great Expectations. (London: Penguin, 1985), p.61

in the narrative. Magwitch, in an effort to show his gratefulness and clear Pip from possible trouble with the law, misleads the soldiers by untruthfully confessing that he was the one who stole the brandy and the pie from the Gargery home. As he embarks on his voyage back to jail with his muddy and drained face solely illuminated by the soldiers' torches, he takes one last look at Pip who has ministered to his needs. On this occasion in the narrative, the low-key lighting does not generate a feeling of uneasiness or alarm. Instead, it complements the overriding sense of depression that pervades through the scene, while, on a symbolic level, the bright light of the burning torches comes to indicate the probability of Magwitch's dire and tragic destiny, thus countermanding to a great degree Pip's and, consequently, the spectator's initial perception of him. While the boat slowly makes its way off the Kent marshes and visual access to Magwitch is progressively impeded as he fades away into obscurity and darkness, there occurs an ironic visual reversal of his entrance in the narrative. While in the opening sequence he emerged from darkness into light threatening and malicious, he now departs beaten and returns into the very gloom and murkiness from which he first came into sight. Once more, Dickens provides an elaborate and at once tangible as well as slanted narration of the event that echoes Pip's thoughts, while Lean offers a high-powered and dramatic visual rendition:

By the light of the torches, we saw the black Hulk lying out a little way from the mud of the shore, like a wicked Noah's ark. Cribbed and barred and moored by massive rusty chains, the prison-ship seemed in my young eyes to be ironed like the prisoners. We saw the boat go alongside, and we saw him taken up the side and disappear. Then, the ends of the torches were

flung hissing into the water, and went out, as if it were all over with him.²⁷

A key sequence of the film in both narrative and lighting terms is the one that involves Pip's first visit to Satis House, the residence of the notoriously idiosyncratic and obscure Miss Havisham. Initially, Pip is hesitant to go there and engage into some kind of play at Mrs Havisham's request, since he is aware and apprehensive of her negative reputation. However, the aggressive insistence of his sister who threatens him with severe punishment if her orders are not obeyed is enough to convince him that his suggestion of an alternative option or a negation of her direct command will have grave consequences for him. As he reaches the gate of the old and visually commanding stately home, he rings the bell and is pleasantly surprised when the young and beautiful Estella reaches the entrance and opens the gate for him. Pip momentarily hesitates as he is astounded by her beauty and, not surprisingly, does not utter a single word. The employment of lighting in this particular scene is of crucial importance as it assists the spectator in mentally registering Pip's first impression of her - an impression that, by his own admission at a later stage in the narrative, will have a lasting and very pungent effect. The light on her face and figure as she rushes towards him is soft and pleasant, and she seems to be gay and gregarious. Although her face appears in close-up, the iron bars that appear in front of her (the shot is from Pip's point-of-view), deny both Pip and the spectator a clearer and more complete look at her

²⁷ Dickens, Charles. Great Expectations. (London: Penguin, 1985), p.71

delicate features. This initial innocuous but restricted visual presentation will later acquire figurative meaning, since Estella will be exposed as a virtual hostage of Miss Havisham both on actual and metaphorical terms. Satis House is the base and training ground for Estella's mental maturation into a replica of the old woman who has undertaken the responsibility of raising and grooming her for life in the outside world. Miss Havisham's dwindling and manipulative mind carefully controls Estella's access to what lies beyond the dilapidated estate. Estella lives in an environment of physical seclusion and mental obscurity, replicating her stepmother's lifestyle and acquiring her psychological traits. On the contrary, the light on Pip's face is high-key and, in so being, it is aimed at exhibiting his positive amazement at the girl's first sight. On former occasions, comparable utilisation of this type of lighting has been used as a directorial means of attracting the spectator's attention to Pip's reactions of fear and disbelief, either at the site of Magwitch or the constantly edgy and infuriating Mrs Gargery. This time, however, it is employed in order to unreservedly manifest his more positive reactions, and imply an unexpected but positive change in the course of his life.

When Pip finally enters the courtyard, he takes an insistent look at the huge clock that is located at the roof of the house and indicates the wrong time of the day. The very low-angle shot of the clock that is presumably from Pip's point-of-view, and the forced visual perspective automatically generate a feeling of uneasiness and oddity while, at the same time, the utilisation of low-key lighting that permeates the presentation of the visuals

attests to Pip's sense of discomfort and confirms his misgivings regarding his presence at Satis House. Everything around him seems strange, old and derelict. The big garden is woefully neglected, dank and dark, without a sign of plant life other than the overgrown weed springing from every crevice of the brick walls and from every crack on the ground. At the same time, the music that accompanies the visuals reflects Pip's nervousness and his progressively distressed psychology. The beautiful Estella who adopts a stern tone of voice when she talks to him, further enhances the dominant feeling of discomfort and inhospitability. The consistent employment of soft lighting on her face and figure is in sharp contrast to her exceedingly unfriendly attitude that is highly reminiscent of Mrs Gargery's reprimanding tone towards her brother earlier on in the narrative. When Pip makes the comment that the clock indicates the wrong time, she coldly and brazenly replies: "Don't loiter boy!" Yet, it has to be taken into account that the narrative is recounted from Pip's point-of-view by means of his voice-over and seen mostly through his eyes since the beginning of the film. Consequently, the case can be made that the permanent gentleness that visually surrounds her figure is subjective insofar as it reflects Pip's partiality. Instead of concentrating on her snotty manner and her words of repugnance that, to his and a neutral observer's eyes, would demand a harsh visual portrayal, he prefers to remain focused on the appreciation of her physical beauty. The function of light, in this case, serves to foreground and magnify the notion subjectivity by means of an obvious disparity between visual representation and the unravelling of narrative events.

Up until this point in the film, the low-key lighting has functioned as a visual element that forewarned the spectator about the possibility of imminent danger for Pip. The same air pervades when he stands timidly at the imposing entrance of Satis House. He once again²⁸ appears almost in silhouette through the use of low-key and backlighting²⁹, while everything in front of him is surrounded by complete darkness. There is not a single object or little corners of the huge reception hall that are brightly illuminated in order to give the general feel of the surrounding space. Nothing is even remotely discernible within Pip's or the spectator's field of vision. There may be no threatening shadows cast by human figures or strange sounds creating an air of consternation, but the complete visual obscurity is as threatening a prospect as any visual or acoustic sign that could trigger a feeling of anxious anticipation. In this manner, there is the instigation of a certain degree of discomfort if not, necessarily, of apprehension. There is a predominant sense that Pip has entered the pit of horrors in which there is no evidence of human life or things he can even vaguely relate to. The sole presence of Estella who escorts him with the help of a lighted candle to Miss Havisham's dressing room does not placate his fears regarding the imminent encounter with the strange lady. The underlighting that is produced by the candle that both Estella and Pip carry evaporates the softness of her features (the camera is predominantly focused on her), and she looks more austere and frigid as she slowly and ceremoniously climbs up the countless

²⁸ A similar visual portrayal was employed during the opening sequence of the film.

²⁹ Backlighting is "illumination cast onto the figures in the scene from the side opposite the camera, usually creating a thin outline of light on the figures' edge. Bordwell, David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.819

stairs. On this particular instance, the camera does not assume Pip's point-of-view but retains its distance from the fictional characters, hence allowing the spectator to grasp the ambience of the surrounding space and its relation to the young children. The choice of mise-en-scene in combination with the lighting aims at formulating an atmosphere of awkwardness whereby the environment becomes dominant and the characters stand as mere props trapped within it. The camera constantly remains at low level and occupies a position behind the stair railings, thus permitting limited visual access to Pip and Estella. Such a camera placement is not accidental. The railings that impair the spectator's field of vision serve, on a metaphorical level, to present Satis House as a prison without guards - an asylum without barbed wire. Such an understanding is further generated by the extremely low-key lighting that gives visual prominence to the railings, thus making them appear as black iron bars that vertically cut the frame, rendering the background in almost complete darkness.

When Pip enters Miss Havisham's dressing-room, the sight he comes across exceeds the eeriness and decay that he has previously sensed both in the countryside and in his own home. The dampness, the thick mist of the marshes, the ominous presence of the trees at the churchyard, or the intimidating presence of his sister within his plain and dreary household cannot provide a point of comparison to the Havisham mansion. Mrs Havisham's dressing-room stands as the epitome of the dereliction that has become palpable ever since Pip entered the grounds of Satis House, and is clearly and almost grotesquely manifest in every corner of the room, while

the staleness in the air penetrates the frame and reaches out to the spectator. In an effort to powerfully convey the downbeat and stifling atmosphere that infuses the scene, Lean creates a setting that goes beyond the rather non-dramatic presentation that Dickens provides in the novel:

I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing table.³⁰

David Bordwell, in describing the principles of mise-en-scene that governed the German expressionist aesthetic in the 1920s argues that:

If the décor has been conceived as having the same spiritual state as that which governs the characters' mentality the actor will find in that décor a valuable aid in composing and living his part. He will blend himself into the represented milieu, and both of them will move in the same rhythm. Thus, not only did the setting function as almost a living element, but the actor's body became a visual element.³¹

In the film, the whole presentation of Satis House setting and Miss Havisham within that environment conforms to German expressionist principles. She is as lifeless as everything that surrounds her presence. To a considerable degree, her body becomes an animate extension of the inanimate world that she inhabits. Her brightly lit but uncombed grey hair strongly resembles the cobwebs

³⁰ Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. (London: Penguin, 1985), p.87

³¹ Bordwell, David. *Film History: An Introduction*. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.111-12

that have formed on the corners of the walls, under the chandelier and all over the draped dressing table that is covered with dust and other vaguely distinguishable articles. Similarly, the windows are hermetically sealed and covered with heavy drapes, not letting a single ray of light into the huge but neglected room. All the light that there is emanates from a number of candles that are placed on every corner, on the tables and around the walls, supplementing in the formulation of a pervasive atmosphere of religious sacrament and monastic segregation. In fact, once Miss Havisham makes her formal acquaintance with Pip, she makes light the issue of her first confession and challenges his courage: "You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?" Meanwhile, the direct very high-key lighting that envelops her figure renders her as flat, cold and lifeless and, similarly, makes her the most brightly illuminated point of reference, aiming, in this manner, at exhibiting her preposterous presence. Whereas previously the utilisation of the same type of lighting was used to present Pip's sister as a menacing woman, this time it lacks the element of hard-lighting that is instrumental in the creation of sharp-edged shadows around the figure. In the same manner, the bridal dress she is wearing, despite being brightly illuminated, appears like a worn-out shroud. Its rich materials of silk, lace and satin, as well as its adornment with flowers and jewels lose their brightness and glory as they become measly decorations in the general ornamentation of the room.

When Miss Havisham invites Estella in her room and requests that she plays cards with Pip, the distribution of light becomes

important in that it directs the spectator's attention to Miss Havisham by means of its differential utilisation. While the two children who occupy the front of the frame are treated with soft lighting, the light on Miss Havisham, who occupies a central but more at the rear position, remains high-key and, hence, makes her the prime visual referent. This lighting discrepancy is not casual. The continuous insults by Estella to Pip are seemingly welcomed by the old lady who sees in her the person she would like to be and the human means to avenge for her past traumatic betrayal by the man who deserted her on the day of her wedding. Consequently, Pip, rather than being the boy who is simply invited to play with Estella, becomes the subject of a sinister game between Miss Havisham and her young female protégé, a tool in satisfying her baleful wishes and intensely disturbed personality. The high-key light on Miss Havisham's face helps the spectator take notice of her perversity and locate the emphasis on *her* reactions rather than on the two children who are equally abused but each for different purposes.

The repeated visits of Pip to Miss Havisham's house become both a testimony of Pip's growing emotional attachment to Estella and a subtle visual referent that underscores the old woman's lifelessness and mental morbidity. As she emphatically tells Pip: "I know nothing of days of the week; I know nothing of weeks of the year." Each time he sees her, she engages him in a perverse ritual that includes a brief walk around the room with her and a persistent enquiry relating to his feelings for Estella. When Pip briefly returns to Satis House after a year of a healthy, happy and prosperous life in London, the mustiness of the grounds, the

morbidity of the house's interior and the residents' mentality, all remain characteristically impervious. On a visual scale, the combination of hard and low-key lighting that was so prominent in previous scenes when Pip was just an innocent and frightened child, is still present. In effect, the exact reproduction of former visual depictions and lighting effects enhances the feel of death and decay and emphatically transfuses it to the spectator. Even the grown Estella retains the beauty, but also the coldness and emotional distancing that characterised her as a child. As she tells Pip while she escorts him to the gate: "You must know Pip, I have no heart... There is no sympathy there, no softness, no sentiment."

Almost one third of the film takes place in London where Pip finds himself following his unknown benefactor's commitment to turn him into a gentleman 'of great expectations.' The lighting of the London sequences is mostly realistic in that it allows for a truthful depiction of life in the capital during the Victorian era. Most of the external shots are in deep focus, encouraging a detailed look at the surrounding space that extends beyond a shallow field of vision. However, the majority of scenes take place in interior settings, possessing all the brightness and gaiety that one comes to associate with the leisurely life of a gentleman. The spectator follows Pip's quick evolution through a series of events that are presented in summary form: his eating, dancing and fencing lessons, or his archery and ice-skating pastimes take place within an atmosphere that stands as a sharp and much welcomed divergence from his prior life at the Rochester forge. There are neither worries nor fears in his heart, nor are

there any threats within his immediate surroundings. London gives the impression of a living paradise where every need is satisfied and every wish fulfilled. Nonetheless, the function of lighting can be also said to have a subjective designation insofar as it reflects Pip's state of mind. His presence in London is a means to an end. By becoming a gentleman, he will be able to enter Estella's social world and escape from her denigrating and haunting characterisation of him as the "common labouring boy," as was her common practice during their past encounters at Satis House. Pip erroneously believes that his social ascendancy will be the means to win Estella's heart, and his cheerfulness at this assumption is reflected in his seeing his new life through an amplitude of light and the absence of the mist and fog, or the dark and threatening shadows that were an inherent part of his childhood. Lean often has light and colour reflecting his fictional characters' changing mentality to the point that the surrounding space becomes an internal manifestation of a desire or a fulfilment of a long-nurtured wish. Just as London becomes a dreamland for Pip, so does Venice transform itself from a city of varying effects to a heaven when Jane Hudson consummates her love with Renato Di Rossi in Summer Madness. Similarly, the dreary and hostile Kirrarry turns into a Garden of Eden when Rosy Ryan does find emotional and sexual fulfilment in the adoring company of Major Doryan in Ryan's Daughter.

The film takes an unexpected turn halfway into the narrative, shortly after Pip receives a very large sum of money from his undisclosed benefactor for his twenty-first birthday. Up until now, the implementation of lighting throughout the London

sequences has remained bright, gay and realistic. Pip has enjoyed the pleasures of a laid-back life, and he has forged a close friendship with Herbert Pocket - his housemate. Therefore, when the sudden darkness, the sound of the church bells and the gashing wind erupt on the audiovisual track, the spectator's mind is immediately cast back to the opening sequence of the film when Pip was at the churchyard and became worrisome at the sound of the creaking branches and the sweeping wind. Consequently, it comes as no surprise to the spectator that when the bell rings at Pip's home, he comes across the figure of Magwitch. The passing of several years since their first encounter prevents him from instantly recognising the escaped convict. Although this second meeting takes place within the bounds of a living room rather than on some hostile and dreary landscape, the scene construction possesses many of the lighting properties that embellished their initial encounter. The lighting is very low-key, and the interplay of light and shadow dominates the mise-en-scene, proliferating the sensation of consternation. Yet, there is a significant thematic, as well as visual disparity between this treatment of this scene and that of their prior meeting several years ago. The lighting on Magwitch's face is not threatening, nor is his general demeanour hostile. The element of fear is still inscribed in his physical reactions to unidentified noises, while his humility and gratitude towards Pip are manifested through his effort to reach out and hug him. Rather, it is Pip who is presented as somewhat assertively predisposed towards the stranger in his house, thus momentarily bringing about an unlikely reversal of roles. When Magwitch discloses that he is the young gentleman's benefactor, the camera

focuses primarily on Pip. The key-light on his face aims at reflecting his amazement at the news, as well as the painful realisation that his dream of marrying Estella has collapsed. All along, he thought that it was Miss Havisham who, in an effort to bring Pip and Estella together, was the supplier of the funds that sustained his spendthrift lifestyle and provided for his social education. Magwitch dispels that illusion and Pip's future becomes as uncertain and bleak as before he left the forge. London will never be presented again in the narrative as the cheerful place where the fostering of wishes is sustained or encouraged, while Pip will concentrate his efforts on safely getting Magwitch out of the country.

Following Magwitch's devastating disclosure, Pip feels obliged to return to Satis House and clarify matters with the woman who he has mistakenly thought of as his gracious benefactress. While there, he once again meets Estella, this time sitting by her 'mother's' side, looking and behaving increasingly like her. The lighting treatment of the two women is identical. Both sit practically motionless by the burning fire at the fireplace, while the high-key and essentially flat lighting that has always enveloped Miss Havisham, has now extended to Estella who, to her mother's outmost pleasure, has become her true animate extension. The utilisation of lighting, in this case, can be said to be both objective and subjective. On the one hand, the director provides a subtle comment on Estella's assimilation to the saturated decay of the house while, on the other, it also functions as a means to dramatically reflect Pip's frustration in finding out that his cherished Estella is willingly pursued by a

man for whom he feels nothing but contempt. Hence, Pip ascribes her the mental cruelty and the emotional void that have been inherent traits of Miss Havisham since the beginning of the film. His unexpected visit causes no expression of contentment or displeasure from either of the two ladies. What appears as the pervading emptiness of their souls infuses the scene with a perverse sense of apathy. Estella does not even look at Pip, and continues with her knitting that she performs in an almost mechanical manner. When Pip discloses that the revelation of his benefactor "isn't a fortunate discovery, and it is not likely to enrich me in reputation, station, fortune, anything," Miss Havisham's remorselessly colourless response throws him off. At the same time, Estella's admission that she intends to marry Bentley Drummle out of sheer indifference becomes the spark that ignites the flame of passion that resides deep in Pip's heart. He lashes out at Estella but, more significantly, he challenges Miss Havisham to face her pitiable and pathetic existence. As he slams the door behind him, a small piece of firewood falls out and Miss Havisham's dress catches fire. Before she has a chance to come to grips with her own reality and offer Pip a plausible explanation³², she becomes a screaming fireball of 'light,' thus turning into a spectacular visual display of her innermost abomination. Her incineration provides a dramatic catharsis to a stale life and Pip becomes the accidental instigator of this change. His desperate

³² Moments before she catches fire, she utters to herself: "What have I done?" thus coming to the realisation that her sinister plan has caused nothing but pain for everyone involved. The same line, with the same dramatic resolution can be found in The Bridge on the River Kwai. As Colonel Nicholson comes face to face with Shears and realises that his bridge has become the target of an allied operation, he utters the same words and he is the one who accidentally falls on the detonator and blows it. Both the characters' tragic predicaments entail the element of irony, as both become the unlikely fomenters of their own physical and mental self-destruction. Nicholson blows his cherished bridge, while Miss Havisham turns into a source of light - her deepest aversion.

efforts to revive her are as fruitless as his hopes of winning Estella's heart. Silver and Ursini pinpoint the metaphorical significance of the visual presentation following Pip's unsuccessful attempt to save her life:

In ending with a high-angle shot of Pip kneeling by her body and collapsing by the "great table," now stripped of its cloth and service and positioned on the right like a huge headstone, Lean implicitly erects a marker over the dissolution of Havisham's perverse existence and creates a metaphor for the entombment of Pip's "great expectations" that simultaneously recalls their inception in the graveyard with Magwitch.³³

The visual treatment of Pip and Herbert Pocket's elaborate plan to secure Magwitch's safe flight from the country is highly reminiscent of the latter's ill-fated attempt several years ago to escape from the Kent marshes. The scenery is not far removed from that of the Kentish wetlands, nor is the general atmosphere that encompasses the visuals different from the former scenes. The location is, once again, near the river. The wind, murkiness and chill that infused the film's opening sequences are reproduced to the same unnerving effect. When it comes to the utilisation of lighting, the spectator witnesses a facsimile of the expressionistic principles that determined the texture of the prior sequences involving Magwitch's chase by the soldiers. As Pip, Herbert and Magwitch set out on an escape practice-run down the river in the cold mist of the night, they ostensibly vanish in the midst of other vessels and cargo ships, much like Magwitch and the soldiers were lost in the vastness and darkness of the

