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Political Science**

*The Reel City: London, symbolic power and  
cinema*

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## **DECLARATION**

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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I declare that my thesis consists of 79,814 words.



## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis, I explore the ways in which cinematic representations re-construct and maintain the symbolic power of the global city. Using London as a paradigmatic example, I situate the research in the 1997-2007 period, the height of the New Labour era in Britain. I investigate the ways in which London's symbolic power was produced and maintained during this period, using a sociological-thematic analysis of several London-set films, which I categorised by theme. The analysis, which incorporates elements of discourse and social semiotics, demonstrates how these films, with both negative and positive portrayals of the city space, are central in the construction of London as a symbolically significant global city. I discuss the consequences of this symbolic construction of the city in relation to its global image and indeed the ways in which the city is changing as a result of the blurring boundaries between the cinematic and 'real' cities. My analysis shows that 'Glamorous London', one of the thematic categories I devised, paints a picture of the city through the lens of class and racial homogeneity, and gender normativity, where the principles of neoliberal capitalism dominate the landscape. 'Glamorous London' is an exclusive and exclusionary place in which only certain types of individuals who fit these normative stereotypes, are welcome. At the same time, films which relate to the 'Multi-Cultural London' thematic category, provide a more bleak and gritty image of the city, where asylum seekers and economic migrants live 'cheek by jowl', struggling to survive in the city's unforgiving underbelly. My analysis shows that Multi-Cultural London films are equally central in painting a picture of a diverse global city which is dynamic, exciting and full of possibilities. The films in this thematic category show the 'other side' of London's global city identity and, more specifically, the city's success as a global centre for capitalism and, correlatively, the city's symbolic power as multi-faceted and full of contradictions. This thesis also provides evidence from non-cinematic media as well as from the city's

evolving landscape, to demonstrate that these cinematic trends have far-reaching implications beyond cinema and indeed beyond the time period in which the film analysis is located.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

In the summer of 2012 London hosted one of the biggest and most watched sporting events on the planet, the Olympic Games. After years of planning and media hype, the city's residents, its extensive transport network, restaurants, bars, hotels and other service providers began to make space for spectators, athletes and officials, stretching the metropolis of over eight million<sup>1</sup> to its limits. Although 'Olympic fever', manifested as both excitement (pride, anticipation) and condemnation (fear, inconvenience, outrage over the expense), was rife across the capital, the main focus was on the Stratford area, home to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The East London district, once poor and run down, has been touted as a shining testament to London's and Britain's commitment to urban regeneration, particularly since the election of the New Labour government in 1997. Starting with the extension of the Jubilee Underground line in 1999 and the arrival of high-speed rail in 2009, Stratford now boasts excellent transport links. It has also become a shopper's dream as the home of one of Europe's largest shopping centres, Westfield.

An article in the *Guardian* newspaper, published the year before the Olympic Games took place, attests to the area's transformation, with a focus on the process of gentrification and the area's changing class dynamics:

Ever since London beat Paris in 2005 to become the host city...this area has been in the spotlight as never before. Millions of pounds have poured into the five Olympic boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Greenwich and Waltham Forest. New transport links have been built; old ones have been upgraded. Vast new office blocks and flats hope to cater for the latest wave of arrivals: middle-class professionals who bring

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from:  
<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/londonfacts/default.htm?category=2>

gentrification with them. The pace and scale of change is unprecedented, and, many would argue, necessary. For the one factor that has remained constant throughout east London's history is its poverty: the boroughs that border the Olympic Park are some of the poorest in the country. (Davies, 2011, p. 3)

It is both this focus on regeneration through altering the built environment, making London's poorer districts *look* more modern, and the focus on consumption which have framed discussions of 'betterment' and 'change' in the capital. This *outward* focus, centring on the city's image on the global stage, set the scene not only for this largely celebrated fortnight of sport, but also for larger trends beyond this global event.

The renowned British film director Danny Boyle, best known for chart-topping films like *Trainspotting* (1996) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), was responsible for the artistic elements of the Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, which took place on the 27 July 2012. The show<sup>2</sup> featured a selective take on British history and representations of contemporary British culture, touching on themes and institutions like the Royal Family, the National Health Service, multiculturalism, British youth culture and the role of digital technologies in everyday life. The event, though grand in scale, was striking beyond its spectacular use of light, music and general razzmatazz. It was the role of film, and in particular of a mainstream and globally recognisable star and cinema franchise, which stood out as noteworthy.

The ceremony featured a short film entitled *Happy and Glorious*, starring Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the British actor Daniel Craig. In the film, the Queen is shown accompanied by Craig as James Bond, a quintessentially British literary and cinematic persona with a long history and strong connection to London, on her journey from Buckingham Palace to the Olympic Park in Stratford. The film opens with a scene inside

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<sup>2</sup> A video recording of the full ceremony is available at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4As0e4de-rI>

Buckingham Palace with James Bond being escorted into the Queen's chamber, where she greets him before they set off on a helicopter journey eastwards over London, towards Stratford. The camera conceals the Queen's face in the initial stages of the short film, in an attempt to cause wonder and scepticism in the audience. Will the Queen really make an appearance? It transpires that Her Majesty does in fact play a starring role in the film and she boards the helicopter which flies across London, from Buckingham Palace to Stratford. Viewers are presented with a panoramic tour of some of London's major landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, the London Eye, Trafalgar Square, the relatively new skyscraper at 30 St Mary Axe (colloquially referred to as the 'Gherkin' because of its cucumber-like shape), Tower Bridge and London's newest landmark, the Shard, the tallest skyscraper in the European Union. This is in addition to aerial and close-up shots of the city's iconic red double-decker buses and black taxis, interspersed with shots of a happy, multi-ethnic populace. Even a statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square comes alive, with the man himself sporting a smile as he directs the helicopter towards Stratford. In a few short minutes, the city, its iconic landmarks, a selection of its population and some key fictional, historical and contemporary figures, are showcased in the name of commemorating the opening of the London 2012 Olympic Games.



Figure 1: Scene from *Happy and Glorious*, featuring Daniel Craig as James Bond and Queen Elizabeth II as herself.  
[http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/61864000/jpg/\\_61864698\\_jex\\_1479548\\_de27-1.jpg](http://news.bbcimg.co.uk/media/images/61864000/jpg/_61864698_jex_1479548_de27-1.jpg)

As I watched the short film, which played a central role in framing this global event, it struck me as a poignant reminder of the explicit links between cinema<sup>3</sup> (a media industry, a mode of artistic expression and a form of entertainment) and the city (a living, breathing, political, economic and symbolic entity). *Happy and Glorious* constructs London as a hospitable and forward-looking city with iconic landmarks and a strong connection to its past and to tradition. This short film, in terms of its content and its timing, encapsulates many of the ideas that inform this thesis, and in some ways epitomises the ways in which cinema can be used to reinforce the *symbolic power* of the city. James Bond, a fictional cinematic character and a cultural icon strongly associated with London, the home of his employer, MI6, interacts with another cultural icon, the Queen, in a playful yet technically complex promotion of London and its iconic landmarks, both familiar and new. The poverty-stricken boroughs surrounding the Olympic Park, and indeed the deprived districts in other parts of the city, unsurprisingly do not feature in this short film.

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<sup>3</sup> In this thesis I use 'cinema' to refer to the cinema industry, and 'cinematic representations' to refer to films.



## 1.2 An Interdisciplinary Enquiry into the Global City

This thesis is an interdisciplinary enquiry into the *global city* (Sassen, 1991) as it is represented and managed in and through the medium of cinema. It is hoped that the research, situated at the juncture of sociology and film studies, will provide a fresh perspective on the role of the global city both generally and within and beyond cinema and other media. The complexity of the city is evident in its workings: vast numbers of people, as pedestrians, in private cars, on various forms of public transport, on bicycles, in shops, restaurants, cafés and bars, mingle within a fixed radius for a variety of reasons. The city is

...something more than a mere collective entity...the city is rooted in the habits and customs of the people who inhabit it. The consequence is that the city possesses a moral as well as a physical organisation, and these two mutually interact in characteristic ways to mould and modify one another (Park, 1915, p. 578).

Here Park alerts us to the idea that the city is a 'lived' space, carrying more meaning and ideological significance than simply those of a geographical location. What other features, then, define the city space, as an extension of Park's concepts, detailed above? Amin and Thrift (2002) draw on the three aspects described by Pile (1999) as designating cities as distinctive spaces: '...their density as concentrations of people, things, institutions and architectural forms; the heterogeneity of life they juxtapose in close proximity; and their citing of various networks of communication and flows across and beyond the city' (Amin & Thrift, 2002, p. 2). Thus cities are '...places of work, consumption, circulation, play, creativity, excitement, boredom. They gather, mix, separate, conceal, display...they juxtapose nature, people, things and the built environment in any number of ways' (2002, p. 3). This encompassing and evocative definition of cities provides a useful starting point for understanding the significance of cities as both lived and represented spaces. Given that there are thousands of cities across the globe, we need to ask ourselves what makes a city a 'global city'.

Georgiou (2008) reminds us that 'possibly more than any other location, the global city brings people, technologies, economic relations and communication practices into unforeseen constellations and intense juxtapositions of difference (Benjamin, 1997)...' (p. 1). The implications of these 'intense juxtapositions of difference' in the city space make the global city '...also a political space where struggles for power, control and ownership are reflected and shaped through the intense (mediated) meetings of people, technologies and places' (Georgiou, 2008, p. 3). Global cities, with their large, transnational populations and high concentration of financial, political and cultural power, are *symbolically significant* locations with easily recognisable landmarks. These cities are often portrayed in a variety of global media, including cinema. The conglomeration of all such cinematic images of any particular global city, repeated, excerpted, referenced and imagined, then becomes what we can call the 'cinematic city'.

Much scholarly attention has focused both on the representational importance of the 'cinematic city' (see, for example, Bruno, 1997 and 2000; Hemelryk Donald & Gammack, 2007) and the hierarchical positioning of global cities (see, for example, Sassen, 1991; Beaverstock et al., 1999; Taylor et al., 2002). Within the framework of the cinematic city and the hierarchical positioning of global cities, we see a constant construction on screen of these cities as 'global', which influences the relationship between this hierarchical positioning and the frequent presence of cities thought to be global cities in cinematic representations (i.e. London and New York as opposed to those cities, like Dubai and São Paulo, that probably are 'global', but are not recognised on screen as such). It is this relationship which needs to be problematised. In this thesis I seek to forge a critical link between well-known global cities that are ranked highly on the global city hierarchy and their presence in cinema, investigating precisely the role of the cinematic medium in cultivating, communicating and ultimately maintaining the global city's symbolic reputation. This has led to the formulation of the following research question: **How do cinema and cinematic representations construct, reaffirm and communicate the symbolic power of the global city?**

Sub-questions include: *How is the symbolic power of the global city negotiated through time?* and *What can cinematic representations of cities, coupled with changes in the global marketplace, tell us about the evolving role of cinema in the symbolic construction of the global city?* The analysis in this thesis asks whether there is a link between the evolution of the portrayal of the global city in cinema and the articulation of the symbolic power of the global city in other arenas (in both cinematic and non-cinematic media, as well as in the realms of politics, cultural production and economics). The city is a complex entity and, since global cities command a lion's share of world cities' symbolic power, this thesis asks what role the widespread distribution and consumption of film texts featuring these cities has in the distribution of power. Are cinematic representations central to the cultivation, communication and sustaining of the global city's symbolic power?

In Chapter 2, I discuss the ways in which global cities command vast amounts of power in a variety of arenas, including the geo-political, cultural-industrial and market spaces. Until now, the scholarly community has engaged with the advent of global cities primarily through their central role in global economic processes, transnational migration and global culture (which has multiple definitions according to Pratt [2008, p. 112], including heritage, high culture, street culture, urban culture and cultural quarters). The moniker 'global city' was defined and popularised by Saskia Sassen (1991), in her discussion of these cities' (London, New York and Tokyo in the case of Sassen's work of 1991) disproportionate control over the majority of the world's financial transactions. In this project I further dissect the concept of the global city by showing how symbolic power is an amalgamation of cultural, economic and political power (see Bourdieu, 1985). This is highly prevalent in the current visual and market landscape, in that there seems to be a strong link between the mediation of the image of global cities through commercial media and the cultivation of their 'iconic' status. Cinema, with its key attributes of (audio-)visual representation and global distribution, is an important intersection between various forms of power. The status of global cities as world centres for capitalism, culture and political power means that they

are also sites of diversity and difference. Indeed, as Georgiou (2008) notes, global cities ‘...present powerful examples, where different groups live cheek by jowl, in close proximity and in intimate interaction – desired or unavoidable’ (p. 223). Large numbers of transnational migrants belonging to a variety of social classes and ethnic backgrounds converge on the global city, looking to exploit its global connectedness, often financially. These groups of migrants include the ‘transnational elite’ (Hamnett, 2004, p. 104), often contracted to work in the high-paying financial sector in the City of London (financial district), as well as asylum seekers and other poorer economic migrants. Individuals belonging to these groups live and work alongside those from more established migrant communities and the indigenous population. Global cities are also, inevitably, focal points of domestic migration, with individuals from rural communities or smaller cities in the same country migrating to the global city. There is massive heterogeneity between these groups and indeed within the different cultural, ethnic and racial groups, relating to class, gender, sexual orientation and other identities. It is precisely this ‘intense juxtaposition of difference’ (Georgiou, 2008, p. 223), which by some accounts makes the global city dynamic, fascinating and unpredictable. The view taken of the dynamism of the resident populations, more than of capital formation and labour relations, and the concurrent sense of the unpredictability inherent in migration and of cultural mixing speaks to the apparently contradictory nature of cities’ *symbolic power*, a concept which is discussed in detail in Section 1.3.

### **1.3 Symbolic Power**

Power can manifest itself in a multitude of ways, both obvious and non-obvious, although obvious forms of power, like militarised borders (see Fanon, 1952; Mbembe, 1990; Frazer & Hutchings, 2008); material and bureaucratic conditions imposed by the state (see Bendix, 1945) or hierarchies in business and industry, are crucial to understanding why certain cities seem ‘global’ whilst others do not. Non-obvious forms of power, like symbolic power, are perhaps more empirically interesting

precisely because they can be difficult to recognise. Indeed, Foucault (1996) argued that power needs to be understood as something complex:

The question of power is greatly impoverished if posed solely in terms of legislation, or the constitution, or the state, the state apparatus. Power is much more complicated, much more dense and diffuse than a set of laws or a state apparatus. One cannot understand the development of the productive forces of capitalism, nor even conceive of their technological development, if the apparatuses of power are not taken into consideration. (p. 235)

Foucault's (1996) mention of the 'apparatuses of power' links to *symbolic power*, where there is an unquestioned acceptance in society of the ways in which power functions and is exercised. The concept of symbolic power was most extensively developed by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who calls this type of power 'misrecognisable' (1991, p. 170) or taken for granted. Although its 'misrecognisable' nature can be construed as something intangible or unidentifiable, relying solely on symbols of power, symbolic power has its roots in other forms of power and influence. Bourdieu (1991) defines symbolic power as 'that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it' (p. 164). In the context of this thesis, symbolic power provides a useful framework within which to discuss the power of global cities, and the dialectical contribution of these cities to the power of cinematic representation. These places are both symbolically significant (in culture and representation) and key sites of global politics, culture and the economy. They have historical and contemporary importance in a variety of arenas.

For example, in spite of the current global economic situation, in which the global cities of the 'North' have relinquished at least some of their economic power to emerging centres in Asia, such as Beijing and Mumbai, many city benchmarking indices – key sites of representational symbolic power – continue to rank New York and London in particular as their top two most important cities. These indices include the Globalisation and World Cities Research Network, based in the UK; the

Institute for Urban Strategies, at the Mori Memorial Foundation in Japan; and the Foreign Policy Global Cities Index, based in the US, amongst others. At the same time, however, these global cities are rarely touted as the world's most 'liveable' cities (see Massey, 2007, p. 9). The disconnect between these two types of benchmarking sheds light on the ways in which 'success' and 'power' are framed and measured in neoliberal capitalism—profits and economic productivity are valued more highly in representations of cities than quality-of-life markers. Bourdieu (1991) addresses this apparent hierarchy of particular representations by reminding us that symbolic power 'is a transformed...transfigured and legitimated form of other forms of power' (p. 170). Symbolic power is therefore also dependent upon *pre-existing power* in a variety of forms. This functions in a way that implies '...a certain claim to symbolic authority as the socially recognised power to impose a certain vision of the social world, i.e. of the divisions of the social world' (Bourdieu, 1991 p. 106). These divisions, like North/South, First World/Third World, have very real and tangible consequences in the cultural and social life of a city and its people.

### 1.3.1 Symbolic power and the media

Although Bourdieu was not referring specifically to the media in his discussion of symbolic power, there has recently been increased interest in the ways that the media inflect and build this type of power through representations. According to Thompson (1995), symbolic power relates to the 'capacity to intervene in the course of events, to influence the actions of others and indeed to create events, by means of the production and transmission of symbolic forms' (p. 17). These 'symbolic forms' most certainly include media output. Couldry (2003) augments this definition of symbolic power with a 'stronger' vocabulary, which he cites as central to understanding the role of the media in constructing particular social norms. 'A strong concept of symbolic power...suggests that some concentrations of symbolic power are so great that they dominate the whole social landscape; as a result, they seem so natural that they are misrecognised, and their underlying arbitrariness becomes difficult to see'

(p. 4). Couldry (2003) is clearly influenced by the Gramscian notion of hegemony, discussed below in the context of symbolic power (see Kong, 1993). This conceptualisation of symbolic power, where the concepts of *naturalisation* or *normalisation* are key, is also central to Silverstone's (2006) claims regarding the 'taken for granted' nature of media output more generally. He notes that 'the need for doubt falls away, for the invitation is to accept the world as it appears on the screen, an appearance which is, for all its superficial variety, ubiquitous, eternal and, to all intents and purposes, real (although...it is nothing of the sort)' (Silverstone, 2006, p. 51). Silverstone's assertion is rooted in Bourdieu's description of symbolic power as a 'misrecognisable' force. The media, according to this interpretation, both respond to and construct the world around us, through a process of cultivating and embedding symbolic identities through a variety of outlets. Couldry (2003) cites explicitly television, radio and the press as important sites at which symbolic power is produced (p. 2). The missing link to Couldry's work is cinema.

This project seeks to understand how precisely *cinematic representations* are also important sites at which the symbolic power of the global city, specifically London, is produced. The ways in which a city is *represented* are intrinsically bound to this notion of the production of symbolic power through the media. Representation, as Stuart Hall (1997) reminds us, is '...central to the process by which meaning is produced' (p. 2). Cities are represented as spectacles of 'us' or of the 'other', whereby both sameness and difference can be monetised. This dialectic, of sameness and difference, is addressed and expanded upon in Chapters 6 and 7. The capacity to control the social production of distinction 'by mediating other forms of power such as economics and religion...' defines symbolic power, argues urban studies scholar Acuto (2010, p. 273). The very term 'symbolic' suggests an intangible yet pervasive force which dictates and guides the ways in which the social world is constructed, consumed and understood—we make sense of the world through symbols. Acuto (2010, p. 273), drawing on Bourdieu (1985, pp. 730-733), defines these symbols as language, image and built space, which he argues form the core of human interaction:

They allow for difference, and consequently for the coexistence and continual creation of individual as well as group identities. Mastering symbolic power, in this sense, means ...voluntarily producing separations and social worlds that affect others' identities and freedom for action.

(Acuto, 2010, p. 273)

Furthermore, Kong (1993) discusses the Gramscian notion of hegemony as a force through which symbolic power becomes 'natural' and 'common sense' (p. 15), again reminding us of Bourdieu's 'misrecognition' in terms of the ways in which reality is constructed. This natural construction is not a fictional construct and this order and these relations of power need to be *believable*. In order to be believable, this construction needs to be grounded in certain real social relations and conditions, inviting us to problematise, question and research how this dialectic between ideology and reality works. Contradictions are therefore inherent in symbolic power. We are conditioned to *assume* and *accept* the existence and pervasiveness of the symbolic power of certain entities, individuals and, most relevant to this thesis, even places.

It is important to acknowledge, then, the 'taken for granted' nature of this sense-making, whereby social realities are accepted as natural. Indeed as Bourdieu (1989) argues, '...agents...tend to perceive the world as natural and to accept it much more readily than one might imagine...the construction of social reality is not an individual enterprise but may also become a collective enterprise' (p. 18). As mentioned, symbolic power is an often intangible force and, as Stigel and Frimann (2006) note a '...tangible product may become a secondary thing in relation to the intangible and symbolic product' (p. 245). Returning to the idea of ranking cities, the very existence of the 'global urban hierarchy' (Brenner & Keil, 2006, p. 3) suggests that there is a certain level of symbolic power attached to certain cities and that this symbolic power, though the result of a number of processes, is often intangible and taken for granted particularly in media representations of cities. Could it be that these places, due to their widespread representation in a variety of media outlets, become 'ordinary'? That some cities are perceived as 'global' or 'world' cities and others are not suggests that certain attributes are



valued over others—this is evidenced, for example, by the disconnect between a city's *globalness* and its liveability (see Massey, 2007, p. 60). This also reflects the ways in which 'success' is measured in neoliberal capitalism (see Massey, 2007, p. 9).

We need to ask ourselves, then, if the global city in fact is not simply the locus in which the practices of the symbolic economy are exercised, but rather whether the city as a concept and a physical space is a *constituent part* of the symbolic economy within the context of neoliberal capitalism. Brenner and Theodore (2002) shed light on this question, claiming that '...cities have become strategic targets for an increasingly broad range of neoliberal policy experiments, institutional innovations, and politico-ideological projects' (p. 375). The city, particularly the global city, is therefore a seat of symbolic power, perhaps the pinnacle of the capitalist agenda. This power is manifested on and through a multitude of channels such as economics, politics, language and cultural production. Each of these channels comes with its own dynamics, which means that the manifestation of power needs to draw from each of these channels' realities, including their internal contradictions. For example, particular forms of economic prosperity also result in increasing economic and social inequalities; political decisions have differential consequences for different socio-demographic groups; cultural production can be, amongst other things, a space for creative expression whilst at the same time potentially exclusive and exclusionary. This thesis therefore seeks to understand how these contradictory but connected impulses and processes are mirrored in the ways in which the city's symbolic power is manifested, represented and built through cinema.

Furthermore, as Friedmann (1986) reminds us, global cities 'are centres for the production and dissemination of information, news, entertainment and other cultural artefacts' (p. 156), thereby commanding large amounts of influence in the portrayal of the world to the world. How does this link to symbolic power? Bourdieu's (1985) discussion of symbolic goods draws attention to the idea that even cultural goods command vast amounts of (economic) power: 'Symbolic goods are a two-

faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object: their specifically cultural value and their commercial value remain relatively independent although the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration' (p. 16). Crucially, there is a significant link between cultural value and economic value, whereby the former becomes entrenched in the latter within the market economy. With regard to global city networks and hierarchies, these practices, according to Smith (2003), ultimately strengthen the linkages between global cities and increase their influence in the world (p. 38). The very idea that we have global city hierarchies is precisely an example of Bourdieu's critique of power relations. To illustrate this critique, I return to the example of the imbalance, the way that symbolic power is unevenly distributed, in that in spite of the economic rise of cities in Asia and the Middle East we continue to see the same cities, London, New York, etc., at the top of city ranking indices. Could this imbalance also extend to *representations* of global cities, in particular *cinematic representations*? Section 1.4 below provides a historicised account of the relationship between films and the city and asks about the links between symbolic power and the *global* city.

## **1.4 Cinema and the City**

Numerous scholars have examined the relationship between cinema and the city in great depth. Most significantly, some view the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the era in which the idea of the 'urban' as a multi-layered, culturally and artistically rich landscape began to take hold within the context of modernity (see, for example, Baudelaire, 1961; Bruno, 1997 and 2007; Mennel, 2008). Film served as a major catalyst for this transformation. Indeed as Shiel (2001) notes, 'the nexus *cinema-city*...provides a rich avenue for investigation and discussion of key issues which ought to be of common interest in the study of society...and in the study of culture' (p. 2). With the advent of film, cities became cinematic and therefore multi-dimensional, diverse entities. Poor, rich, colourful, bleak, desolate, bustling, abandoned, full: the represented city became an inherently nuanced space. Since the appeal of cinema relies on links between fiction and reality, films featuring cities presented (and continue

to present) multiple facets of the city's identity. The filmmaker's lens became a tool for giving a city its character; a city's identity was captured and rendered timeless by the movie camera. Bruno's (2007) discussion aptly concludes that '...film was born out of the geography of modernity and its visual culture...[and that] the emotion of cinema extends beyond the walls of the movie house. It is genealogically implanted in the movement of modernity' (pp. 13-14). In Bruno's earlier work (1997), she attests to the idea that '...the movie theatre housed the city, which itself was a movie house, a theatre of modernity's journeys' (p. 13).

Bruno's (1997, 2007) words are significant on two levels. Firstly, she suggests that the relationship between cinema and the city is a reciprocal one, whereby one influences the other and vice-versa. The influence of the cinematic city is so widespread, so broad, that we must consider to what extent the filmmaker's rendition of a city shapes our perceptions of it, either prior to or during our physical experience in that city. In addition, Bruno (1997) suggests that a city's physical elements, for example its architecture or its infrastructure, may influence or may be influenced by cinematic representations. 'The image of the city ends up closely interacting with filmic representations. The streetscape is as much a filmic "construction" as it is an architectural one' (p. 12). Such an understanding of the relationship between film and the city warrants an exploration of cinema's reciprocal influence on the city's architecture and on images we associate with certain cities. In this thesis, I address the ways in which a city's 'essence' or 'spirit' is constructed and depicted in film, in the interplay between the cinematic and 'real' (physical) cities. In many instances, the city itself becomes a protagonist, as in the Italian Neorealism and French New Wave styles (such as De Sica's [1948] *Bicycle Thieves* and Godard's [1960] *Breathless*). Such notions echo directly the 19<sup>th</sup> century French concept of the *flâneur* or 'city stroller', whose tenets and philosophies arguably had a profound impact on the role and significance of cities in cinema.

Mazlish (1994) discusses Baudelaire's (1956) *flâneur*, highlighting in particular that, within the context of modernity 'the *flâneur's* version of life, based on his peripatetic observations, creates reality...' (Mazlish,

1994, p. 52). Here there is a clear emphasis on the idea that, in addition to influencing architectural and artistic movements (as is evidenced, for example, by Jerde's Universal City Walk project in Los Angeles (see Silver, 1998), a city's 'spirit' may potentially be defined by the activities of the *flâneur*, whereby his impartial and classless state allows for a more profound, balanced picture of the city and its workings (Mazlish, 1994, pp. 48-50). If likened to the camera's lens, the *flâneur* may not be as objective as suggested by Mazlish's (1994) analysis of Baudelaire (1956), in the sense that all that is seen and subsequently relayed by the *flâneur* is intentionally represented in a specific way. A more subjective portrait of a city's 'spirit' emerges, therefore, in much the same vein as the portrayal of the city in cinematic representations. Cinema is simply a tool with which those involved in a film's production (modern-day *flâneurs*) are able to publicise their perception or vision of a city. This perception is transferred to the viewer, whose tools for meaning-making include what Appadurai calls 'mediascapes', within which cinema naturally plays an integral role (see Appadurai, 1990). Jansson (2002) explicitly links media consumption about a city to the ways in which a city is perceived and the ultimate desire for first-hand tourism, a concept which he has termed 'mediated spatial phantasmagoria' (see Jansson, 2002). Could mediatised representations of cities, especially films, therefore be potentially important tools for city marketers and planners? And in what ways is the complex and changing materiality of wealthy cities rich symbolic resources for directors to play with and to incorporate into narrative?

López (2002), reminds us that, like *flâneurs*, filmmakers and the various individuals and bodies responsible for the production of films are not without prejudices or ideological motives. López (2002) describes Hollywood's depictions of Latin American cities in the 1940s and 1950s as highly stylised and often embellished—the products of a particular era with a particular set of motivations. The 'otherised' representations of Latin American cities and therefore their inhabitants are further emphasised by new technologies, López (2002) argues, such as the advent of the Technicolor mode of filming (p. 206). The (Northern) depiction of the (Southern) other exposes a clear stratification of

discursive, and therefore cultural and ultimately political, power. The location and implications of such power relations, though discussed at length by scholars like Saïd (1978), are rarely analysed from the viewpoint of the role of cinema in perpetuating and/or responding to established stereotypes of the city of the discursive 'other'. López's (2002) brief analysis of the 'othering' of Latin American cities as a response to North American sentiments towards the region in the post-World-War-II era deserves greater scrutiny on a wider, perhaps global, scale. López's discussion rightly suggests that the representation, and ultimately the embedded image, of the city and of its inhabitants is the product of a particular dominant culture. While this thesis does not deal with representations of Latin American cities or of the North/South divide in film, López makes an important point about power relations, whereby the 'misrecognised' nature of the dominance of a particular culture reminds us of Bourdieu's (1994) concept of symbolic power. How does this seemingly isolated example relate to a more general conversation about cities and cinema? We need in this instance to return to Stuart Hall (1997), who notes that representations are intrinsically linked to meaning-making, where power dynamics play a key role. The meanings created through representation '...define what is "normal", who belongs—and therefore, who is excluded. They are deeply inscribed in relations of power' (p. 10).

A discussion of 'normativity', addressing issues of power, is warranted at this stage. The ways in which cities are represented in films, and the ways in which the characters interact with their surroundings, both reflect and construct dominant or 'naturalised' concepts present in society. The 'truth' about an image in general, let alone with reference to a city, is a specific *version* of the truth. Representation is a construction and, returning to Bourdieu's ideas, symbolic power is created and reaffirmed in cinematic representations of the global city. There is a clear link here to the Gramscian notion of hegemony, in the sense that certain representational conventions are deployed in such a way that they appear to be common sense and as such simply go unnoticed, making symbolic power embedded and invisible. Indeed, as Gramsci himself argues with

reference to how the world is portrayed by the dominant classes, 'common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself' (cited in Hall, 1982, p. 73). Useful in this instance is MacDonald's (2003) work on media discourse, in which he discusses the idea of constructivism.

The notion of construction implies neither an intention to deceive, nor an ability on the part of the media to determine our thinking. Instead, it suggests a vital interaction between the media's role of forming the "frames for understanding" we construct in our heads about the material world, and the actuality of our behaviour and attitudes. (p. 14)

Although MacDonald's (2003) analysis refers to the media more generally, he emphasises the idea that our 'frames for understanding' form the basis for the viewer's interpretation of the 'reality' displayed on screen. Although framing theory is not expanded upon in this thesis, since it is a concept normally associated with news media, I do approach the notion of symbolic power in terms of making the global city's image 'ordinary' in the context of media output. Kong (1993, p. 15) relates this to hegemony, where symbolic power becomes 'natural', 'common sense' and 'taken for granted' (see Section 2.2.4 of this thesis). Drawing from Foucault (1981), MacDonald (2003) argues that 'discourses are to be explored for what [Foucault] calls their "tactical productivity" (what they achieve in terms of power and knowledge) and for their "strategical integration" (what circumstances and rules give rise to their use in particular circumstances) (Foucault, 1981, pp. 101-102)' (MacDonald, 2003, p. 18).

The way the world is portrayed for us in cinematic representations, then, could be understood within a constructivist framework. Jeunet's (2001) depiction of Paris in *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*, with its enchanted streets and few individuals of non-European descent, is a *construction* of a reality which may exist for some viewers but not for others. In this film, the city's framing properties, referred to both visually and by the film's narrative, are a generally accepted version of Paris's cultural legitimacy: the city is magical and enchanted. Kassovitz's (1995) Paris in *La Haine*, on the other hand, is far from enchanted, poor, fragmented and violent. The spotlight in the latter example is on the

*banlieue* of Chanteloup-les-Vignes as opposed to the well-known central *arrondissements* depicted in Jeunet's work.

As I began formulating this thesis in 2009, the use of cinema and cinematic representations as tools through which to promote the global city's symbolic power was an emerging phenomenon. I therefore do not question here *whether* this phenomenon exists; rather, as discussed in Section 1.1, the primary research question is *how* cinema and cinematic representations construct, reaffirm and communicate the symbolic power of the global city. The way the research questions are framed is reflective of this positioning. This focus on *cinematic representations* immediately points towards a text-based research methodology (see Chapter 4), straddling the disciplines of film studies and sociology. However, the concept of symbolic power, discussed extensively in Section 1.3, has a multi-faceted focus, on, amongst other things, aesthetics (representations) and market considerations (see Bourdieu, 1985). This dual focus on aesthetics and on the market implies the importance of the political and economic factors through which the films in question were conceived, produced and distributed. Further, to make this research practically pertinent, we need to reflect on how film influences other media and institutions beyond cinema. The articulation of the symbolic power of the global city within the context of cinema, then, must be considered as part of a complex system of linkages between various institutions. Indeed, as Medhurst (1984) argues, 'texts and contexts are indivisibly interrelated discourses, each a part of the other, and to conceptualise them as discrete is to render full analysis impossible' (p. 35). The contextual focus is central in the way that it allows for an intersection of the fields of film studies and sociology. To explain this, I turn to Casetti's (1999) work, in which he discusses the four ways in which this intersection can be defined: the socioeconomic aspects of cinema, the institution of cinema, cinema as a culture industry, and the ways in which cinema provides representations of the social world (p. 109). This thorough explanation was incorporated into the methodological approach taken here and is discussed further in Chapter 4.

This contextual focus equally implies that the two concepts of aesthetics and economics are not mutually exclusive. This project asks whether there is a link between aesthetics and the marketisation of the cinematic city, where the artistic aspects of film texts (shooting locations, angles, dialogue) may be linked to a particular, market-orientated aesthetic approach. Riley, Baxter and Van Doren (1998) note, of films released in the early and mid-1990s, that

...movies were not produced with the prime intent of inducing people to visit locations. However, it was thought that major motion pictures *enhanced the awareness, appeal, and profitability* of locations and they were of *limited duration* in terms of viewing time and days at cinematic venues. Further, motion pictures were likened to *recurrent events* through their re-release on mediums such as cinemas, videos, laser disks, and television and cable networks.

(p. 922; italics original)

I make no claims with regard to intentionality, unless there is specific evidence within and/or outside the film text (in other media) to indicate that artistic choices were made with a particular agenda in mind, perhaps involving creative agents or other stakeholders in city promotion. The empirical research reported in this thesis does suggest an evolving marketplace in which cinema and other industries, including government agencies, work together to exploit the potential of film to sell the city to the world.

## **1.5 London in Cinema**

In this thesis, I use London as a paradigmatic example of a global city, since its global city status is undisputed (see Beaverstock et al., 1999, pp. 445-446). The construction of the city as a dynamic and innovative global centre was heavily propagated and publicised after 1997, when the New Labour government came to power. Tony Blair's campaign to make Britain 'cool', discussed at length in Chapter 3, was manifested both in rhetoric and in policy, in the social and cultural arenas. Film and cultural policy changed and the UK Government began to emphasise



profit and managerialism in relation to creativity.<sup>4</sup> Profit and managerialism are elements strongly associated with neoliberalism, which Lemke (2001) defines as 'a political rationality that tries to render the social domain economic and to link a reduction in (welfare) state services and security systems to the increasing call for "personal responsibility" and "self-care"' (p. 203). Many films released after 1997 seem to reflect this shift, with primarily blockbuster romantic comedies representing London as a shiny, white, middle-class, US-friendly city. It is for this reason that the film analysis in this thesis is located in the 1997-2007 period, the height of the New Labour era in Britain and before the 2008 global economic downturn. The London-set films selected for analysis are indisputably global productions, featuring international film stars and funded by a variety of studios in many countries. The Government's film policy created a favourable environment for international studios to make films in the UK (see Watson, 2000). This thesis seeks to discover how films released during the 1997-2007 period participate in re-affirming and maintaining London's symbolic power in an array of different ways and within the context of particular policies and cultural changes.

Other recent scholarly works have also looked at the connections between the city and cinema, with a few focussing on London. Brunsdon (2007), for example, provides an excellent deconstruction of post-war London as depicted on screen, through a thematic analysis of the interplay between space, place and the screen. Instead of providing an archival resource, Brunsdon (2007) asks us to revisit our perceptions of cinematic London, moving away from clichés and distancing ourselves from preconceived ideas about London's status as a cinematic city. In fact, Brunsdon initially dispels any hesitations about London's status as one of the world's foremost cinematic cities, quelling any doubts about its central position in the history of cinema and the city (see Brunsdon, 2007, p. 9). Other scholars, by contrast, particularly when discussing cities with a weak cinematic presence, cite London as one of the world's foremost

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<sup>4</sup> See the Creative Industries Mapping Document, released in 2001, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creative-industries-mapping-documents-2001>

cinematic cities, taking for granted London's rich screen history (see, for example, Hassam, 2009 Hemelryk Donald & Gammack, 2007). In fact, Hassam (2009), in his discussion of Melbourne's cinematic presence in Bollywood films, notes that certain cities in fact *aspire* to resemble London (p. 45). This is an important statement, affirming that London's symbolic power both in and beyond cinema is clearly evident, given that other cities attempt to emulate its cityscape and by extension its cinematic image.

The film analysis in this thesis, contained mostly within Chapters 5 and 6, is divided into theoretically generated thematic categories, bringing together ideas from the fields of film studies and urban sociology. This has some similarities with work done in Webb's (2014) book about cinema and the city in the 1970s, moving from what he calls the 'urban crisis' of the 1960s to the 'urban renaissance' of the 1980s (see Webb, 2014). In Chapter 5 of this thesis, I look at 'Glamorous London' films, which portray the city as a desirable location full of iconic landmarks and upmarket restaurants and bars. These films were hugely profitable at the box office and beyond (DVD and online sales). They present the *obvious* signs of London's global city status and therefore its symbolic power, with depictions of the city's skyscrapers, affluent residents and solid infrastructure. These are the films which register 'a sense of London as a global city' (Brunsdon, 2007, p. 111). By contrast, Chapter 6 looks at 'Multi-Cultural London' films, which centre on the stories of migrants and migrant communities. I call this thematic category 'multi-cultural', rather than 'multicultural', in order to refer to demographics rather than immediately to indicate an ideological positioning in the chapter title. This is not to say, however, that multiculturalism as a doctrine, which was advanced under New Labour, does not play a role in the analysis. In the Multi-Cultural London thematic category, the city is portrayed as bleak, desperate and challenging, with very few references to London's iconic monuments and attributes. Much of the action in Multi-Cultural London films, which focuses on immigrants belonging to both established and newly arrived communities, takes place outside the recognisable West End (entertainment and shopping district) or the City. How do these films

mould themselves to and make use of the idea and the space of London as a global city? Part of the aim of this thesis is to understand how these negative portrayals of the city can fit into a discussion about the contrasting and contradictory elements of London's symbolic power. This type of power is linked to the city's identity as a global city, whereby its significance as a world financial centre renders it concomitantly a hub for the global media, culture, the arts (films, visual art, theatre, music) and for transnational migrants.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This thesis asks how London, a global city, uses cinema to enhance its symbolic power and how films about London use the idea of London and the materiality of its space to enhance their layers of meaning. London, like other global cities, possesses a large amount of *pre-existing* symbolic power, which is the very context within which some film narratives play. It is, therefore, the interplay between this existing and latent symbolic power, coupled with a strong cinematic presence, which make the city of London a fascinating site for this type of investigation. Cinema as a cultural industry, and therefore cinematic representations themselves, have rendered the global city a consumer 'good', emphasising the centrality of the global city's position in the market dimension—the global cities have become as much 'consumer products' as the films in which they are featured. Take for instance the 1999 film *Notting Hill*, whose title indicates an awareness of the lucrative potential of London's symbolic power to promote the film. This example points to the current state of the media, in which there is an extraordinary link between global and cinematic cities. This dual focus points to a symbiotic or mutually beneficial relationship between certain cities and cinema.

A report released in September 2012, entitled *The Economic Impact of the UK Film Industry*, suggests that 'successful' (based on box office receipts and international distribution) films made and set in the UK provide tangible financial benefits for the country's economy. The report cites merchandising and increased numbers of overseas tourists looking

to visit locations seen in films as evidence of these benefits. In London, activities carried out by agencies linked both to the city and to the cinema industries seem equally to attest to the importance of cinema for tourism. For example, the government-sponsored agency Film London produces movie maps guiding visitors through locations used in various films, whilst the Warner Brothers studio at Leavesden, to the north-west of Central London, in 2012 began offering a studio tour, with a focus on the *Harry Potter* films, which were made in the studio.



Figure 2: The Warner Brothers Studio Tour at Leavesden.  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2114972/Harry-Potter-studio-tour-review-See-inside-movie-sets-Leavesden.html>

My research hypothesis suggests that mainstream, globally distributed cinematic representations of global cities make visible a change in the articulation of the symbolic power of the global city whereby cinema is central to the ways global cities manage their reputation and symbolic power. This hypothesis is a response to an observation of the current state of global mainstream cinema and the promotion of global cities, where a synergetic and symbiotic relationship is taking place. This relationship reflects contemporary conditions in the marketplace, where both films and global cities are taking on the characteristics of 'symbolic goods'. The concept of symbolic power

introduced by Bourdieu (1985), focusing on the duality of this type of power as both representational and economic, is central to understanding that the symbolic power of the global city is not fixed: its construction, particularly through the medium of cinema, has evolved over time. Critically, it is important to understand and acknowledge that the city's symbolic power may be as nuanced and as contested as the city itself. This thesis addresses these contradictions and shows how they fit into an analysis of the connections between the cinematic city and symbolic power. I approach this study through an investigation into the ways in which the global city of London was represented in cinema over a fixed period, 1997-2007, and the repercussions of the changes which took place during that period on the way the global city has taken on the characteristics of a consumer good. This study, combining elements of film studies and urban sociology, seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on cinema and the city. It is hoped that this fresh perspective on the subject opens up new areas of scholarly enquiry into the role of cinema and other media in constructing and re-affirming global urban hierarchies.



Figure 3: Panorama of London featuring St Paul's Cathedral, the City, Canary Wharf and the Shard (photo taken by the author from Waterloo Bridge).

## CHAPTER 2: THE GLOBAL CITY

### 2.1 Introduction

On a crowded London Underground train one evening, I noticed a fellow commuter—a middle-aged white man—reading a newspaper. The headline on the front page read: 'Migrants take *all* new jobs in Britain',<sup>5</sup> suggesting that problems relating to joblessness in the UK are linked to the presence of 'foreigners' on British soil. The man shortly proceeded to answer his ringing phone, conversing with the person on the other end in Polish. Meanwhile on the train's loudspeaker, the driver interrupts the clear, animated tones of the automated announcement to ask passengers, in an Indian accent, to 'mind the closing doors'. As I leave the train, I am delighted to hear that 'there is a good service in operation on all London Underground lines with no reported station closures'. The announcement is made in a strong French accent. These experiences, which all took place in the space of 20 minutes on a short commute from Shepherd's Bush Market in West London to Baker Street in Central London, have become part of the fabric of life in the British capital. Years, decades and perhaps centuries of migration have created one of the most culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse cities on the planet, where it is common to hear at least two languages spoken in a space as confined as a Tube carriage. Indeed, it would be difficult to wander the streets of London without hearing a language that is not English or not to notice a sea of faces comprising a variety of races and ethnicities. London is the epitome of the 'global' city, where individuals from every corner of the earth come to live and work. London's international population contributes to its dynamic and fascinating nature.

This ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity transcends class boundaries, as London is a city in which members of the aristocracy and wealthy corporate executives working in the financial district, the City of

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<sup>5</sup>See <http://www.anorak.co.uk/378413/politicians/everything-victoria-ayling-knows-about-immigration-she-learnt-from-these-daily-mail-front-pages.html/>

London, share the streets with asylum seekers, political refugees and unskilled workers. The world's rich and the world's poor call London their home. The streets of the affluent Knightsbridge district in Central London, for example, are peppered with luxury shops, expensive cars and some of the world's most expensive residential and commercial property, where wealthy shoppers and poorer service providers share the same space. At the same time, residents of Barking, Dagenham and Havering, the statistically poorest areas of London, earn on average just under £17,000 a year (see Stone, 2015, n.p.). This is against an average annual income of approximately £41,000 in the capital in 2014 (Anderson, 2014, n.p.). Although these two examples demonstrate clear boundaries within the city, long-term gentrification projects have resulted in many deprived areas becoming wealthier and less accessible for those on low incomes. This means that London's poorer residents are being priced out of home ownership in some of the city's traditionally working-class neighbourhoods. Examples include Hackney in East London and Islington in North London. Meanwhile, the King's Cross area in Central London, known for prostitution and the conduct of illicit affairs, is now home to a luxury hotel and the restored St Pancras Station, London's international rail hub. With growing levels of wealth and investment across London, the city becomes more attractive to international corporations and individuals looking to capitalise on London's profit-making offerings. The city becomes even more attractive to these entities given London's large international population with workers from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of skills – from corporate executives to cleaners to clerical workers. All the phenomena and processes just mentioned are generally seen both as the consequence of and as examples of globalisation, which is conventionally viewed as the process by which markets and nations become more and more integrated, through massively increased flows of people, technology, trade and culture, bringing previously disparate parts of the globe into relation with one another (Robertson, 1992; Tomlinson 1999; Bordo, Taylor & Williamson, 2007).

In this tradition, the global city has been discussed as a fundamental part of globalisation. Without the global population, and



therefore connections to the rest of the world, most global cities would not exist in the way that they do today. How is the global city's 'success' measured? Although the answer to this question is often related in a celebratory manner to financial power and marketable culture (see Florida, 2002; Kennedy, 2011), this chapter will demonstrate that there are other important and necessary factors which make the global city dynamic and fascinating, both as a lived space and as a concept for scholarly enquiry. In order to unpick the global city's success, in fact in order to unpick the whole idea of success, we need to problematise the celebratory discourse of 'economic growth' and 'increased investment' so prevalent in the mainstream media and amongst some academic commentators (see Kennedy, 2011). This celebration is of course also coupled with right-wing rhetoric about the impacts of globalisation, as in the example described earlier in this section of the newspaper headline about migration having a negative impact on employment for the country's native inhabitants. These accounts are both linked to particular understandings of *financial power* and fail to take into account the experiences of those actually inhabiting the city space. Whilst schemas framed in relation to conceptualisations of neoliberal globalisation place London at the top of many city benchmarking indices, it is at face value an 'unliveable' city, in terms of quality of life and affordability, according to a recent survey (see Allen, 2014). So, why is London's success celebrated when the quality of life for those who inhabit the city is actually so uneven? This has much to do with the ways in which 'success' is measured in neoliberal capitalism, a phenomenon that fetishises unfettered market competition as the lifeblood of personal, social, civic and political life (see Massey, 2007, p. 16). Further, even 'quality of life' indicators, which are themselves ideological, do not take into account the actual lived experience of the city's inhabitants. Both methods for ranking cities – city benchmarking and assessing liveability – are flawed and construct a misleading picture.

In order to draw out the tensions between institutional and critical perspectives on global cities, this chapter provides several approaches to global cities. Firstly, It looks at the idea of the global city from a normative institutional perspective, focussing on celebratory discourses



relating to the success of certain cities. Section 2.2 approaches this normative institutional approach from a variety of perspectives, including those of economics and culture, with symbolic power emerging as an important theme. The overarching theme in this section is the contribution of a multitude of factors and agents to the economic growth of the global city. Section 2.3 problematises such institutional approaches by looking at how the tangible benefits of the focus on economics are usually restricted to a select few; at the ways in which capital may not be the only contributing factor to global cities' power and allure; and at the case to be made for an approach which works through representation and narrative in the construction and maintenance of the city's symbolic power. Since this thesis is empirically interested in assessing what role film has in the process of enhancing the symbolic power of the global city, this chapter also explores, in Section 2.4, the theme of cinema and the city, connecting cinema and cinematic representations of the global city to the theme of symbolic power working through representation and narrative. This section ties these diverse accounts of the global city to cinema, an industry strongly associated with the city in terms of both representation and production. This provides a backdrop for the empirical analysis of films about London in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

## **2.2 The Global City: Institutional Approaches**

As noted, there are political, critical and depoliticised ways of using the notion of 'global cities', all of which will be examined in this chapter. This section looks at the ways in which the global city is presented in a positive light both in scholarly literature and in mainstream media such as newspapers. There is a conventional and widely held view that the existence of the 'global city' is a cause for celebration and that its development and growth has resulted in overall prosperity (see Kennedy, 2011). The very idea that we classify cities at all is suggestive of a particular line of thought which celebrates contemporary capitalism and the neoliberal approach to governance. Illustrating this tendency, Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor (1999) explore the ways in which the financial power of global cities has developed over time. These authors

suggest that, beyond numerical measurements of the success of global cities, there is an intuitive understanding or acceptance of the hierarchical positioning of global cities, noting that '...it is obvious that cities like London and New York are world [global] cities...There has been broad consensus as to which cities are located at the top of the world city hierarchy' (pp. 445-446). This reference, without any interrogation, to a broad consensus and to the apparent obviousness of certain cities' global power, neatly demonstrates Bourdieu's (1975) conceptualisation of the way in which symbolic power 'constitutes the given by stating it' (p. 82; also see Section 1.3 of this thesis). Skórska and Kloosterman (2012) use the same discourse and metaphors as Beaverstock et al. (1999), taking for granted the importance of financial services in the process of globalisation and, in turn, their role in increasing the power wielded by global cities: 'the role of financial services in a city on a global scale...can be seen as an indicator or proxy of the importance of that city in the global economy' (n.p.). Whilst it is factually accurate to note that these cities are today key locations for a variety of financial services institutions, media and cultural industries, these kinds of assertions de-historicise and de-contextualise the manner in which such global hierarchies come into being and are maintained.

Changes in Western capitalist economies concerning patterns of production and consumption since the 1990s explain some of the economic factors at play in continuing to help some cities retain and build their 'global' reputation. Writing about economic history, Cassis (2009) refers to the 'new world economy' characterised by 'globalisation, deregulation and innovation' (p. 242). In this type of economy there is an emphasis on services rather than manufacturing. Pine and Gilmore (1999) refer to the growing importance of the service industries to Western economies since the late 1990s as the 'Experience Economy'. As central nodes in global capitalism and therefore in this type of service-based economy, global cities are also at the epicentre of what has been conceptualised as the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). From experiences for tourists to financial services, to global dining, drinking and entertainment, to settings for major films, global cities are seen as

providing the ideal geographical and metaphorical backdrop for a variety of services and intangible products. Pine and Gilmore's concept of the experience economy may be useful in understanding how global cities maintain their power through their attractiveness to visitors and potential residents by way of the promise of a particular 'experience' of the city. Here it is possible to see the beginnings of a connection between the concept of hegemony (as discussed in Section 1.3) and the concept of symbolic power. To understand the maintenance of the hierarchical nature of global city taxonomies, we need to look beyond immediate economic and financial power to a sustained attempt on the part of institutions and individuals to direct attention to power in the arenas of culture and transnational migration. These two factors, culture and transnational migration, are as important as economics in the discussion of the symbolic power of the global city. The concept of the experience economy only implies and does not adequately address the fact that the dynamics of the global city's power and reputation are not simply a result of its financial influence, but rely upon a *variety* of realms which make the experience of the city central to its power. We need to remind ourselves that the city is both a *lived space* and a *represented space*. There is little dispute about the fact that the material resources of global cities are structured in ways which demonstrate unequal and hierarchical power. However, cities' symbolic qualities also relate to power dynamics, particularly those originating from individuals and institutions in positions of power.