³³ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.50

landscape of the marshes in their cat-and-mouse game. The extreme low-key lighting facilitates the casting of big shadows that, along with the noises of the oars and the songs coming from sailors, establishes an aura of anxious anticipation. This fear is further enhanced by the fact that the spectator has already established the presence in the location of Magwitch's archenemy and pursuer, Compeyson. He, too, is participating in a sinister recreation of events that took place many years ago. The danger of Magwitch being seen looms in every corner of the frame. Large, dark statues seemingly hovering over the group in the skiff appear like callous archetypes of law and justice. These high-angle, imposing shots that have the statues dominating the frame structure are redolent of the soldiers' daunting presence when they set out to capture Magwitch at the beginning of the narrative. The unmistakable similarity of these shots with the film's opening, as well as the identical thematic concerns (the attempted escape and the ensuing chase), make the spectator increasingly aware of the doomed nature of Pip's task. Hence, by means of repetition the narrative informs the outcome: Magwitch will once again be caught and sentenced to hanging, while Pip will stand on the sidelines as a powerless onlooker. As Silver and Ursini accurately point out:

Suddenly a figurehead looms into the foreground of a high angle shot; over a reverse someone, unseen, cries, "Ahoy there!" The head itself looks down on them like the face of God, as if incarnating a placid destiny that witnesses their passage, voices a challenge, and lets them hold their course knowing where it will lead.³⁴

³⁴ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.51

The film's final sequence is of paramount importance, not only in providing the narrative with its resolution, but also in elevating the theme of 'light' to prominence. After having recovered from a long illness that kept him in the forge and away from any contact with the outside world, Pip returns to Satis House to reminisce about the past. As he opens the gate, his heart becomes filled with nostalgia. In his mind, he recreates the ambience of his past visits to the estate. He can still hear Estella's first words and Miss Havisham's desperate cries of isolation. As soon as he enters the grounds, he engages in the same ritual that had him previously standing hesitantly at the dark entrance and, then, with the help of a candle slowly climbing up the stairs to Miss Havisham's dressing-room. The lighting patterns that were utilised on prior occasions are faithfully reproduced in this, his last visit to the house. When he enters the dressing-room, he is surprised to find Estella staring at the void and occupying the same armchair that was the tarnished throne of her late mother. In an effort to sustain herself in the terrible self-imposed mental and physical isolation, she is in complete possession of a single incontrovertible motive that represents what she conceives of as her deeper self: a complete identification with Miss Havisham. As she says to Pip: "She is not gone. She is still here with me in this house, in this very room." For Estella, any notion of an alternative existence is unthinkable. Like Miss Havisham, her personality slowly disintegrates and fulfils itself in destruction. What Pip painfully senses is the fiendish rebirth of Miss Havisham from the ashes. Yet, his own emotional maturation through his sometimes

grievously acquired experience, prevents him from receding yet again into a passive role that will have him as a mere observer of events and a recipient of abusive comments. His conviction that there is still potential for Estella's running away from her own demons is manifest in the essentially subjective utilisation of lighting. Although Estella has been subjected to the same traumatic experience as Miss Havisham³⁵, assumed her apathy and even her posture, the lighting on her figure lacks the predominantly flat high-key qualities that were so characteristic of Miss Havisham visual presentation. Instead, there is a combination of side and backlighting that softens the edges around her face and body. For one, such utilisation suggests that Pip is not afraid or repelled by her attitude and her outwardly manifested morbidity in the way he was with Miss Havisham. For another, it attests to Pip's continuing fascination with her beauty and his very tender feelings towards her. Thus, in a final effort to exorcise all evil and bring Estella back to the world of the living, he makes light the issue and the catalyst of his ultimate endeavour. As he forcefully exclaims: "I have come back Miss Havisham to let in the sunlight!" He then pulls the drapes down and opens the sealed windows, leaving Estella bowled over by the realisation that she has allowed herself to disintegrate along with everything in her immediate surroundings. When the rays of sunlight enter the room, the decay becomes manifest in all its gruesome opulence. Whereas previously the selective and expressionistic employment of lighting allowed only certain

³⁵ Estella was planning on getting married to Bentley Drummle. Yet, when he found out her true parentage (Magwitch was her father), he decided to leave her.

aspects of Miss Havisham's physical environment to be seen by both Pip and the spectator, the current amplitude of natural light allows for a full and realistic rendition of the circumstances of Estella's life. It is precisely that recognition that will force Estella to come to terms with the reality of her pathetic condition and step out into the sunlight with Pip into a new life of 'great expectations.'

Great Expectations is not simply a narrative that follows the events in the life of a young orphan boy who has a great fortune falling into his lap and who grows through emotional pain and misfortune into genuine maturity. It is a moral drama whose central theme revolves around the question of how people come to realise their true inner selves. As the foregoing analysis has demonstrated, the utilisation of lighting becomes pivotal in bringing those issues to the fore. Its diverse employment creates varying effects, many of which assist in resolving the question of identity. At the same time, it becomes an essential tool in the creation of a high-powered drama whose psychological intensity never slackens, as well as a means through which the director exposes his technical skills and artistic foresight.

HOBSON'S CHOICE (1954)

The film marks a crucial and transitional point in Lean's directorial career. It would be the last film to be entirely shot in Britain with exclusive British finance, as well as his last in black-and-white. From then onwards, he set out to conquer the international movie scene by indulging in projects that included mostly large scale productions in foreign settings and financial support by economically robust American studios such as Columbia and MGM. Furthermore, Hobson's Choice was to be the second and last comedy that Lean would ever direct. He never concealed his preference for dramatic subjects that involved larger than life characters and, hence, his choice to direct a modest Lancashire comedy pertaining to the lives of a family of boot makers seemed like an unlikely proposition. This decision seemed particularly curious, especially as it followed the adaptations of the Dickens novels, Great Expectations and Oliver Twist, as well as the resounding drama of The Sound Barrier. The final decision to embark upon such a venture was largely the result of Alexander Korda's intervention who, having bought the rights to the film, offered it to Lean as an artistic and thematic challenge. However, the choice to turn the existing script into a film was not a wild proposition that entailed a substantial element of uncalculated risk for both the producer and the filmmaker. By the time Hobson's Choice was about to be made into a film, it had already established its reputation as a very popular British play. Its success in Britain was so great that it propelled interest from abroad and, as a result, premiered in the United States in 1955 to

considerable box-office appeal. When Lean saw it at an Arts Theatre Club revival, he was so enthused by the excellent production values and the outstanding performances, that he decided to accept Korda's offering by going ahead with its pre-production.

Despite his initial hesitations, Lean warmed to the idea of making the film because of a certain number of factors. Following a series of compelling dramatic stories, Lean was eager to engage himself in the filming of a love story. Although Hobson's Choice was a comedy, it did entail an unusual love story around which much of the narrative evolves. Secondly, the portrayal of Henry Hobson around whose presence much of the comedic character of the film is centred, presented Lean with the potential of exploring a seemingly Dickensian figure, albeit in its comic dimensions. Charles Laughton who, after several deliberations, was assigned the role of the vulgar and occasionally grotesque Henry Hobson, was one of the most celebrated British actors and a big star in the United States, by appearing in such films as Frank Lloyd's Mutiny on the Bounty (1935) and William Dieterle's The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939), amongst many others. His casting in the role of Hobson was considered as a triumph for Korda and Lean, especially since the actor had established a reputation for being very selective with acting parts offers. Furthermore, Hobson's Choice presented Lean with further possibilities to explore the late Victorian settings, since the film is historically situated in the era of the Dickens films. Finally, the subject matter that concerns itself with the lives of three unruly daughters under the stern and, occasionally, vulgar patriarch, was in tune with the

dominant trends in British society. Marcia Landy paints a portrait of the British film industry's thematic preoccupations at the time the film was made:

For all its satyric cast, the film appears consonant with other 1950s films in asserting the rights of men and of the family. The film's ideology expresses the familiar social attitude of allowing women power but restricting it to the domestic sphere. The female becomes the instrument for transforming the traditional image of the patriarchal family while still retaining patriarchy.³⁶

Hobson's Choice did considerably well at the box-office in Britain and won critical acclaim in America. Its success across the Atlantic could be argued to be somewhat unexpected considering that it was a small-scale British feature, when the American film industry was moving ahead with technical innovations such as widescreen cinema, stereophonic sound and Eastman colour, all of which pointed towards a need for bigger and more spectacular films. Success, however, did not limit itself to Britain and the United States, but spanned across Europe. It got the prestigious Golden Bear Award at the Berlin Film Festival, and numerous other citations from the continental film industries. Hence, Lean would make one more step towards establishing himself as a major director with artistic consistency and limitless potential.

The film's director of photography was Jack Hildyard. Having have worked previously in the critically acclaimed The Sound Barrier, this would be the second film on which he would collaborate with Lean. He would also occupy the same position in

³⁶ Landy, Marcia. British Genres: Cinema and Society 1930-60. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), p.327

the subsequent films Summer Madness, and The Bridge on the River Kwai for which he would get an Academy Award for cinematography. His great success with the latter film enhanced his reputation in America, and he soon became a favourite with many filmmakers across the Atlantic, including such big names in the industry as Anatole Litvak, Joseph Mankiewicz, Fred Zinnemann, Nicholas Ray and Alfred Hitchcock. However, and despite a rich and rewarding career, The Bridge of the River Kwai would be considered as his finest hour as a cinematographer. In Hobson's Choice he was called to replicate the atmospheric lighting that the elaborate technique of Guy Green created for the Dickens adaptations, and depart from its forceful but very realistic utilisation in The Sound Barrier.

In Hobson's Choice, as the subsequent analysis will attempt to elucidate, Lean adopts both a realist aesthetic in the depiction of the late Victorian Lancashire settings, but also expressionist principles in the visual depiction of the characters and the situations they find themselves in. What is of particular interest in the film is the process through which Lean aims at achieving or enhancing the comedic effect. The dialogue, the performances and the editing, all play an instrumental role in establishing the tone of the film, but it is the meticulous utilisation of lighting that is very often indispensable in rendering that effect more persuasive and potent.

ANALYSIS

Critics and film historians have often argued that the opening sequence of the film was Lean's own humorous commentary on his earlier dramatic versions of Great Expectations and Oliver Twist, especially as it employs similar audio-visual patterns, only to create a very different effect. Commenting on the opening of the film, Silver and Ursini have argued that:

In Hobson's Choice, the comic anagram becomes a parody of genre style, in particular his own. The atmosphere of the opening is built on ominously exaggerated details: the streets must be wet, the wind must be blowing, a branch must be striking the skylight with its twisted silhouette. This staging precipitates an even greater comic deflation when a character staggers in and turns out to have neither shot or stabbed nor plagued by any demon other than rum.³⁷

The utilisation of lighting in the opening sequence plays its own fundamental role in establishing a dark comedic effect through the continuous and systematic interchange between the generation of apprehension and the instigation of a more placating effect, until it reaches its climax. The film opens with a close shot of a hanging boot swaying back and forth by the force of the sweeping wind. The shot is highly reminiscent of the gallows that were visually prominent as Pip rushed to the graveyard in the opening of Great Expectations, and the spectator's initial impression is that a human body hangs lifeless on a gibbet. The role of lighting, camera movement and sound is crucial in creating a momentary sense of foreboding on the spectator's part, and in

³⁷ Silver Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films, (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.110

reversing the initial jovial mood that has been established during the opening credits of the film through the utilisation of light and gleeful musical tones. The darkness that permeates the frame and the close shot of the boot does not permit clear visual access to the details of the shot, apart from a faint glimpse of the dark and wet streets of Salford. Thus, a great deal is left to the spectator's imagination. Correspondingly, the exaggeration of the ominous sound effects against an indistinct setting supplements the sense of consternation. The sound of the sweeping wind and the harsh metallic screech coming from an unidentified source are the sole points of auditory reference, while the absence of people on the street renders the setting as instantly bleak and inhospitable. Yet, as the camera slowly tracks back, it reveals a single boot dangling from rusty hinges that make an irritating and ostentatiously loud and high-pitched noise. Thus, what initially looked like a gibbet that was assumed to have been recently used for the execution of a human, is nothing more than an iron post that supports a fancy advertising trick for a boot making shop belonging to Henry Hobson. Just as the spectator comes to terms with the visual irony and experiences a reversal of expectations, the matter seems to be resolved. As the camera cuts inside Henry Hobson's shop, everything in the room appears in sharp focus and readily discernible by means of deep-focus cinematography and the employment of three-point lighting.³⁸ Nothing within that enclosed environment appears to be remotely threatening or suspicious. There are no dark corners or deep shadows formed by the objects

³⁸ Three-point lighting is "the common arrangement using three directions of light on a scene: from behind the subjects (backlighting), from one bright source (key light), and from a less bright source (fill light)". Bordwell. David. Film History: An Introduction. (Madison: McGraw, 1994), p.824

that lie in different areas of the room. Meanwhile, the static position of the camera, while allowing a careful and prolonged look at the surrounding space, keeps the front door of the shop centrally placed in the shot, suggesting that if any sort of action will take place, it will originate from that area of the frame. A sudden pan, however, of the camera to the right of the frame, reveals a clock that strikes one o'clock in the morning. This unexpected and rather violent camera movement, the hard-key lighting on the clock coupled with the otherwise pervading silence, regenerates a feeling of anxious anticipation and expectation. In an effort to sustain the pervading feeling of uneasiness, the camera keeps the spectator on hold. This time, it cuts to a closer view, revealing an endless number of shoes and boots that are meticulously placed on the benches. The music re-emerges, and its blithe tone aims at reversing the feeling of consternation that was momentarily activated by the unanticipated camera movement and the clock's exaggerated sound. The long tracking shot of the inside of the shop aims at relaxing the spectator to the point of tedium. This exploitation of shot length is essential in steering the senses, and paramount in paving the ground for yet another psychological reversal. Consequently, a second sudden pan of the camera that is identical to the one a few moments before, reveals a dark corner of the shop. The music stops abruptly, and the low-key lighting renders that specific area ominously conspicuous. As the dark branches hit violently against the brightly lit shop window, there is a recurrence of the visual motif that functioned as a harbinger of Magwitch's entrance to the narrative in Great Expectations. The overriding sensation is that

a violent human figure will emerge out of the insidious darkness. As the camera starts panning across the floor, a huge shadow of a prodigious human figure is cast on it, while the simultaneous sound of the front door opening reveals a man in silhouette. The strong backlighting conceals his facial characteristics and portrays him as instantaneously menacing and intimidating. However, before the spectator has the chance to fully grasp the moment and become apprehensive, the exaggerated sound of the unidentified character's burping releases the tension and, thus, delivers the comedic effect more prevailing and effective. What is revealed to the spectator is Henry Hobson, owner of the shoe shop. He is a grotesque-looking middle-aged man, with a round face, a double chin and a protruding belly, in a state of drunken stupor. In terms of visual staging, he is the comic inversion of Magwitch: equally big, with pronounced features, but slack and non-detrimental. There is no menace about him, but a pathetic vulgarity that, at first glance, appears to be rooted in his drunkenness. As he stumbles towards his bedroom with the help of his daughter Maggie, he comes across as a feeble man who depends on the help and tolerance of others around him. Yet, as the narrative will progress, so will he be revealed as an occasionally harsh character. Anderegg provides an accurate account of his temperament as this becomes manifest from very early on in the narrative:

Neither Lean nor Laughton allows Hobson to be merely funny. Though the situations Hobson finds himself in may be comic, he is not a figure of fun. We laugh at but seldom with him. A petty and cruel domestic tyrant who bullies his daughters, beats his employees, ridicules his friends, and abases

himself before his betters, Hobson embodies the dark side of both the Victorian parent and the Victorian employer.³⁹

The subsequent sequence in the film reveals what was previously concealed from the spectator: normal daily life in the city of Salford. The use of deep-focus cinematography and three-point lighting provides a comprehensive and realist depiction of the industrial urban surroundings with their long alleyways, the back-to-back housing, and the commercial centre with people going about their daily businesses. Hence, expressionism gives way to realism, and desolation to liveliness. While in the opening sequence the dramatic expressionist utilisation of lighting created an aura of bleakness and discomfort in that it allowed the surrounding space to look barren and dreary, on this particular occasion, everyone and everything appears clear and auspicious under the sun. The spectator is given ample visual information about the locale in which the narrative will unfold. However, this depiction is not limited to conveying realism, but also has ideological implications. This is the bourgeois part of the city, where there is an abundance of goods, shops and middle-class people strolling insouciantly about the streets. The naturalistic, crisp lighting provided by the bright rays of the sun embellishes the visuals with gaiety and purports a general impression of security and comfort enjoyed by the citizens. When, however, later in the film Maggie finds herself in the working-class area of Salford in order to inform Will's would be fiancé that she has made the decision to marry him, the atmosphere is lacklustre and

³⁹ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.84

dim. The people on the side of the streets emerge as shabby, apathetic and lifeless, while the houses are run-down. Thus, what is evident through the mise-en-scene is further enhanced by a gloomy ambience provided by the employment of diffused lighting that pervades through the shots. Light, like wealth, appears to be the privilege of the well to do, while obscurity is the fate of the poor. In this manner, Lean projects the social repercussions of urban life, and a subtle visual referent pertaining to the physical and mental segregation of the classes during the Victorian era.

Another instance whereby class distinction is accentuated through the combination of camera angle, dialogue and differential use of lighting can be found in Will Mossop's introduction to the narrative. When the stern-looking Mrs Hepworth visits Hobson's shop, she insists upon finding out who is responsible for having made her boots. Her tone of voice and reprimanding style lead both Hobson and the spectator to assume that she is about to complain to the owner about the quality of her boots. Hobson is apologetic before he has the chance to hear what she has to say. With a knock on the small trap door, Maggie summons one of the workmen, Will Mossop, to enquire about the making of the boots. As he emerges from the darkness of his small workshop cellar, dirty and browbeaten, the use of a high camera angle shot renders him as instantly subservient to his employer. This effect is further accentuated through means of audio-visual correspondence. As soon as Will hesitantly comes into sight, Hobson's stringent demeanour and harsh words help the spectator establish the fundamental nature of their relationship as master and servant. As Hobson says

to Mrs Hepworth: "If there is anything wrong I'm capable of making the man suffer for it." In terms of lighting treatment, the scene reinforces the sense of segregation between the classes. Will's emergence from a very dark and gloomy cellar to the bright and lush ambience of the shop constitutes a powerful visual commentary on the conditions that exemplify the acute differentiation that saturates the interaction between people from different milieus. The darkness and grime that one associates with the life of lack and penury is the world that Will inhabits, while the profusion of light and cleanliness is the unquestionable licence of the affluent. Any indulgence of the former has to be seen as an unsolicited intrusion into a superlative social order. That is precisely why Will's surfacing from the cellar is treated, on a visual scale, as a rather preposterous ascendance into an alien and self-righteous social dominion. Silver and Ursini provide an accurate visual portrayal of Will's first appearance: "He pops up through the cellar trap and squints at the world like a myopic mole."⁴⁰ When, to his surprise, Hobson realises that Mrs Hepworth's intention was to congratulate Will for "the best pair of boots she's ever had," he turns sour and makes a comment to Maggie that transpires as an expression of denigration for his servile employee: "What does she want to praise a wet one to his face for?" For all its subtlety, the utilisation of lighting in the scene lends a moment of compelling drama. Apart from concocting a socially-informed entrance for Will in the narrative, it also brings to the fore the more antipathetic aspects of Hobson's

⁴⁰ Silver Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.114

personality that are rooted in his unrestrained egotism and proverbial crudeness.

A particularly important scene that establishes Maggie's social transgression and augments the comedic character of the narrative is the one that involves her and Will's supposedly romantic escapade by the side of the river Irwell. The spectator has already established that Maggie is an indomitable woman who resents her father's desire to see her as the perennial spinster who will look after him and the shop for the rest of her life. Instead, she is prepared to press forward in a purposive manner by practically forcing Will Mossop to marry her. Conversely, Will has been presented as a humble and bashful man who is committed to his work as a boot hand for Hobson, inured to hardship and obeying orders. Thus, when she invites him on a Sunday outing to Peel Park, the circumstance of their encounter does not convey a sense of romanticism, but rather that of business appointment.