Approaching the city as a lived space requires an exploration of how the unequal distribution of symbolic and material resources impacts global city inhabitants, in particular those from the working and middle classes. It is the combination of these two aspects – the city as a lived space and the city as a symbolic space – which make the global city fascinating as an object of representation and of study. The interplay between these two aspects is largely absent from Pine and Gilmore's (1999) work. Given that the economic considerations relating to the growth of the service-based industries and the decline of manufacturing have accelerated in the past 20 or 30 years, their emphasis is perhaps

understandable. However, what such analyses neglect is the connection between the material, tangible aspects of economic and social life in global cities – for instance migration, housing, crime, jobs and infrastructure – and the symbolic and representational aspects.

Although economic factors play a major role in narratives concerning the power of the global city, Short (2004) reminds us that global cities also 'act as crucial mediators and translators of the flows of knowledge, capital, people and goods that circulate in the world...Inter-city linkages take a variety of forms: economic, political...as well as cultural flows including films, television, books and events' (p. 15). This statement highlights *cultural* power as emerging through migration, travel, technology, mediated networks and the concentration of these networks in global cities. Indeed, a global city's reputation is considerably enhanced by what I shall call its cultural economy. Although urban geographer Pratt (2012) is critical of the celebratory economic approach to culture in cities, he reminds us that 'culture and the city, especially the global city, are close companions' (p. 266). Even Skórska and Kloosterman (2012) argue that 'arts...are...important for cities and may contribute to determine [a city's] standing and position within the global urban system' (n.p.). In a reductive move, they contend that it is impossible to ignore the monetary value of cultural production and trade and its impact on global cities. London and New York, for example, are the epicentres of the art trading and collecting worlds (see Macquisten, 2013), containing numerous auction houses and a vast array of the world's most prized pieces of artistic output, which is on display in the cities' many museums and galleries. Pratt (2008b) notes that attracting 'cultural tourists' to cities '...with the hope that they will be well off and well behaved' has been the longstanding goal of many cities (p. 141). The commodification of culture also relates to low-brow or 'street' culture, which is often associated with marginalised or poorer social groups. For example, works created by the graffiti artist Banksy, whose pieces appear on the streets of Bristol, London and other UK cities, now sell for up to £500,000. A 2014 article in the *Guardian* newspaper provides a succinct summary of the changes

which have taken place over the years with regard to perceptions of Banksy's work in the mainstream art world:

If a piece by Banksy had appeared in the grand streets around Sotheby's in Mayfair 10 years ago, it would have been removed as fast as the street cleaners could get there. Today it would be removed just as quickly, but to sell for a substantial sum on the open market.

(Kennedy, 2014, n.p.)

Subcultural artistic production, frequently created in urban bohemian enclaves, is often appropriated by the mainstream and repackaged to appeal to the affluent classes with higher purchasing power. Beyond street art, other examples include rap music and fashion trends which mimic urban style. Seen from a normative and celebratory perspective, this means that artists are able to command higher prices for their work.

Urban studies theorist Florida (2002) discusses various indices through which he assesses the cultural clout of a number of western cities, including the 'gay', 'bohemian' and 'coolness' indices. He argues that the higher a city finds itself on these indices, the more the city benefits. Florida (2002) puts forward the notion of the 'creative class', which serves to enhance these alternative indices and works symbiotically with the construction of a city as symbolically significant. A strong creative sector, according to Florida, '...signals an environment that attracts other types of talented or high human capital individuals' (p. 67). Florida (2002) also cites 'diversity and creativity as a key factor in city growth and development' and claims that there is a '...tendency for innovative economic activity to cluster in and around bohemian enclaves' (p. 58). Here Florida refers to the benefits to the city of developing the arts for financial gain. The arts and creative industries themselves, according to this argument, are legitimised as their economic benefit extends into the realm of economic activity. In addition, subcultural artistic production, frequently created in urban bohemian enclaves, is often appropriated by the mainstream and repackaged to appeal to the affluent classes with higher purchasing power, making even these areas part of the cycle of commodification and significant in the cultivation of the city's symbolic

power (see as an example Blair's [1993] work on the commercialisation of rap music). These districts, like the Lower Eastside of Manhattan and Shoreditch in London, formerly industrial areas, become wealthy and desirable locations. All of this, however, still speaks to the centrality of a monetary approach to the power of global cities.

So, what other aspects of culture in cities might be relevant to an analysis interested in power? We need to consider a critical and alternative take on Florida's celebratory nature of the economic impact of diversity and variety in the city. In her work on culture and the global city, Zukin (1995) discusses the role of New York City within what she calls the 'symbolic economy', whereby the city's status as a 'culture capital' creates a snowball effect of higher prices for services in the city and a more general, intuitive sense of 'desirability' in certain districts. 'Developing the city as a culture capital...creates qualitative benefits for the service economy as a whole' (p. 14). From increasing the economic value of commercial and residential property to attracting tourists who spend money on attractions, food, accommodation and other amenities, any well-publicised addition to a city's cultural landscape, according to Zukin (1995), is thought to be beneficial to that city's economic performance. The use of culture to boost a district's desirability is part of the process of gentrification, as discussed in more detail in section 3.3.1). A more recent work by Zukin (2010) discusses the notion of 'authenticity' in a city, which gentrification often erodes. While Zukin, a Neo-Marxist, is largely critical of the commodification of culture, the contextualisation of culture as profit-generating is largely celebrated in the neoliberal political landscape, where economic revenue is seen as the key gauge of 'success' more generally (see Massey, 2007; Kennedy, 2011). The foregoing insights are corroborated by Crewe and Beaverstock (1998), who argue that cultural production and consumption play a key role in the revitalisation and regeneration of contemporary cities (p. 304). This neoliberal approach to culture emphasises only the monetary benefits associated with cultural production and consumption. Complicating this simplistic economic determinism, Short (2004) points out that in the information age global cities are '...no longer defined by the presence of

[for example] corporate headquarters' (p. 17). This reminder is significant because it suggests that we need to factor the de-territorialisation of capital into any understanding of global cities' continued power.

### 2.2.1 City branding: Normativity

A key manifestation of that paradigm from a representational point of view is city branding. The analysis in the empirical chapters of this thesis suggests that there are *parallels* between the practices of representing cities in cinema and the branding of the same cities, whereby cinematic representations construct particular images which are *sold* to consumers (film viewers). Given the importance of cinema in the representation of the city and indeed the centrality of city promotion in neoliberal capitalism (see Massey, 2007, p. 9), the utility of branding as a linking theoretical concept in the symbolic construction of the global city becomes apparent. Branding is a complex procedure involving several actors and agencies:

The promotion of places as world cities is a major industry that involves image creation and manipulation, marketing and merchandising. It extends across a wide range of areas, including the media, heritage, sport, recreation, tourism and aspects of the urban economy. The aim is to give the city a clear positive image or identity so that it will stand out from other places. It is to present the city in the most flattering light and to boost its appeal so that it will attract global attention and investment. Images are constructions that shape perceptions and define the ways in which cities are viewed and responded to. They create a landscape of signs and symbols that has replaced use as the basis for consumption. (O'Connor, 1998, quoted in Clark, 2003, p. 182)

The focus on *images*, *marketing* and *merchandising* seem to point to the importance of cinema in this process of city promotion and branding.

The images incorporated in city branding feed into the notion of 'desirability' mentioned in the previous section, where competition between cities is central. This competitiveness, in theory at least, leads to increased economic productivity in cities. The proliferation of rankings

systems and global city indices mentioned above, for example, has pointed to the consistently favoured status of the global cities of London, New York, Paris and Tokyo. The Globalization and World Cities (GaWc) Research Network at Loughborough University is one of the most comprehensive of such rankings guides, placing the above cities in the 'Alpha++' (London and New York) or 'Alpha+' (Paris and Tokyo) (top) categories, giving them 'super brand' status. Enhancing a city's image is an important factor in global competition for investment. In their study of the branding of the Spanish city of Granada, for example, Luque-Martinez and Muñoz-Leiva (2005) highlight the importance that cities place on benchmarking, concluding that '...cities and territories need to analyse what their potential is in order to be able to compete in the international environment using their differentiation' (p. 422). In spite of efforts by many other cities to join the global cities in the 'Alpha' category, the above locations, in particular London and New York, form an élite club of 'super brands' which appears to be virtually impossible to penetrate. City branding consultant Simon Anholt (2010) provides a useful way in which to understand the concept of city branding: '...there is a big difference between observing that places *have brand images*...and claiming that places *can be branded*...Place branding...observes the former but does not claim the latter' (p. 11). Here Anholt is suggesting that cities that are already well known or have a strong global image are part of the rhetoric of place/city branding. This is reflected in the concept of symbolic power and the idea of a global consensus as to which cities belong at the top of the global urban hierarchy. Places which *have brand images* are the New Yorks, Londons and Parises of the world.

The focus on the experiential elements of production and consumption has transformed the ways in which we consume cities. The effects of the media in cultivating particular 'ways of seeing' through representations brings forth the notion that the *practices* of everyday life are in some ways being transformed by this emphasis on experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 12). As the narratives and images of everyday life have in some ways become rooted in mediatised representations, especially in the developed world, the efforts of city branding agencies



risk being lost in the seemingly endless repertoire of media-generated texts and images available to society at large, whereby those texts are constituent parts of the recent trend of *experiencing*, rather than simply *consuming*. Anholt (2010) assesses whether this 'taken for granted' nature of media output has an effect on the efficacy of city branding campaigns:

If you repeat a slogan frequently enough, people will end up recognising it... Whether it actually has the power to alter their opinions and their behaviour towards [a city]...is quite another matter...In city after city...marketing campaigns are cheerfully sold to governments, and billions of dollars of public money are spent producing them and placing them in the media, where they disappear without a trace. (Anholt, 2010, p. 3)

Anholt suggests that *long-term* repetition, perhaps in a subtle manner, through efforts like product placement and hosting global events, is more likely to solidify a city's reputation in the global consciousness than short-lived marketing campaigns. Is it possible that the representational power of repetitive cinematic repertoires of the city works in similar ways?

City marketing and branding agencies are therefore at the mercy of media proliferation, which forces them to create, for example, campaigns and product tie-ins that aim to circumvent the constraints brought about by 'media clutter' (Olson, 2004, p. 68). Cities are now endowed with *personalities* and are given celebrity status in the media, allowing individuals to interact with them at the level of imagination in the hope of creating long-lasting bonds between individuals and places. The often strong *emotional* characteristics granted to cities (for example, love, hope and dreams), with which individuals connect, are likely to become *embedded* in the everyday life-world. This idea, that emotions and feelings become, in Shils's (1981) terms, 'normative', is of great interest to this thesis. Ambivalence leads to the '...acceptance of tradition as normative' (p. 24): normative brand platforms are simply accepted. Brands more generally, according to branding consultant Wally Olins (2003), '...have become a social and cultural phenomenon with the most

extraordinary strength and power...Branding...is largely about involvement and association; the outward and visible demonstration of private and personal affiliation' (pp. 11-14). Holt (2004) augments Olins's definitions, describing branding as a '...psychological phenomenon which stems from the perceptions of individual consumers...what makes a brand powerful is the collective nature of these perceptions; the stories have become conventional and so are continually reinforced because they are treated as truths in everyday interactions' (p. 3). Holt's point is crucial: brands are powerful when their 'stories' (narratives) are treated as *collective* truths in everyday life. These narratives become 'taken for granted' and eventually 'normalised' in mediatised representations.

Raban (1974) asserts that '...the city as we might imagine it...is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture' (p. 10). Raban's (1974) imagined city is paralleled in the more modern concept of the branded city, which Anholt (2010) emphasises is an embedded entity, one which may not alter its position by way of simply applying commercial branding techniques. '...cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier: their brand goes before them, opening doors, creating trust and respect...' (p. 4). Branding efforts, Anholt (2010) argues, become less relevant, at least in the short term: it is the embedded image and reputation of a place which gives it a competitive edge (p. 5). This is a striking notion which, apart from seeming to discredit some of Anholt's previous work (see Anholt, 2003), brings to light a theoretical tension: how do strong ('iconic') city brands exist if short-term city branding efforts are largely ineffective? How do cities become '...lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation on the global stage...' (Anholt, 2010, p. 4)? A marketing or even a political economic approach does not suffice. Global cities are not simply the locations in which global processes take place at a geographical and material level. Rather, we need to approach global cities as hubs both of the global economy and of politics and culture. Marketers have long

understood the power of symbolic resources such as narratives in branding and fixing the image of cities.

Further developing the paradigm of city branding, Sevcik (2011) claims that 'cities are best understood by the outside world through a narrative. So in a competing globalised world, the main question is not how to brand a city but how best to shape a living city narrative' (p. 344). Furthermore, Sevcik (2011) classes this narrative as an all-encompassing strategy which conveys the 'being and meaning' of the city that becomes embedded in social exchanges. Introducing the idea of the 'living city', indicates that the narrative must incorporate diversity and present a realistic portrayal of the city – one which is not overly idealised. Cinema is an ideal medium through which to construct and convey this narrative, strengthening the city's symbolic power by representing the global city in a variety of ways. The empirical section of this thesis, particularly Chapter 7, provides an analysis of the ways in which the symbolic power of the global city has in recent years been valorised in cinematic representations. Positive portrayals of London in cinema, for example, mask the realities of ethnic and class struggles in the city (see Chapter 5) whilst negative portrayals of the city bring these struggles into the limelight (see Chapter 6). It is precisely the combination of these two opposing narratives which makes the mediatised representation of the city 'real', mirroring the dynamic and fascinating nature of the global city.

### **2.3 Problematising the Normative Approach to the Global City**

Section 2.2 uses the terms 'normative' and 'institutional' to denote the way in which the importance of economic growth as an indicator of the 'success' of the global city has been reinforced in a number of studies. In this section I look at how this celebratory perspective on the global city detracts from the social and material consequences of economic growth and the focus on profit. This will entail a re-working of the definition of globalisation, since in this context the term will take on a more critical meaning. According to film studies scholar Zaniello (2007), who writes about the political economy of film, globalisation is 'an economic and

political phenomenon involving the transnational creation of goods and services by multinational corporations at the lowest cost and for maximum profit' (p. 1). This definition of globalisation clearly problematises the celebratory approach to the global city. The low cost and high profit aspects of this definition suggest the creation of efficiencies in production, where surely those at the bottom of the food chain (labourers) are not likely to benefit. At the same time, however, this definition is incomplete, as it does not take into account the other realms in which globalisation is realised, like the media, technology, culture, international travel and global migration. Global cities are at the centre of this transnational creation of goods and services. Massey (2007) augments Zaniello's definition in relation to the global city, claiming that these cities are important specifically in *neoliberal* globalisation, as they are centres for a wide range of political, economic and cultural processes which have a global reach (p. 9). The analysis in Section 2.2, above, emphasises and reinforces the notion of the global city's success as defined by economic growth and resulting financial indicators. Using this notion as a starting point, in this section I have looked at how this celebratory perspective on the global city overlooks the downside of its success by detracting from negative consequences of economic growth and the focus on profit. If the global city's success is to be measured by its economic and financial indicators, then the people behind these indicators need some attention.

### 2.3.1 The postcolonial city

An important characteristic of the global city is the international nature of its population, with London in particular being home to people of many ethnicities and nationalities. London's rich migration history is in large part a product of British colonisation in many corners of the world. London's diversity and its role as the former capital of the British Empire are a manifestation of the contradictions and complexities of the lived and represented landscape of the global city, which make more visible the limitations of the normative regime. In his work on London's development as a global city, Hamnett (2004), a British expert on gentrification and

social polarisation, notes that '...the geography of European colonisation was reflected in the early pattern of post-immigrant flows. Immigrants were recruited from a number of ex-colonial countries...' (p. 105). The 1960s saw large numbers of immigrants, (many of them unskilled, low-paid workers), arriving in Britain from Africa and South Asia in search of a better life. Although the flow of migrants was initially mainly comprised of unskilled, low-paid workers, the '...increasingly integrated nature of western economies has led to the growth of skilled international migration, particularly in the financial and business services sectors' (p.105). Hamnett calls this latter group of migrants the 'transnational elite' (2004, p.104), a moniker which reflects the group's international composition, high level of wealth and hyper mobility. The difference between the two categories of migrants – low-paid workers and members of a global economic elite – is key to unpicking and understanding the global city's economic and financial success. In many ways, unskilled, low-paid workers, often migrants from poorer countries, maintain the polished, safe and airbrushed look and feel of the city's more affluent neighbourhoods. The celebration of economic productivity discussed in Section 2.2 has a darker side.

The extreme wealth and success generated in the global city often result in varying extremes of poverty. Homelessness and sub-standard living conditions are unfortunately becoming more prevalent in London. According to the homelessness charity Crisis, 7,581 people slept rough in the city in 2014/5, a rise of 50% since 2009/10.<sup>6</sup> Rough sleepers can be found in many wealthy Central London districts attractive to tourists, like Soho and Oxford Street in the West End. These districts are famous for their 'world-class' entertainment and shopping. Saskia Sassen (1991), a sociologist and expert on urban globalisation, calls these districts 'glamour zones'. Ramanan (2007), writing about film, provides a succinct summary of these zones, defining them as 'hubs of "super profits" that boast state-of-the-art office buildings, luxury hotels, up-market shopping complexes and fancy apartment blocks that house the "hyper urban professionals" of the global economy' (quoted in Hassam, 2009, p. 47).

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homeless-def-numbers.html>

These 'hyper urban professionals' are transnational and national/local elites working in profit-making industries, often finance and lucrative creative pursuits. These areas are visually and energetically remarkable, with skyscrapers or buildings of historical importance, cafés, expensive restaurants and entertainment establishments which are frequented by crowds of well-dressed and fashionable workers from every corner of the globe. London alone contains many such districts, including the City of London (London's original financial district), Canary Wharf (the city's second financial district) and the West End (entertainment and shopping district). The existence of these glamour zones means that precisely the opposite—slums and areas of extreme poverty—is also present in the city.

Harvey (1990) discusses class inequality in the city, noting that successful urban areas have to '...cope with increasing impoverishment and unemployment...the impoverished practise both new and well-tried survival strategies' (p. 260). According to Sassen (2011), this leads to the '...obscuring and even camouflaging of articulations between the glamour zone and the rest of the city (p. 126). In a global city like London, it is possible and likely that those who inhabit, work and are entertained in the glamour zones never experience poorer or more deprived areas of the city. Poverty is only hinted at, perhaps through a rough sleeper on a street corner or a busker performing for pennies on the London Underground. Indeed Huang (2006), a geographer exploring the case of glamour zones in Asian cities like Taipei and Shanghai, notes that the glamour zones attract individuals who are '...highly mobile and tend to represent the dominant and most *legitimate* "users" of the city, and their fancy lifestyle and model of success (pp. 47-48; emphasis added). Correlatively, districts which are less glamorous or affluent house the millions of poorer migrants and unskilled workers who in many ways maintain the system that allows the glamour zones to exist, employed both legally and illegally as cleaners, minicab drivers and tailors, to name but a few professions (see Loshitzky, 2010).

Huang's use of the word 'legitimate' is telling of the way that we approach global migration in the context of neoliberal capitalism. A recent article in the UK's *Guardian* newspaper discusses the dominant

terminology used in Western media outlets to describe migrant workers. Whereas white migrants are normally referred to as 'expats', migrants from other countries are called 'immigrants'. The article elaborates: 'Africans are immigrants. Arabs are immigrants. Asians are immigrants. However, Europeans are expats because they can't be at the same level as other ethnicities. They are superior. Immigrants is a term set aside for "inferior races"' (Koutonin, 2015). An article in the US publication the *Wall Street Journal* explores the same subject. Christopher Dewolf (2014), a Canadian-born, Hong Kong-based journalist, provides his opinion on the expat versus immigrant debate: 'a more current interpretation of the term "expat" has more to do with privilege. Expats are free to roam between countries and cultures, privileges not afforded to those considered immigrants or migrant workers' (n.p.). Expats' use of the city is decidedly different from that of immigrants. Whereas expats enjoy the global cities' high-end amenities, immigrants tend to live in deprived areas. When immigrants find themselves in the glamour zones, they are often there as part of the unskilled labour force, maintaining the infrastructure and providing basic services for expats and the local elite.

The data in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis corroborates this argument in the context of films based in London. Whereas in Glamorous London films, for example *Match Point*, where London-based US expat Nola enjoys London's upscale dining and shopping experiences in some of the city's more exclusive enclaves, Okwe and Senay, two London-based immigrants in the film *Dirty Pretty Things*, live in an unremarkable deprived neighbourhood, probably in North London. When these two characters find themselves in London's glamour zones in the West End or the City, the setting is often portrayed as bleak and depressing. These characters are exploited and abused in the city's glamour zones. From a theoretical standpoint, this is mirrored in Georgiou's (2008) work on the global city. She notes that 'migration and travel are inherently linked to the establishment of global cities as major financial centres...' (Georgiou, 2008, p. 4). Here Georgiou brings to light the core role of international migration as helping to *establish* and indeed to *maintain* the global city's power as a financial centre. Whilst the transnational elite, along with local

and national elites, represents the visual aspect of economic and financial growth, low-paid workers (both migrant workers and the local working class) are the invisible backbone of the global city's economic success, generating money for corporations through their labour. The two groups are mutually inclusive in the context of the global city.

### 2.3.2 Agency

The above sections approach the global city's power from two opposing perspectives. Section 2.2 approaches the global city from a normative point of view, where its power is taken for granted and is at times celebrated. Section 2.3 problematises this normative approach, looking at how the emphasis on financial power and economic growth has potentially negative consequences for certain members of society. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 therefore tell two sides of the same story, providing a balanced look at the issues involved when discussing the global city's power. What is missing, however, is a 'bottom-up' approach to this phenomenon, looking how this analysis affects those who actually live in the global city. This sub-section therefore moves beyond statistics and looks at how the global city, with its conflicts and contrasts, might actually provide a space for individual agency to flourish in ways that it would not in other, less international geographical contexts. It is precisely the focus on the actual inhabitants of the city which can provide us with a better understanding of the facts and figures presented in earlier sections in this chapter. Who exactly are the global city's inhabitants and what draws them to the global city?

It is tempting to reduce diversity in the global city to statistics and umbrella terms like 'immigrants' or 'migrant workers'. It is instead more productive and fair to recognise the actual diversity within the statistical diversity. Migrant groups are comprised of individuals who can and should be identified by characteristics other than their national origin or ethnic identity. As a result of transnational migration in globalisation, global cities like London and New York host large numbers of temporary migrant workers and those belonging to both newer and more established migrant



communities, creating a socio-scape in which individuals from different cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds share the same space (see Sassen, 2001). Furthermore, Smith (2005) writing about transnational urbanism, reminds us that 'many early proponents of neoliberal globalisation as well as some of its harshest critics tended to define globalisation as an inexorable structural-economic transformation, operating outside of thought and human practice, behind people's backs, so to speak, to change the world in which we live, for better or worse' (p. 236). Indeed, Smith's (2005) mention of 'human thought and practice' reminds us of the human factor that we need to recognise in discussions of global migration. Smith further develops this argument by describing the diversity within diversity that needs to be accounted for:

Contemporary transnational migration is highly differentiated by class, gender, generation, religion, and political and economic circumstance of migration within the same migrating 'nationality' even within a single transnational city...It adds class, gender and ideological differentiation to our conceptualisation of "immigrant enclaves". (p. 239)

Migrants who share the same national or regional origin, for example, will not necessarily feel any affinity towards their fellow countrymen, particularly if the country or region in question is large and diverse. South Asian communities, for example, are comprised of individuals from several countries and many regions who speak different languages, eat different food and celebrate different holidays. London alone is home to several South Asian neighbourhoods, including but not limited to Brick Lane in East London (Bangladeshi community), Harrow (Gujarati and Tamil communities), Wembley (Gujarati community) and Southall (Punjabi community). Neighbourhoods are being transformed by these global flows. Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005), in their study of globalisation and a sense of belonging in the British city of Manchester, note that 'as residents go about their daily life, they encounter images, people and technologies from outside their neighbourhood which provide the potential for neighbourhood itself to be redefined' (p. 7). The street signs in and around Brick Lane are in both English and Bengali, whereas the signage in the Southall area, including at the local railway station, is

in both English and Punjabi. To paint these areas and communities with the same brush would be inaccurate and potentially offensive.

Furthermore, Smith (2005) brings to light the need to look at 'migrants' as individuals beyond their ethnic identity. The people who comprise these groups are gendered, classed and have interests beyond their national or ethnic origin. Robins (2001) notes that the global city of London, for example, offers a non-national perspective on the cultural consequences of globalisation, whereby residents can identify themselves as, for example, Londoners rather than belonging to any particular national or ethnic background, including British (p. 86). In this case, London offers its residents the opportunity to assert the aspects of their identity which transcend their national or ethnic origin. Although London is not lacking in migrant enclaves where people with similar backgrounds reside in the same neighbourhood, cultural mixity is a strong feature of the city. As a Canadian-born long-term London resident of Indian origin, I have never felt at odds with my status as a Londoner, because the city is not one in which residents are forced to conform to a particular identity. Returning to the introduction to this chapter, London's transport system provides a striking example of this in the way that it demonstrates London's diversity and Londoners' tolerance. For many in the city, the system is the only, if not the most efficient, way to navigate the city, to get from home to work or to visit family and friends. The various modes of public transport in the city demonstrate not only London's diversity but equally its ability to grant individuals precisely the ability to be individuals. For instance, fellow passengers are unlikely to bat an eyelid if a man enters a Tube carriage in a kilt or if a woman boards a bus wearing a burqa. Public transport in London demonstrates one of the global city's great strengths: to provide a safe and tolerant space for the world to congregate.

## **2.4 The Global City and the Media: The Cinematic City**

Cinema is part of the machinery of normative order with regard to global cities, since it expresses these cities' rise and legitimacy. Appadurai (1990) refers to the 'mediascapes' created by media output as integral

participants in the creation of 'image communities': the notion of the 'image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality' of cities is highly useful in understanding the role of the media in shaping the images of certain places (p. 4). Indeed, Jansson (2002), argues that

Mediascapes...consist of the multitude of mediated texts surrounding people in their everyday lives – television programmes, magazines, advertisements, postcards and so on. While these texts are diffused and consumed in sociophysical spaces, they also represent these other spaces, providing people with both realistic and phantasmagorical visions of the world. (p. 432)

More generally, in addition to enhancing the 'spatial phantasmagorical' element of a place (see Jansson, 2002, and below), the various media outlets enable individuals to re-live their experiences in a certain city or perhaps to experience a city for the first time. The media therefore contribute heavily to the articulation of certain cities' symbolic power through their role as mediators of the city experience.

Friedmann (1986) notes that global cities 'are centres for the production and dissemination of information, news, entertainment and other cultural artefacts' (p. 156), thereby commanding large amounts of influence in the portrayal of the world to the world. Jansson and Lagerkvist (2009) note that mediatised representations of urban landscapes contribute greatly to a city's symbolic power.

Through their power to capture the hearts and minds and, indeed, bodies, of media consumers, day dreamers, visitors and dwellers in urban spaces, media representations of city panoramas – and the factual physical silhouette turned into an abstraction, standing in for the city itself in the distance – are powerful economical and political forces in their own right. (p. 26)

Building on this, Jansson (2002) notes that contemporary media culture 'involves a state of constant virtual mobility' (p. 429). This is a key idea when situated in the context of the ways in which cities both develop and maintain their symbolic significance. Jansson (2002) calls his central

concept 'mediated spatial phantasmagoria' or the 'mediatisation of tourism' in the marketplace: cities become symbolically significant, for example as desirable destinations, through their repeated presence in the media. Rather than reducing the desire for first-hand tourism through mediatised experiences of cities, Jansson argues that the omnipresence of particular cities in the media in fact enhances this desire. The mediatisation of tourism 'contributes to "imaginative hedonism", even "hyper-tourism"', whereby individuals seek out experiences which mimic that which they have viewed through a variety of media' (p. 430). This transcends the 'Sex and the City Tour' phenomenon and extends to re-enacting events which take place on screen: hyper-tourists will eat in restaurants, drink in bars and shop in retail outlets frequented by characters on television programmes and in films. Film and television in this case mediate and inflect the physical experience in the city whilst at the same time drawing on the materiality of the city as substance and inspiration. Transnational media outlets are perhaps the most pervasive providers of images which enhance the symbolic power of global cities, not least when they reproduce urban imagery of skyscrapers and famous boulevards, or indeed when they showcase 'edgy' but exciting inner city locales. Indeed, as Stevenson (2013) reminds us,

...representations of the built space, as aspects of the globalisation of both material and symbolic cultural production, also inform popular conceptions not only of which cities should be classified as world or "world class" cities, but also of what such cities should look like. (p. 127)

Stevenson (2013) here makes the case for the importance of representations of the global cities as key sites at which symbolic power is reproduced. This is corroborated in Georgiou's (2013) work, where she reminds us of the difficulty in separating 'the *city* from the *image of the city*' (p. 41). This increasingly blurred line is part of the process of mediation and the ubiquity of representations of the city. Hannerz (2006) discusses the impact of global cities and the role the media play in constructing their dominant images in the global mediascape. The media, Hannerz argues, '...play a part in offering substitute world [global] city spectacles. The transnationally effective media are in large part at home

in the world [global] cities, and often preoccupied with portraying them to the world...' (p. 318). This is mirrored in the work of Jansson and Lagerkvist (2009), who use the example of New York's pervasive media presence: 'since the 1920s, New York and its skyline [are] the symbolic blue print for the modern city...throughout the world' (p. 26).

Whilst the centrality of transnational media outlets in constructing symbolic images of the world's cities must not be taken for granted, it is important to remember that global cities in fact commanded vast amounts of symbolic power prior to the inception of these outlets. For example, the global city can be seen as an imperial centre, a global centre for art and history, and indeed as a represented space where its power is manifested through the built environment (see Stevenson, 2013, p. 127). Indeed, the symbolic power of the city must be understood as an amalgamation of a wide range of political, social and economic factors. Cultural power and media exposure (media power) are often a reflection of these other factors, whereby the media reinforce the symbolic power of these cities.

Although Hannerz (2006, p. 318), as discussed above, and Couldry (2003, p. 2), suggest the importance of the media in the production of symbolic power, there is surprisingly no specific mention of the cinematic medium, which stands out as an example of a widespread, global media platform which has thus far lacked the appropriate attention from the scholarly community in the context of symbolic power, especially in the case of the global city. As the empirical element of this project is primarily concerned with cinematic representations, the connections between the cinematic image and the symbolic power of the global city will be expanded upon in the following section (2.3) of this chapter and indeed in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

### **2.4.1 Cinematic representations of the global city**

This sub-section looks at the ways in which representations of the city in cinema speak to the theoretical concepts discussed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2. After all, cinematic representations of the city have, since the

late 19<sup>th</sup> century, had a large hand in allowing the physical city's image to transcend its national, cultural and geographical boundaries. Durham (2008) notes that '...the cinema, at the very moment of its inception, became the primary and the most popular reproducer of images of the city' (p. 179). In order to investigate the role of cinematic representations in the construction and maintenance of the global city's symbolic power, we need firstly to consider the pivotal role of films within global culture more generally. Barsam (2007) notes that 'in just over a hundred years, movies have evolved into a complex form of artistic representation and communication: they are at once a hugely influential, widely profitable global industry and a modern art—the most popular art form today' (p. 2). Cinema's influence can be seen in a variety of arenas, given its popularity and global distribution and consumption.

The advent of film as a representational medium gave impetus to moving images and therefore to secondary (visual) modes of city consumption and interaction whereby the *experience* of the city could be mediated by visual technology—this was revolutionary. McQuire (2008) notes that '...by the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the task of apprehending the heterogeneous flows that created the distinctive environment of the modern city belonged less to the human eye than the technological apparatus of cinema' (p. 59). Adding to this, Bruno (1997) asserts that 'the image of the city ends up closely interacting with filmic representations. The streetscape is as much a filmic "construction" as it is an architectural one' (p. 12). Further, Mennel (2008) corroborates this idea, stating that 'cinema influenced the facades and topographies of cities' (p. 6). The interplay between cinema and the city was characterised by the construction of cinema halls, altering the cityscape in many cases. In addition, Mennel (2008) reminds us, 'the city street was a particularly privileged setting for action in early cinema' (p. 7). The hectic pace of people and transport moving through cities provided an ideal platform for early filmmakers keen to exploit the exciting and new capability of the movie camera to capture movement.

While the spaces and practices of city life have provided inspiration for the narratives of a burgeoning film industry, with cities also being the

location of cinema halls and other venues for displaying and exhibiting films, the advent of cinematic technologies was instrumental in the creation of new ways to consume and experience the city. Mazierska and Rascaroli (2003), in their work on cinematic cities, draw on Chambers (1994) to note that cinema rendered the city highly complex and multi-faceted, presenting viewers with:

...the gendered city, the city of ethnicities, the territories of different social groups, shifting centres and peripheries—the city that is a fixed object of design...and yet simultaneously plastic and mutable: the site of transitory events, movements, memories. [The cinematic city] is therefore also a significant space for analysis, critical thought and understanding. (p. 3)

Cinema provided (and continues to provide) viewers with the opportunity to engage with their own cities and with cities to which they had perhaps never been on an imaginary level, allowing them to question their relationship to the potentially phantasmagorical and technologically mediated images portrayed on screen. Cinema also provides many viewers with an incentive and an opportunity to travel through the city to new and unexpected venues and cinema halls (see Dudrah, 2006). But how have such representations and viewing practices been linked in previous studies to the symbolic power of the media?

The emotional function of representation drives and echoes the experience of the city, which is full of contradictions and sensory experiences. Stevenson (2013) reminds us that cities themselves '...contain within them the places of contradiction, memory and experience, [and are] sites of fear and intimacy...they are built at the interface of such contradictions and juxtapositions...Emotions inhabit and gain shape in micro spaces of the everyday' (p. 96). Could cinema's capacity to inspire emotional reactions in viewers connect to the emotional element of experiencing the city and its intensity? Jansson's (2002) concept of mediatised 'spatial phantasmagoria', which stipulates that one's experiences in a place or one's impressions of a place (irrespective of whether one has travelled to that place) are often influenced by prior media consumption, including consumption of films, is

useful in understanding the profound effect the 'cinematic city' has on the city itself (see Jansson, 2002). Along the same lines, McNeill (2008) claims that 'filmic images...provide a powerful means of representing both actual and virtual spheres of the city' (p 144). Taking this idea a step further, Bruno (1997) suggests that '...the image of the city ends up closely interacting with filmic representations. The streetscape is as much a filmic "construction" as it is an architectural one' (p. 12).

Bruno's later work (2007) addresses the idea of movement as a tool of the imagination, both in the literal and figurative senses. Movement, Bruno argues, is an emotive process, triggering various thoughts and feelings which ultimately determine the individual's interaction with the (virtual/filmic) city space. 'Motion...produces emotion, and, correlatively, emotion contains movement' (Bruno, 2007, p. 14). The very term 'movie' ('moving image') connotes the notion of the journey, transporting the viewer through the cinematic landscape, which in many instances is an urban setting. Cinematic emotion is tantamount to the creation of an imaginary and interactive space, corresponding to Hemelryk Donald and Gammack's (2007) understanding of the complexities brought about by the cinematic representation of cities. '...the image of the city exceeds the schematic and emotional mapping of its literal geographical and environmental features, and combines at an imaginative level with...cinematic...expressions of its sensuality...' (p. 9). It is precisely with the emotive element of cinematic representations that viewers can connect and identify. The city is often an integral part of this connection.

#### 2.4.2 The global city as a cinematic reiteration

Castells (2009) discusses the standardisation of media output on a global scale, through which certain cultures (and by association their cities) tend to dominate the media landscape through '...the construction of meaning on the basis of the discourses through which social actors guide their action...' (p. 9). Institutions, according to Castells, exercise power through the domination of a particular societal realm (2009, p. 10). Hesmondhalgh's (2007) discussion of the cultural industries provides a



succinct articulation of the implications of the power wielded by the media industries, with a particular reference to cinema: 'Films...provide us with recurring representations of the world and thus act as a kind of reporting...They contribute strongly to our sense of who we are...' (p. 3). Cinema presents a form of persuasive power, elements of which, due to its widespread popularity and distribution, have become a staple feature of our contemporary visual landscape. It would be naïve, then, to consider it coincidental that some global cities also happen to be some of the world's most recognisable cinematic cities. So, while the representation of global cities in films could be read as a contingent use of city space as an artistic resource and evidently is in some cases, my empirical chapters (5, 6 and 7) examine the notion that cities are also strategically, and perhaps systematically, positioned within films with extra-textual consequences. Paris, with its long boulevards and Eiffel Tower; Manhattan with its yellow taxis and towering skyscrapers; London with its Houses of Parliament and red double-decker buses: these have become integral and iconic elements of our visual culture.

Though the contemporary media space, through a multitude of platforms (film, television, the internet, print media, radio, amongst others), provides the potential for articulations of local, lesser-known cultural discourses, it is clear that, at least in cinematic terms, repeated representations of Western cultural trends, frequently situated in certain Western, often global, cities, tend to dominate in mainstream representations. Hemelryk Donald and Gammack (2007) assert that this is an intangible, 'intuitive' notion, which they believe cinema is at least partly responsible for constructing.

Many films are set in New York...At the same time Bombay...is the urban centre of the other global film player: India. Its genres, stars and music are exported all over Asia and Europe. But Bombay has...very little popular recognition as an urban entity outside of its immediate Indian population and diaspora. This anomaly is partly due to the way in which US films have been used as spearheads of international trade and cultural diplomacy over the century of cinema. (p. 15)

Here Hemelryk Donald and Gammack (2007) take for granted the cinematic presence of certain cities, which they use as benchmarks through which to assess the utility of cinema in propping up the symbolic value of other cities. They point to the awareness of cinema's importance in the sustaining of a city's image and reputation, citing how the naturalising of particular (in this case US) cities in the cinematic landscape has by default rendered other cities and other cinemas 'exotic' or, worse, unrecognisable (Hemelryk Donald & Gammack, 2007, p. 15). 'Conversations, to the modern conception of place are...based on the knowledge of cinematic presence...' (pp. 20-21). This is a bold statement which corroborates the notion that cinema plays a central role in the articulation of the global/cinematic city as a consumer good: its symbolic value is highly pervasive and central to the ways in which the world is portrayed for us. In her work on cinematic Paris, for example, Cruickshank (2010) notes that, particularly since the late 1990s, 'filmic images...contribute to the city's value on the global market' (p. 152). This is a key point that informs the basis for this project: the question is not *whether*, but rather *how* cinematic representations (re-)construct, cultivate, communicate and sustain the symbolic power of the global city. In the next chapter, I take one global city, London as a paradigmatic example and chart the ways in which the global city's cinematic presence, identity and symbolic power have evolved seemingly symbiotically over the past two centuries.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, divided into three main sections, I unpick the ways in which the representative medium of cinema creates norms and legitimises global urban hierarchies, which are linked to symbolic power. The chapter begins by highlighting the normative approach to global cities, whereby the 'misrecognisable' nature of symbolic power (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170) is evident. Crucially, the chapter then problematises the normative approach to the global cities' symbolic power, finally linking cinematic representations of these cities in film, to these approaches. The project's main research question, *How do cinematic representations*

*participate in the cultivation, communication and sustaining of the global city's symbolic power?*, entails a focus on cinematic representations and the strategies involved in the portrayal of the global city in cinema and how these techniques and strategies contribute to the construction and maintenance of particular global cities' symbolic power. The cinematic medium provides a unique form of mediated, visual representation which has, since its inception, had close ties to the city more generally. The literature on global cities tends to focus on economic factors (see Sassen (1991), Friedmann (1986) and Beaverstock, et al. (1999)); however, the continued presence of the same cities at the top of global city hierarchies (London and New York in particular), seems to conflict with recent global financial conditions, particularly the relinquishing of some economic power to centres in Asia and South America. Furthermore, these cities are never ranked highly in global liveability surveys (see Massey, 2007, p. 9). I link the symbolic power of the global city with the centrality of cinema in the portrayal of the city space (see, for example, Barsam, 2007; Durham, 2008; Hemelryk Donald & Gammack, 2007; McQuire, 2008). Within this extensive body of literature on both the global city and the cinematic city, the construction of the symbolic power of the global city in cinema is taken for granted and is in fact used to discuss the potential of 'non-global' cities to enhance their own symbolic value through cinema (see Hemelryk Donald & Gammack, 2007).

The concept of *branding* and, more specifically Sevcik's (2011) idea of the 'strategic urban narrative' speak to the idea that the *representation* of global cities in cinema is related to the articulation and cultivation of their symbolic power. The use of the term 'narrative' also suggests a strong link to cinema, whilst the emphasis on a *living* narrative indicates the importance of portraying many aspects of life in the global city, providing a sense for the many layers and complexities which constructs global cities as interesting, fascinating and exciting destinations for tourists and potential residents. This links to the global cities' symbolic power, which is inherently also multi-layered and full of complexities and contradictions. How are these complexities and multiple layers articulated through cinema and what are the potential implications of this multi-

faceted approach to symbolic power? In the next chapter, I take one global city, London, as a paradigmatic example and chart the ways in which the city's symbolic power and its cinematic presence have evolved seemingly symbiotically over the years. As the title of this thesis suggests, London is also the focus of this project's empirical analysis.



## CHAPTER 3: LONDON GLOBAL CITY

*London [in the late 1990s] was...stunning to behold. If loss of empire was once a drag on the spirit of the British people, the immigration that resulted in part from that loss had by the mid-1990s become a major driving force behind the richly multicultural London blossoming before our eyes. It was a heady time, and even Thatcherism could be seen in an appealing light: as detested as it was by so many, Thatcherism had worked a kind of alchemy on British society, effecting a multitude of changes, from the economy to the arts... (McGuire, 2009, n.p.)*

### 3.1 Introduction

The global city is one of contrasts. London in particular is unique in its mixity. In this chapter I provide an in-depth look at London as an example of an archetypal global city. I demonstrate the ways in which London can be seen as a unique case within the framework of global cities, ultimately connecting the changes in the city's social and political situation to its filmic identity. Now viewed as a vibrant global city, London's reputation once evoked images of a depressing, foggy, cold and grey place. Writing about cities and cinema, Mazierska and Rascaroli (2003) note that 'London's fog has become almost symbolic of the city...largely thanks to art and literature, most notably the work of Turner, Dickens and T S Eliot (Donald, 1999, pp. 2-3)' (p. 170). We see this bleak image shift throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it was in the late 1990s that London began to exude qualities of vitality, creativity and entrepreneurialism (see, 2004; Massey, 2007; Pratt, 2008). This was also evident in the city's cinematic identity at the time (see Church Gibson, 2003; Brunsdon, 2007; Murphy, 2009). The identity shift which immediately followed the election of New Labour in 1997 coincided with some contentious changes in the city like the mass gentrification of London's inner boroughs, whereby the city has been transformed from an '...industrial to a post-industrial city, whose economy...is...based on finance, business services and the creative and cultural industries' (Hamnett, 2004,

p. 5). These changes are in line with the neoliberal approach to governance, which has led government policy since the Thatcher era. In addition, we see the management of London's increasing ethnic and racial diversity beginning to align with the managerial culture (part of the neoliberal approach to governance) prevalent at the time. These changes are reflected in cinematic representations of the city starting in the late 1990s. Like any change, the shift in the way the city was managed and governed had both positive and negative implications and generated both positive and negative reactions for the city and its inhabitants and for cinema. These implications and reactions are discussed in detail in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

London's status as a global city is undisputed (Beaverstock et al., 1999, pp. 445-446) and it is also the world's most visited city, with nearly 19 million overnight visitors expected in 2015 (see Schmalbruch, 2015). It is a city whose cinematic personality echoes its rootedness in different eras—a simultaneously modern and historical city. Once the capital of a vast and brutal global empire commanding phenomenal amounts of geopolitical power (see Thompson, 1991) London's image is highly recognisable. The city has been the setting for a large number of highly regarded literary works since at least as long ago as the 15<sup>th</sup> century (*Books on London—London in Literature*, n.d.) and is the home of one of the world's largest news broadcasters, the BBC World Service, whose television and radio broadcasts in 2009 reached a global audience of approximately 238 million ('BBC's international news services attract record global audience of 238 million', 2009). Whilst it is unlikely that all 238 million people who watched or listened to the BBC World Service have visited London, they are reminded of the city every time they tune in to a BBC broadcast—the accents, the consulting of experts based in London and the direct mention of the city are all explicit reminders of London's authoritative status.

Whilst powerful, these reminders are perhaps not powerful *enough*: for the most part, they lack the immediacy of the visual, which is readily provided by cinema. Though potentially useful as supplementary reminders of the city, the radio broadcasts of the BBC World Service lack

this ability, which is unique to cinema and, to a certain extent, non-news television output, which often provides a variation on the cinematic style. Though some BBC World television news reports will invariably be about London, the network's focus on global news often places the city in the background, albeit prominently. The visual element escapes World Service radio broadcasts entirely. Literary works featuring the British capital may be evocative, but again lack the emotive power of the moving image (see Bruno, 2007). From the perspective of cinema, however, London is empirically interesting precisely because it lacked a strong and focussed global cinematic presence before the mid-1990s, even though some of the earliest known films by the Lumière Brothers were set in the city (Hanks, 2007, p. 1). Indeed, as Brunsdon (2007) notes, 'London is an old imperial city...already imagined and given many shapes...before the movies were invented' (p. 9). Cinema, I argue, ~~is~~ has become a key medium in the cultivation and maintenance of the city's symbolic power. In the empirical part of this thesis, in Chapters 5 and 6, I demonstrate the ways in which a selection of films from 1997-2007, from the point of view of representation, work *with* and *for* the city's symbolic power, particularly given that London is a key hub for global capitalism and for migration.

This chapter is divided into three main sections on Multicultural London, Urban Contrasts and London on Screen. The sections on Multicultural London and Urban Contrasts discuss the ways in which cultural policy changes under New Labour changed the ways in which race and class were viewed and managed in the 1997-2007 period, under Tony Blair's leadership. The Multicultural section discusses multiculturalism and its role in the management of race and ethnic relations in London at the time. The Urban Contrasts section discusses the changes in London's class structure as a result of the city's central role in global capitalism. The section on London on Screen discusses film policy and changes to the creative and cultural industries in Britain in the late 1990s and how these changes influenced the types of films released at the time, in particular those set in London. I argue that there are strong parallels between political, economic and cultural changes in



London and the types of film which were popular at the time. This assertion is explained and unpicked in more detail in the empirical section of this thesis.

### 3.2 London: The History of a Global City

Although, as discussed in chapter 2, London's status as a global city is now undisputed (Beaverstock, et al., 1999, pp. 445-446) and the city is classified as 'Alpha ++' (highest possible) on the most recent ranking on the GaWC index<sup>7</sup>, this was not always the case. Porter (2001), for example, notes that 'London is not the eternal city...London grew because it became the headquarters of the world's hugest empire' (p. 1). After the collapse of the British Empire, the postcolonial space in London became fraught with divisiveness and racial tensions, as many former colonial subjects relocated to the British capital. Migrants from the Caribbean and South Asia in particular became numerous in certain districts and, as a result, friction between these migrants and indigenous communities resulted in social unrest. Jefferson (2012) reminds us that, for instance, 'during the 1970s, poor, black youths in deprived inner city locations began to be seen as troublesome and potentially criminal (p. 8). This led to a turbulent relationship between the police and black youths, with the latter group suffering from prejudice and poor treatment by the former. These tensions came to a head in 1981 in the form of the race riots in Brixton, an area with a large Afro-Caribbean population. Issues like racial tension, coupled with intolerance towards the LGBT community and other minority communities, became part of the fabric of life in the capital during the 1970s, 1980s and early-1990s. London-based cinematic representations released during this period reflect these bleak social realities. For example, *Burning an Illusion* (1981) focuses on the challenging experience of a black woman during Margaret Thatcher's time in power and *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) fuses issues of ethnicity and sexuality within its narrative.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2012t.html>

As we can see, retaining the image and role of global city is something which requires work and performance in addition to investment and economic power. Although in some ways London is similar to other global cities, in this chapter I identify aspects of the city's uniqueness within the framework of global cities more generally. London has a rich and highly exportable cultural heritage, linked precisely to its colonial status as the capital of an Empire, which, alongside its effect on the city's topography, culture, politics and cultural identity, was reflected in the city's cinematic persona in the late-1990s and 2000s (see Church Gibson, 2003). The British capital has for the last three centuries commanded a coveted position as one of the world's foremost global cities, but its uniqueness lies in the multi-faceted nature of this globalness. 'London is now one of the world's leading global cities. One of the characteristics of this is the role of the City of London and its position in global financial flows; another is the role of London in global migration, both at the top and bottom ends of the labour market' (Butler & Hamnett, 2011, p. 1). Financial considerations are pivotal in the discussion of London's global city identity, however its diverse population, partly a result of the city's role as the headquarters of the British Empire, is equally important. Cassis (2009) reminds us that Britain, even in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, was 'a great trading and colonial power...and was the cradle of the industrial revolution' (p. 16). This legacy continues today, both tangibly and as a memory of what London once was. Jacobs (1996) notes that in the City,

the idea of empire is not confined to the past. It is an active memory which inhabits the present in a variety of practices and traditions and which still works to constitute the future of the City...For example, the efforts to preserve the historic built environment in the present are often also efforts to preserve buildings and city scenes which memorialise the might of the empire (p. 40).

Indeed the Imperial legacy can be seen throughout London – the city's landmarks, its numerous heritage buildings, are reminders of Britain's status as a successful and ruthless colonial power. Jacobs (1996) uses the example of the heritage battle of Bank Junction in the City of London

being about 'how an activated past assists in the City's (and the nation's) adjustment to the loss of empire (p. 40).

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century signalled the emergence of London as a major financial power (Cassis, 2009, p. 16). Although this section discusses the colonial legacy as a key factor in London's symbolic power, economic power, is central in the context of neoliberalism (see section 2.1 and Larner, 2000, p. 7; Brenner & Theodore, 2002 p. 8; Massey, 2007, p. 9) and London has indisputably been one of the world's most important financial centres for centuries.. Although we tend to equate 'success' and power with financial gain in neoliberal capitalism (see Massey, 2007, p. 60), globalisation and the process through which London transitioned from imperial to global city are the result of a variety of historical, cultural and political factors, only one of which is financial. Eade (2000) reminds us that London's transition from an imperial to a global city '...entails not just economic and political changes...the term, global city, highlights the ways in which global processes have transformed London, not only economically but also socially and culturally' (p. 16).<sup>8</sup> Although London, as the UK's capital city, has been at the heart of neoliberal globalisation at least since the Thatcher era (see Massey, 2007, p. 11), it is generally agreed that the election of the (New) Labour government in 1997, led by then Prime Minister Tony Blair, represented a shift in the way that neoliberal political ideology was presented and managed (see Newman, 2001; Hamnett, 2004; Cerny & Evans, 2004; Massey, 2007). Cerny and Evans (2004) describe New Labour's strategy as a continuation of the Thatcherite neoliberal project, but '...with a human face' (p. 63). Furthermore, 'a shift...occurred in the focal point of party and governmental politics...to the promotion of enterprise, innovation and profitability in both private and public sectors' (p. 61). Fairclough (2002) claims that, by incorporating elements of Thatcherism into its version of governance, New Labour '...transformed the field of political discourse' (p. 21). Of great interest in the context of the primary research question of this thesis is the fact that this shift, heralding a change in image and

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<sup>8</sup> See Driver & Gilbert (1997) for a discussion of the influence of global imperialism on London's cultural geography.

rhetoric, is also reflected in cinematic representations (see Brunsdon, 2007, pp. 111-112; Church Gibson, 2003, p. 369; Murphy, 2009). Indeed, as Roodhouse (2009) notes, the political and cultural shift of the time helped to determine '...our corporate sense of aesthetic' (p. 79).

Neoliberalism de-emphasises the public sector and emphasises the private sector, in that governments are concerned with economic efficiency and international competitiveness, with a focus on managerialism and, ultimately, profits (Larner 2000, p. 7). Cerny and Evans (2004) note that New Labour's policy agenda '...reflects the continuing transformation of the British industrial welfare state into a competition state [including] the marketisation of "UK PLC"' (p. 51). Furthermore, there was a linguistic shift from the use of the word 'business' to 'entrepreneurialism', entailing creativity and risk taking, and in some ways undermining industrial and more mechanical jobs (see Fairclough, 2002, p. 34). This is consistent with the changes associated with the 'Experience Economy' (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999), discussed in section 2.2, and indeed with the boost to the creative industries in Britain under New Labour. Here we see the growing importance of symbolic power in the idea of global competitiveness, where London's 'success' on the global stage is measured in terms of its capacity to be at the top of the global urban hierarchy (see section 2.2). At the same time, however, we see a shift in 1997 from blatant neoliberalism to something more subtle. Cerny and Evans (2004) argue that immediately preceding the election of the New Labour government in 1997 '...the Thatcherite project of a more undiluted neoliberal version of the Competition State had lost both its economic edge and its political cohesion' (p. 55). This led to the popularity of New Labour's 'diluted form of neoliberalism' (p. 60), involving Tony Blair and New Labour creating catchphrases like 'Cool Britannia', which features in international press coverage of Britain and especially of London as a 'cool' and vibrant location. For example, the US magazine *Newsweek* featured in 1996 an article explaining 'Why London Rules'. According to the magazine, London was the 'coolest city on the planet', featuring 'outrageous fashion, a pulsating club scene and lots of new money' (McGuire, 1996, n.p.). Indeed, Oakley (2004) describes the

period as one of 'optimism and hype' (p. 69). The phrase 'Cool Britannia' in itself is telling of the political and cultural climate of the time.

The phrase is of course a play on '*Cruel* Britannia', which refers to the colonial era in which Britain controlled a vast global empire, often resulting in violence and oppression. 'Coolness' (as opposed to cruelty) suggests a forward-thinking, youth-focussed, dynamic and open society, in which image and culture are central. This was reflected in New Labour's emphasis on youth culture and making Britain 'youth friendly' (Watson, 2000, p. 83). At the same time, the use of 'Britannia', an antiquated form of 'Britain', suggests a strong connection to the past and to the country's heritage. Rhetorically, merging the two evokes the sense of a modern, cutting-edge society with a strong link to its history, without entailing any questioning of the problematic aspects of that heritage. Luckett (2000) calls this 're-imagining' Britain's national identity, from being '...rooted exclusively in its past [to] ...ultra-modern while simultaneously being renowned for its history, replacing and reconfiguring Thatcherism's combination of economic "modernity" and veneration of its "heritage"' (pp. 89-90). This is precisely where London's uniqueness lies: it is an important seat of global capitalism and culture (like all global cities), but is known for its unique heritage and strong links to its past – London is at once modern and historical. London's symbolic power, whilst linked to its political past and global domination, began to evolve through a re-framing of the city's identity under New Labour. We can highlight the influence of the city's pre-existing power by asking the following question: if a city lower on the global urban hierarchy, for example, Odessa in Ukraine, had adopted similar tactics (for example, re-framing its identity on the basis of its Soviet past and its importance as a large port), would we have seen a similar result? This is unlikely. Here we again see the connections between hegemony and symbolic power (see Section 1.3).



Figure 4: Front cover of March 1997 edition of *Vanity Fair* magazine, featuring actress Patsy Kensit and musician Liam Gallagher.

<http://www.vanityfair.com/magazine/archive/1997/03/london199703>

To clarify, this thesis does not provide an in-depth analysis of the evolution of politics and social/economic policy in Britain under New Labour, nor does it provide a detailed account of London's cinematic history. Instead, it examines the ways in which London's cinematic history has influenced the cultivation and maintenance of the city's symbolic power, noticing patterns of representation in conjunction with changes implemented by the government and prevailing cultural attitudes in the late 1990s and 2000s. In Chapter 7, I demonstrate how these patterns, arguably influenced by policy and cultural changes, have resulted in broader changes in film and creative policy in the UK, and indeed how these changes have influenced the ways in which London manages its symbolic power. This is important because film is '...a hugely influential, widely profitable, global industry and a modern art—the most popular art form today' (Barsam, 2007, p. 2). Because of cinema's strong links with the city (see Mazierska & Rascaroli (2003, p. 3) and indeed

cinema's pivotal role in global culture (see Barsam, 2007, p. 7), it is essential that we understand how representations of a highly influential global city, London in this case, both reflect and construct that which is taking place in the city.

### **3.3 Multicultural London: A Critique of the Neoliberal Approach to Cultural Diversity**

Although cultural diversity is an important element of any global city's identity, this section delineates London's uniqueness within this realm. Positioned as it was at the heart of a vast colonial Empire stretching from Canada to Australia and including colonies, slaves, outposts and plantations as well as a vast fleet of ships, London has for centuries been an ethnically diverse city. Jenkins (1999) argues that the city's success as a global financial centre can be attributed to its international population:

The iron law of successful cities is, always welcome a newcomer. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, London's banking was dominated by Italians, hence Lombard Street. When London's first great merchant, Sir John Gresham, pleaded with Elizabeth I to relax immigration for Flemish refugees, his argument was crisp: 'it will profit the citie'. It did. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, London played host to the trading houses of Europe. What we regard as British banking names were all once foreign immigrants: Rothschild, Baring, Hambro, Montagu, Schroder, Kleinwort, Warburg...If I were running the modern City, I would erect [the Statue of Liberty] at Heathrow airport. The City's future lies not on the playing fields of Eton but in the airport arrival lounge. (Jenkins, 1999, quoted in Hamnett, 2004, p. 106)

Furthermore, London's multi-ethnic socio-scape at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century can of course be credited at least in part to the city's seat as the former capital of the British Empire, whereby 'London's social and economic divisions still bear the traces of empire.' (Eade, 2000, p. 16)., Indeed, London would not be a *global* city without its status as the former capital of the British Empire and the resulting diversity and international population. Georgiou (2008) reminds us that London's global city status, 'cannot exist without its cultural diversity, its intense mediated

interconnections within its territory and across the globe, and its politics that challenge national geographical authority and national and exclusive political citizenship' (p. 229). We need to consider how London's multi-ethnic socio-scape has evolved and changed, particularly since the late 1990s, when the New Labour government instigated cultural and policy changes relating to migration and the management of ethnic and racial diversity.

In the late 1990s, there began a shift in the way 'race' and 'ethnicity' were conceptualised and framed in public and political discourse in Britain. Under New Labour, led by Tony Blair, the UK's turbulent history of race relations and ethnic exclusion, coupled with a focus on racial, national and ethnic 'difference', was addressed through the celebratory discourse of multiculturalism. The words 'diverse' 'diversity' took on a rhetorical significance during this period, which moved away from anti-racism and equality towards a more 'marketable' aspect of people's identities. My experience of the city at the time was one of intense optimism, where more British women of Indian origin wore saris to formal occasions and the Russian Maslenitsa festival was celebrated in Trafalgar Square. Although these outward expressions of multiculturalism promoted inclusion through the celebration of difference, I follow Kymlicka (2010, p. 33), who refers to multiculturalism as a 'doctrine', very much a part of London's identity in the 1997-2007 period, inasmuch as the term carries a specific ideological meaning which was popularised in New Labour-run Britain. According to Kymlicka (2010), 'multiculturalism is characterised as a feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity, encouraging citizens to acknowledge and embrace the panoply of customs, traditions, music and cuisine that exist in a multi-ethnic society' (p. 33).

Hatziprokopiou (2009) augments this definition, noting that 'the celebration of diversity in mainstream discourses reflects...a sort of political correctness drawing from the liberal tradition, the legacy of antiracist struggles and the politics of multiculturalism' (p. 15). This conceptualisation of multiculturalism can be seen as a superficial and mainstream discourse used to draw attention away from the racial



struggles and societal divisions which invariably result from a diverse group of people sharing the same space. In neoliberal, New Labour-run Britain, the 'multicultural champion of Europe' (Kepel, 2005, n.p.), the emphasis on, amongst other things, the presence in the country of a variety of global cuisines, international cultural events, ethnic minority districts (Chinatown, Little India, etc.) and global music festivals detracted from the more serious consequences of the city's multi-cultural socio-scape. Indeed, Eade (2000) states that 'the multiculturalism of contemporary London...may not extend far beyond limited changes in catering, fashion and street festivals. Their emphasis on ethnic traditions, assimilation and the melting pot concept clearly directs attention away from the darker side of London life' (p. 40). In the city, one can easily in the space of a few hours enjoy an Ethiopian lunch, watch a Russian film and attend an Indian classical dance performance.

It is not uncommon to eat a variety of international cuisines in London, or indeed in many districts to hear many languages spoken (see Section 2.1). This multitude of cultures provides for a rich and fascinating experience of the city, both in terms of lived experience of and from a scholarly point of view. At the same time, these outward displays of multiculturalism do not address the economic and social issues which invariably affect London's multi-racial and multi-ethnic population, such as cultural integration or the presence of a transient group of (legal and illegal) immigrant labourers in the city. The presence of international populations results in a globalised, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic socio-scape in which several non-indigenous groups share the same space. Alongside migrant communities that are more established, some over several generations, there exists a large group of legal and illegal migrants and asylum seekers working in low-skilled jobs, the members of which provide services that in many ways facilitate the smooth running of the city and the maintenance of its 'glamour zones' (see Sassen, 1991). Indeed, as Loshitsky (2010) claims, the global city '...not only exploits "illegal immigrants" but also forces them to become "legally criminals" by creating an economic situation that pushes them to resort to strategies of survival defined as illegal and therefore criminal' (p. 72).

From a statistical point of view, London, like other global cities, '...receives a substantial proportion of asylum seekers and refugees from around the world' (Hamnett, 2004, p. 105). Sassen (2011) argues that in the global city, there is an '...obscuring and even camouflaging of articulations between the glamour zone and the rest of the city' (p. 126). The individuals in the 'rest of the city' are the '...displaced and those workers who matter to the glamour zone but are never recognised as mattering' (p. 126). This troubling aspect of London's diversity must of course be seen in conjunction with another significant migrant community in the city. As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, the '...increasingly integrated nature of western economies has led to the growth of skilled international migration, particularly in the financial and business services sectors' (Hamnett, 2004, p. 105). He calls this group of skilled migrants the 'transnational elite', highlighting the level of wealth and spending power this group hyper-mobile global migrants possesses. It is precisely the combination of these diverse groups, and indeed the diversity within these groups, which make global cities (including London) *global* and fascinating and exciting, both as places to live in and visit, and as an area of scholarly enquiry.

Some scholars have connected the changing nature of London's population in the 1990s with the change in government. For example, McGhee (2005) argues that the '...problematisation of the social bads of antagonism, prejudice and hatred is part of a wider project associated with the re-imagination of British national identity under the New Labour government' (p. 6). Indeed Newman (2001) discusses some of the changes which took place after the election of New Labour in 1997, both in terms of policy and rhetoric, with regard to race and diversity. She cites, for example, the criminalisation of specifically 'racially aggravated' assault (when the victim is targeted because of his or her race), amongst others (Newman, 2001, p. 157). Whilst efforts like this are undoubtedly commendable, the multicultural message in general was one of *homogenisation* or *integration* rather than fragmentation. Through the 'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33), we see the normalisation of difference (Hatziprokopiou, 2009, p. 15).

Taking this further, diversity in London in this period became a *spectacle* – something to observe rather than something in which to immerse oneself – confining expressions of (non-indigenous) ethnicity to theatres, festivals, restaurants and ‘ethnic’ (again, non-indigenous) neighbourhoods, rather than mainstream outlets. Newman (2001), argues that British identity seemed to encompass difference, ‘so long as those differences did not make a difference...The limits to consent and the constraints of who could be included became starkly evident as Labour faced a series of challenges around gender, race and sexuality’ (pp. 158-159). Britain’s (and, correlatively, London’s) identity as modern and inclusive, with strong links to its past, (‘Cool Britannia’) seemed to be at odds with its multi-ethnic socio-scape, which was becoming ubiquitous.

How, in particular, did *visible minorities* fit into the idea of heritage? Did the UK’s and London’s minority ethnic population really advance its democratic presence and participation in society or did segregation become a problem? Clapp (2013) notes that urban dwellers, irrespective of race, ethnicity or national origin

share their urban environments overwhelmingly with people of whom they have no biographical knowledge; people whom they scarcely and incompletely identify by the clothing they wear, the cars they drive, and other superficial variables. In urban societies urbanites are mostly alien to one another. (p. 204)

In this light, Clapp’s (2013, p. 204) emphasis on class (clothing, cars) in some ways suggests that the development of multiculturalism under New Labour shifted the focus from ethnicity and race to economic difference. This is elaborated upon in the Urban Contrasts section (3.3) of this chapter.

Whilst the construction of London’s image in the media was moving away from an identity associated with the darker elements of imperialism, like racism and exploitative behaviour, the huge numbers of people of different races and ethnicities who live ‘cheek by jowl’ (see Georgiou, 2013), especially in London, provide a reminder of the city’s former role as the capital of a vast and exploitative global empire. The city’s

architecture and heritage are reminders of its colonial past. Jacobs (1996), writing about post-colonialism and the city, notes that 'heritage' becomes a part of the city's identity (p. 35). She reminds us that heritage buildings '...are inherited artefacts but they gain an active influence in the present way of the various popular meanings and official sanctions ascribed to them. The making of heritage is a political process' (p. 35). Jacobs goes on to call Britain 'an imperial space set in a postimperial age' (1996, p. 38). These sites are also richly resonant as sites for cinema, particularly in heritage films like *Topsy-Turvy* (1999), *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and *The King's Speech* (2010). To move away from reminders of British colonialism and the cruelty and exploitation that ensued, New Labour therefore re-contextualised Britain's multi-ethnic and multi-racial socio-scape, and indeed its heritage, within the context of the corporatisation of governance and the more general managerial culture which was taking shape at the time.

Returning to Bourdieu (1991), we see how this ideological change relates to symbolic power:

Symbolic power is a power of constructing reality...[whereby] ideologies serve particular interests which they tend to present as universal interests, shared by the group as a whole...it also contributes to the fictitious integration of society as a whole, and thus to the apathy...of the dominated classes. (pp. 166-167)

This extract from Bourdieu's (1991) work links to New Labour's multicultural project insofar as it was an ideological construction of a particular image of the country whose contentious past was being transformed into a force for positivity, at least on the surface. Multiculturalism, more than simply a social project, became during the New Labour period an integral element of the city's identity (Hatziprokopiou, 2009, p. 24). This element, like many during that government's terms in office, was part of the corporate and enterprise culture normally associated with economics and, particularly in Britain, with creative policy (this is discussed in relation to cinema in Section 3.3). Instead of simply acknowledging and managing difference, cultural and racial diversity became a selling point and certain districts in Britain's

cities, especially in London, housed (and continue to house) large ethnic minority communities: multiculturalism became commercialised and part of the city's global image. An advertising campaign created in 2007 and launched in 2008 in anticipation of the 2012 Olympic Games, for example, centred on London's multicultural identity. Its principle advertisement featured a picture of a globe fashioned to resemble a map of London, with the worlds 'See the World. Visit London'.



Figure 5: 'See the World. Visit London' advertising campaign.  
[http://assets.londonist.com/uploads/2008/08/i730/see\\_the\\_world\\_5.jpg](http://assets.londonist.com/uploads/2008/08/i730/see_the_world_5.jpg)

Cultural difference and ethnic/racial diversity became a spectacle during this period through, for instance, the transformation and promotion of areas with large minority ethnic populations as tourist attractions. Indeed, as Eade (2000) notes, 'London's transition from an imperial capital to a global city still involves racialised boundaries between insiders and outsiders' (p. 11). London's Chinatown, for example, though in existence for many years prior to New Labour's term in office, has become a branded space which '...features prominently on London's tourist maps and welcomes visitors...' (Horvath, 2011, p. 96). The idea of 'difference' means in this case that London's Chinese community and its traditions are restricted to a certain, albeit vibrant, part of the city, taking the focus away from, for example, the lack of representation of

individuals with a Chinese background producing mainstream media, underrepresentation of professionals of Chinese origin and lack of representation of British citizens of East Asian origin on UK screens.

A city wanderer could feasibly walk through this 'ethnic' district and then, within moments, find him or herself on Piccadilly, walking past the Royal Academy of Art and ending up in Mayfair, an affluent Central London shopping, business and residential district, where even nods to traditional Chinese culture are practically non-existent except in the vases which decorate hotels for the superrich. A wanderer in Chinatown would initially see many Chinese faces, street signs in Chinese, and be provided with ample opportunities to enjoy a Chinese meal, but would not necessarily understand the historical or contemporary significance of the area for London's Chinese community (see Sales et al., 2009, p. 57). Once in Mayfair, the wanderer might see only a few Chinese faces as part of the 'mainstream' business culture of the district.



Figure 6: London's Chinatown, located in the West End entertainment district.  
[http://london-sightseeing.net/wpcontent/uploads/2011/09/Chinatown\\_london.jpg](http://london-sightseeing.net/wpcontent/uploads/2011/09/Chinatown_london.jpg)





Figure 7: Shaftesbury Avenue, a major London thoroughfare with its many theatres. Shaftesbury Avenue is adjacent to Chinatown.

<http://cdn.roughguides.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/15.shaftesburyAvenue-42-31334483-crop-1680x1050.jpg>

Cultural diversity, in this case, is not celebrated, but is rather *side-lined* and can easily be avoided, but can equally be consumed as part of a particular *experience* of the city. Returning to the idea of the corporatisation of ethnic diversity, the above reference to the 'global ethnic supermarket' (Sepulveda, Syreh & Lyon, 2008), indicates that cultural difference can be situated within the framework of *consumption* and economic power. Continuing with the case of London's Chinatown, the district is promoted as a tourist attraction and has become the material symbolic base for trade and cultural exchange with China (Sales et al., 2009, p. 57). Loshitsky (2010, p. 73) comments on the corporatisation and commodification of culture and cultural difference in global cities, noting that the 'globalised' approach to immigration and diversity re-focuses attention from the challenges associated with the existence of a multi-racial and multi-ethnic socio-scape to a tool of economic prosperity for the host society. This is very much in line with

the tenets of neoliberal capitalism, as Lipschutz (2010) reminds us: '...high rates of aggregate economic growth are desirable irrespective of effects on individuals since they offer the highest levels of economic utility to society as a whole' (p. 140). This reinforces the idea that New Labour's culture of managerialism, linked to the party's 'diluted form of neoliberalism' (Cerny & Evans, 2004, p. 60), was related to profit and overall economic growth. In terms of the city's global image, linked to its symbolic power, the *spectacle* of diversity plays into the idea that the city is harmonious, accepting and tolerant: the world feels at home in the global city of London.



Figure 8: Street signs in English and Bengali in Brick Lane, London's 'Banglatown'. <http://www.tourguidelondon.com/userimages/bricklanecropped.jpg>

Writing about London's ethnic diversity in the mid-1990s, Rao (1995, p. 47), notes that

London...has very few administrators or top civil servants from what it euphemistically calls the "New Commonwealth"...You can pass through Fleet Street, the City or the Inns of Court without meeting a top editor, business tycoon or a leading Queen's Counsel from the settlers' community. (quoted in Eade, 2000, p. 39)

Although at the start of the new millennium, according to Eade (2000), 'contemporary London enjoys a high level of racial harmony' (p. 39), there were equally very few, if any, individuals with ethnic minority



backgrounds in powerful positions. *Institutional racism*, whereby exclusion of certain racial groups took place at an institutional level (organisations, societies, government posts) in terms of hiring or service provision, rather than racism at 'street level', was prevalent at the time.

### **3.4 Urban Contrasts: Class and the City Space**

A key theme to which I have only alluded so far, is that of socioeconomic class. As discussed extensively chapter 2, one of the key features which characterises contemporary global cities is social inequality and the marked distinction between socio-economic groups, with the upper echelons of society often relying upon unskilled migrants and other underprivileged members of society to provide manual labour and services. Class in the UK context is further complicated by a long history of the aristocracy, nobility and colonialism, coupled with the massive growth of the City of London (financial district). In modern Britain, where access to mass wealth is supposedly open to all through, for example, universal education and the welfare state, class is determined less and less by heritage (aristocracy or gentry), than it was in the past, and is increasingly determined by the ability to amass wealth in a relatively short space of time. Massey (2007) refers to this as 'the breakdown of the old class settlement and the conflictual establishment of the new...' (p. 74). At the same time, the '...exuberant, champagne-swilling claim of the success of London's reinvention' (p. 55) (the emphasis here on champagne is telling of the types of class markers which were valued in Britain and London in the late 1990s and 2000s) still had echoes of Britain's old class system. Speech, for example, notably 'speaking proper' or speaking in a 'posh' way, in order to signify accent as a social symbol (see Mugglestone, 1995), continued to feature as an important class signifier, signalling the importance of cultural attributes and certain types of behaviour as having greater 'value' than others. This ties into the corporatisation and 'managerialisation' of politics and society under New Labour, whereby the UK's strong economic performance resulted in class inequality in London. Indeed, as Massey (2007) argues, great wealth and its opposite, great poverty '...are intimately related...they are the

combined outcome of the politico-economic strategy of neoliberalisation...Inequality between rich and poor...is more marked in London than anywhere else in the country' (p. 55).

Consumption and the generation of profit, coupled with elitism in education through exclusive institutions like Eton and Oxford, became a central and guiding principle in the development of policy and, in a range of ways, the structuring of society under New Labour. Whilst '...the class structure in London...[was] becoming increasingly *proletarianised*, with a large and growing population of low-skilled workers' (Hamnett, 2004, pp. 48-49; italics original), the continued economic strength of the City helped to generate high levels of wealth amongst the elite classes. The co-existence of and connection between these two groups facilitated the growth of the global city and reinforces its economic power. This relates to the shoring up of the city's symbolic power, as we see the increasing importance of the market dimension (see Bourdieu, 1985). Given their roles as international centres for finance, culture and migration, global cities, London included, present us with dichotomies and contrasts, relating in this case to class. Hamnett (2004) argues that the 'growth in inequality is not an accidental by-product of London's role as a global city. On the contrary...it is part and parcel of the changing industrial and occupational structure of the city...the outcome is...greater wealth and greater inequality' (p. 9). Furthermore, 'to a very significant extent, the economy of the City of London and the salaries which are paid there generate massive inequalities' (p. 102). As a result of London's economic success, particularly in the late 1990s and into the 2000s, these high salaries meant that high levels of wealth were no longer restricted to the aristocracy, or indeed to members of a particular race or ethnicity. The internationalisation of the City meant that wealthy Londoners came from a wide variety of cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. The ways in which the theme of class and the importance of the City relate to cinematic London is discussed extensively in Chapters 5 and 6 and in Section 3.5.

Is the shift from race to class necessarily a bad thing? Whilst social inequality invariably results in the suffering of certain individuals, perhaps

we can approach this shift as positive, in that moving along the social class ladder is at least open to all, irrespective of race, in London at least. We need to see this as part of the city's uniqueness within the framework of global cities more generally. Relative at least to New York and Paris, London is very racially and ethnically mixed, as opposed to racially and ethnically segregated. In Nava's (2006) work on the specificity of London, she notes that '...although some migrant groups settled close to people from their own background...most were schooled in a highly mixed environment...Such familiarity between groups is one of the factors that have shifted the axis of belonging in much of contemporary London' (p. 69). Have Londoners simply become over time desensitised to difference? Nava (2006, p. 69), argues that postcolonial London has become a city where individuals are 'increasingly undifferentiated, hybrid', noting the high number of mixed race marriages and romantic partnerships found in London relative to other global cities. Although intolerance and prejudice are still sometimes features of life in London, the city is one in which race and ethnicity matter less than one's other attributes and qualities. Indeed, London is an *attractive destination* to a wide variety of individuals of varying ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds, from around the world. Although London's thriving economy (a major factor in the city's symbolic power) is naturally an important element in attracting these individuals to the city, we need also to understand the cultural, political and social reasons for global migration (Cassis, 2009, p. 242). City dwellers have identities which often transcend cultural or ethnic categorisations (see Robins, 2001, p. 86). The idea of individual agency, and the merits of living in a multicultural city like London, are a focus of Chapters 6 and 7, which describe empirical research. These chapters explore the ways in which London is a space of both despair and celebration, both in cinematic representations of the city and indeed in the city itself.

#### 3.4.1 Transforming the built environment

At the same time, the city's topography and built environment began to change. The City and Canary Wharf (London's second financial district in the eastern part of the city) were suddenly home to modern

skyscrapers, luxury shopping centres and ever-increasing numbers of five-star restaurants. At the same time, in line with the re-framing of Britain's identity as a blend of unique heritage and fresh, modern outlook, buildings of historical significance were improved and promoted. Indeed as Jacobs (1996) notes of the City of London, 'Heritage, correctly preserved and enhanced, was seen as a way the City could promote itself as distinctive in a new global market' (p. 55). This approach, combining heritage and modern architecture, gave London a unique skyline. Equally, we can see changes in the *use* of the urban environment and the ways in which urban dwellers interacted in this city of contrasts. Harvey (1990, p. 259) points out that different social groups use the city in different ways. He uses the term 'spatial practices' to express this idea in the context of capitalism, relating the use of the built environment to class. Spatial practices in the city '...take on specific meanings and these meanings are put into motion and spaces are used in a particular way through the agency of class, gender, or other social practices' (p. 259). This is manifested in many ways in the global city. For example, the demand for high-end, luxury real estate in London has transformed the market and house prices are unattainably high for most. Massey (2007) reminds us that this results in a city where '...the poor...have to live ("paradoxically") cheek by jowl with the rich; it is also that the very co-presence make their lives even harder. Juxtaposition in place makes a difference' (p. 67). This relates to the concept of the 'glamour zone' (Sassen, 1991), summarised by Ramanan (2007) as 'hubs of "super-profits" that boast state-of-the-art office buildings, luxury hotels, up-market shopping complexes and fancy apartment blocks that house the "hyper-urban professionals" of the global economy' (quoted in Hassam, 2009, p. 47). Harvey (1989), argues that 'Use [of the city in this case] values relate to matters of accessibility, taste, tone, aesthetic appreciation, and the symbolic and cultural capital that goes with possession of a certain kind of "valued" built environment' (p. 266).

Harvey's (1989) argument draws us back to a discussion of the ways in which symbolic power manifests itself in conceptualisations of the city. For Bourdieu (1991), symbolic power is 'a power of constituting the

given through utterances, of making people see and believe' (p. 170). Social class in an urban context is defined through the use of the city in a certain way: residents and visitors are convinced that frequenting certain locales and buying certain products will enhance their lives in some way. Aspiration, a concept which 'was adopted by New Labour in the run-up to the 1997 General Election and continued as a core theme under the successive leaderships of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown' (Butler & Hamnett, 2011, p. 2), is closely linked to the notion of symbolic power. The idea of aspiration is expanded upon in the empirical analysis in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.1.2). In that chapter, on Glamorous London, I look at films featuring London's glamorous side and note that aspiration is depicted as a desirable quality to adopt. Evidence for this is found in *Closer* (Clive Owen's character) and *Match Point* (Jonathan Rhys Meyers's character) who both come from working-class backgrounds, but manage to ingratiate themselves into the world of London's élite classes. Equally, during the New Labour period, '...the notion of aspiration has been widely embraced not least by many minority ethnic groups who have seen an opening up of social and educational possibilities over the last 20 years in ways that were not open to their parents' (Butler & Hamnett, 2011, p. 2). This opens up the theme of generational difference, which is explored in Chapter 6 where I look at ethnic diversity in London. In *Bend it Like Beckham*, for example, we see a generational distinction being created in ethnic minority groups in the city, in terms of their educational and professional goals and aspirations.

The glamour zones are frequented and used by a variety of individuals from differing class backgrounds. For example, the Canary Wharf business district in the Docklands area of East London is home to several modern glass skyscrapers housing a variety of international banks and law firms and their European head offices, luxurious shopping malls, lavish bars and expensive restaurants. This 'glamour zone' is one in which members of the 'transnational elite' group work, shop, eat and are entertained. Indeed, as Hassam (2009) argues, '...we need to relate spaces of consumption to the broader lifestyle of the "hyper-urban" professionals who inhabit those spaces; and the glamour of upmarket

shopping complexes in...London or New York is dependent on the fantasy of a global lifestyle' (p. 47). The process of gentrification ('transformation in a neighbourhood's social class composition', Butler & Lees, 2006, p. 469) is related to symbolic power because the process involves transforming certain areas into 'glamour zones', which are manifestations of the importance of London within the global city hierarchy. Conversely, the cleaners, waiters, security guards and other low-skilled service providers who frequent the area use and relate to the space differently than the 'transnational élite' group. The districts or zones inhabited by the poorer, low-skilled group are unlikely to be frequented by the transnational élite, apart from those which are in the process of revitalisation or gentrification. Bourdieu (1989) reminds us that 'people who are very distant from each other in social space can encounter one another and interact, if only briefly and intermittently, in physical space' (p. 16). These brief and intermittent interactions mask the realities of class inequalities in the city. These inequalities feed into the discussion of symbolic power's contradictory and conflicting nature. In Chapters 6 and 7 we shall see how negative portrayals of the city and its inhabitants are central to creating a holistic picture of the city's symbolic power.

The accelerated process of 'glamorisation', particularly under New Labour, was complemented by the growth of *urban regeneration* or *gentrification* projects. This 'glamorisation' and transformation were part of the then government's neoliberal policies and emphasis on gentrification as a means to re-vitalise and re-invigorate poorer areas in and near Central London, a strategy which continues today (see Edwards, 2010). Smith (2002) argues that the 'comparatively recent process of gentrification has been generalised as a central feature of...new urbanism' (p. 430). To clarify, this thesis does not offer a detailed account of gentrification in London, nor does it delve in depth into the debates surrounding gentrification. The concept is instead used as an example of how the built environment was transformed under New Labour and indeed how this transformation impacted upon the various social groups in London and even on the use of London as a location for filming. This is

key because these processes have continued under the coalition and Conservative governments.

According to Pratt (2008a), the justification for gentrification under New Labour ‘...is a trickle-down effect of more jobs and economic growth. The evidence on this is rather thin...’ (p. 112) Given that ‘Tony Blair’s Labour administration may be the most outspoken advocate of reinventing gentrification as “urban regeneration”’ (Smith, 2002, p. 443), we need to look at how changes in London’s geographical landscape influence the ways in which class develops and is perceived in the capital. The ‘thin’ evidence (Pratt, 2008, p. 112) for the economic benefit to all sections of society of the gentrification of certain areas is related to the discussion of class in this context. Lees (2000, p. 396) discusses the ‘New Middle Class’ in relation to gentrification, arguing that the transformation of deprived areas relates to a new set of (less conservative) cultural sensibilities, whereby groups of people *joined* the middle class through high salaries.

In the literature on gentrification discussion of the ‘new’ middle class has become synonymous with discussion of the ‘emancipated’ gentrifier. One of the hallmarks of this new middle class has been its ability to exploit the emancipatory potential of the inner city, and indeed to create a new culturally sophisticated, urban class fraction, less conservative than the ‘old’ middle class.(Lees, 2000, p. 396)

This ‘new middle class’, related to the ‘creative class’ (see Florida, 2002; Pratt, 2008), influenced the ways in which gentrification was managed and implemented. Indeed, as Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007) note, the conversion of industrial spaces into lofts (a common gentrification strategy in the transition from manufacturing to services (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999) is indicative of an ‘economic and occupational class transformation...towards the growth of professional and managerial workers working in financial, business and creative services’ (p. 106). Poorer areas and those that were once hotbeds of young ‘starving artists’ began to be transformed into ‘trendy’, luxurious districts – ‘glamour zones’. Examples include Shoreditch (East London) and Euston/King’s

Cross (Central London). The latter area was also in the process of becoming an international transportation hub, with the revitalisation of the Victorian St Pancras station building as the hub for Eurostar rail services to and from Paris and Brussels. The old station hotel building was also being re-developed as a luxury hotel, the St Pancras Renaissance. Edwards (2010) claims that the strategy for the area ‘...was devoted to changing the *image* of the area through a mixture of psychological and material measures...[giving the area] a new characterisation as vibrant, creative, safe(r) and desirable’ (p. 196; italics added). This involved the development of expensive property, including the apartments within the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel complex and the re-development of the warehouses behind St Pancras and King’s Cross stations, which now house the University of the Arts London and a variety of mid-/up-market restaurants and bars.

The transformation of the King’s Cross area is a noteworthy example because it combines the ideas of modernisation and revitalisation with those of preservation and restoration. St Pancras International Station, including the St Pancras Renaissance Hotel, is a listed Victorian building: its restoration acknowledges the area’s history and indeed London’s heritage. At the same time, the modernisation of the interior, including provision for high-speed rail, coupled with the revitalisation of the warehouses behind the station, speak to the idea of innovation, and business- and tourist-friendliness (quick rail links to Paris, Brussels and the rest of Europe). The re-development of the district is a strong example of the ways in which New Labour’s core neoliberal principles were put into practice. By catering for the ‘transnational elite’, wealthy tourists and others with moderate or high spending power, poor and underprivileged members of society, regardless of their race or ethnicity, are forced into enclaves on the periphery, out of sight and, correlatively, out of mind. The film *Breaking and Entering* (2006), analysed in depth in Chapter 6, explores the changes in King’s Cross and features the implications of the ‘revitalisation’ of the area, for both the wealthy developers and the local migrant community. This film moves away from the intermittent nature of cross-class (and cross-cultural)



interactions in the social space of the global city and explores the relationship between the owner of the architectural firm responsible for the development of the King's Cross area and a Bosnian seamstress who lives on a local housing estate. The film deconstructs the positivity and enthusiasm that defined London's symbolic power at the time by showing how the huge income disparity between the two groups can have detrimental effects.



Figure 9: The recently restored St Pancras International Station  
<http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Guardian/Pix/pictures/2012/8/24/1345824608108/St-Pancras-Renaissance-ho-008.jpg>

### **3.5 London on Screen: Symbolic Power and the Cinematic City**

The election of the New Labour government in 1997, with its optimism and aspirational rhetoric, came in the midst of a period where we can observe a shift in the ways in which London was portrayed in cinematic representations. Indeed as Lockett (2000) notes, 'like New Labour...it seems that much [late-] 90s mainstream cinema aspires to public relations, erasing conflict through the creation of images designed to create the illusion of direct communication with the public' (p. 98). This,

corresponds with aspects of a change in government policy in relation to the arts, including cinema. In the late 1990s, London suddenly became a global city in the filmic sense after years of patchy global cinematic presence. Like New York and Paris, the city was suddenly romanticised and idealised, providing a seemingly idyllic backdrop for urban middle-class stories relating of romance, drama, humour and the spending of money. Church Gibson (2003) argues that cinematic representations of London in the late 1990s and early 2000s 'depict different fantasy Londons, which may evoke not only the "upbeat" and highly selective representations...of tourist-board documentaries and Pathé Pictorials' (p. 363). Like Brunsdon (2007, p. 111), I do not claim that the political climate and film/cultural policy under New Labour was the only factor which incited this change in London's cinematic identity, nor do I claim that New Labour somehow actually transformed the social fabric of the UK or of London through the representation of the city in cinema; rather, I reflect upon the ways in which these policies and the political climate have *influenced* the city's non-cinematic identities and, alongside this, London's identity as a global city. 'London in the latter part of the twentieth century, because of the heritage of Empire, may have become *differently* rather than *more* international' (Brunsdon, 2007, p. 111). The 'branding' of the nation and the city under New Labour changed, or perhaps amplified, the elements of London's global-city identity which contribute to its symbolic power in the global arena. Whilst the erasure of evidence of social conflict and urban struggle was one such rhetorical strategy, Brunsdon (2007) also refers to London's evolving architectural landscape as a way of understanding how London became 'differently international': '...previous landmarks such as St Paul's are now dwarfed by buildings like the Swiss Re Building (the Gherkin) and No. 1 Canada Square [in London's second financial district, Canary Wharf]. These buildings...could be seen, along with [new] attractions such as Tate Modern and the Millennium Wheel, as the landmarks of London as a global city' (p. 113).

The New Labour government's shift in rhetoric and policy regarding the cultural and creative industries, and indeed the architectural changes

implemented during the party's time in government, had implications for the ways in which films, in particular mainstream films, were funded, thereby influencing the *types* of film which were released. In fact, the very change in wording, from 'cultural' to 'creative', can be seen as related to an ideological shift, rather than simply to semantics. Pratt (2008a) argues that, 'Creativity is universally seen as a positive characteristic: who wants to be uncreative? Moreover, creativity provides a positive feel as against the ambivalence of culture (which carries with it suspicions of high culture and exclusion, as well as antipathy to business)' (p. 113; original emphasis). Although seemingly more inclusive (via the de-emphasising of 'high culture'), it was the 'business friendly' angle which fit best with New Labour's neoliberal politics. Pratt (2008a) continues

...for an essentially neo-liberal government such as the UK's New Labour who sought to continue the policy of competition as a watchword for economic strategy [the] new *creative* industries made a convenient bedfellow. They also ensured that the economic, commercial and individualist dimensions were emphasised.

(Pratt, 2008, p. 113; emphasis added)

Soon after the election in 1997, the government established a Creative Industries Task Force, which released the *Creative Industries Mapping Document*. Schlesinger (2007) notes that 'the core purpose of the Task Force was "to recommend steps to maximise the economic impact of the UK creative industries at home and abroad". The logic of economic policy has prevailed' (p. 379). Indeed the focus on *economic impact* seems to have encouraged the release of films which had the potential to generate profits both at home and abroad. Joint UK-US productions like *Sliding Doors* (1998) *Notting Hill* (1999) and *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) are examples of films released during this period which enjoyed global popularity and large profits,<sup>9</sup> presenting Britain and in particular London as 'posh', glamorous and international – both a modern metropolis and a quaint historical city. Whilst in the 1997-2007 period films that portrayed

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<sup>9</sup> Information obtained from [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)

London's more troubled side were rarely profitable (see Section 4.4.2), *Notting Hill* (1999) and *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) were 'the most successful British films ever made' (Church Gibson, 2003, p. 364). The New Labour project of turning culture into a profitable, income-generating *industry* added an international element to London's film history, with the participation of some of the major Hollywood studios in representing the city to the world. As a result viewers see only one side of London, in which 'the educated middle classes predominate and there are few people over the age of 40...' and where Londoners are separated into two groups: '...those who have the freedom of gentrified London and those condemned to remain where they are' (Church Gibson, 2003, pp. 367-369). How does this focus on the economic benefits of production link back to symbolic power? We need once again to refer to Bourdieu (1985), who reminds us that symbolic power has both representational and market dimensions. This dual focus gives us a clear connection to the political-economic climate prevalent at the time, thereby emphasising the importance of the market dimension in neoliberal capitalism.

### 3.5.1 Glamour

The importance of Hollywood in Britain's film culture and the globally-distributed representations of a particular side of London (rich, glamorous) are undeniable. Hollywood, as Langford (2010) reminds us, has for the last century '... set the terms of global film culture [and has]...yet to be challenged...Since the end of World War II above all, Hollywood has been without question the dominant global film industry' (p. xi). In spite of the development of many successful cinema industries around the world, Hollywood films continue to enjoy the most widespread global distribution and consumption of all (Langford, 2010). Indeed, the films mentioned above and some of the London-set films discussed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis are Hollywood productions:

...*Notting Hill* and the *Bridget Jones* series are American productions—although they may star British actors like the smooth but caddish Hugh Grant and the slightly nicer Colin Firth in the lead male roles and have a “made in England” feel to them, the money to make them either comes

from Miramax or some other American super-conglomerate and, most often, it is an American star for the female lead... (Hayward, 2006, p. 80)

Indeed, 'in 1997, seven Hollywood movies accounted for fifty-four per cent of the £465 million spent on feature film production in the UK' (Miller, 2000, p. 39). Furthermore, in 1998 'the Government opened a British Film Office in Los Angeles in an attempt to facilitate traffic between Hollywood and Britain by offering liaison services to the industry and promoting British location and talent' (Miller, 2000, p. 39). Film policy under New Labour was firmly rooted in the desire to attract investment to the UK. This was reflected in the types of film that were made during the period, with the most successful featuring familiar plot lines and stars. For example, the romantic comedy genre was highly popular at the time and the British actor Hugh Grant starred in many of these films (Church Gibson, 2003, p. 364).

The above examples show how London's filmic identity began to change in the late 1990s, when New Labour began to implement ideologically driven changes to creative and film policy (including the establishment in 2003 of Film London, the body charged with promoting London as a filming location), reflective of its profit-driven motives. Indeed, as Miller (2000) argues, film policy at the time showed precisely the 'struggle between the desire to build a viable sector of the economy that provides employment, foreign exchange and multiplier effects; and the desire for a representative and local cinema that reflects seriously upon society through drama' (p. 44). The New Labour government, beginning with the establishment of the Creative Industries Task Force in 1997, made changes to cultural and creative policy (focussing on 'innovation') which have impacted filmic output. Watson (2000, p. 80) discusses some of these changes and suggests that the huge profitability of films set in Britain and in London released during this period can be attributed in part to the investment of some of the major Hollywood studios in British film. 'US investment in the UK film industry easily outstripped that of Europe' (Watson, 2000, p. 81). Creating US-friendly productions, by way of a partially American cast and other means,

ensured that these films would have a wider audience, beyond the UK's shores, increasing profit levels and demonstrating that the UK, particularly London, was an international hub for creativity and culture. This investment in the UK film industry was equally beneficial to the investors (US film studios) themselves, as New Labour made it much simpler for foreign studios to make films in the UK. This was achieved through the creation of an economically favourable environment, with an enhanced tax write-off system (, pp. 81-82).

Furthermore, Watson (2000) notes that the reputation of British studios like Pinewood, located just west of London, and of British technicians, coupled with '...the need to use British locations or the desire of key talent...to work in Britain...played their part in boosting the number of Hollywood films made in the UK' (p. 82). New Labour, in line with their policies designed to make culture and creativity profitable, relied on the statistic that one film job is thought to create 1.7 additional jobs in, for example, the insurance, hotel, catering and transport industries (Watson, 2000, p. 82). This is corroborated by a 2007 report from the British Film Institute (BFI), which confirms that 'for every job supported in the core UK film industry a further job is supported through indirect and induced multiplier impacts. The core UK film industry therefore helps to support 67,000 FTE jobs in total [in 2006].' (*Economic Contribution of the UK Film Industry*, 2007, p. 3). The same report states that the UK film industry in 2006 '...contributed over £4.3 billion to GDP in 2006, paid over £1.1 billion to the Exchequer in tax revenues (gross of tax relief and other fiscal support) and supported a total of about 95,000 jobs' (p. 5). The report also discusses the UK film industry's further contributions to the UK economy through the sale of promotional merchandise and attracting tourists to the UK (p. 4). Given these high profit levels, it appears that the Labour government's cultural (and therefore film) policies contributed to the growth of the UK film industry from the late 1990s. At the same time, New Labour's business- and profit-centred approach to popular culture, including film, resulted in 'a populist, big-budget, apolitical model preferred to an artisanal "poor" cinema articulated around social issues', with an emphasis on global blockbusters, likely to generate large profits

(Miller, 2000, pp. 44-45). This was encouraged by financing films which adhered to a successful formula, including sequels and those belonging to a particular series, like the James Bond and Mr Bean films. As Miller (2000) puts it, the future of British cinema was 'massive commercial success' (p. 45). This 'commercial success' strengthened London's symbolic power through the provision of global distribution and the representation of London's glamorous side. In the empirical part of this thesis, I examine precisely how this takes place on a textual level, examining both commercially successful films and those which benefit from global distribution and/or a well-known international cast, but whose profit levels are relatively low or negligible. How does this link to the representation of London as possessing high amounts of symbolic power? After all, London's symbolic power, as it developed through cinematic representations in the late 1990s and 2000s, was nuanced and full of contradictions, much like the city itself. The empirical analysis in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 attempts to provide some answers to this question.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discuss London as an archetypal case of both a generic and a unique global city. In particular, I look at the ways in which policy and rhetoric changed in the UK after the election of the New Labour government in 1997 and how this in turn influenced cultural production and Britain's and London's global image. Although in some ways simply a continuation of the neoliberal policies which began under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government, New Labour propagated policies which reflected their strategy of 'globalisation with a human face' (Cerny & Evans, 2004, p. 63). On the surface, their policies encouraged inclusiveness amongst the various classes, cultures and ethnicities which lived in and shared the city space. Upon closer inspection, policies like New Labour's multiculturalism and business-friendliness (deregulation and an emphasis on the financial sector), contributed to increasing inequality, particularly in London. The city's ethnic diversity became a spectacle and the financial success of the City, coupled with the gentrification or 'glamorisation' of many Central London districts, meant that poorer

Londoners were increasingly unable to afford to live alongside the 'transnational elite' and the city's existing wealthier residents. London-set Hollywood films released during the 1997-2007 period reflected these ideological and social trends, whereby the city was represented as mostly white, middle-class and young. Furthermore, creative policy under New Labour, including film policy, encouraged foreign studios to invest in London. Some of the most financially successful British films ever made were released during this period and they were Hollywood productions (see Church Gibson, 2003, p. 364). In terms of symbolic power, representing precisely the 'globalness' of the global city (representations of the transnational elite and the glamour zones) was undoubtedly a method by which to enhance the city's reputation (see Cruickshank, 2010, p. 152). At the same time, we need to consider the effects of more gritty and raw representations of the city and how these, too, fit into a discussion of symbolic power, in particular as a reflection of London as a postcolonial space. In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, I explore precisely how this is achieved, with a focus on both representations of 'Glamorous London' and indeed representations which focus on the seemingly negative implications of the city's global city identity, exploring the contradictory and contrasting nature of the city's symbolic power. Chapter 4 explores the methodological approach deployed in the empirical section, which includes an analysis of cinematic representations of London (Chapters 5 and 6) and the evolving nature of symbolic power in the city itself (Chapter 7).



## **CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this thesis I approach cinematic representations as artistic output that is created in a particular context and is reflective of particular societal, political and economic trends. I also approach these texts as part of larger systems of meaning, relating them to other texts present in other media. Cinema's influence is therefore not restricted to artistic, filmic output; rather, films are immensely popular and have the ability to '...perpetuate and alter cultural stereotypes...' (Sobchack, 1980, p. 298). Given the importance of the cinema as a popular representational medium (see Barsam, 2007, p. 2) and the use of cinematic elements in other media, parts of this thesis explore the ways in which film texts have become intertextual. 'Intertextuality refers to the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts' (Rose, 2001, p. 136). Kristeva (1980) is credited with coining the term intertextuality, and she argues that 'the text is not an individual, isolated object but a compilation of cultural textuality' (Simandan, 2010, p. 25). The concept of intertextuality became an important influence on my methodological approach, helping me to discuss and locate the symbolic power of the global city, London in this case, within cinema and indeed within the broader context of the 'real' city.

As discussed in Section 1.3, the symbolic power of the global city is multi-faceted and aesthetic (artistic representations) and market considerations, amongst others (see Bourdieu, 1985), are important elements in its development. It is also contradictory and sometimes inconsistent, much like the city itself. Concerning the production and communication of the global city's symbolic power, Langford's (2010) claim that '...the complex linkages between economics and film aesthetics need careful examination and analysis' (p. xii), succinctly alludes to the multifaceted nature of symbolic power and hence the importance of forging a methodological link between aesthetics and economics in the

analysis of film. In the case of this thesis, the dual focus on aesthetics and market considerations made it necessary to combine a visual analytic approach with one that takes into consideration at least some of the political and economic dimensions through which the films in question were conceived, produced and distributed. Furthermore, given the multifaceted nature of symbolic power in conjunction with cinema's popular appeal, it became necessary to find a method of assessing adequately the ways in which these film texts function beyond the cinema hall and how they, and indeed the cinematic medium itself, have had a hand in developing London's symbolic power through cinema and the implications of the city's cinematic image both for the city's reputation and for its inhabitants.

As we can see, then, aesthetics and economics are not mutually exclusive, but directly connected, in and beyond the context of the symbolic power of the city. One of the key aims of this project was to link the aesthetic, artistic and market orientations of cinematic representations of London, assessing whether textual elements such as settings, camera angles, characterisation, and even dialogue, were evidence of a particular ideologically driven, market-orientated aesthetic approach and what this meant for the symbolic power of global cities more generally. As a result, Critical Discourse Analysis presented itself as an apparently effective methodological tool, particularly given that, according to Fairclough (2003), 'representation is clearly a discursive matter...which may represent the same area of the world from different perspectives or positions' (p. 26). At the same time, however, I deemed it necessary to approach the text from the perspective of semiotics whilst looking for ways in which to incorporate a discussion of the ways in which cinematic signs and symbols related to discourse.

Given the emerging focus of this thesis in its theoretical sections on rhetoric and political economy, I initially carried out a primary discourse analysis on the texts of several films released between 1997 and 2007 and featuring London. Surprisingly, the results were unsatisfactory in terms of answering the research questions. Instead of addressing *how* cinematic representations reconstruct and maintain

London's symbolic power as a global city, the analysis became a rhetorical one that over-emphasised the films' political and economic aspects and provided little space for commentary on how these aspects connected to the filmmakers' artistic choices. This took the project in a direction which gave little scope for addressing the multiple facets of the global city's symbolic power in the context of cinematic representations. Given the widespread media convergence, and indeed the introduction in Section 2.3.3 of the concept of branding as flowing between screen and non-screen locales, the discourse-analytic method provided too narrow a focus to answer the research questions.

At the same time, however, the rigour of the discourse-analytic method provided a solid base from which to expand the analysis beyond rhetoric and political and economic considerations. As a result, I chose to separate the analysis into two parts. The first part (Chapters 5 and 6) provides a sociologically informed thematic analysis of six London-based film texts. The theoretical focus in this thesis on the New Labour period in the UK, and indeed on the sudden shift in the way London was represented in cinema from the late 1990s (see Brunsdon, 2007, pp. 111-112; Church Gibson, 2003, p. 369; Murphy, 2009), meant that the films chosen were all released during the 1997-2007 period. I chose this timeframe because it has clear social, political and cultural particularities, but also because this proved a pragmatic timeframe to work with, given the time and space restrictions of the project. These films were selected on the basis of a set of specific, theoretically informed criteria, which are discussed in Section 4.3.1. The sociological-thematic analysis was influenced by discourse analysis and semiotic analysis that add to the robustness and reliability of the empirical analysis by ensuring that the texts are discussed as part of a system of representation within a particular context. In this light, Chapter 7 discusses how these films, and more generally the city represented, connect to trends taking place in the real, material city. This discussion takes place via a thematic analysis of industry and government reports and of journalistic output plus a semiotic analysis of narrative advertising featuring London from the same period. There is, in addition, a discussion of the ways in which the events

of the period continue to have an influence on film policy, tourism and the development of certain London neighbourhoods.

## **4.2 Method: Sociological-Thematic Analysis**

The bulk of the empirical work uses the thematic analytical method. Thematic analysis ‘...is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). This focus on detail proved a highly useful element of the method, allowing an *in-depth* investigation of the films (Chapters 5 and 6) and of other non-cinematic texts influenced by the cinematic medium (Chapter 7). Thematic analysis of film has thus far been lacking in close scrutiny and at times been applied with little rigour. Furthermore, ‘...thematic analysis is not often a named method...’ in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 100), especially in film-centred projects. As this is a sociological study of the cinematic city and the city through cinema, I sought a method which would provide a solid basis for the textual analysis, but would allow for an exploration of the ways in which film reflects and influences other areas of the media and of society. Klinger (1984) calls precisely for a contextual approach to film analysis:

The text...is an intersection at which multiple and 'extra-textual' practices of signification circulate.... The 'law' of the text, then, has to be tampered with to exact a less streamlined and more socially-responsive theory of the cinema/ideology relation... thus more adequately attending to the constituent features of the multi-faceted phenomenon of ideological maintenance. (p. 44)

The central foundation for the analysis of film texts in this thesis is therefore the notion that the text can only be interpreted when the context is thoroughly and rigorously taken into account, allowing the researcher to situate the film texts within larger systems of meaning, in this case outside the cinematic medium. This sociological approach to the thematic analysis of film makes film research relevant to other disciplines, including history, politics and economics.