The scenery is far from picturesque or compliant to courtship. A solitary bench by the side of a capsized fence and a polluted riverbank overlooking the industrial part of town with its tall chimneys emanating grey clouds of smoke are the sole visual referents - unadorned and dreary. The pervading greyness that embellishes the visuals is both realistic and symbolic. The clouds that have formed on the sky and blot out the sun are not nature's own, but products of the industrial zone on the opposite side of the river. On the other hand, the stifling greyness functions as a metaphor, insofar as it reflects the forced and unromantic nature of the encounter. The spectator is instantly aware that neither of them is emotionally committed to each other.

The utilisation of lighting and camera placement become overt indicators of the emotional detachment between the two. While the camera retains a position behind their backs, never allowing the spectator to bear witness to their facial expressions and mannerisms, the polluted river comes into visual prominence by means of a powerful but artificially utilised key-light. The batches of bubbles arising from the detergent residue that floats in the swamp-like waters, provides a sharp comic analogue of the archetypal romantic imagery, while the physical distance between them is evident in their sitting of the right and left edges of the bench and frame. Even their ensuing dialogue possesses all the characteristics of a contrived conversation. While Maggie holds Will's hand, he prefers to talk about his memories of the river when it was still clean and pleasant, while he also outrightly dismisses her idea of marriage, despite Maggie's insistence that love is not a prerequisite for entering and committing to a life-long relationship. As she tells Will, self-assuredly: "We'll get along without it." Silver and Ursini point out Lean's striving for generic inversion and self-parody:

A similar reversal is applied in the scenes of courtship between Maggie Hobson and Will Mossop. Their Sunday meeting starts out as vaguely reminiscent of Alec and Laura's boating excursion in Brief Encounter. An extra long shot of them strolling through the green parkways laid out in a complex geometrical pattern dissolves to a medium shot by a river bank. But the river Irwell is nothing like the pleasant stream in the earlier film... Lean is not above satirising his own images of love and nature.⁴¹

⁴¹ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.110

The same kind of reversal takes place soon after, when Maggie asks Will to kiss her for the first time. The setting loosely echoes that of Brief Encounter: a dark alleyway by the side of a main street becomes the background against which the romance is supposedly about to turn prurient. The paradox, in Hobson's Choice, lies in the mental disposition of the fictional characters, as well as on the details of the setting which are heightened by means of lighting manipulation so as to enhance the comedic effect. Thus, as Maggie rests on a brick wall in the semi-darkness of the causeway and Will approaches her in order to satisfy her demand for a kiss, what stands out visually is the sewer that occupies the background against which the intimate moment is meant to materialise. The employment of lighting becomes instrumental in the visual structuring and its thematic implications. Unlike Brief Encounter, when Laura and Alec's passionate encounters were embellished in mystical darkness, the very high-key lighting of the centrally placed sewer brings it to the forefront of the spectator's visual field and grabs his/her attention. Consequently, it takes away the muscle from a potentially touching and romantic moment, and turns it into a particularly satiric comment on the incongruous status of their relationship. The kiss may not materialise at that point in time, but the comedic effect is forcibly rendered.

When Maggie and Will set out to find a place to stay and use as a workshop for their new business, they end up in an Oldfield Road cellar that is highly reminiscent of Madeleine Smith's bedroom in Madeleine, as well as Miss Havisham's dressing-room in Great Expectations. The place is dark and damp. The only source of

light is a pair of tiny windows that overlook a flight of steps, while the filth and dereliction is manifest in the presence of cobwebs in every corner and under every piece of the room's furniture. The predominantly low-key lighting becomes a tool in highlighting the run-down state of the lodgings. Unlike the Dickens film, there is nothing sinister about its visual representation. Rather, it functions as an implicit corroboration of Maggie's defiance of her father, and an acknowledgment of her determination to have a life of her own. She is willing to move away from the comfort of her upscale and plush life at Chappel Street, and indulge into a personal and business gamble that involves opting for the temporary paucity of working-class life and a marriage below her class. For Maggie, Oldfield Road becomes a challenge that, as Landy asserts, is the epitome of middle-class principles and aspirations: "Maggie embodies the middle-class values of hard work, productivity and respectability that come from commercial success."⁴² Hence, the visually telling murkiness and ramshackle of her new residence becomes the breeding ground for her and Will's ascendancy to personal and business respectability.

As soon as Willie cleans up his future home from the dust and the cobwebs and Maggie ensures that everything from advertising leaflets to the necessary furniture and shoe-making materials are distributed and in place, she sends him home to rest and prepare to open shop the next morning. While he ascends the stairs, he sees a sign that has his name inscribed on it with big letters:

⁴² Landy, Marcia. British Genres: Cinema and Society 1930-60. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991), p.327

'William Mossop. High Class Boot Maker.' For the first time in the narrative, Will is overcome with pride. This change in composure and confidence is reflected in the employment of lighting. The modest sign suddenly glows like gold, evincing, in this manner, Will's upbeat mental disposition. He feels he is no longer a nameless servile boot hand, but a master of a business that bears his name. The potential of success becomes a stream of gratification and, as a result, darkness turns into light. Though the shot, like most shots in the film, is not directly subjective in that it is not taken from Will's point-of-view, it stands out as a moment of profound audience empathy for him. Silver and Ursini stress the significance of this singular moment in the narrative, and explain how spectator identification with Will is realised:

As he stops to inspect the sign with his name on it, a key light comes up on the letters and sets them glowing like the pride inside him. Much of the subjective sensation in an instance like this depends less on a formal manipulation than on a sustained identification with the character.⁴³

One of the most stylistically sophisticated scenes of the film occurs following Henry's alcoholic overindulgence at Moonraker's. Distraught at the realisation that life without Maggie is far from ideal, Henry returns to his emotional sanctuary, which is none other than the drinking establishment where he shares his thoughts with his male friends. While there, and inebriated by excessive amounts of alcohol, he becomes abusive

⁴³ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.118

to his drinking partners and ends up emotionally segregated and physically incapacitated. As he lurches across the room and stumbles out of the pub in the dark and cold dampness of the night, he practically collides with a lamppost. From then onwards, starts a peculiar and, at the same time, comic pursuit of the moon's reflection in the puddles of water that have formed on the wet street. While the thematic treatment of the scene is surrealistic in that it presents a liberation of Hobson's mind from logic and its substitution by a hallucinatory dream, the employment of lighting is characteristically expressionistic. In this state of delinquent phantasmagoria, he approaches the puddle in a desperate effort to get closer to the moon. However, as he moves towards and steps onto the puddle, the moon disappears, and in its place, he sees his own distorted reflection. The spectator's mind is instantly cast back to his own words when he saw the first fliers of Will and Maggie's new shop. "Moonshine with love behind it. They've got sick fancies." Yet, on this occasion, he becomes the victim of his own perversity and the personification of the madness that he ascribed to his daughter only moments before. The moon becomes his sole visual referent, and its hopeless chase his bizarre obsession. The complete darkness that covers the surroundings brings the moon and Hobson's brightly illuminated face to the forefront of visual concentration. By isolating the two singular light sources in almost every frame and shot structure and having them 'interconnect' in a nonsensical manner, Lean aims at establishing Hobson's mounting identification with it, and draws the spectator into his aberrant mental process. This connection is further

augmented by means of enhancing a sense of physical likeness between them: the light on Hobson's bloated and glowing face forms a contour that resembles the roundness of the full moon. Just as Miss Havisham's posture, hair, looks and costume in Great Expectations were, to a large extent, the physical addendum of the world that she inhabited and a symptom of her state of mind, so does the moon's reflection become a testament to Hobson's temporary insanity. Hence, as he moves senselessly along the cobblestoned street, the moon follows his every move and vice versa, until its chase leads to a sudden and unpleasant fall into a very dark grain cellar. Then, the camera cuts to a very low-angle shot of the moon occupying a central position directly above him. It is as if madness has won the final battle, and looks down on him with scorn and a degree of cynicism.

Throughout this sequence, the utilisation of light is both minimal and concentrated. As mentioned above, nothing is immediately discernible apart from Hobson and the moon. The acute darkness allows the action to remain strictly focused on their interaction, while the comic element is delivered via Hobson's exaggerated gesticulations and facial expressions that conform to expressionist principles. Music also plays a very significant part in creating the appropriate mood. Without it, the sequence could easily transpire as a particularly horrific nightmare with which the spectator would come to forcibly identify. On this occasion, however, the musical chords become the means through which the spectator retains his/her emotional distance from the fictional character, and even embellishes Hobson's outlandish experience with irony and comedy. As Silver and Ursini maintain:

With the tremulous chords of Arnold's "moon theme" on the track, Lean moves from the humorously absurd image of Laughton on his back with his feet caught on the guard chains and floundering like an overturned tortoise, to the chillingly eerie tumbledown down the grain shaft: a matte of Hobson, mouth gaping and eyes widened in surprise, over a forced perspective of bricks - the moon still looming unnaturally overhead after the body has dropped from sight, its theme sounding a note of final victory over his crash landing.⁴⁴

The visual presentation of Maggie and Will's wedding is of particular importance when it comes to the mise-en-scene and the utilisation of lighting. The camera is at a very high angle, showing Will as a rather minute figure when compared to the church's edifice that dominates the frame. The purpose of such visual structuring pertains to his discomfort at having to get married. The fear at such a prospect is so overwhelming that everything around him seems to bear down on his very existence. Even the tombstones that are arranged in a horizontal line across the edge of the yard are lighted in such a way as to cast big shadows, all of which appear as spiky pointers. On a symbolic level, this subtle use of low-key lighting has a double function: on the one hand, the shadows look like sharp knives about to stab him. In other words, his inner thoughts are visually objectified. On the other, they may be seen as simple signs that point towards the church's entrance, thus functioning as coercive elements in determining Will's course of action - he *has* to get married. When the guests appear and Maggie has a short conversation with Will, the camera cuts to a medium close shot of them facing each other. The shadows disappear, and so does Will's diffidence regarding matrimony. Maggie's words further alleviate his fears, as she

⁴⁴ Silver Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and his Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.120

gives him the option to eschew at the last minute: "The parson is going to ask you if you love me. And you'll either answer truthfully or not at all." Will's answer is distinctive of his growing conviction that he must go ahead with the wedding ceremony: "I'll tell him yes. I'm resigned. You're growing on me. I'll do the line with you."

Following the wedding day comes the wedding night. Will is faced with yet another daunting task: that of performing his 'duties' as a husband. The lighting of this scene, along with the music that accompanies it, is of paramount importance in establishing the appropriate mood, especially as there is very little dialogue to support the visuals, and the action is limited to controlled, if subtly comedic body-language. As soon as Maggie shows the dinner guests out and cleans the dining table from the dishes, she asks Will to briefly practice his writing skills before joining her in the bedroom. Will is extremely hesitant, and his actions testify to his fear and fundamental unwillingness to consummate their relationship. Thus, he takes an excessive amount of time to finish his writing, and pretends to arrange the coal in the kitchen-stove. As he removes his starched collar and places it on the mantelpiece and under the faint gaslight, the formation of a very dark shadow creates a contour of an imaginary human figure's bust. To complete the illusion, Will places his cuffs on either side of the collar. What he sees in front of him is the man he would like to be. The slightly protruding collar projects a confident male ready to face all challenges, including sexual intercourse. Will stares at it, as if wanting to draw power from an illusionary mirror image of himself. For a moment, too, the

music acquires a rather bombastic nature. However, he quickly comes back to reality when the bedroom door opens and the double bed features prominently at the centre of the frame by means of high-key lighting application. The moment of truth is before him, and by calling visual attention to itself, it functions as an merciless materialisation of his fear. Hence, on both occasions, the manipulation of light becomes fundamental in projecting Will's inner thought processes. From the low-key illusion of himself as a poised and audacious man, to the high-key dread of his laborious duty as a husband, subjectivity governs the structuring and texture of the images.

One of the funniest scenes of the film takes place when Hobson, after having experienced a night of imbibing, wakes up only to experience very strange sensations that take the form of particularly grotesque visions. The scene begins with him lying in bed and scratching his face, believing that some insect has landed on his face. As the spectator follows his actions, he/she notices that there is a lurid glow saturating the shot. As a result, the overall ambience is particularly gay and bright and predisposes the spectator for the unravelling of a light-hearted sequence. When Hobson comes out of his dream, he thinks he sees a swarm of oversized locusts coming down on him. Following this unpleasant experience which is from his point-of-view, he thinks he sees a huge grey mouse leaning on the side of his bed, looking at him with scorn. The blurred glow surrounding the mouse's presence gives it a dreamy quality and, consequently, confirms the fact that it is a figment of his vivid imagination. The presence of an imaginary representative of the animal kingdom that acquires human

traits, such as the ability to induce mockery by means of sardonic facial expressions, is reminiscent of the scene where Pip rushed out of his house to give food to an escaped convict. On that occasion, the cows were not imaginary, but their ability to speak was an exercise in narrative surrealism - an audiovisual conveyance of Pip's guilt. The same is true of Hobson, in that he pays the price of his excesses. Yet, while in the Dickens film the visual ambience was sinister and morose, on this occasion, it is comic and inconsequential. The utilisation of lighting is extremely important in disallowing the spectator access to Henry's emotions of fear and bewilderment. For him, the visions are part of a dark and particularly unpleasant nightmare, but for the spectator they are just instances of a hilarious toxic delirium. As mentioned above, the evenly spread high-key lighting of the room, which is not to be seen so luminously emanating in any other part of the film, creates an atmosphere of merriment and comedy. There is a marked absence of shadows or a sustained utilisation of point-of-view shots that would permit spectator identification with Henry's inner world, or a stimulation of disconcerting thoughts. Instead, the intention of the filmmaker is to expose his vulnerability in a farcical manner and use his visions as a directorial animadversion of his character and general demeanour. Hobson's final illusion - seeing one of his drinking companions sticking out his tongue in the mirror instead of seeing a reflection of himself - is the culminating point of his delusion and the apogee of the derisively infused sequence.

The final shot of the film is identical to the opening one in terms of frame composition. The boot that hangs outside Hobson's

shop occupies the top right of the frame, while the wet street is once again visible in the background. Like in many Lean films, this, too, reaches its closure by returning to its beginning, at least on a visual level, thus confirming the director's partiality to circular narrative structuring. However, there is a marked divergence from the initial shot of the film, and that primarily resides in the differential utilisation of lighting and sound. While the opening shot created an atmosphere of consternation and anticipation through the exploitation of magnified sound effects and visual obscurity, this time there is a noticeable absence of any diegetic sound or dimness. Instead, there is a final rendition of the main musical motif that has embellished many of the film's comic sequences with characteristic vivacity and optimism. Similarly, the lighting, much like the outcome of the story, remains high-key, amplifying the pervading sensation of elation at the effectuation of positive narrative resolution. The sun shines and the fictional characters become an integral part of the warmth that transpires. Willie will move away from his humble and rather depressing environment at Oldfield Road and return to Hobson's as an equal partner in the business, while Maggie will take care of her ailing father. "In my beginning is my end" is a quote that may very well pertain to the film's ending, although it applies only as a thematic paraphrase of Eliot's words in his poem *Four Quartets*. The shy and hard-working boot hand will return to the place where he has learned his trade, and the defiant daughter will be once again of service to her tyrannical father. As for Hobson, he will continue to feel in charge of the place, but he will have to sacrifice his drinking habit and accept his old

servant as the new and capable co-master of his shoe-making establishment.

Hobson's Choice provides one of the most upbeat endings of all the Lean films, and is only comparable to Oliver Twist in terms of narrative closure. The majority of his films end up in death and destruction, while others like Ryan's Daughter and Lawrence of Arabia end in disillusionment and suspension. Even his only other comedy, Blithe Spirit retains its fundamentally sinister character by having all the protagonists dead by the end of the narrative. In Hobson's Choice, lighting, like all the other formal elements, is essential in releasing with great potency the fundamentals of comedy, irony, realism and gaiety that are inherent in the plot, formulating, on many occasions, a catalytic effect that promulgates the other elements' narrative weight and generic legitimacy.

5. COLOUR

"The purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love colour the most."

John Ruskin *The Stones of Venice*

INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of a David Lean picture, one's mind is most often drawn to expansive vistas, realistic settings, and a rich canvas of naturalistic colours that embrace the narrative and enhance the texture of his films. From the romantic Venetian pastels in Summer Madness, to the visually striking bazaar scenes in A Passage to India, and from the jungle greens of The Bridge on the River Kwai, to the warm and sometimes daunting yellows of Lawrence of Arabia, the cold whites and blues of Doctor Zhivago and the dreary greys of Kirrory in Ryan's Daughter, Lean always uses colour as more than a mere reflection of the world that surrounds his fictional characters. To a great extent, colour in his films is a character itself - one the protagonists respond to or absorb as their own point of reference, hence, subjectifying it in many occasions as will be discussed in the forthcoming analysis.

Still, only half of his films were ever made in colour. In fact, his directorial career in terms of his use of colour can be delineated along more or less precise lines. The first half was largely devoted to artistic explorations in mise-en-scene and

black-and-white photography. Heavily influenced by the profound early German style, as well as by the contemporary American cinema of Orson Welles¹ which thoroughly relied on deep-focus cinematography and the formation of light and shadow to create overwhelming stylistic and narrative effects, he sought expression through these means, the most characteristic being his classic adaptations of Charles Dickens' Great Expectations and Oliver Twist. It was only after he had the chance to travel extensively outside the bounds of his own country that Lean saw the true expressive potential of the application of colour in his films, starting with Summer Madness and ending with A Passage to India - his last film.

Colour film had been available long before Lean embarked on his career as a film director. Motion pictures in colour could be seen as early as 1896, alongside the emergence of the medium itself. However, in the early days of cinema the prints were hand-painted. As the industry expanded and the production became more mechanised and standardised, the technique of hand painting was abandoned and gave way to tinting and toning. The former involved the immersion of celluloid in any one number of standardised dyes in order to give an overall feel of the mood of a sequence, and the latter entailed a "colouring the half-tones and shadows, leaving the highlights translucent."² These particular methods aimed at achieving a more sophisticated way of dealing with the artistic potentialities of the medium. Steve Neale further explicates the point:

¹ In his biography of David Lean, Kevin Brownlow mentions how influential Orson Welles' Citizen Kane was on Lean. Not only did he have the highest respect for his American colleague, but he also adopted certain of his visual and narrative techniques, such as deep-focus cinematography, acute angles and flashbacks for several of his films. Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996).

² Neale, Steve. Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour. (London: BFI, 1985), p.118

Tinting and toning were an integral part of what might be termed a symbolic or poetic or rhetorical realism, in which effects of gesture, lighting and colour were motivated as much by mood (itself motivated by theme or plot) as by narrative or diegetic logic.³

The most significant breakthrough in colour technology came with the introduction of the sound film. The production companies believed that if sound were to add a significant naturalistic effect to the medium so should colour, for the sole purpose of ensuring a uniformity of vision and aesthetic consistency. Hence, Technicolor's two-colour system was introduced as a natural photographic colour system in the early 1930s, and its improved version, the three-colour Technicolor became dominant in the 1940s and 1950s, until Eastman colour offered a cheaper alternative. In the meantime, tinting and toning was still applied to films sporadically, especially in westerns, but it was largely abandoned due to its counter-cost effectiveness and the rapid altering of the film industry's production values and aesthetic concerns.

When Lean co-directed his first feature In Which We Serve with Noel Coward in 1942, the country was already at war with Germany. The British film industry was undergoing drastic changes at the time. The war effort necessitated the bringing together on the screen of all classes as equal forces in the struggle against the common enemy. Up until then the honourable, if sometimes romanticised representation of the working man, was reserved almost exclusively for the documentary film and, most particularly, to its greatest exponent in Britain - Humphrey Jennings. Fiction films were, by and large, patronising and caricaturing the lower classes. The war gave filmmakers the

³ Neale, Steve. Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour. (London: BFI, 1985), p.119

chance to attempt a more honest approach towards the representation of the classes and a renunciation of the segregation of the lower divisions of British society. Given this new impetus that imposed a breakthrough in social realism, the film itself aimed at stirring the patriotic feelings of the audience by presenting the heroic actions of a group of men across the class spectrum, who took to the sea aboard the destroyer HMS *Torrin*. In Which We Serve was very distinctly a propaganda film with realism at its core. It was precisely this newfound realism that, along with the financial difficulties the studios were facing in the inter-war years, made the use of colour an unlikely proposition.