Miller, Govil, McMurria, Maxwell and Wang (2005) apply a dualistic methodological approach to their enquiry into Hollywood cinema. They ask about Hollywood's claim to global dominance, the implications of this dominance and whether Hollywood can be understood as simply a geographical location (p. 7). Through the use of statistical analysis, they unpack the commodification of Hollywood cinema and the increasing understanding and production of films as commodities rather than artistic output (p. 5). This model, whilst clearly relevant to the present research in terms of the commodification of film and the focus on the market element of symbolic power (see Bourdieu, 1985, p. 16), only tells half the story. As Miller et al. (2005) employ a quantitative approach, there is little scope for addressing the textual merits of the actual cinematic *representations*. The film texts themselves are not adequately assessed or referenced for their textual qualities. By neglecting semiotic readings of the film texts, we ignore the potential diversity of pleasures and emotional investments beyond the commercial logic of production. The analysis I carried out demonstrates the importance of these textual qualities in building the global city's symbolic power through representations, alongside the films' connection to sociological and other contextual considerations, including political and economic factors, and in particular box-office statistics.

Although 'thematic analysis is regularly used by scholars and researchers...Often it is used without being specifically described...' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 6). This presents additional problems in attesting to the method's rigour and robustness. Whereas scholars like Ryan and Bernard (2000) regard thematic analysis as simply a foundational tool, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that '...thematic analysis should be considered a method in its own right' (p. 78). Furthermore, they argue that thematic analysis '...offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data' (p. 77). Thematic analysis therefore provided the most balanced method, offering simultaneously a sense of rigour and of freedom, without the narrow focus of discourse analysis. Furthermore, thematic analysis proved an excellent method for handling large volumes of data. It also provided a useful way of

organising and categorising the data, and indeed provided the scope and flexibility to sum up large trends, connecting the film analysis back to the sociological and theoretical context developed and discussed extensively in the theory chapters (2 and 3). This was because 'thematic analysis enables scholars...to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy...in understanding and interpreting observations...' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). Furthermore, thematic analysis is 'a way of *making sense* out of seemingly unrelated material' (ibid., p. 4; italics original). The method therefore provided an interpretive framework within which to situate the data and allowed for the unearthing of meanings which might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Defining thematic analysis as a rigorous empirical strategy helps the researcher to avoid the potential pitfalls of passively noticing and noting emerging themes. Ely, Vinz, Downing and Anzul (1997) argue that this passive approach 'can be misinterpreted to mean that themes "reside" in the data, and if we just look hard enough they will "emerge"...Themes...reside in our heads and from our thinking about our data and creating links as we understand them' (pp. 205-206). A strong thematic analysis adds the elements of rigour and reliability to a project, particularly when there is a sociological slant to the analysis. On this, Sobchack (1980) argues with specific reference to film, that 'one must learn a new language, a new way of seeing and reading, in order to raise the film text beyond its usual status...' (p. 300). As scholars we are able to give film-based projects more validity in the social sciences by highlighting the medium's potential sociological effects and influences. Indeed, '...a theme is a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon' (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 4). This definition provides the researcher with an opportunity to move the research beyond the confines of the texts themselves. In the case of this thesis, this meant adding a sociological element to the methodological strategy, in order to contextualise the film analysis. Casetti (1999), whose work I mention in Section 1.4, provides a thorough explanation of the precise elements that scholars need to incorporate into their analysis

of film: the socioeconomic aspects of cinema, the institution of cinema, cinema as a culture industry, and the ways in which cinema provides representations of the social world (p. 109). These elements became important to the empirical analysis and the way it was conceived of and developed.

Other scholars call for a sociological approach to film analysis in order to make film studies more relevant. Dudrah's (2006) work, for example, looks at Hindi-language films from a sociological perspective. He cites Denzin (1991) in particular as perhaps one of the only academics to work with a 'true' sociological approach to cinema. Dudrah (2006) argues that 'Denzin's two publications can be considered as explicit attempts at taking up an alliance and fostering a cross-disciplinary dialogue between sociological studies of cinema...film studies...and cultural studies' (p. 25). Indeed it is Denzin's (1991) focus on understanding how Western societies view themselves through the lens of cinema which is of great interest to Dudrah (2006) and, to a certain extent, to the present research. Denzin (1991) takes this further by citing cinema as '...a refraction and an emblem of wider culture and society across race, gender and sexual lines' (Dudrah, 2006, p. 24). Denzin also '...considers the personal and collective social struggles organised around the personal experiences and social structures of race, gender and sexuality as brought to life in Hollywood cinema' (Dudrah, 2006, p. 24). The centrality of mainstream (Hollywood in the case of Denzin's work) cinema as widely distributed and widely consumed gives the medium its importance as a tool that both reflects and arguably constructs social realities.

Dudrah himself (2006) uses 'interdisciplinary and critical theoretical and methodological frameworks—germane the subjects of sociology, film and media studies...to establish and elaborate on some of the relationships between cinema and culture and society...' (p. 29). I attempted a research design along these lines, using a sociologically influenced thematic analysis of both film texts (Chapters 5 and 6) and contextual documents, situating the film texts within wider systems of meaning and demonstrating the ways in which film texts are rearticulated in non-cinematic media (Chapter 7). This contextual approach to the

analysis led the empirical research in a slightly different direction in Chapter 7. Although that chapter continues the discussion of the influence of cinematic representations on London's symbolic power, it takes the research further by offering evidence that shows how this symbolic power as articulated through the cinematic medium, begins to affect other media like narrative advertising. Furthermore, chapter 7 identifies and comments on the reciprocal nature of the relationship between cinema and the city, where influences from each are evident in the other. The relationship between cinema and the city is dynamic.

This thesis is framed by a sociologically driven thematic analytical method, incorporating some aspects of each of the following: Foucault's (1972) idea of connecting the discursive and non-discursive realms and Kristeva's (1980) concept of intertextuality, or the rearticulation of one text in another. Kristeva (1980) argues that 'every text is from the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it' (cited in Culler, 1981, p. 105). Kristeva's (1980) term is a synthesis of Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and Saussure's semiotics. The relationship between the individual text and the cultural text, Kristeva (1980) argues, 'are made from the same textual material and cannot be separated from each other' (Simandan, 2010, p. 25). Bakhtin's notion of the dialogue places an emphasis on the 'relation between author, work, reader, society and history' (Simandan, 2010, p. 25), whilst Saussure discusses the world of signs. Kristeva's (1980) bridge between Bakhtin's concept of the dialogue and Saussure's ideas on signs is key to unearthing meanings in texts that are mediated through, or filtered by, codes that are reliant upon other texts.

Semiotics as such played an important role in the development of the thematic codes and indeed in the thematic coding structure in this project. Semiotics helped to connect the thematic analysis to the cinematic medium, providing a useful tool for conveying the uniqueness of the cinematic medium. Indeed, as Wollen (1972), referring to Metz (1968), reminds us, '...cinema is indeed a language, but a language without a code...because it has texts...but, unlike verbal language, it cannot be referred back to a pre-existent code' (Wollen, 1972, p. 120).



With specific reference to Paris, Wollen (1972) also argues that filmmakers need to do very little in order to convey to viewers which city a film is set in if that city is well known: 'It is possible to convey "Pigaleness" or "Paris-ness" with shots of neon, cigarette-girls and so on, or with boulevard cafés and the Eiffel Tower...' (p. 146). This is reflected in the work of Idema (2001), where the argument is made that texts '...are defined as being the semiotic manifestation of material and social processes' (Idema, 2001, p. 187).

To rely on semiotics as the principle analytic strategy for the present research would not satisfactorily respond to the principle research question (*What is the role of cinematic representations in the communication and sustaining of the global cities' symbolic power?*), since semiotics stipulates that meticulous attention must be paid to individual scenes and filming styles, rather than necessarily connecting the film texts to larger themes and systems of meaning. This would have resulted in an overly textual analysis, foregoing the focus on context that was necessary in order to address the research question. Semiotics did, however, provide a useful schematic frame within which to situate the overall analysis and to develop analytical themes.

#### 4.2.1 Textual analysis: Semiotics

Broadly speaking, semiotics is the study of the meanings of signs. 'A semiotic approach is concerned to uncover the processes of meaning production and how signs are designed to have an effect upon actual and prospective consumers of those signs' (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p. 300). A semiotic approach challenges conventional analyses and understandings of texts, searching for themes that have been 'omitted or repressed and/or overlayed by other themes' (Kellehear, 1993, p. 43, quoted in Liamputtong, 2009, p. 137). The aim is to discover meanings which may remain opaque if approached from alternative perspectives. The semiotics element of the analysis therefore also had a sociological slant. This is expanded upon by Idema (2001), who argues for a sociological approach to semiotic analysis:

...Social semiotic analysis is an interpretive exercise, and not a search for "scientific proof". Its purpose is to describe how texts construct "realities", and to argue the sociohistorical nature of their assumptions and claims. So rather than search for further proof, we should think about how the filmic mode has been exploited to serve specific interests. (pp. 198-200)

Idema (2001) importantly addresses how social semiotic analysis is useful in grounding the aesthetic elements of visual texts, cinematic representations in the case of this thesis, in the social world. This allows the researcher to conduct an analysis which shows the relevance of film texts beyond the confines of the cinematic medium itself. Furthermore, the social semiotic '...method is effective in bringing out hidden meanings' (Jewitt & Oyama, 2001, p. 154).

Though initially developed as a method of analysing works of literature, the semiotic analytical method devised by Barthes (1974) in *S/Z* lends itself extremely well to film analysis. Lesage (1977) claims that Barthes' (1974) '...major methodological premises can well be applied to the study of film...for Barthes does not build on some canon of great works but rather evaluates a closed narrative by its successful orchestration, integration and manipulation of cultural and symbolic codes' (pp. 18-19). *S/Z* presents an effective strategy for in-depth analysis, providing the researcher with a variety of materials through which to conduct a thorough study which assesses the text and the context, relating the themes assessed to the sociological world. This is achieved through Barthes' (1974) codification of the analytical process, which is presented in five steps. These are the *Enigmatic Code*, the *Action Code*, the *Referential Code*, the *Semic Code* and the *Symbolic Code*. Lesage (1977) notes that 'in a Barthesian analysis, analysis of theme or of uniquely expressive cinematographic techniques would be of only partial interest' (p. 4). Lesage (1977) suggests that, instead, a Barthesian analysis entails noting details like place and time, connoted through architecture, traffic patterns fashion styles and other visual elements, forcing the analyst to move the analysis beyond the simplistic (p. 4). Meanings, in a Barthesian analysis, are constructed through textual elements which in some ways connect the film to the world outside the

text: the world which the text attempts to represent and the world in which the text is consumed.

#### 4.2.2 Text analysis: Discourse, ideology and intertextuality

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter (Section 1.1), my thematic analysis also draws on discourse analysis, ideology and intertextuality, particularly when looking at bounded sequences in films. This allowed a stronger connection of the film texts to their wider context. Discourse, according to Rose (2001) is '...a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how things are done in it' (p. 190). Through a discussion of the wider role of film, Lesage (1977) discusses an important facet with which the present research is concerned: 'In daily life and art, conventions...provide whole clusters of seemingly natural details. The fact that these details and the conventions behind them are unremarkable means that ordinarily we do not notice or discuss them...' (Lesage, 1977, p. 3). We can see strong parallels between Lesage's (1977) words and Bourdieu's (1991) conceptualisation of symbolic power as 'misrecognisable' (p. 170). As this project has been devised so as to uncover meanings which the film texts suggest, Lesage's emphasis on the 'unremarkable' became highly relevant: the textual elements which seem natural, ('normal', 'obvious' or 'ordinary') must be identified and examined. In many of the films I analysed, the city is not necessarily the central focus; rather it is often a peripheral character, highly important but not essential to the film's narrative. The city is, however, ever-present, framing the action and driving the narrative. This aspect of the analytical process provided a rigorous method by which to unearth a nuanced perspective on London's symbolic power.

Although this thesis does not offer an ideological analysis of film, ideology is an important concept and had a bearing in the way that the methodology was constructed. According to Ryan and Kellner (1988), 'ideology...is primarily a metaphoric way of representing the world that is linked to a particular way of constructing social reality' (p. 15). This connection to the social world is a key theme and helps connect film studies to sociology. Indeed, as Purvis and Hunt (1993) argue,

'ideology...implies the existence of some link between "interests" and "forms of consciousness". Central to such a conception is the contention that interests are identifiable in a form that is distinguishable from the form in which these interests are experienced' (p. 475). Once again, we see a strong link to Bourdieu's (1991) perspective on symbolic power as 'misrecognisable' (p. 170) and, therefore, the potential of film as a medium through which to enhance, maintain and construct this power. Discourse and ideology work together so that both the text itself and external factors are central to perpetuating a particular version of reality.

If 'discourse' and 'ideology' both figure in accounts of the general field of social action mediated through communicative practices, then 'discourse' focuses upon the internal features of those practices, in particular their linguistic and semiotic dimensions. On the other hand, 'ideology' directs attention towards the external aspects of focusing on the way in which lived experience is connected to notions of interest and position that are in principle distinguishable from lived experience. (Purvis & Hunt, 1993, p. 476)

Howarth (2000), in his discussion of realist accounts of discourse, notes that 'discourses are regarded as particular objects with their own properties and powers...In order to account for [their] specific causal impact they need to be placed in relation to other social objects, such as the state, economic processes and so on' (p. 3). The reading of discourse from this standpoint underlines the importance of locating texts within a field beyond the texts themselves, through an '...account of the ways discourses reproduce and transform the material world' (Parker, 1992, p. 1, quoted in Howarth, 2000, p. 3). I draw on Foucault (1972) to further develop this notion, as he connects 'discursive practices' and 'non-discursive' activities and institutions (Howarth, 2000, p. 4). The foundation for the analysis of film texts in the present research is therefore centred on the notion that the text can only be interpreted when the context is thoroughly and rigorously taken into account, allowing the researcher to situate the film text within a larger system of meaning. This is reflected, for example, in Klinger's (1984) contextual approach to film analysis:

The text...is an intersection at which multiple and 'extra-textual' practices of signification circulate.... The 'law' of the text, then, has to be tampered with to exact a less streamlined and more socially-responsive theory of the cinema/ideology relation... thus more adequately attending to the constituent features of the multi-faceted phenomenon of ideological maintenance. (p. 44)

Kristeva's (1980) concept of intertextuality underpins this discourse-ideology connection. By channelling the cinematic city narrative into both the realities of the 'real city' and the non-cinematic genres in which the cinematic city is often re-articulated, we see how cinematic and non-cinematic media texts speak to one another in the context of the city. On this, Kuhn (1990), in her work on science fiction films, discusses the importance of superseding genre and texts, calling for film analysis to move '...into the sphere of discourses and practices at work beyond cinema itself...in which films and genres participate' (p. 9). An important feature of this methodological approach therefore explores the reach of film texts, both within and beyond the realm of cinema and into the city itself. Which are the elements which indicate the dynamic relationship between cinema and the city? The discourse element grounds the analysis in the texture of the film as text, but equally in the peripheral considerations through which the film was produced, distributed and received. The foci on discourse and intertextuality equally reinforce the point that film texts are increasingly being re-articulated in non-cinematic genres, spilling into other media and indeed discursive realms beyond the various media outlets, permeating our everyday lifeworlds.

Bordwell and Thompson (2004) suggest that the ways in which these elements are filmed and altered, cultivate a creative 'style' (p. 389). Indeed Connell (2012) notes that 'The use of *mise-en-scène* (design aspects of film production and arrangement of scenes in front of the camera), cinematography and editing processes control the presentation of setting and subsequently influence the viewer's perception of setting, landscape or what might be best termed filmscape' (p. 1014). To take this concept further, I turn to Fairclough (2003) and his

discussion of the socio-cultural practices associated with particular texts. If we view films from a critical perspective, it becomes evident that going beyond the textual and grounding the work in the social is necessary insofar as '...discourse figures in the representations which are always a part of social practices' (p. 26). Discourse in this sense refers to the ways in which a particular part of the material world is represented. Thus it is not simply a case of filming the city, but precisely of how the filming style and the mise-en-scène serve or contribute to a particular mode of representation and, subsequently, how these representations fit into a particular system of production and distribution, consumption and, correlatively, ideological meaning-making. Furthermore, the notion that a film is a product of a variety of ideological standpoints is best addressed through discourse. 'When looking at art from an ideological and critical stance, we assume that art reflects the ideologies from which it comes' (Barsam, 2007, p. 326). The ways in which a film communicates its ideological reference points is clearly connected to discourse.

### **4.3 Sampling**

#### **4.3.1 Films: Chapters 5 and 6**

The task of selecting a wide variety of films released between 1997 and 2007, which would satisfactorily address the research questions, was highly challenging. This was in part due to the lack of a developed central archive of London's screen presence when I began this project (see *Hidden Treasures: The UK Audiovisual Archive Strategic Framework*, 2004).<sup>10</sup> Given this limitation, paradoxically coupled with London's extensive cinematic presence, I compiled my own list of approximately 100 films released in the 1997-2007 period (see Appendix A). Each film fulfils at least one of the following theoretically-informed criteria, where an aspect of the city's symbolic power is evident. This symbolic power, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, is complex and at times seemingly

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<sup>10</sup> The Film London agency has been developing an archive of London-set films for several years. Although not yet complete, many of these films are available through the London Screen Archives website at <http://www.londonsscreenarchives.org.uk>

contradictory. The selection criteria are therefore also laden with contradictions, mirroring the intensity and dynamism which the city itself contains:

- The film portrays an element of London's global connectedness or diverse urban landscape;
- The film portrays London as a centre for global capitalism (using references to the service economy and/or conspicuous consumption through, for example, the use of Sassen's [1991] 'glamour zones');
- The film portrays London as a culturally, racially and ethnically diverse city;
- The film reflects social strife, conflict or social inequalities

Furthermore, these criteria were placed within the context of the textual analysis, linking the scenes I analysed to broader themes relating to the discursive elements inherent in the thematic codes and sub-codes. The films selected were also either widely and globally distributed, or were funded by a variety of international studios and stakeholders.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, these films portray specific geographical locations in London through either visual or dialogic references, or both. I separated the films into thematic categories: Glamorous London, Multi-Cultural London, Heritage London and Children's London. Given the theoretical focus on London's global city identity as having multiple layers, particularly relating to deep societal inequalities, I decided to focus on the Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London thematic categories, which reflect these inequalities, for the analytical part of the thesis.

This decision was taken in light of the space restrictions associated with this project and, more importantly, in order to provide scope for analytical rigour. In addition the two thematic categories selected provided the most nuanced material for a discussion of symbolic power and the global city. As I compiled the list of films and began the process of critical viewing, it became evident that films in the Heritage London

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<sup>11</sup> Information obtained from the Internet Movie Database, IMDb.

and Children's London categories, whilst containing potentially rich analytical material, were not necessarily appropriate to addressing the research questions. Heritage films, written about extensively by Church Gibson (2002) and Monk (2012), are important in discussions about, for example, national identity and historical representation, but they do not provide enough material in the discussion of symbolic power and the city. Although this genre does raise questions about film-induced tourism and the role of heritage in London's identity, these aspects were not sufficient for carrying out a thorough analysis of the role of cinema in the construction and maintenance of the city's symbolic power. Films made for children presented an even less compelling case, as the fantastical elements related to the representation of the cityscape are prevalent throughout the narratives in a variety of contexts – children's films are inherently 'magical' and, as such, do not provide sufficient material for incorporation into a discussion of the symbolic power of the global city. On the other hand, the two thematic categories which were selected, Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London, provide the 'obvious' signs both of London's symbolic power and indeed of the contradictory nature of this power. These two thematic categories are defined in detail in Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

#### 4.3.2 Contextual material: Chapter 7

Chapter 7 follows a different structure and the sample contained a combination of journalistic output, narrative advertising featuring London and government agency and industry reports on film in the UK. The sample was gathered using the purposeful sampling method, in an attempt to find illustrative cases which pointed towards a particular trend in film and media culture more generally. This helped to link London's symbolic power as a cinematic city to events taking place in the 'real' city. The purposeful sampling method '...involves studying information-rich cases in depth and detail. The focus is on understanding and illuminating important cases rather than on generalizing from a sample to a population' (Patton, 1999, p. 1197). The aim in Chapter 7 was to illustrate the evolving dynamics of London's cinematic identity and how



this identity began and continues to spill over into other media through synergetic promotion, and even into certain districts in the city itself. This sampling method adds an element of rigour because of the extremely specific criteria by which the samples are generally selected. Indeed, 'rigor in case selection involves explicitly and thoughtfully picking cases that are congruent with the study purpose and that will yield data on major study questions' (Patton, 1999, p. 1197). I therefore created a list of six narrative advertisements (see Appendix D) released in the 2000s, based on the following criteria:

- The advertisements must be set in London, featuring a city landmark;
- The advertisements must contain a cinematic element (filming style, the use of a well-known actor, narrative);
- The advertisements must be shown in countries other than the UK;
- The advertisements must portray London in a favourable light.

I selected two advertisements: an American Express commercial set in Camden Town, North London, and starring British actor Kate Winslet, and a Yardley of London commercial which features Westminster Bridge, the Palace of Westminster and Katrina Kaif, an Indian actress. These were released in two different markets (the American Express advertisement was created for the US market, whilst the Yardley advertisement was released in the Indian market). This international element helped to strengthen the argument that London's image is marketable and that London's is a globally recognisable city. This marketability and global recognisability are part of London's symbolic power as a global city.

I also created a small sample of journalistic output which connects London's cinematic presence with its global city identity and indeed government and industry reports on the state of the UK film industry, in an attempt to discuss the political and economic implications of London's strong global presence in film. This included output from the Film London agency, the British Film Institute (BFI) and Prime Minister David Cameron's comments on film. These were also selected on the basis of highly specific criteria. All of these were released or written in 2010 or later, forging a link between changes in cinema policy and London's

cinematic identity under New Labour and the subsequent Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's naked neoliberal approach. I also cite examples from the city where cinema has clearly had a hand in transforming certain districts (i.e. King's Cross through the *Harry Potter* franchise) and indeed in transforming tourism in London. Equally, Chapter 7 discusses the contradictory nature of the city's symbolic power, looking at how deprivation and ethnic plurality continue to feature in the construction of London's symbolic power. Most of the filmic references in this chapter do not correspond directly to the films analysed in Chapters 5 and 6, as the point was to show that the filmic observations in the Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London thematic categories are applicable to other films set in London. Chapter 7 therefore provides the *contextual* elements of the analysis in this thesis, making this a true sociological study of the city through the medium of cinema (and beyond). The dynamic relationship between the cinematic city and the 'real' city becomes evident in this chapter.

#### **4.4 Analysis**

The technique I adopted in assessing the film texts involved a multi-layered thematic analysis, bearing in mind semiotics, discourse, ideology and intertextuality. Firstly, I viewed each film once in its entirety. I then developed thematic codes linked to each London theme, as described above, which provided the key frame for analysis. These codes were partly based on some of the theoretical concepts discussed in previous chapters; however, many came into being only after several viewings. Subsequently, I developed further sub-codes which became instrumental in refining the analysis. Through these sub-codes it became apparent that the heading codes were interrelated with one another and across the two thematic categories (Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London, see below). Thirdly, I gave each film several more viewings, at which point specific scenes were selected for analysis. These were the scenes in which the thematic codes were most apparent. The scenes were then unpacked and assessed, paying close attention to the *mise-en-scène*, camera angles, lighting and editing, in order to assess their sociological

orientation (how these themes and the scenes relate to the sociology of the city and, ultimately, the city's symbolic power). The coding structure is as follows:

Although the patterns in the data were to a certain extent identified using an inductive or 'bottom up' approach (see Frith & Gleeson, 2004; Braun & Clarke, 2006), where the themes became apparent from the data, they were mostly identified using a top-down approach and are therefore theoretically-informed (see Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This robust link to the theory gave a solid basis from which to conduct an analysis that made strong connections to the context in which the film texts were created and indeed to the context that these films reflect, particularly through the contextual analysis in Chapter 7 (discussed in greater detail below). Indeed, this corresponds to the approach to thematic analysis which 'starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). This creates overlaps with discourse analysis and is sometimes referred to as a 'thematic discourse analysis' (see Singer & Hunter, 1999; Taylor & Usher, 2001). This provided a robust link to the sociological considerations on which this thesis was founded.

#### 4.4.1 Chapter 5: Glamorous London

From a theoretical point of view, the Glamorous London thematic category builds on the work of Sassen (1991) and her concept of the 'glamour zone' (see Section 2.2.2). In addition, the works of Church Gibson (2003), Brunsdon (2007) and Murphy (2009) cite the romantic comedies that feature heavily in this thematic category as central to London's 'global city' identity in the late 1990s and 2000s. Brunsdon (2007) notes that the romantic comedy genre is largely absent from London's filmic past prior to the 1990s (p. 120). Indeed, London as a cinematic city in the 1980s and early 1990s was somewhat bleak and 'raw', bounded in terms of both language and geography. It is precisely the romantic comedies of the late 1990s and 2000s that register '...a

sense of London as a global city' (p. 111). Brunsdon (2007) suggests that the release of similar films in this category, with their focus on light entertainment, such as *Sliding Doors* (1997) and *Notting Hill* (1998), is far from coincidental. My analysis in this chapter centres upon the films' contribution to London's reputation as a symbolically significant global city. These films achieve this through a variety of mechanisms, including characterisation, filming style and dialogue. For example, in a scene from *Bridget Jones's Diary* which takes place outside the Royal Courts of Justice in Central London during an extradition trial for a Kurdish freedom fighter, the film participates in the construction and communication of London's symbolic power through the representation of the city as a world centre for legal affairs and civil rights, given the emphasis on the trial and through the visual representation of the imposing mock-gothic structure of the Royal Courts of Justice. In addition, this is one of the few instances where a non-white individual (the man on trial) is represented, though his relationship with the city is very different from that of the film's protagonists—he is being 'saved' by the British legal system.

Let us return for a moment to the theoretical shaping of the thematic categories and codes in this project. Brunsdon (2007) refers to economic changes such as the 'decline in manufacturing and light industry' in the late 1990s as having an impact on London as a representational space in cinema (p.112). Indeed, as Church Gibson (2003) notes, the romantic comedies released in the late 1990s and early 2000s were highly favourable for filmmakers, as the image of the city that these films portray, coupled with other filmic elements like cast and distribution, are associated with 'significant commercial success' (p. 365). Many films released during this period are therefore indicative of this trend. At the same time, London's 'glamorous' identity during the period is also articulated in non-comedic romantic dramas. Thus, I argue that consideration of the 'globalness' and symbolic power communicated in cinematic London during this period should not be restricted to romantic comedies but should also include romantic dramas. For example, *Closer*, released in 2004, generated box office profits of over US\$115 million.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

On this theme I therefore analysed three films in depth: *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), a romantic comedy, as well as *Closer* (2004) and *Match Point* (2005), both romantic dramas. I chose to limit the analysis to one romantic comedy as this genre has been discussed at length in the scholarly works cited in this sub-section. I deliberately chose to add two romantic dramas into the analysis as this genre, with its complex plot structures and in-depth characterisations, provides less 'obvious' signs of London's symbolic power. The incorporation of the two genres provided an opportunity for a robust and thoughtful analysis of the ways in which cinema constructs and maintains the city's symbolic power.

#### 4.4.1.1 *Thematic codes (section headings) in the Glamorous London chapter*

- 'Ideal Users' (of the city space)
  - Class, Consumption and the City
    - Natural
      - Corporate London
      - Creativity and the Corporatised City
    - Aspirational
  - 'The Global Middle Class: Young, rich and white'
    - The American Connection and Gender Stereotypes
    - London as a Centre for 'Global' and 'Cool' Consumption
- Capitalism and Consumption: Iconic London
  - Glamour Zones
  - Iconic Spaces and Monuments

#### 4.4.2 Chapter 6: Multi-Cultural London

I termed the thematic category dealing with issues of race, ethnicity, immigration and integration 'Multi-Cultural London'. The hyphenated version of 'multicultural' was a deliberate choice so as to denote in the title demographics rather than alluding to an ideological

debate. At the same time, however, London's 'multicultural' identity, the 'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33), represents one aspect of this thematic category. This is particularly evident in *Bend it Like Beckham*, released in 2002, which at times alludes to the celebratory nature of the city's multi-ethnic socio-scape. The film's colourful scenes and happy ending contribute to this 'feel-good celebration' (see Appendix C for a plot summary of this and other Multi-Cultural London films). This film is also one of the few profitable films in this thematic category, grossing over US\$75 million at the box office.<sup>13</sup> It raised the profiles of both its starring actors, Keira Knightley (now a well-known Hollywood actor) and Parminder Nagra (who starred in the highly successful US television series, *ER*) and capitalised on the popularity of the film's namesake, footballer David Beckham.

*Bend it Like Beckham* is a highly appealing and (eventually) uplifting story with a happy, Hollywood-friendly ending. The film's release also coincided with the 2002 World Cup of Football, again capitalising on Beckham's popularity and indeed the global popularity of football at the time. In this sense, several promotional strategies and indeed industries were integral to the distribution, selling, marketing and ultimate success of this film. Other films in this category, like *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002) and *Breaking and Entering* (2006), though funded by a variety of global industries and featuring a smattering of Hollywood and French superstars, were, by many standards, considered box office failures. *Dirty Pretty Things* has grossed just under U\$14 million and *Breaking and Entering* just under US\$9 million.<sup>14</sup> These films deal with controversial subjects like immigration, ethnic integration, poverty and desperation, making them less appealing to mass audiences than *Bend it Like Beckham* and indeed the films in the Glamorous London thematic category. The films in this thematic category were selected precisely for their differing approaches to the portrayal of London's multi-ethnic socio-scape. *Bend it Like Beckham* deals with one of London's more established ethnic minority communities, whereas *Dirty Pretty Things* and *Breaking and Entering* explore the trials

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<sup>13</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

<sup>14</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

and tribulations of London's large economic migrant population. In these films, the protagonists are part of these communities—their experience of the city as non-white and non-indigenous Londoners is the central focus.

This thematic category therefore mostly uses cinematic representations of London to demonstrate the city's symbolic power from a *non-obvious* perspective, with the city's transnational characteristics playing a central role in the development of the analysis. Rather than focusing on the 'transnational élite', as discussed in the Glamorous London thematic category (see Sections 1.1, 2.2.2 and Chapter 5) and indeed with London's 'glamour zones' and iconic monuments, films in the Multi-Cultural London category deal, in painting a picture of London's diverse socio-scape, with ethnic, racial and cultural difference. Furthermore, Multi-Cultural London films are often set in areas other than the West End (shopping, theatre, museum and entertainment district) and the City (financial district) and focus on interior spaces and often unrecognisable exterior locations. The storylines in many Multi-Cultural London films are often depressing and far from uplifting, highlighting the struggles faced by many migrants (refugees, asylum seekers) looking to make London their home. This is reflected in the literature surrounding the global city narrative, particularly in understanding the 'other side' of London's global city identity (see Massey, 2007; Georgiou, 2013) and indeed the contradictory and conflicting nature of the city's symbolic power. At the same time, London is presented as a city in which individual migrants are given a voice and an opportunity to find freedom from their situations. For example, in *Dirty Pretty Things*, released in 2003, one of the protagonists, Okwe, finds a way to trick his boss into donating a kidney to an illegal organ-trafficking operation. The kidney was supposed to be extracted from Senay's (the other protagonist who is an illegal Turkish migrant living in London) body. This is one of several examples in which a character in this film stands up to or outsmarts his or her oppressive or abusive superior. Within the bleakness, viewers are presented with the city as a site of hope. The analysis shows that even seemingly negative portrayals of London contribute to its symbolic power as a global city.

#### 4.4.2.1 *Thematic codes (section headings) in the Multi-Cultural London chapter*

- Symbolic power and immigration: new and established migrant communities
  - New migrant communities
  - Established migrant communities
- Social class and consumption
- Trains, planes and automobiles (transport and movement)

#### 4.4.3 Chapter 7

The analysis importantly involved connecting these thematic codes to the larger theme of symbolic power, addressing the notion that aesthetic and market considerations are linked to the communication of the city's symbolic power (see Bourdieu, 1985). To further situate the analysis within the market realm, the final empirical step involved a large amount of analysis of the films' commodity history and value and of their respective extra-textual functions. The purposeful sample included a report from the BFI (British Film Industry), statistics from Film London, narrative advertising featuring London, journalistic output on the subject, a selection of cross-promotional material and evidence from the 'real' city of cinema's influence. For example, the King's Cross district, once notorious for prostitution, now attracts fans of the Harry Potter series, with the mainline station actually transformed to feature a representation of 'Platform 9¾', as featured in the films and books. The station is now actively touted as a tourist attraction and includes a retail space filled with *Harry Potter* paraphernalia (see Section 7.4.1). Equally, we see depravation and poverty still rife across the capital, with homelessness still a problem in many districts, including more affluent areas. This chapter importantly demonstrates how London's grit and rawness fit into the 'story' of London's symbolic power, highlighting the dynamic relationship between cinema and the city.



#### *4.4.3.1 Thematic codes (section headings) in Chapter 7*

- A city of many facets
  - Tourism: Studios, agencies and movie maps
- Brand London: A cinematic perspective
  - Beyond the Silver Screen: Synergies
  - Advertising
- Setting a precedent
  - The 'Real' City: a space of contrasts and contradictions

### **4.5 Reflexivity and the Risks of Textual Analysis**

Morley (1997) urges researchers to exercise caution in employing a methodological strategy which relies heavily on textual analysis, as, in his view, this '... often allows the cultural phenomena under analysis to drift entirely free from their social and material foundations' (p. 123). In order to address this concern, my methodological approach ensures that the text is situated in a particular context, whereby sociological considerations are taken into account and the textual analysis connects the themes to the wider world. Furthermore, the empirical work in Chapter 7 moves beyond the text, and beyond cinema itself, into other realms where the cinematic city may manifest itself intertextually. In addition, my reflexivity as a London-based researcher allows me to maintain a degree of distance from the texts, given my extensive geographical and cultural knowledge of the 'real' city. This was particularly useful for the analysis of films in the Glamorous London thematic category, where, as Chapter 5 demonstrates, the lives and preferences of the hetero-normative and racially homogenous middle-class characters were presented as 'normal'. My position as a Londoner from a minority ethnic background afforded me the ability to maintain a critical stance towards this construction of the city. At the same time, my familiarity with the city, its mechanisms, geography and topography could have positioned me 'too close' to the data. Bearing this in mind, I took care to provide adequate description and background details in the

analysis, acknowledging that many readers may have an alternative view or understanding of the city.

The present research is concerned with the ways in which cinematic representations of a city, London in this case, function as intertextual, cultural products in communicating and sustaining this global city's symbolic power, itself an amalgamation of a variety of realms including economic power, cultural power and geo-political power. I situate the texts within a system of meanings (the context), whereby I show how meanings are made available by the text and the context in which these meanings were produced and received. The theoretically grounded thematic categories and coding structure ensure that the film analysis is relevant and reflective of the larger sociological questions they raise. Chapter 7, entitled 'London and Cinema: a dynamic relationship', goes a step further and discusses the influence of London's cinematic identity on the city itself and indeed on other media, with a particular emphasis on synergies between cities, cinema and other promotional/media industries. Assessing the ways in which audiences understand and interpret the texts was beyond the scope of this research and potentially unproductive in terms of the research questions, which point to a text-based inquiry ('how'). Instead I addressed the notion of intentionality and the communication of ideological positioning through an in-depth textual analysis, connecting the discursive themes to the non-discursive world (see Foucault, 1972) and bearing in mind Kristeva's (1980) concept of intertextuality. In her study of science fiction films, Kuhn (1990) calls for a methodological approach which contextualises films and relates the analysis to systems of meaning beyond the cinematic realm. She argues that it is necessary to '...move beyond film texts and genres, into the sphere of discourses and practices at work beyond cinema itself, but in which films and genres participate' (p. 9). This influenced my decision to create an interdisciplinary study of the global city as it is represented in the medium of cinema, without restricting the analysis to a strictly film studies approach.

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter defines, outlines and critically explores the methodological strategy I used in the empirical part of the thesis. Although the research is guided by cinematic representations, the primary research question, which asks: *how do cinematic representations re-construct and sustain the global city's symbolic power?*, entailed an analytical strategy which spoke to the multifaceted and at times contradictory nature of the symbolic power of the city. This question is theoretically grounded and I therefore decided to take an interdisciplinary perspective, guided by a thematic analysis of six films that incorporated semiotics and discourse. These films belong to two thematic categories generated on the basis of a list I created of approximately 100 films released in the 1997-2007 period. These thematic categories are 'Glamorous London' and 'Multi-Cultural London'. These thematic categories were developed primarily because of their explicit link to the theoretical framework developed in Chapters 2 and 3, although the texts themselves were instrumental in their development.

Thematic analysis was a useful method because it provided a robust and efficient way of handling large volumes of data and indeed a quick way of summing up significant trends. For the film analysis, I relied on an approach which combined semiotics and discourse. Incorporating semiotics and discourse within the thematic method allowed me to broaden out to the wider context in which the films were produced and distributed. In Chapter 7, I take the analysis further by grounding London's cinematic identity, as it developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, in other, at times non-cinematic, media such as narrative advertising. In addition, I look at the ways in which the 'real' city itself has been transformed by London's position as a globally recognisable cinematic city, making a connection to London's symbolic power as multifaceted and at times contradictory. For this chapter I relied on purposeful sampling, which provided information-rich cases selected on the basis of a set of highly specialised and focussed criteria.

My aim in this thesis was to demonstrate that, like London's symbolic power, its cinematic identity is diverse and multi-faceted, and therefore potentially lucrative for filmmakers and corporations. Evidence is provided that shows precisely *how* this is done and how this has developed since 1997. My aim is also to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between cinema and the city. Because of cinema's pervasiveness and global popularity, we need to think about cinema as more than simply art. Cinema responds to and constructs social realities that in turn shape the ways in which we see the world.

## CHAPTER 5: GLAMOROUS LONDON

### 5.1 Introduction

Glamorous London films present London as a glamorous and desirable location. This is achieved through the filmic construction of both the city itself and indeed the characters that inhabit the city. These films also contain a wide range of signals, visual and other, which indicate that they are targeted primarily at global, often US, audiences, presenting London as a tourist-friendly and relatively safe city—one which is culturally, social and racially homogenous. London's iconic spaces, monuments and attributes, old and new, are the focus of regular pans, zooms and close-ups, at times used semiotically to frame scenes which are instrumental to the film's plot. In *Closer*, viewers are bombarded with images of London's red buses, black taxis and riverside panoramas, filmed to include the office tower at 30 St Mary Axe (colloquially known and henceforth referred to as the 'Gherkin') in the City, the Palace of Westminster (including the Houses of Parliament and the Big Ben clock tower) and St Paul's Cathedral. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, scenes in trendy West End restaurants are interspersed with images of Borough Market and Tower Bridge. The London in *Match Point* is almost exclusively one of iconic spaces; this film is especially concerned with some of London's newer monuments, like the London Eye, the Gherkin and the Tate Modern art gallery, all three located outside the West End. Through the juxtaposition of London's old and new monuments, I argue that Glamorous London films redefine London's cityscape, giving the city's newer architectural monuments a globally distributed platform through which to firstly develop then exert their iconic characteristics.

The films I use in this chapter, *Closer*, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Match Point*, present the notion of consumption via 'glamour' and through a variety of identities communicated through racial, gender, age, class and social categories. The situations, products, characters and the characters' interactions both with the city space and with one another, suggest a certain uniformity with regard to a specific 'urban typology' of

individuals within these categories. The notion of 'success' and, correlatively, of 'legitimate' users of the city (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480 and Section 2.2 of this thesis) are imagined through hetero-normative stereotypes set against the backdrop of a racially homogeneous socio-scape. The female characters, for example, embody success mainly through their sexual identities. When Bridget Jones decides to change careers and become a television journalist, she is portrayed as hapless and incompetent, finding herself in one embarrassing situation after another. Her career is salvaged only when she is aided by the man who becomes her lover, Mark Darcy. Similarly, in *Closer*, Alice/Jane is able to lead her comfortable life in London because she lives with and is presumably at least partially financially reliant on Dan. Anna, though successful in her profession, is represented with a melancholic air throughout the film until the final scene in which she is featured, when she finally decides to reconcile in her marriage with Larry. Nola's lifestyle in *Match Point* changes dramatically (and negatively) after Tom breaks off their engagement.

Conversely, the men mostly embody success independently of the women in their lives. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Daniel Cleaver is a publishing executive, Mark Darcy is constructed as a high-profile lawyer and Larry in *Closer* is a *private* dermatologist. Another example is Dan in *Closer*, who, despite his unsuccessful attempt at selling his book, appears to be in no economic difficulty given his ability to financially sustain both himself and Alice/Jane. These gender stereotypes are emblematic of attitudes in the 'real' city, in which 'widespread societal assumptions about the characteristics of femininity and the desirability of maternity continue to ensure that women's place in the labour market is seen as less legitimate than men's' (McDowell, Perrons, Fagan, Ray & Ward, 2005, p. 447). The city's symbolic power is constructed through these characters and through the semiotic representation of the city in a particular way: the camera work and framing posits London as the *natural* home of the glamour zone and those who are shown to inhabit the city are represented as physically at ease in this space. Glamour and symbolic power are semiotically linked to class and the corporatisation of

culture. Contextually we know that this takes place under the keen eye of the New Labour government in power in Britain at the time (see chapter 3).

The construction of the array of characters who feature in these films as upwardly mobile, members of the quasi-aristocracy or simply able to consume freely, irrespective of their employment situation, cultivates a sense of what I, drawing on Hassam (2009, p. 47), term the 'global city lifestyle'. It is precisely *how* the characters are represented using the city space, their 'spatial practices' (see Harvey, 1990, p. 259), that helps to shape the portrayal of the city itself. As discussed in the analysis below, the characters in these films belong socially to the middle class, if not the upper middle class. They are all white and in their 20s or 30s, at most in their early 40s. This race and age-specific manifestation of class power allows for the camera's exploration of the city space through *active* characters (they move around the city with consummate ease) and single or newly paired (childless) characters with a relatively high disposable income. Discursively, these films construct and project the city's 'ideal users' (see sections 5.2 and 5.2.2.2); their interactions with one another in the city space—where they work, eat, sleep, have sex, socialise—delineate this categorisation. London's symbolic power is constructed and suggested through these mechanisms, employing the notion that these people—their lives, their hopes, their fears—can only be manifested in the city, in *this* city. They do not experience racial stereotyping, ageist abuse or financial difficulties. Indeed this 'lifestyle' is highly pervasive in Glamorous London films and is communicated through categories like class, gender, age, professional and consumerist behavioural patterns, which are often presented in parallel with visual reminders of the city through its 'glamour zones'. By foregrounding these characters, these films suggest that London is a city in which other types of individuals, those belonging, for example, to different class or racial groups, simply do not exist or exist solely on the periphery, mainly as servers in restaurants and pubs. This chapter argues that the construction of this lifestyle through a variety of mechanisms, along with the seemingly blatant exposition of London's old and new monuments,

construct and re-frame London's symbolic power. In other words, the city's symbolic power in these films is rooted in the spatial practices of the city's 'ideal users', which allows for the showcasing of 'middle-class London'.

## **5.2 Ideal Users**

### **5.2.1 Class, consumption and the city**

#### *5.2.1.1 Natural*

The notion of 'glamour' manifests itself in the class structure exhibited in this thematic category, in that the upper and middle strata of society dominate the on-screen socio-scape. In the films in this thematic category, the concentration of class to the upper or middle levels is not only achieved through blatant devices such as juxtaposing individuals of various social classes or through explicit references to class issues. In Glamorous London films there is rather a clear effort made to homogenise and therefore *naturalise* the city's class structure, constructing the city as a space in which only one (affluent) class exists, as this allows for a particular portrayal of the city. Harvey (1990) reminds us that affluent groups '...can command space through spatial mobility and ownership of basic means of reproduction' (p. 261). This semiotic and discursive construction of one social class as being naturally 'of the global city' in these films is suggested through the activities in which the characters engage (which they can afford, given their relative financial freedom) and indeed through the absence of any signs of those in the lower strata of the city's socio-scape. Class homogenisation through semiotic cues such as high end technologies, expensive restaurants, designer shoes, scarves, apartment blocks and the like serves to construct a particular global city identity which often centres upon consumption, where most of the characters are *naturally* at ease in their class situation.



#### 5.2.1.1.1 *Corporate London*

In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, there are ample examples of the ways in which this 'natural' class element is discursively and semiotically constructed. In this film, the city's socio-scape is homogenous, with very few, if any, foregrounded representations of individuals belonging to classes other than middle or upper middle. Bridget, her friends, her colleagues, her love interests and her parents are members of an élite section of society, irrespective of their likely income (indicated by their professional position—for example, Bridget Jones's middle-class lifestyle does not match her position as a clerical worker). Class is perhaps *the* central theme of the film and in some ways facilitates the other themes discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter. The consumerist and 'global' elements of this film, for example, are constructed through class inasmuch as they rely on the existence of high-spending individuals with certain interests and preferences to construct and maintain what Brunsdon (2007) calls '...a sense of London as a global city' (p. 111). Bridget's life, for example, revolves around her relationship status. Every element of her life, including her career, her social activities and indeed her vices like smoking, are directly and indirectly controlled, shaped and altered by the men in her life, with whom she is either in a relationship or whom she is attempting to woo.

Aside from the comedic element achieved through this ideological gender positioning and, correlatively, its function in fashioning the 'ideal user' of the city space, Bridget's relationship-centred life is indicative of the predominant class structure in the film. Instead of changing careers because of financial considerations, for example (Bridget chooses to terminate her role at the publishing company to move into television), her motivation is presented as solely to gain distance from her boss/former lover, Daniel. Furthermore, Bridget lives in a comfortable flat in a gentrified neighbourhood in South London and shops at her local gourmet market. She drinks and dines out on a regular basis (this is both shown directly and suggested through her inability to prepare an edible meal for

her friends), often at upmarket West End venues, surrounded by her white, middle-class friends and family.

Scene for analysis from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (00:07:53)

Description of the scene: We are introduced to Bridget's boss, Daniel, by way of a close-up shot of his face in a lift, in a flashback to an office Christmas party. The camera follows Daniel, who emerges on the mezzanine level of a large, open-plan, modern office space to the sound of an intoxicated Bridget, singing (off key) a karaoke song. The scene transitions into another modern, open-plan office, this time during working hours. We hear the buzz of speech and telephones ringing. Bridget works at her desk on a modern-looking computer. Daniel's private office is slightly raised and glassed-in with floor-to-ceiling windows. Bridget, as narrator, describes her superiors, all of whom she views in a negative light. The camera moves in for a medium-close-up shot of Bridget as she receives a telephone call from her friend, Jude, who is the head of investment at Breitling's Bank. According to Bridget, Jude 'spends most of her time trapped in the ladies toilet crying over fuckwit boyfriend'. The camera then shifts to Bridget's point of view, showing Daniel hovering over her desk. Bridget proceeds to pretend she is speaking to Professor F R Leavis, who, as Daniel sarcastically points out, has been dead since 1978.



Figure 10: Bridget Jones (Renée Zellweger) and her boss, Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant):

<http://i1.mirror.co.uk/incoming/article2322975.ece/ALTERNATES/s615/bridget-jones-diary.jpg>

This scene is laden with many potential themes for analysis, such as gender relations in the workplace, corporate hierarchies, male-female sexual relationships and the role of alcohol in British society. I begin my analysis with a focus on Daniel, played by the British actor Hugh Grant, who is Bridget's caddish, suave love interest and manager at the publishing company. The construction of his character suggests an intertextual intentionality related to the middle-class discourse and the middle class's 'natural' home in Central London. Through repeated representations of essentially the same character in a series of films, viewers are presented with 'Hugh Grant's London'.<sup>15</sup> In this version of London, nearly everyone is represented to seem under 40, white and middle-class (semiotically communicated through lifestyle and accents),

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<sup>15</sup> This character, seen in a variety of London-set films, including *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), *About a Boy* (2002), *Love Actually* (2003) and *Bridget Jones: the Edge of Reason* (2004) is also seen in New York-set films like *Mickey Blue Eyes* (1999) and *Did You Hear About the Morgans* (2009), emphasising the strong ties shared by these two global cities.

irrespective of their likely income or employment situation. When Daniel Cleaver first appears in *Bridget Jones's* diary, it is through a close-up shot of his face. This invites viewers to recall his characters in two previous films, both of which were widely released across many global markets and were highly profitable at the box office<sup>16</sup>. This shot seems to ask viewers to connect the success of the previous films with *Bridget Jones's Diary*, providing familiarity and continuity.

Daniel is constructed as powerful—both as the manager of Bridget's division and given Bridget's romantic interest in him. The shot of Daniel where Bridget is on the phone presents him in a position of power. His office is slightly raised, allowing him to look over the entire department, with a clear view of Bridget. His power is also exercised through the effect he has on Bridget, causing her to act foolishly around him (pretending to speak to Professor Leavis, for example). Furthermore, on the subject of gender, Bridget's friend Jude, though successful in her job, according to Bridget spends 'most of her time' crying over her boyfriend. This is important in the construction in this film of the archetypal female character whose life is defined by her romantic relationships. The 'corporate' element of the city is presented as a *natural* element of life in London—everyone seems to work in the corporate world and irrespective of their actual position to earn a high salary. It is precisely this *naturalising* of the middle class, whereby everyone in the city seems to belong to that class, which allows for a representation of the city as a hetero-normative and racially homogeneous space.

#### 5.2.1.1.2 Creativity and the corporatised city

Complicating the corporatised construction of London's 'glamour' and its impact on the city's socio-scape is an emphasis in some Glamorous London films on the arts and writing. Initially seemingly

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<sup>16</sup> *Four Weddings and a Funeral* grossed US\$245,700,832 against a production budget of US\$4,400,000. *Notting Hill* grossed \$363,889,678 against a production budget of US\$42,000,000. Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

different from Sassen's (1998, p. xxxiii) and Huang's (2006, pp. 479-480) emphasis on the 'managerial class' in global cities, this is consistent with the corporatisation of culture and creativity under New Labour in Britain (see Sections 3.2 and 3.4)

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (00:11:00)

Description of the scene: The scene opens with a medium shot of Dan in a photography studio. Anna is photographing him for the launch of his new book. The scene is comprised of a number of medium and close-up shots of the two, with a few medium-wide-angle shots of the interior of the studio, which doubles as Anna's residence. The studio is large, with tiled walls and wood floors, and features photographic prints on the walls, as well as a state-of-the-art Apple computer. Alice arrives and Dan goes downstairs to collect her from the street. The district seems to contain a number of (former) warehouses. Alice and Dan enter the flat/studio. Anna offers Alice a cup of tea and Alice asks to use the 'loo'. When Dan leaves, Alice tells Anna that her job as a waitress in a nearby café is 'not temporary'.

This scene, and indeed the film in general, contain a multitude of potential themes for analysis, including the role of art in society, romantic relationships, adultery, and the expatriate community in London, amongst others. Reflecting on the main research question, I focus on the importance of the arts more generally in framing a particular representation of London as a dynamic, global city. The foregrounding of Anna's studio and the emphasis on her art, coupled with Dan's discussion of his writing, I argue, extend Sassen's (1998, p. xxxiii) and Huang's (2006, pp. 479-480) definitions of the 'managerial class' to individuals involved in creative pursuits. Given the emphasis in the literature on the broader role of 'creativity' and the 'creative industries' in enhancing the city's image, this scene (and others in the film) is indicative of this trend in terms of encouraging particular types of individual to use and inhabit the city's spaces. Anna's lifestyle speaks directly to the representation of her studio. The loft-like space, evoking a converted industrial complex, participates in the construction of London as an artistic, creative and

creative hub and indeed supplants the city's industrial past. In *Closer*, the notion of 'bohemia' is altered in a way that speaks to the consumerist discourse: Anna's 'bohemia', her luxurious loft-like studio, is associated with the commercial value of art and her successful photography career. The film importantly bridges the gap between the 'starving artist' and the high-spending corporate manager, whereby Anna the (wealthy, successful) artist is equally part of the high-spending, managerial, global class of citizens (see Sassen, 1998, p. xxxiii and Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480).<sup>17</sup>

The focus on cultural production as necessarily economically productive is in line with the New Labour initiatives prevalent at the time of the film's release. The government's policy defined cultural activities as those '...which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (*Creative Industries Task Force*, quoted in Roodhouse, 2009, p. 79). *Closer*, through the characters of Anna and Dan in particular, is reflective of this strategy. London is portrayed as a hub for art and culture, enhancing and re-framing its position as a symbolically significant global city and reinforcing the city's symbolic power. Although these elements could be applied to any global city, the scene equally features distinct reminders of London's cultural specificity (Alice asking to use the 'loo' and Anna offering to make a cup of tea). London is firmly rooted in the network of global cities, but is also framed as a culturally distinct location.

#### 5.2.1.2 Aspirational

Although many characters are constructed as 'naturally' at home in Glamorous London films, some are represented as 'upwardly mobile' in terms of their class positioning, making their experience, and therefore the representation of class less 'natural'. This discursive construction suggests that London is a city in which those belonging to underprivileged

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<sup>17</sup> This notion of art and creativity as being economically viable pursuits is reflected later in the film in a conversation at Anna's exhibition, in which Alice laments the commodification of art.

social classes have the opportunity to make money and eventually become part of the 'high spending managerial class' (see Sassen, 1998, p. xxxiii; Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480). The analysis that follows positions the articulation of these characters' class background as an important element in the construction of a 'glamorous' city space. Amongst the three films analysed for this chapter, two characters appear to fit most closely this aspirational typology: Larry in *Closer* and Chris in *Match Point*. The latter enters the world of the quasi-aristocracy by ingratiating himself with one of his tennis students and eventually marrying this student's sister. His working-class background is constructed on many occasions, through his food preferences (roast chicken over caviar blinis), his limited travel experience (he reveals that he has never been to the Greek islands) and his immersion in tennis as a 'way out of a poor existence'. Chris's ascent of the class ladder is guided by luck and good fortune, rather than hard work or unique skills. As a result of his father-in-law's corporate connections, Chris quickly becomes a high-powered City executive and seamlessly integrates himself into the world of London's white aristocratic elite. The upper-middle-class discourse, in this case, is naturalised through Chris's quick and easy ascent of the social ladder, which seems to require very little in the way of demonstrable professional skill. Rather, the ways in which Chris is shown to *behave* and the ways in which he *learns to behave* are fundamental to his ascent. Larry in *Match Point* has been constructed more subtly, in that this character's past is rarely explicitly referenced. I analyse a particularly poignant scene to illustrate this.

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (00:44:59)

Description of the scene: This short scene begins with Larry approaching his home in a black London taxi. Although his cobbled street is virtually empty, the main road in the distance is noisy (sirens, car horns) and busy with traffic. As Larry enters his home there are several wide-angle shots of the flat, emphasising the designer loft space. Anna has just bathed after having sex with Dan. Larry talks about his trip to New York (we learn that he attended a dermatology conference) and Anna offers to make him tea. Larry asks Anna for sex and when she says no he decides

to shower. He laments his choice of bathroom décor, which Anna calls 'middle-class guilt'. Larry corrects Anna and calls it 'working-class guilt'. The scene ends with a medium shot of Larry (from Anna's perspective) going up the stairs towards the bathroom.

Most striking in this scene is Larry's quasi-working-class London accent, which suggests a working-class background. Although this contradicts his middle-class lifestyle, it signals his fruitful ascent of the employment ladder. The only other characters in the film who share Larry's accent are the faceless drivers of the (expensive and iconic) taxis often taken by the protagonists to transport themselves around the city (including in this scene). Larry's actual words, too, are indicative of his possible class origin. Anna mentions Larry's 'middle-class guilt' which he quickly corrects to 'working class guilt'. This foreshadows other similar utterances later in the film. For example, in the gentlemen's club scene, where Alice does an erotic dance for Larry in a private room, he tells her that he is 'rich, but not stupid', perhaps dispelling any potential stereotypical readings of his educational background and/or working-class accent. This also reminds viewers of his level of wealth. Another example takes place when, towards the end of the film, Dan visits Larry in his plush new surgery. In a heated argument, Larry refers to himself as 'common' and Dan comments on Larry's 'simplicity', again making reference to Larry's class background.

These differing approaches to class, the 'naturalised' middle-class lifestyle of Alice, Dan and Anna (*Closer*), of Bridget, Daniel and Mark (*Bridget Jones's Diary*) and of most of the characters in *Match Point*, as opposed to the 'aspirational' nature of Larry's (*Closer*) and Chris's (*Match Point*) ascent of the class ladder, paint a new picture of a city once known for its 'obvious contrasts of wealth and poverty' (Sorensen, 1996, p. 152). The films suggest that the city is inhabited exclusively by those who exhibit particular class-based preferences, irrespective of the way they amassed the means to afford these preferences. The construction of Larry and Chris, in particular, as representatives of the 'nouveau riche' facet of society, provides at least a nuanced perspective on the 'middle class'. The films therefore present London not simply as the city where the rich



spend their money: it is equally the place where the rich *make* and *have made* their money. Though Larry's past is never explicitly revealed, the clues provided by his character and discussed above make reference to his working-class background. *Closer* and *Match Point*, through Larry and indeed Chris, portray London as the city in which the culture of aspiration and entrepreneurialism resides. This once again corresponds to New Labour and its drive to change attitudes towards employment, encouraging Britons and those residing in the country to cultivate a sense of entrepreneurialism (see Cerny & Evans, 2004). The 'entrepreneurial spirit' is a key feature in the construction of the aspirational element of class in this thematic category. The city is at once the home of an established élite and an aspirational class, making it attractive to those who are wealthy and those looking to amass wealth. This is part of the construction of London's symbolic power and what makes London a global city.

#### 5.2.2 The global middle class: Rich, young and white

One of the ways in which cinematic representations participate in the construction and sustaining of London as a significant global player is through the communication of 'the global' as a representational entity. Glamorous London films, through elements like their cast (often international), distribution (always global) and indeed the action itself, suggest the importance of non-local elements. For example, many films in this thematic category star an American actor as the female lead. Although the global element could suggest that the precise location, London in this case, is irrelevant, the city in these films is instead the 'missing link' between filmic representations and the wider world, presenting London as the unique space in which the action takes place. These films equally communicate 'the global' through references to non-UK cultural practices and conventions, and (cultural, commercial) products. Essential to this equation is the fact that Glamorous London films are generally commercially successful.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Information obtained from [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)

### 5.2.2.1 *The American connection and gender stereotypes*

'The global' in the Glamorous London thematic category often takes the form of semiotic and narrative references to the USA. For example, *Closer* communicates 'the global' through its cast. The female protagonists, Anna and Alice, are played by the American actors Julia Roberts and Natalie Portman. This strategy is mirrored in *Match Point* via Nola, an American character played by Scarlett Johansson. Unlike in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, in which an American, Renée Zellweger, plays a British character, Roberts, Portman and Johansson play American characters based in London. Supporting this casting strategy, London is portrayed discursively as a dynamic and important global city in which international residents of a particular class and race are welcome and feel at home. This is strongly evident in Anna's character due to her embodiment of the 'transnational élite', discussed above. She is a successful artist who chooses to remain in London after her divorce in order to pursue her photography career.

Despite not having the 'transnational élite' status, the other international female protagonists in this thematic category are discursively constructed with the ability to transcend any immigration issues. When we are first introduced to Alice (*Closer*), her place of residence in London is, seemingly deliberately, left ambiguous, as the next time we see her is a year after the start of the film, after she has begun a co-habitation relationship with Dan. It is important to bear in mind, however, that she initially left New York and moved to London, meaning that she could afford at least an aeroplane ticket and presumably some sort of accommodation. At no point in the film does she appear to be in financial difficulty. In reality, it would be virtually impossible for a US national to settle in the UK without a job offer or a professional qualification, let alone a work visa. Since Alice's past is left ambiguous, it is of course possible that she is a dual national of the US and UK/EU, though this peculiarity is never explored. Furthermore, her job as a waitress corresponds to then current employment trends for females in global cities, where '...many women work on a part-time basis'

(McDowell et al., 2005 p. 444). Similarly, Nola in *Match Point* is in London to pursue her acting career and eventually works as a sales assistant in a clothing store. Like Alice, Nola's citizenship and connection to her country of origin (the USA) are left somewhat ambiguous.

Whether dual nationals or simply global nomads with US citizenship (Alice's US passport is revealed at the end of *Closer*), Alice and Nola exemplify the archetypal female characters in the Glamorous London thematic category, whose probable salary and actual profession do not correspond to the life they lead. They are highly dependent on their respective romantic situations to achieve financial security. If these women are in fact dual nationals of the US and UK/EU, this suggests London's symbolic power because the characters, with the fortunate opportunity to settle down in the USA or a wide variety of countries in the European Union, have chosen to situate themselves in London—the place, according to these films, in which this archetypal female character resides. If Alice and Nola are simply global nomads, this also suggests London's symbolic power by portraying it as a city in which opportunities are abundant, even for foreign nationals. In sequences where semiotic cues all correspond to particular ideological positions in relation to class and consumption, Alice, the American, sips Moët et Chandon champagne, discusses the commodification of art and possesses sufficient funds to change her hairstyle and to purchase an extensive array of clothing. She is depicted using the city in a particular way and in accordance with her class (see Harvey, 1990, p. 259). There is nothing to suggest that she is in any sort of financial trouble. Nola, the struggling actor who works as a sales assistant in a clothing boutique, lives and socialises with the top tier of London's high society through her romantic relationship with Tom. The semiotic and discursive construction of these characters' class, race, age and gender attributes contribute to the notion that there is an 'ideal user' of the city space, particularly an ideal *female* user in this case—they do not claim state benefits and they consume freely. London importantly emerges as central to the construction of this female archetype and as an attractive global hub for individuals who fit the 'ideal user' criteria.

Reinforcing the 'global-ness' of London is the American connection in all the films in the Glamorous London thematic category. *Bridget Jones's Diary* offers one of the most apparent manifestations of 'the global' in the many references to the USA and, more specifically, to US cultural conventions. Firstly, like all the films in the Glamorous London theme, the female protagonist is played by an American star, in this case Renée Zellweger, who is from Texas. Rather than portraying an American living in London, as is the case in the rest of the films featured in this thematic category, Zellweger plays a British character. Preparation for the role was allegedly extensive and involved the actor gaining a considerable amount of weight and receiving accent coaching (see Holden, 2001). The resulting portrayal achieved positive reviews and an Academy Award nomination for the Texan. One reviewer attests that 'Ms Zellweger accomplishes the small miracle of making Bridget both entirely endearing and utterly real. It is a performance so airy you barely sense the work that must have gone into it' (Holden, 2001, para. 7).

The immense effort and funds which were doubtless committed to achieving Zellweger's positively received portrayal of the London 'singleton' (a quintessentially urban status), Bridget Jones, could presumably have been avoided had a British actor been chosen for the role. The use of an American star and one who is likely familiar to non-British (especially US) audiences likely served, amongst other things, as a lucrative marketing tool.<sup>19</sup> From a textual perspective, the placement of a US star so closely intertwined with the city narrative (Bridget takes viewers on a filmic tour of London's West End and of gentrified districts across Central and South London), serves once again to remind viewers of London's symbolic power as a global city that is highly international, attracting well-known stars and studios.

Several other elements of the film point to the production team's focus on global, often US, culture. The use of generic interior spaces like flats, department stores and offices, provide 'safe' and familiar viewing for (US) audiences, whilst the characters' speech, interactions and

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<sup>19</sup> According to [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com), the film has made nearly US\$300,000,000 since its release in 2001

mannerisms, coupled with prominent references to London's cityscape, are a reminder of the film's geographical setting. Bridget's office in particular embodies the notion of the urban 'glamour zone', endowing it with symbolic significance, whilst simultaneously maintaining a generic quality and thus again providing 'safe' and familiar viewing for global audiences. For example, a scene approximately half way through the film takes place in a Central London department store. This interior space is highly generic and would feel familiar to a global, especially US, audience, given the geographical non-specificity of the retail space. These spaces, however generic, are intrinsically linked to London as a unique city space through the characters, their speech and mannerisms.

Another important reference to US culture is made in *Closer*, at the very end of the film, when Dan returns to the square in which at the start of the film he shows Alice what he calls 'the London the tourists never get to see'.

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (01:34:23)

Description of the scene: This sequence begins with Alice queuing for passport control at US immigration. We see a close-up shot of her passport, in which her name is revealed to be Jane Jones. She disappears into the distance via a medium-long shot of the customs hall, bearing the sign 'welcome to the United States'. The action then returns to grey London, via an aerial shot of Postman's Park, in which Dan walks holding a takeaway coffee cup from Costa Coffee. He peruses the tiles along one of the walls in the park, one of which commemorates Alice Ayers, the name by which Jane was known when she lived in London. Dan seems visibly shocked by this. The action then returns to the United States, with Jane walking in slow motion through a busy street in New York. She sports a neat, modern hairdo and a white, fitted vest top. A few of the men who pass her turn back and look. The shot transitions to an aerial view of the street, which appears to be Times Square. The sky is clear and those in the frame are wearing summer clothes.

This scene is significant for many reasons, including its placement in the film as the final scene. It presents several potential analytical

themes, including identity fraud, trust issues in romantic relationships, the objectification of women and others. I focus on the way in which London is constructed, particularly in relation to its connection to the wider network of global cities, New York in this case. It is noteworthy that in many instances in this film, the non-alcoholic beverage of choice is the quintessentially British drink, tea. Alice discusses serving tea in the café; Alice is offered tea in Anna's studio Alice diverts Dan's attention by asking him to prepare them some tea as she leaves their flat; Anna offers to make Larry a cup of tea when he returns to London from New York. Though the preparation of tea is often alluded to, characters are rarely seen actually drinking the beverage and when they are, it is in a domestic space. This is a device which conveys London's cultural specificity, its uniqueness within the global city narrative. When Dan is depicted consuming a hot beverage outdoors, as in this scene, he does so in a takeaway Costa (a UK coffee shop chain) cup, just as Alice is shown walking through Times Square in New York City. Perhaps a simple case of product placement, this is also a discursive reference to the presence in London of US-style coffee chains and therefore more generally to London's 'globalness', where the 'global city lifestyle' (see Hassam, 2009, p. 47) is a *natural* or '*misrecognised*' (see Bourdieu, 1991) part of daily life in the city. By situating something as seemingly banal as a takeaway cup in a scene that mirrors another at the start of the film in which Dan shows Alice 'the London the tourists never get to see', the cup and its function as a cultural artefact become part of London's cityscape, emphasising the city's prominent position, its symbolic power, within the discourse of global consumer culture—the 'global city lifestyle' (Hassam, 2009, p. 47). The communication of London's symbolic power, its simultaneous uniqueness and generic-ness as a global city, implies the possibility of enjoying both London's unique cultural quirks (tea in china cups prepared in domestic spaces and local cafes) and its global-city (US culture) amenities like takeaway coffee. The visual reference to New York in this scene strengthens the idea that London is in some way (through US coffee culture in this instance) connected to the network of global cities.

This is further exemplified in *Bridget Jones's Diary* by, for example, references to Bridget's weight, either through textual, non-diegetic references on the screen or through diegetic references on digital displays in the city, such as the digital billboard in Piccadilly Circus (a busy crossroads in the West End). It is significant that Bridget's weight is not displayed in stones and pounds, or perhaps kilogrammes, as would be common practice in the UK, but in pounds only, which is a more familiar format for US audiences. Furthermore, the use of the digital billboards of Piccadilly Circus (reference to the 'commodified city') to display Bridget's weight creates a link between an iconic London landmark and an element of US culture—both in terms of the reference to her weight and indeed to the lights of Piccadilly Circus, which mirror those in New York's Times Square. In addition, references in the film to self-help books and to Bridget's use of Hotmail email are equally a nod to US culture. These elements combine to create a US-friendly production, so that US and global audiences familiar with US culture, can relate to the film: London, the city in which the action takes place, becomes both unique (interesting) and familiar ('safe'). Moreover, the ideological positioning, drawing on specific gender conventions (Bridget's obsession with her weight and pledge to 'improve' her life) to achieve this, is instrumental in conveying London's global-city identity, its symbolic power, through the construction of the city's 'ideal users' (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480) as exhibiting particular qualities and indeed constructing the 'global city lifestyle' (see Hassam, 2009, p. 47).

#### *5.2.2.2 London as a centre for 'global' and 'cool' consumption*

The global city lifestyle is communicated in Glamorous London films through the activities in which the characters engage. Food and dining are central to communicating this lifestyle. The international element of London's dining scene contributes to the idea that the world resides in the city—or at least that the city's inhabitants are familiar with and engage with 'the world', given London's vast array of culinary offerings. Instead of reflecting the reality of a city with rich ethnic diversity, London is

constructed as a 'safe' multicultural space as seen through the eyes of the white, middle-class protagonists.

Scene for analysis from *Bridget Jones's Diary* (00:15:32)

Description of the scene: Bridget, as narrator, informs viewers that she is in an 'emergency summit with urban family for coherent discussion of career crisis' at a restaurant. She introduces some of her friends including 'Shazzer, journalist, likes to say fuck a lot' and 'Tom, 80s pop icon...total poof of course'. The camera is initially placed just above the group's table, showing the busy restaurant with waiters dressed smartly, candles on the tables and a young, trendy crowd. Bridget and her friends are all smoking and drinking vodka. On the table is a bottle of vodka, a bowl of olives and a large sharing plate of tortilla chips, all surrounding a bowl of guacamole. Tom has a new mobile phone, whose box is on the table. As he speaks he casually assembles the phone. The action then moves to a medium shot of a taxi driving along a wet, empty street. A train passes along an elevated railway line, with sparks flying, illuminating the street. The taxi stops and Bridget exits, stumbling into the street, immediately after her voice as narrator assures viewers that, now in her 30s, she is better able to cope with the effects of excessive alcohol consumption.

This scene is particularly poignant for a variety of reasons. We are introduced to Bridget's 'urban family', who are all portrayed as white and in their 30s. From an analytical point of view, one could discuss this 'urban family' in relation to alienation in the city. In addition, the themes of alcohol consumption, public transport, restaurant culture, gender relations and homosexuality are all relevant. I focus on the ways in which London's 'global' identity is discursively constructed through this episode's casual focus on 'global' cuisine, which allows for the cultivation of specific racial and sexual identities within the context of its 'coolness' as an urban location. Instead of conveying the idea of London's multicultural identity through, say, a visit to one of the city's many ethnic minority districts, like China Town or Brick Lane (London's Bangladeshi neighbourhood), or indeed through the foregrounded representation of non-white individuals, London's multi-ethnic and multi-racial socio-scape is presented through



the eyes of the city's 'ideal users'—white and middle-class with a sizeable disposable income. These 'ideal users' (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480) situate themselves in Central London and approach the notion of global cuisine (olives and guacamole in this case) through the discourse of 'glamour'. In this manner, the film presents the concept of what I term 'global consumption', inspired by Hassam's (2009, p. 47) 'global city lifestyle', as a fashionable, luxurious experience, with London as the inimitable provider. The city becomes the headquarters of the 'global ethnic supermarket' (Sepulveda, Syrett & Lyon, 2008, p. 6), a notion which situates the consumerist discourse within the 'safe' multicultural cityscape and, correlatively, within a particular ideologically-constructed global-city narrative.

The restaurant in which Bridget and her 'urban family' eat and drink is popular and, as indicated through a variety of semiotic elements like bottles of spirits and sparkling wine, perhaps champagne, plus the general 'buzz' created through characters in the foreground *and* the background, probably expensive: an unlikely choice for a young clerical worker. Setting this scene at this restaurant, again semiotically constructed as likely to be in London's West End, presents the city as a vibrant, glamorous location in which the consumption of high-end goods and services is a regular occurrence or a *natural* element of life in the city. Tom's casual unpacking of his new mobile phone, the candid nature of the table conversation and the characters' unremarkable reaction to their surroundings further delineate the film's semiotic and discursive communication of the 'ordinariness' and 'coolness' of this type of consumptive experience. Furthermore, Tom is gay and it is noteworthy that his role in this scene and indeed in the rest of the film is peripheral and seems to add nothing more than comic relief. This presents the city and its glamour zones as 'interesting' and 'cool', (see Florida, 2002, for a discussion of the 'coolness' of cities with large gay populations), but 'safe' for a more mainstream and possibly conservative audience, as the protagonists all conform to hetero-normative stereotypes.

The use of Borough Market in a later scene suggests an intentionality with regard to the emergence of the 'global consumption'

discourse. The market is laden with references to London's claim to symbolic power, whereby the city itself becomes the unifying concept in channelling this global image through cinematic representations. The portrayal of the international gourmet market as the food shopping destination of choice for the film's protagonist, Bridget Jones, discursively suggests that in London there is a particular legitimate and *natural* consumptive mode. Londoners, according to this frame, do not shop like their suburban counterparts in chain supermarkets or discount co-operatives. Instead, they participate in the global consumerist discourse, within which London emerges as an instrumental character. In addition, Bridget prepares a meal using 'exotic' ingredients and recipes (caper berries, Thai soup) in a quintessentially urban location (the sparks of the nearby railway attest to this). Although her flat is relatively generic and 'place-less', these semiotic cues provide the location with a cultural specificity unique to London as a global city.

Beyond global cuisine, London's prominent legal field takes centre stage in *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Mark Darcy is a human rights barrister and is often filmed in his large, plush office. One of Bridget's assignments in her role as a correspondent for the fictitious morning news programme *Sit Up Britain* is to cover an extradition trial taking place at the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, featuring a British aid worker and a Kurdish freedom fighter. A careless gaffe leads to Bridget missing her opportunity to interview the freedom fighter, but Mark saves the day by landing her the interview as he is the principal lawyer on the case. The trial itself conveys the importance of the city to the global legal process, given its international significance and the large amount of press coverage it attracts. London and its legal field are 'saving' a Middle Eastern man, further enhancing the city's claim to symbolic significance. The city's 'ideal users' (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480) and, correlatively, the city itself, embody the important position of 'global moral police'. One of the functions of this trial is therefore to situate the discourse of cosmopolitan morality within the global-city discourse, specifically in London, in that this version of morality is shown to have a home in this

global city. This scene presents London as a global decision-making centre.

## **5.3 Capitalism and Consumption: Iconic London**

### **5.3.1 Glamour zones**

In this section I discuss the ways in which the films in this thematic category highlight the 'glamour zones' (see Section 3.3.1) in London, emphasising their exclusivity and pervasiveness, through the showcasing of these zones and indeed through the construction of the characters discussed in the previous section. *Closer* manages to convey 'a sense of London as a global city' (Brunsdon, 2007, p. 111) through a variety of cinematographic techniques that highlight the city's 'glamour zones'. These include many wide-angle shots, particularly of London's riverside panoramas, office buildings and extensive transport infrastructure, coupled with its touristic and commercial spaces, including visitor attractions, art galleries and shopping centres.

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (00:06:54)

Description of the scene: Dan and Alice are on a bus, on their way to Dan's workplace. The initial shot is a medium shot of the exterior of the bus. The action then shifts to the bus's interior, on the upper deck, where Dan and Alice discuss Dan's work as a journalist who writes obituaries, which he calls 'the Siberia of journalism'. The exterior of the bus, driving swiftly along a wide road, momentarily becomes the focus once again,. Alice tells Dan that she was a stripper in New York. The action shifts to the area surrounding Dan's office block, a towering, modern structure, firstly by way of a low-angle shot. Before they part ways, Dan reminds Alice that in the UK the traffic generally approaches from the right-hand side (earlier in the film she is struck by a vehicle after looking the wrong way at a pedestrian crossing).

This sequence functions as an introduction for viewers of two of the film's principal characters. We learn about Dan's work and Alice's former life in New York. On the bus, the camera's placement and wide-angle

shots allow for views towards London's riverside, facing south, highlighting the city's network of bridges. The brief shot of the bus's exterior reminds us of London's extensive public transport network. The red bus is also a quintessentially London icon, a symbolic reminder of the city's imperial past and therefore its geo-political power. The episode on the bus is placed directly before the shot of Dan's contemporary office block, a modern, glass structure. This building, in 'Thomas More Square has become an increasingly popular filming location. The high-tech office block has stunning rooftop views and was used for the exterior of Dan's newspaper office' (Closer Movie Map). It is for the most part an unremarkable modern building, a skyscraper, such as could easily be found in any other modern city. The proximate reference to the iconic red double decker bus and Dan's reference to the UK's unique traffic patterns, however, provide a discursive link to London, through which the city's uniqueness and history (the bus) are combined with economic productivity through the construction of a 'glamour zone' (the office building). Viewers are reminded both of the city's modern position as an economic powerhouse and of its past geo-political power: two key elements of London's symbolic power as a global city. It is at once a unique (specific) and a generic modern (global) city.

Furthermore, the placement of the scene in the film's early stages suggests several ideological frameworks through which the notion of glamour is cultivated. Firstly, it is clear from a variety of signs and symbols, including clothing and speech (accents, topics of conversation), that 'Glamorous London' is linked to class. Alice communicates her class position through the discursive construction of her national identity and purpose of entry into the United Kingdom. She is from the USA, clearly not seeking asylum in the UK, searching for a job as a waitress. Dan is smartly dressed, wearing a lounge suit and a Mac coat, and engages in a conversation about Siberia. These referential codes serve to naturalise their (middle-)class values and attributes as early as possible in the narrative, particularly given the non-existence in this film of characters belonging to other classes.

Later in the film, we are presented with Anna's photography exhibition, which takes place in a high-end West London shopping centre, Whiteley's. The building was 'London's first real department store and now a modern, luxury shopping centre. Bette Davis does her shopping here in *Connecting Rooms* and Sixties spy thriller *Billion Dollar Brain* starring Michael Caine was also shot here' (Closer Movie Map).

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (00:33:49).

Description of the scene: This is the only scene in which all four protagonists appear together. Dan and Alice enter the exhibition space, where they are dwarfed by the floor-to-ceiling prints of Anna's photographic portraits, one of which features a tearful Alice. The camera pans round the space, picking up fragments of conversation in a variety of languages. A Brazilian song plays in the background. Alice stands in front of her portrait. Larry approaches her and the two engage in a conversation questioning the commercial value of art. The consensus is that art can be profitable if the right buyer is found. Alice and Dan leave together and Alice takes a taxi home. Dan then hails a taxi for himself, intending to catch a train, but instead returns to the exhibition space, where he and Anna have a conversation in which he asks her if she loves him. Once Dan leaves, Larry and Anna converse over a glass of Moët et Chandon champagne.



Figure 11: Scene from *Closer* featuring all four protagonists at Anna's (Julia Roberts) photography exhibition:

<http://www.cineoutsider.com/reviews/pix/c/cl/closer1.jpg>

Although this scene is primarily about romantic relationships, I focus on the conversation about the commercial value of art and the visual construction of the lavish exhibition space, a 'glamour zone', which together highlight London's importance as a global artistic centre. The luxury shopping centre setting can be seen as a nod to the notion that artistic expression can be a highly profitable commercial enterprise. The city more generally has an important role to play in this scene. Anna is discursively constructed and represented as a well-known American photographer who has chosen to showcase her exhibition in London. As the scene begins, with a panning shot of the gallery/shopping centre space, catching anonymous fragments of conversation in a variety of languages, the city is constructed as an important global centre and more specifically as an important global *artistic* and *cultural* centre.<sup>20</sup> In addition, in a few shots viewers can see the champagne bottle clearly displaying the Moët et Chandon brand name. Aside from the blatant product placement, this semiotic and discursive reference to wealth and

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<sup>20</sup> Later scenes in the film take place in the ornate Theatre Royal Drury Lane and in the National Portrait Gallery, making further visual references to London's world-class cultural offerings.

class further delineates the calibre of the event, of the space and of this construction of the city as high-end and glamorous. In this scene, the discussion of the commodification of art, the use of a luxury shopping centre and the élite international flavour of the event, coupled with the refreshments on offer, connote an air of luxury and aspiration. This in turn provides a repertoire of products and situations which are employed to present the city itself as a consumable entity. Returning to Hassam (2009), the film by way of this scene and others, seems to participate precisely in the construction of the 'global city lifestyle' (p. 47), with London presented as the inimitable home of the amenities which facilitate this lifestyle and indeed of the types of individual at whom this lifestyle is targeted.

Like *Closer*, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Match Point* feature a plethora of visual and dialogic references to London's 'glamour zones'. Though all three films deal in some ways with romance and relationships, *Bridget Jones's Diary* also offers a comedic element, framing the city's glamour in an upbeat manner. Bridget Jones, at first an administrative assistant at a US publisher's London outpost, is an unlikely member of the 'hyper urban professional' set, discussed above (see Hassam, 2009, p. 47). Nevertheless, Bridget is frequently represented enjoying food, drink and other services at London's more fashionable and expensive venues in the West End and newly gentrified areas in the south of the city, like Borough and the South Bank. Furthermore, in *Bridget Jones's Diary* continuity is frequently forgone, perhaps in an effort to showcase a wide variety of London's 'glamour zones'. A scene at the end of the film, in which Bridget chases after Mark along the snow-covered streets of London in her underwear, is particularly relevant in the way that it constructs London's topography. She begins in her own neighbourhood (Borough) and arrives within minutes at the Royal Exchange in Bank. Anyone familiar with London's topography will be aware that Borough and Bank are far enough away from one another that one could not feasibly walk the distance within a few minutes, let alone in one's underwear in the snow. This type of representation makes the city seem accessible,

manageable and easy to navigate, as it discursively suggests that journeys from one 'glamour zone' to another are seamless and simple.

### 5.3.2 Iconic spaces and monuments

Glamorous London use and construct London as a city of both old and new iconic spaces and monuments. Given the city's historical importance, its specificity is achieved unsurprisingly through the representation of its more 'familiar' iconic spaces and monuments, like the Palace of Westminster, St Paul's Cathedral, Tower Bridge and Trafalgar Square, and indeed its other well-known, iconic attributes, like red double decker buses and black taxis. Glamorous London films transcend these historical references by reconceptualising London's cityscape as a mix of old and new icons. Whilst the monuments, spaces and attributes mentioned above enjoy a long history of representation in film, television and literary works, this is not the case for London's newer monuments, like the Gherkin, the Tate Modern or Canary Wharf. Inspired by Brunsdon (2007, p. 113), I demonstrate how these new consumerist spaces, 'glamour zones', are *rendered* iconic through their repeated semiotic inclusion in Glamorous London films. Indeed, as Brunsdon (2007) notes,

...previous landmarks such as St Paul's are now dwarfed by buildings like the Swiss Re Building (the Gherkin) and No. 1 Canada Square [Canary Wharf]. These buildings...could be seen, along with attractions such as Tate Modern and the Millennium Wheel, as the landmarks of London as a [contemporary] global city. (p. 113)

In this section I provide textual evidence to demonstrate that it is the *juxtaposition* of old and new iconic spaces that makes the newer spaces 'the landmarks of London as a [contemporary] global city' (Brunsdon p.111). The city is therefore presented as a place where history and progress are equally at home. For example, in *Closer*, Anna and Larry stand outside the London aquarium and viewers can clearly see St Paul's Cathedral and the Gherkin in the distance. This deliberate shot of the City of London features links to the past (St Paul's Cathedral) and



contemporary reminders of London's continued relevance and significance as a global financial centre (the Gherkin). This visual reference to London's past and present reflects the construction of London as a global city through both its old and new iconic spaces.

A later scene in *Closer* takes place at the National Portrait Gallery in Central London. This scene also blatantly participates in the construction of London's symbolic power through its iconic spaces.

Scene for analysis from *Closer* (01:10:20)

Description of the scene: The scene begins with a medium shot of Anna at a table in a café (on one of the upper levels of the National Portrait Gallery in Charing Cross Road, off Trafalgar Square in the West End). Larry approaches the table, though only the back of his body and not his head is initially visible. The table is next to a large window with a panoramic view of Trafalgar Square and the Palace of Westminster. It is daytime and the sky is grey and leaden. Larry sits at the table and remarks: 'I hate this place...Central London is a theme park'. As the two converse we hear the buzz of conversation and cutlery and also the sound of a clock chiming in the distance. The two negotiate the terms of their divorce (Larry wants to have sex with Anna before he signs the divorce papers, whilst Anna tries to convince Larry to sign immediately). Larry proceeds to the bar to order alcoholic beverages. Anna follows Larry and informs him that she is prepared to have sex with him in order to finalise their divorce.

Although this scene provides a variety of potential themes for analysis (romantic relationships, the manipulative use of sex, the service industries, art, the role of alcohol in society, dining in the city), I focus on the panoramic view and Larry's comment about Central London's theme-park-like offerings. The camera's placement and wide angle bring much of the viewer's attention to the postcard-like view of Trafalgar Square and, in the distance, the Palace of Westminster. The museum itself, in particular the modern restaurant in which the scene takes place, is semiotically and discursively constructed as a 'glamour zone', in that it is a centre for 'high culture' and offers luxurious services (exclusive drinking

and dining). This contemporary consumer space is framed within London's history through the visual reference to the 'Old London' icons of the Palace of Westminster and Trafalgar Square. This juxtaposition of old and new communicates precisely London's symbolic power as rooted in both its historical significance and its contemporary dynamism. Larry's comment, his belief that Central London is a 'theme park', undoubtedly reflects a negative opinion of the commodification of the city and indeed the reduction of the city's historical central area to a simple spectacle. However, this comment also positions London as a 'safe' and 'familiar' space for global visitors and indeed for the city's 'ideal users' (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480). The city is therefore in this scene of historical and contemporary significance—specifically with just enough of a generic quality ('theme park') to appeal to mobile and middle-class global users.

The Gherkin and other newer London monuments, like the Tate Modern gallery and the London Eye, frame a large part of the action in *Match Point*. The Gherkin in particular is given a large amount of screen time, as one of its upper floors hosts Chris's large, open-plan office. The building is introduced early in the film, via a low-angle shot emphasising its height and unusual design, followed by a brief scene in Chris's new office. His job is with the Global Infrastructure and Finance division, emphasising the Gherkin's and therefore London's importance as a global financial centre. The Gherkin scenes are often followed immediately by interior shots of Chris's modest flat, which is relatively shabby compared with the sleek, contemporary space of the Gherkin. Other newer monuments, though enjoying substantially less screen time than the Gherkin, are also semiotically and discursively rendered iconic through their appearance on the screen. The London Eye and the Saatchi Gallery,<sup>21</sup> both on the South Bank of the River Thames, are introduced within 15 minutes of the start of the film. The wide-angle shots of these two attractions are immediately juxtaposed with wide-angle, panoramic shots of the Palace of Westminster, providing the viewer with a discursive and semiotic link to London's well-known historical monuments. A similar

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<sup>21</sup> The Saatchi gallery was located in County Hall on the South Bank until 2008, when it moved to Duke of York Square, Chelsea.

technique is employed in the presentation of Chloe's and Chris's new loft flat in a contemporary luxury apartment block (undoubtedly a 'glamour zone'), south of the Thames. The well-appointed modern interiors are augmented with views towards the Thames, again featuring the Palace of Westminster, framing London as both a historically significant and a contemporary city with modern luxury amenities for its residents and visitors. This discursive technique is repeated yet again when a scene featuring the Tate Modern gallery is immediately followed by a shot of an 'Old London' street, perhaps Harley Street. Relating the spaces of New London with those of Old London serves to give impetus to London's newer monuments as iconic spaces.

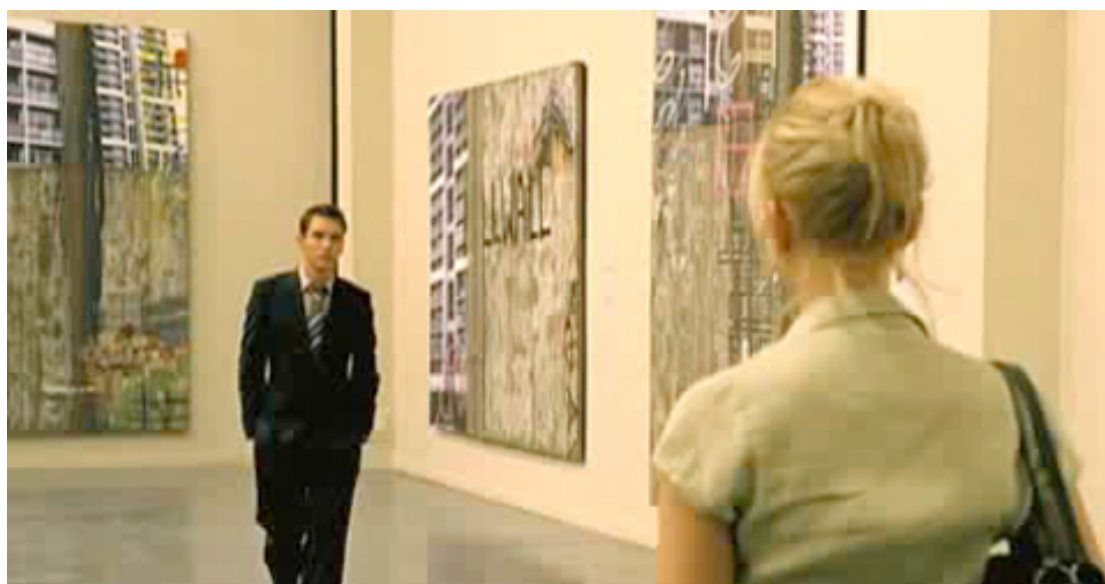


Figure 12: A scene from *Match Point*, filmed at the Tate Modern gallery in Southwark, South London.

<http://www.iambo.com/blog/archives/match%20point.jpg>

## 5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I identify and analyse the function of the various cinematographic techniques used in Glamorous London films both to construct and to maintain London's symbolic power in the global marketplace. These films offer rich reminders and visual/dialogic references to London's importance as a global city by way of the representation of London's elite through hetero-normative stereotypes

and the representation of London's modern and historical architectural icons. This, coupled with these films' global reach and high profit levels, provide a useful starting point for assessing strategies in the city's management of its symbolic power and global image. The analysis of film scenes in this chapter highlights the ways in which these films construct the city's 'ideal' or 'legitimate' users (see Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480), who are generally white and middle-class, embodying the 'global city lifestyle' (see Hassam, 2009, p. 47) through the discourse of 'global consumption'. The Glamorous London thematic category is nuanced, suggesting an acknowledgement of London's diverse class background whilst continuing to frame the city's 'ideal users' in a particular manner, conveying a sense of hetero-normativity and cultural homogeneity in the construction of London's socio-scape. In films in this thematic category the specific manner in which the 'middle class' is constructed as both natural and aspirational is key to the construction of London's socio-scape and therefore its 'misrecognised' symbolic power (see Bourdieu, 1991). The city is presented as both a place of established middleclass communities and a place in which individuals can become part of the middle class, irrespective of their previous class background.

This thematic category therefore constructs the city's ideal users discursively and semiotically as having specific race, gender and class identities. The pre-existing discursive power of such identities allow for the association of the city with powerful, global economic and cultural trends, through the characters' use of its spaces and the ways in which the city space is filmed. The precise manner in which these characters relate to and use the city space is facilitated both by this characterisation and their class background. London is discursively represented as an important node within what appears to be a benign and successful neoliberal capitalist system. The construction of these characters within this class framework facilitates the visual focus on the city's expensive retail, dining and entertainment offerings and indeed the visual construction of the city as one of iconic spaces and monuments. London's symbolic power is constructed and reproduced in these films precisely through the notion of 'glamour', in that both its inhabitants and its

physical attributes are constructed as 'glamorous'. In addition, although London seems at times to be presented as a generic global city, the films rely on the city's cultural specificity to convey its uniqueness: the city in these films is portrayed as both familiar (especially to US audiences) and exotic. Presenting the city through *natural* representations of heteronormativity and cultural homogeneity constructs the city as an appealing and 'safe' place for a specific group of high-spending individuals. At the same time, London's iconic monuments play a central role in the visual landscapes of these films. I demonstrate the ways in which London's newer, more generic monuments (skyscrapers and attractions like the Millennium Wheel) are *rendered* iconic through their visual juxtaposition with the city's older and more familiar landmarks. London's symbolic power is thus constructed as a distinctive blend of old and new: this is the city's unique selling point.

The interconnectedness of the two main sections of this chapter, on the construction of those who inhabit the city and the visual framing of the city itself, reflects the dualistic nature of representations of London in this thematic category. Like Glamorous London characters, the physical city is a mix of old and new, established and newly arrived. The New London monuments and spaces which feature in these films, for example, are in many ways highly generic (skyscrapers, galleries, museums) and very like those to be found in other global and non-global cities. It is precisely the juxtaposition of these monuments and spaces with those of Old London that communicates the city's distinctiveness within the realm of global cities more generally, and indeed its key role as a historical and contemporary global financial hub. This reflects New Labour's neoliberal economic and cultural policies, which de-emphasised the role of the state and emphasised private enterprise. London's newer monuments (skyscrapers), for example, tend to house the headquarters of multinational corporations. The city's role as a global financial and cultural hub is indicative of its symbolic power.

However, this is only one part of the 'story' of London's symbolic power. As Section 1.3 of this thesis demonstrates, symbolic power in general is full of contradictions and is multi-faceted. It is therefore

essential to note that the city's central role in neoliberal capitalism equally results in deprivation and difficulty for the city's poorer residents. Although Glamorous London films shy away from this 'other side' of the city's symbolic power, the films discussed in the next chapter, on Multi-Cultural London, complete the story of London's global-city identity and resulting symbolic power through representations of the city as depressing, dangerous and unforgiving. It is precisely these striking contrasts which paint a believable picture of the city as having multiple identities—Chapter 6 shows us that representations of London are as nuanced and contrasting as the city itself.

## CHAPTER 6: MULTI-CULTURAL LONDON

### 6.1 Introduction

Whereas Glamorous London films represent the city through a vast amount of explicit visual evidence alluding to the city's symbolic significance, particularly through the discursive and semiotic construction of 'glamour' via the characters' spatial practices (see Harvey, 1990, p. 259) and the showcasing of the city's monuments, Multi-Cultural London films instead provide precisely the opposite. In this thematic category, the construction of bleakness and the use of hard-hitting storylines at first suggest that the city is a space for despair rather than celebration. The generally low profitability of Multi-Cultural films<sup>22</sup> likely stems from the genre most commonly featured in this thematic category, melodrama, which often deals with narratives of bleakness and desperation—a far cry from the light entertainment films and 'Hollywood-friendly' storylines which populate the Glamorous London thematic category. In Multi-Cultural London films, viewers are presented with a side of the city with which tourists and members of the 'transnational élite' (Hamnett, 2004, p. 104) indirectly *interact* but which they rarely *see*.

Characters in Multi-Cultural London films (particularly in *Dirty Pretty Things* and *Breaking and Entering*) are shown to provide the services which facilitate the smooth functioning of the city as presented in Glamorous London films (see Loshitzky, 2010 and Section 2.3.1 of this thesis). The analysis uncovered many symbols and signs in Multi-Cultural London films which imply that it is the minicab drivers, hotel housekeeping staff, doormen, seamstresses, sweatshop tailors and airport workers who provide the essential services that the 'transnational élite' (Hamnett, 2004, p. 104) demand. The depiction of these individuals in the city leads us back to Sassen's (2011) discussion of the global city order more generally, beyond cinema, in which these cities' socio-scapes feature both extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Harvey (1990) also

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<sup>22</sup> Information obtained from [www.boxofficemojo.com](http://www.boxofficemojo.com)

discusses the class inequalities in the (global) city, noting that successful urban areas have to '...cope with increasing impoverishment and unemployment...the impoverished practise both new and well-tried survival strategies' (p. 260). In Multi-Cultural London films, the transnational community is often portrayed as poor and transient. By giving a voice and agency to individuals who normally work and reside in the background, the city's 'underbelly', and indeed to those residing in its peripheral neighbourhoods, the films in this thematic category contribute to the notion that the symbolic power of the global city is a multi-layered phenomenon to which these individuals make an important contribution.

Indeed, as Georgiou (2008) reminds us, 'migration and travel are inherently linked to the establishment of global cities as major financial centres...' (p. 4). Following this line of thought, I argue that setting these films in London suggests that the city is an important node in the global capitalist system, endowing it with a power which both feeds and is influenced by these gross social and racial/ethnic inequalities. The 'story' of the global city and its conflicting and contradictory symbolic power (see Section 1.3) is made more believable through the representations of the city and its inhabitants in these films. The construction of London's global-city identity makes it a fascinating and unpredictable place, worthy of its 'global' title. Georgiou (2008) argues that 'the [global] city cannot exist without its cultural diversity, its intense mediated interconnections within its territory and across the globe, and its politics that challenge national geographical authority and national and exclusive political citizenship' (p. 7). The films in this thematic category remind viewers of this side of London's global city identity.

#### 6.1.1 Multi-cultural versus multicultural

In this chapter, the terms 'multicultural' and 'multi-cultural' are used with distinct meanings. I use the term 'multi-cultural' to refer simply to demographics, in that London's socio-scape consists of a multitude of nationalities, races and ethnicities living and working in the city, as observed in the films in this thematic category and indeed corroborated



by statistical evidence from the city itself.<sup>23</sup> The term 'multicultural', on the other hand, has a much more specific ideological meaning. I follow Kymlicka (2010, p. 33), who refers to multiculturalism as a 'doctrine', very much a part of London's identity in the 1997-2007 period, inasmuch as the term carries an ideological significance. In neoliberal, New-Labour-run Britain, the 'multicultural champion of Europe' (Kepel, 2005, n.p.), the emphasis on, amongst other things, the presence in the country of a variety of global cuisines, international cultural events and music festivals, detracts from the more serious consequences of the city's multi-cultural socio-scape (see Section 3.2)

Although much of the analysis in this chapter attests to these films' critical stance towards the superficial nature of London's multicultural identity, it equally emphasises that the tensions between multiculturalism and the city's multi-cultural socio-scape are, like the global city itself, multi-layered: multicultural London and multi-cultural London overlap, in that there are some continuities between these two identities. In *Bend it Like Beckham*, for example, although I discuss discourses like the lack of cultural integration and provide a critique of the film's emphasis on consumption, the film also discursively represents precisely the 'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33) associated with multiculturalism, providing a plethora of ways in which to interpret the film's key messages. Indeed it is these overlaps that enhance through cinematic representations London's symbolic power as a global city. The films in this thematic category provide a nuanced picture of the symbolic power of the global city, which includes the celebration of diversity, the emphasis on the service economy and the transnational character of the city. In addition, although neoliberal globalisation and capitalism are largely responsible for the injustices these characters face, the city, London in this case, provides a space in which neoliberalism is equally responsible for helping them to escape, or at least to stand up to, their

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<sup>23</sup> See:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3&b=276775&c=WC2A+2AE&d=13&e=16&g=349181&i=1001x1003x1004&o=322&m=0&r=0&s=1349449572081&enc=1&dsFamilyId=87>

respective predicaments. These are reminders that the symbolic power of the city works in *non-obvious* ways.

## **6.2 Symbolic Power and Immigration: New and Established Migrant Communities**

In Multi-Cultural London films, the contradictory and multi-layered nature of London's symbolic power as a global city is achieved through the representation of migrant communities, both those newly arrived in the city and those established possibly for generations. The dichotomy between these 'new' and 'established' communities sets the scene for the construction of an ethnically, racially and culturally diverse city-scape. This diversity is central to the construction of London's symbolic power in the ways this diversity fits into the global-city narrative. The films, through their 'bottom-up' approach to the representation of the city's financial power, give agency to the individuals who make up these communities, which in turn is central to the construction of the multi-layered realities of the city's global status. The focus on these individuals' stories creates a compelling case for the centrality of London to the process of financial (and cultural) globalisation.

### **6.2.1 New migrant communities**

Scene for analysis from *Dirty Pretty Things* (00:38:00)

Description of the scene: Okwe is treating an elderly Somali man who has had one of his kidneys removed in a makeshift surgical procedure. The scene, like the rest of the movie, is filmed in muted colours and features a variety of medium and close-up shots of the individuals, including the secondary characters speaking Somali. The elderly man, whose torso is scarred by a large, likely infected, wound, is lying on the floor in pain, surrounded by his family and Okwe. As Okwe instructs the family on the correct dosage of medication required for the man's treatment, he realises that not a single adult member of the family speaks English. He hears a child's voice behind him and this child eventually translates Okwe's instructions. In a London accent, the child says that her English is

more fluent than her Somali. It transpires that the man had consented to the removal of his kidney in exchange for a British passport.

This scene introduces issues relating to the medical profession, in that Okwe, a trained professional who is unable to practise medicine in the UK due to his illegal immigration status, provides 'unofficial' medical assistance to those without appropriate access to medical facilities. Okwe's knowledge of medical terminology and his possession of medication and other equipment, is reassuring to the family, who are fearful of exposing their illegal immigration status to National Health Service (NHS) workers. Secondly, the scene presents language issues, in that the overwhelming majority of the characters in this scene do not speak English, suggesting perhaps that mastery of the language is not necessary in order to survive in the city. Thirdly, the theme of generations is important, whereby a British-born (or at least British-raised) child provides a symbolic and practical link between the immigrant community and the host society by acting as a translator. The child emerges behind Okwe and, from both a cultural-linguistic and a visual perspective, is separated from the family. The thread that runs through these seemingly disparate themes is that of the plight of these migrants and their very presence in the city, struggling to survive and engaging in potentially life-threatening behaviour in order to secure better access to jobs and services. We can also see the ways in which the city itself is at the centre of this desperation, as this scene provides a window into the 'unseen' aspects of London's global-city identity, in which global migrant populations play a large and essential role (see Georgiou, 2008; Sassen, 2011). The focus on individual stories in interior spaces, although lacking any semiotic references to London's monuments and/or glamour zones, suggests and acknowledges the multi-layered realities of the global city, solidifying London's role as an important centre in global capital flows.

That the elderly man has subjected himself to a dangerous, unregulated surgical procedure, giving up an organ in exchange for a British passport, is indicative of the desperate situation he and his family face. He and other characters in the film, like Senay, are portrayed to believe that a European Union passport, the key to becoming a legal

resident in the UK/EU and providing easier access to the US and other developed countries, is their perceived ticket to freedom. These characters make significant sacrifices in order to attain this perceived freedom. Furthermore, it is a member of the younger, perhaps British-born, generation who provides the symbolic and practical link between the migrant community and the host culture, acting as a bridge. However, given the child's family's economic situation, it is unlikely that he will enjoy the fruits of economic globalisation and London's global city status. The film's focus on immigrants is a discursive indication that the city has a dynamic and mobile labour force. This labour force is an essential element in the city's claim to financial power—the primary driver for the financial aspect of its symbolic power, particularly in the context of neoliberal capitalism (see Sassen, 2011). Indeed as Loshitsky (2010, p. 73) argues, the 'globalised' approach to immigration emphasises the economic benefits for the host society.