An industry manual⁴ published as late as 1957, by which time the use of colour was extensive in both British and American films, explains why there was a disdain for colour especially in British films where realism was firmly established as a form of cinematic alternative to Hollywood's essentially escapist entertainment:

Colour can be used 'creatively' in these genres whose values of verisimilitude are not tied to conventions of realism in the way that other genres like the war film and the documentary may be. Colour can be used creatively in genres designed to provide the eye with visual pleasure.⁵

Yet, colour was not abandoned altogether. In fact, Lean's two subsequent films, This Happy Breed and Blithe Spirit, were shot in three-strip Technicolor. Lean never hesitating to experiment with new technology, and wanting to contribute a certain amount

⁴ Elements of Colour in Professional Motion Pictures. 1957

⁵ Buscombe, Edward. 'Sound and Colour' *Jump Cut*. No 17. p. 24

of financial prestige⁶ to the newly formed Cineguild with which he was collaborating, decided to embark on a project that would do justice both to his chosen subject matter, as well as to the largely unrealised potentials of colour application. This Happy Breed was a domestic British drama centring on the lives of a family across a span of two decades. Apart from being realist in its depiction of the lives of the men and women of the Gibbons family, it was also a propaganda film in that it foregrounded the emotional resilience of the average British family in the inter-war years and laid emphasis upon their staying power. Despite the fact that some critics found the colour tones "too sweet and melting,"⁷ they never deviated from a certain truthfulness and sense of integrity as regards their relation to the subject matter. The subdued colours and muted tones did not render the subject ineffectual, nor the characters unreal. Instead, they enhanced its realism while, simultaneously, they remained aesthetically pleasing. For that, the majority of reviewers have hailed the film. At the same time, Natalie Kalmus' motto "Colour is not the star of the picture - it is an additional factor"⁸ seemed to be gaining momentum.

Guy Green who, like in In Which We Serve, worked in the production of the film as a camera operator, commented on the desired application of colour in films:

The Americans with consummate technical skill exploit colour's advantages over monochrome to the full and give us a dazzling and often a breathtaking eyeful, and the colour is part of the show. Photography for dramatic subjects

⁶ Following the success of In Which We Serve, David Lean, Anthony Havelock-Allan and Ronald Neame formed Cineguild - an independent production company that along with the Archers (Powell and Pressburger), Individual, and Wessex, were under the umbrella of the Rank organisation. Cineguild's option to produce This Happy Breed and Blithe Spirit in colour at a time when there were only four Technicolor cameras in Britain, added financial prestige to the newly formed company and enhanced its reputation in Britain and the United States of America.

⁷ Huntley, John. British Technicolor Films. (London: Citizen, 1949), p.144

⁸ Ibid. p.55

cannot be approached in this way. It must reflect the emotional content of the screen. It must help the audience forget that they are in the cinema at all. It must not be a glorious spectacle all on its own. Therefore, in some way it must be suppressed and made to lend itself to the subject dramatically.⁹

Green, who went on to be Lean's Director of Photography in another four films, had a profound influence on the director who, in subsequent years, went on to film predominantly dramatic stories in black-and-white. His technical expertise found a powerful expression in the Lean films, while the director himself shared his ideological position as regards the function of colour, thus making their collaboration efficient and fruitful.

The utilisation of colour in Blithe Spirit, Lean's next film, was of an entirely different nature since the subject matter itself belonged to another genre - comedy. Accordingly, the use of colour would be as playful as the narrative, and as excessively used as the script necessitated, ranging from the light-hearted and bright tones, to the more eerie and fantastic colours. Comedy, however, was far from being Lean's favourite genre, and he was never to do another high comedy in his career. Still, the overabundance of colour as has been applied in this picture, would point towards his understanding of the domain, as well as to his skill in handling diverse film material.

Lean's ensuing seven films were shot in black-and white and, with the exception of the rather blithesome Hobson's Choice, all were high dramas centring on the human condition and on relationships across space and time. Instead of further experimenting with colour, Lean returned to the subtleties of dramatic lighting in monochrome, deep focus cinematography,

⁹ Huntley, John. British Technicolor Films. (London: Citizen, 1949), pp.117-8

expressionistic settings and camera angles. It was during these years of abstinence from colour that Lean would establish himself as a major film director, not only of British but of international cinema, as well. Given that, he secured a high degree of creative freedom and a financial security that would allow him to be selective with the material that was offered to him.

Biographers, historians and critics alike, have often argued that Lean's decision to return to black-and-white cinema was significantly affected by his disappointment with Blithe Spirit and its failure at the box-office. In fact, Lean never disclosed the reasons that led him to shift to monochrome. All he has been quoted as saying was that: "I wanted to do something else after Blithe Spirit."¹⁰ His long association with Noel Coward gave him the chance to read his play *Still Life* and, consequently, turn it into a film that would become one of the most cherished and indelible British classics of all time - Brief Encounter. To proclaim that this change took effect due to a single factor would be simplistic and erroneous. A combination of varied determinants, economic and ideological, played a pivotal role in Lean's resolve to return to a more intimate and less expensive form of production. Steve Neale accurately points out the inter-relationship between ideology and economics, putting particular emphasis on the former:

Economic theories can only partially explain technological innovations; since economics cannot say why innovations take the form they do, only why they are an essential part of the system... But a new technology cannot be successful unless it fulfils some kind of need. The specific form of this need will be ideologically determined.¹¹

¹⁰ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.193

¹¹ Buscombe, Edward. 'Sound and Colour'. *Jump Cut*, no 17. p.24

Lean's decision to continue making films in black-and-white would have both an ideological and an economic foundation. Despite cinema's advent of sound and colour, most filmmakers continued to shoot in black-and-white well into the 1950s. The cost for the use of colour per feature was very high, ranging from 35 per cent of the total cost in 1935, to 10 per cent by 1949. Similarly, by filming in colour, distribution was becoming a major problem while, most significantly, there was still uncertainty about its market value. Therefore, it is not surprising that the poorer than Hollywood British film industry was far more restrained in its production of colour features. Lean was part of the British system and had no power to alter it from his position as a director. It was much later in his career, when colour in the cinema was competing with television for aesthetic quality and market value that Lean re-adopted colour as an integral element of his movie making. By the mid-1960s, when television converted to colour, virtually all films were shot in colour both in the United States and Britain.

On an ideological front, it could be argued that, in spite of the fact that colour was adding 25 per cent to a film's earning power, it was still considered less arty or, to put it in a better way, was closely associated with fantasy and spectacle (musicals, westerns, cartoons). The British film industry was seeking to establish an identity of its own that would be ideologically removed from Hollywood. Hence, smaller-scale, and much less extravagant and dazzling films were produced, with priority given to realist depictions of everyday life. From 1942 until 1955 when Lean embarked upon an international career, his films were essentially modest in their production values though stylish and intelligent in their structure and outlook. His

black-and-white period was in tune with the Britishness that producers were inclined to put forward as the desired form of cinematic representation. Even upon his later undertaking of colour in uncommonly expensive productions financed by American studios, he still retained a commitment to realist aesthetics, giving new substance to genres like the epic that in earlier years were almost solely associated with spectacle and sensationalism. By subordinating colour spectacle and majestic landscapes to the story line rather than by elevating them to an independent status of striking photography, he achieved an aesthetic result through which neither the artistic principles of realism were betrayed, nor the narrative line abandoned. Additionally, it could be asserted that the rapid altering of the ideological and economic values of the American film industry further enhanced the success of his films in the 1950s and 1960s. The emergence of television as a widespread form of entertainment that was competing with cinema for popularity and earnings, brought the American audiences, especially, in touch with a new form of realism as this was depicted in the news, documentaries and current affairs programmes. Hence, in a market as competitive as that of screen entertainment, the call for more realism in the cinema became pertinent. Neale stresses the significance that colour television had on the public and the amount of influence it exerted, without refraining from stressing the obvious contradictions that surfaced as a result:

As colour began to be used on television for news and current affairs programs, the overwhelming association of colour with fantasy and spectacle began to be weakened: colour acquired instead the value of realism. Realism, however, was one of the discourses used to support and

motivate the use of colour in the cinema in the first place.¹²

Hence, it becomes apparent how the economics of colour technology and the ideological apparatus that either supports it or is determined by it, are so closely intermingled that it is impossible to come into a definite conclusion as to the primacy of one over the other. What can be argued with certainty, however, is that Lean's leap from the black-and-white British period to the international colour period was successful because it fulfilled both the individual stylistic endeavours of the artist, and conformed to the socio-economic realities of the film industry at the time.

Returning to the issue of the ideology of colour, it has to be stressed that there have been several theories pertaining to its value long before it became a cinematic innovation, and some have profoundly influenced filmmakers. However, there has never been a theory - or theories - of colour for the cinema. Most such postulations involved a consideration of the use of colour in painting and architecture, and lengthy philosophical discussions amongst eminent literary figures regarding the nature and function of colour.

Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, for example reflects, to a great extent, nineteenth century ideals about issues concerning colour harmony and symbolism, while attempting to provide a scientific guide to the examination of colour phenomena. Contrary to this phenomenological approach is Charles Riley II who has proclaimed colour's inability to be specifically and systematically codified. As he asserts:

¹² Neale, Steve. Cinema and Technology: Image, Sound, Colour. (London: BFI, 1985), p.144

The sheer multiplicity of colour codes attests to the profound subjectivity of the colour sense and its resistance to categorical thought. Colour behaviour does not conform to one paradigm, chart, or episteme. The topic of colour has become a watershed for thinking about models and about art that is created by systems simply because it is such a devourer of models and systems.¹³

Others, such as Wittgenstein, resist the idea of coming up with a colour theory and opt instead for a textual account that can only be tested in a verbal way. In this process, questions of psychology, phenomenology, epistemology and metaphysics are brought to the forefront of the discussion regarding the nature and use of colour.

Among the personalities of cinema, only Sergei Eisenstein made some concrete comments on the application of colour in films. A formalist by all accounts, Eisenstein seeks to establish colour as a formal element of a film just as with sound, music and montage, amongst others. His understanding of colour clashes with the Romantic aesthetic that champions notions of the unobtrusive and the unnoticed effect as a prerequisite for superior artistic accomplishment. Instead, he advocates its application when that is necessary as a factor that foregrounds the film's narrative line. In addition, he also mentions the "broader understanding of colour through the dramatic presentation of the active element within it (which gives expression to the conscious and volitional impulse in the one who uses it, as distinct from the indefinite status quo of a given colour in nature)."¹⁴ For Eisenstein, colour cannot have independent meaning outside the context in which it is placed,

¹³ Riley II, Charles. Colour Codes: Modern Theories in Philosophy, Painting and Architecture, Literature, Music, and Psychology. (Hanover: New England UP, 1995), p.1.

¹⁴ Eisenstein, Sergei. The Film Sense. (London: Faber, 1986), p.120

whether that is a painting, a film, or any other art form. Rather, its comprehensibility is acquired through the arbitrary association of different elements within the system of images as these are laid down in the work. There are no single, unequivocal psychological correlations of colour with the other senses, nor are there any specific and binding social associations attached to its application in any given medium. In other words, its intelligibility and function, as Eisenstein puts it:

will rise from the natural order of establishing the colour imagery of the work, coincidental with the process of shaping the living movement of the whole work... This means that we do not obey some 'all-pervading law' of 'absolute' meanings and correspondences between colours and sounds - and absolute relationships between these and specific emotions, but it does mean that we ourselves decide which colours and sounds will best serve the given assignment or emotion as we need them.¹⁵

David Lean never professed to have particular knowledge of philosophical theories, and was often alleged to be essentially indifferent to intellectuals. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the various colour theories have never influenced his understanding of colour and the way he applied it to film. His colour vision was precise and very detailed, but it was also instinctive, in the sense that it did not undergo the analytic but formally binding process that an adherent of a particular theoretical surmise would adopt. That does not mean that his utilisation of colour did not have a consistency and a sense of aesthetic and narrative purpose. Instead, much like Eisenstein's argument about the artist's understanding of colour as a basic ingredient in the intermingling of the various formal components

¹⁵ Eisenstein, Sergei. The Film Sense. (London: Faber, 1986), p.122

of a film, Lean's employment of colour served as a way of expressing the emotions as he needed them.

The subsequent analyses of Summer Madness and Ryan's Daughter, will attempt to investigate the way in which the two films apply colour both as a narrative tool and as a stylistic device in order to enhance their overall effect and appeal. In the meantime, it will also tackle issues involving the relationship between the utilisation of colour and the other formal elements such as sound, music, dialogue and mise-en-scene. Moreover, it will examine the way in which their interaction affects the narrative line, as well as the aesthetic value of the films in question.

Instead of choosing a colour film from Lean's early days as a director and one from the later period, the decision was made to select Summer Madness that clearly occupies a middle position in his career, and Ryan's Daughter - his penultimate film. The early colour films, as has been aforementioned in this chapter, display Lean's facility and skilfulness in handling new technology, while they also remain unswervingly attached to the stylistic demands of the genres they belong to. Yet, they fail to fully demonstrate Lean's creative potential as this is displayed in his later colour films. The reasons for that can be attributed to Lean's limited artistic freedom with the material he was assigned to at the time, and to the relatively insufficient financial resources of the British film industry in the early 1940s.

On the other hand, Summer Madness and Ryan's Daughter present great interest in their utilisation of colour: the former, being Lean's first directorial undertaking outside Britain, exemplifies the manner in which the protagonist responds

to the beauty of the natural setting, absorbs it, and is manipulated by it. Colour becomes a major force in determining our understanding of the female hero's psychology, as this is reflected in her changing self-awareness and in her relation to the world and the people that surround her. Similarly, the latter film demonstrates the mode through which the protagonists' psychological disposition can affect and alter theirs and the spectator's perception of the surrounding landscape in terms of colour, and how this, in return, affects the progression of the narrative through a system of interrelationships between the characters within the given location.

SUMMER MADNESS (1955)

Although Summer Madness is Lean's eleventh film, it is only his third in colour. His previous two colour films, This Happy Breed and Blithe Spirit, were met with moderate commercial success despite the fact that they were critically commended for their effective use of colour; the former for enhancing the naturalistic effect of the narrative, and the latter for embellishing the gay tone of the film and rendering the comic effect more forceful and pervasive. However, in spite of the acclaim received, Lean went on to make his next seven films in black-and-white, without ever disclosing the rationale behind his decision to do so. The notorious success of Brief Encounter (1945) that dealt with an intimate love story in a relatively confined space, owed a lot of its dramatic and stylistic efficaciousness both to the mise-en-scene, as to the art direction, which, through the emphatic application of light and shadow, enhanced its look and feel. Similarly, the ensuing Dickens adaptations of Great Expectations and Oliver Twist utilised a visual expressionism that was highly reminiscent of early German cinema, manifesting a propensity on the part of the director for magnifying the graphic elements of the films and the elevation of their characters to a larger than life stature. It may, therefore, be that Lean had found in black-and-white cinema a means of expression that eluded him in his previous ventures with celluloid, one that suited his artistic vision and chosen thematic structures better than what he would achieve with colour.

By 1955, however, things were drastically changing in the British film industry, and as Michael Anderegg comments, this was due to a number of diverse factors:

The year 1955 saw a dramatic expansion in television ownership among the British working classes and, as John Sproas has shown 'each new set dealt a heavy blow to the cinema'. Movie theatres began to close at an ever-increasing rate. At the same time, more and more American films were being made in Britain. Hollywood could benefit from lower labour costs while spending its blocked earnings and, by qualifying as British under the quota system, profiting from the levy on admissions in aid of British films. Hollywood was also recruiting British directors.¹⁶

At the same time, Lean was getting increasingly disillusioned with his own artistic output, and although Hobson's Choice (1954) got him the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, as well as the Best British Film of the Year from the British Film Academy, he wanted to move away from the small-scale, domestic British drama and attempt to explore the world. Exhorted by his boss and friend Alexander Korda, Lean took a trip to Egypt and India that proved to be catalytic in his future approach to life and film. As he admitted in the following years: "I suppose it was really the first time I realised the world was mine and that I needn't be fenced in."¹⁷ Given his new perception of the cosmos, Hobson's Choice would be the last of his films to be entirely shot in Britain under the sole finance of a British studio, as well as his last endeavour with black-and-white filmmaking.

Summer Madness was the vehicle that brought him out of England and into the alluring city of Venice. Having read the

¹⁶ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p.91

¹⁷ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.310

play and visited Venice, Lean decided that the intimate love story between the American tourist and the Italian playboy should be shot entirely on location. Without straying from the essential thematic concerns of his earlier women's pictures¹⁸, Lean went further to place his heroine in a setting which at once served as a backdrop and as a major character in the film. Jack Hildyard photographed the city itself in such a way that colours, tones and structures became an integral part of the action. Colour came to designate, to a large extent, mood and commanded the visual and narrative flow. Lean emphasised the point further: "I want Venice to be the star of this picture."¹⁹

Besides being his first film to be photographed entirely on a foreign location, Summer Madness marked several noteworthy breakthroughs in Lean's career. It was the first time that non-British actors were hired not simply to act but to star in one of his films. Katharine Hepburn was one of the most admired Hollywood stars at the time, a household name amongst moviegoers around the world. Similarly, Rossano Brazzi who co-starred alongside her, was one of the most popular *jeune-premiers* of the Italian cinema. In fact, this was the only Lean film where foreign-born actors embodied all the major characters. Other international film stars would be engaged in subsequent films, such as William Holden, Sessue Hayakawa, Anthony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy, Jose Ferrer, Rod Steiger and Robert Mitchum, and some would become celebrities following their roles in his films (Omar Sharif, Christopher Jones, Victor Banerjee), but they would always share the credits alongside famous and acclaimed British actors, some of whom have been Lean's collaborators in a number

¹⁸ Brief Encounter (1945), The Passionate Friends (1949), Madeleine (1950)

¹⁹ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.321

of his previous films (Alec Guinness, Claude Rains, Ralph Richardson, John Mills).

Furthermore, Summer Madness would be Lean's maiden effort to film an American play²⁰ written by Arthur Laurents, concerning the emotional peregrinations of a middle-aged American woman. In the process of adapting the play for the screen, Lean and co-writer H.E Bates transformed it to a considerable degree so that it would meet Lean's thematic and emotional preoccupations. As Anderegg pinpoints:

The play stresses the cultural differences between Americans and Italians: Americans worry too much, especially about matters of the heart and the libido; Italians do not worry enough. Lean shifts the emphasis toward the theme of romantic yearning in conflict with social reality, expressed in Brief Encounter and The Passionate Friends and to be taken up again in Doctor Zhivago and Ryan's Daughter. The film, as a result, is a more poignant, if less acerbic, treatment of romance than the play. Summer Madness gives us something else that *Time of the Cuckoo* cannot, except by implication: Venice.²¹

To conclude, the film's production values have to be taken into consideration. As mentioned earlier, the British film industry at the time the film was to be made was suffering greatly from American antagonism and its own inefficiencies that have accumulated over a number of years. London Films, under the leadership of Alexander Korda who was the financier of Lean's two previous films (Hobson's Choice and The Sound Barrier), could not cover alone the costs of such an expensive and ambitious production. Hence, Ilya Lopert of Lopert Film Productions in association with United Artists stepped in as the production's co-financier. Lean's liaison with an American financial colossus

²⁰ Arthur Laurents' *Time of the Cuckoo*.

²¹ Anderegg, Michael. David Lean. (Boston: Twayne, 1984), pp.86-7

would open the gates to his international career. In the following years and until the end of his life, all his films would be produced by economically robust American studios²², thus allowing him an increased amount of creative freedom, certifiable quality in production values and a guaranteed, extensive publicity of his epic-scale film creations. Summer Madness was just the beginning, and though modest in the lavishness of its production when compared with the later films, it was also a far cry from everything that has preceded it. The use of the natural setting of Venice, as well as the use of colour to enhance both the realistic and subjective aspects of the film, coupled with the sheer magnitude of its stars and the story that they enacted, contributed to the film's artistic weight and appeal to the public.