However, although the scene is a poignant example of the difficulties faced by poor immigrants in London, it emphasises the cultural and linguistic differences within these (Nigerian and Somali) migrant communities. The scene therefore gives voice and a sense of agency to the individual migrants as independent members of their society, whose identities and attributes are based on their skills and circumstances rather than on their racial or cultural backgrounds. These characters are not simply 'immigrants' or 'Africans' who are 'all the same', but individuals, Londoners. Focussing on a group of individuals who are part of this labour force gives this group agency and a voice, and provides a seemingly overt critique of the neoliberal capitalist system in which symbolic power and financial power are closely linked.

*Breaking and Entering* is equally concerned with the story of migrant labourers in London, as part of the narrative is centred on the plight of Amira, an asylum seeker from Serbia working as a seamstress, and her London-raised son, Miro (see Appendix C for a plot summary). The film is presented as more interested than *Dirty Pretty Things* in breaking down class and ethnic boundaries in the city, as it draws attention to a scenario in which the middle-class and migrant working-

class worlds are directly interwoven, through crime, deceit, architecture and a sexual relationship. I argue that the interactions between these two societal groups in the same geographical space, and the emotional pain that ensues, feed into the construction of the darker side of London's symbolic power.

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Scene for analysis from *Breaking and Entering* (01:20:53)

Description of the scene: This scene takes place after the burglaries and after Will and Amira begin their romantic relationship. The scene is mostly set in a derelict exterior part of Amira's and Miro's council estate, after dark. Miro, his cousin, his uncle and another man load goods into a white van. There are no other individuals present. Miro's uncle speaks sternly in Serbian, whilst Miro answers in English, 'I'm not a monkey'. There is a strong focus on Miro's facial expressions, through close-up and medium shots, whilst Miro's uncle is shot from below. The boys disperse and Amira walks towards the van with an angry expression. She bangs on the window of the van, shouting and crying hysterically in Serbian. She returns in a distraught state to her flat, to find Miro sitting at the dining table, crying. She consoles him. The scene quickly transitions to a blurry, dreamlike sequence of Will and Amira having sex.

This scene tells part of the 'story' of the global city—that of struggle, crime, immigrant communities, extremes of wealth and poverty, and indeed of dynamism and political action or 'active opposition' (see Georgiou, 2008, p. 10). These elements, coupled with the glamour of Glamorous London, are two important facets of the global city narrative, in which London plays a central role. The types of camera-shot used here convey the characters' emotion-laden expressions, particularly Amira's grief and anger and indeed Miro's desperation and remorse—although there is little English spoken, it is clear that the two are very upset. The dark, empty and physically isolated environs of the large council estate, adjacent to the King's Cross re-development site and Green Effect's offices, provide a 'hidden' space for the criminal operation. Although the estate is situated in a ready-for-gentrification neighbourhood, we see a

visual representation of the 'other side' of the area (poor and populated by economic migrants) and, therefore discursively, the 'other side' of the global city's identity and symbolic power. The scene is therefore a prime example of the symbolic representation of this immigrant community's marginality and therefore of the multi-faceted nature of London's city- and socio-scapes.



Figure 13: Amira (Juliette Binoche) on a council estate in *Breaking and Entering*. <http://www.dinaview.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/11/breaking-and-entering.jpg>

In common with other films in this thematic category, it is a member of the younger, British-born or British-raised generation, Miro in this case, who provides the symbolic link between the immigrant and native communities. Miro speaks perfect London English and refuses to speak Serbian. As demonstrated by his remorseful attitude when back in his flat, Miro seems keen to give up his life of crime, perhaps longing to become part of the 'mainstream' or middle class. This is evidenced by the careful placement in his bedroom of the small architectural figurines he steals from Green Effect. However, the film seems to be asking us to question the importance of being British-raised and English-speaking in London, given that Miro, in spite of possessing these seemingly beneficial attributes, nevertheless enters a life of criminality, possibly as a way to actively oppose his life of relative poverty (see Georgiou, 2008, p. 10). Although likely coaxed by his uncle, Miro gains access through his criminal behaviour to a state-of-the-art Apple laptop, a physical symbol of

the 'mainstream' and indeed of the 'spoils' of globalisation and global capitalism, a system in which London is a key player. This laptop, more than simply a piece of computing equipment, is a semiotic device which connects Miro to a world beyond his council-estate existence. Indeed the extensive use of close-up shots of Miro and Amira seems to be appealing to viewers to empathise with their difficulties—they live in the glamorous global city, with affluent or soon-to-be-affluent districts adjacent to their home, but have no legitimate access to the 'betterment' which the area's imminent gentrification promises.

This is a critique of global, neoliberal capitalism more generally and its capacity to create injustices and inequalities, with London, in this case, is portrayed as being at the centre of this global system. Even the ominous character of Miro's uncle, semiotically communicated through his stern manner and the way he is filmed, can be interpreted as a critique of this system, as his uncle is simply exploiting the system in order to amass wealth and perhaps eventually become part of the mainstream. The mainstream here is portrayed as wealthy and middle-class, much like the characters who dominate films in the Glamorous London thematic category. In *Breaking and Entering*, however, even the characters engaging in 'global consumption' (see Chapter 5) are portrayed as at times dissatisfied in spite of being both recipients and creators of these 'spoils'.<sup>24</sup>

### 6.2.2 Established migrant communities

The representation of the variety of processes through which financial globalisation is exercised in the cultural and social realms forms the basis for London's multi-cultural and multicultural identities in films in this thematic category. This is exemplified by the characters' arrival in London in the hope of financial betterment and the depiction of how they are forced to take jobs in the service industries (see Loshitzky, 2010 and Section 2.3.1 of this thesis). This variety solidifies the argument that the

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Will and Liv experience marital problems, resulting in Will's affair with Amira, and Liv's daughter, Bea, is autistic. They are portrayed as generally unhappy in spite of having financial security and living in a wealthy neighbourhood.

elements which give London its global-city identity, and therefore shore up its symbolic power, are multi-faceted and multi-layered in nature. London's established migrant communities, at least in their representation in Multi-Cultural London films, are integral to this multi-faceted nature of London's symbolic power.

*Bend it Like Beckham*, a dramatic comedy, provides the foundation for this argument, as the film deals with the children of migrants, generally second or perhaps third generation Britons, who at times struggle with their hybrid identities. In this context, we are provided with semiotic and discursive reminders of a city which was once the capital of a vast and exploitative global empire. London's multi-cultural socio-scape is a result of this global domination and resulting geo-political power (see section 2.3.1). Before I continue, I need to point out that this film is primarily about women's football. I choose to focus upon the ways in which the football-centred text also helps us to understand the symbolic power of the city. Like the other films in this thematic category, there is very little imagery reminding viewers of London's 'glamour zones'. *Bend it Like Beckham* instead presents viewers with imagery mostly from some of London's western suburbs, near Heathrow Airport. Unlike the other films in this thematic category, *Bend it Like Beckham* is visually 'bright', featuring sunny skies, vibrant clothing and plenty of outdoor scenes, semiotically creating an overall 'positive' visual construction. In *Bend it Like Beckham*, humour acts as an effective tool in revealing the variety of the contradictions in the rhetoric surrounding London's multicultural identity and indeed the multi-faceted nature of London's global city identity. London in this film is both the home of the 'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2012, p. 33) and racial segregation and cultural isolation. It is the co-existence of these two elements, which tells the story of Multi-Cultural London and, in turn, helps us to uncover the multiple facets of the city's symbolic power.

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The film features a variety of events, visual and dialogic, that discursively construct the city's socio-scape as one of separation and



segregation between the indigenous (white) and Punjabi-Sikh (Indian) communities, in at least in the West London district of Hounslow. For instance, Paula refers to Jess as her daughter's 'Indian friend', implying that Jess is Jules's *only* friend of Indian origin, even though Hounslow is adjacent to the Southall district, known as 'Little India', where 'you can even pay in rupees in a pub' (Harcourt, 2005, n.p.). Paula's attempts at demonstrating her knowledge of Indian culture involve mentioning that she 'cooked a lovely curry the other day', likely in an attempt to find a commonality with Jess and to reduce and exoticise Indian culture simply to cuisine. Jess's father remarks on the difficulty he and his wife face in ensuring that their children assert their Panjabi-Sikh identity in a predominantly English world ('you know how hard it is for our children over here. Sometimes they start behaving like English children'). At one point, Pinkie refers to the Harriers' coach, Joe, as English, when in fact he is Irish. When Jess points out Pinkie's mistake, Pinkie says, 'they all look the same'. These discursive clues point to the notion that, in the film, Hounslow, and perhaps London as a whole, are places in which there is very little interaction and therefore understanding between the two communities. The film, given its genre (comedy), also features a variety of scenes with conflicting and contradictory messages, whereby the city is constructed as both an unforgiving and a celebratory space. Some of the most significant scenes, suggesting the deep segregation between the two ethnic groups as well as the celebratory and colourful element of the city's cultural identity, take place during Pinkie's wedding celebrations.

Scenes for analysis from *Bend it Like Beckham* from Pinkie's wedding celebrations (throughout the film)

#### 1. Description of the Engagement Party scene (00:07:53)

Jess is dressed in bright blue, Indian-style clothing, carrying a large tray of Indian sweets through the Bhamras' crowded living room. An elderly female guest tells Jess that 'it will be your turn soon [to get married]'. Jess responds with a stoic, almost annoyed, expression, continuing to offer the sweets to the other guests. At one point a mobile phone rings and some of the elderly female guests, seated in a row, each

check to see if it is their phone that is ringing. It transpires that it is Teetu's (Pinkie's fiancé) phone. The scene ends with an exterior, wide-angle shot of the Bhamra's house decorated with lights, in stark contrast to the darker, more subdued neighbouring houses.

## 2. Description of the wedding festivities scene (01:14:45)

A wide-medium shot of the festivities in the Bhamras' back garden gradually transitions into an aerial shot of the action. The view from above shows the Bhamras' white neighbour, whose garden is separated from theirs by a fence, hanging her washing on a line. The neighbour is alone in her garden and her house is dark. The Bhamras' garden, in contrast, is lively and bright, featuring dancing, colourful clothing and loud music. Inside the house, an elderly woman mentions that 'English people are always complaining [about noise] when we are having functions'.



Figure 14: A scene from Pinkie's wedding in *Bend it Like Beckham*.  
[http://content7.flixster.com/question/50/29/82/5029829\\_std.jpg](http://content7.flixster.com/question/50/29/82/5029829_std.jpg)

The mise-en-scène in both scenes suggests that the two British worlds, those of the white and Indian communities, in spite of their physical

proximity are firmly separated by culture and by physical structures like fences. Furthermore, these scenes feature very few semiotic cues to remind viewers that the events do in fact take place in England and not in India. Not a single guest, for example, has a non-South Asian appearance, and the food and clothing are indicative of a South Asian cultural gathering. Although many of the guests, particularly those belonging to the younger generation, are likely British-born, there is a clear separation between their British and Indian identities, suggested not only by the lack of non-South Asian faces, but by the conversations which pepper the festivities. The elderly lady's comment about 'English' people complaining when the family hosts celebratory events once again serves to remind us that the two communities do not interact on a regular basis and that some members of the Indian community, although likely established in England for many decades, do not consider themselves English or British. Equally, when Jess is told that she will be 'next' to marry, this is a discursive reminder that Jess is expected to conform to Indian, rather than British, cultural norms.

Although this interpretation suggests a socio-scape riddled with problems relating to cultural integration and racial segregation, the centrality of this event and of these characters suggests that the very presence of this community in Britain, in London, contributes to the dynamism and diversity on which the global city narrative is partly reliant—the city is at once multi-cultural and multicultural (see Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33). Although there is a degree of grimness and hopelessness in Jess's attitude towards her duties as a 'good Indian daughter', these scenes also depict the city as one in which the Bhamras and others are free to express their ethnic and cultural identity, albeit within the confines of their home. The majority of the guests in these scenes are shown enjoying the party, through semiotic indicators like smiling, dancing and generally engaging in merriment. This, coupled with the bright colours and the comedic element, suggest that the scene can equally be read as one of hope and celebration, presenting the multicultural city as *the* home of the '...feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33), where the 'Indian-ness' of the party becomes a visual spectacle.

In this sense, this film, like the others in this thematic category, demonstrates that there is a sense of fluidity and flexibility in the way that we can approach the idea of the global city's symbolic power, this time through London's highly visible multi-cultural and multicultural socio-scape. These scenes present London's global-city identity as multi-layered and fraught with contradictions, creating the excitement and dynamism required to register a sense of the city as 'global'.

Scene for analysis from *Bend it Like Beckham* (01:37:38)

Description of the Scene: *Bend it Like Beckham* ends on a positive note at Heathrow Airport, with Jess and Jules leaving for the USA after accepting their full scholarships to study at a prestigious football academy in California. This scene, comprised of a mixture of shot types, begins with a close-up of Jess's British passport, covered by a picture of a religious figure whose image is shown sporadically throughout the film. Jess's mother is dressed in Indian clothing and her father is wearing a turban. The young women's respective parents engage in limited conversation whilst Jess discusses with Joe the arrangements for their romantic relationship during Jess's sojourn in the USA. This portion of the scene includes several close-up shots of the respective characters' faces. Jules interrupts their conversation to alert everyone to David and Victoria Beckham walking through the terminal, at which point the camera cuts to a wide-angle shot of the celebrity couple traversing a glass-encased walkway on the upper level. The scene (and the film) conclude with a medium shot of Jess and Jules smiling and waving goodbye to their parents and coach/boyfriend as they go through the gate to board their flight. The film ends with a freeze-frame of the women smiling as the credits appear on screen.

This scene represents a breakthrough in each of the characters' turbulent relationships—Jess and Jules; Jess and her parents; Jess and Joe. Once again several discursive themes emerge, such as those of clashing cultures and resultant gender expectations, generations, cultural difference, celebrity culture and inter-cultural romantic relationships (Jess and Joe). Jess's and Joe's relationship in particular is representative of

the increasing normality at the time of mixed-ethnicity relationships in London, a unique aspect of life in that city relative to other multi-cultural cities (see Nava, 2006, p. 69 and Section 3.3 of this thesis). These themes relate both directly and indirectly to the core investigation of this thesis, linking the action on screen to the symbolic power of the city. The scene, though relatively brief, is firstly significant in its contribution to the theme of cultural mixing and integration. Jess's hybrid identity is discursively and semiotically suggested through the close-up shot of her travel documents, with a simultaneous visual reminder of her British nationality (her passport) and her religious and cultural affiliation (the picture of the religious figure Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, placed atop the passport). Jess, like the other second generation British characters in films in this thematic category, is a symbolic bridge between the two cultural groups (Indian and white English) as she straddles both identities. The two sets of parents, on the other hand, exchange few words and behave awkwardly with one another. They are visually differentiated by their clothing (Jules's parents are predictably dressed in contemporary Western clothing, whilst Mrs Bhamra is wearing Indian clothing and Mr Bhamra is wearing a turban).

Though in some ways a grim reminder of the separation of the two communities, this is equally suggestive of a diverse socio-scape in which the youth seek to overcome the boundaries of integration which their parents are portrayed as instrumental in fostering. In this sense, the film participates in the discursive construction and communication of London as a symbolically significant global city, if approached from the point of view of the girls' respective cultural roles. Jules, a representative of the 'indigenous' community, provides a support network and an encouraging, colour-blind base through which Jess's parents, members of an established yet segregated immigrant community, are able to 'see the light' and modernise their ways by relaxing their strict, traditional (non-indigenous) values, granting their daughter permission to attend the football academy in the USA. The girls', particularly Jess's, happy demeanour adds to this positive sentiment. Indeed, as Giardina (2008) argues, Jules and Jess '...end up conforming to the mores and values of

Prime Minister Tony Blair's mythical Cool Britannia' (p. 77), by working hard (both on and off the pitch, using their skills as footballers and in diplomacy as they convince Jess's parents to grant Jess permission to travel to California) and achieving their dreams.



Figure 15: The final scene of *Bend it Like Beckham* features Jess (Parminder Nagra) and Jules (Keira Knightley) smiling and waving as they board their flight to the USA.

[https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/RrRgtHgWMT04UfU5Girgo0runK4fzkvCGXPiEmIctA-EXtoen3\\_Pg9ISHnuij9z4ipjiSIZ20AAAuzmUVtvJaQUq3S2c8aPI5Z5Zn8Ucv34TdRogek4gL3TA](https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/RrRgtHgWMT04UfU5Girgo0runK4fzkvCGXPiEmIctA-EXtoen3_Pg9ISHnuij9z4ipjiSIZ20AAAuzmUVtvJaQUq3S2c8aPI5Z5Zn8Ucv34TdRogek4gL3TA)

The scene equally discursively constructs the themes of hopefulness and happiness, in that Jules and Jess seem to revel in their freedom and seem extremely content. The freeze-frame of the women waving and smiling at the very end of the scene, and of the film, is indicative of this. Although Jess is leaving the man with whom, after a great deal of hardship, she has recently begun a romantic relationship, she is focussed on her career and hence her decision to move to California. In addition, the film ends at one of London's most important transport hubs, Heathrow Airport, a discursive and practical link to the network of global cities and indeed to the rest of the world, used by 'regular' people like the film's protagonists and indeed by celebrities (David and Victoria Beckham). This scene suggests London's symbolic power and global-city identity as multi-layered: at once grim, difficult,

exciting, dynamic and joyful, mirroring scholarly literature on the global city (see, for example, Georgiou, 2008, 2013; Sassen, 2001).

### **6.3 Social Class and Consumption**

In Multi-Cultural London films, the city's high level of symbolic power is reliant upon the discursive and semiotic construction of its key role, as a centre for global capitalism, in the global financial system. The very basis for the presence of many of the characters in these films is London's role as a global financial hub and the resulting need for workers to provide the services which help the city's economy to function efficiently. This trend was mirrored in the 'real' city at the time (see Hamnett, 2004, pp. 48-49). A brief sequence in the first half of *Dirty Pretty Things* suggests that these workers, though exploited, equally have the opportunity to improve their quality of life within the framework of the financial system in which they live and work. In this sequence, Ivan, one of the night porters at the Baltic Hotel, prepares a sandwich made with cheap supermarket bread and inexpensive processed meat for an unofficial room service delivery, removing the bread's crusts 'like at the Ritz'. He notes 'it's the little touches that make the difference—that's capitalism'. This sequence could be interpreted as a critique of London's culture of outward displays of the city's wealth and prosperity, which mask the realities of social and cultural injustices which are so prevalent amongst the city's 'invisible' groups, whose work is instrumental in maintaining the city's 'glamour zones'. Alternatively, this sequence can be read in terms of Ivan's shrewdness and creativity, which are rewarded within this system. This brief sequence alone discursively suggests that the city's symbolic power is highly complex and has multiple facets. In this section I present a more detailed analysis of further scenes that reinforce this point.

Scene for analysis from *Dirty Pretty Things* (01:18:00)

Description of the scene: Okwe (who, it emerges, was a fully qualified doctor in Nigeria, but is forced to work as a hotel desk clerk and minicab driver in London) arrives at the Baltic Hotel and informs Juan and Senay

that he is prepared to perform an operation to remove one of Senay's kidneys, but only if the procedure is carried out 'correctly', taking appropriate medical precautions. Juan agrees and Okwe covers the room in white sheets and reveals medical equipment and hospital scrubs, turning the Chichester Suite into a temporary hospital room. Senay is lying on the bed, seemingly unconscious, and Okwe asks for Juan's assistance during the procedure, firstly asking him to drink some beer, as Juan is apparently unable to maintain steady hands without consuming an alcoholic drink. Juan takes a few large gulps of beer and discusses his plans for going into business with Okwe. Juan's speech gradually becomes an incoherent mix of English and Spanish. The camera cuts to Juan's perspective, closing in on Okwe's face with the rest of the room in a white haze. Juan then falls down unconscious and Senay leaps up, assisting Okwe in placing Juan on the bed, which becomes a makeshift operating table. It transpires that they plan to remove one of Juan's kidneys instead of Senay's. The scene cuts to a long shot of Juliet and Ivan collecting ice in a polystyrene box in another part of the hotel. When the action returns to the Chichester Suite, Okwe reassures Senay that he has carried out the procedure 'many times' before. This is followed by interchanging close-up shots of Senay's and Okwe's faces, as Senay playfully asks Okwe to 'let me wipe your brow, Doctor'. They both smile. Juliet enters with the ice and the surgical procedure begins. Okwe gives the women specific instructions while the camera focusses in close-up on Juan's body, upon which Okwe makes precise incisions. The thirty-minute procedure (Juan specifies earlier in the scene that someone will arrive at the hotel in thirty minutes to collect the organ) is condensed into a few minutes, at the end of which Okwe successfully removes Juan's kidney. The three take the organ (contained within the polystyrene box of ice) to the hotel's underground car park, to exchange it for an envelope filled with cash. When the (white, English-sounding) collector asks for Juan, and why he had never seen Okwe, Senay or Juliet before, Okwe replies that they are 'the people you don't see. We clean your rooms, drive your cabs and suck your cocks'. Juliet boldly and humorously raises her finger, indicating that it is she who provides the sexual services.



This is a poignant and graphic scene that is open to a variety of interpretations. As elsewhere in the film, the medical profession is central to this sequence, with Okwe's skills and knowledge once again put to the test. The transformation of the luxury hotel suite into a makeshift hospital room suggests the semiotic construction of the medical field through the extensive use of the colour white and the hospital uniforms (scrubs). Returning to the core themes of this thesis, it is important to note that the power relations so prevalent throughout much of the film are for the first time reversed. Juan's, Senay's and Okwe's boss, who earlier in the film rapes Senay, is drugged and operated upon. The organ collector, who assumes that the kidney in the box of ice belonged to an anonymous hotel housekeeper, is tricked into accepting Juan's kidney instead. The three 'invisible' members of society, Okwe, Senay and Juliet, are now in control. This is further acknowledged through the ways in which they interact with one another, displaying emotions other than fear and sadness. These include moments of tenderness (Okwe and Senay's intimate exchange) and humour (Juliet's brazenness when she indicates her role as the provider of sexual services). Instead of running or hiding from border control agents, employers or other authority figures, as Okwe and Senay frequently do throughout the rest of the film, they take a stand, albeit by performing an illegal surgical operation. Okwe's explanation of their identities ('the people you don't see...') encapsulates the importance of these characters to the city's functioning: they are indispensable yet marginalised. Loshitsky (2010) corroborates this idea, noting that the global city '...not only exploits "illegal immigrants" [like Okwe and Senay], but also forces them to become "legally criminals" by creating an economic situation that pushes them to resort to strategies of survival defined as illegal and therefore criminal' (p. 72). Although illegal, their actions are an effort to put an end to the injustices faced by so many of their fellow migrants.

Migrant workers are a necessary requirement in the global capitalist system. Therefore, the cinematic representation of these communities surviving in London further emphasises the city's key role in global capitalism and reinforces its symbolic power as a global centre of

economic activity. Equally, the elicited nature of the action discursively provides an element of 'edginess', which, as demonstrated in detail in Chapter 7, is equally important for the construction of the city's multi-faceted symbolic power. Although in this scene there is no explicit reference to a 'glamour zone', the work that these characters carry out, as articulated sharply and concisely by Okwe, is suggestive of the glamorous spaces that require the labour provided by these characters. This is echoed in Sassen's (2011) work, in which she notes that in the 'real' city, there is an '...obscuring and even camouflaging of articulations between the glamour zone and the rest of the city' (p. 126). The individuals in the 'rest of the city', in the case of this scene Okwe, Senay and Juliet, are the '...displaced and those workers who matter to the glamour zone but are never recognised as mattering' (p.126). This is mirrored in Okwe's statement regarding the invisibility of this community in the city. These individuals carry out the jobs essential for the city's smooth functioning, or at least those services demanded by members of the 'transnational élite' (Hamnett, 2004, p. 104), but are seldom recognised or rewarded for their contribution.

Furthermore, by tipping the balance of power and allowing Senay, Okwe and Juliet to take control of the situation, the scene importantly reminds us that this momentary shift in the relations of power discursively reflects the notion that the city in the film is a space for hope or at least space in which one can overcome injustices, irrespective of one's social position or legal status. Although London is generally constructed in this film as a city in which working class immigrants face an uphill struggle for survival, this particular scene suggests that this group of individuals can take control of their situation and transform the prevailing power relations, turning the city into a positive and optimistic space. This is an important element in the construction of the symbolic power of the global city. Although the global capitalist *system* is responsible for creating large gaps between rich and poor, the global *city* at the heart of this system can be a space in which this system is both reinforced and challenged, once again emphasising that the symbolic power of the global city is multi-layered.

*Bend it Like Beckham*, too, presents several instances where the theme of consumption is central. Although the narrative focusses upon middle-class families, the film at times breaches the theme of 'class mobility'. For example, Mrs Bhamra is hell-bent on showing her daughter's in-laws that her family 'is not poor'. Although this is presented farcically, it discursively suggests the economic, and therefore social, progress the family has made in London. When Pinkie tries to convince Jess to suppress her attraction to coach Joe and instead to date men with a Hindu-Indian background, Pinkie claims that 'Indian boys now wear good clothes [and] have flashy jobs', making a direct reference to economic means as a determining factor in the pursuit of love and possibly happiness. Pinkie's and Mrs Bhamra's comments discursively suggest that the Indian community, through its ascent of the class ladder, is now as 'legitimate' as the indigenous community.

The theme of upward mobility is equally apparent in the film's 'indigenous' element, in the portrayal of Jules's family. The Paxtons' accents suggest a working-class background, which contrasts strongly with their lifestyle and possessions: they live in a large, detached house with a manicured garden. Certain actions also convey a sense of aspiration or upward social mobility. When explaining the offside rule to his wife, for example, Alan refers to the bottles and containers he uses as props, as the 'sauce', the 'salt' and the 'mustard'. Paula insists that he uses their 'correct' names, the 'teriyaki sauce', the 'sea salt' and the 'Dijon mustard'. Paula in this case reveals her knowledge of global cuisine, demonstrating middle-class attributes contrasting sharply with her working-class accent and indeed her husband's initial reluctance to use the extended names for the condiments. Social class in London, according to certain episodes in the film, seems to depend not on background, but on financial means (see *Glamorous London* chapter for a detailed analysis of class in London). Although this is a film primarily about women's football, the discursive and semiotic construction of London as a city and as a global commercial centre plays a role in the plot development and indeed in the characters' actions and interactions. Jess and Jules seem happiest and most free on the football pitch; however, a key moment of

liberation takes place when the women embark on a journey from suburban Hounslow to London's West End to shop for football accessories.

Scene for analysis from *Bend it Like Beckham* (00:30:25).

Description of the scene: The sequence begins with a wide-angle shot of the exterior of Hounslow Central Underground station, quickly transitioning into a medium shot of Jess and Jules on an Underground train moving rapidly above ground. The view from the window, though blurred, features greenery and low-rise buildings, probably houses. The women are then shown arriving at Piccadilly Circus Station, when the camera cuts to brief medium and wide-angle shots of the streets surrounding the station, mostly featuring shops, including the exterior of Soccer Scene, where Jess purchases a pair of football boots. A song (non-diegetic) about independence plays throughout. After shopping, the girls walk to a nearby pub, where they drink (Jules drinks an alcoholic beverage whilst Jess opts for a soft drink). The scene ends with a return to the staircase which leads the women into the Underground system, where the Piccadilly line transports them back to Hounslow.

As the sequence begins with a wide-angle shot of Hounslow Central station, followed by shots of Jess and Jules on the train moving at relatively high speeds above ground, viewers are reminded that Hounslow is geographically distant from the West End. The camera could have simply cut to a shot of the girls' shopping experience in Central London, excluding the emphasis on the transport aspect of their journey. This semiotic construction of the West End as distant discursively highlights the differences between it and Hounslow, whereby the former turns into a spectacularised space in which the women experience freedom and happiness. This is communicated in particular through Jess, who in this scene, like in those which take place on the football pitch and some of the scenes in Hamburg, smiles and laughs. Throughout the rest of the film, Jess's facial expressions are often sombre and muted, particularly when she struggles to be understood by her parents. In the West End the women engage in *consumer* experiences (shopping and drinking at a pub), which are rarely present in this form in the rest of the film. The visual

construction of the scene seems to link consumption with happiness and freedom, through an intertextual reference to a Glamorous London space, a 'glamour zone', in which spending money on goods and services is presented as a *natural* activity. Certain Glamorous London characteristics are reinforced, rather than re-framed, in this scene, strengthening the argument that the overt and visible space semiotically and discursively constructed in Glamorous London films is precisely one of glamour and, correlatively, of consumption. That the women's visit to the West End is brief and fleeting serves to underline their suburban existence and indeed the internal city boundaries, as enabled and determined by consumption. Equally, the sidelining of ethnic diversity to the suburbs suggests a certain urban order, in which it is implicitly suggested that the more central zones of the city are free from any potential strife related to this diversity. On a separate, but related, note, the scene highlights the city's extensive public transport infrastructure, thereby participating in the discursive construction of London's image as a developed and accessible global city.

#### **6.4 Trains, Planes and Automobiles**

In Multi-Cultural London films, the city is depicted as a transient space. The 'real' city is highly accessible, as it is notably home to six international airports and hundreds of mainline railway stations, one of which St Pancras in Central London, provides international services to France and Belgium. Sassen (2000, p. 152) reminds us that airports, with their first- and business-class lounges, extensive array of duty-free shops and luxury services, are 'glamour zones'. St Pancras International railway station, home to Eurostar train services to Paris and Brussels, is also a 'glamour zone', as it too features an array of shops and restaurants, a luxury hotel and Europe's longest champagne bar.<sup>25</sup> Whilst the amenities and services available at these transport hubs are mostly targeted at tourists and the high-spending managerial class (see Sassen, 1998, p. xxxiii; Huang, 2006, pp. 479-480), it is important to mention that

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<sup>25</sup> Information obtained from: <http://www.searcyschampagnebars.co.uk/st-pancras-champagne-bar-home.php>

London's airports and St Pancras International station are also used by the city's many migrant workers and short-term residents as points of entry and departure. In his discussion of London as a global city, Hall (2007) notes that London's reputation is, in part at least, defined by its connectivity to networks of people and information that flow out to other cities. 'It is no accident that Heathrow is the busiest international airport in the world' (p. 4). The films in the Multi-Cultural London thematic category make ample reference to the city's transport hubs, particularly its airports, thereby strengthening the notion that London is a key player in the global arena. *Bend it Like Beckham*, for example, is set in Hounslow, just east of Heathrow Airport. The Bhamras' close links with the airport, in terms of both physical proximity and employment, remind viewers of the airport's existence, emphasising London's identity as a global, multicultural and transnational city. The family's connection to the airport also serves as a discursive reminder of the Bhamras' identity as part of a previous wave of immigrants to London, whose financial means now 'legitimise' their existence in the city.

Scene for analysis from *Dirty Pretty Things* (01:24:30).

Description of the scene: *Dirty Pretty Things* concludes at Stansted Airport. As Okwe and Senay, chauffeured by Guo Yi, approach the airport's set-down area, the weather is decidedly wet and grey. The camera then transitions to shots of the inside of the airport terminal, following Okwe and Senay from behind. The two characters are in sharp focus, whilst the other passengers are faceless and blurry. As they walk towards the security area, Okwe tells Senay to expect 'lights in the trees and policemen on white horses' when she arrives in Manhattan. Senay says that she knows 'it won't be like that'. She walks away from Okwe and fades into the distance, becoming a faceless, anonymous member of the crowd. Okwe then approaches Senay before she enters the security screening area. She asks him to hold her. 'Always we must hide', she exclaims. The shot once again is focussed upon Okwe and Senay, as they both begin to cry. Senay then proceeds through the security check point, using for the first time her new European Union passport. She and Okwe mouth the words 'I love you' to one another, as Senay disappears into

the security screening area. The film ends with a wide-angle shot of a large window, showing an idyllic pink sky outside the terminal, followed by the film's final shot, a close-up of Okwe on a public telephone, telling Valerie, 'at last, I am coming home'.



Figure 16: A final embrace for Senay (Audrey Tautou) and Okwe (Chiwetel Ejiofor) at Stansted Airport in *Dirty Pretty Things*. <http://ichef.bbci.co.uk/images/ic/640x360/p037nr6l.jpg>

That this scene takes place at an airport makes it significant on a number of levels. Firstly, airports are spaces of transience, of movement, of goodbyes and of greetings. The development of Senay's and Okwe's relationship reaches its apex in this scene. Though they love each other, they can never be together and their eventual physical separation and transient way of living are discursively emphasised by setting this scene at the airport. The theme of immigration itself, given Senay's sudden transformation from an illegal migrant into an EU national, is equally prominent. Furthermore, it is significant that *Dirty Pretty Things* foregoes completely the foregrounded representation of members of the middle class. The airport, as discussed above, is a 'glamour zone'; however, in this sequence the airport is represented as a gateway for the oppressed, rather than for those who can afford and enjoy its luxury amenities. This is reinforced through the visual focus on Senay and Okwe, rather than on the other passengers. The airport is represented as a way *out* of London

for those who are exploited in and by the city. To some, like Senay, the airport represents freedom—her wish throughout the film, to escape London and move to New York, is realised at London's Stansted Airport.

This connection to New York firmly places London within the network of global cities (see Taylor et al., 2002, p. 232). Although Senay's insistence on escaping to the American city features throughout much of the film, it is through her verbal exchange with Okwe that she acknowledges New York's potential shortcomings, understanding that it is perhaps not the home of 'lights in the trees and policemen on white horses'. This spectacularised version of the city, Senay reminds Okwe (and viewers), does not necessarily correspond to reality for many of its inhabitants. In contrast, Okwe's conversation with Valerie, in which he pledges to return home to Nigeria, signals the potential for a hopeful situation, although perhaps he will return to the civil strife which drove him to London in the first place. The dichotomous nature of the airport, as a space of both despair and hope, imitates the semiotic and discursive construction of London's symbolic power in these films, whereby the city is positioned as both painful and hopeful. Furthermore, the representation of the airport—an international transport hub—reinforces London's role in the network of global cities and, consequently, its own symbolic power.

The theme of transport also features heavily in *Breaking and Entering*, through the narrative's focus upon the re-development of the King's Cross area, now a major centre for international transport. This parallels the work which took place in the 'real' city, where throughout the early 2000s the once shabby neighbourhood was the focus of an extensive makeover, which included the restoration and expansion of St Pancras station. As mentioned above, St Pancras International is now one of London's key transport hubs, as it is the terminus for Eurostar train services from continental Europe, including Paris (another top-tier global city). This emphasis on London's global importance is discursively suggested through its extensive international transport network—an important element in the city's symbolic power. Instead of excluding any particular class group in the representation of the area, the film highlights the disparity between those managing the area's revamp and the



underprivileged individuals who reside in the neighbourhood. The film problematises the outward, superficial indicators of 'glamour' by showing the social and geographical realities of life in the city for some of its inhabitants. Although St Pancras station is now home to an international rail hub, luxury shops and a five-star hotel, the neighbourhoods adjacent to the station were once riddled with problems relating to crime and prostitution (see Griffiths, 2006). This is reflected both through the narrative and through the use of a dark and muted filming technique. For example, Amira's flat is situated on a large and deprived council estate, semiotically and discursively drawing attention to the contrasts between the neighbourhood's potential future wealth and 'glamour' and the struggles that many of its local residents face. To further emphasise the sombre mood, London is portrayed in this film as grey, misty and unwelcoming.

Scene for analysis from *Breaking and Entering* (00:22:55).

Description of the scene: This sequence begins at Green Effect's offices, situated in a warehouse near King's Cross. Detective Bruno Fella, in charge of the burglary investigation, is shown watching one of the company's promotional videos on an Apple computer. The camera cuts briefly to the video, which features Will walking through a virtual mock-up of the proposed architectural and landscape changes due to take place in the neighbourhood. The camera returns to a medium shot of the action, then focusses on Bruno, who notes of the area that 'you've got the British Library over there with the Eurostar and bang in the middle you've got crack village with a load of Somalians walking about with machetes. It's an area in flux'. Returning to the video, Will notes that the area is 'associated with poverty, crime, vice and urban decay'. Sandy then complains about the burglars' brazenness, to which Bruno replies that, because of their economic means, it is likely that if Sandy or Will were to break the law they could afford a high-profile lawyer to fight their case, thus probably never facing any consequences. Sandy points out that neither he nor Will has in fact broken the law, to which Bruno replies 'everyone's broken the law'. Immediately following the action at Green Effect, the action is set in Miro's bedroom, where he watches the same

promotional video on Will's laptop, stolen from Green Effect's offices earlier in the film. Miro gazes into the screen, watching and listening to Will who promises to transform the area through architectural redevelopment and gentrification from one 'associated with poverty, crime, vice and urban decay' to an urban oasis. 'How we behave,' Will declares, 'is directly affected by the space around us'. The camera immediately cuts to a wide-angle shot of the building work being carried out in King's Cross.

This sequence is poignant as it encompasses a variety of themes and plot devices essential to the film's overarching narrative and its subtext. The scene raises discursive issues relating to the legal system, immigration, poverty, crime, race relations, class and technology. Bruno's statement alone, focussing on a particular national group and articulated in his working-class accent and incorrect English ('Somalians' instead of 'Somalis'), might warrant an entire chapter's worth of discourse analysis. However, I focus on how this sequence relates to the construction and communication of London's symbolic power. Firstly, looking at Green Effect's offices, situated in a loft-like structure, we are reminded of a contemporary urban gentrified space. Indeed as Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007) note, the conversion of industrial spaces into lofts is indicative of an 'economic and occupational class transformation...towards the growth of professional and managerial workers working in financial, business and creative services' (p. 106). In other words, the 'transformation' that Will speaks of in the promotional video involves ridding the area of its industrial, crime-ridden past (or even present, at the time) and creating a space in which shopping, travel and luxurious living become the norm. Indeed, the emphasis on state-of-the-art and 'fashionable' technology, like the Apple computers and architectural models which dot the loft's interior, is indicative of this discursive and semiotic connection to the city's glamorous identity.

The focus on moving away from industrial production and the expansion of the service industries (luxury shopping, high-end restaurants, bars and hotels) as a means of 'improving' the area, is suggestive of the then government's neoliberal policies and emphasis on gentrification as a way of re-vitalising and re-invigorating poorer areas in

and near Central London. The small-scale transformation of the derelict warehouse space into the upmarket setting for Green Effect's operation is a micro-level manifestation of this trend. Bird and Luka (2010) note in their discussion of the film that the architects and the architectural firm leading the transformation of the built environment are '...professionals charged with some kind of social mission...' (p. 85). The King's Cross redevelopment relates not only to the visual manifestation of change (the built environment), but precisely to the social consequences of transforming the landscape. Indeed the burglaries and the 'criminals' who perpetuate these crimes, discursive reminders of the area's social problems, do not seem to affect the main building project, as indicated through the wide-angle shot of the building site.

Miro's bedroom resembles a mini Green Effect, featuring Will's laptop and a selection of figurines he collects earlier in the film from one of the company's architectural models (Will later reveals that these figurines are from Japan and very difficult to source in the UK, which leads him to suspect Miro's involvement in the burglaries). Paralleling Will's words ('how we feel about ourselves, how we behave, is directly influenced by our surroundings'), Miro's bedroom, simply through his appropriation of Green Effect's property, the laptop and the figurines, becomes a gentrified space within a derelict and deprived council estate. This is reflected in the work of Harvey (1989), who observes that the 'Use [of the city in this case] values relate to matters of accessibility, taste, tone, aesthetic appreciation, and the symbolic and cultural capital that goes with possession of a certain kind of "valued" built environment' (p. 266). Returning to Bruno, who says that the King's Cross area is 'in flux', this sequence reminds viewers that the volatile and diverse area is set to become yet another 'glamour zone', focussed on the construction of a mixture of office buildings, leisure spaces, transport hubs and high-end residential blocks.<sup>26</sup> This emphasis on the centrality of the built environment to shaping social and personal attitudes parallels the strategy in the 'real' city, where the redevelopment of the area, as

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<sup>26</sup> For a detailed discussion of the changes that took place in the 'real' city with regard to the 'glamorisation' of King's Cross, see Edwards (2010).

Edwards (2010 claims, '...was devoted to changing the *image* of the area through a mixture of psychological and material measures...[giving the area] a new characterisation as vibrant, creative, safe(r) and desirable' (p. 196; italics added). The gentrification of the area reinforces and enhances the city's symbolic power through transforming the formerly deprived neighbourhood into another desirable 'glamour zone'.

## 6.5 Conclusion

The cinematic representations in the films in this thematic category discursively and semiotically construct London's symbolic power as multi-faceted and, at times, seemingly contradictory. On one hand, the dark portrayal of the city in Multi-Cultural London films can be interpreted as a strong and overt critique of the global *system* through which London became a contemporary global city in the first place. In this system, there is naturally a strong emphasis on financial power. Though the films are critical of this system, they simultaneously acknowledge London's importance within it. The very depiction of the array of Multi-Cultural London characters in the city attests to London's key role in the global, neoliberal capitalist system, in which migrant workers are a necessary requirement. Indeed as Short & Kim (1999, pp. 3-4) note, although the cultural and political realms of globalisation are certainly significant, globalisation's most profound effects relate to the financial realm. Thus, Multi-Cultural London films, with their outward emphasis on cultural globalisation (immigration and the city's multi-ethnic socio-scape), are equally concerned with the effects of financial globalisation. Unlike the experience of immigrants from previous waves (like the Indian community portrayed in *Bend it Like Beckham*), *Breaking and Entering* and *Dirty Pretty Things* discursively suggest that London has become a city of anonymity and transience (in *Breaking and Entering* Amira is keen to return to Bosnia, whilst in *Dirty Pretty Things* Okwe hopes to return to Nigeria and Senay focusses her energy on migrating to New York), in which immigrants, anonymous and often unnoticed, maintain the city's

economic engine rather than simply contributing culturally to the city's diversity.

Following this line of argument, the fostering of a multi-cultural socio-scape is an essential element of the cultivation of London's financial success and, correlatively, of portraying this success cinematically. Rather than simply a commentary on the individual case of the social inequalities present in London, although this of course is an equally major component of the films' critique, these films more importantly address larger, *global* processes and *resultant* social problems within the framework of global neoliberal capitalism, in which London is a key player. This chapter has demonstrated how these films communicate London's central position within this system—feeding the representation of the city's symbolic power—through its identity as an economic powerhouse. London's 'global-ness', its symbolic power, is a multi-layered, complex picture, represented in these films through a celebration of diversity, and through depictions of the service economy, the transnationality of the city and of neoliberal multiculturalism.

On the other hand, the films in this thematic category discursively suggest that the city is a space for celebration and hope, adding further nuances to the city's symbolic power as constructed in cinematic representations. In Multi-Cultural London films the city is presented as both multi-cultural (in terms of demographics) and multicultural (a term carrying ideological significance, as discussed in Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33). For example, *Bend it Like Beckham* presents London as bright, sunny and colourful and provides ample visual representations of Indian cultural and family events where the overwhelming majority of those participating seem happy. The film alternates between Jess's problematic relationship with her parents and her freedom on the football pitch and in Central London with Jess. That the film concludes on a positive note enhances the generally hopeful picture of a city that once experienced race riots and constructs London's identity as one of acceptance and tolerance.

Although the representation of the city in *Dirty Pretty Things* and *Breaking and Entering*, both visually and through the narrative, is

generally bleak and dark, it is equally suggested that the city is a dynamic and exciting space which provides its inhabitants with opportunities to break out of their difficult situations. The analysis in this chapter demonstrates that these films, by giving agency to the poor and to deprived migrant characters, successfully position London as a liberating space in which individuals are able to stand up to the injustices they face. Although London is at the centre of an unjust global system (neoliberal capitalism), it is a place in which these individuals find one another and indeed the opportunity to overcome these injustices. Foregrounding and giving a voice in these films to characters from minority and socially disadvantaged groups gives these individuals agency and suggests that they are important to London's global-city identity. The city's symbolic power is further enhanced by the representation of the intensity and dynamism created by the flows of migrant communities through the city. In this sense, the films in this thematic category represent the global-city narrative precisely as a multi-layered phenomenon and reinforce the notion that this dynamism and intensity are, from a representational standpoint at least, indicative of London's symbolic power as a global city. Furthermore, this darker side of the city is part of its image as a dynamic and 'edgy' metropolitan centre. This too is part of the multi-faceted nature of the city's symbolic power.

## CHAPTER 7: LONDON AND CINEMA: A DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP

### 7.1 Introduction

Whilst the Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London chapters establish that globally distributed films featuring London in the 1997-2007 period broadly reflect the then current social and political situation in the UK, this chapter approaches London's identity during and beyond that period and re-evaluates the idea of the city's symbolic power as multi-faceted and full of contradictions. Glamorous London films, distributed and consumed in a wide variety of global markets, present the glossy, middle-class version of the city which is business- and tourist-friendly. Multi-Cultural London films, on the other hand, provide glimpses into London's underworld, in which asylum seekers and illegal immigrants fight for survival in the city. These two versions of the city, the glamorous and the gritty, work in tandem with each other, providing a believable 'story' of a city that includes many diverse communities. Although films in the Multi-Cultural London thematic category do not generate high levels of profit, they are essential to creating a believable narrative of the city that reflects its dynamism and excitement and indeed the multiple facets of its symbolic power. The grit is as important as the gloss in strengthening this power in the global arena and these two facets allow for a representation of the many layers of the global city.

There is increasing evidence to suggest that London's cinematic identity is developing strategically, given the city's already well-known cinematic and non-cinematic identities, including its *pre-existing* symbolic power. For example, the New Labour government established the Film London agency, charged with selling London to film studios as a desirable destination. This, coupled with the financial benefits for those who make films in London, as discussed in Section 3.4, has ensured that many Hollywood blockbusters have been set and made in and around London in the last decade. Film London estimates that one in ten tourists visits the UK as a result of cinematic representations (See *Film London – Film*

*Tourism* (n.d.) and Section 7.2.1). As a result, Film London produces 'movie maps', guiding tourists through the city from the perspective of their favourite films. Film tours provide visitors with alternative perspectives on London and tourists sometimes make 'media pilgrimages' to the city (see Reijnders, 2010, p. 371), aiming to re-enact their favourite film scenes. London's cinematic image often transcends the silver screen.

Whilst a great deal of scholarly work has addressed city promotion from an economic perspective (see Sassen, 1991) and a commercial perspective, drawing on theories of branding and management (see, for example, Anholt, 2003, 2010; Olins, 2003), there has been limited work linking city promotion (in particular for cities whose brand images are already well-known) with the 'cinematic city', within the framework of the global city and symbolic power. Meanwhile, there is a developing body of literature focussing on place-branding from the perspective of tourism (see for example Beeton, 2004; Morgan et al., 2004; Connell, 2012). In the contemporary media space, the connections between the city's cinematic image and its brand identity are becoming ever more apparent on a variety of platforms. Through synergies between corporations and cinema and indeed the city itself, we see London's symbolic power as a global city being both developed and exploited. Narrative advertising, cross-promotions, product tie-ins and city tours, all centred on the city and cinema, have become very prevalent, almost ordinary.

Since the early-2000s, this proliferation of London's cinematic brand identity has set a precedent for the way the current government approaches film and indeed the ways in which London is packaged and sold on the global stage. In this chapter, I look in detail at the evolving dynamics of film promotion through the city and the related practice of city promotion through film. This provides the contextual background against which the films in the *Glamorous London* and *Multi-Cultural London* films were produced, distributed and consumed. Furthermore, the analysis in this chapter demonstrates how *Glamorous London* and *Multi-Cultural London* films have been re-mediated in the contemporary media



space, both within the period in which this film analysis is located and in the more recent past.

The chapter is structured as follows: section 7.2 looks at the ways in which the advancing of London's symbolic power has influenced agencies devoted to promoting tourism in the capital; section 7.3 looks at the impact of cinema on London's 'brand' identity; and section 7.4 discusses the contradictory nature of London's symbolic power as developed in the film analysis in chapters 5 and 6 and looks at how this contradictory symbolic power is mirrored in the city itself. It is indeed the multiple facets of London's symbolic power, the glamorous and the depressing, which serve to paint a holistic picture of the city and its identity. Thus, the negativity and hardship depicted by Multi-Cultural London films is also an important factor in discussion of London's evolving global image and of the city's symbolic power. This chapter also makes a case for addressing the implications of this marketisation of London's symbolic power for those who inhabit the city.

## **7.2 Tourism: Studios, Agencies and Movie Maps**

Film London is an agency devoted to attracting to London not only foreign studios, but also foreign filmmakers themselves in order to showcase the city to the world. The capital's agency, created during the New Labour era (a strong indication of that government's awareness of the potential of film to sell London as a desirable destination), 'aims to ensure London has a thriving film sector that enriches the capital's business and its people'.<sup>27</sup> The emphasis on 'business and people' suggests an awareness of the potential of films featuring London to influence realms beyond the cinema hall, including by attracting more visitors to Britain's capital city. The emergence of a mutual or reciprocal relationship between cinema and the city is evidenced by American director Woody Allen's 2005 film, *Match Point*, which is discussed extensively in the Glamorous London chapter. The film stars an American (Scarlett Johansson) and was financed by BBC Films. 'The director has

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<sup>27</sup> See [http://filmlondon.org.uk/about\\_us](http://filmlondon.org.uk/about_us)

been keen to use London landmarks in his films. Tate Modern, the Saatchi Gallery and the Royal Opera House feature in *Match Point...*' (Teodorczuk, 2005, p. 1). One could be forgiven for mistaking this film for an advertisement for the city, as its landmarks feature so heavily throughout the narrative. Although the efficacy of this and other films in attracting tourists to London is difficult to measure, Film London estimates that a reasonable proportion of visitors to the capital arrive as a result of seeing London on screen.

London is one of the most cinematic cities in the world and images of London on screen contribute significantly to the branding of the capital, increasing the attraction of the city for business and leisure tourism alike. Over 15 million overseas tourists come to London each year - together with ten million domestic visitors and 150 million day trippers. Films depicting the UK are responsible for attracting about 1 in 10 overseas tourists, spending around £1.8 billion a year. Major brands such as *Bond* and *Harry Potter* have become global advertisements for London...with such films sparking a boom in tourism and generating an amount of screen time that no tourist board could afford to purchase in terms of advertising its brand and destination. (*Film London – Film Tourism*, n.d.)

This is corroborated by Reijnders (2010), who argues that 'visiting the settings of popular films and TV series has become a growing niche in the tourist market' (p. 369).

Cashing in on a rise in 'film tourism' (see Beeton, 2004), Film London has, as mentioned, created a series of movie maps, offering tourists and residents the opportunity to visit the locations featured in successful mainstream films set in the city. Some of the films included are *Match Point*, *Notting Hill* and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (the 2004 sequel to *Bridget Jones's Diary*), plus a map featuring some of the locations used in a variety of Bollywood films set in London.<sup>28</sup> Some companies even offer film tours, where visitors can experience the city through some of the sites featured in their favourite films. One such

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<sup>28</sup> Information obtained from [http://filmlondon.org.uk/film\\_culture/film\\_tourism/movie\\_maps](http://filmlondon.org.uk/film_culture/film_tourism/movie_maps)

company, BritMovieTours, organises a Bridget Jones tour of London, where fans/tourists are able to 'pose for a picture by the front door of Bridget Jones's apartment' and 'buy something in the newsagent where Bridget bumps into Darcy during the Aghani law case' ('Bridget Jones Tour of Locations'). For some tourists, film tours might simply act as a '...less traditional way to see the town...[which] appeals to independent travellers who are not interested in a "normal tour" with bored tour guides narrating the same facts and figures day in, day out' (Beeton, 2004 p. 110). For others, however, the connection to the film itself is as important as, if not more important than, finding an alternative to a standard city tour.



Figure 17: Brit Movie Tours website.

<http://britmovietours.com/bookings/romantic-love-film-locations-tour-london/>

The current state of the cinematic and promotional industries features a high level of reflexivity in its awareness of London's cinematic identity. A further example underscoring the prevalence of synergies between film studios, advertisers, corporations, and indeed the city itself, is the release and promotion of the 2009 film *Sherlock Holmes*. The film inspired a tourism campaign by Visit London, which encourages visitors to discover at first hand some of the locations used in the film. Indeed, the explicit and symbiotic link between the film and the promotional

industries in the case of *Sherlock Holmes* indicates that there is an acute awareness of London's effectiveness as a brand, that the city itself may be sold through the medium of cinema, but, equally, the film that features the city is reliant on the location to generate hype and other synergetic 'spoils'.

The theoretical underpinning of this concept is touched upon in Section 2.2.4 by way of Jansson's work (2002) and his theory of mediatised spatial phantasmagoria. Jansson argues that the mediatisation of tourism contributes to "imaginative hedonism", even "hyper-tourism", whereby individuals seek out experiences which mimic that which they have viewed through a variety of media' (p. 430). Gathering evidence for this phenomenon is challenging, but a recent study points to the importance of this type of film-related city tourism. Reijnders (2010) discusses the concept of the 'media pilgrimage', where tourists visit sites and districts that feature in their favourite films. He refers specifically to Westminster Bridge, a tourist 'hot spot' in Central London connecting the North and South Banks of the River Thames. The bridge offers north-facing views towards the Palace of Westminster and south-facing views towards the South Bank, including the London Eye. To the east is the City of London with its ever-expanding network of skyscrapers, and St Paul's Cathedral, with the Canary Wharf district, London's 'mini Manhattan', just visible in the distance. Instead of (or in addition to) simply admiring these iconic views, some tourists '...lean over the bridge railing and train their eyes downwards...This is because in a scene from...*Die Another Day* (2002), James Bond (played by Pierce Brosnan) crosses Westminster Bridge, goes down a stairway and opens a door hidden in a pillar of the bridge' (p. 371). This 'physical point of reference to an imagined world' (p. 371.) represents the point at which the city and its cinematic presence are indistinguishable. For some fans, the simple act of visiting locations like the 'secret' door on Westminster Bridge does not suffice—they also mimic poses and gestures performed by the film's title character. Through this mimicry, these fans enter a phase in which they 'are the furthest from their everyday lives and momentarily seem to merge into an "anti-structure", experiencing oceanic feelings of freedom' ( Reijnders, 2010, p.

373). This form of escapism takes place not in the cinema hall, but in the city itself.

### **7.3 Brand London: A Cinematic Perspective**

In this section I link the ways in which the global city of London has become a well-known and desirable city brand to the city's strong cinematic presence, particularly since 1997. Through the overlapping disciplines of film studies and the sociology of the city, and in particular through the relationship between cinematic representations and the city's symbolic power, this section demonstrates that the city itself has become a highly complex symbol of status and desire. Although the two are separate entities, the cinematic city and the branded city are now explicitly and intentionally merged: this hybridised entity is a relatively new phenomenon. Using a sociologically informed thematic analysis that takes into account discourse, ideology and intertextuality (as discussed in Chapter 4), I look at documents including journalistic output, tourism websites, advertising material and peripheral texts relating directly to films (i.e. film-funding, film titles, the studios involved), in order to understand how London's cinematic identity is moving beyond cinema and into other realms. Take for instance the 1999 Richard Curtis film, *Notting Hill*, whose title is the name of a district in West London. This indicates an awareness of the lucrative potential of 'brand London' as a selling point for the film. This speaks to the emergence of a reciprocal mode of representation: the city brands and promotes the film whilst, simultaneously, the film brands and promotes the city. This points to the contemporary condition where there is an unprecedented merging of branded and cinematic cities. These are now often indistinguishable as a result of the proliferation of global media and of corporate synergies in branding and marketing strategies in which cinema plays a pivotal role. This explicit merger emphasises the centrality of the cinematic mode of representation in the portrayal of the city space. This is all the more evident when we consider cities that do not have strong global brand identities. For example, Hemelryk Donald and Gammack (2007) use cities like London and New York, which have both strong brand identities and

strong cinematic identities, as *benchmarks* from which to assess the potential of other cities to increase their brand strength through cinema. This reinforces the acceptance or the 'misrecognisable' (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170) nature of the symbolic power of global, cinematic cities like London. The city's cinematic presence is even re-contextualised in other quasi-cinematic genres, giving 'brand London' a strongly cinematic identity. Examples of how this re-contextualisation takes place are expanded upon in the next section.

To further illustrate this point, I provide an example of a city with a weak cinematic identity, Toronto in Canada, a city often used in Hollywood films to stand in for the generic North American metropolis. Citing the example of Toronto's Distillery District, a formerly industrial area now home to a thriving arts and entertainment scene, Matthews (2010) discusses the notion of urban re-development through Hollywood cinema. He cites the area's use in numerous film and television productions as partly responsible for its lucrative re-development in the early 2000s. According to Toronto.com, a city information portal, 'during the nineties the empty distillery buildings became the number one film location in Canada and continue to be used for that purpose. Past productions include *Chicago*, *X-Men*, *Cinderella Man*, *Against The Ropes* and *The Hurricane*' (Toronto.com, n.d.). Though clearly of economic benefit to the city and essential to Toronto's reputation as a film production centre (the city is often referred to as 'Hollywood North'), setting these films in Toronto does very little to enhance the symbolic power and influence of the city, as in the films mentioned the city actually stands in for a variety of US locations. Toronto here is used simply as a generic 'non-place', a product of 'runaway production' (see Scott & Pope, 2007). Indeed, as Lukinbeal (2004, p. 316), quoted in Matthews (2010), notes, Canadian cities 'specialise in offering representational spaces that are "placeless"' (Matthews, 2010, p. 178). This is in complete contrast to a city like London, whose symbolic power reaches beyond the confines of cinema and whose image is instantly recognisable and distinctive.

Agencies charged with branding cities with weak brand identities have had to come to terms with media proliferation, creating, for example,

campaigns and product tie-ins that aim to circumvent the constraints brought about by 'media clutter' (Olson, 2004, p. 68). Cities are now endowed with *personalities*, allowing individuals to interact with them at the level of imagination, creating long-lasting bonds between individuals and places. The strong *emotional* characteristics often granted to cities (for example, love, hope and dreams) and with which individuals connect, become ordinary and are not questioned. The notion that emotions and feelings become, in Shils's (1981) terms, 'normative' is key. We are programmed to accept '...tradition as normative' (p. 24). In the context of this thesis, it is the normativity or taken-for-granted ordinariness of London's symbolic power, a 'misrecognisable' force (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170), which frames discussion of the use of the city itself as a branding tool to promote products and services not directly related to the city.

According to Roodhouse (2009), a successfully branded city space features a '...mix of existing inhabitants and their businesses, young creative, history, geography, architecture, design and...ethnic mix' (p. 88). Though many cities, especially global cities, possess these qualities, London's uniqueness transcends statistics. Further to this, Kapferer (2011) claims that '...a brand image is made of...a *tangible* and an *intangible* part, both being of course tied together intimately into a value proposition' (p. 185; emphasis added). The city's qualities as a desirable location are a result of its *pre-existing* symbolic power. Indeed as Georgiou (2013) argues, London's '...authorities...have an easier task than other cities in building their city's reputation and advancing its symbolic power' (pp. 24-25). London is not alone in possessing a great deal of pre-existing symbolic power. Other global cities, like Paris, for example, are equally 'lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation' (Anholt, 2010, p. 4). The *tangible* parts of the global cities' brand images are very similar – they are all powerful economic, legal and diplomatic centres with a large influence on global culture. The *intangible* part, however, sets these cities apart from one another. It is this part which gives them their unique identities.

In 2008, when London beat Paris in the bid to host the 2012 summer Olympic Games, the then mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoë,

made a comment which can be interpreted in the context of the intangible element of city branding. He claimed that, although Paris's proposal was stronger, London's 'sexier' image led to the success of that city's bid (Kapferer, 2011, p. 184). This comment, though simply Delanoë's opinion, is indicative of a unique brand proposition that transcends the city's position as the British capital. London's brand image 'has its own momentum', which operates independently of the country's performance (Kapferer, 2011, p. 186). To further the discussion on this matter, I return to the issues raised in Section 2.2.1. Through the work of Holt (2004), we are introduced to the idea that branding is a '...psychological phenomenon which stems from the perceptions of individual consumers...what makes a brand powerful is the collective nature of these perceptions; the stories have become conventional and so are continually reinforced because they are treated as truths in everyday interactions' (p. 3). Holt's point is crucial: the brands are powerful when their 'stories' (narratives) are treated as *ordinary*. As brands (branded cities in this case) become familiar, they trigger an emotional connection with those interacting with the brand (consumers, tourists, film viewers). 'This relationship is two-dimensional: it is not only economic in nature, but also, over time, creates emotional ties which are sometimes very intense' (Chevalier and Mazzalovo, 2004, p. 15). This identity is evident in the way the city is promoted and in the way its symbolic power is advanced through synergetic branding activities centred on cinema.

### 7.3.1 Beyond the silver screen: Synergies

The current promotional market is rife with opportunities for cities and films to enjoy a synergetic or symbiotic relationship. The convergence of various media platforms, coupled with the evolving dynamics of film promotion, mean that the synergies between cinema, the promotional industries, large corporations and the city in the contemporary media space are many. This indicates that cinema's influence on the city goes far beyond the silver screen: from narrative advertising to cross-promotions to London-themed competitions and 'movie maps', the promotional industries use cinema's globally distributed



and widely viewed output as a springboard for promotional activities involving corporations and brands not directly related to cinema or indeed to the city. The use of cinematic stars associated with London (such as Jude Law for Dior Homme Intense and Kate Winslet for American Express) in filmic or narrative advertising is one of many strategies for making use of London's symbolic power and thereby its potentially lucrative cinematic/brand identity.

Though normally a practice associated with tangible commercial products, setting a film in a particular city can be seen as a form of product placement, particularly, but not exclusively, when a city or region pays to be featured in a filmic production. Bressoud and Lehu (2007), drawing on the work of Belch and Russell (2005), conclude that the primary aim of product placement is to '...[generate] complementary income for the author, the medium of production on the one hand, while offering an opportunity of branded entertainment to the advertiser' (p. 2). This is not restricted to London: other cities that possess a strong brand identity also feature in product-placement-type agreements. Global blockbusters like *Angels and Demons* (2009) rely on the cities in which the action is set to generate income not just from box office receipts, but from far beyond the cinema house by way of product tie-ins, competitions and promotions, all of which may be encompassed in the term 'product placement': this is a strategy of synergy. 'Synergy is the practice among media conglomerates of using one medium to promote products in another, using each to sell the other' (Olson, 2004, p. 66). For instance, the Australian DVD release of the above-mentioned movie provided an opportunity for a film-themed competition whose grand prize was a trip to the city of Rome, where the film is set.<sup>29</sup> This reliance on the city itself as an alluring element in the film's promotion is indicative of Rome's pre-existing symbolic power.

Returning to London's cinematic brand identity, and indeed the city's symbolic power, the promotional activities surrounding the release of *Bridget Jones's Diary* in the US are strong examples that demonstrate

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<sup>29</sup> See <http://www.angelsanddemons.net.au/tnc.pdf>

this convergence and the importance of London to the film—and specifically to the film’s release. These activities equally demonstrate the evolving dynamics of city promotion. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* was released in 2001 ‘...with about \$10 million in estimated promotional partner build-up from The Body Shop, MSN.com, Virgin Megastore and Virgin Atlantic’ (Finnigan, 2001, p. 12). The campaign included a ‘buy one get one free’ offer on flights to London with Virgin Atlantic and promotions on skincare from the UK-based body care chain Body Shop (p. 12). The Virgin Atlantic deal in particular highlights the centrality of the city to the promotion of the film and, correlatively, the centrality of the city to the film itself. Not only is the film set in London, but promotional activities relating to the film’s release offer viewers a cost-effective way of actually travelling to the city, providing residual benefits to London’s economy through tourism. This example also highlights the symbolic power of the city outside the cinematic medium and therefore the attractiveness of the city as a lucrative tool for helping promote the movie. Although films like *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, as demonstrated in the Glamorous London chapter, are important in cultivating the city’s symbolic power and, correlatively, in advancing the city’s ‘brand platform’, they are equally reliant upon the city as an already existing seat of symbolic power to create a sense of allure and to attract audiences. The promotional activities surrounding the release of these films, such as the above-mentioned flight offer, solidify this argument.

Anholt (2010) corroborates this notion, arguing that

...cities and regions that are lucky or virtuous enough to have acquired a positive reputation find that everything they or their citizens wish to do on the global stage is easier: their brand goes before them, opening doors, creating trust and respect... (p. 4)

In spite of the changing world order (the increasing economic importance of cities in the Global South), in both the tangible and intangible senses, ‘...London remains in all different accounts on the top tier’ (Georgiou, 2013, p. 24)., Reciprocal promotional activities such as the advertising campaign for the release of *Bridget Jones’s Diary* also provide evidence of the corporatisation of the city and its promotion, whereby private

organisations become involved in advancing the city's brand platform. This multitude of actors involved in the promotion of the city, centring on film, demonstrates the complexity and the evolution of the relationship between cinema and the city.

### 7.3.2 Advertising

Narrative advertising is also an area of the media which showcases the evolving dynamics of the relationship between cinema and the city, whereby certain cities play 'starring roles' alongside well-known actors in promoting luxury products that at times have no direct relation to the city on screen. The city serves as the backdrop and enhances the high value associated with the product being promoted, with the lighting, shots and style creating an air of desirability. The product is often left ambiguous until the very end of the advertisement, placing the film star and the city, the secondary products, in the foreground. There exist many examples of this phenomenon, including, amongst others, advertisements for high-end fragrances, fashion, cosmetics and even financial services.

#### *7.3.2.1: Kate Winslet for American Express*

A notable example is New York-based credit card company American Express, which chose to feature Kate Winslet and the Camden Town district of North London when publicising its product in a global advertising campaign in 2004. The advertisement shares many commonalities with cinema, in terms of both style and substance. In a voyeuristic, cinematic style, Winslet is featured making explicit references to her past film roles, with Camden Town, whose outdoor market is a prime tourist destination,<sup>30</sup> featuring prominently in the foreground. For those viewers perhaps not acquainted with the area, an enlarged close-up of Winslet's face is shown plastered on a red London double-decker bus towards the end of the advertisement, immediately preceding mention of the product being promoted (the American Express card). The bus is an iconic visual reminder of London that suggests the city's central role in

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<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.timeout.com/london/shopping/london-markets>

the narrative of the advertisement. The parallels between cinema and branding are prevalent in this case through the exercising of the normative presentation of London's prime position as a cinematic-branded city—this presentation serves to heighten the sense of desirability being communicated. According to American Express, who launched the campaign in 2004 in the US, 'the campaign positions the key attributes of the brand to reflect the Company's tradition of service and integrity, while redefining membership for today's affluent, high-spending customers' ('Kate Winslet Latest Addition to Global "My Life My Card (SM)" Communications Campaign from American Express', 2005, para. 5). Here the explicit links between the product, the actor and affluence are visually framed by London, a city with a large amount of symbolic power as a glamorous space. This advertisement also links the cinematic and branded city in today's consumer society, contributing to intuitive and embedded ways of thinking about certain cities like London and their associated commercial products as objects of desire. Rather than leading to a fluid repository, this instead reinforces a normative medium and, by association, consumer culture. That a New York-based company chose London and a British actor to promote its product in the US market is telling of the intuitive 'pull' or symbolic power possessed by London as a cinematic-branded city.

#### *7.3.3.2 Katrina Kaif for Yardley of London*

The phenomenon of using London to promote consumer products and services is not restricted to Western markets. The Indian market is also one in which London's image attracts advertisers and, correlatively, consumers. An advertising campaign created in 2010 and starring Bollywood actor Katrina Kaif for Yardley of London, a cosmetics company, is an example of reliance on London's pre-existing symbolic power coupled with cinema as a means of selling a product or promoting a consumer brand. This symbolic power, as demonstrated in the film analysis chapters, is used and reaffirmed in a variety of different ways. Yardley has a strong link to Britain's heritage, as it is 'one of the oldest brands in history...[which] conjures up images of women in flowery

dresses...as they delicately sip Darjeeling tea from bone china cups and elegantly nibble on perfectly cut crustless watercress sandwiches' (Nickels & Iyer, 2012, p. 162). This link to heritage was refreshed in 2010 through the Indian campaign starring Kaif. The television advertisements feature brief scenes of the Palace of Westminster and Kaif involved in glamorous situations like gaining access to exclusive establishments and strutting down a catwalk. In one advertisement Kaif is driven across Westminster Bridge in a luxury car while spraying herself with a Yardley product. In another, the narrator promises that those who use Yardley products (spray deodorants in the case of this campaign) will be empowered through Yardley's 'rich, international fragrances', causing men (who for example control access to the night club in the advertisement) to lose their ability to resist the (female) user's charms. This campaign, like the films in the Glamorous London thematic category, is laden with social references to class and gender, representing the 'ideal user' discourse through these typologies. The ethnic paradigm discussed in Glamorous London (the overwhelming presence of indigenous white Britons) takes a twist in this campaign as Kaif is of mixed British-Indian heritage and her friends in the advertisements have a South Asian appearance. This is clearly strategic, as the advertisements were shown in the Indian market.



Figure 18: Actress Katrina Kaif for Yardley  
[http://img.youtube.com/vi/5Ne\\_M4b7t0g/hqdefault.jpg](http://img.youtube.com/vi/5Ne_M4b7t0g/hqdefault.jpg)

The Yardley campaign both highlights and updates India's complicated relationship with Britain, from which it gained independence in 1947. The campaign, an intertextual reference to Glamorous London films, depicts London as an exciting and dynamic location (catwalks, exclusive night clubs) with a strong connection to its heritage (visual references to the Palace of Westminster). These elements, coupled with Yardley's long history as a quintessentially British brand, are linked to cinema not only through the use of a narrative, but through Kaif herself, who is '...one of the highest-paid actresses in the Indian movie industry' (Nickels & Iyer, 2012, p. 163). Nickels and Iyer further argue that 'while the quintessence of Old World Britain may no longer carry the same cachet in England, in India and all the former colonies...there can be no better point from which to start reinventing a brand' (p. 164). This connection to Britain's and London's heritage, paired with the interjection of cinema, specifically a young Bollywood superstar, have created a '...brand relevant to a new generation of Indian consumers' (p. 164). This

*branding* strategy is reminiscent of the 'strategic optimism' of the New Labour era, when, initially at least, the 'Cool Britannia' sentiment was hugely popular. This sentiment, as discussed in Section 3.1, merged Britain's well-known heritage with a fresh and modern outlook focussed on innovation and gentrification.

These advertisements highlight the synergetic relationship enjoyed by the city, consumer products and cinema, where these three formerly separate industries come together to create a relationship of reciprocal promotion. This fascinating convergence of formerly distinct industries has become a standard part of our media culture. Georgiou (2013), referring to the presence of cities in cinema, argues that 'the relation of media and the city has become synergetic but ordinary, so much so that it is rarely spoken about, even in media and communications studies' (p. 5). This *ordinariness* is precisely the starting point for understanding the embedding of the image of these branded (and cinematic) cities into the global imagination ('global' because of the widespread use of London in global campaigns as detailed above). 'Misrecognisable' symbolic power (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170) is a key factor in successful reciprocal campaigns which are beneficial to both the film and the city. Further to this, Anholt (2010) questions the efficacy of branding strategies such as advertising campaigns in cities which do not possess a great deal of pre-existing symbolic power:

If you repeat a slogan frequently enough, people will end up recognising it...Whether it actually has the power to alter their opinions and their behaviour towards [a city]...is quite another matter...In city after city...marketing campaigns are cheerfully sold to governments, and billions of dollars of public money are spent producing them and placing them in the media, where they disappear without a trace. (p. 3)

As consumers, we are encouraged to be tempted by the perfumes of Paris, the fashion of London and the cosmetics of New York because these city brands are desirable and suggest superior quality: appending 'Paris', 'London' or 'New York' to a commercial brand is intuitively more lucrative than appending 'Nairobi', 'Brussels' or 'Tashkent'. Chanel Nairobi, Burberry Brussels and Donna Karan Tashkent are likely to evoke entirely

different sets of images and emotions compared with those evoked by the cities in which these companies are actually based. The above examples, brought together because they demonstrate the variety of ways in which the city is used as a marketing tool, demonstrate that the city's cinematic and branded identities culminate in the economic realm, confirming Bourdieu's (1985, p. 16) argument that the representational side of symbolic power is entrenched in economic and financial considerations.

Although the city's glamorous nature is an obvious selling point, this thesis has on numerous occasions, not least in the analysis performed in chapter 6 (Multi-Cultural London), demonstrated that focussing solely on glamour only tells half the story. How do the contradictory and negative elements of London's global city identity, like poverty, ethnic struggles and inequality, fit into a discussion of London's global appeal and its utility as a location for film narratives and plots? Where the analysis in this section focusses on narrative advertising which relies heavily upon London's glamour zones, the remainder of this chapter will examine the ways in which London's rawness and class and ethnic diversity are equally important in creating a romanticised narrative about the city. This speaks directly to London's symbolic power as multi-faceted and, at times, seemingly contradictory.

## **7.4 Setting a Precedent**

The relation between city life and cinema is dynamic and one of the ways in which it is expressed is through the lens of popular culture. If we accept that cinema is an element of popular culture, then music, graffiti, consumption in the city relate back to cinema within the larger framework of the popular. Indeed as Williams (1989) notes, 'Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind' (p. 3). This ordinariness is part of symbolic power, in the sense of this ordinariness being a 'misrecognisable' force (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170) in both representations of the city (culture) and the 'real' city. Returning to the main research question (*how do cinematic representations participate in the cultivation, communication*



*and sustaining of the global city's symbolic power?*), the examples in section 7.3 indicate that London's symbolic power is as multi-layered and as complex as its global-city characteristics. We also need to take into account London's *pre-existing* power as a colonial and imperial capital, a global financial hub and an international trade centre. Rather than solely constructing London's symbolic power, cinema equally serves to *reinforce* the idea that London's identity is well-known, familiar, and appealing to a wide variety of societal groups and to *reinvent* the city's symbolic power so that the city's image remains fresh and current. This neoliberal approach to culture, though part of Thatcher's legacy and further perpetuated in the New Labour era, continues to drive film policy and rhetoric in contemporary London and Britain.

This section links the images of London in cinema, with real changes taking place on the ground. These include: the processes of gentrification as a reflection of the meeting of glamour and grit on the screen; the ways in which the vibrant popular culture expressed in graffiti and music in the city is reflected in the rich cultural material that are circulated globally through cinema and other global popular culture networks, like music from films, revealing another element of continuity within global popular cultural flows; and patterns of consumption of popular products through advertising and cross-referencing of other products related to the films in question.

Whilst the films analysed in the Glamorous London and Multi-Cultural London chapters, along with the resulting discussions of symbolic power, media synergies and city promotion/branding, are located within Britain's New Labour era, current policies and rhetoric continue to reflect the trends set in the 1997-2007 period. In recent years in particular, the neoliberal approach to culture has taken on a new dimension, whereby the Conservative Prime Minister, David Cameron, has been vocal about the centrality of film and its contribution to the UK economy. In January 2012, referring to the UK film industry's £4 billion contribution to the national economy, David Cameron stated that

Our role, and that of the BFI, should be to support the sector in becoming even more dynamic and entrepreneurial, helping UK producers to make commercially successful pictures that rival the quality and impact of the best international productions. Just as the British Film Commission has played a crucial role in attracting the biggest and best international studios to produce their films here, so we must incentivise UK producers to chase new markets both here and overseas.

(‘PM Backs “Dynamic and Entrepreneurial” UK Film Industry’, 2012)

The sentiment that the ‘dynamic and entrepreneurial’ UK film industry should help UK producers to make ‘commercially successful pictures’ is contradictory. Dynamism and entrepreneurialism would, by definition, involve risk-taking and innovation. The reference to ‘commercially successful pictures’, on the other hand, seems to emphasise mainstream, big-budget films that rely on conventional plot structures, big-name stars and familiar locations. This formulaic output enjoys heavy international promotion and therefore brings commercial success. This is evidenced by the box office success of films in the Glamorous London thematic category (see Section 4.4.1) as opposed to the mediocre takings of films in the Multi-Cultural London thematic category (see Section 4.4.2). For example, *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, released in 2001, has grossed US\$281,929,795 worldwide since its release.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the film’s sequel, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, has grossed US\$262,520,724 in profits since its release in 2004,<sup>32</sup> solidifying the argument that previous success combined with widespread distribution and heavy marketing is likely to equate to long-term commercial success for the ‘brand’ (Bridget Jones in this case). On the other hand, supporting formulaic filmic output like this does little to encourage ‘dynamism’ and ‘entrepreneurialism’ in cinema.

*Dirty Pretty Things*, a Multi-Cultural London film, was released two years later, in 2003, and has grossed US\$13,904,766 worldwide since its release,<sup>33</sup> substantially less than *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. Although both

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<sup>31</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

<sup>32</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

<sup>33</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

films feature an all-star international cast (particularly Renée Zellweger as the lead character in *Bridget Jones's Diary* and in *Dirty Pretty Things* Audrey Tautou, who gained global attention and garnered positive critical reviews in 2001 for her role as the title character in *Amélie*),<sup>34</sup> several elements contributed to these films' contrasting fortunes. As discussed above and in the Glamorous London chapter, *Bridget Jones's Diary* was promoted heavily and released widely (2,547 cinemas in the US alone).<sup>35</sup> This, along with the film's genre (romantic comedy) and the appeal of Glamorous London, are responsible for these extremely high profit levels. In contrast, *Dirty Pretty Things* was released with much less fanfare and in fewer cinemas in the US (493).<sup>36</sup> Its less popular genre and serious subject matter also contributed to its relative lack of success.

These examples suggest that a film's commercial success is much more complex than David Cameron's statement implies. As the promotion of *Bridget Jones's Diary* indicates, commercial success is driven both by cinematic elements like cast and script and, perhaps more importantly, by economic and industry factors like promotion and distribution. Aside from genre, *Dirty Pretty Things* and the Bridget Jones films possess similar cinematic elements – a well-known cast and a critically acclaimed script – but were subject to dissimilar distribution and promotional strategies. Where *Bridget Jones's Diary* and its synergetic promotion generated massive profits, *Dirty Pretty Things*, with its more subdued release and promotion, was only moderately profitable. In the present era, we see a growing body of evidence to suggest that the 'blockbuster' strategy is still being employed in an effort to advance London's brand on the global stage, working seemingly more deliberately with London's topography. The city's architectural landscape, particularly in the City and south of the river, is changing. Starting in the New Labour era, we have seen the skyward development of London's cityscape, with the notable example of the Gherkin opening in 2003. More recently, the City of London has seen

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<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.metacritic.com/movie/dirty-pretty-things> and <http://www.metacritic.com/movie/bridget-jones-diary>

<sup>35</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

<sup>36</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)

the arrival of an even higher number of tall buildings with quirky names like the Cheese Grater and the Walkie Talkie.

A real 'statement' building, the Shard, was completed in 2012 and is located in the London Bridge area on the south bank of the River Thames. In a city not known for its tall buildings, the Shard is a symbol of London's symbolic power as a global city, as it is the tallest building in the European Union. These futuristic skyscrapers, which continue to advance London's global city identity as one of dynamism and economic power, feature heavily in London's more recent cinematic image. Several films released in 2013, like *Welcome to the Punch*, *Star Trek Into the Darkness* and *Trance*, are filled with images of London's futuristic architectural monuments. Referencing these three films, an article in the *Guardian* newspaper stated that 'cinema's newfound interest in London's modern architectural landmarks demonstrates the UK capital's status as a global city' (Hoad, 2013, n.p.). The term 'newfound' is not accurate, as the films in the Glamorous London thematic category and the analysis in Chapter 5 demonstrate that Hollywood has spent at least ten years exploring and filming London's evolving skyline and newer architectural monuments. Given that London's newest skyscrapers are perhaps not (yet) well-known, cinema in this case is a platform through which to *render* these monuments iconic and to publicise London's changing architectural landscape.

#### 7.4.1 The 'real' city

This sub-section discusses changes in the 'real' city which are connected to cinema and cinematic representations, providing evidence of the influence of film on contemporary life in London. Much of the above discussion relates to the 'outside' element, whereby the analysis looks at the city's image and the construction of its symbolic power in the outside world. The 'internal' element, however, has not been discussed in detail. Do films construct or reflect reality, and how does this affect the city's residents? After all, as Koeck (2012) asserts, '...do we not already gaze at architectural spaces and cities as if we were a filmmaker ourselves?' (p.

73). How do these ideas reflect or contradict the city's brand identity? The 'internal' aspect of London's symbolic power is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is essential to highlight the variety of ways in which London's contrasting and contradictory symbolic power may be impacting on those who inhabit the city. We need to remind ourselves that increasing the city's symbolic power on the global stage does not result evenly, or necessarily at all, in tangible benefit for the local population. As Massey (2007, p. 67) reminds us, in neoliberal capitalism an increase in a city's symbolic power does not necessarily equate to a better quality of life for that city's residents. As mentioned in the introduction, whilst the city's status as a global city with high levels of symbolic power is undisputed (Beaverstock et al., 1999, pp. 445-446), London scores relatively poorly in liveability and quality of life surveys (Massey, 2007, p. 9). The two qualities of symbolic power and liveability are unrelated in the context of the global city.

#### *7.4.1.2 Glamour and grit*

Gentrification, a process discussed in Section 3.3.1, is and has been rife in London for many years. Areas like Notting Hill, King's Cross and Soho are but a few of the those that were once working-class or crime-ridden neighbourhoods, but are now home to high house prices, middle-class residents and tourist attractions. Notting Hill, a district located on the western fringe of Central London, for example, once endured race riots. This area has now become one of the wealthiest districts in London. Whilst it is difficult to claim a causal relationship between the district's transformation and the release of the film that bears its name, the film has undoubtedly had an influence on the ways in which the district is perceived. 'To the outside world [the district] has been depicted most famously and infamously in...*Notting Hill*, but also in countless other popular media accounts, as the "hippest" place in the capital' (Martin, 2005, p. 72). Indeed a BBC News article entitled 'Proud to be a Notting Hill Tory' declares that 'actor Hugh Grant helped raise Notting Hill's reputation worldwide' ('Proud to be a Notting Hill Tory', n.p.). The implications of this raised reputation have included higher house

prices and the subjugation of the local working-class and poorer migrant population. Although I do not claim a direct link between the film's influence on the area's notoriety and the district's gentrification, as this is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is a noteworthy observation demonstrating the far-reaching impacts of film on the city and its symbolic power.

The King's Cross area, on the other hand, does provide hard evidence, showing the impact of film on the 'real' city (I discuss the regeneration of the district in Section 3.3.1). While *Notting Hill* shares its name with the West London district, King's Cross has been the focus for several years of the *Harry Potter* series. Originally a series of books, the *Harry Potter* franchise has been made into several films by Warner Brothers, at their studio at Leavesden in the northern fringes of Greater London. The hugely popular films (the most recent instalment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*, released in 2011, has so far grossed over \$1.3 billion in box office receipts alone)<sup>37</sup> contain references to the King's Cross area, in particular to the railway station. Although these are literary and filmic references, there are official and unofficial tours of London centred upon the films and books. The website of one such unofficial tour, operated by Discovery Tours, explains the significance of the London district and the railway station in the books and films:

Although Harry Potter and his schoolmates board the Hogwarts Express at King's Cross Station, the exterior used in the films was in fact the one that now looms over you, St Pancras Station. It was on the corner of the courtyard to your left that Harry and Ron park the Ford Anglia in *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*. Later in the film, when they find themselves unable to pass through the wall on to Platform nine-and-three-quarters, they return to the Ford Anglia and fly off over the station. The clock that towers over you to your right is shown in this flight scene.  
(Harry Potter—Locations in London, n.d.)

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<sup>37</sup> Information obtained from [boxofficemojo.com](http://boxofficemojo.com)



Figure 19: A scene from *Harry Potter* filmed at St Pancras International station. <http://soulsmithy.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/harry-potter-train1.jpg>

In the context of the *Harry Potter* films, the 'real' and the cinematic cities begin to merge, with signs at King's Cross station directing passengers to the fabled Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ , where a luggage trolley appears to be jutting out of the wall. In addition, the station features a retail unit called 'The Harry Potter Shop at Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ '. Cinema, in the case of the *Harry Potter* franchise, has a clear link to the 'real' city, beyond the confines of the cinematic medium. This example shows how the 'real' city is changing in order to accommodate film tourists and local *Harry Potter* enthusiasts.



Figure 20: 'Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ' at King's Cross station

<http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-zOQVflziois/URyF1DS33MI/AAAAAAAAACZg/SAr-geFqPs/s1600/harry-potter-shop-kings-cross-station.jpg>

Although gentrification is a process of 'rehabilitation of working-class and derelict housing and the consequent transformation of an area into a middle-class neighbourhood' (Smith & Williams, 1986, p. 1), we need to think about how 'middle-class' attributes can also include a city's hard-hitting and gritty image, as developed in Multi-Cultural London films. This is consistent with the idea that the city's symbolic power, like its cinematic identity, is multi-faceted and at times contradictory. By contrast with the glamorous, middle-class West End and City, East London is more commonly associated with crime, poverty and the



working class. Unlike the polished streets of the West End, the landscape in the East End retains a raw and gritty look, with its 1960s tower blocks and abandoned warehouses. A 2012 article on the CNN website describes the East End as an area which ‘...has long housed the capital's working, criminal and creative classes. And Stratford, where the Olympic Park now stands, has been regarded by many as little more than a post-industrial wasteland, a relic of the city's bygone manufacturing era’ (Thompson, 2012, n.p.). Thompson (2012) calls the city's East End ‘rough around the edges’ but, he argues, this is exactly why the area is appealing:

Waves of immigrants have settled amongst the white working-class locals in the East End for generations -- Bangladeshi communities in Mile End and Whitechapel; Afro-Caribbean communities in Hackney; and Turkish, Kurdish and Orthodox Jewish communities in Dalston -- and the area's extreme diversity means that virtually anything you want is only a bus stop away. (Thompson, 2012, n.p.)

The district's appeal, according to this interpretation, is in its diversity and rawness, similar to the image of the city used in Multi-Cultural London films.

We see a direct connection to cinema by way of the ‘Gangster Walking Tour of London's East End’, where actor Stephen Marcus, who starred in the 1998 film *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, guides tourists through the East End using a combination of ‘real histories and fictitious recreations’ (*Gangster Walking Tour of London's East End Led By Stephen Marcus*, n.p.), including a tour of locations used in various East End-based films. In this example, we see an erasure of the district's potential danger as an area associated with violent crime. There is an important blurring of the East End's cinematic and ‘real’ identities in the example of this tour, whereby the spectacular elements in films featuring it begin to blend into the actual experience of the city. This is similar to the discussion in Section 7.2.1, in which I discuss Reijnders's (2010) concept of the ‘media pilgrimage’ in relation to the 2002 film *Die Another Day*. Though perhaps a less direct manifestation of the ‘media pilgrimage’ than the example in Section 7.2.1, the Gangster Walking Tour of London's

East End demonstrates a merging of the cinematic city and the city itself, where visiting criminal hotspots is deemed a safe activity, as though it were the same as viewing the area on the silver screen. The grittiness and rawness of East London are part of its appeal as an attractive destination.



Figure 21: A mural and some graffiti in Chance Street, Shoreditch, East London, in 2012. The new London Overground railway bridge at Shoreditch High Street station is visible in the background.

<http://streetartlondon.co.uk/blog/2012/04/23/roa-hedgehog-pops-shoreditch/>

Shoreditch, on the eastern periphery of Central London, is a specific example of a gentrified area in London's East End whose grittiness is part of its contemporary identity. This district would score highly on Florida's (2002) 'bohemian index' (see Section 2.2), where its appeal lies precisely in its status as a home for sub-cultural artistic production. The area, once home to affordable art studios and warehouse space, now features fashionable bars and nightclubs, expensive restaurants, trendy boutiques, concept fitness centres and luxury lofts. Transport in the area has been revitalised with the extension of the London Overground rail network replacing the neglected and now defunct East London Line on the Underground. Many of the very studios and warehouses that the area was once known for have been converted into

high-cost residential units. Unlike in the King's Cross transformation discussed earlier in this section, where changes to the built environment reflect the area's conversion into a glamour zone, the overall visual character of Shoreditch has been retained, with its graffiti and buildings with a rough industrial look featuring heavily.

This character, though less *obviously* appealing to tourists and middle-class locals, has become part of London's appeal. From tours to consumer experiences (shopping, dining, entertainment), the East London district is now a glamour zone that does not possess the visual characteristics of the glamour zones of Central and West London. An example of this phenomenon is the Shoreditch Street Art Tour. According to the tour operator's website (<http://www.shoreditchstreetarttours.co.uk>)

Shoreditch is home to a vibrant and colourful culture of street art, murals, cafes, bars, galleries, restaurants, fashion and markets. Street artists from London's east end and the UK as well as international artists from all over Europe and the rest of the World leave an ever changing kaleidoscope of energy and creativity on the walls of Shoreditch.

Seemingly no longer 'a modern touchstone of urban discontent' (McAuliffe & Iveson, 2011, p. 128), graffiti, at least in this part of London, are seen as part of the city's artistic landscape.



Figure 22: People photographing graffiti and street art on the streets of Shoreditch: <http://www.shoreditchstreetarttours.co.uk/>

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* attests to this new face of gentrification in some parts of London, where the visual rawness we see in Multi-Cultural London films becomes an attractive selling point. The newspaper cites Brixton in South London, an area which, like districts in the East End, maintains its gritty feel, as another example of a district which has a growing appeal for the middle class: 'Previously best known as the scene of riots and violent clashes between the local Afro-Caribbean community and the police in the 1980s, this South London neighbourhood's fruit and veg market has been transformed into one of the capital's foremost foodie destinations' (Maxwell, 2015, n.p.). The article also discusses the equally gritty Hackney Central area and recommends the 'Dalston Roof Park for a chorizo, halloumi and mackerel burger' and an exclusive boutique selling fashionable apparel (2015, n.p.). These are but a few examples of the ways in which London's edgier side, similar to that which we see in Multi-Cultural London films, is exploited

and becomes part of the city's contradictory nature. This is consistent with Georgiou's (2013) observation that '...poverty, the social divides and tensions of inequality often creep back into the brand of the city in the form, for example, of celebrated subcultures' (p. 18). We see the commodification of even street culture, as is evident in the Shoreditch Street Art Tour: this is precisely where we see the manifestation of the contradictory aspects and multiple facets of the city's symbolic power. This power, as Bourdieu (1981, p. 16) reminds us, has both representational and market elements.

## **7.5 Discussion: What about Londoners?**

This chapter has so far looked at the ways in which London's symbolic power is advanced and developed through a cinematic identity containing both positive and negative elements. On one hand, we see a positive celebration of diversity, multiculturalism, economic growth, productivity and social cohesion. On the other, we see gross inequalities fuelled by an unjust system in which those lacking economic and cultural means are left to fend for themselves. Illegal migrants, poorer disenfranchised locals and some members of ethnic minority communities are all part of this latter group. How do Londoners themselves fit into this discussion? This project, which focuses on textual analysis, is perhaps an inappropriate place to discuss individuals' relationships with the city from their own perspective. However, we can instead look at statistics and trends that are reflective of the evolving nature of London's symbolic power in order to determine the ways in which locals are able to relate to their city.

In this instance we need to return to the definition of gentrification put forward by Smith & Williams (1986), which they describe as a process of regenerating working class and run-down housing that results in the local area becoming more middle-class (p. 1). This process of transformation results in higher house prices, with longstanding local residents becoming unable to afford to live in their local area. The area around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford, located in the borough of Newham, East London, is a prime example of the ways in

which recent gentrification and regeneration projects are changing the property market in the capital. Newham '...is one of the most deprived boroughs in London and also has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in the UK (Kennelly & Watt 2012)' (Watt, 2013, p. 104). Although the district, unlike others in the East End of the capital, has forgone its gritty look in favour of a 'glamorisation' for the Olympics (including the Olympic Park itself, plus the large Westfield shopping centre and a brand new rail hub), the issues facing low- to middle-income residents are similar to those in other parts of gentrified London.

In his study of the impact of the Games on housing in London, Kavetsos (2012) found 'that properties up to three miles away from the main Olympic stadium sell for 5 per cent higher...having substantial social and financial implications for existing residents' (p. 1453). Local residents in formerly deprived and now gentrified areas are being priced out of their own homes. As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 6, low- and middle-income workers are key to the functioning of any global city, providing the services, like cleaning, administrative work and minicab driving, that are required for the glamour zones to function effectively and efficiently (see Loshitzky, 2010). A 2015 report published by the independent body Centre for London highlights this problem: 'Rising housing costs are putting huge pressure on London's modest earners and mean that a growing number of working households are struggling to secure decent accommodation' (Hanna, 2015, p. 28). Although an in-depth discussion of this growing problem is well beyond the scope of this thesis it is an example of the ways in which the commodification of the city's symbolic power, including the city's cinematic image, is having a negative impact on local residents. Much like the formulaic approach of Glamorous London films, many gentrified areas in London, aside from those in the south and east of the capital which retain their raw feel, are becoming generic and similar. Chain stores, restaurants and cafés selling £2 cappuccinos are regular features on many London High Streets. These make not only for an undynamic, homogeneous cityscape, but for a city which is affordable only for those who possess the economic means to enjoy these 'glamorous' amenities.

Beyond the financial element of gentrification and the advancing of London's symbolic power, we need to return to the ideal of 'belonging' in the global city. How does the local discourse fit into a discussion of large trends? An important factor, particularly in the context of East London, an area traditionally inhabited by the white working class, is the impact of migration both for the migrants themselves and indeed for those who were born and bred in the capital. Although the city's diverse population lives in relative harmony and the urban context allows for an articulation of personal identity based on factors other than national or ethnic origin (see Robins, 2001), we need to understand fundamentally how national origin and ethnicity relate to the discussion of urban change and globalisation. Equally, we need to ask how cinematic representations of these areas might fit into this discussion.

This thesis, and particularly Section 6.2, has demonstrated that Multi-Cultural London films provide a sense of agency for the groups portrayed in these films. Instead of fading into the background, Londoners of various ethnicities, including those in lower income brackets, are the protagonists. Could media consumption be a factor in the argument surrounding 'belonging' in the global city? Giddens's (1990) conceptualisation of globalisation, focussing on social relations, emphasises that '*...local transformation* is as much a part of globalisation as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space (p. 64; italics original). This is useful for understanding how global processes can influence local practices and media consumption can provide clues to how the local-global dialectic plays out. Although mainstream media are widely consumed, we need to remember that various groups will consume media that are relevant to them. This includes local and ethnic media outlets. In her study of media and the city, Georgiou (2013) reminds us that local, pirate and ethnic media remain entrenched in the domain of subculture. 'Only a handful of the hundreds of producers of these media...will ever make it to the mainstream media' ( p. 43). Only very exceptionally do we see stories about London's many ethnic minority groups and/or its poorer, disenfranchised communities in mainstream films. *Bend it Like Beckham* is an example of such an exception. Multi-

Cultural London films on the whole, as discussed at length in Chapter 6, are only moderately, if at all, successful, from the point of view of box office receipts (see Section 7.4). The stories these films tell and the characters they feature could be useful in fostering a sense of belonging in London's marginal communities where stories of *their* inhabitants are shown to be as important as stories featuring the types of characters we often see in Glamorous London films. Though beyond the scope of this thesis, the role of mainstream film as potentially socially integrative is a subject which requires careful consideration and development.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The global city's symbolic power is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon whose deployment, development and study are rooted in a variety of domains and disciplines. From the point of view of cinema, the 1997-2007 period saw a change in the way cinematic representations featuring London were produced and distributed. The period saw the deliberate merging of the city's cinematic and brand identities, both in and beyond the cinema hall. Film itself was approached less from a cultural point of view and more from an industry point of view, where government policy, for example the establishment of the Film London agency, encouraged foreign studios (specifically Hollywood) to make films set in London. The goal was to promote the city in the global arena as an attractive destination for tourism and business. Film-induced tourism developed in line with this goal, with many tourists arriving in London as a result of the city's strong cinematic presence.

There was simultaneously a push for the continued development of 'brand London' which, through synergies between cinema, the city and even corporations, became part of the London's mediatised identity. Widespread, global promotional efforts like narrative advertising centring on cinema, cross-promotions and product tie-ins all contributed to making London's cinematic-brand identity 'ordinary' and normative. London's image was used to sell films while film was used to sell the city. Both film and the city were used to sell consumer products that at times had



tenuous connections to the city and indeed to cinema. London's symbolic power was therefore *advanced* and *reinvented* through cinematic representations, as the city possesses a great amount of *pre-existing* symbolic power which makes the task of selling the city much simpler for London's authorities. This is partly why negative portrayals of the city, which of course complete the 'story' of London's global city identity, do not harm but instead enhance London's brand promise. The emphasis by the current Government on 'commercial success' means that these negative portrayals, often exposing the difficult conditions endured by the city's underclasses (see examples in Chapter 6), will receive less attention and less funding in future. This is unfortunate because, as this thesis demonstrates, these films provide London's identity with an element of 'believability', whereby its symbolic power becomes nuanced and multi-faceted. This diverse picture of London's symbolic power is an important aspect of its brand identity. The reliance upon formulaic cinematic productions also restricts innovation and creativity.

Perhaps more fundamentally, Multi-Cultural London films provide a voice and agency for the city's underprivileged residents. A deliberate halt to the production of films like these means that these individuals will see less mainstream cinematic output featuring people like themselves, and their stories will be restricted to art house productions with limited distribution. Crucially, this also means that residents belonging to other class groups will continue to lack opportunities to experience 'the other side' of the global city experience. As this chapter demonstrates, 'the other side' of the city's symbolic power is appealing to tourists and locals alike, and we continue to see the actual experience of the city being influenced in certain areas by its cinematic identity. A multi-faceted approach to symbolic power needs to acknowledge the city's diversity and contradictions. The city is lived, consumed, represented in cinema and other popular forms: this includes some and excludes others. The city is an important character in these popular incarnations and representations that spill outside films as a profit-generating force. Yet, there is a contradiction here and always, as the city itself is always primarily a lived space and remains more than simply a tool in the generation of profit.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION: A CITY OF MANY FACETS

### 8.1 Introduction

In this thesis, using London as a paradigmatic example, I have demonstrated the many ways in which cinema and cinematic representations participate in the construction and maintenance of the global city's symbolic power, whilst at the same time providing a rich spatial and symbolic repertoire for the weaving of film narratives and the deployment of film language. The film analysis was intentionally located within the 1997-2007 period as it has clear social, political and cultural particularities with regard to New Labour's neoliberal socioeconomic policies and changes and indeed with regard to the development of the diversified repertoire of London's cinematic representations. I also chose this period for pragmatic reasons, since this is an identified distinct moment within wider processes of neoliberalism and which provides me with a contained period for study. This period was one in which key changes in London's political, aesthetic and financial history were reflected in the major changes in the way that the city began to *manage* its symbolic power. This thesis has aimed to make the case that the ways in which new labour courted the international film industries of Hollywood and Bollywood, and promoted British film making during this period, also resulted in a number of key cinematic representations of London as a global city. An analysis of these processes and representations inevitably led to a discussion of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, which, amongst other things, stipulates that a particular image or set of images is conceived, produced and distributed at the nexus of the cultural aesthetic and financial fields (see Bourdieu, 1985) and indeed the notion that symbolic power is 'misrecognisable' or unnoticed (see *ibid.*, 1991, p. 170). This thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach to study of the cinematic city, bringing to light the blurring boundaries between cinema, media industries, other media platforms and the global city. Ultimately, this thesis argues that whilst major cities such as London provide adaptable and iconic venues for locating cultural production, the

cinematic medium and other media influenced by cinema, work together in shoring up the global city's symbolic power. The city's symbolic power is multi-faceted and, at times, seemingly contradictory, and advances through a re-affirmation of urban hierarchies, portraying the global city, London in the case of this thesis, as the inimitable home of the 'global city lifestyle' and as a central node in global capitalism. Cinema's contribution to naturalising particular discursive ideas and ideological ways of seeing Western European cities like London and their associated commercial products as objects of desire, rather than leading to a truly diverse and fluid image repository, serves only to reinforce a normative visual (cinematic) and, by association, consumer culture. Indeed, the focus on creating filmic output that has the potential to be 'commercially successful' (see 'PM Backs "Dynamic and Entrepreneurial" UK Film Industry', 2012) is related to the homogenisation of mainstream film. Does this mean that negative cinematic portrayals of the city, which are often less profitable than their 'glamorous' counterparts, will receive less funding? This thesis has shown that the symbolic power of the city is capable of encompassing contradictions, exploitation and exclusion in ways which stereotype and romanticise the migrant or working class other, as well as the neighbourhoods frequented by these others. Indeed, the variety of depictions of the city, including depictions of its gritty and raw side, further strengthens its symbolic power on the global stage and to make concentrated symbolic power seem natural (see Bourdieu, 1991). A residual but important effect of the more negative portrayals of the city is that those living and working in the city's underbelly are given a representational space, making cinema more complex than merely a homogenous representational system that reproduces hegemony. Moreover, these representations bring to the foreground the often bleak and depressing social realities of the city, but often do so in the form of commodity and spectacle for a global, middle class audience, yet they open up possibilities for us to see the city as lived and imagined in more than a single way

There is evidence to suggest that the link between cinema and marketing the city is evolving, particularly through narrative advertising

for luxury products, in which the cinematic city's identity is re-articulated as a desirable product. The city is used to sell high-end goods and services, like cosmetics, clothing, financial services and even migrant labour. Although the glamorous aspect of the city is important for its global image, we have also seen the increasing importance of the city's raw side, which is exploited for profit-making. Industry evidence detailed in this thesis suggests that cities and cinema are enjoying an ever-expanding symbiotic relationship in which financial reward is seen as reciprocal, whereby the city benefits from global exposure whilst films benefit from the readymade historical and iconic spaces, and the symbolic power already possessed by certain cities. On the other hand, whilst certain groups of people are elevated, others are subjugated: the analysis in this thesis shows the ways in which this takes place through filmic ideologies.

Although the New Labour government which came to power in 1997 was at the forefront of the policy and the rhetorical modifications that influenced these changes, we see a continuation of this in today's global media. The extensive representations of global cities in cinema, one of the largest global media industries, are suggestive of the medium's key role in constructing and re-affirming the global city's symbolic power, whilst at the same time rhetorically reconciling deep and problematic gaps in the social and ideological consciousness around issues such as poverty, migration, city planning, space and sociality outside the realm of consumption. As cinema is increasingly articulated in other media, like advertising texts and penetrating the digital and promotional worlds, this thesis addresses the *evolving* role of the medium in enhancing global cities' symbolic power. This interdisciplinary, sociological approach to cinema and the city allows us to foreground a popular culture medium and to problematise accepted conventions in representation. The focus on certain aspects of political economy allows us to make connections between popular media output and government and corporate interests. Crucially, the ways in which the city's symbolic power is advanced do little to help those who are struggling to survive in the global city, the working classes and underclasses. How can we turn the debate about symbolic

power into a productive discussion about the ways in which 'prosperity' can be applicable to all those living in the city?