²² Bridge on the River Kwai , Lawrence of Arabia and A Passage to India were produced by Columbia Pictures, Doctor Zhivago and Ryan's Daughter by MGM.

ANALYSIS

As with most mainstream films of the period, Summer Madness' opening credit sequence is of particular importance, as it sets the film's mood and character. Yet, in an uncharacteristic deviation from the Lean norm that wants the opening titles to be presented against a background filled with suggestive music but devoid of action, Summer Madness introduces a narrative that precedes the main one but which, at the same time, remains closely interwoven with it. In this manner, the spectator is given the opportunity to extract information on what has occurred prior to the unfolding of the story he/she is about to experience on the screen. What is, however, more noticeable and impressive about this introductory narrative that is organised in summary form, is not necessarily its mere presence but the way in which its designated parameters that include colour, sound effects and music, define its structure and expound both its narrative and aesthetic function. As it will become evident in the analysis, it is solely through their application that the viewer follows the flow of events. Hence, in order to determine the value of the opening credit sequence, it will be necessary to examine the interfusion of its constituent elements, with particular emphasis given to the utilisation of colour.

The opening one-and-a-half minute long title sequence commences with a shot of an open blue suitcase and a red shoe on its side painted in watercolour (plate 1)²³, as well as with the introduction of an upbeat musical theme coupled with the first credits. The painting itself seems unsophisticated in that it

²³ For all plates see appendix.

lacks the attention to line and form that a mature painter might have given to the visual depiction of the chosen object. Instead, it looks like being the creation of a child or an inexperienced amateur whose primary concern is to illustrate objects through colour impressions. In fact, throughout the sequence, the child-like visual style remains a constant visual referent. Yet, its application is hardly accidental in the film. Rather, it points towards a certain innocence that one associates with a child on a psychological level. As the film unfolds, it will become evident that the female protagonist around whose actions the narrative progresses, possesses a guileless behaviour and a chaste character, qualities that allude to her childhood innocence. These attributes will leave her vulnerable to emotional upheavals but, at the same time, they will also function as the primary source of her attractiveness as a woman and a human being.

Specific colours, too, play a very important role in the introductory sequence, and are structured in such a way as to have very explicit meanings and associations. The most characteristic example is the utilisation of the colour red. Not only is it present in every shot of this fifteen shot sequence, but it also stands out from all the others. This effect is achieved through careful and meticulous structuring on the visual scale. Our first encounter with the particular colour is on shot 1 where we see a light blue suitcase lying open against a light blue background. The objects inside the suitcase cannot be clearly defined and are painted in light grey-yellowish tones. Similarly, there is a small green object on the right of the screen that one assumes is a small box. The only things that are very specifically demarcated and highlighted in this essentially blue and indifferent background are the purple-red titles 'Lopert

Films Incorporated present', the striking red pump, as well as the purple nametag on the suitcase. By singling out these specific objects, one is immediately aware that the suitcase belongs to a woman. When, in the next shot (plate 2), the name of Katharine Hepburn appears in bright red letters on the screen, it again stands out from the rest, including the name of her co-star Rossano Brazzi that is painted in a darker variation of the blue background that occupies the whole frame. Furthermore, in the ensuing third shot (plate 3), as is true with all the remaining shots, we see the figure of a redheaded woman wearing a purple coat. Hence, the mental associations that are dependent on the application of colour become unavoidable. The suitcase, the shoe and all the remaining gear belong to Katharine Hepburn who is off on a vacation. The narrative advances from shot to shot chiefly through the constant employment of a colour referent, and that is the figure in red. In that way, she is also established as the narrative's main protagonist.

Another function of red is to ensure the visual and thematic continuity of the preliminary narrative through the establishing of a false sense of motion. The effect is achieved by means of placing the female character in subsequent frames in such a manner as to give the impression that she is actually moving across them. Hence, while we see her on shot 3 (plate 3) occupying the far right of the frame saluting the well-wishers at New York's harbour, the ensuing shot (plate 4) places her on screen right, on top of the cruiser's gangway and still waving to the crowds below. Though the spectator does not witness the character's actual movement from right to left, the primary visual referent that is the figure of the woman in bright red provides the point of guidance for him/her. It has to be

acknowledged at this point, that the sense of continuity is accomplished through audio means as well. The sounds of the cheering crowds emanating from the harbour below and off-screen provide an audio constant that reinforces the continuity of the narrative. In addition, the music that embellishes the whole sequence contributes towards its stylistic integrity and thematic consistency. Similar frame structures occur between shots 7 (plate 7) where we see her getting a ticket on screen left, and her exiting the bus and moving to screen right (plate 8), while in the following shot (plate 9), she is seen entering the screen on the far left and photographing Piccadilly's statue of Eros. In that way, the impression that is given lies on the presumption that soon after she exits the bus she comes across the statue and she films it.

Perhaps, the best example of the effective interrelationship of all the constituent parts of the sequence lies in the ultimate shot (plate 15) and the mode through which it fuses with the main narrative. As the sequence reaches its climax, the spectator witnesses an audio-visual transition that interconnects the past with the present and the principally visual with the essentially dialogue-oriented narrative progression. The last shot of the title sequence entails an image of the readheaded woman resting on the window frame of the Orient Express that has Venice as its final destination. We hear the characteristic sound of the train whistling, and we then observe a cut to the actual train reaching the city, announcing its arrival by means of a deafening whistling. As we cut to the main narrative, the music stops, hence marking the end of the introductory narrative and the commencement of the principal one. Therefore, on an audio level, the means of transition rests in the application of an identical

sound effect (the whistle of the train), as well as the sudden discontinuation of the musical theme, while on a visual level the smooth passage becomes feasible through the salient employment of the images. The redheaded woman, who has dominated the narration up to this point, becomes a living figure that possesses all the characteristics that have made her readily identifiable to the spectator. In the meantime, however, the bright colour tones give way to the more subdued ones, and colour impressionism succumbs to colour realism. As the narrative advances, and as the forthcoming analysis will attempt to prove, the use of colour will be shown to have alternating functions. On the one hand, it will depict the objective reality surrounding the main characters, while on the other it shall reflect the inner world of the female protagonist, thus foregrounding a degree of subjectivity.

The use of red in the sequence has also sociological and cultural applications. In the former case, such an assumption can be deduced from the manner in which the name of Katharine Hepburn appears on the screen. As aforementioned, it is ascribed a bright red tone that distinctly separates her from her co-star and fellow actor whose name appears in blue - the colour that frequently appears as a neutral in that it delineates the background against which red makes itself readily and forcibly apparent. By doing that, her name acquires elevated status on an ideological level. As has been stated in the introduction, the name of the American star in any given picture was sufficient to draw the attention of the cinema going public at the time. Therefore, it can be asserted that apart from maintaining a visual and thematic continuity, Lean also aims at attracting the spectator to the name of the star itself. Though it could be

argued that such a conclusion cannot be exclusively drawn from the presentation of the title sequence *per se*, one has to remember that films are also ideological constructs that are largely determined by the times and the places in which they are created. Summer Madness was Lean's maiden effort at conquering the international scene of films, and Katharine Hepburn was a vehicle that would not automatically bring him success, but guarantee a certain amount of public exposure.

Red, on occasion, also has a cultural application in that it delineates the places that the mysterious lady in red visits and are cultural landmarks. Hence, her passing through London is marked by the visual representation of the characteristic red double-decker bus (plate 8), as well as the Buckingham Palace guards who are typically dressed in red and black uniform (plate 10), and is reinforced by the presence in the soundtrack of appropriate sound effects (the sound of the bus as it is moving along and the shouting during the change of the guards). Given that the spectator has already established the colour red as the one that commands the most attention by the spectator, it is hardly surprising that those cultural signifiers become points of visual concentration.

Thus, in concluding the analysis of the opening credit sequence, we see how it preambles and paves the way for the main narrative. The spectator is given information as to which the protagonist is, what she has done, and where she has been to prior to her arrival in Venice. Hence, this advance information about certain aspects of her life and her activities make her initial appearance as a living fictional character assume a degree, however minimal, of familiarity with the viewer. As far as the utilisation of colour is concerned, it has a very

significant functional role both in determining the mood of the film as light and gay, and providing a means of unifying and advancing the narration around specific colour signifiers. Finally, colour also operates as an implicit indicator of the sociological underpinnings that determine elements of the film's ideological structure.

When Jane Hudson, the female protagonist, arrives in Venice, she appears to be very eager and enthusiastic. As she has been depicted as doing in the introductory narrative, her characteristic initial urge when she reaches a new destination is to film the city's various famous landmarks or monuments with an eight-millimetre camera. The same occurs as she reaches Venice - her final destination. With the camera in hand, full of avidity and expectation, she records images of the unveiling landscape. Her first conversation is with a fellow American in the train compartment of the Orient Express as they approach the city. Jane seems surprised that he is a frequent visitor and that he is somewhat nonchalant about Venice and the pleasures it has to offer. Like a typical tourist who expects the most out of a long awaited vacation, she protests against his relative apathy by trying to convince herself that this trip is one she has to like. As she tells him: "I've got to. I've come such a long way. I saved up such a long time for this trip." However, her early experiences in the city of Venice are far from pleasant. The crowding is overwhelming and the native population appears to be either indifferent or uncommunicative. Jane, through whose subjective perception the spectator becomes accustomed to and familiarised with the setting, strikes the viewer as being lost in a seemingly unfriendly environment where scenery is merely a backdrop to the action. Her preliminary visual impressions are

both fragmented and ambivalent. Fragmented, because she is constantly interrupted by an elderly American couple that treat their vacation as an inventory of tasks that have to be carried out before they can move on to their next destination in Europe. The McIlhennys drag Jane into a meaningless discussion that prevents her from acquiring a decent first look at the surrounding scenery. It is only when the conversation momentarily breaks that she has a chance to take a few isolated glimpses of the city that she has been longing to see. Colours and sounds seem to be the main factors that attract her attention. Whether it is the Venetian fire brigade that rushes to put out a fire, the lights that regulate the traffic on the canals, the distinct sounds of the church bells or the dazzling colours that adorn the plaster walls of the houses, Jane gives them her undivided focus. The ambivalence lies on the fact that on the one hand, she is enchanted by the architectural beauty of the San Marco Cathedral and other grand or less impressive architectural structures while, on the other, she is discontented with the hassle and the noise of the city, as well as with the vulgarity of some of its citizens. Above all, Jane is enraptured by the sheer uniqueness of the surroundings, and like a typical tourist on a first trip, she uses her Bolex camera to capture it on film. Henceforth, the spectator's initial encounter with Venice is realistic rather than a picture - postcard glorified version. Colour and mise-en-scene play a significant role towards establishing the kind of realism that is evoked on the screen by reflecting the variety of the city's differential attractions without deviating from an essentially truthful depiction. Thus, the camera cuts from the striking colours of the Renaissance frescoes that decorate the walls of some of the buildings, to the television antennas of the

adjacent residential structures, from the narrow, dark and grey alleys of the inner city, to the expansive vistas alongside the waters, and from the deep blue and adorned with gondolas waters of the Grand Canal, to the ones littered by the locals further within the bounds of the city.

Therefore, colour reflects both the extraordinary and the mundane and Jane, though eager to be gratified, has to come to terms with the harsh realities as well as the novelties of the city as these unravel before her eyes. At the same time, the words of the American whom she has previously met on the train acquire special weight. Her protestations against his assertion that "not everybody likes it (Venice) in the same way. Some people find it too quiet, some people find it too noisy. And it is very noisy." seem to be losing their impetus. Venice is not merely a beautiful place with impressive monuments to magnetise the unsuspecting tourist coming from abroad. It is also a living city with all the advantages and disadvantages that are integral to such densely populated areas. Moreover, these initial visual impressions play a significant role in constituting a background against which Jane will evolve from a naïve and conspicuously virtuous girl to a mature and sexually sophisticated woman. As Jane will psychologically ripen, so will the city transform itself from a locale of contrasting emotions to an earthly paradise for her. As mentioned before, it is through Jane's viewpoint that the viewer becomes accustomed to the locale and it is similarly through her understanding of the world and herself that the viewer's fictional universe becomes informed. Subjectivity will come to be closely associated with colour perception and vice versa.

Revelation is one of the main themes of the film and a continuous process through which the narrative advances and reaches its climax. The role of colour in foregrounding revelation and transformation is paramount. On many occasions, it stands as an indicator of the changes that are about to occur, or as a visual sign of those that have already taken place and are not otherwise known to the spectator. Colour, therefore, becomes the means through which knowledge is acquired. This knowledge involves both the spectator and Jane herself. As the forthcoming analysis will show, the privileged position of knowledge alternates between spectator and the fictional character.

Venice is slowly revealed to Jane. From the first fragmented shots she takes with her camera on the boat ride to her hotel until the end of the film, parts of the city will gradually be made known to her. The manner of revelation will often vary, but the utilisation of colour will play a notable role in making it more emphatic. Thus, when she walks in the elegant but rather heavily ornamented pensione Fiorini, she finds herself in an impressive but undeniably dark and rather cold environment. Signora Fiorini, owner of the pensione, walks towards the windowpanes and as she opens them, the terrace is revealed and along with it a majestic view of the canal. The colourful scenery overwhelms Jane, and soon the terrace becomes her favourite spot for concentration and reflection. In a similar manner, when she is escorted to her room, she is impressed by the elegant interior and the ample space, but it is only when she is shown Venice from her balcony that she is truly mesmerised. The emotions springing from seeing the Grand Canal's bright azure and the weather-beaten rooftop tiles of the archaic city are so intense as to make Jane feel compelled to disclose, though under the pretext of

commenting on behalf of another woman she met on her trip, her passionate and innermost desire to explore the depths of her soul. Her brief but characteristic revelation to Signora Fiorini is highly indicative of her emotional disposition: "This girl on the boat was waiting. She was coming to Europe to find something. Way, way back, in the back of her mind, was something she was looking for. A wonderful, mystical, magical miracle...To find what she's been missing all her life."

Following Jane's first emotional exposition to a virtually strange woman, there is a get together of the American residents of the Pensione Fiorini. With Jane and Signora Fiorini are Lloyd and Edith McIlhenny, the elderly couple whom Jane had met earlier on the boat ride to the hotel, as well as Eddie and Phil Jaeger, a young, amiable couple who appear to be very much in love. Soon, everyone except Jane leaves the premises and she is left by herself contemplating her loneliness. As she strolls along the terrace, she is overtaken by the surrounding beauty as this is manifested both through the abundance of colours, as well as by the surrounding scenery, both animate and inanimate. The alluring atmosphere created by the vivid colours of the plants in the flowerpots ornamenting the houses' balconies and the terrace itself, the pensione's yellow and red umbrellas that provide protection from the blazing sun, and the various tints of blue of the canal, all provide a kaleidoscope of visual impressions that seemingly affect Jane. Similarly, the serenity of the landscape with its peace and quiet, only broken momentarily by the flapping of the wings of the pigeons that fly by, or the laughter of the loving couples crossing the bridge over the canal have a profound emotional impact on her - to the point where she becomes tearful. Venice is a far cry from her hometown of Akron, Ohio and Jane

responds to it by releasing emotions that were otherwise kept hidden deep in her psyche. The realisation that romance eludes her becomes all the more painful and dramatic within the context of this new environment that with its mere presence forces her not only to initiate a process of acceptance of lack, but also to utter it by openly exposing her emotions. Similarly, however, and under the emotional roller coaster in which Jane is in, Signora Fiorini's words of advice of a romantic nature to Jane "These miracles, they can happen, but you must give a little push to help" gather impetus and find ground to grow in Jane's initial emotional outburst.

Therefore, so far in the film, the viewer has become witness to Jane's slow process of emotional ripening, fundamentally through means of visual signifiers. Though colour by itself cannot be said to be the sole stimulus that impinges upon her psychological disposition it, nonetheless, has a pronounced effect in providing the incitation and the background against which Jane's emotional maturation will become possible as the narrative progresses and reaches its closure. The significance that is attached to the utilisation of colour and its reception by Jane is further reinforced by the infusion of both diegetic and non-diegetic music and the absence of dialogue during the moments of her reverential assimilation of both the panoramic vistas and the more intimate views of the city. Henceforth, this temporary suspension from narrative action enables the spectator to enter a process of identification with her.

On her first outing in the city, Jane is depicted walking through the narrow and practically sunless alleyways, rushing towards the Piazza San Marco from where the sound of bells is originating. Once again, the *mise-en-scene* of the sequence is

structured in such a way so as to foreground the already familiar model of revelation. As Jane moves along, the placement of the camera remains at an eye level whereby the proximity of the buildings and the density of the crowds create a rather claustrophobic atmosphere. Yet, when she finally reaches the famous piazza - Venice's major landmark and tourist attraction, the camera cuts to Jane's point-of-view, exposing the grandeur and visual splendour of the location; hence the element of revelation through contrasting camera placements and the discrepancy between differential points of visual referents. Replacing the relatively gloomy passage through the commercial parts of town are the historical monuments that titillate the visitor by means of their prominent positioning and architectural beauty, as well as by their exteriors' adornment with salient colours and elegant statues. The significance of this particular sequence also rests on the method of camera employment, especially as this alternates and foregrounds subjective and objective modes of perception. In this instance, where Jane finally finds herself in Piazza San Marco, the utilisation of the camera serves a double purpose: on the one hand, to give an objective view to the spectator via the use of crane, wide-angle shots and, on the other, to provide a subjective view that constitutes Jane's field of vision. While the objective shots aim at foregrounding the enormous and impressive architectural design so as to inform the spectator of the sheer scale of the city's landmark, the shots designated as Jane's own are far more intimate in scope and infinitely more detailed. Therefore, we see the golden lion statues that ornament the exteriors of the old buildings set against colourful backgrounds, the old, rusty bells of the San Marco Cathedral and the bright red, blues and golds

that embellish the various monuments. Jane's vision is meticulous in its attention to specifics and, as has been shown so far in the film, the presence of colour in various patterns and combinations seems to be one of the prior points of visual interest for her. This specificity with which Jane appreciates the surroundings stands in sharp contrast to the lack of sophistication with which fellow American tourists treat the manifest visual splendour, and it is one that annoys and embarrasses her. As one lady says to her guide after seeing the piazza: "Don't change a thing, not one thing." It can be evidently discerned from this statement that the narrative function of the unknown woman is to delineate a separation between the typical American tourist and Jane who is prepared to be absorbed by the novelties of the city, and attach to it an aura of intimacy and romance.

Soon after her first visit to the piazza San Marco, Jane finds herself there again later in the same evening for a refreshment and a chance to experience what life has to offer in the heart of the city. Most of the shots in the sequence are from Jane's point-of-view. Her primary focus is on the various couples that walk by or sit at the tables eating, having a drink or their caricatures made, people of all ethnicities and all ages. However, when she starts filming with her camera, the sight of two young men hotly pursuing a couple of women offends her prudish nature. From that moment on, Jane shifts the centre of her attention to the recording of the inanimate, and uses her camera for that purpose alone. Once more in the film, the spectator is in a position to verify that Jane's principal fascination is with colour. The gentle waving of the Italian and the brightly coloured Renaissance flags becomes the focal point

of her attention. What she does not know at this point in time is that the mature gentleman who sits behind her and of whose presence Jane is totally unaware is fascinated by what he sees her as filming and by her feminine body language. When she realises it, she leaves the piazza. This the first instance in the film whereby the viewer has a privileged, if only momentary, access to information. He/she and the Italian gentleman know that it is precisely Jane's choice of shots and her movements that seem to exert a pull on him.

The film's first catalytic point comes when Jane, while taking her first strolls in Campo St. Barnaba, sees a bright red goblet centrally placed on the window of an antiques shop. The image of the goblet appears in close-up and its bright red colour almost fills the frame. This particular choice of shot aims at attracting the attention of the spectator to the specific colour that, as the narrative will unfold, will become the signifier of a dramatic change in her emotional and sexual life. Hence, as soon as she enters the shop, she encounters its owner, an amiable Italian in the presence of whom she feels both charmed and uncomfortable. The spectator very soon and certainly prior to Jane realises that it is the same man who has been previously staring at her at the Piazza San Marco. It quickly becomes obvious that Jane is so taken by this man that her words become mixed up and instead of composing plain sentences, her phrases become full of sexual innuendo. As she leaves the shop, she takes a look back realising that the strange but handsome Italian is still staring at her, and she consequently stumbles on the pavement. Given all this information, red becomes the colour of the surging passion in her. Her clumsiness is both a sign of her uneasiness around him and enthrallment by him. In this instance,

an obvious association is made with the first shots of the film when Jane had the fellow American in the train compartment hold a tourist brochure that advertises Venice as the city of romance. The words "city of romance" are inscribed in red, and the mental links begin to form. Additionally, further mind correlations can be drawn from the introductory narrative whereby Jane appears as the conspicuous figure in red that dominates the visual plane. Therefore, it can be discerned from this sequence that Jane is on her way to experience the romantic feelings she has been longing to savour since her arrival in Venice.