## **8.2 London on Screen**

New Labour's election in 1997 signalled a superficial shift in policy and rhetoric, whereby the Thatcherite neoliberal project was refreshed and revitalised. The preceding Conservative regimes were adversarial and bleak, replete with social conflicts and struggles from the miners' strike and anti-poll tax campaigns to the Argentine and first Gulf wars. New Labour, sticking to neoliberal politics, created a youthful, dynamic and seemingly open image for the country via a calculated PR campaign. Cinematic representations of London in that period reflected this shift, particularly with Glamorous London films (see Chapter 5) registering 'a sense of London as a global city' (Brunsdon, 2007, p. 111). New Labour's corporatised approach to culture and creativity, discussed in Sections 1.3 and 3.1.1, gave rise to increasing numbers of Hollywood films set in London, like *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Notting Hill* and *Sliding Doors*, which became some of the most profitable 'British' films ever made (in reality, many of these films were Hollywood productions). Although the portrayal of London in Glamorous London films, with their airbrushed scenes of young, white, middle-class Londoners, broadly echoes the optimism of the period and we need to recognise that London's global-city identity necessarily entails some representation of the less shiny, working-class and gritty side of the city as equally important. The films in the Multi-Cultural London thematic category (see Chapter 6) highlight and explore this darker side of London's global-city identity. The 'real' global city is a postcolonial city, historically linked to colonialism and migration: diverse, unequal and full of contradictions and dualisms, as the analysis in Chapter 7 demonstrates. The cinematic city, as the films analysed in Chapters 5 and 6 shows, also embodies these qualities, although rarely in a single representation.

### 8.2.1 Glamorous London

The Glamorous London thematic category focuses on the construction of the 'ideal users' of the city space in London-based films. The films in this thematic category rely on hetero-normative stereotypes and the construction of ethnic and cultural homogeneity in order to portray the city space as alluring for an imagined transnational and generally transatlantic audience. In these films, women, for example, tend to be reliant on the men in their lives for both emotional and financial stability. Men, on the other hand, tend to be financially independent and much more in control of their emotional states. Other sociological taxonomies like race and sexual orientation are, for the most part, ignored. In the films analysed, only one character (Tom in *Bridget Jones's Diary*) is presented as homosexual, and the inclusion of this character provides nothing more than comic relief, allowing the character and his sexual orientation to blend into the hetero-normative socio-scape. The city is also presented as racially homogeneous, in that the outright lack of characters from non-white or non-English/American backgrounds suggests a racial and cultural uniformity in these representations of London. If individuals of other racial or cultural origins are presented, this is exclusively in the background, as peripheral characters or those whose difference is emphasised (like the Kurdish freedom fighter in *Bridget Jones's Diary*) or seems out of place (the black neighbour in *Match Point*, for example, who is the only non-white character in the film).

The precise manner in which the main characters relate to and use the city space in films in this thematic category is facilitated both by this characterisation and in particular through these characters' class background. London is presented as an important node within the capitalist system, in that it is a space in which consumption, particularly 'global consumption' through the 'global city lifestyle' (see Section 5.1) is central. The positioning of these characters within this class framework facilitates the visual focus on the city's expensive retail, dining and

entertainment offerings and indeed the visual construction of the city as one of iconic spaces and monuments. London's symbolic power is constructed and reproduced in these films through the notion of 'glamour', in that both its inhabitants and its physical attributes are constructed as 'glamorous'. In addition, although London seems at times to be presented as a generic global city, the films also rely on the city's cultural specificity to convey its uniqueness. In these films the city is portrayed as both familiar (especially to US audiences) and exotic.

Geographically, films in this thematic category are mostly concerned with representations of London's West End (entertainment and cultural district) and the City (financial district), along with some of its recently gentrified districts in the East (Shoreditch) and South (South Bank, Borough) of the city. London's newer monuments, like the Gherkin, the London Eye and the Tate Modern, are arguably *rendered* iconic through their representation in the Glamorous London thematic category, given the emphasis these films place on these newer architectural monuments and indeed the wide reach and profitability of these films. It is equally important to remember that these newer monuments (apart from the London Eye) are far from unique. It is not uncommon in modern cities to find skyscrapers and industrial buildings converted into cultural centres. Indeed as Harvey (1990) asks, 'how many successful convention centres, sports stadia, Disney world and harbour places can there be? Success is often short-lived or rendered moot by competing or alternative innovations arising elsewhere' (p. 267). The analysis in Chapter 5 shows that this potential setback is offset in Glamorous London films by juxtaposing these newer, more generic, monuments and iconic spaces with some of London's more recognisable historical architectural and cultural attributes. London, in these films, is at once historical and modern, referencing and enhancing the city's past geo-political power and colonial heritage, and its contemporary position as a modern, global financial and cultural centre. This combination of innovation and heritage corresponds to the 'Cool Britannia' image perpetuated in the late 1990s by the New Labour government. The films in this thematic category therefore participate in the re-construction of London's symbolic power as

an old-world power with new-world facilities—a unique yet ‘safe’ representational and, correlatively, physical space for a superficially cosmopolitan, white middle class.

### 8.2.2 Multi-Cultural London

Multi-Cultural London films often present the city’s socio-scape as inharmonious and riddled with problems relating to money, race, ethnicity and cultural and social exclusion. Chapter 6 demonstrates that these films, although apparently contradicting the glitzy and glamorous version of symbolic power perpetuated in Glamorous London films, complement and complete the ‘story’ of the global city, thereby allowing its symbolic power to take on more nuanced characteristics. Films in this thematic category suggest that London’s ‘glamour zones’ could not function effectively or efficiently without the minority groups and migrant workers featured in Multi-Cultural London films. This, as well as acknowledging London’s identity as the former capital of the British Empire through the representation of migrant communities from former British colonies, alludes to the city’s geo-political power, making these films key texts in the unpacking of this multi-layered representation of the city’s symbolic power. Through limited intertextual references to Glamorous London spaces and the construction of the city’s darker and less culturally harmonious and homogeneous side, Multi-Cultural London films suggest that without the illegal migrant workers portrayed in *Dirty Pretty Things*, the British-Sikh airport employees in *Bend it Like Beckham* or the asylum-seeking seamstress in *Breaking and Entering*, London could not exist as a powerful global city. This is a key point that frames a large part of the analysis in Chapter 6. Furthermore, Multi-Cultural London films deal with the city’s plethora of ethnic, racial and cultural groups, appearing to give individual characters and groups a voice yet continuing to control and profit from the representation of that voice. Multi-Cultural London films therefore seem to present a ‘bottom-up’ approach to the global city narrative, ironically increasing the city’s symbolic power, giving these



usually subjugated characters a sense of agency and of ownership of their own lives in the urban space.

At the same time, however, London's multi-ethnic socio-scape often provides a space for cosmopolitan celebration. For example, these films suggest that the 'feel-good celebration of ethno-cultural diversity' (Kymlicka, 2010, p. 33) of multiculturalism, would not exist without Multi-Cultural London characters—London would not be able to boast its extensive Indian dining scene, for example, without its large Indian community. Films in this thematic category tend to film and represent the city's diverse socio-scape to emphasise demographic contrasts which feed into particular plotlines, and at the same time participate in the construction of the city's symbolic power as a global city which accommodates a wide variety of transnational groups. This evolution of the city's symbolic power suggests the ways in which even gritty critiques and countercultural practices are incorporated by the relentless logic of capitalism and subjugated to the profit motive. This then results in critique and subversion becoming both 'cool' (grittiness) and a spectacle (multiculturalism).

### 8.2.3 A city of many facets

Whilst Glamorous London films present London as a recognisable and iconic city, Multi-Cultural London films remind viewers that London extends beyond the glamorous West End and City, where both indigenous and non-indigenous communities have learnt (or are forced) to co-exist. I pointed out how in *Dirty Pretty Things* many of the street scenes take place in unremarkable, non-central zones filled with individuals belonging to diverse groups of poorer migrant communities; and how *Bend it Like Beckham* provides glimpses of London's western suburbs, near Heathrow Airport, in a narrative where the local white and Indian communities come together over a love of football. These representations of the cinematic city across the two thematic categories paint a diverse picture, in many ways mirroring the diversity in the 'real' city.

This diversity, in terms both of the city's demographics (the 'real' city) and in representations, reminds us that, although neoliberalism stipulates the centrality of managerialism and economic power, we need to acknowledge that the city is a living and breathing space comprised of individuals whose identities transcend categories and statistics. Whilst 'difference is reduced to controlled and carefully presented "multicultural gloss" in the selling of places by city authorities, developers and "boosters" (Soja, 1989; Sorkin, 1992)' (Martin, 2005, p. 70), films remind us that real people from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds live, work, study and survive in the city. Financial power and economic interests are central to modern capitalism, but are not and cannot be the sole driving force behind decisions for those in charge and for those living in the city: London's global-city identity is not solely the result of its economic power. The city is also an important node for cultural output. Cinematic representations in both thematic categories located in London since the height of the New Labour neoliberal era remind us of London's global-city identity by foregrounding the *characters* (citizens) who inhabit the city, often providing a 'bottom-up' approach to the city's symbolic power.. This takes place in a subtle way in Glamorous London films, where the characters are constantly in search of happiness through romantic relationships, in spite of their relatively comfortable financial situations. These characters are at liberty to enjoy the city's amenities in the 'glamour zones', including the city's 'world-class' cultural outposts like its numerous galleries and museums, and live out the 'global city lifestyle'. At the same time, these characters do not find happiness, if ever, until they are in a stable romantic relationship.

Multi-Cultural London characters, on the other hand, do not possess the means to lead a 'glamorous' life and often struggle for survival, working several low-paid jobs simultaneously. Although the city in Multi-Cultural London films is often portrayed as grey, bleak and difficult, it is equally a space in which these characters are able to find ways *out* of their unfortunate and desperate situations. These characters are thereby given agency and the city becomes an important site for liberation and individualism. Although the films suggest that economic

factors govern many of these characters' decisions, likely in some cases even their original decision to re-locate to London, their relationship with the city is complex and multi-faceted. This diversity of representations in turn paints a picture of the city itself as complex and multi-faceted. These cinematic representations, with their varied depictions of the city, serve to strengthen the city's symbolic power through this diversity. The city is an attractive and desirable destination precisely because it is portrayed as appealing to a wide variety of individuals—from tourists and business people to asylum seekers and other immigrants, cinematic London offers 'something for everyone'.

Returning to Sevcik (2011) and the strategic urban narrative (see section 2.3.3), the focus on diversity makes the *narrative* aspect believable. A uniquely glossy and glamorous cinematic identity would be problematic as it would not reflect the realities of the 'real' city. The city's grittier cinematic identity provides a believable representation of the city and its inhabitants. These multiple facets, in the shape of positive and negative representations of cinematic London, add to the city's reputation and strengthen its symbolic power as an important node in global capitalism. The glamour cannot exist without the grit. The seemingly contrasting identities enhance the city's symbolic power through its appeal to diverse groups of people. These differing representations of London's symbolic identity in Multi-Cultural London films cater to a gaze which differs greatly to that which is created by Glamorous London films. Whilst the polished, middle class scenes of London in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, for example, are likely to appeal to middle class tourists from the US, Multi-Cultural London films offer a glimpse into London's migrant underworld for those not necessarily well acquainted with this more grim version of the city.

## **8.3 Contributions: Cinema and the Global City**

### **8.3.1 Reflection on Methodological Approach**

The empirical analysis in this thesis follows a methodological approach that borrows elements from various disciplines. Through an investigation of the synergetic relationship between film and cities, and the resulting multiple expressions and consequences, this project is situated at the crossroads of media and communications studies, urban sociology and film studies. The analysis relied primarily on the thematic analytical method, which, given its flexibility as a methodological approach, afforded the opportunity for an in-depth, text-based investigation that reflects the project's interdisciplinary foundations. The choice of thematic analysis drew elements from semiotics, discourse and ideological analysis. The methodological approach provided an opportunity to show how London's promotion as a desirable destination is reflective of the at times strategic use of film in creating this identity for the city. Furthermore, the supplementary material required to make the study rigorous and accountable, like the list of films set in London in the 1997-2007 period (see Appendix A) and the list of advertisements featuring a cinematic version of the city (see Appendix D), can be seen as a useful resource for scholars looking to conduct further research on London's screen identity.

The results of this thesis should be seen as a critical 'first assessment', of the changes that are continually taking place in the cinematic and promotional industries since the late 1990s, with regard to the global city. Whilst the textual analysis presented in this thesis contributes to an already strong literature on film and the city, there is of course space for further studies of audience engagement and critique through interviews and focus groups. A further study incorporating interviews with city planners, film directors and other élites, would also enhance this project's findings by exploring the element of intentionality and assessing more directly the strategic elements in the management of the city's symbolic power. Whereas the research in this thesis looks at

what the texts (film, advertising) have done, a future research project could focus on the contribution of those responsible for the texts' inception, linking the filmmakers' intentionality (were cities involved in funding the these films, which have to a certain extent become advertisements for the city?) with the underlying meanings unearthed in this thesis. Crucially, this study, particularly through the analysis in Chapter 7, shows how the city itself is changing in response to its evolving cinematic identity and indeed to the ways in which London's symbolic power is being managed. The field would therefore benefit from a further study approaching Londoners themselves and seeing what these changes have meant for the people who inhabit the city.

### 8.3.2 The global city and symbolic power

In this thesis I have demonstrated that the commodification of the city, including its culture, through the representation of the spatial practices (see Harvey, 1990, p. 259) of those who inhabit the city and the changing nature of the built environment, create an 'outward' focus on the city's global *image* which detracts from the sociological realities of events taking place in the 'real' city. We need to remind ourselves that even the iconic and well-known global city is a living and breathing entity inhabited by a variety of individuals with diverse backgrounds and needs. Whilst primarily falling within wider systems of representational power order, cinema cannot but also reflect the complexities of urban life, at least to an extent. The managerial culture in neoliberalism creates an emphasis on cities as centres of exchange of commodities and of cities as commodities, both of which are reflected in the competition between cities. Indeed the commodification culture in neoliberal capitalism depends upon image-making and representational order as these are also reflected in the ways in which the various global media outlets represent the world. This outward focus, reducing the high concentration of individuals living 'cheek by jowl' in the global city to a simple branding strategy, diverts attention from the real social challenges the city faces. Wealth inequality is an especially pressing issue in London (see Hamnett, 2004; Massey 2007) and urban regeneration strategies, coupled with

promotional efforts, seem to do little to alleviate this problem. House prices in London, for example, given the focus on gentrification and making districts appealing to those with higher levels of wealth, are increasing at an alarming rate (see Section 7.5). London's efforts to attract more tourists (a strategy which includes exploiting the city's cinematic identity, as demonstrated by the case of the re-branding of King's Cross station to include references to Harry Potter (see Section 7.4.1), and indeed its status as the world's most visited city do not make for a more liveable city. The 'strategic narrative' of London, which includes the city's presence in cinema, might be encouraging this increase. This links to the ways in which we measure 'success' in neoliberal capitalism, where there is often a focus on economic productivity rather than income equality or quality of life (Massey, 2007, p. 67).

This thesis has argued that the symbolic power of the global city is complex and multi-layered. This power is often intangible, difficult to measure and, ideologically driven.. Moreover, this thesis, through an interdisciplinary approach informed by aspects of critical political economy, and thematic analysis, contributes to the literature on city branding that is currently an emerging area of urban studies. The analysis shows that the global city's symbolic power, looking in the present research specifically at London, is related to a variety of realms which come together in the cinematic medium and in those media that feature cinematic influences. This thesis provides a critique of city branding at the juncture of political economy and culture, in particular where the global city's *pre-existing* symbolic power, accrued through and exercised within the geo-political, cultural-industrial and market spaces, is global north capital cities, with claims to globality, manage their image and brand platform, through and beyond the cinematic medium. The main research question (*how do cinema and cinematic representations construct, reaffirm and communicate the symbolic power of the global city?*) suggests that global cities possess high levels of symbolic power independently of their presence in cinematic representations. Thus, cinema, in conjunction with the promotional industries and city authorities, *reinforces* the symbolic power of the global city, reducing its complexities

and diversity to clichés and to something 'manageable'. This corresponds to the managerial approach to culture and creative output more generally, which has been rife since 1997 in the UK.

This thesis has revealed important trends in the *management* of the global city's symbolic power. These trends, though here related specifically to the representation of the global city in the cinematic medium and other media, bring to light questions that we need to address in order to understand the interplay between mediated representations and the sociological realities of the city. This research has shown that the cinematic representational space of London is shot through with vicious social and political inequalities, stereotypes and misrepresentations that colonise the spaces for social critique, change, solidarity with middle-class needs and commodities or working-class and underclass despair. The concept of symbolic power, I have argued, is a core concept helps us understand the idea that some cities are 'global', whilst others are not. The focus in this thesis on the ways in which this symbolic power is represented and how these representations have inspired changes in the city itself, have shown how cinema contributes to the 'normalisation' of certain images by making these representations complex and even some times contradictory: the city's symbolic power is as much normalised as it is 'misrecognisable' (see Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170).

Since visual representations are 'the focal point in the process through which meaning is made in a cultural context' (Dikovitskaya, 2005, p. 1) and the viscosity of the moving image provides a space for potentially emotive iterations of global cities (see Bruno, 1997), this thesis fills gaps in the literature where there has been little work on the construction of symbolic power through representations of global cities in cinema. This thesis has 'de-naturalised' London's cinematic image by demonstrating how the city's symbolic power is constructed in a multi-layered manner in cinematic representations. This is achieved through the popularity of cinema and indeed the synergetic relationship between cinema, the city and the promotional industries. Although London's symbolic power is invariably related to its key role as a hub of global

capitalism, and therefore its economic power, it is equally a result of its cultural influences and historical and current geo-political power, which is partly reaffirmed through the overconcentration and dynamic presence of cultural production and consumption in its physical and mediated space.

Cinema, as this thesis demonstrates, can provide global cities with a platform through which to *refresh* their global image and *maintain* their symbolic power. It has demonstrated that the complexity and the multi-faceted nature of London's symbolic power, both through and independently of cinema, has become more evident in the recent past, particularly since 1997 and the New Labour regime. A growing body of evidence suggests that London's cinematic identity has transcended the cinema hall and the political economy of film has taken centre stage. Film and cultural policy under New Labour focused on the deliberate merging of the city's cinematic and branded identities—this continues under the current Conservative government. The goal has been to promote London in the global arena, as a tourist- and business-friendly destination alongside the creation of 'tourist-friendly grit' in the East End. For example, the Film London agency, created in 2003 when New Labour was in power, encourages foreign studios to make films based in London. According to the agency, many tourists arrive in London as a result of having seen the city depicted on screen (See *Film London – Film Tourism* [n.d.] and Section 7.2.1). Evidence like this, coupled with the popularity of Glamorous London-type films, has resulted in an emphasis on 'commercial success' with regard to film funding. As mentioned in Section 7.4, Prime Minister David Cameron, referring to a report from the BFI, has stated that only films which are likely to be profitable will receive the bulk of government funding. This unfortunate policy is likely to result in the release of fewer negative portrayals of the city, which in any case tend to have a more limited distribution and therefore lower profits. As this analysis has shown, however, it is precisely the mix of positive and negative representations of London that helps to strengthen its symbolic power as a global city.



## 8.4 Reflections: The 'Other Side' of the Global City's Symbolic Power

This thesis outlines and establishes the strong links between cinema, the city and symbolic power, along with the ways in which this is manifested in other media such as advertising texts. It also demonstrates the ways in which these links are manifested in the city itself. In particular, Chapter 7 demonstrates that synergies between cinema, the city and the promotional industries have become increasingly prevalent in the contemporary media landscape. From DVDs to film-themed merchandise and competitions, these explicit synergies have become increasingly common, both in the media and in the city itself. Where the *Harry Potter* series of films created demand for film-related products, the city has changed as a result. For example, King's Cross railway station in Central London is now a place where some fans make their pilgrimage to 'Platform 9¾', whilst others can make their way to the Warner Brother's Studio at Leavesden, in London's northern outskirts, for the *Harry Potter* studio tour (see Section 7.4.1). Equally, we see gangster film aficionados being led through crime-ridden areas of East End by a famous actor. The commodified aspects of London's cinematic identity and, in turn, the city's multi-faceted symbolic power are difficult to ignore.

Yet, in a discussion of the city as a 'living' entity in the context of cinema, the city and symbolic power, we need crucially to assess how its inhabitants are impacted by the changing dynamics of the city's symbolic power. Gentrification and the resulting rising rents and unaffordable basic items are becoming more prevalent in more districts around the capital. Although we see a clear disconnect between economic productivity and quality of life for the city's poorer residents, we also need to ask just how far city planners and government agencies are willing to proceed with regard to pricing out poorer Londoners. Will the central zones become nothing more than vapid areas of mindless consumption? Will gentrification result in the loss of the city's distinctiveness? Will Western global cities become indistinguishable from one another? A walk down one of London's main retail hubs in the West End reveals several US-based chain stores and supermarkets like Banana Republic, J Crew and

Whole Foods. On a similar walk along Fifth Avenue in New York, shoppers will encounter UK-based retailers like All Saints, Top Shop and of course the ubiquitous Prêt A Manger sandwich shop chain. Visual distinctiveness is becoming rarer in city centres.

The empirical analysis in chapter 7 has shown that there is a wider system of cross-fertilisation within creative forms and popular cultures that links the grim with the glamorous, the local with the global, and the represented city with the lived city. Cinema can thus also be understood in regards to its symbolic value in dialogue with other forms of popular culture. For example, there is an increasing awareness amongst city planners, marketers and developers of the importance of creating a 'believable' narrative for the city, where distinctiveness in the form of grit and rawness, particularly in London's East End, are maintained and exploited in developing construction, shopping and catering projects. The same can be said for the spectacle of ethnic minority enclaves in London, with their bilingual street signs and tourist-friendly offerings. The recognition by the cinema and promotional industries of the lucrative mutual benefits of exploiting the symbolic power of the global city has wide implications for our visual culture, for the film industries in general and indeed for both global and non-global cities. Whilst mainstream filmic output becomes standardised, our mainstream visual culture in general also becomes standardised, providing limited opportunities for non-cinematic/non-global cities to display themselves to the world. We need to ask: does the development and maintenance of the city's symbolic power or reinforcing global urban hierarchies actually benefit those living in global cities? What about the artistic production that tends to take place in bohemian enclaves in urban centres? In the case of London, much of this production and creativity is being squeezed further and further east. Subcultural artistic production, often re-packaged and re-branded to appeal to mainstream audiences, is dependent upon creative urban enclaves.

Where Shoreditch, a district bordering the City of London, was once home to 'starving artists', it is now a luxury residential, entertainment and business area, a glamour zone. Peckham, in southeast London, is

currently undergoing a similar process of gentrification. The once working-class neighbourhood is seeing property prices rise and a change in its overall character. Given the discussion of the lucrative potential of a multi-faceted approach to symbolic power, can London and other global cities afford to sacrifice their poorer and creative classes when not integrated in established systems of the creative industries? Will the city lose the underground art scene for which it is famed? Will the service workers, key to the city's economic success, no longer be able to afford to live within commuting distance of the West End and the City because of rising rents? Or will we see more extreme living conditions taking shape in inner London? Tottenham in north London, for example, was in the headlines in 2015, with '30 migrant workers and children living in slum conditions in a single house' (see Harris, 2015). Will unfortunate and unacceptable situations like this one become the norm? We need to reinforce the idea that global cities are not simply economic engines, but living, breathing spaces, containing huge concentrations of people from all walks of life, with London in particular being a strategic arrival point for many transnational migrants.

The neoliberal focus on the commodification of places and cultures is in urgent need of re-assessment as it does not focus adequately on the well-being of city dwellers. From social and spatial displacement of those on low incomes to the loss of bohemian enclaves, the re-affirmation of the global city's symbolic power is a reflection of our times, where 'success' in neoliberal capitalism relates to economic productivity rather than quality of life. Global cities, the world's hubs of international finance, culture and geo-politics, are therefore the epitome of this 'success'. At the same time, global cities are spaces of tolerance and diversity, where individuals can create a sense of identity and belonging beyond their ethnic or national background. It is precisely this ambivalence which makes the global city a fascinating, dynamic and exciting place. The cinematic or 'reel' city, given its prolific nature, could be useful in cultivating equality and justice for more people, by foregrounding diverse peoples' stories and critically evaluating the economic, political, social and spatial conditions in which they struggle to survive. Blurring the line

between representation and reality, cinema could prove powerful tool in ensuring that the city's marginalised groups are given a voice in the mainstream media.

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## **Films**

*Bend it Like Beckham* (2002). Dir. Gurinder Chadha, Germany/UK/USA.

*Bicycle Thieves* (1948). Dir. Vittorio de Sica. Italy

*Breaking and Entering* (2006). Dir. Anthony Minghella, USA/UK.

*Breathless* (1960). Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, France.

*Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001). Dir. Sharon Maguire, UK.

*Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004). Dir. Beeban Kidron,  
UK/France/Germany/Ireland.

*Burning an Illusion* (1981). Dir. Menelik Shabazz, UK.

*Closer* (2004). Dir. Mike Nichols, USA.

*Dirty Pretty Things* (2002). Dir. Stephen Frears, UK.

*Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (2001). Dir. Jean-Pierre Jeunet,  
France.

*Four Weddings and Funeral* (1994). Dir. Mike Newell, UK.

*La Haine* (1995). Dir. Mathieu Kassovitz, France.

*Happy and Glorious* (2012). Dir. Danny Boyle, UK.

*The King's Speech* (2010). Dir. Tom Hooper, UK.

*Love Actually* (2003). Dir. Richard Curtis, UK.

*Match Point* (2005). Dir. Woody Allen, UK/USA.

*My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985). Dir. Stephen Frears, UK.

*Notting Hill* (1999). Dir. Richard Curtis, UK/USA.

*Sex and the City* (2008). Dir. Michael Patrick King, USA.

*Sherlock Holmes* (2009). Dir. Guy Ritchie, UK/USA.

*Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Dir. John Madden, UK/USA.

*Sliding Doors* (1998). Dir. Peter Howitt, UK/USA.

*Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). Dir. Danny Boyle, UK.

*Topsy-Turvy* (1999). Dir. Mike Leigh, UK.

*Trainspotting* (1996). Dir. Danny Boyle, UK.

## APPENDIX A: List of 100 London-set films released in the 1997-2007 period

### British Film Industry

Title	Year	Director	Studio/Funding	Notes
Face	1997	Antonia Bird	BBC Films; British Screen Productions; Daigoro Face Productions; Distant Horizon	Gangster film set in Mile End and Haringay
Fever Pitch	1997	David Evans	Channel 4 Films; Wildgaze Productions; Scala Productions	Based on Nick Hornby's novel; starring Colin Firth; did not do well in the USA, but inspired a re-make starring Drew Barrymore and Jimmy Fallon in 2005 (about baseball rather than football); pre-'Cool Britannia'
Shooting Fish	1997	Stefan Schwartz	Gruber Brothers; Arts Council; National Lottery; Tomboy Films; Winchester Media plc	According to Wikipedia, the film attempted to piggyback on the success of <i>Four Weddings</i>
Martha, Meet Frank, Daniel and Laurence	1998	Nick Hamm	Channel 4; Banshee (?)	Starts in the US and is about an American woman who ends up in London; didn't do particularly well
Beautiful People	1999	Jasmin Dizdar	Arts Council of England; <u>British Film Institute (BFI)</u> ; <u>British Screen Productions</u> (as British Screen); <u>British Sky Broadcasting (BskyB)</u> ; <u>Channel Four Films</u> ; <u>Merseyside Film Production Fund</u> ; <u>Tall Stories</u>	Not a box office success, but was globally distributed

This Year's Love	1999	David Kane	Kismet Film Company (UK); Entertainment Film Distributors (UK)	
Wonderland	1999	Michael Winterbottom	BBC; Kismet; Polygram Filmed Entertainment; Revolution Films; Universal Pictures	
Love, Honour and Obey	2000	Dominic Anciano; Ray Burdis	BBC	Gangster film starring the 'Primrose Hill set'. Set in North London; characters share their first names with the actors who play them
28 Days Later	2002	Danny Boyle	British Film Council; DNA Films	Surprise hit in the USA
Bend it Like Beckham	2002	Gurinder Chadha	Film Screen	Widely credited with launching the careers of Keira Knightley and Parminder Nagra
Dirty Pretty Things	2002	Stephen Frears	BBC Films, Celador Films; Jonescompany Productions	Starring Audrey Tautou
The Honeytrap	2002	Michael G. Gunther	Film House, London	
Enduring Love	2004	Roger Michell	Pathe; UK Film Council; Film Four; Inside Track Films; Free Range Films; Ingenious Film Partners; Ridgeway Productions	
Kidulthood	2006	Menhaj Huda	Stealth Films; Cipher Films; TMC Films	
London to Brighton	2006	Paul Andrew Williams	Steel Mill Pictures; Wellington Films; LTB Films Ltd; UK Film Council	
Scenes of a Sexual Nature	2006	Ed Blum	Tin Pan Films; The Mob Company	Empire Review ( <a href="http://www.empireonline.com/reviews/ReviewComplete.asp?FID=134588">http://www.empireonline.com/reviews/ReviewComplete.asp?FID=134588</a> ): 'good in patches but insubstantial, the

				only discernible moral is that Hampstead Heath is a nice place to be on a sunny day'
Storm-breaker	2006	Geoffrey Sax	Samuelson Productions (UK); Isle of Man Film (UK); The Weinstein Company (USA); VIP 4 Medienfonds (Germany); Moving Picture Company (UK); Rising Star Entertainment (USA)	
28 Weeks Later	2007	Juan Carlos Fresnadillo	Fox Atomic (USA); DNA Films (UK); UK Film Council; Figment Films (UK); Sociedad General de Cine (Spain); Koan Films (Spain)	Mainly UK production; some funding from Spain
Outlaw	2007	Nick Love	Ingenious; Vertigo Films	
Run Fatboy Run	2007	David Schwimmer	Beech Hill Films; Entertainment Films; Material Entertainment	

### British Film Industry/Hollywood joint productions

Title	Year	Director	Studio/Funding	Notes
Harry Potter series	2001-2011		Heyday Films (UK); 1492 Productions; Warner Brothers (USA); P of A Productions (UK)	Not primarily set in London, but London is very important to the storyline
Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels	1998	Guy Ritchie	Polygram Filmed Entertainment (UK); Summit Entertainment (USA); Steve Tisch Company (USA); SKA Films (UK); HandMade Films	



			(UK);	
Sliding Doors	1998	Peter Howitt	<u>Intermedia Films</u> (UK); <u>Mirage Enterprises</u> (USA); <u>Miramax Films</u> (USA); <u>Paramount Pictures</u> (USA)	Joint UK/USA production; female protagonist is American
The Wisdom of Crocodiles	1998	Po-Chih Leong	Goldwyn Films (?); Film Foundry Partners (USA); Entertainment Film Distributors (UK); Zenith Entertainment (UK); Arts Council of England (UK)	Starring Jude Law
Notting Hill	1999	Roger Michell	Working Title (UK); Polygram Filmed Entertainment (UK/USA)	Female lead is American whilst male lead is British. Unrealistic portrayal of area, but film is widely acknowledged to be responsible for eventual allure of Notting Hill area
Snatch	2000	Guy Ritchie	Columbia (USA); SKA Films (UK)	Featuring major American stars
High Heels and Low Lives	2001	Mel Smith	Torchtone (USA); Fragile Films (UK); High Heel (UK)	Inspired a Bollywood re-make
Shanghai Knights	2003	David Dobkin	All Knight Productions (UK); Torchtone Pictures (USA); Spyglass Entertainment	Primarily set in London and some scenes set/filmed in New York

			(USA); Birnbaum/Barber Productions (USA); Jacke Chan Films Ltd (?)	
Layer Cake	2004	Matthew Vaughn	Sony Pictures Classics (USA); Marv Films (UK)	Gangster film
Green Street	2005	Lexi Alexander	Odd Lot Entertainment (USA); Baker Street (UK)	Mixed reviews; independent film starring Elijah Wood
Mrs Henderson Presents	2005	Stephen Frears	Pathe (UK); BBC Films (UK); Future Films (UK); Micro Fusion (UK); The Weinstein Company (USA); UK Film Council (UK); Heyman- Hoskins Productions (UK); Mrs Henderson Productions Ltd (UK);	Considered a 'British film', but has some Hollywood funding; positive reviews; performed well at the box office
Children of Men	2006	Alfonso Cuarón	Universal (USA); Strike Entertainment (USA); Hit & Run Productions (UK)	Primarily a Hollywood film but some UK funding involved
Flushed Away	2006	David Bowers; Sam Fell	Dream Works (USA); Aardman Animations (UK)	Animated film; 'posh Kensington'
Notes on a Scandal	2006	Richard Eyre	Fox Searchlight (USA); DNA Films (UK); UK Film Council (UK); BBC Films (UK); Scott Rudin Productions (USA); Ingenious Film Partners (UK)	Many parts of the film were shot in Islington Arts and Media School
Scoop	2006	Woody Allen	BBC Films (UK); Ingenious (UK); Phoenix Wiley	

			(UK); Jelly Roll Productions (USA)	
Venus	2006	Roger Michell	Miramax (USA); Film Four (UK); UK Film Council (UK); Free Range Films (?)	Not widely distributed, but nominated for many awards in US and UK

## Hollywood

<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Studio/Funding</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Shakespeare in Love	1999	John Madden	Universal Pictures; Miramax Films; Bedford Falls Productions	Won numerous Oscars and BAFTAs; extremely profitable
102 Dalmatians	2000	Kevin Lima	Walt Disney Productions	
From Hell	2001	Albert Hughes; Allen Hughes	Fox; Underworld Entertainment	
The Mummy Returns	2001	Stephen Sommers	Universal Pictures; Alphaville Films; Imhotep Productions	Extensive references to British Museum, which was actually closed at the time so UCL was used instead
Winning London	2001	Craig Shapiro	Dualstar Productions; Tapestry Films	
Reign of Fire	2002	Rob Bowman	Spyglass Entertainment; Torchtone; Tripod Entertainment; World 2000 Entertainment; The Zanuck Company	Sci-fi thriller
What a Girl Wants	2002	Dennie Gordon	DiNovi Pictures; Gaylord Films; HSI Tomorrow Film; Sloane Square Films;	

			Warner Brothers	
Agent Cody Banks 2: Destination London	2004	Kevin Allen	MGM	
Alfie	2004	Charles Shyer	Paramount; Palatex Productions	Jude Law plus a variety of US female stars
Closer	2004	Mike Nichols	Columbia Pictures	Star-studded UK/US cast; notable London locations
Breaking and Entering	2006	Anthony Minghella	Miramax; Mirage Enterprises	International cast: Robin Wright-Penn; Jude Law; Juliette Binoche
Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties	2006	Tim Hill	Twentieth Century Fox; Davis Entertainment; Dune Entertainment; Ingenious Film Partners; Major Studio Partners	Animated feature
The Holiday	2006	Nancy Meyers	Columbia Pictures; Universal Pictures; Relativity Media; Waverly Films	Not primarily London-set, but there is a 'London feel' to the film (intertextuality: Love Actually, etc.); stars Kate Winslet and Jude Law (particular version of highly exportable 'Britishness') plus Jack Black and Cameron Diaz. Winslet character writes for the Telegraph society page and lives in a quaint Surrey village

V is for Vendetta	2006	James McTeigue	Primarily Warner Brothers	
Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer	2007	Tim Story	Twentieth Century Fox; Marvel; 7 Studios; 2K Games	Poor reviews; set in both London and NYC
National Treasure: Book of Secrets	2007	John Turteltaub	Walt Disney Pictures; Jerry Bruckheimer Films; Junction Entertainment; Saturn Films; Sparkler Entertainment; NT2 Productions	Significant London scenes featuring key attractions like Buckingham Palace
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street	2007	Tim Burton	Warner Brothers; Dream Works; Parkes/MacDonald Productions; Zanuck Company	

## Bollywood

Title	Year	Director	Studio/Funding	Notes
Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham	2001	Karan Johar	Dharma Productions	
Yaadein	2001	Subhash Ghai	Mukta Arts	
Mujhse Dosti Karoge	2002	Kunal Kohli	Yash Raj Films	Locations include Albert Memorial and Canary Wharf
I...Proud to be an Indian	2004	Puneet Sira	?	
Chocolate: Deep Dark Secrets	2005	Vivek Agnihotri	Inspired Movies (UK); Spice Team Entertainments (India)	Some UK funding involved
Aap Ki Khafir	2006	Dharmesh Darshan	Venus Films (India)	Re-make of Hollywood film The Wedding Date
Aksar	2006	Anant	Siddhi Vinayak	

		Mahadevan	Creations	
Bhagam Bag	2006	Priyadarshan	Shree Ashtavinayak Cine Vision; Popcorn Motion Pictures; K Sera Sera	
I See You	2006	Vivek Agarwal	Chasing Ganesha (India); K Sera Sera (India)	Re-make of a Hollywood film starring Reese Witherspoon and Mark Ruffalo
Cheeni Kum	2007	R Balki	?	Lots of London scenes
Jhoom Barbar Jhoom	2007	Shaad Ali	Yash Raj Films	Poor reviews; partly filmed in Paris
Namastey London	2007	Vipul Amrutlal Shah	Blockbuster Movie Entertainers	
Salaam-e-Ishq	2007	Nikhil Advani	?	Plenty of London scenes

### British Film Industry plus other industries (not exclusively Hollywood)

Title	Year	Director	Studio/Funding	Notes
Nil By Mouth	1997	Gary Oldman	SE8 Productions (UK); Europa (France)	Gary Oldman's directorial debut
The Man Who Knew Too Little	1997	John Amiel	Warner Brothers (USA); Regency Enterprises (USA); Polar Productions (UK); Taurus Film (Germany)	Starring Bill Murray
Wilde	1997	Brian Gilbert	BBC (UK); Capitol Films (UK); Dove International (?); NDF International (UK); Pandora Filmproduktion (Germany); Pony Canyon (Japan);	

			Samuelson Entertainment (UK); The Greenlight Fund (?); Wall to Wall Television (UK)	
Croupier	1998	Mike Hodges	Channel 4 Films (UK) plus a few European studios (France, Germany, Ireland)	Primarily UK-funded, but some European funding also involved
If Only	1998	Maria Ripoll	CLT (UK); Escima (?); HandMade Films (UK); Mandarin Films (France); Paragon Entertainment Corporation (Canada); Parallel Pictures (UK); UFA International (?); Wild Rose Productions (?)	Spanish director; partly Spanish cast (including Penelope Cruz)
Gangster No. 1	2000	Paul McGuigan	Film Four (UK); Pagoda Film (?); Road Movies Filmproduktion (Germany); British Screen Productions (UK); BskyB (UK); Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg (Germany); NFH Productions (?); Little Bird (Ireland)	Protagonist reflects back from 1999 on 1960s ('swinging London')
Sexy Beast	2000	Jonathan Glazer	Recorded Picture Company (UK); Film Four (UK); Kanzaman (Spain)	Highly profitable at the box office
Bridget Jones's Diary	2001	Sharon Maguire	StudioCanal (France); Working Title Films (UK); Little Bird (UK)	Essentially a UK film, but caters to a US audience; female lead is American and male leads are British
About a Boy	2002	Chris Weitz; Paul Weitz	Universal Pictures (USA); Studio Canal (France); Tribeca Productions (USA); Working Title (UK)	

Dot the I	2003	Matthew Parkhill	Alquimia Cinema (Spain); Arcane Pictures (UK); Summit Entertainment (USA)	UK/USA/Spain joint production; badly received in the US
Johnny English	2003	Peter Howitt	Working Title Films (UK); Rogue Male Films (UK); Studio Canal (France); Universal (USA)	Huge international box office success; mixed reviews
Love Actually	2003	Richard Curtis	Universal Pictures (USA); Studio Canal (France); DNA (UK); Working Title (UK)	
Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason	2004	Beeban Kidron	Miramax (USA); Studio Canal (France); Working Title Films (UK); Little Bird (UK)	See entry for Bridget Jones's Diary
Shaun of the Dead	2004	Edgar Wright	Universal Pictures (USA); Studio Canal (France); Working Title Films (UK); WT2 Productions (UK); Big Talk Productions (UK); Inside Track 2 (UK); Film Four (UK); De Walfe Music (UK)	Relatively unknown London locations; zombie rom-com; became a cult classic and did very well at the box office
Wimbledon	2004	Richard Longcrane	Firestep Productions (UK); Inside Track Films (UK); Studio Canal (France); Working Title Films (UK)	Essentially a UK film with some French funding. Starring Kirsten Dunst
Creep	2005	Christopher Smith	UK Film Council (UK); Filmstiftung NRW (Germany); Dan Films (Germany); Zero West (Germany)	Primarily funded by the UK Film Council, but some German funding also involved
Match Point	2005	Woody Allen	BBC Films; Jada Productions; Kudu Productions; Thema Productions (Luxembourg)	Female lead is American; male lead is Irish; director is American; smattering of British actors; notable use of



				London locations, especially on the South Bank; primarily UK-funded
Oliver Twist	2005	Roman Polanski	RP Productions (France); Runteam II Ltd (UK); ETIC Films (Czech Republic); Medusa Produzione (Italy); Runteam (UK)	Starring Ben Kingsley
Cassandra's Dream	2006	Woody Allen	Iberville Productions (UK); Virtual Studios (USA); Wild Bunch (France)	Mainly US/UK funded, but some French funding involved
Love and Other Disasters	2006	Alek Keshishian	Europa Corp (France); Ruby Films (UK); Skyline Films (UK)	'Frivolous' rom-com starring Brittany Murphy
Sixty Six	2006	Paul Weiland	Studio Canal (France); Universal Pictures (USA); Working Title (UK); WT2 Productions (UK); It is Now Film (UK)	DVD Cover: from the makers of Bridget Jones and About a Boy
The Prestige	2006	Christopher Nolan	Torchtone (USA); Warner Brothers (USA); Newmarket Productions (?); Syncopy (UK)	Set in 19 <sup>th</sup> century London
Eastern Promises	2007	David Cronenberg	Focus Features (USA); BBC Films (UK); Astral Media (Canada); Corus Entertainment (Canada); Telefilm Canada (Canada); Kudos Pictures (UK); Serendipity Point Films (Canada); Scion Films (UK)	Joint US-UK-Canadian production. Several Hollywood stars
Flood	2007	Tony Mitchell	Power (UK); A Muse Productions (Canada); Moonlighting Films	

			(South Africa); Flood Productions (UK); Muse Entertainment Enterprises (Canada)	
Irina Palm	2007	Sam Garbarski	Entre Chien et Loup (Belgium); Pallas Film (Germany); Samsa Film (Luxembourg); Ipso Facto Films (UK); Liaison Cinématographique (France); Ateliers de Baere (Belgium); Radio Television Belge Francophone (Belgium); Future Films (UK); Canal+ (France); Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung (Germany); Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Communauté Française de Belgique (Belgium); Fonds Euroimages du Conseil de l'Europe (France); Filmförderungsanstalt (Germany); Film Fund Luxembourg (Luxembourg); Région Wallone (Belgium); Le Tax Shelter du Gouvernement Fédéral de Belgique (Belgium)	Award-winning film (in Europe); did quite well globally

### Other

Title	Year	Director	Studio/Funding	Notes
Spider	2002	David Cronenberg	Blue Tongue Films (Australia)	

## **APPENDIX B: Plot summaries for films in the Glamorous London thematic category**

### ***Closer***

*Closer* is a London-set romantic drama, featuring an all-star Hollywood cast, including Jude Law (Dan), Natalie Portman (Alice/Jane), Julia Roberts (Anna) and Clive Owen (Larry). The female protagonists, Alice (a waitress/stripper) and Anna (a photographer), are Americans living in London, whilst the male protagonists, Dan (a writer) and Larry (a dermatologist), are British, probably from London. The film opens with a busy street scene, on a typically grey day most likely in winter or autumn, given the clothing. The slow-motion scene features Alice walking through the crowd, eventually being struck by an iconic London black taxi after looking the wrong way at a pedestrian crossing. Alice's non-native identity is introduced early on with this simple misreading of London's traffic, which usually approaches from the right rather than the left. Dan, who had been eyeing Alice in the crowd, takes her to hospital. It emerges that Alice has recently arrived in London from New York and found a job as a waitress (she reveals early on in the film to Anna that her chosen profession is not 'temporary'), whilst it is later revealed that Anna is a photographer who was once married to a British man. The film revolves around Dan's on-off romantic affair with Anna, which continues in spite of Dan's long-term relationship with Alice and Anna's marriage to Larry. In the interim, Alice revives her previous career as a stripper and Larry upgrades to private practice, intimating that he was previously working for the National Health Service (NHS, the UK's state-run health service). After turbulent romantic episodes, the film culminates with Alice (whose real name is revealed to be Jane) returning to New York, leaving Dan alone in London, and Larry and Anna reconciling in their marriage.

### ***Bridget Jones's Diary***

The film's title character, Bridget Jones, is a single, thirty-something London resident whose love life and failed sexual exploits become the basis for the plot. Bridget works for a publishing company, in an administrative capacity. She later leaves her job and begins a role as a

presenter for a breakfast television programme. Bridget leads a socially active life, featuring her core group of friends, encompassing a variety of 'urban' characters. Bridget struggles with her weight, often drinks too much and is a smoker. These attributes and character traits form the basis for her 'diary', in which she documents the trials and tribulations of her daily life, with reference to romantic encounters, her choice of underwear and other intimate details. Various snippets of her diary are relayed to the viewer. Bridget becomes romantically involved with her suave, caddish boss, Daniel Cleaver, played by Hugh Grant, who is subsequently unfaithful. She then ends up with lawyer and childhood acquaintance Mark Darcy, played by Colin Firth, after a series of misunderstandings and misread signals. The film begins at a New Year's Day party at Bridget's parents' residence in the snowy countryside outside London and ends in Central London, near the Royal Exchange, during an equally snowy scene in which Bridget is barefoot in her underpants. The film most certainly fits within the romantic comedy genre.

### ***Match Point***

Directed by renowned New York-based director Woody Allen, *Match Point* is a London-set romantic thriller starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Scarlett Johansson, Emily Mortimer, Matthew Goode, Brian Cox and Penelope Wilton. Chris, played by Rhys Meyers, is a retired tennis professional who lands a job as an instructor at an exclusive London tennis club. He begins dating his student Tom's sister, a character named Chloe, played by Emily Mortimer. At the same time, Chris is attracted to Tom's fiancé, Nola, played by Scarlett Johansson, and the two have an affair. Chris and Chloe marry, but Tom and Nola end their relationship. Chris is placed in an executive position at one of his father-in-law's companies, which happens to be based in the 'Gherkin' office tower. Nola leaves London, but returns some time later and Chris runs into her at the Tate Modern gallery. They exchange numbers and begin having an affair. Whilst Chloe is unable to conceive, it transpires that Nola is pregnant with Chris's child. When Chris finds out, he steals a hunting rifle from his father-in-law's country house and uses it to stage a burglary and shoot Nola. Chris is not punished for his crime and, at the end of the film, he

and Chloe end up having a baby. The film was shot on location in London and features many of the city's landmarks in the West End, the City and on the South Bank.

## **APPENDIX C: Plot summaries for films in the Multi-Cultural London thematic category**

### ***Dirty Pretty Things***

The film, starring Audrey Tautou (Senay) and Chiwetel Ejiofor (Okwe) and directed by Stephen Frears, centres on Okwe, a Nigerian immigrant in London. He is a qualified doctor, but is forced to work as a minicab driver by day and a hotel desk clerk by night. He stays awake by chewing a herbal stimulant known as 'khat'. He becomes aware of an organ-trafficking scheme taking place at the hotel, where the manager, Juan, trades human organs for European Union passports. The victims of this scheme are illegal migrants who work at the hotel but want to settle in the UK and other Western countries. He befriends Senay, a Turkish migrant who also works at the hotel. The film follows their exploits as they struggle to survive comfortably in London, which is portrayed as inhospitable and unforgiving. Usually on the run from immigration officials, Senay and Okwe work in a variety of jobs in order to earn enough money to make ends meet. Eventually, Juan asks Okwe to help in his clandestine business, but Okwe refuses. Senay, after being forced to perform oral sex on one of her employers, in desperation agrees to exchange one of her organs for an EU passport. Okwe is distressed by her decision and pretends to agree to Juan's offer and is placed in charge of extracting Senay's kidney. Senay and Okwe drug Juan and remove his kidney instead, selling it to Juan's contact in the hotel's underground car park. The film ends at Stansted Airport where Senay, equipped with an EU passport, leaves London for New York and Okwe begins his journey home to Nigeria.

### ***Breaking and Entering***

*Breaking and Entering* stars Jude Law (Will), Juliette Binoche (Amira), Robin Wright (Liv) and Rafi Gavron (Miro) and is directed by Anthony Minghella. Will runs a company called Green Effect, which is charged with the redevelopment of the King's Cross district of Central London. The company's offices are located in an industrial complex in the district. The

company's focus is on the gentrification of the neighbourhood, transforming its reputation for prostitution and crime into one for urban culture and safety. Green Effect's offices suffer a series of burglaries. Will spends many evenings on 'stakeouts', attempting both to catch the burglars and to escape his turbulent home life, where he and his partner Liv are struggling to make their relationship work. One evening Will follows one of the culprits, Miro, to his residence on a council estate nearby. Instead of exposing the teenager's crime, Will later returns to the estate and asks Miro's mother, Amira, a seamstress and a refugee from Bosnia, to mend his suit. He and Amira begin a romantic affair. Amira finds out that her son is involved in the burglaries and, in an effort to protect her family, films herself having sex with Will and threatens to expose their affair to Liv. When the police apprehend Miro, Will decides not to press charges. Will and Liv end their relationship.

### ***Bend it Like Beckham***

*Bend it Like Beckham*, directed by Gurinder Chadha, stars Parminder Nagra (Jess), Keira Knightley (Jules), Jonathan Rhys-Meyers (Jo), Anupam Kher (Mr Bhamra) and Archie Panjabi (Pinky Bhamra). The film is set in Hounslow, West London, near Heathrow Airport, and follows the life of Jess, the daughter of a Punjabi-Indian family. Whilst Jess's parents encourage her to live like a 'good Indian girl' by doing well at school and learning to cook, Jess is interested in football and joins the local women's team, the Harriers, with the help of her friend, Jules. Her parents do not approve, but Jess defies their wishes and continues playing. This arrangement works for some time, as Jess's family is distracted as they prepare for her sister Pinky's wedding. As the Harriers advance, they are invited to play in Hamburg. Jess asks Pinky to cover for her as she travels to Germany, but her parents eventually find out and Jess stops playing. In Hamburg, Jess and her coach share a kiss, which causes a rift in Jess's friendship with Jules. They eventually repair their friendship and Jess manages to convince her parents to allow her to attend a prestigious football academy in California, where she and Jules have been offered scholarships to train. The film ends at Heathrow Airport with the two friends bidding their families farewell as they embark on their journey to

California to train as professional footballers. Unlike the other films in this thematic category, *Bend it Like Beckham* paints a hopeful picture of a multicultural Britain where fear and prejudice can be overcome.



## APPENDIX D: Narrative advertisements featuring London

Product	Actor Involved	Year	Luxury?	Link
Dunhill London	Henry Cavill	2008	Yes	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKqFMxdN3Pc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKqFMxdN3Pc</a> ; <a href="http://www.youtube.com/user/LiveLondon">http://www.youtube.com/user/LiveLondon</a>
American Express	Kate Winslet	2006	Yes	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1zJk0Mx-n4">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1zJk0Mx-n4</a>
Burberry London	Rachel Weisz	2008	Yes	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK0pTfY5JQI">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FK0pTfY5JQI</a>
Dior Homme Intense	Jude Law	2009	Yes	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkKxhEtHG7s&amp;NR=1">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkKxhEtHG7s&amp;NR=1</a>
Lady Dior Grey	Sir Ian McKellan; Marion Cotillard	2011	Yes; extended narrative	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keU74IKqltQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keU74IKqltQ</a>
Yardley London	Katrina Kaif	2011	No but probably 'higher end' in India	<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQBvcUJIbPc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQBvcUJIbPc</a>