As the sequence unfolds, it becomes evident that what occurred in the shop is not merely coincidental, but a turning point in her emotional life. In the next shot, we see her sitting at the veranda of the Pensione Fiorini smiling and contented. The change in her mood is not simply manifested in the outward expressions of contentment such as a smile, her body language and the letter to her friends back in Akron in which she presents, the Italian she just met and talked to, as "mio amico" - her friend, but also in her dress colour code, that will become another sign of her emotional evolution and transformation. Jane wears a bright rose-coloured dress, with its sleeves rolled up and slightly open at the neck that is vastly dissimilar to the relatively conservative dresses she has been wearing up until this point in the narrative. Since her arrival, Jane has been sticking to conventional dresses in earthy or pastel colour tones. Therefore, we initially see Jane wearing a brown dress and a white shirt closed at the neck, then a light grey dress and a long mint green one, all of them elegant but unassuming. It seems as if she wears these colours in an effort of self-effacement, a striving towards showing herself as nothing more than a 'fancy

secretary' which is the term she uses to describe herself to Signora Fiorini when she first has the chance to talk to her.

However, Jane's conformist choice of colours is not limited to the obvious, straightforward visual representation, but is additionally heightened through a process of comparison. The setting of her character against typical female sexual prototypes early in the film further reinforces Jane's conservatism in the mind of the spectator both on a narrative and visual scale. One such characteristic example is the presence of the Jaegers who have been seen as openly sharing their love for each other and who are always portrayed wearing comfortable clothes in bright coloured tones - a signifier of sexual freedom. Mrs. Jaeger talks frankly and unreservedly of her love for her painter husband and always appears in arrestingly coloured and striped skirts, while her lace and other fanciful shirts always expose her neck and arms, highlighting her feminine figure. It seems that the narrative, thematic and pictorial function of the couple is to be set against Jane, to expose her phenomenal rigidity and to stand as a point of contrast to her. It is only later in the film when Jane encounters Phyl Jaeger in a city bar that they both confess to each other the problems with their relations. Jane is distraught by her realisation that her boyfriend is married, while Phyl faces unspecified marital problems. Yet, this emotional co-existence becomes possible only because Jane has entered Phyl's world - the world of romance and outward expression of sexuality. Hence, this notable initial change to an infinitely more vivid colour tone marks one of Jane's first steps towards liberation from her own insecurities and a positive move towards accepting the inevitability of her newly acquired amorous temper.

The ensuing pattern of her dress code has more or less obvious implications that are very closely intermingled with the focal points in the story and its narration until this reaches its climactic end. Thus, following her own realisation that she has fallen in love, Jane appears eager to meet the mystery man again. Wearing her bright rose dress, she once again finds herself at the Piazza San Marco - the location of their first encounter. However, when their accidental meeting takes the wrong turn,²⁴ Jane retreats to her room in the pensione in misery and desolation. The spectator sees Jane sitting on her bed, now changed into a fully white pleated dress. The common cultural application of white points towards innocence and purity, and Jane having felt betrayed or even guilty about her ardent feelings, goes back into the world of chastity in which she feels safe but not comfortable. Her purity has remained intact but her pride has been wounded. Silver and Ursini take particular notice of this brief sequence, and comment on the similarities between Jane's depiction on the screen and similar depictions in painting:

Contrasting with the exultant stance on the balcony against the bright, sunlit city is a later medium shot of Jane in her full white dress sitting on her bed amid the dark grey and brown furnishings of the room, posed contemplatively like a Vermeer figure.²⁵

Vermeer's heroes are typically represented as inhabiting a closed universe. Similarly, Jane confines herself to her room in

²⁴ Jane sits down to have a coffee at the Piazza, waiting for the Italian man to show up. When she catches a glimpse of the Jaegers passing by, and in an effort to be seen as if she is expecting company, she leans the back of the chair on the table, suggesting that the seat is taken. The Jaegers do not see her, but when De Rossi shows up, he thinks she has other company and leaves her alone, practically in tears.

²⁵ Silver Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and His Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992) p.131

order to reflect upon her misfortune and hide her humiliation from the world; and like Vermeer who employs visual means for investigating the rapport between the human presence and its environment, Lean utilizes this type of shot to highlight her sense of solitude.

The subsequent sequence in the film is also particularly noteworthy insofar as the employment of colour on a symbolic level is concerned. Hence, while Jane tries to capture De Rossi's shop on camera, she falls in the canal wearing the same white dress as before. Apart from its obvious comedic effect, the sequence also formulates an indirect allusion to the mystery of baptism. While baptism stands as a sacrament of admission to the Christian Church, Jane's accidental fall in the Venetian waters functions as a metaphor of her initiation to love - an admission to the kingdom of eros. The white dress hints at the ceremonial process of baptism as well as the mystery of marriage whereby the wearing of white clothing (the child, the bride) is traditionally required. Henceforth, it is hardly surprising that following her 'baptism', Jane never wears the same dress again. From that point on, Jane will enter the world of carnal desire and sexual gratification.

When Jane meets Renato again at the pensione soon after her misfortune outside his shop, she emerges totally unprepared for the occasion. With her hair down, wearing a casual blue skirt, a khaki shirt and a plaid neck-scarf, she assumes an informal, unadorned presence that does not, however, appear to deter Renato. Jane may not be at her most elegant but she is forced to admit her feelings for the man she has fallen for. Being herself, openly manifesting a range of emotions, is what attracts him the most, rather than a fanciful exterior that one would assume would

be of considerable significance and an influential means to magnetise him as the object of his desire. His own admittance that "you attract me because you do," eliminates the possibility that Jane's two-dimensional, impersonal presence can, or will exert any particular power of a sexual nature on him. The magnitude of his statement acquires special importance when, later in the film, the spectator will follow the course of their affair and witness Jane's abandonment of the preoccupation with external appearance, and a concentration on her part on the essentials of her relationship with Renato that are nothing more than passion and affection. Hence, it is hardly surprising that when Jane gets aboard the train on her departure from Venice, she wears the exact same clothes she came in with. Her life has come full circle. She has surpassed her inhibitions, experimented with novelty, and has reached a state of maturity and sexual sophistication that will allow her to contemplate her future life from a different perspective. Outwardly, she is the same person - hence the same dress - but within she has ripened to a degree that permits her to have confidence in herself.

However, before reaching the moment of realisation, Jane exercises and demonstrates her narcissism by going out on a shopping extravaganza for new clothes. Yet again in the film, the utilisation of the colour red will be of primary importance. Following a visit to a beauty salon, Jane buys a pair of bright red-coloured shoes, a black dress with a white and red neck-scarf, and black lace gloves. If the red goblet marked the preliminary point of departure from her previous life, the new dress has that repudiation imprinted all over it. For the first time in the film, Jane wears clothing that exposes her figure in dramatic colour combinations, and Giovanna's complimentary to

Jane's statement that she looks like an Italian functions as a very much needed confirmation of this change, at least on a visual level. The night of passion she shares with Renato is inferred on a visual scale not by direct representation, but by the symbolic, yet overtly palpable application of the red colour. Thus, when the loving couple disappears from view and retreats to the hotel bedroom, the camera cuts to a firework display that takes place in the city suggesting, in this manner, the moment of consummation. The carnal desires are metaphorically inscribed on the screen as flashing red sparks, and the close-up on Jane's red shoe that has been dropped in the balcony indicates her capitulation to passion.

Some critics have accused Lean for over blowing the sequence both pictorially and thematically by means of attaching to it banal, Freudian innuendo. However, since much of the film has been through Jane's point-of-view, a different treatment of the sequence would betray its purpose. In other words, since the beginning of the narrative, Jane has been portrayed as the naïve girl whose innocence and child-like manner attest to her sexual unawareness. Her best friend during much of her stay in Venice is a child who, apart from operating as a guide, is also her companion and an occasional point of solace for her. Even at the initial stages of her romance with Renato, her jejune frame of mind is in evidence. At Renato's request, she enthusiastically picks a white gardenia from a basket of flowers that reminds her of the first ball she has ever been to and later on, the display of mechanical toys on the table she shares with Renato are causing her uncharacteristic emotional exuberance. Jane's attitude towards sex, apart from being imbued with the conservatism of her mid-western American roots, is not dissimilar

to that of a daydreaming teenager who perceives the sexual act as a highly dramatic and sentimental affair, exaggerated in all its parameters. Thus, the exposition of the sequence constitutes a reflection of Jane's mentality rather than a directorial comment on the narrative action.

Returning to the issue of the red colour's employment in the film, it also demarcates negative passion. So far, the spectator has witnessed the colour's positive attributes. Yet, there is one instance in the narrative when its function is inverted. When the McIlhennys return from their shopping spree in the city, they interrupt an intimate conversation between Jane and Renato. Mrs. McIlhenny, ignoring the intrusion, insists upon showing Jane the glass she bought from Murano. When she opens the large box, she removes a red goblet that is identical to the one that Jane bought at Renato's shop. The camera cuts to an extreme close-up of the goblet that is practically flashed at Jane's face, providing a moment of intense shock as she feels that Renato has lied to her about her goblet being an antique. To her, a piece of glass becomes evidence of betrayal and deception. Jane feels that he has been using her desire for purchasing an object to get close to her. At that point, her psychology is reversed. As she was about to give in to Renato's advances, the goblet changes the situation, and provides a temporary suspension of the romance's evolution.

Blue is also a colour that bears considerable significance in the film both in its interplay with red and on its own merits. First and foremost, it has a mystical and romantic quality in that it accommodates Jane and Renato's 'illicit' love affair. When they first kiss, it is in an alleyway by the side of the canal. Their figures can be seen in silhouette and the spectator

imagines more than he actually sees going on between them. The blue darkness of the night provides the necessary refuge from public exposure that Jane, especially during the initial stages of her relationship with Renato, is trying to avoid. This evading from exposition is equally directed at the spectator in that it protects her from his/her intrusive gaze, too. It is during that time of the day that Jane feels more at ease with herself and her surroundings, especially as these become indistinct and convivial for lovers. As their affair progresses, so does the interaction of red and blue attain amplified visual prominence. While red is suggestive of mental and carnal passion, blue is indicative both of the mystical and romantic qualities of their liaison, as well as of the controlled visual display of the growing physicality between them. In both cases, the utilisation of colour reflects Jane's rather than Renato's psychological constitution. However, as their bond reaches new levels of ripeness, following Jane's deflowering that serves as the narrative's climactic point, Lean abandons the employment of overt colour signifiers as these become unnecessary. The couple now openly share their love for each other. Jane does not need to hide her feelings, nor does she feel compelled to disclose the passion she experiences in other than explicit ways.

The couple's trip to Murano is a perfect example of the visual portrayal of the shifting of emotions and another ring in the chain of revelation that is prominent throughout the film. Jane now enjoys the fruits of her affair with Renato, and the surrounding environment seems more colourful than ever before. The colours of the houses are bright and cheery; the sun in all its glory appears for the first time in the film while later, as Jane shares one of her many romantic moments with Renato, the

setting sun infuses the scene with softness and warmth. Colour operation in this case is both realistic and subjective. The spectator already knows that following Jane's infatuation with Renato her psychology alters dramatically. Consequently, her perception of things is infused with subjectivity. The setting appears idyllic for a romantic escapade. This idealisation is manifest in the manner in which everything appears as a glorified version of reality. What is depicted on the screen as a poor and tiny neighbourhood with old and not particularly eye-catching residential structures is to Jane an earthly paradise. On the other hand, Murano itself being one of the most picturesque parts of the city of Venice, appears in all its natural splendour. When they arrive at the island by boat, Renato describes it to her as "the island where the rainbow fell." Following his statement, the camera cuts to a series of quick shots that are a directorial confirmation of Renato's proclamation. Hence, we see a plethora of vibrant colours adorning the houses' exteriors.

The assumption that can be drawn from witnessing the interaction of the objective with the subjective is that Murano may be very colourful, but what makes it even more so to the eye of the spectator is Jane's jovial temperament. It can similarly be argued that Lean's choice to film one of the last sequences of the film in Murano is hardly coincidental. On a pictorial and narrative scale it provides the perfect backdrop to the action, while its thematic purpose is to foreground Jane's manifestation of contentment just before she departs from "the city of romance."

In conclusion, it can be contended that in Summer Madness, the meticulous utilisation of colour codes serves to transform a city of impressions to a city of expressions. Jane Hudson is both

the agent and the receiving beneficiary of this metamorphosis, as it is essentially through her perspective that the world is seen and understood. When she arrives in Venice, she observes it primarily through her camera, hence ascribing to it a two dimensionality. Colour impressions are recorded both on film and in her mind, so that they can later evolve into powerful tools in her ascendance to a three-dimensional level of self-realisation. Colour assists both Jane and the spectator in following a process of revelation that, in turn, holds the key to the linear narrative progression. This process of revelation operates on a visual scale through the controlled employment of the objective/subjective shot patterns, while on a thematic scale it is achieved through subtle connotations based for the most part on culturally and narratively identifiable colour symbolisms. Colour, thus, becomes a catalyst through which both narration and characterisation are rendered distinctly forceful.

RYAN'S DAUGHTER (1970)

When Ryan's Daughter was released, the European but, most profoundly, the American film industry was undergoing dramatic changes. The 1950s and 1960s were decades where the dynamics of television's popularity would lead some studios to throw their money into expensive, lavish productions where spectacle was the main ingredient and the primary source of box-office appeal²⁶. Others opted for more realism, in an effort to approximate the kind of verity that was depicted in television through the news and current affairs programmes. However, by the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the major studios would adopt a trend vastly contrasting that which had been endorsed until then. The emergence of a popular and innovative European art cinema, the increased politicisation of artists and public alike, especially following the May 1968 events in Europe, and the war in Vietnam, all contributed to a change in the perception of cinema. Major studio productions were total failures at the box-office, fact that led the big Hollywood companies to cut their expenses and seek another kind of production. Low-budget and youth-oriented pictures were the order of the day - the most characteristic example being Columbia's Easy Rider (1969), the production of which did not exceed the very modest figure of \$340,000, but which made over \$16,000,000 in ticket sales and was the highest grossing film of the year. Spectacle was not to be entirely abandoned, but the expensive productions were limited to one or two a year per studio. It also changed form and character

²⁶ Biblical epics such as Quo Vadis (1951), The Ten Commandments (1956), Ben Hur (1959), and musicals like The King and I (1956), Gigi (1958), West Side Story (1961), Mary Poppins (1964), My Fair Lady (1964), and The Sound of Music (1965), were huge box-office hits and won many awards.

around the mid 70s by means of an introduction of a new genre: the disaster movie.²⁷

By the time Ryan's Daughter went into production, Lean was enjoying the benefits that the success of his two previous films has brought him. Lawrence of Arabia was acclaimed by the critics and general public alike and won him seven Oscars, including those for Best Film of 1962 and Best Direction. The ensuing Doctor Zhivago earned him another five Oscars, and was the biggest money-maker of 1965. Following these stupendous critical and financial achievements, he sought to get involved in a production that was initially supposed to be a middle ground between his old British films and the more recent epics. He would abandon the production excesses of Bridge on the River Kwai, Lawrence of Arabia and Doctor Zhivago, and would return to a more intimate, smaller-scale love story set in Ireland at the beginning of the twentieth century. Unlike his two previous films, this one was based on an original screenplay written by him and Robert Bolt, though the story loosely echoed Gustave Flaubert's novel, *Madame Bovary*. It may have been a modest production by the standards Lean came to impose on the industry, but it was still considered a very expensive film set at an initial budget of \$9,000,000 that quickly exceeded the \$12,000,000 mark. However, long before the film was released in December 1970, the production underwent several setbacks. For one, MGM, which was the company financing the project, had undergone management changes in 1968 and was facing fiscal difficulties, hence, putting pressure on Lean's shooting schedule. Moreover, the weather in Ireland where the film was set

²⁷ The most characteristic examples include Earthquake (1974), and The Towering Inferno (1974).

to take place did not help towards the timely completion of the film. The crew and actors had to wait for weeks at a time for the weather to improve so they could shoot additional scenes. The film very quickly went over-budget and over-schedule, leading MGM officials to put a \$2,000,000 budget limit on all future features, thus signalling the end of the giant, epic-scale productions.

Still, the worst was to come following the general release of the film. The critics unanimously denounced it as an overblown spectacle. As one critic put it:

There are in Ryan's Daughter a lot of canvas, paint, brushstrokes, tones and plains of vision. However, the art it represents belongs to that school of very classy calendar art supported by airlines, insurance corporations and a few enlightened barber shops. It doesn't transfigure the world. It embalms it.²⁸

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the 1970s were an era when big productions dealing with familiar themes were becoming increasingly unpopular and financially non-viable. Hence, it comes as no surprise that Ryan's Daughter suffered as a result. Although the majority of the negative reviews pinpointed inadequacies in the screenplay, historical inconsistencies, and an over-blown pictorialism that was believed to obscure the narrative, the truth is more consistent with the increasing amount of hostility expressed against Lean. Filmmakers, who felt they were deprived of their right to make their own films at much lower costs, exhibited an increased degree of resentment. Similarly, a new generation of critics was emerging, influenced by their European counterparts, and striving to establish

²⁸ *The New York Times Film Reviews*. November 22, 1970. p.244

themselves as the intellectual alternative to traditional film criticism. Richard Schickel was one of the critics who interviewed Lean shortly after the release of Ryan's Daughter. His recollections and comments regarding the way the critics treated films and film-makers in those days is very illuminating:

The National Society of Film Critics was founded in the late sixties as a counterweight to the conservative middlebrow New York Film Critics, which at the time confined its membership exclusively to the newspaper reviewers, who were not a very distinguished lot. We thought we were slightly finer stuff and in those days tended almost automatically to give our prizes to Ingmar Bergman and a few other Europeans of his ilk... In the sixties and early seventies, when literary New York made the wonderful discovery that film was an 'art', we, the critics, were for a time lionised, became demi-celebrities, and this had an unfortunate effect on a lot of egos.²⁹

The harsh criticisms coming from the majority of reviewers were enough to make Lean abandon filmmaking for fourteen years in spite of the film's modest box-office success.³⁰ Recalling his decision to abstain from the industry for an extended period of time, Lean has remarked upon the harshness with which he was treated and the way he could have possibly avoided it:

I made a fatal mistake and I know what it is now. When the love affair started, I told Fred: 'Make it as romantic as possible'. And we did. I mean we chose the locations, bluebell woods, clouds on hills, and because I wanted to give the impression of somebody being madly and hopelessly in love, if you like to put it that way, or sexually attracted, in this heady atmosphere. And we did it very, very romantically. The fault that I made was that I didn't tell the audience what I was doing. And the critics all thought that I was being a wildly romantic filmmaker. I should have had the priest, or somebody, saying 'Rosy, you're seeing everything through rose-coloured glasses. And follow-it with the scene, and they've have got it and it

²⁹ Brownlow, Kevin. David Lean. (London: Richard Cohen Books, 1996), p.585

³⁰ Ryan's Daughter was one of MGM's most popular box-office attractions of 1970. It did not have the same appeal as his previous epic films, but the name of the director was sufficient to draw audiences to the cinema.

would have been perfectly all right. But that's I think why the critics attacked Ryan's Daughter.³¹

As Lean implies in his self-criticism, the function of colour is of pivotal importance in the film. It is through colour that the viewer sees the heroine's world transformed and the surrounding locale change from a dreary little village to a romantic paradise. In fact, colour throughout Ryan's Daughter does not merely evoke an objective perception of the world in which the characters live and the narrative unfolds. Rather, it becomes a tool in the hands of the filmmaker through which notions of subjectivity come to the forefront. Colour becomes a non-verbal means of expression of the main characters, as well as a unique channel of communication with the spectator. It is precisely this intermingling between the subjective and the objective in the utilisation of colour that makes the film an ideal subject for critical analysis.

³¹ David Lean's interview by Melvyn Bragg for LWT. 'David Lean: A life in Film.' Transmitted on Sunday, 17 February 1985.

ANALYSIS

When the clouds dissolve and the sun begins to rise in Ryan's Daughter's opening sequence, what is revealed to the spectator is a long stretch of beach, seagulls flying over it, and Rosy - a young woman on top of a steep green cliff looking forlorn as her lace embroidered parasol falls in the sea down below. Father Hugh and Michael - a dumb mental retard who prides over his catching a lobster - pick up the parasol and hand it back to her. The sense of deception is now complete. Not far from this idyllic setting lies the Northern Irish village of KIRRARY, built along a dusty road with old grey houses, and inhabited by crude men and women whose bawdy idea of entertainment is the ridicule of Michael and the expression of scorn for the British soldiers that patrol the area. Following that brief depiction of the village and its residents, the camera once again cuts back to Rosy as she strolls along the sandy beach. The breaking waves under the bright sun create an aura of freedom and exuberance and Rosy, with a book in hand entitled 'The King's Mistress', is on her way to greet Charles Shaughnessy - the village's schoolteacher. It quickly becomes evident that Rosy's attraction to Charles rests on his advanced knowledge and extensive travels outside KIRRARY that, to her mind, set him apart from the rest of the villagers. His cordial manners and enthused comments about the Berlioz and Tchaikovsky concerts he has attended in Dublin, gratify her in that they provide a point of positive reference as to the pleasures and possibilities that lie beyond the 'closed' borders of her hometown.

Hence, the lingering discrepancy between life in the village and Rosy's solitary representation serves two primary rationales:

on the one hand, it initiates from the very beginning of the narrative a process of her segregation from the remaining characters in the film. Rosy is presented as the protagonist who is both physically and emotionally set apart from the other inhabitants of her village. As Father Hugh angrily protests at her aimless mooning about the sea, "Doing nothing is a dangerous occupation". Her ground of repose is not the dreary village, but the vast expanse of beach where daydreaming becomes possible. The application of colour, along with non-diegetic music and camera placement, enhances this kind of detachment and conflict on a pictorial level since it foregrounds her colourful and vibrant universe that is nature, as opposed to the monotonous and essentially monochrome world of Kirrarry. Similarly, the romantic but gleeful musical tones and the extreme long shots that accentuate her physical solitude, all delineate the essence of her nature. On the other, it sets the fictional canvas against which the narrative will unfold in a pattern of dramatic oppositions that will pervade through most of the film.

Like in Summer Madness, dress colour codes play a pivotal role in helping define the psychology of the female heroine and in providing a visual and thematic referent for the spectator. When Rosy is seen for the first time in the film, she wears a beige straw hat with white paper flowers attached on its brim, a pendant, a body-tight white blouse and black skirt, as well as a light but dull brown jacket that she appropriately gets rid of before she meets Charles Shaughnessy. However, what is more arresting about her appearance is her pair of black lace gloves and the lace parasol which, as her father admits to Father Hugh, was bought for a substantial amount of money. The colours of her garments may be not striking in themselves but, to her father,

Rosy is a 'princess', and that is true for the spectator as well, since when compared to the other villagers, she stands out as an image of elegance, beauty and femininity. Her stylish appearance and her carefree demeanour directly bear upon her desire to be impressionable and lure Charles into appreciating it. Her fundamental yearning is to escape the commonplace realities of life in Kirrarry, and Charles appears to be the perfect vehicle towards achieving that goal. When Father Hugh protests to Rosy's father that "it's time she (meaning Rosy) had a fellow of her own, a house of her own, floors to scrub", the spectator senses that the Father's refusal to comply with Rosy's vision of life further accentuates a sense of incongruity between her and the people in her immediate surroundings.

Following her engagement to Charles, Rosy finds herself again at the beach and in the company of Father Hugh. This time, however, her attire is far more conventional and highly reminiscent of those worn by the other female inhabitants of Kirrarry. Instead of a flower-adorned hat, she now wears a black headscarf and a very unassuming brown dress. This change in outfit is not coincidental; she appears before the Father in humility, wanting his blessing for her upcoming marriage. Rosy willingly maintains an unpretentious appearance before the representative of God, but she also feels compelled to express her curiosity on how her life will change following her initiation to sex hoping, at the same time, that the pleasures of the flesh will make her a better person. When Father Hugh dismisses her assumptions about the power inherent in the sexual act, she is left somewhat incredulous of his genuineness. Yet, despite their considerable differences in the appreciation of love's essence, the scene helps to ascertain the discretion that

defines the core of their relationship, as well as the degree of Rosy's deference to him.

One of the narrative's critical moments comes during the celebrations that follow Rosy's marriage to Charles. On this occasion, many of the elements that were assumed as given in the film are reversed. The method in the application of colour is fundamental in demonstrating this overturn, and in highlighting the powerful effect they have primarily on Rosy. Hence, on her wedding night, she is depicted sitting next to her husband dressed in her wedding gown, hardly a glance exchanged between them. At the same time, the villagers become the heart and soul of the nuptial party. The shots alternate between the silent and predominantly black and white set-up at the wedding table where the newlyweds sit apprehensive and almost motionless under the sacred image of Christ, and the spirited, colour-flooded festivities that go on before their eyes. The sluggish and lifeless inhabitants of Kirrory are dressed up in bright colours and have a ball during Rosy's anticipated night of celebration. To an extent, they rejoice to see her married to someone whom they consider as the epitome of dullness. Their open expression of contentment and display of vivacity significantly alters the perception that the spectator has formulated up until that point in the narrative. What was earlier assumed, both textually and pictorially, as the monochrome and lacklustre world of the village now passes through, and inhabits Rosy's reality. When she is about to retreat to her bedroom with Charles, she gets through scores of people who, in a mob-like manner, throw themselves at her kissing and hugging her for good luck in her new life. This episode points towards an intrusion into her insulated world. Her earlier trips to the beach underscored her longing for privacy

and introspection. On her wedding night, that should be the most joyous but private affair, she feels harassed by, and exposed to, the people of Kirrarry.

The climactic point of the sequence, as far as the utilisation of colour is concerned, comes when she finds herself alone in the bridal bedroom with Charles. The sense of anticipation regarding the moment of consummation overwhelms her, and her nervousness is further fortified by the continuously eluding sense of privacy. The noise and the bustle coming from downstairs urging the couple to engage in the act of sex affect her profoundly. Eager anticipation, however, turns into agony since nothing in her immediate physical surroundings generates an aura of romance. As she looks at the ceiling while lying in bed, she notices the humidity and the cracks on the faintly coloured walls. Even as she looks at the window while the party is still going on, the emanation of a shimmering red light from downstairs instead of providing a passionate ambience intensifies her worries. On one level, its presence highlights the villagers' expectations of her but, more significantly, on a metaphorical plane, the given fact that this light comes from an external source signifies the terrifying aspect of pleasure resting outside rather than inside. In the bedroom where she lies down waiting for her husband to join her, there is nothing but gloominess and monotony. White is the predominant colour, pointing both at her sexual purity, and at the clinical and unadventurous approach with which every move is conducted. When Charles turns off the light and the crowd screams from down below, the sexual act takes place. If the previous anxious anticipation created an unenthusiastic atmosphere, this is finally confirmed as Charles, rather unresponsively, deflowers

Rosy and turns her back to her so he can go to sleep. Rosy's dream of the moment being one that would change her life and give her wings, as she suggested in a prior sequence to father Hugh, is quickly dispelled.

A key scene that communicates to the spectator Rosy's sense of unhappiness takes place when the couple share their first day together at Charles' residence - the schoolhouse. Everything in the house appears to be cold and impersonal. Their run-down bedroom with its old light grey walls, coupled with Charles' indifference and his lack of sexual interest in Rosy, heighten her desolation. Even the sounds of Beethoven emanating from the gramophone have an adverse effect on her mentality. When previously she has been mystified and even immersed in the music she was listening to from behind the green walls of the schoolhouse, it was because she was subconsciously associating Beethoven's musical tones with her romantic feelings towards Charles and, hence, identified the composer's work with her mounting infatuation. Yet, following her marriage to Charles, the presence of these melodies become a painful reality and a reminder of what ought to be instead of what is. The bust of Beethoven that prominently stands on top of the gramophone is fittingly placed on a red cloth - the only sign of any bright colour in the house, and one reflecting Charles' passion for classical music. Thus, it would be fair to argue that, at this point, Rosy's relation to Beethoven becomes antagonistic. Rosy demands all of her husband's affection and, instead, he turns to Beethoven. To her, the red cloth becomes a mantle with which her husband gilds Beethoven, as well as a visual sign of the contrasting passions and heated emotions that are never ostensibly articulated.

The ensuing shot in the schoolhouse depicts both of them going on about their daily routines. Rosy is sitting by the fireplace, clad in a dull blue dress with her hair pulled up, knitting, while Charles picks colourful but dead flowers for his 'Flora of Kirrarry' collection. On a symbolic level, it can be maintained that Charles' fascination is with everything dead. His stop at the cemetery to pay respects to his dead wife early in the film, his obsession with a dead composer, and now his careful arrangement of floral specimen, indicate his morbid association with lifelessness. On the contrary, Rosy is as close to nature as she is to everything alive. When, in the previous sequence, Charles presented to her a pot of lilies that he has planted himself, he received a genuine hug and kiss from Rosy, as well as a declaration of affection for his thoughtfulness. "Charles, you are a rare man," is what Rosy told him, but now she stands in silence and irritation as she watches him crashing leaves between the pages of a book. For Rosy, flora is nature's gift of colour and life, and its preservation after death stands for Charles' emotional lack and the growing apathy in their relationship.

A worthy of note scene takes place soon after when Charles is depicted cutting wood, bare-chested, in the schoolhouse's backyard. Rosy admires her husband's physical qualities. Once more, she nurtures passionate thoughts, but this time, of a more carnal nature. Thus, she rushes back to the dining room to make the chair he will sit on more comfortable for him when he returns from his labours. As the camera cuts to a close-up of what is essentially assigned as *his* chair, the spectator realises that it is the only other red-embroidered object in Charles' house besides the cloth on which stands the bust of Beethoven. The use of this particular type of camera shot, in combination with the

ones that have preceded it, is both deliberate and effectual since it points towards Rosy's burning desire to perceive her husband as a fervently loving man. Red, therefore, stands for her craving and her expectations. However, as the sequence unfolds, it becomes evident that Charles' mindset is far removed from such a sense. Instead, he kindly requests Rosy to provide him with a shirt so that he can keep a 'decent' appearance. Rosy's and Charles' conflicting emotional dispositions lead to tension and, eventually, Rosy reveals her frustration by throwing his shirt at him. The visual impact of her aggravation becomes more prominent when the camera cuts back to her, and she is ironically framed alongside the red cloth and Beethoven's plaster bust. To her, all prospects for a moment or a vision of passion are spoiled.

Hence, it comes as no surprise when, in one of the subsequent sequences, she goes back to the beach - her emotional sanctuary. Rosy feels as much betrayed by her own self for not comprehending the extent of her needs, as from Charles' inability to respond to them. While there, she yet again comes across Father Hugh who vehemently reprimands her for displaying discontent and nurturing wishes that exceed the bounds of her marriage. In a show of authority and upon her insistence on demanding more things from her life, he slaps her across the face. The impact of the scene is very powerful and reminiscent of the one in Oliver Twist, when the young Oliver asks for more food from one of the orphanage's administrators and instead gets fierce punishment in the form of a beating. Yet, while in Oliver Twist, the spectator's identification is firmly with Oliver, in this particular instance in the film, the spectator is confused. On one level, he/she identifies with Rosy's need to escape the dreary reality of her existence while, on the other, he/she

sympathises with Charles who had earlier warned her about the perils attached to her possible romantic association with him. As he has told her: "You were meant for the wide world Rose, not this place. Not this. Me, I was born for it." Rosy pays the price for her immaturity and impudence and for her nothing is a higher price to pay than unhappiness. The prospect for dual identifications becomes possible both through the forceful application of colour referents that in their majority favour Rosy's viewpoint, as has been shown in the foregoing analysis, as well as through the power of dialogue that maintains an equal distance and balance between the major characters, hence making identification with any of them feasible.

Returning to the discussion regarding the utilisation of the red colour in the film, it should be stated that is not only associated with carnal and romantic passion but also with the commitment to revolution and bloodshed, as this is exemplified in the form of a sub-plot that is formed by the arrival at the Village of Kirrarry of Irish Republicans who prepare an armed assault on the British forces. When the revolutionaries first appear, it is in a carriage that is painted red and contains guns. Similarly, when they enter Tom Ryan's pub and have a brief conversation with him, they attest to his partiality to the revolutionary movement. After seeing a picture hanging beside him on the wall, Ryan challenges them to recognise "Red Tim himself," as he describes him: one of the major Northern Irish figures in the fight against British rule. Correspondingly, during the storm sequence when the explosives are washed ashore or picked up by the villagers in bright red boxes, tensions mount as the uprising becomes imminent. The 'red' revolt will never come to fruition, but it will significantly alter the course of the narrative, as

it will foreground opposing forces of loyalty and betrayal, courage and cowardice. Finally, it is the very anticipation of such an uprising that brings Major Doryan to Kirrarry and, indirectly, instigates another insurgency of a far more intimate nature.

The major turning point in the narrative comes when Major Doryan arrives at the village. His introduction to the film has a dramatic visual impact. He appears almost in silhouette with the sun right behind him. As he opens his golden cigarette case, it glows in the sun. He is both a dark and a radiant figure, a man of great mystery. At this point, the spectator is reminded of an earlier reference from Charles who in his effort to deter Rosy from allowing her feelings for him to grow, tells her: "You are mistaking a pane window for the sun." Hence, it becomes inevitable for the spectator to formulate assumptions as to what Major Doryan's role will be as the narrative progresses. His almost dreamy presence, like a hero from a romantic novel that Rosy is so keen on reading, reflects her idealistic perception of the amorous and quintessentially adventurous male. On his ride to the barracks, Doryan says very few words, and the sun that is reflected on the window of his car almost obliterates his face from view, thus perpetuating the sense of mystery that surrounds his presence.

In an effort to sustain the spectator's hypothesis regarding the real relevance of his arrival in Kirrarry, the film provides both visual and narrative information that involves his actions but which, at the same time, alludes to Rosy's reading of her surroundings and the constitution of her mind, as this has been exemplified so far in the film. For one, Doryan's drive through Kirrarry under the predominantly hostile glance of the villagers

generates within him a feeling of uneasiness that reminds the spectator of Rosy's unwillingness to be amongst them. Similarly, when he passes by the schoolhouse, a group of curious children stop his car and indiscreetly stare at the new British arrival. This 'crowd' scene is reminiscent of Rosy's wedding celebration when the suffocating presence and exasperating intrusion of the villagers overwhelmed her. For another, Major Doryan appears to be ensnared and sidetracked by the beauty of nature. From inside the car, he gazes at the vast expanse of sea that assumes a golden colour as the sun's beams are reflected on the water. Like Rosy, the beauty of the natural order and the striking colour combinations that this vista provides captivate him. Up until that point in the narrative, no other person has been portrayed as appreciative of the spectacular landscape that envelops the dreary village. The only two other fictional characters that have been depicted as temporarily inhabiting Rosy's safe haven are Father Hugh and Michael. However, the narrative function of them both does not coincide with that of Rosy's. The Father's presence by the shore principally denotes his value as a suspending factor to her daydreaming, while Michael's habitual beachcombing remains as elusive as Michael himself. In addition, Doryan shares two other important psychological characteristics with Rosy: on the one hand, he silently admits to an officer that he is estranged from his wife, much like Rosy is from Charles and, on the other, he is as spiritually detached from his fellow British soldiers as Rosy is from the inhabitants of Kirrary.

However, the most evident correlation between Rosy and Major Doryan at this early stage can be extrapolated on the visual/thematic plane and, more specifically, in the assigned function of the red colour. When Doryan passes by the

schoolhouse, he sees a bright red petticoat drying out in the sun that presumably belongs to Rosy - the sole female inhabitant of the dwelling. Its visual prominence is supported by means of its differentiation from the uniformly grey surroundings, as well as by the fact that this is a shot that reflects Doryan's point-of-view, hence foregrounding the visual preoccupations within a subjective order. The camera zooms in on the undergarment as Doryan quickly passes by. He is immediately drawn both to its colour and to what this may imply on more a figurative level. The spectator has previously acknowledged the connotations of red as these have applied to Rosy. Red is the colour of the passion that eludes her. Hence, the possibility of romance between them becomes a growing probability since they seem to share the same passions and have the same aversions. Consequently, their immediate attraction that leads to a series of fervent kisses in her father's bar comes as no surprise to the already clued-up spectator.

Following their initial intimate encounter, Rosy and Doryan cannot help thinking about each other. Rosy is restless and briefly leaves her house in order to invigorate herself, leaving Charles behind marking a bundle of school papers. While outside, she finds herself amidst a garden of lilies. The camera cuts to a close-up of one of them as it gently sways in the breeze. The atmosphere has an alluring aura about it that insinuates Rosy's mounting affection for Doryan. Her visual representation within an environment that corresponds to what she holds dear in her heart, further underpins the spectator's understanding of her mental state. The overwhelming presence of white, both on her clothes and on the flowers, can be said to have a double signification: on the one hand, on the level of Christian

religious symbolism, it points towards a contradiction between the chastity of her external appearance and her growing promiscuity, thus perpetuating a feeling of guilt that lingers in the back of her mind:

The Archangel Gabriel is usually known in pictures from the fact that his emblem is the lily sometimes called the "lily of the annunciation," as a sign that a pure soul is necessary before Christ can take possession of it ³²

On the other, it suggests the purity of her love for Doryan. Any confusions that she might have had before she met him as to the nature of true love and the power inherent in carnal desire, are dispelled following the initiation of their ardent relationship.

The ensuing sequence that entails Rosy's and Doryan's sexual encounter in the forest, is one of the most disputed sequences in the film, and one that led many critics to proclaim that Lean has betrayed the film's essence and purpose by degrading it to a spectacular, sentimentalist extravaganza. As it has been mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Lean was so despondent by the detrimental criticisms concerning this scene in particular, that he excommunicated himself as a director for the next fourteen years. However, if the sequence is looked at closely enough, it is evident that it serves very specific narrative purposes and acts as a catalyst in the evolution of the narrative while, at the same time, it maintains the film's integrity in its thematic concerns. There is, indeed, extravagance in the utilisation of colour, the setting, and the choice of shots, but none are used arbitrarily. The red petticoat in which Rosy appears for the first time in the film is the same

³² Conroy, Ellen. The Symbolism of Color (North Hollywood: Newcastle, 1996), p.41

garment that captured Doryan's attention upon his arrival at Kirrarry. It symbolises Rosy's overt desire to be sexually gratified, and it also reflects the intense passion she feels within. Nature, too, appears in all its glory: a glade of a sunlit thick wood, carpeted with bluebells, grass and red brackens, the cascades of water and the little pools surrounded by honeysuckle, all create an idyllic natural setting that is unprecedented in the film. So far, the spectator has been accustomed to the drab variations of grey that pervade in the depiction of the village of Kirrarry, while the more open and colourful depictions of the seashore never achieved the richness of texture that the forest scene elucidates. Hence, this visual excess with its abundance of colours and textures, reflects not so much the actual reality of the landscape but, rather, the idyllic conditions that Rosy has devised in her mind for that moment when she would experience the ultimate in physical and emotional fulfilment. The sequence functions as an execution of her perfect dream, and it suggests that her lack has evaporated and has been replaced by realisation. Along these lines, the diffracted rays of the sun that have been ascribed by Rosy as Doryan's symbol and now make her face glow, allude to him as the instigator of the dream's materialisation, while the shots that depict the blowing away of the dandelion heads by the breeze and the intertwining of two silken strands of cobweb connote the moment of orgasm. It must not be forgotten that, all throughout the film, Rosy's kinship to nature has been so forcefully depicted that it would be inevitable to include it in her wildest imaginings. For Rosy, nature in all its diverse colourations, smells and feels is instrumental in preserving her emotional balance and in fostering her aspirations.

Therefore, despite the fact that the majority of the shots are not from her viewpoint, the whole sequence operates as a testament to her subjective perception of this climactic point in her emotional life. Silver and Ursini underscore the postulation by maintaining that:

The sexual interlude in the forest becomes a stylised externalisation of her total experience in body and thought. In her first glance of Doryan that day - a long shot of him on horseback - he is, like a knight errant before a castle or Childe Roland come to a dark tower, the graphic embodiment of all her past romantic dreams. Similarly, the images intercut with the lovemaking in the arbor both emerge from and are selected by Rosy to form a montage of attraction not with the event per se but with her rapturous consciousness.³³

When Rosy returns home following her tempestuous first encounter with Doryan, she sits on a chair contemplating both the emotional and practical ramifications of her actions. This particular scene would not pose any interest for analytical consideration if it were not for the specific red chair that has been portrayed previously as the one assigned by Rosy as Charles' and which, as the preceding analysis has demonstrated, bore very specific emotive implications. By having Rosy now sitting on it rather than her husband, there is a clear suggestion that whatever passion she could not ascribe to him, she now asserts as her own. At the same time, by occupying a space that was his, she eliminates him from her thoughts as a vehicle for contentment and a subject of desire. Visual elements of her last-ditch effort to revitalise her life with Charles are readily apparent in the altered interior decoration of the house they live in. When once

³³ Silver, Alain, and Ursini, James. David Lean and His Films. (Los Angeles: Silman, 1992), p.205

there was only aged grey adorning the walls, Rosy had made it more cheerful by adding yellow patches that include the bedroom door and the borders of the ceiling. However, more vigorous colour patterns did not prove sufficient in changing the basics of their relationship, and Rosy felt she ought to seek the ultimate in gratification that she has eventually found in Doryan. Thus, her staging on the red chair suggests her expropriation as a commonplace, impassive wife and the assumption of her role as a defiant adulteress.

In the previous shot, Doryan is depicted sitting on a chair in his semi-dark room, dressed in his official uniform that has a red collar and a double red stripe that is embroidered across the legs of his trousers. From this juxtaposition of shots between Doryan and Rosy, it can be discerned that there is an affinity between them. They hold the same stance, are enriched by the same suggestive colour, and preoccupied with the same thoughts. Rosy is unfaithful not merely on a physical level but principally on a psychological one. As the narrative will progress, her treachery will become profound in the manner in which she will repeatedly deceive her husband, even when the truth regarding her amorous liaison with Doryan will become known to Charles and to the other villagers.

The signification of the chair's presence and its occupancy will alternate throughout the film, and will expose the smouldering emotional conditions of both Charles and Rosy on given occasions. When, for example, Charles lets Rosy know of his awareness relating to her affair with Doryan, he maintains a sombre and mature tone that suggests a lack of passion and a controlled expression of feelings. The chair he sits on appears black on the screen because he has placed his jacket over it. It

is only when he stands up and exits the frame that the spectator realises he has been sitting on the red chair all along. On a metaphorical level, it can be asserted that Charles hides his frustration - a passionate, if negative feeling in itself - under the mantle of a cold exterior.

In another instance, when Charles returns home after a long overnight deliberation with himself at the beach, he announces to Rosy his intention to leave her. Although she makes clear to him that her affair with Doryan is over, he still perceives that she is not truly over him and, hence, the possibility of a return to a harmonious co-habitation without the essential element of commitment would be fruitless and undesirable. As he tells her, "He (Doryan) will be like a ghost about the place." As these words are uttered by Charles and get affirmed by Rosy, the mise-en-scene exposes the red chair in the background. Neither of the two sits on it, and it is put aside. Once again, the symbolism is overt: there is indeed Doryan's ghost around, and it occupies the chair of many passions. His presence/absence serves as a reminder of the intense feelings that have consumed both Rosy and Charles, and for which Doryan is primarily responsible as the instigator. Red, after all, is as much *his* colour as it is Rosy's. It is *he* who has inaugurated her into carnal delight, and it is also *he* who without his deliberate intention has pulled Charles from his world of controlled manifestation of emotions to a more open realisation of his jealousy and envy. It is *he* who indirectly makes the unassuming and placid schoolteacher get out of his house and find solace by the seashore - Rosy's world of contemplation and reflection. The characteristic sequence where Charles discovers that Rosy and Doryan have been together at the beach, springs a daydream for Charles that is embellished with

Beethoven's music and in which his wife holds hands with the British officer as they amorously stroll along the sand. Rosy is dressed in a striking yellow outfit and Doryan, in his formal army uniform, offers her a seashell he has picked from under a big rock. Charles stands behind the rock watching them but never intervenes. What is remarkable about his daydream is the colour he ascribes to Rosy's dress. According to cultural symbolism:

In its degraded meaning it is the saddest of all colours, for we recognise the deceitful Judas very often in ancient pictures from the fact that he is given dingy yellow robes.³⁴

Charles, therefore, retains all his passions within himself. His outbursts never go beyond the level of impassive utterances. In fact, all throughout the film, his demeanour remains as composed as his external appearance is modest and inconspicuous. His wearing dull-coloured clothes that range from variations of brown and grey to the darkest colour of all - black, indicate his intention to stay on the sidelines of passion. Henceforth, Doryan's laying of the foundations for Charles' most emotionally violent dream brings to the surface otherwise unknown facets of his personality.

Finally, it is also Doryan who puts a halt to the plans for a 'red' revolt by the Irish Republicans, and it is also he who brings a bloody end to his own life by using the revolutionaries' explosives. While his posting in KIRRARY is intended as a form of convalescence from his traumatic war experiences, it turns out to be the location of his demise. Perhaps, his ultimate function in the narrative is to state that the nurturing of passion is as

³⁴ Conroy, Ellen. The Symbolism of Color. (North Hollywood: Newcastle, 1996), p.20

destructive a force as death. His 'red' constitution is echoed in Father Hugh's words to Rosy "Don't nurse your wishes. You can't help having them, but don't nurse them or sure to God you'll get what you're wishing for." Rosy opts for passion and as a result, she loses both her lover and the trust of her husband. Furthermore, Doryan unleashes an awkward and tragic predicament for those closest to her. The two opposing forces of common sense and obsession that permeate through the film come into a violent confrontation with tragic results.

Hence, in a visual portrayal of a characteristic Lean reversal of fortunes, Rosy, following the staging of a lynch trial that includes the shredding of her clothes and the merciless cutting of her hair by the villagers, sits despondent and humiliated on the red chair in her house. She has been wrongly accused as the informer on the revolutionaries, more on the grounds of her romantic association with Doryan than on the substantiation of the facts. On this particular occasion, however, red becomes an emblem of her passion's destructive powers. Whereas before, in a similar shot structure, she has been perceived as the beautiful woman at the mercy of her ecstasy and the utilisation of red was a reference to her surging passion, she now stands as the recipient of its negative implications. Her face and her soul have been ravished by her own indulgence into lust. Whatever life potential she had in Kirrory is non-existent and, thus, her leaving the village along with Charles who, too, has been victimised through his association with her, provides the inevitable formal closure to the narrative. Yet, the future of their lives remains unresolved, as does the true nature of their feelings for one another. Their essentially colourless exit

from their childhood home delineates their draining of emotions and restores 'normality' in the village.

Ryan's Daughter is the darkest of all Lean's films. The principal characters are situated in a confined and predominantly hostile environment that does not allow the articulation of emotions that dare to go beyond the limit of conventionality. Insurgencies, emotional or other, are crushed and the protagonists find themselves trapped between their longings and reality. Their fate is largely predetermined by the very violence and ambiguousness of their emotions. What the foregoing analysis has aimed at demonstrating is the fundamental role of colour in delineating the axes of confrontation between the characters and their surroundings, as well as the articulation, through colour, of internal conflicts that remain largely unresolved. Without this element of mise-en-scene, the film would be ineffectual in highlighting the multi-layered confrontations, and would not rightfully articulate its purpose of existence.

6. CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis has been to illustrate through an analytical textual approach the significance that certain formal elements of the David Lean films such as sound, music, black-and-white cinematography and colour, have on the formulation of his individual and diverse aesthetic approach to filmmaking. During the course of the textual scrutiny, the purpose was not to simply locate and foreground a very particular stylistic oeuvre that runs through and characterises all his films. Instead, the primary goal has been to track down specific instances in the narratives whereby the utilisation of these formal elements becomes instrumental in the construction of specific narrative effects, in the forging of identifications between the spectator and the fictional character/s, in maintaining and effectuating narrative cohesiveness and, ultimately, in enhancing the dramatic impact of those films. Furthermore, it is hoped that the thesis has elaborated, through its choice of films for analysis, the wide range of Lean's technical expertise and artistic inventiveness.

The essentially formalist approach that has been followed in the thesis aimed at foregrounding an alternative proposition to the analysis of films. The neo-formalists' basic supposition revolves around the notion that already existing theories of film such as psychoanalysis, structural semiotics and post-structuralist literary theory which have dominated the field of film studies up to now, defeat the purpose of film analysis that should be an effort to discover what is particular and

appealing about each individual film. By adopting a specific theory of film, the analyst is forced to make the film conform to the theory, thus narrowing the scope of investigation. Neo-formalism strives to promote a critical dialogue that is based on the flexibility of analytical approach. The thesis, by concentrating on the audio-visual aspects of Lean's work, has achieved a double objective: on the one hand, it has brought forward previously, and especially by theorists, ignored elements of his work while, on the other, it has allowed for the incorporation of other information which is fundamental to the awareness of film style and technology, such as detailed historical and social knowledge pertaining to his work. It is through this multi-layered approach that a better understanding of what is unique about his films came to the forefront of the investigation.

Furthermore, the choice of these particular formal elements for analysis was also based on the principle that they have rarely been discussed in the past by even film scholars of a formalist persuasion. Even when such efforts were conducted, the emphasis placed upon them was considerably less than on other aspects of his work such as editing, narrative structure and recurrent thematic preoccupations. Though the thesis did not intend to refute or diminish the significance of such approaches to analyses, especially as they are conducive to a better valuation of his body of work and creative proficiency, it follows a different line by attempting to fragment his work into four distinct audiovisual segments and evaluate *their* contribution to

an understanding that is based on principles of uniformity and multiplicity.

Therefore, in the analysis of sound, the choice of films was made on the premise of their chronological distance from one another, the different sound technology applied in each one, and on their belonging to different genres. The Passionate Friends is a woman's film of the late 1940s dealing with the psychological torments of a woman who has to choose between a life of security and controlled emotions and one of wild passion but instability. The use of sound in the film serves predominantly as a referent of the female protagonist's psychology both on an actual and on an emblematic level. On the other hand, The Bridge on the River Kwai is a film of the mid-1950s when sound techniques were revolutionised. The introduction of stereophonic sound enhanced the prospects for more naturalistic depictions, so the jungle rot and life in a prisoner's camp provided the perfect exercise in auditory realism. Moreover, in a further deviation from the former film, The Bridge on the River Kwai has practically no women in it except in secondary and inconsequential roles. There are numerous occasions when sound functions symbolically in order to promulgate the futility of war, or to foreground notions of madness and illusion, but all these, unlike The Passionate Friends, are hardly ever subjectively applied, except as ideological annotations by the director who manipulates the narrative material. Yet, it must be stressed, that in both films sound becomes an intrinsic tool in explicating or complicating psychological traits of intricate characters who frequently find themselves in convoluted or impossible situations. Thus, while there is generic discrepancy

and differential technological approaches between the two films, there are, also, elements of correspondence that apply to both the manner of sound employment, as well as to the narrative and emotive effect they aim at generating.

The chapter on music similarly attempts to examine two films that belong to different genres, different decades and which apply differently engineered musical sources. Thus, while Brief Encounter represents the archetypal British melodrama of the 1940s and uses an established source as its musical embellishment, Lawrence of Arabia is a large-scale male biopic of the 1960s with an original score accompanying and supplementing the visuals. The diversity of the two films does not, however, prevent the manufacturing of comparable and, on occasion, indistinguishable narrative cognition. In both films, the volatility of the characters and their fragile mentality transpires through the versatility in the application of music. Although there is a consistent reiteration of the main musical themes in both films, they educe varying impressions based upon the emotional evolution of the fictional characters. Hence, the leitmotif in Brief Encounter that belongs to Laura becomes a non-verbal communicator of her metamorphosis from an ordinary woman to one passionately in love, and from a slave of her feelings to a person resigned to the emotional certitude and commodity of marriage. Equally, in Lawrence of Arabia, the 'Lawrence theme' conveys the constantly altering mental disposition of the male protagonist; from a romantic idealist, to a triumphant warrior, and from a beaten man to a brutal avenger, the music like the hero remains enigmatic to the end.

When it comes to black-and-white lighting, the films appear to have too much in common. They both use expressionistic principles to render their effect more forceful, and they both take place during the Victorian era. However, their generic differentiation stands as the key point of their lack of narrative correspondence. Great Expectations is an adaptation of a famous dramatic novel, while Hobson's Choice is a small-scale Lancashire comedy. On this occasion, the emphasis lies in the utilisation of similar and sometimes identical lighting techniques for different narrative purposes. Lean's mastery is exemplified in the manipulation of generic convention for the formulation of a visually potent edifice.

The chapter on colour aims at exercising the spectator's awareness on how its diverse utilisation becomes an indicator of the properties of locale, emotion and circumstance. Both Ryan's Daughter and Summer Madness pertain to the lives of women who seek to find emotional sanctuary in natural beauty and love, but it is only in the former film that emotional regression is evidenced in visual drabness while, in the latter, colour phantasmagoria comes along with emotional maturity. Yet, in both films, there is an interchangeability of subjectivity and colour perception that complements the complexities innate in the female protagonists' cultural and intellectual dispositions.

Finally, it must be stated that such an analysis has some obvious drawbacks. Firstly, it is thematically narrowed by choice, thus disallowing a broader examination of the director's overall contribution to the world of film. Secondly, the choice of films, though carefully selected, does not cover the body of his work.

Yet, as mentioned before, it offers a completely new perspective on a certain field of investigation which aims at offering renewed potential for the understanding and appreciation of his films.



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

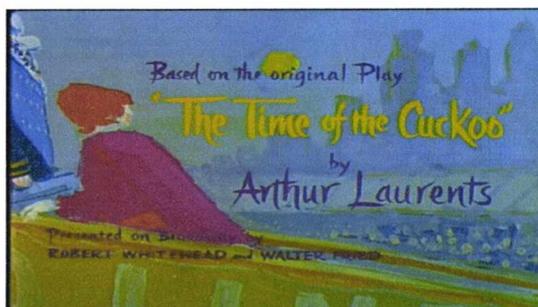


Plate 4

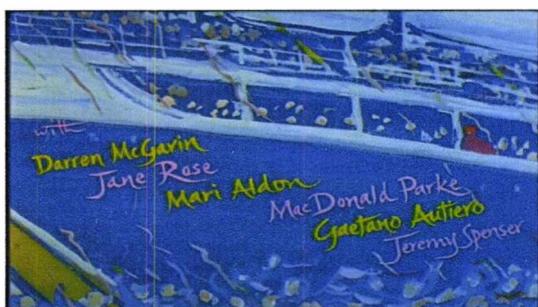


Plate 5



Plate 6

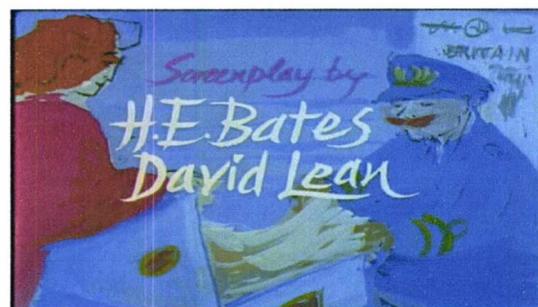


Plate 7



Plate 8

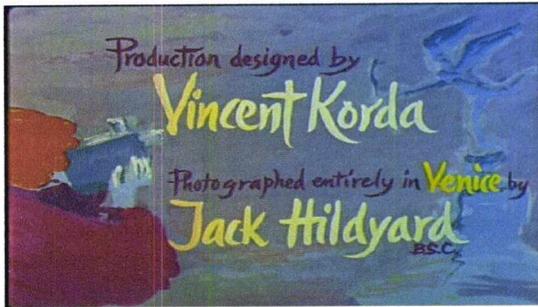


Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11

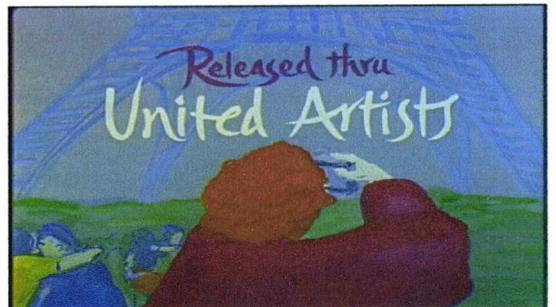


Plate 12

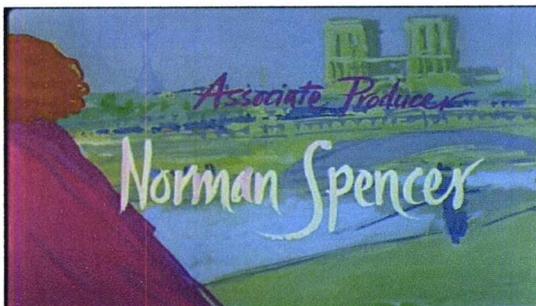


Plate 13

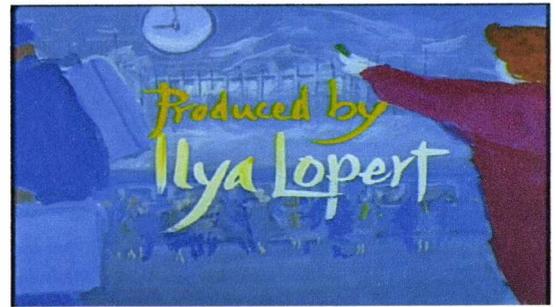


Plate 14

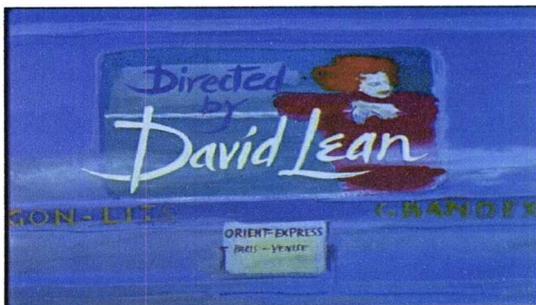


Plate 15

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- Blossom Time. Dir: Paul Stein. British International Pictures, 1934.
- Casablanca. Dir: Michael Curtiz. Hal B. Wallis for Warner Bros, 1942.
- Cesar and Cleopatra. Dir: Gabriel Pascal. Rank/Two Cities, 1945.
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- Contraband. Dir: Michael Powell. John Corfield for British National, 1940.
- Daisy Kenyon. Dir: Otto Preminger. TCF, 1947.
- David Copperfield. Dir: George Cukor. David O. Selznick for MGM, 1935.
- Earthquake. Dir: Mark Robson. Mark Robson and Jennings Lang for Universal, 1974.
- 49th Parallel. Dir: Michael Powell. John Sutro and Michael Powell for GFD/Ortus, 1941.
- French Without Tears. Dir: Anthony Asquith. David E. Rose for Paramount/Two Cities, 1939.
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- The King and I. Dir: Walter Lang. Charles Brackett for TCF, 1956.
- The Lodger. Dir: Alfred Hitchcock. Michael Balcon for Gainsborough Films, 1926.

Love Story. Dir: Arthur Hiller. A David Golden Production for Paramount, 1970.

Mary Poppins. Dir: Robert Stevenson. Bill Walsh for Walt Disney, 1964.

Millions Like Us. Dir: Frank Launder. GFD/Gainsborough, 1943.

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Mutiny on the Bounty. Dir: Frank Lloyd. Irving Thalberg and Albert Lewin for MGM, 1935.

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The Towering Inferno. Dir: John Guillermin and Irwin Allen. Irwin Allen for TCF/Warner, 1974.

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West Side Story. Dir: Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins. Robert Wise for UA/Seven Arts, 1961.

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